

EDITOR'S COMMENTS ON SPECIAL GUEST EDITED ISSUE

This issue is special in a number of ways. First, it is the first issue in the 2010 volume (Volume 8) of the *Journal of Research in Character Education*. Hence it represents the beginning of the JRCE's eighth year. Second, it is our second "themed" or guest-edited issue in a row. This is something we have wanted to do for years. Despite "flirting" with various proposals for such issues, these are the two that have delivered and we are deeply appreciative of the guest editors who do much of the heavy lifting in bringing a set of papers to the journal for review. Volume 7, Number 2 was a themed issue guest edited by Tamara Haegerich on the Social and Character Development research program. It was an excellent collection of papers on one of the most rigorous scientific studies of character education to date, and the JRCE is privileged to publish it. Third, this is a highly international collection of studies. It includes authors and data sets from four countries.

Fourth, the current issue is not merely another excellent set of empirical papers concerning an exemplary character education program, namely EQUIP, but it also personally meaningful to me in many ways. Most notably, John Gibbs, one of the primary creators of EQUIP, was my first research collaborator in the mid-1970s when I was a postdoctoral fellow with Larry Kohlberg at the Harvard

Graduate School of Education and I was still doing my master's thesis at Wayne State University. We continued this collaboration through my dissertation, my postdoctoral work at Harvard, and beyond when we both got our first tenure-track positions. John remains one of the brightest, hardest-working, and creative scholars in our field. So it has special meaning to me to be able to host an issue presenting the fruits of his scholarly labor. Daan Brugman, the lead guest editor on this volume, is another long-standing colleague of mine and when he proposed this volume, I jumped at the opportunity.

In part, my reaction was because of EQUIP. Since John and his colleagues first began the EQUIP program, I have been a big fan. It began in juvenile corrections (see Devlin & Gibbs' article, this volume) as a way to "equip" antisocial youth with the psychological competencies they were lacking; for example, empathy and moral reasoning. Then it began to be applied in other venues, most notably middle schools (see Ann-Marie DiBiase's article, this volume). The melding of constructivist psychology and education and positive peer culture created a theory-driven, empirically-supported, and cross-theoretical model that was both scientific and practical. The articles in this special issue bear powerful witness to these characteristics and to the value of the EQUIP model.