Guest Editors'
Introduction

Debra DeCastro Ambrosetti
& Victoria Brookhart Costa
California State University, Fullerton
& Caryl Hodges
University of San Francisco

This special issue of *Issues in Teacher Education* presents research and diverse perspectives on the use of teaching performance assessment in teacher credentialing programs. In response to concerns about traditional measures of teachers' competency for licensing decisions, many states have implemented teaching performance assessments as a requirement for licensure. These assessments typically include a series of tasks in which teacher candidates are asked to document their teaching effectiveness by demonstrating that they are able to do the following: address the needs of all students, including English learners and students with special needs; plan for instruction and assessment; analyze the impact of instruction on student learning; and reflect upon the success of an instructional unit.

As California teacher educators, we three guest editors have had significant responsibility for the design and implementation of teaching performance assessment and its ramifications at our own universities. As a result, we were quite invested in the selection of a range of articles

Debra DeCastro-Ambrosetti is an associate professor and vice chair in the Department of Secondary Education and Victoria Brookhart Costa is a professor and director of science education, both in the College of Education at California State University, Fullerton, Fullerton, California; Caryl Hodges is associate dean of the School of Education at the University of San Francisco, San Francisco, California. They served as co-guest-editors of this issue of Issues in Teacher Education.

that would represent multiple views of the strengths, drawbacks, opportunities, and consequences associated with large-scale assessment of teacher candidates. We wanted articles that examined multiple performance assessments; explored both large-scale issues as well as individual voices of candidates, teacher educators, and assessors; and considered special interest groups, including specific content areas and populations of students. We feel that the following seven articles demonstrate this complexity.

Performance assessments are intended to provide more direct evaluation of teaching ability and offer powerful professional learning experiences. In addition, systematic analysis of assessment scores may identify areas of strength and needed improvements in the preparation of teacher candidates. These results have the potential to contribute to improved teacher quality. As a result, teaching performance assessments have emerged not only as useful measures of teacher performance but also as a way to evaluate the quality of credential programs for program improvement, federal accountability, and state and national accreditation requirements. The articles included in this special issue include those from both researchers and practitioners and report results of research and/or provide theoretical and policy perspectives.

The first three articles present studies of each of the three teaching performance assessments approved for use by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. In their article, "A Local Evaluation of the Reliability, Validity, and Procedural Adequacy of the Teacher Performance Assessment Exam for Teaching Credential Candidates," Matthew Riggs, Michael Verdi, and Pat Arlin examine the performance of students and evaluators in the Multiple Subjects and Single Subjects Teacher Credential Programs. Utilizing qualitative and quantitative data from the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, they evaluated the California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA) in terms of reliability, validity, and the potential of scores to serve the purpose of program outcomes assessment. Recommendations include those pertinent to reducing the amount of time and effort related to the task evaluations and improving availability of sufficiently trained assessors.

Insight into pre-service teachers' perspectives on the ways in which the process of completing the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) affected them on various levels was the focus of research by Irina Okhremtchouk, Sumer Seiki, Betsy Gilliland, Comfort Ateh, Matt Wallace, and Anna Kato for their article, "Voices of Pre-service Teachers: Perspectives on the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT)." Using two open-ended questions with seven sub-questions, pre-service teachers were asked to comment on the effects of

PACT and the support they received. They noted that the overall effects of PACT on student teaching and instructional practice were beneficial across Single Subject and Multiple Subject groups. However, the Multiple Subjects and the Single Subject groups encountered different difficulties in their experiences with PACT.

Developed by California State University, Fresno faculty and based on ten years of effort on teacher work samples through The Renaissance Group partnership, the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers (FAST) is the only independently-developed, state-approved system of teacher performance assessment in California. In "Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers: A Teacher Performance Assessment that Informs Practice," Colleen Torgerson, Susan Macy, Paul Beare, and David Tanner clarify the FAST model for the reader and elucidate how it is embedded in coursework, allows for remediation, and was designed to improve both the performance of candidates as well as the preparation program that approves teacher candidates for initial credentialing.

Our second set of articles considers how performance assessment shapes and is shaped by consideration of subject matter areas and special populations. Elizabeth van Es and Judi Conroy, in their article, "Using the Performance Assessment of California Teachers to Examine Pre-Service Teachers' Conceptions of Teaching Mathematics for Understanding," explore how pre-service teachers defined the paradigm of engaging students in learning mathematics and what evidence they considered as verification of this practice in teaching. The four cases that were analyzed concentrated on distinctions and similarities in how candidates conceptualized this aspect of effective mathematics instruction, which constituted a framework for pre-service teachers' grasp of mathematical engagement. Moreover, the authors identified three differences in relation to the use of mathematical tools, the roles of teachers and students in the learning environment, and strategies for analyzing and reflecting on teaching and learning. Also identified were areas of similarity which included the language teacher candidates employed to discuss mathematics instruction and learning, and the methods candidates considered as valid means to engage students in mathematical discourse and reasoning.

In their article, "Beyond the Scores: What High Stakes Teacher Performance Assessment Can Tell Teacher Educators About Preparing Teachers to Work with English Learners," George Bunch, Julia Aguirre, and Kip Téllez examine teacher candidates' responses on the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) which revealed that they envisioned a variety of challenges and used a variety of instructional supports to meet the needs of English Learners. Teacher candidates

described the importance of using multiple representations to model mathematical problems to maximize the lesson's accessibility to English language learners. They also discuss the importance of modeling and promoting the use of mathematical language in the classroom and describe strategies that utilized the students' native language and community knowledge as assets rather than impediments for mathematics learning. Additionally, teacher candidates exhibited a multifaceted understanding of academic language as discourse rather than simply as academic vocabulary. The PACT responses revealed how teacher candidates understand the broader nature of the language and discourse demands intrinsic in mathematics instruction, as well as the embedded opportunities for language development.

The final articles consider large-scale implementation issues as well as how to maximize benefits of teaching performance assessment. Increasing discussions held across California State University campuses, which include procedures, policies, and templates related to the teaching performance assessment as a means to communicate best practices, resolve common problems, and most importantly develop a plan in order to secure funding that is both "sufficient and sustainable" over time, are at the crux of "Teaching Performance Assessment: A Comparative Study of Implementation and Impact Amongst California State University Campuses," in which Curtis Guaglianone, Maggie Payne, Gary Kinsey, and Robin Chiero discuss issues related to sharing training responsibilities and cultivating a collective group of assessors. And finally, Maggie Payne and Mimi Miller present "A Collaborative Approach to Assessment in a Teacher Education Program: The Assessment and Improvement Management System (AIMS)" which serves the dual purpose of assessing candidates' development and provides evaluation of candidate data and program resources and operations for the purpose of program improvement. These two articles emphasize the multiple purposes served by candidate assessment and evaluation.

Before you jump in, however, we have a special treat! Jon Snyder, dean of Graduate School of Education at Bank Street College, frames these articles in his comments in "Taking Stock of Performance Assessments of Teaching." His consideration of human "wiggles" reminds us of the danger of trying to serve multiple functions with a single approach.

Finally, Suzanne SooHoo, the Book Review Editor for *Issues in Teacher Education*, has worked diligently to select books for review that appear to be of high interest for our readership, and to select reviewers who reflect a range of experiences and perspectives. We hope you will find the book review section both interesting and relevant.