From the Managing Editor

Welcome to a new issue of JNAAC. There are three articles for this issue. The first article is from LaRon A. Scott, Lauren P. Bruno, and Cassandra B. Willis from Virginia Commonwealth University. The study surveyed special education teachers enrolled in a Virginia-based alternate route certification program to determine if they perceived the program was valuable for creating effective special educators through the lens of effectiveness of alternative routes to teacher preparation. A sample of alternate route special education teachers rated their perceptions of the preparation they received, based on state and national standards and the extent the program met their needs. Findings showed participants perceived the program was highly effective in preparing them to become special education teachers in addition to participants expressing high satisfaction with the program.

The second article is a Best Practices article from Nicole C. Miller, Anastasia D. Elder, Dekota A. Cheatham, Dana Seymour, and Devon Brenner from Mississippi State University. Their article addresses recruitment of teachers through alternate route programs in rural areas. In order to address rural teacher shortages, the Mississippi State University College of Education implemented a fully online, alternate route, teacher preparation program to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers for rural middle level (i.e., middle school) classrooms in the state. The rural nature of the state meant that extensive recruiting efforts were required in order to reach qualified participants. This article provides a description of this work, and provides a reflection on the various recruitment efforts of the program in an effort to inform others. Specifically, three categories of strategies are discussed: (a) fostering and maintaining relationships, (b) targeting an appropriate audience; and (c) using various communication methods. While each of these methods provided various benefits, the relative timing and significance varied depending on the stage of program development or implementation.

The third article is from the editor for this issue’s Editor’s Perspective article. The focus is on preparing alternative certification teachers to teach through the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy (used throughout the current article as culturally responsive pedagogy) has been defined by Ladson-Billings (1994, pp. 16-17) as one “that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (as cited in Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p. 165). In this article, the use of culturally responsive pedagogy as a lens in which to prepare alternative certification teachers is examined in the context of preparing teachers to teach in diverse school districts in urban environments. The article rests on the premise that teachers prepared through the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy are better prepared to teach in diverse schools and constitutes a step toward teaching within a social justice context.

Finally, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Judy Corcillo for all the wonderful work she has done for NAAC and JNAAC over the years. We wish you the best in your next endeavor!

Brian R. Evans
JNAAC Managing Editor
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