



HERE WE GO

Suzanne Bouffard

There is opportunity in crisis, opportunity that can galvanize us now that there are some lights in the darkness.

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THE HOPE OF BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD

When designer Kitty Black showed me a draft of this issue's cover, I couldn't look away. Over the past year, there have been many images from which I couldn't turn my eyes, or my thoughts late at night. But this was different. I kept looking at the image of this effervescent young girl because it's filled with hope.

This issue of *The Learning Professional* is about possibility and the hope of brighter days ahead. This is not to deny the many struggles we continue to face. But as authors in this issue point out, there is also opportunity in crisis, opportunity that can galvanize us now that there are some lights in the darkness.

For example, Linda Darling-Hammond, founding president of the Learning Policy Institute and leader of President Biden's education transition team, points out that educators have been innovating in extraordinary ways (p. 24). We can leverage these developments to transform teaching, she says — if we provide ample opportunity for educators to learn from one another.

Jal Mehta, professor at Harvard and an expert on deeper learning, finds potential in the way teachers have quickly become comfortable with new teaching methods they were reluctant to try before (p. 32). He shares reflection questions to help you leverage those kinds of shifts as you move forward.

Mary Antón, Lee Teitel, and Tamisha Williams (p. 36) write about a hope “rooted in the power of what the collective can do” to change the status quo and disrupt inequities. They share examples of how virtual learning networks are providing new opportunities to focus on race and equity.

Plus, Melinda George and Denise Glyn Borders share Learning Forward's hopes for more professional learning investment at the federal level and our requests of the new U.S. presidential administration. And on p. 28, Learning Forward team members share what they've been learning from our newest professional learning network, Design Professional Learning for a Virtual World, which is helping districts optimize new learning environments in equitable ways.

In this issue, I am thrilled to introduce three columnists who will share their insights with you throughout 2021. Jim Knight, senior partner at the Instructional Coaching Group, writes the new Keep Growing column. Sharron Helmke, Learning Forward senior consultant, continues the Coaches Corner column. Angela Ward, founder and CEO of 2ward Equity Consulting, pioneers the Equity in Focus column. Ward is also hosting a special members-only discussion of this month's column and the reflection tool she created that appears on p. 64. See p. 65 for details.

Of course, to achieve the potential this issue's authors envision, educators need support more than ever before. The Ideas section homes in on a crucial but often overlooked area of support: social and emotional well-being. The authors encourage us to attend to the needs of the whole educator as we do the whole child and address the needs and unique stresses for teachers of color.

As you read through this issue, we think you'll be drawn to many images beyond the one on the cover, as we feature original art that is integral to its creators' learning processes and professional growth. On p. 12 and p. 76, Chelyse Stefanik-Miller shares her journey with sketchnoting, describing how visual notetaking has changed her approach to learning. On p. 39, Tamisha Williams shares how she uses drawing when she facilitates professional learning.

What really makes us at Learning Forward optimistic about the future is all of you and your students. What about you? Share with us what makes you hopeful. You can send us your art or poetry, post a photo, or leave us a comment. Tag us on Twitter and Facebook with #LearnTwdTLP.

Keep up the great work, and keep the faith. ■