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Foreword

Multiple Voices Advocates for Educational Equity and Social Justice

This special issue of *The Journal of Praxis in Multicultural Education* celebrates the 20th anniversary of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) and its legacy of educational equity and social justice, by listening to the voices of faculty in the College of Education at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS) as they discuss the latest panoply of research and practices utilized at UCCS and beyond, to prepare educators who are advocates for educational equity and social justice.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s ignited educational reform such as curricula and program enhancements. During the 1960s, poet Langston Hughes reflected on an educational experience that occurred in grammar school that continued to haunt him. "I was a victim of a stereotype. There were only two of us Negro kids in the whole class and our English teacher was always stressing the importance of rhythm in poetry. Well, everyone knows — except us — that all Negroes have rhythm, so they elected me as class poet" (The New York Times, 1967). In the poem, "Theme for English B," written in 1951, Hughes reflects on the influence of his white teacher and, perhaps even more importantly, the lasting impression that a young black student might have on his teacher:

I guess being colored doesn't make me NOT like
the same things other folks like who are other races.
So, will my page be colored that I write?
Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be
a part of you, instructor.
You are white--
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.
That's American.

Hughes raised an important point - as educators, how much of us is a part of our students, and how much of our students is a part of us? In 1990, these and other questions were also very much on the mind of the founders of the National Association for Multicultural Education when they called for more comprehensive reform and began its advocacy. A salient part of the NAME advocacy is how the organization broadly defines multicultural education and

continues to update its definition to address change and remain viable. Multicultural education as defined by NAME (2003) is:

a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity as acknowledged in various documents, such as the U.S. Declaration of Independence, constitutions of South Africa and the United States, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations. It affirms our need to prepare students for their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It recognizes the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice.

Multicultural education is a process that permeates all aspects of school practices, policies and organization as a means to ensure the highest levels of academic achievement for all students. It helps students develop a positive self-concept by providing knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups. It prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality in organizations and institutions by providing the knowledge, dispositions, and skills for the redistribution of power and income among diverse groups. Thus, school curriculum must directly address issues of racism, sexism, classism, linguisticism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, and xenophobia.

In this issue, authors advocate for changes in teacher preparation and research as well as describe the specific programmatic changes such as infusion of multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching tenets in their respective departments (e.g. Curriculum & Instruction, Leadership, & Special Education). But even the most culturally responsive teaching methods cannot be successful if all students are not being included in the educational process. For example, in the article, "Access to Higher Education for Undocumented Students: 'Outlaws' of Social Justice, Equity, and Equality," the authors are concerned with the lack of academic support given to these students. Like Langston Hughes, students who are undocumented, recognize that a combination of low expectations and cultural stereotypes can have lifelong effects on them—the feeling of being an outsider in the U.S. educational system.

In the final stanzas of his poem, “Theme for English B,” Hughes (1951) illuminates feelings of being an outsider in his English class:

Sometimes perhaps you don’t want to be a part of me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that’s true!
As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me--
although you’re older--and white--
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

Throughout this issue you will experience many legacies of NAME—multiple voices advocating for educational equity and social justice. We conclude this foreword by thanking the founders of NAME led by Rose Duhon-Sells, James E. Anderson, H. Prentice Baptiste, Jr., Leslie McAvoy Baptiste, Charlotte R. Bell, Samuel H. Bolden, James B. Boyer, Glenn A. Doston, Cherry Ross Gooden, John Hendricks, Tonya Huber-Warring, Marjorie Kyle, Alfred G. Mouton, Cornel Pewewardy, Isiah Sessoms, Pritchey Smith, Samuel E. Spaght, Porter Lee Troutman, Jr., Maureen Vanterpool, and Doris C. Vaughn.

—*La Vonne I. Neal and Lindy Crawford*

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