



An Educational Vaccine

I, like millions of educators, eagerly await the chance to be vaccinated. We have put ourselves out there, in front of our students, and indirectly, their families and friends. We are essential, dedicated, and tireless, for we believe in education and the value that it holds for the children seated before us, and the future they will eventually shape. Apart from coordinating a secondary program focused on creative productivity, I also teach a few sections of Biology, and viruses and vaccines are the topics of the day. In teaching about the vaccination process and how it effects our body's immune system to recognize new and emerging "threats", produce antibodies against them, and maintain immunity into the future, I could not help but see the connection to the field of education.

Through each lesson we deliver, in every experience or strategy we present, there is a small dose of vaccine, providing immunity against the imminent personal, societal, and global problems our students will eventually face. We introduce them to the skills needed to navigate both their educational careers and future professions. We infuse habits of mind like persistence, compassion, and independent thinking into our curriculum. We have discussions and activities dealing with leadership, communication, research, and presentation. We focus on self-efficacy and motivation, creativity and problem solving. Whatever the means and mixture, a complete package is delivered year after year to them with the hope that when faced with any challenge or obstacle, they carry with them an internal resistance, allowing them to overcome anything. Best of all, there isn't a line and no one has to wait.

Let us look at the contents of this issue. *Jumpstarting Your Students' Self-Advocacy*, by Deb Douglas, reminds us that we are in a position to encourage and support our students, offering insight and the tools needed to promote their personal growth. *Choice Boards as a Curriculum Modification Technique*, by Jessica Stargarter, presents a simple, yet effective way to modify the curriculum. Tracy Cloninger's *Become a Potions Master:*

Lessons Learned from Hogwarts School uses the characters and situations of the Harry Potter series as an example of how to successfully differentiate for our students. *How to Kill a Passion Project*, by Mark Hess, presents a satirical look at passion projects and personalized learning, where choice, creativity, and motivation make all the difference. *Taking the Lead* seems to take a cue from our feature articles, focusing on innovative ways to encourage student choice, foster relationships, and increase self-advocacy. A new column, *Social and Emotional Learning*, centers on social and emotional development during these challenging and uncertain times and *Special Populations* recommends strategies for educators seeking to support racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistically different populations during the current climate. *iMathination* takes a deeper dive into promoting and supporting students' mathematically creative writing, and *Socially Scientific* highlights a few instructional tools and tips garnered from virtual instruction. *Buried Under Books* shares a book about 50 award winning children's book authors, and how to utilize it in the classroom. Exposing K-12 students to a sustained financial literacy program is the topic presented in *Digital Ecosystem*.

There are strategies and solutions out there to deliver. If we are to prepare our high-ability students for the future they will live, thrive, and succeed in, we need to inject every ounce of educational intervention we have at our disposal. Each year, providing a continuum of services booster until at last they finally reach a state of immunity to the recognized adversity and obstacles they will face in finding success in solving our society's problems. Our world is depending on them.

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