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# Mentor's Introduction

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# ***mentor's introduction***

**VESTA A.H. DANIEL**

The Ohio State University

Wanda Knight has focused her steady gaze on the future. She has gathered her considerable experience as an educator, world citizen and parent and is now involved in the business of constructing or bolstering strategies for meeting the needs of America's diverse student population. All who know her recognize that she is serious about the challenge. Indeed, her research regards the current and future demographic changes in America and responds by investigating approaches to preparing prospective teachers to deliver discipline-based art education to heterogeneous student groups. Specifically, Wanda's questions have focused on:

- \* How and to what extent are visual arts preservice teachers being prepared to work with learners whose backgrounds are different from their own and from others?
- \* How and to what extent are visual arts preservice teachers being prepared to function non-ethnocentrically within pluralistic classrooms and schools?
- \* How and to what extent are visual arts preservice teachers being prepared to provide discipline-based art education instruction about the pluralism of U.S. society?

While conducting her research in higher education classrooms Wanda was also functioning as a student teaching supervisor and guest lecturer. During the course of these interactions Wanda became a highly regarded mentor for many undergraduate art education students. They listened with obvious interest to her scenarios and anecdotes about teaching, her views about the relationship between schools, higher education institutions and communities and her questions to them about their responsibilities as educators. It was as clear to the students as it was to the faculty that Wanda was well informed by her many years of teaching experience and administrative involvement.

Recently, Wanda's reputation for clarity of thought and vision, excellence in the areas of teaching and teacher preparation, organizational skills and devotion to equal access to excellent education won her the position of principal of the first Africentric school in the Columbus Public School System. Gratefully, her sphere of influence will now enlarge to include more direct contact with children, preservice teachers, teachers, parents, community members and administrators. I fully expect Wanda's research results and her positive involvement in education to be significant, impactful and visionary.