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Editors' Comments

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EDITORS' COMMENTS

This issue of the journal seeks to explore a wide range of topics to come to a deeper understanding of Catholic education. Articles included examine historical, contemporary, and international perspectives on issues facing Catholic schools, colleges, and universities.

Historians will likely call the period from the end of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century the era of assessment. Assessment pervades public policy and social welfare systems, especially educational assessment and accountability. We assess individual students, teachers, schools, districts, and states, holding parties increasingly accountable for assessment results, both formative and summative. It is helpful to consider, from a historical perspective, the roots of this increasingly sophisticated and comprehensive assessment and accountability climate to gain a deeper understanding of its impetus, its role, and its future in our schools. This issue features an article (Ryan) elucidating how Catholic school educators responded to the testing movement during the progressive education era of the early 20th century.

The other articles in this issue explore contemporary issues in Catholic education. Looking at middle schools, Fenzel & Domingues compare traditional Catholic middle school models with the Nativity middle school model, examining how these two school structures—and their distinct learning environments—meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. With a focus on the professional development needs of Catholic secondary school teachers, Lucilio offers an analysis of data on the issues and processes that teachers, school administrators, and diocesan administrators, each with their varying perspectives, consider vital to the improvement of teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Not only do we benefit from considering historical and contemporary analyses to improve educational practice and planning into the future, but we also need to gain new perspectives by looking beyond our own shores. Dorman's research on psychosocial environmental factors in Australian Catholic high schools provides insight into factors that impact student learning environments. International comparative studies make important contributions to both the practitioner and scholar in Catholic education. Currently, there are several research-based resources that highlight important cross-national topics, including not only this journal, but the *International Handbook of Catholic Education: Challenges for School Systems in the 21st Century*, published by Springer in 2007, which provides a critical vantage point for understanding Catholic schools internationally, and the new academic journal

International Studies in Catholic Education, a Routledge publication, which provides a venue in which to facilitate dynamic, global conversations.

Finally, not only does this issue consider matters of consequence for Catholic elementary and secondary education, but Catholic higher education as well. Mohr's article describes a new academic program and field of study that focuses on the phenomenon of hatred, in which scholars and students engage in a disciplined analysis of hate. The article sets forth an argument on the importance of the field of study and how Catholic social teachings and specifically the Jesuit commitment to social justice can provide a particularly powerful contribution to this discipline. The article hopes to expand this emerging interdisciplinary field of Hate Studies by encouraging further research and development of programs in Catholic and Jesuit institutions of higher education to help students gain the intellectual skills necessary to participate in social transformation.

This issue also includes several book reviews on two important topics: commercialism and curriculum. A review of *School Commercialism: From Democratic Ideal to Market Commodity* identifies some of the dangers of school sponsorship and marketing that is present in many schools, from cafeteria food to scoreboards and even charter schools, in which corporations provide funding for schools. Another book reviewed by Luby examines how individuals need to be thoughtful consumers, as what we buy is an expression of our faith and belief in the dignity of all people. Three book reviews explore curriculum innovations. Carlevato reviews a book on inquiry-based learning in an urban English classroom, O'Connor-Campbell explores literacy in early education, and Davey reviews a book on integrating imagination across the curriculum.

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