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Letter from the Editors

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Letter from the Editors

Abstract

Welcome to vol.14, no. 1 of the International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Beyond the usual introduction to the issue, we'd like to address the extraordinary circumstances under which we all find ourselves working. After a year where the Journal shifted publication schedules, and thus included three issues in vol. 13, this issue is the first of a volume that drops back to our usual biannual publication. It is also the first issue since over six million of us have been infected by the Coronavirus. We thought seriously about delaying this issue, but ultimately decided against that. We recognized that our authors, readers, and reviewers expected us to meet our commitments, but all would certainly understand a more accommodating pace.

However, we're not quite so easy on ourselves, and felt that honoring our scheduling commitments was a chance to create something firm and reliable in an increasingly uncertain world. We have found that this work was not only intellectually fulfilling and stimulating, but it has somehow made us feel more connected to one another. While we are all experiencing various levels of social distancing and isolation, work like this — and that includes reading this issue — reminds us that we are still a part of a community of scholars and educators, all sharing the common goal of increasing the chances of our students' success. As the spring 2020 semester limped to an end and the repetitious days ran into one another in seemingly endless monotony, it was sometimes difficult to remember the misty past of just three months ago. So we hope that this issue helps you to maintain some vestige of normality, whatever that means to you.

Creating and keeping a timeline are two very separate things, especially when the normal order of our lives is so disrupted. The former requires imagination, while the second requires that plus discipline. This issue would not have been possible without the outstanding efforts of our reviewers, who added this work to their myriad additional responsibilities of porting courses and teaching online, maintaining their own scholarly and pedagogical activities, and adjusting to the new-found silence of the campus-at-home. We salute their willingness to work with us to create an issue we can be proud of. And we can't leave the matter of our reviewers without offering readers an opportunity to apply to become a member of our Editorial Board. The secure form for any nomination is at this URL: <https://forms.gle/u6eAWFG8ajN62mJL6>

In recognition of the "new normal" our reviewers now face, we must begin to extend our timelines for notifications to authors concerning their manuscripts. Historically, we have tried to let authors know the decisions of our reviewers within six weeks. But this past semester has shown us that such a short turnaround time is too much to ask of our reviewers. Many potential manuscripts for this issue were sent to four or five different reviewers before one of them would agree to review it. Each back-and-forth between the editors and the reviewers eats into our promised response time. A quick review of the editorial response times for a number of biannual academic journals across multiple disciplines reveals that their response times vary from seven weeks to five months. We believe that extending our timeline will help our reviewers feel less time-pressed, and therefore be more willing to accept review assignments. This will also cut down on the frustration of authors who understandably would like to know the status of their submitted manuscripts. Moving our response time to a more flexible and less specific period will, we hope, help us to cover many of the contingencies we may need to address, while still allowing us to accommodate the majority of those who submit work to the Journal.

The fall 2020 semester does not appear like it will offer a return to the groundedness most of us knew previously. Given this uncertainty, the articles in this issue, then, look very timely. Considering primarily faculty, authors here address collaboration and mentoring. Other authors focus on students, looking at

their sense of self, their ability to reflect on their work, their critical thinking skills, and their perceptions of both faculty feedback and grading systems. Two articles consider technology from both student and faculty perspectives. And at the societal level, three authors address such varied issues as diversity training, incorporating global perspectives, and teaching social justice.

As we all redefine ourselves and our roles for the foreseeable future, we know that the Journal will continue to provide you with the research, arguments, and motivation that inform and inspire your teaching. But we hope that we may also continue to remind you that you are not alone in your uncertainty, your consideration, or your commitment.

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Dear Colleagues,

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Wishing you health,

Delena Bell Gatch, Delores D. Liston, and Joe Pellegrino
Editors