

# Education for All: A Promise Yet Deferred

## A Foreword

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The 2014-2015 school year marked the first year that majority of the students in America's public schools were non-White (Klein, 2014). Despite the shifting demographics, there still remains a persistent struggle to ensure that all students receive a quality education and this problem is even more pervasive for students of color (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). The projections for the demographic shift of the United States population are well known yet the teacher population remains severely mismatched. Irvine (1991) explains that a lack of "cultural synchronization" between teachers and students can negatively impact student success. As a result, much focus has been given to the need to improve teacher education and training programs. More specifically, research literature continuously demands pre-service teachers must be able to understand and employ culturally responsive pedagogy to effectively reach and teach diverse learners.

*As Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals presents its third volume,*

the articles that compose this issue discuss topics of teacher preparation, the role of race and racism in schools, marginality, and parental involvement. Combined, the articles tackle pertinent issues that are consistently faced in urban schools and environments. In a solution-oriented fashion, the authors have contributed recommendations towards improvement of education.

In the first article, Russell examines the experiences of Black teenage girls in predominately-White suburban neighborhoods. Utilizing the Black feminist intersectionality framework, the author adds to the literature on the lived experiences of Black girls in academic contexts, the navigation of their identities, and the significant impact that race and racism has on their academic and social experiences. The second article by Acosta provides implications for teacher education and the need to be sure that prospective African American teachers are not being marginalized in teacher education programs. She argues that Black educators



employ a complex pedagogy that is culturally influenced and that examining how successful Black educators define their practice could enable teacher educators to be able to assist, engage and support African American pre-service teachers. This research supports the need to understand what it means to teach from culturally centered perspectives and how examining effective pedagogy for African American children can inform the preparation of African American teachers.

The third article by Ferguson and Boudreaux, delivers data on pre-service teachers' attitudes toward English language learners in mainstream classrooms. While survey data reveals that this sample population of pre-service teachers has positive dispositions towards ELL students, the authors did find evidence of a lack of confidence in teacher abilities and instructional practices needed to reach and teach this population of students. The authors argue for training and relevant coursework to be incorporated into teacher education programs to reinforce and sustain such positive beliefs about English language learners in the classroom.

In the fourth article, Jordan delivers a unique performance piece that confronts the "inner eye of the dominant world". The concept of the "inner eye" can be understood as what others see when they look at you even though these thoughts and feelings may never be verbalized. The author's prose illuminates the power that curriculum in schools can have if it allows

for and encourages the opposition of dominant and oppressive ideologies.

In the fifth article, Watson, Robinson, Hollis and Talley-Matthews utilize DuBois' notion of the "color line" and argues that it persists even today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through a comprehensive review the authors utilize data to demonstrate evidence of the color line on both social and economic levels. Lastly, the authors address the impacts of urbanization, school discipline, and cultural mismatch in schools. The last article by Johnson examines existing literature on parental involvement in urban schools. His research reviews the common lenses through which parental involvement in schools is most often assessed. Recommendations are provided on how schools can approach and improve parental involvement.

It is my desire that the amalgamation of research presented here can assist all education stakeholders as we continue our endeavor to ensure equitable education for all.

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*Editor*



## References

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