

## Editors' Note

### **It takes a professional community to educate an English language learner**

The first decade of the twenty-first century brought substantial changes to the education of English language learners (ELLs). Notwithstanding the harmful effects of the accountability movement and other national education initiatives aimed at ELLs in the United States, these policies highlighted the responsibility of every educator and support person for ELLs' success in school. While English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) specialists remain central in promoting students' English language development and academic achievement, increasingly math teachers, social studies teachers, and other school personnel and service providers are striving to contribute to these two foundational goals. If it takes a village to raise a child, it indeed takes a professional community to educate an English language learner.

In the spirit of these interdisciplinary efforts to facilitate ELLs' English language development and academic achievement, *The Tapestry Journal* was born. Its inception was formed by interactions among educators and support personnel from a variety of subject areas and backgrounds and supported by a grant from the Office of English Language Acquisition. The journal's intention is to offer a "big tent" where professionals from all areas can access cutting-edge research, theory, and practice in promoting language development and academic achievement of English language learners. The issues that the journal's articles address may be direct to these goals, such as comparative studies of instructional interventions, or may be ancillary and facilitative, such as ethnographic descriptions of immigrant families' attitudes toward counseling services.

Inclusivity of disciplines offers multiple perspectives on the singular topic of educating ELLs. As with any interdisciplinary effort, the exclusive language of each discipline must be unpacked and assumptions about the reader's background knowledge of the subject must be adjusted. Accordingly, *The Tapestry Journal* attempts to use clear, straightforward language that is accessible to both educators and education-related professionals. When discipline-specific background knowledge is necessary for comprehension, the electronic format of the journal enables hyperlinks to detailed information for those needing it. As such, the journal helps educators expand their awareness of issues and concepts in other disciplines that pertain to educating ELLs.

Our first issue of the journal includes four articles, two of which report findings of new research, and two describe successful practices from the field. In the lead article, **Kathleen Mohr, Ron Wilhelm, and Patsy Robles-Goodwin** explore the complex roles that optimism and self-concept play in the academic achievement of urban middle grade Latino/a students. They note that even in successful schools, academically at-risk students exhibit complex patterns of behavior and achievement. They recommend that to help ensure success, schools attend to students' academic, social, and emotional growth.

In the second article, **Susan O'Hara** and **Robert Pritchard** report the results of a study in which they used hypermedia authoring to support English language Learners' vocabulary development in a science classroom. Their findings indicate that engaging students in hypermedia authoring projects enhances their understanding of science concepts and promotes greater willingness to engage in vocabulary development activities. The authors share instructional procedures that teachers may want to use when supporting their English language learners' vocabulary development.

In the first article written from a practices-oriented perspective **Karen Vocke** and **Amanda Stearns-Pfeiffer** offer a vision for creating a multi-purpose resource center that serves the cultural, linguistic, and literacy needs of migrant families with the goal of enhancing the education of migrant workers in our schools and communities.

Drawing on sociocultural theory, **Lisa Crayton** then paints the portrait of the home literacy environment of a low-income Guatemalan family of five in South Florida in an effort to assist mainstream classroom teachers and administrators gain insights into home reading and writing experiences of non-mainstream children.

As editors, we invite you to enjoy reading the articles featured in this inaugural issue of *The Tapestry Journal*. To facilitate offline reading and distribution to students and colleagues, each article can be downloaded as a PDF.

We envision a holistic education of ELLs in which researchers, school-based personnel, social services personnel, and community initiatives learn from each other and collaborate to ensure the academic and personal achievement of every English language learner in our schools and communities. Thus, we request your assistance in helping us grow *The Tapestry Journal* into a valuable resource for researchers, teachers, and service providers alike in three ways: 1) Submit manuscripts that address issues or questions related to the education of English language learners; 2) share *The Tapestry Journal* with your colleagues from various fields such as literacy, second language acquisition, educational leadership, counseling, social work, speech pathology, or professional development, and encourage them to submit articles or commentaries; and 3) share your thoughts and suggestions for themed issues and reviewers with us.