

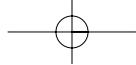
# Foreword

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Patricia Ruggiano Schmidt and Wen Ma are to be congratulated for writing what will become a classic and invaluable classroom resource, *50 Literacy Strategies for Culturally Responsive Teaching, K–8*. There is no more compelling rationale for this book than the teacher’s comment quoted by the authors that “I’m an American; I don’t have a culture.” Many teachers are culturally out of contact with themselves and their roots. As I noted in 2000 in the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, teachers are “. . . the individuals of the third-, fourth-, and fifth-generations who are the lost ones whose first cultures like unsettled spirits haunt their angst-filled reveries. They are the shadow diasporas, consensually self-validated as groups, but only vaguely.” How can a teacher address cultural issues and hold the belief that some human beings do not have a culture? It is with great excitement and expectation that I read this book. Schmidt and Ma state that “. . . we were inspired to design a text for elementary and middle education that demonstrates how to develop cultural sensitivity and an appreciation for differences.” They also argue that much of what teachers know about culture and diversity amounts to stereotypes. I noted in 2004 that “The morning newspapers regale us with stories about illegal immigrants, immigrants who are criminals, and immigrants who become outstanding success stories, winning spelling bees or making vast fortunes.” This book will help students and teachers get past the stereotypes. Bravo!

This book is a welcome addition to work in culture and diversity. It presents teaching and learning strategies designed to introduce students to the diversity in their own classroom communities. Strategies are designed for students who are beginners, intermediates, and advanced. The authors brilliantly connect their strategies to other areas of the curriculum.

I believe that what is most outstanding about this book may be an unintended, but significant, outcome. Students will learn about diversity and culture, but the most important outcome, I believe, will be that the teachers themselves will learn about the diversity and cultures in their own classrooms and schools by virtue of using the strategies. I have argued that if students’ cultures are not considered by teachers, the students will fail. The pattern of failure across the United States appears to support this conclusion. This book provides multiple strategies for teaching students about diversity and culture. It is my hope that these strategies will help in some small way to reduce the



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number of students who feel alienated because their cultures are not recognized or are subject to stereotypical perceptions by their classmates and teachers.

Thank you to Schmidt and Ma for this gold mine of strategies. It is needed and overdue.

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