In the academic year 2008/2009, the School of Education at Boston University rededicated itself to scholarship that advances knowledge and practice. A central factor in this effort is the Journal of Education. Founded in 1873, the Journal is the oldest publication of its type in the United States. As the Journal moves forward, the focus will be on how scholarship illuminates practice, and how practice provides direction to scholarship and to the education of professionals.

We are pleased to introduce Numbers 1/2 of Volume 189, a double issue on the theme “Theory, Research, Reflection on Teaching and Learning.” The theme of Number 3 will be “Reflection and Renewal.” Seminal articles published in the Journal during the last half-century will be reprinted, each accompanied by a reflection written by a contemporary scholar in the same field of study. The goals of Volume 189 are to capture the manner in which the relationship between scholarship and practice has been addressed historically, and to prepare the foundation for future volumes that will address this relationship in the current context.

The articles and chapters in Numbers 1/2 have been reprinted from high impact journals, handbooks of research, and collections published by an academic/professional association or academic press. Every text was written by one or more distinguished scholars and reviewed by a group of faculty members that included a specialist in each of the fields that are the foci of the articles, and three doctoral students who served as the initial Editorial Review Board. With a primary emphasis on high quality teaching and learning, the themes of the texts are consistent with the work of the School of Education. Each focuses on practice that is informed by research and theory in four curriculum areas including literacy, mathematics, science, and social science; insights into approaches that increase opportunities for students at risk; the teacher as learner; and the principal as instructional leader. Space constrains the full representation of all the programs in the School of Education; some have been featured in previous issues, and others will be included in the future.

This issue begins with an article on teachers as learners, written by Lee S. Shulman and Judith H. Shulman (2004), who present a theoretical model designed for the purpose of “Fostering a Community of Learners” (p. 1). The explication of the model and the guidelines for implementing the central ideas has the power to inform both the pre-service and in-service education of teachers. Linda Darling-Hammond (2006) reminds the reader of the central purpose of public education in the United States as conceived by Thomas Jefferson, to arm “people with an intelligence capable of free and independent thought” (p. 9). Her article is an explication of the ways teachers and teacher educators can honor the “right to learn” (p. 9) that is guaranteed by the fundamental “freedom to learn” (p. 9).

The classic article in which Keith Stanovich introduced the frequently cited concept, the “Matthew Effects,” was published in 1986. Although this early research was designed to explain individual differences in the acquisition of literacy, the enduring lesson of the Gospel of St. Matthew, “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer,” as applied to language and concept development, has informed teaching and learning in many disciplines and across the lifespan.

María S. Carlo and her colleagues (2004) address the language and literacy development of English-language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms and describe a plan for research-based instruction that led to success for both monolingual and bilingual learners at the critical fifth-grade level. In addition to elementary classroom teachers, this work informs those who are responsible for teaching monolingual and bilingual students effective ways to learn from academic texts.

The success of cognitive strategy instruction in recent decades offers an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of teaching the fundamental learning processes: reading, writing, mathematics, and language. Michael Pressley and Karen R. Harris’s (2006) chapter is a compendium of basic research on knowledge, memory, metacognition, and information processing; and includes a specific description of the ways this research informs practice at the elementary and secondary levels of education.

Central to effective instruction is informed assessment of student learning. In her article, Lorrie A. Shepard (2000) describes “the kind of assessment that can be used as part of instruction to support and enhance learning” (p. 95). She presents historical and conceptual frameworks and discusses the ways assessment practices can be made more effective. Although the article is addressed to “educational researchers who participate in one way or another, in teacher education” (p. 95), the insights presented here will also guide practitioners who wish to use dynamic assessment to gain greater understanding of their students’ learning strengths and needs.

Nell Duke and P. David Pearson (2002) provide an overview of the significant classroom-based research on effective curriculum, instruction, and assessment of reading comprehension along with specific exemplars of the research in practice. The authors conclude with a checklist for “assessing the comprehension environment and instruction” (p. 119) that can be used by content teachers and principals as well.
A study conducted with a low-income population in middle grades is reported by Kazemi and Stipek (2001) who describe classroom practices that create “high press for conceptual thinking” (p. 123) and conclude that the interactions that produce this outcome are characterized by four sociomathematical norms. These norms provide insights into processes that may be effective in teaching other disciplines, as well.

In their article on knowledge integration and the impact of instructional time in computer-enhanced science instruction, Douglas Clark and Marcia C. Linn (2003) describe the critical variables of content depth and time allocation in their case studies of students at the middle school through high school levels. This article is a resource for teachers of other disciplines and for administrators who must consider these two critical factors as they make decisions about curriculum content and school schedules.

Robert B. Bain (2000) describes an ethnographic study of a “cognitive approach to teaching history” (p. 159) that is informed by scholarship in history and experience in teaching history to high school students. The “cognitive apprenticeship” (p. 160), central to this work, offers a guide to teaching students in other disciplines the thought processes that are central to the work of scholars in each field of study.

The texts on the challenges posed to teachers of the academic disciplines are followed by a description of ways to ensure content-area learning by secondary students with learning disabilities written by Donald D. Deshler and his colleagues (2001). To respond to the needs of these learners, three factors that are related to student success are considered: valid interventions, effective service delivery systems, and professional development programs.

The final article, Carolyn J. Richl’s (2000) review of the “normative, empirical, and critical literature on the practice of educational administration” (p. 183), addresses three tasks: “fostering new meanings about diversity, promoting inclusive school cultures and instructional programs, and building relationships between schools and communities” (p. 183). The vision presented in this article is consistent with the major theme of this issue: the implementation of instruction and assessment that is informed by research and theory and designed to increase the opportunity for success for all learners and their teachers.

The issue ends with two reviews written by the doctoral members of the current Editorial Review Board. In the review of academic/professional books, the focus is on three edited volumes on best practices in literacy education. Kevin Koziol reviews a collection on literacy instruction; Jennifer Rabold reviews a volume on adolescent literacy instruction; and Michael Harten reviews a work on writing instruction. The second review is a new addition to the Journal. From this issue forward, there will be a review of books for young readers that have been selected for teachers to use with their students as they implement the practices described in one of the articles. Jennifer Rabold initiates this new feature by reviewing books that promote mathematical thinking as described in the article by Elham Kazemi and Deborah Stipek.

Beginning with Volume 190, the Journal will become a refereed publication. As we look to the future, we hope that the Journal will become a publication to which scholars, policy experts, and practitioners can turn to deepen their understanding of current and historical ideas in the practice of education. To accomplish this goal we seek three types of manuscripts: Reports of research, Explanations of theory, and Reflections. Each article must include implications for practice in educational settings. The Guidelines for Authors are printed inside the back cover, as are the names of the members of the 2009/2010 Editorial Review Board. The Editor and the current members of the Editorial Review Board have invited the Dean of the School of Education at Boston University to edit, on an annual basis, a section of the Journal that includes a case study of educational innovation along with a commentary addressed to scholars and practitioners.

We welcome readers and writers to the Journal of Education as we renew our commitment to the community of scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students of education, and to our shared efforts on behalf of all learners.