

When we were asked to guest edit this special theme issue of *The CATESOL Journal* on content-based instruction (CBI), we seized the opportunity to showcase the interesting work in this area taking place around our state at all educational levels—elementary, secondary, postsecondary, and adult. In this journal edition, we seek to raise important issues in CBI, describe current content-based practices, and suggest directions in which this approach might evolve in the future. In designing this edition, we decided to look forward, opting to build on previous work in language and content integration, rather than retell its history. Throughout the issue, however, are references to earlier work in CBI; we invite readers to explore these references to provide context, both national and international, for the work here in California.

We also decided to use this theme issue as an opportunity to cast the net widely and show the relationships between CBI and other approaches which are currently generating interest in California. Accordingly, we asked experts in such areas as cooperative learning, whole language, and the teaching of culture to discuss the relationship between their work and CBI. We also looked to English for specific purposes (ESP), vocational English as a second language (VESL), and sheltered English, where the connections are a bit more obvious, in an attempt to uncover the similarities and delineate the differences among these related endeavors. We believe that this type of bridge building reveals a broadly based foundation for content-based teaching at all levels of instruction and suggests a great variety of approaches to improving instruction for language minority students.

As in the regular editions of *The CATESOL Journal*, there are three sections to this special issue: **Articles**, **CATESOL Exchange**, and **Reviews**. The **Articles** section presents a comprehensive treatment of four key topics in content-based instruction: syllabus design; student needs, interests, and motivation; testing; and literature as content. The **Exchange** section augments the full-length chapters by covering a wide variety of practical issues in CBI and, as mentioned, considers the relationships among related approaches. We designed this section as a true exchange, a dialogue of sorts with the authors who shared their perspectives and experiences across different levels of instruction. The third section, **Reviews**, examines current ESL/EFL textbooks designed for either sheltered content or content-based language instruction at a variety of instructional levels, ranging from the elementary setting to preuniversity and university levels. Some

of these texts are designed for multiskill instruction; others emphasize a single skill such as vocabulary or writing while also suggesting ways in which students can practice other skills.

We think that this issue represents the state of the art in CBI in California. The rich variety of ways in which the principles of CBI are being applied at all educational levels is indeed impressive. We would like to encourage others working in CBI to join the dialogue by sharing their experiences at annual CATESOL conferences, in *CATESOL News*, and in future volumes of *The CATESOL Journal*. For those new to this instructional approach, we hope that this issue will inspire them to try content-based teaching in their classrooms. And finally, while we have designed this special issue with ESL teachers in mind, we hope that readers will share relevant articles with colleagues in the content areas and in the workplace in an attempt to build the bridges which are at the heart of content-based teaching.

Marguerite Ann Snow and Donna M. Brinton
Guest Editors