

Foreword

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A thread you will find running through this issue of *Research Matters* is that of gaps – the gap between learning theories and classroom practice, between the capture of assessment data and its subsequent use by teachers, the gaps in mathematical understanding that mean roughly one-third of GCSE students in the UK need to resit, and the gaps that emerge over time between students who leave school with lower A Level grades, and their higher-scoring peers.

Research is excellent at finding such gaps, but the harder question, and one that our researchers are always working through, alongside colleagues across our wider organisation, is how to bridge those gaps, turning evidence into solutions that a teacher can use in the classroom, a curriculum designer can build into their materials, or a policymaker can act on with confidence.

This issue also reminds us that necessity, in this case caused by COVID-19 disruption, really can be the mother of invention, as evidenced by Filio Constantinou's research into the positive impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on education. Through a lens not often used on the pandemic's impact on education, we can better understand "post-traumatic growth" in this context, and learn how this can contribute to the global dialogue on the future(s) of education.

Taken together, these five articles interrogate where gaps lie, and then point out what closing them, or using them, might look like. We hope this issue leaves you with a sharper sense of where evidence is needed, as well as some ideas for translating that evidence into practice.