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## Editors' Note

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### *Editors' Note*

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, DC, bilingual education will be a touchstone for the quality of multicultural awareness and sensitivity in the nation. Bilingual education encapsulates the issues that we as a nation must resolve in our relations with the world. How we welcome and educate new Americans and the tolerance, respect, and value we show for the languages and cultures that constitute the country, are directly related to the way we relate to the nations of the world. Historically, the United States has, like the Roman god Janus, smiled or frowned upon bilingual education at home depending on what the country saw on the international scene. The spectacle of the First World War in Europe aroused suspicion of Germans at home, a suspicion that fueled nativist paranoia resulting in the demise of the extensive bilingual education systems that had thrived during the nineteenth century. How will we look at the world now and how will that vision transform our view of the world cultures within our borders? Will we see enemies without and demand the shiboleth of English only as a pledge of unity within? Or will we converse with the world in its many languages, all of which we can easily speak with native proficiency if we choose to do so?

As the articles in this issue show, bilingual education policy is fluid and changing quickly. Issues of policy are inseparable from issues of definition, interpretation, and value. What is bilingual education and what is its purpose? Is it to support multilingualism in a multicultural society? Or, at the other end of the spectrum, is the purpose of bilingual education to foster the unity of the nation by ensuring literacy in a national language?

This special issue of the *Mid-Western Educational Researcher* features six articles that offer different perspectives on these issues. Tim Boals explores the landscape beyond the bilingual education/English Only debate, describing certification reform designed to ensure academic success for English language learners by demanding content area specialties of bilingual education/ESL teachers. Wallace Sherlock responds to Boals with an argument for including foreign language teachers among that group. Sharon Adelman-Reyes provides a review of the literature concerning two-way bilingual immersion programs. Narciso Alemán describes such a program, *El Telpochcalli Irma Guerra*, a proposed two-way bilingual charter school for Latino parents in Milwaukee; another local initiative, Hmong Language, Culture, and Learning, a course taught at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, is described by Donald Hones. The final article, an action research piece by ESL teachers Lori Petrie and Rebecca Sukanen, describes their experiences with collaborative approaches to ESL instruction.

We hope you find these articles to be informative and thought provoking, and that they inspire you to examine the approaches to and attitudes toward bilingual education in your communities. We welcome your response.

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It was our intent with this issue to explore the political and pedagogical arguments in the field of bilingual education.