

April 2014


## Editors' Comments

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## Editor's Comments

April 2014

On behalf of the Governing Board, we are excited to announce that the title of the Journal has changed from *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice* to the *Journal of Catholic Education*, effective with the publication of this issue. The new title is one outcome of our continued efforts to ensure the Journal's relevance, both within Catholic education and academic publishing. The new, shorter title reflects contemporary aesthetics and trends in publishing and facilitates publicity through social media outlets. More importantly, we believe that the new title is "user-friendly"—memorable, accessible, and inviting—for readers and contributors. In fact, in our discussions with longtime Journal readers and authors, we discovered that most were already referring to the Journal as "The Journal of Catholic Education." The official name change, therefore, better reflects the practices of our community.

We premiered the name change, along with a new logo for the Journal at the 2014 American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, held April 4-7 in Philadelphia. The editorial board and support staff from Loyola Marymount University staffed a booth in the exhibit hall, where we advertised the Journal, talked with prospective authors and readers, and learned about a variety of exciting new research projects about Catholic education currently underway. The Journal will also have a presence at the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) meeting in Pittsburgh later in April; we invite all our readers, authors, and peer reviewers attending NCEA to visit booth 529 to meet the Editorial team and Governing Board members, to check out the new logo, and to pick up some of our great new promotional materials.

The title change and the new logo and masthead are evidence of our commitment to the continual evolution of the Journal. Despite these updates, however, many things remain the same: The Journal remains dedicated to publishing current, relevant, inclusive, insightful, and rigorous research related to Catholic education; to maintaining our status as the top outlet for research on Catholic education (pre-K through higher education) from US and international perspectives; and to providing support for new authors. The Journal will continue to publish in an online, open-access format; all articles,

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book reviews, and other content will remain freely available online and accessible worldwide. As we move forward with the work of the Journal, we endeavor to maintain those qualities that have, over the years, proven to benefit our community of readers and contributors, while always keeping an eye out for new and exciting opportunities to broaden our reach or improve our work. The articles in this issue—the first to be published under the new title—address many of the most important issues in Catholic education today. While each of the articles investigates different aspects of Catholic education—leadership, teacher preparation, curriculum, and pedagogy—a common thread is the way educators’ own Catholic identities shape the way they understand the goals, purposes, and practices of education.

Martin Connell, S. J. opens this issue with his article “Recovering the Social Dimension of Reflection.” In this article, Connell critiques the ways Schon’s (1983) concept of “reflection in action” has been implemented in education, noting a disempowering focus on individual teachers rather than efforts to cultivate community. Connell draws from John Dewey’s work and St. Ignatius’s *Spiritual Exercises* to illustrate approaches to reconceptualizing teacher reflection. He emphasizes focusing on experience as a way of generating theory from within the teaching profession; that is, understanding theory as something that emerges from the contributions of communities of teachers rather than as concepts taught to teachers.

Barbara Stacy Rieckhoff’s article investigates how early-career principals develop as faith leaders in the first years of their work as principals. Rieckhoff’s mixed-method study analyzed data from surveys and interviews to understand principals’ perceptions of their leadership abilities—including ability as a faith leader—and how these leadership abilities develop over time. The article concludes by outlining a number of important implications for principals as well as for those who prepare Catholic school leaders, including advocating for the use of self-assessments to help leaders understand strengths and areas for growth and support for faith leadership from the central diocesan office.

Patrick Manning’s article addresses essential questions for Catholic educators: Who do we want our students to become? How do we help them toward that goal? Manning examines the notion of holistic education in Catholic schools through four anthropological dimensions—corporeal, affective, volitional, and cognitive—drawn from the work of Thomas Groome. These four notions have, as Manning notes, “emerged as constants in the

Christian view of the human person holistically conceived” (p. 78); in other words, these concepts consistently influence and shape the ways in which Catholic schools integrate faith formation within a curriculum designed to educate the whole student. Manning concludes the article with recommendations for classroom practice linked to each of the four dimensions.

In “The Catholic School as Courtyard of the Gentiles,” Leonardo Franchi examines a current Church initiative aimed at encouraging dialogue between Catholics and atheists. Two broad arguments frame Franchi’s inquiry. First, he argues that the concept of the Courtyard and the ways it is implemented in schools are promising illustrations of authentic humanism, a concept “rooted in the notion of the human person as a union of a physical body and an immortal soul” (p. 62). Franchi asserts that authentic humanism provides a strong underpinning for Catholic education. Second, he argues that the concept of the Courtyard offers an opportunity to understand Catholic schools as existing (and shaping) the intersection of religion and culture.

Carrie Fuller and Lauri Johnson’s article, “Tensions between Catholic Identity and Academic Achievement in an Urban Catholic High School,” investigates how administrators, faculty, staff, and students in an urban Catholic high school describe the position of Catholic identity within the contemporary curriculum. The authors distinguish between two categories of Catholic identity, as described by participants: implicit and explicit. Implicit identity encompasses the way relationships are formed and fostered and commitment to the school’s mission and charism. Explicit identity includes the outward signs and symbols of Catholicism, such as masses or the presence of religious men and women on campus. In recent years, a strategic move to privilege reading and math over other subjects has resulted in a de-emphasis on religious instruction. While many community members agreed that religion should be brought back to the forefront of instruction, they disagreed on which aspects of Catholic identity—explicit or implicit—should be privileged. The authors unpack this tension, coming to the recommendation that “a school’s Catholic identity might be better understood as a process of dialogue and reflection rather than something a school does or does not possess” (p. 119).

In addition to the main articles in this issue, we are pleased to share a Focus Section highlighting the work of the Catholic Education Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

In his introduction to the section, Shane Martin, past SIG Chair, provides a brief history of the SIG and outlines the priorities of the group in the coming years. Following this framing piece are two articles written SIG dissertation award winners.

In the first article, Christian Dallavis examines the practice of culturally responsive caring in one urban Catholic school, drawing links between this practice and expectations for academic achievement. His findings illustrate the ways in which supporting academic achievement became a part of a holistic approach to supporting students' well-being in the school under study. Next, Ursula Aldana's article examines two urban Catholic high schools in order to identify the mechanisms used to provide a college-going culture for low income African American and Latino male students. These mechanisms are evident in the schools' missions and coursework, as well as in specific services and supports available to students. Through the exploration of the two schools, Aldana makes recommendations for other Catholic high schools seeking to build a college-going culture that benefits traditionally underserved students.

Following the Focus Section is a collection of five reviews of recently-released books related to Catholic education. We wish to recognize our book reviewers, Jill Bickett, Kurt Nelson, Kristopher Knowles, Fernando Estrada, and Stephen Hess, S. J., for their contributions.

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, Editorial Board member Karie Huchting, was installed as the new SIG Chair. Under Dr. Huchting's leadership, we look forward to building connections between the work of the SIG and the work of the Journal in order to serve the Catholic Education research community. Be sure to follow the Journal Twitter (@CatholicEdJrnl) for announcements related to special issues and other collaborative projects between the Journal and the SIG.

As we close out Volume 17, we wish to thank all of you—our readers, authors, peer reviewers, and other members of our community—for your ongoing support of the Journal and its work in Catholic education. We look forward to continuing collaborations and new projects in the coming years.

*Mary K. McCullough, Martin Scanlan, and Karie Huchting*