



Into the Unknown

I write this editorial in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, knowing full well that by the time you explore this issue, things may have started to get back to some sense of normalcy. Like all of you, I have not entered my school or interacted with my students face to face in twelve weeks. There have been no high fives or in-person hellos and conversations. My curricular materials sit on a shelf in my office. Lab materials collect dust in closets. There will be no exams, no final presentations, no graduations. Twenty plus years of teaching experience altered overnight. The shift from daily classroom instruction to a complete on-line environment, while working as best as can be, has proved to be challenging. The vibrant nature and excitement that comes from the atmosphere of a classroom environment is absent, replaced by tiny heads on a screen, static audio, misspellings in a chat feature, and endless submissions and comments through an online portal. Social and emotional health too, is waning. Our daily concerns and worries have been compounded as we think about the students we counsel and help each and every day. We have had to quickly figure out new ways to effectively deliver, track, and assess student work, all while maintaining the important relationships that exist between the teacher and the student. Sure, I have been interacting with my students, but I have to be honest, it is not the same.

Yet, we press on, because we have to! It is in our nature to teach and inspire as many of our students as possible, always working to increase their overall knowledge, sharpen their skills, and hone in on their passions and interests. We can still offer innovative resources, visual media to watch and learn from, and interactive websites and virtual tours to experience. We will get through this. They will get through this.

Let us take a look at the contents of the issue, for they present some important and relevant considerations for us to keep in mind as we get ready to begin the school year.

In *Preparing and Affirming Gifted Black Males for Transition from High School to College*, Marques Dexter and Tarek

Grantham discuss the crucial issue of supporting Black males as they head off to higher education. Carla Brigandi stresses the need for creativity training and presents examples and ideas for success in *Creativity Cultivated*. Manashri Bhor, who was accepted for publication during his sophomore year of high school, provides a view of the four important skills he refined and utilized during the research process in *Advanced Research Projects and their Benefits to Gifted Secondary Students*. *Curriculum Café* considers the many relationships that have been tested during this time of distance learning, focusing on curricular approaches intended to boost social and emotional development. *Taking the Creative Leap* makes the case that in order for students to thrive in this new digital reality, educators must embrace and utilize the resources available to them. *Special Populations* offers four narratives from educators of color who comment on how to improve equity in gifted and education programs. *Unwrapping the Gifted* highlights the issue of sensitivity and suggests that simple strategies may make all the difference in managing this characteristic. *The Digital Ecosystem* describes three areas of online teaching that can help you become a more effective and reflective online teacher. *iMathination* continues a three-part series addressing mathematical discourse and *Taking the Lead* encourages us all to embrace the recent educational shift as a time to reflect and redefine what we do.

Any journey into the unknown carries with it exhaustion, apprehension, challenge, and frustration. It may also bring new experience, knowledge, and understanding. We are explorers, venturing out into new territory, and I'm confident that we will make it. We have to.

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