

Letter From the Editors

It is hard to believe that one year ago we were just entering this new COVID reality. When P12 schools and institutes of higher education shut down in March of 2020, we had no idea what to expect. I think many of us assumed we would take a few weeks to flatten the curve and then return to our lives, more or less as usual. Clearly, we were wrong. One year later, we have surpassed 500,000 deaths in the United States and communities are continuing to struggle to contain the virus. While more students are experiencing in-person instruction than in the fall, most schools are still operating at significantly reduced in-person capacity, many students attending one to two days a week. Colleges and universities have struggled to maintain residential learning, moving to a mix of in-person, hybrid and online offerings to meet the needs of programs, students, and communities safely. Student teachers have returned to the field in many places, but many programs have created alternative experiences for all but the culminating field placements, trying to minimize our impact on our P-12 partners. In short, the world is nothing like we imagined one year ago. And yet, we persevere. Children still go to school, sometimes from their kitchen tables and sometimes in elementary or secondary classrooms, we continue to prepare teachers and teacher leaders, and the work of education goes on, in ways unimaginable one year ago.

This issue is a testament to the resilience and creativity of teachers and teacher educators. All of the manuscripts included in this special issue address some aspect of the COVID-19 response. Rosenberg, Mason-Williams, Kimmel, and Sindelar describe how teacher candidates can continue to serve as assets to school districts during this complicated time and offer specific strategies for the successful integration of candidates in both in person and virtual settings. Grandits and Wagle present a framework for successful online learning with application to multiple educational levels. Drawing on their work as literacy teacher educators, Stoetzel and Shedrow share effective methods for the integration of technology into teacher education to expand learning outcomes for students in face to face and digital instruction. The articles by Gonzalez-Frey, Garas-York, Kindzierski, and Henry and Doody, Fulcher-Rood, and Schueltze both address responses of college and university students to facets of COVID era instructional and community-service experiences. Finally, Stacki, Bey, FlynnDavis, and Herman explore the perspectives and practices of middle school teachers during the rapid switch to remote teaching.

Due to the strong response to this special issue on responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will feature additional manuscripts related to this topic in in our summer issue. However, we are already reviewing manuscripts for a general fall issue and encourage you to consider submitting your scholarship and encourage your colleagues, students and field partners to do the same. We also welcome additional reviewers as our number of submissions continues to increase. And we wish to express our most sincere appreciation to the authors and reviewers who took time out of their over-committed schedules to submit and review the manuscripts featured in this special issue. We have experiencing greater demands on our time and energy over the past year and we are grateful you still find a way to support the work of this journal. Thank you. I hope by the time we publish our summer issue, we will have truly turned a corner and be able to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Until then, stay safe, stay connected, and stay positive. We all need each other.

Christy and Julia