

## Editors' Introduction

Educational policy and practice are premised on good intentions. Policies and standards are subsumed with language about addressing gaps and providing more equitable opportunities for all students to succeed and prepare for the future. Yet, in practice, they repeatedly fail to bring us closer to equity. The articles in this collection provide various perspectives on the possibilities and shortcomings of policies, standards, and practices, nuancing moments in the ongoing conversation about educational equity. The authors question who is served by various policies, standards, and practices. They also question if the policies and standards serve in the ways purportedly intended, and probe the objectives of those implementing them or taking advantage of the opportunities that they present. The authors ask: Who do our policies, standards, and practices serve, and in which ways? What are their unintended consequences, and who do they leave behind? How do they promote equity, and in what ways do they limit equity?

Each author takes on these questions by addressing educational equity in nontraditional contexts and employing a range of theoretical and methodological approaches. One author analyzes the motives of undergraduate students who apply for Teach For America, and ultimately complicates a simplistic teaching altruism with the desire for *ed cred*—a combination of credibility, convenience, and a credential. The second piece presents a qualitative study in which the author examines the intentions of a California community college transfer policy and how these are misaligned with the lived experiences and desires of students at one community college, drawing the policy's efficacy into question. Finally, the third piece explores how a set of library standards that are intended to support students' literacy skills might actually serve to constrain definitions of what counts as literacy in schools. Across the pieces in this issue, the authors complicate our understanding of how intentions can lead the endless search for educational equity astray when their rhetoric, theory of change, and implementation are not first deeply interrogated, or put into conversation with the lived experiences of students across the K–12 and higher education continuum.

In the first article, "Legitimizing the Dilettante: Teach For America and the Allure of Ed Cred," Davis Clement examines the beliefs and motivations of applicants to Teach For America (TFA), an alternative teacher certification program that places corps members in high-poverty schools for 2 years of service. TFA enjoys widespread support from policymakers, philanthropists, and education reformers who view the program as an ideal means to rapidly expand the number of teachers in schools that are difficult to staff. However, Clement's study complicates popular understandings of TFA, revealing that TFA applicants are often drawn to the program not by the desire to pursue a teaching career, but by TFA's promise of *ed cred*: credibility, convenience, and a credential. Drawing from interviews with TFA applicants, Clement argues that *ed cred* is a powerful motivator for those who ultimately accepted their TFA offers. Clement's findings suggest that the growth and popularity of TFA comes at the expense of developing a highly skilled and professionalized teacher workforce. Moreover, his findings suggest that TFA, although purportedly oriented towards serving high-poverty K–12 students, may be equally or more focused on *ed cred* as a teacher recruitment strategy.

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In the second article, "Using Ethnography to Understand How Policy Reform Influences the Transfer Process at One Community College," Eric Felix critically examines the transfer function of the California Community College system and questions whether a state-mandated reform is serving its intended purpose for the thousands of first-generation, low-income, and racially-minoritized students who hope the California Community College will be the first step in achieving a bachelor's degree. Using an ethnographic approach, Felix highlights the interaction between the existing context and policy mandates that reshape campus transfer culture and finds that, despite intentions to improve transfer pathways, there is a fundamental disconnect between students' aspirations and the state higher education institutions made available through the new policy. These findings suggest the need for transformative higher education policy, built upon new concepts of transfer infrastructure, to improve college opportunities and outcomes for students across the state.

In the final article, "Constructing the Literate Child in the Library: An Analysis of School Library Standards," Alyson Rumberger draws on the example of New York City's elementary school library standards to illustrate how standards may constrain understandings of literacy. Rumberger argues that libraries are important spaces for student learning, but that the standards may undermine the goal of increasing student literacy through their prescribed notions of inquiry processes. She uses critical discourse analysis to examine the language of the *Empire State Information Fluency Continuum* and point out the ways in which linear approaches to inquiry are privileged and narrow conceptions of knowledge construction are perpetuated. In order to avoid excluding "students whose literacies have historically been marginalized" (p. 108), Rumberger argues that standards should be critically examined for hidden values and ideologies to ensure future iterations allow for more student agency and flexibility as to what "counts" as literacy.

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The *Berkeley Review of Education* invites pieces that continue and extend the conversations started by the authors in this issue as well as work that starts new conversations on issues related to equity and diversity. We encourage senior and emerging scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to submit articles that address issues of educational diversity and equity from various intra/interdisciplinary perspectives. The editorial board especially welcomes submissions that provide new and diverse perspectives on pressing issues impacting schools, educational systems, and other learning environments. We also welcome a broad range of "critical" scholarship. We define critical work as that which aims to analyze, evaluate, and examine power and dominant structures while helping us to imagine something new.

We thank the many people who have assisted in getting this issue to press: the authors, current and former board members, volunteers, reviewers, advisers, and the students and faculty members at the Graduate School of Education who have helped us in many other ways. We especially thank Dean Prudence Carter, Assistant Dean Alejandro

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*The Editors*