Hello from the Editor

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Hello from the Editor,
Dona Matthews

I’ve been enjoying my correspondence with you as I’ve been assembling articles for this issue of the e-journal of the AERA ROGAT Special Interest Group. I love the vibrancy of this e-journal format, as it allows people to report on work in progress and discuss ideas in the field as they emerge.

I’m a great proponent of the motivation, engagement, and learning possibilities in thoughtfully informed controversy, and you’ll see that we’ve got a good bit of that in this issue. We have a review by Joan Freeman of a book on a very controversial topic in our field, Indigo Children. And in a funny coincidental way, that piece ties into one of our other contributions—Joe Renzulli is the only other person in the field who I’ve heard (at NAGC last year) publicly discuss this phenomenon, saying that it is one of the worst things to happen to our field in the past ten years, and Joe has written a piece for this issue on the Renzulli Learning System. It is my opinion that Renzulli Learning is one of the most exciting advances in the field of education in many years. It enables children and educators to take practical guided advantage of the powerful learning opportunity that is the Internet. The possibilities for supporting gifted development are extraordinary, and only just beginning to be realized.

This ties into the piece that Michael Matthews (no relative!) has written on the changing legislation on gifted identification in Florida—Michael’s concern is that with these changes, English Language Learners who need the kind of support that Renzulli Learning provides will not be getting it. Similarly, Holly Hertberg Davis’s description of the research that she is doing with Carolyn Callahan focuses on making sure that all students get the support that they need for optimal academic development; she has given us an early report on research in progress to consider ways to close the achievement by race gap in high school, specifically in AP courses. This theme of addressing cultural/racial diversity in our field continues with Marcia Gentry’s description of her research project at Purdue with Project HOPE, working to provide summer and Saturday learning opportunities for high-ability children who are growing up in low-income families, as well as professional development for teachers working with these students.

(continued below)

Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius — and a lot of courage — to move in the opposite direction.

Einstein
And approaching the need for on-going supports from a different angle, Shirley Aamidor’s article gives us a longitudinal follow-up to a study of gifted education in economically disadvantaged rural settings. Her findings emphasize the importance of following up with supports for such students; it is not enough to identify them as gifted and put them into programs for high-ability learners. Finally, we have a thoughtfully controversial piece by Pam Clinkenbeard, raising the issue of economic viability, another topic that we in gifted education have avoided concerning ourselves with historically, but that we are going to have to think about if the field is to survive.

Please tell me what you think about all this and more — what’s interesting, engaging, and controversial in your work with high-ability learners, and what you’re learning or reading or thinking about investigating in your own research.

Finally, I want to say a huge thank you to our layout editor, Leigh Kupersmith. She is one of those people who makes a collaborative effort an enormous pleasure — in all our interactions, I’ve found her thoughtful, funny, creative, positive, and responsive, all in addition to her finely-honed expertise.

Looking forward to the ongoing dialogue with you all,

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