

## Critique

Theresa McCormick argues that equity and excellence in education should not be accepted as being on opposite ends of a continuum, but rather should be viewed as two related components of education. The twin concepts of equity and excellence are compatible and must be identified as important goals of education. Educators at all instructional levels in all subject disciplines need to include a study of and value these educational and social concepts. These concepts can be taught to young people as “fairness” and “goodness.” More mature students can examine the concepts from the perspective of several academic disciplines.

The article could be examined as three shorter writings incorporated into a longer article which concludes with overall recommendations for teacher educators. The information presented should be well known to those interested in gender and minority issues; however, McCormick attempts to link gender and minority issues and asks if the achievement of equity and excellence are hostile or compatible to each other.

McCormick provides background information concerning the educational reform movement of the 1980s. She notes the major reform reports provide strong statements concerning the need to achieve educational excellence, but that these reports fail to recognize the ongoing inequities in education. The reports assume that equity has been achieved due to social and economic reforms of the 1960s and 1970s, and because of these reforms, a lack of excellence exists in our schools. What needs further examination are other variables which extend beyond the school but influence educational achievement for all students.

McCormick blames the Reagan and Bush administrations, Congressional inaction, and judicial decisions for turning back earlier equity victories for women and minorities. She notes the national attitude of retrenchment concerning opportunities for women and minorities is clearly evident in education at all levels but does not offer recommendations for the formulation of social policy which would provide equity for all citizens.

Finally, McCormick addresses equity issues related directly to the educational setting. It is well known that for many reasons male students receive greater individualized attention in the classroom and in time assume leadership positions in education and elsewhere. These inequitable practices hinder the intellectual abilities and leadership skills of female and minority students. What needs to be studied are the efforts to

undo classroom inequities and injustices and the long term results of these efforts.

McCormick concludes by offering nine suggestions for teacher educators to use in designing teacher education programs. For the most part these recommendations are not new but are included in many of the state human relations requirements already in place for teacher certification or are included in program review criteria. What is important to recognize is that teacher education extends across the university and these issues need to be addressed in multiple settings. As a nation we cannot afford to lose the abilities and skills of one half or more of our population. It is estimated that within the next two decades, those who are minorities today will be majorities. At present persons or minority backgrounds already constitute the majority of students in the schools of several states.

Little, if any, research has been conducted to evaluate the impact of these requirements on individuals completing human relations coursework. Intuitive knowledge indicates these efforts seem to be effective; however, there is little data to support this knowledge as to the effectiveness of such programs. The lack of published evaluations research studies offers numerous possibilities for the development of new research models and evaluations instruments.

—Margaret A. Laughlin  
University of Wisconsin  
Green Bay