

## Building Inclusive Communities through Collaboration and Collective Action

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### Abstract

This editorial introduction highlights the 2025 Region V Training hosted by the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME). The three-day event convened scholars, educators, and advocates from ten states in Region V, fostering a vibrant learning community through virtual, hybrid, and face-to-face engagements. With the theme “Building Inclusive Communities through Collaboration and Collective Action,” the event underscored the power of collective organizing, shared leadership, and justice-centered pedagogy in advancing equity in education. This issue of the *Texas Journal for Multicultural Education* captures the voices, scholarship, and action-based work that emerged from these sessions and keynotes. It affirms the value of regional collaboration in amplifying multicultural education across diverse contexts.

### Key Words

collective action, inclusive communities, multicultural education

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In times marked by rising censorship, political polarization, and deeply entrenched inequities in education, the importance of inclusive, equity-driven communities has never been more urgent. This year’s National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) Region V Symposium brought together educators, scholars, and advocates committed to dismantling injustice and cultivating spaces of belonging, care, and critical consciousness. Over the course of three powerful days—virtual, scholarly, and in-person—we witnessed a deep commitment to collective action and collaboration. Participants engaged

with strategies to strengthen local chapters, refine research agendas, and ground pedagogical practices in multicultural frameworks. This gathering was not only a convening of minds but a celebration of shared values and a reaffirmation of the transformative potential of multicultural education.

Held under the banner “*Building Inclusive Communities through Collaboration and Collective Action*,” the symposium was supported by NAME, Texas NAME, the Holocaust Museum of Houston, and Texas State University. From quick-hitting Speed Learning Sessions to hands-on

interactive workshops, keynote reflections, and roundtable dialogues, each session provided opportunities for rich engagement, reflection, and learning. The breadth of topics, the diversity of presenters, and the powerful testimonies shared reinforced the central idea that real change happens when communities come together across geography, identity, and expertise.

### **In this Issue**

The articles in this issue offers a unique lens on how educators and leaders can advance multicultural education in today's complex landscape. From conceptual explorations of professional organizations as sites of solidarity, to the creative integration of translanguage in theatre education, to studies on special education teacher retention in urban schools, and finally to leadership strategies for sustaining the success of students of color, these articles collectively illuminate how collaboration and collective action are indispensable for building inclusive communities. Each author challenges us to consider how we, as educators, scholars, and advocates, can work together to transform schools and society.

### **Symposium Proceedings**

In "The Role and Reach of Professional Organizations in Building Communities for Multicultural Education," Diana Wandix-White offers a conceptual literature review that underscores the critical role professional organizations play in advancing multicultural education. By drawing on scholarly discourse and organizational practices, the author situates multicultural pedagogy as both a transformative framework and a practical tool for building inclusive and equitable learning environments. The review identifies persistent barriers to implementation—ranging from institutional resistance to lack of teacher preparation—and emphasizes the necessity of sustained engagement in order to dismantle these obstacles. In doing so, the article echoes Banks' (2004) assertion that multicultural education must be

understood as both an idea and a reform movement aimed at restructuring schools so that all students experience educational equality.

In "Translanguaging in a Theatre Classroom: The Family Theatre History Project," Sunny Stubbs foregrounds the potential of translanguaging pedagogy in theatre education, illustrating how the arts can serve as a powerful tool for honoring the whole child and affirming bilingual students' identities. By framing translanguaging as a natural communicative process, the author highlights its potential to nurture both creative expression and biliteracy development. The paper introduces the concept and history of translanguaging, shares instructional strategies for implementation, and presents the Family Theatre History Project as a model for integrating family and community knowledge into classroom learning. In doing so, the article demonstrates how culturally sustaining practices can transform the arts into spaces where students' full humanity is recognized and celebrated.

In "Sustaining Excellence: Retaining Special Education Teachers through Culturally Responsive Collaboration," DaJuana Chaney and Lynette O'Neal explore the critical issue of special education teacher retention in multicultural and urban schools, situating its analysis within Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Drawing on survey data from 72 educators—most with direct SPED experience—the study highlights both intrinsic motivators (such as passion for teaching and a strong sense of purpose) and external supports (including collegial collaboration and organizational culture) as central to teacher persistence. The findings emphasize that while intrinsic factors provide the foundation for longevity, they must be bolstered by culturally responsive school environments and structures of collaboration. By centering retention within multicultural contexts, the study advances the conversation on how equity, inclusivity, and organizational support intersect to shape teachers' professional lives.

## Webinar Series

In addition to a biannual TXNAME conference and NAME Region V Symposium, TXNAME offers members an ongoing webinar series featuring multicultural education practitioners and stakeholders. These sessions leave attendees with practical strategies, lessons from the field, and a shared sense of purpose. In “Culturally Responsive Leadership: Building Pipelines of Success for Underrepresented Students at Underserved Schools,” Lawrence Scott develops concepts from his recent webinar presentation.

Scott’s article examines the structural, cultural, and pedagogical interventions school leaders can employ to promote sustained academic success for students of color in high-need schools. Through a critical review of the literature combined with reflections from leadership practice in both K-12 and higher education, the author outlines best practices that include student mentorship, culturally relevant and sustaining curriculum, and the recruitment and retention of culturally responsive teachers. In addition, the article highlights systemic strategies such as equity audits and restorative disciplinary practices as transformative tools for disrupting inequities and building authentic educational pipelines. By weaving together theory and practice, the piece underscores the central role of leadership in fostering environments where students of color can thrive.

## Conclusion

Taken together, these four articles highlight the urgency of sustaining multicultural education as both an intellectual movement and a lived practice that requires systemic change. They affirm Banks’ (2004) framing of multicultural education as more than classroom reform—it is a broader project of educational restructuring rooted in equity. Whether through translanguaging strategies that honor students’ linguistic repertoires, collaborative networks that sustain educators, or leadership practices that

challenge inequities, the contributors echo Gay’s (2018) insistence that culturally responsive pedagogy is essential for affirming identity and fostering belonging. In doing so, they also align with Nieto’s (2017) emphasis on the centrality of language and culture to student success, and Sleeter’s (2018) call for collaboration and dialog as necessary tools for transformative change.

The shared message across these articles is clear: the challenges we face in advancing multicultural education cannot be addressed in isolation. Professional organizations, creative pedagogies, supportive school cultures, and bold leadership practices all thrive when rooted in collective engagement. As readers, we are invited not only to absorb these insights, but to act on them by strengthening networks of solidarity, amplifying student and community voices, and committing to practices that dismantle inequities. The work of building inclusive communities is ongoing, and as these authors remind us, it is through collaboration and collective action that we sustain hope and create the conditions for lasting transformation.

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