

Letter From the Editors

Welcome to summer! Our last three letters from the editor were written from the perspective of life in a global pandemic. Fear, uncertainty, loss, and adjustment have characterized much of the last year. As this issue goes live, the news is certainly brighter. Infection rates are dropping, more and more people are vaccinated, schools are resuming concerts and end of year events, many colleges had in person commencements—the list goes on. While these are undeniably hopeful and positive changes, we are not yet out of the woods and the last year and a half has left an indelible mark. We keep hearing the phrase, “return to normal” or even “new normal.” While most of us are eager to return to classrooms and offices, I hope we don’t go fully back to the way things were before. The COVID-19 pandemic made visible and exacerbated already existing inequities, and those inequities do not disappear as the virus fades. And we need to ensure that our post-pandemic plans are guided by a renewed commitment to racial justice, equity, and inclusion. We have also learned things during this time—about ourselves and our needs, but also about the ways systems and structures can shift and bend when necessary. We have provided instructional accommodations and universally-designed supports that many people, particularly those with access needs, have long asked for. We have attended to mental health needs and the social emotional well-being of our students in new ways. We have found new avenues of engagement with families and community members through virtual platforms that make the barrier between home and school more porous.

In some ways, we are all tiptoeing carefully into whatever comes next. This issue is offered in that spirit. Rather than dealing directly with the pandemic, as the last issue did, this one considers topics ranging from school-university partnerships, to literacy education and lesson study, to engaging across difference. Langan and Lawrence focus on disciplinary literacy and integrated learning experiences in secondary classrooms. Barber turns the lens onto lesson study as a tool for exploring ideas and assumptions teacher candidates have about their 6th grade mathematics students. Aronson, Enright, and Amatullah explore the use of narrative reflection to build capacity for engagement across diversity gaps. Articles by Wepner, Gómez, and Quatroche and Austin, Caldas, Malow, and Ecker both address the role of school leaders. The first addresses the perspective of school-based leaders on university partnerships, while the second focuses on administrators’ perceptions of the skills necessary for effective teachers. And finally, Dunn offers a review of the book *Collaborative Learning Communities in Middle School Literacy Education: Increasing Student Engagement with Authentic Literacy*.

As always, we are grateful for the work of our authors and reviewers, who continue to support this journal and the work of NYACTE. We are pleased by the growth in the journal, in particular the fact that we were able to publish *three* open-access online issues this year. We hope you can take some time to catch your breath this summer, perhaps return to some activities you have missed, find joy where you can, and get ready for the fall.

Best Wishes,

Christy and Julia