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Editors' Comments

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EDITORS' COMMENTS

The focus section of Volume 11, Number 4, was put together by Brother Raymond J. Vercruyse, C.F.C., the Director of the Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership (ICEL) at The University of San Francisco, and a member of this journal's governing board. We are indebted to Brother Ray for his leadership. The focus section's topic, Spirituality and Catholic Schools, is an ever-emerging one in recent times. The term "spirit" has been derived from a vital principle that gives life; spirituality may be viewed as the breath of God within each of us. Spirituality in teaching certainly has been featured in the works of the well-known, and deservedly so, Parker Palmer.

Brother Ray has arranged for three articles on the topic. The first, by the stalwart of Catholic education, Gini Shimabukuro of ICEL, offers practical insights into developing a spirituality for teaching. Shimabukuro's writing relies on aligning Church documents, theology, leadership theory, and sociology in proffering her insights.

Departing from the traditional mind-body Cartesian dualism, Judy Goodell and David Robinson, S.J., call attention to the need for counselors to include development of the soul in their holistic work with students. Their essay is followed by Deborah Bloch's treatise on the role of complexity theory in assisting counselors and educators to help students make sense of their own lives by embracing the unity and diversity of their life's experience.

There are four general articles that follow the focus section. The first, with James Frabutt of the Institute for Educational Initiatives at the University of Notre Dame as its lead author, presents a retrospective review of the research presented in this journal for the past 10 years. Frabutt makes some thoughtful, constructive criticisms of that record and offers some insightful suggestions for the future.

An interesting essay by Joyce Long and Raéal Moore follows and deals with the impact of teachers' motivational levels on students in alternative teacher education programs, such as the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) at Notre Dame. They call for the integration of motivational assessments into teacher education programs that will benefit both in-program teachers and their students. The third article hails from St. Louis, written by John James of Saint Louis University and three of his colleagues from the educational leadership of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. A practical article, the St. Louisians present a model for determining the viability of financially endangered schools. The model they employ identifies "tipping points" that lead to the recognition of schools headed for closure as well as distinguishing them from those schools that will survive and remain open.

Finally, Dan Guernsey and James Barott report on a recent development, the founding of independent Catholic schools, and some of the conflicts involved, as they ask: “independent of what?” Their article deals with only four schools, two that split from their dioceses and then two that ruptured from the original two. There are, however, approximately 170 such schools according to the National Association of Private Independent Catholic Schools (NAPCIS) in the nation, most of which are small, and are governed by lay boards, all of which operate at the “fringes of the traditional Catholic educational establishment.” NAPCIS reports that of the 60 that are its members, many have undergone some kind of internal dispute over governance. This is a recent phenomenon that will undoubtedly receive more scrutiny in the near future.

Three book reviews conclude this issue. Your editors are pleased to bring it, their final issue, to the readership.

Thomas C. Hunt, Ronald J. Nuzzi, Editors