



# Giving Up Control

It's not easy for anyone to give up control, let alone those in the educational field. After all, these are our classrooms, our lessons, our curriculum. We make the tests and quizzes, assign the homework and long term projects, and make the rules. We write the directions and the rubrics. As seasoned educators, we know what works and what hasn't, know who listens and who doesn't, and recognize who needs help and who has exceeded expectations. It is our ship after all, and on this high educational sea, we are at the helm, we are the captains, we are in control. At least for a bit.

Over the years I've come to understand that sometimes maintaining control is actually better than being *in control*. In order to grow as educators we must be willing to accept advice as much as praise, and allow students to share what they know and what they want to know, all the while being comfortable with who and where they are. Program evaluation and review strengthens programs! Open ended inquiry and problem based learning motivates students! Reflection and self-regulation inspires us all! Our ship is only commissioned for so long. We only have our "crew" for a short time. Wouldn't it be best to relinquish some of that control and see where the tides take you? I think you'll be surprised at where you end up. It just may be a journey worth taking.

Let us take a look at the contents of the issue. In *A Model for Program Evaluation and Improvement*, Kimberly McCormick & Keri Guilbault present Maryland's Criteria for Excellence and Excellence in Gifted and Talented Education, established to aid school leaders with the planning, implementation, and evaluation of local gifted education programs and services, which can be adjusted and adapted to fit the needs of any state or district. Omar Alsamani's *Fostering Creative Productivity for Creatively Gifted Students* asks how gifted education teachers can support students in developing their creative potential. His interviews of several educators uncovered four strategies intended to foster creative productivity. *Empowering*

*Student Autonomy Through Inquiry and Reflection* by Sarah Newell & Cara Nyvall hits at the heart of curricular planning, where feedback, conversation, and responses from the students themselves drive instruction. *Special Populations* profiles three programs from around the country that showcase exemplary strategies that enable program models to be more successful with gifted students of color and those from low income backgrounds. *iMathination* delivers Part 1 of a three part series presenting several instructional tools for promoting mathematical discourse. *Socially Scientific* highlights the contributions of African Americans and asks that educators make intentional decisions to highlight their phenomenal contributions throughout the school year. *Digital Ecosystem* introduces us to a new term, "Infollution" and offers tools and tips to use with students in evaluating the immense types of information and disinformation found online. *Buried Under Books* looks to the additional information provided in books, the "Back Matter" that often provides context, facts, and tidbits that are intended to enhance the reader's experience. *Taking the Lead* rounds out the issue with a last look at self-reflection and evaluation, crucial elements of our profession if we truly want to meet the needs of our students.

As we right the ship and head course for lands unknown, may we take comfort in knowing that education is truly a collective experience, where the teacher and the student, the curriculum and the assessment, the ideas and actions, all contribute to a fantastic voyage.

I do hope you enjoy this issue.

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