

Letter From the Editors

Fall 2021—as most of us are getting back to teaching in-person, albeit vaccinated and masked, we cannot help but reflect on what the events of the past twenty months have taught us. We have learned how to be more inclusive in our teaching, offering students multiple ways to participate in classes, and maybe without even knowing it, have implemented principles of Universal Design for Learning in our teaching. We have, hopefully, found moments to extend mutual grace as we navigate our own lived realities and all that entails with our families and workloads and help our students navigate theirs. We thought that remote teaching was time consuming, but many have found this return to the mostly in-person world even more intense than last year. As the field of education, like other frontline fields, is experiencing record numbers of people choosing to leave the profession, we need to take an honest look at who we are as teacher and leader educators and how we prepare folks for careers in education.

In addition, we write this as the nation is grappling with how to teach about this nation's history. As a New York State journal, we might not feel as connected to the laws banning the teaching of Critical Race Theory in public schools (which isn't actually transpiring anyway!) in other states, but the import of these ideas in teacher education cannot be denied. As we work to promote more inclusive and anti-racist environments in our schools that also retain teachers, we must attend to how we foster this in our teacher and leader preparation programs. We think that this issue speaks to this.

Virtual learning is probably here to stay, which is not necessarily a bad thing, since it opens up possibilities to address equity lacunae in current teacher and leader preparation. In this issue, Rosenberg, Duerr, Ingraham, Bell, and Gould present the results of a study on the efficacy of a pilot virtual classroom management course. Sembert, Vermette, Lyman, Bardsley, and Snell explore the use of the think-pair-share strategy in virtual environments with study buddies. Scott, Bruno, Gnilka, Kozachuk, Brendli, and Vitullo examine the personality profiles of people who choose to be special educators, which has implications on retention. Gormley and McDermott present a content analysis of how literacy journals present critical literacy to teachers, especially in the context of racial and social justice. And finally, Hoskins and Smedley review Sahlberg and Doyle's *Let the Children Play: How More Play Will Save our Schools and Help Children Thrive*.

We want to again thank the *Excelsior* reviewers; we recognize that we are being asked to do more and more, and we appreciate your labor. These last two years have challenged us all in new ways, but also created opportunities for growth and reimagination. I hope we can all take advantage of those possibilities. We wish you all a calm end to 2021 and an invigorated 2022!

Best Wishes,

Christy and Julia