

Editorial Introduction: Classroom Research: Catalyzing Education through Inquiry

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Robert John Meehan (2020) writes that “Without collaboration our growth is limited to our own perspectives.” The guest editors have wanted to publish the action research of our graduate students for as long as have been collaborating together. As luck would have it, our paths crossed with Editor, Dr. Suzanne Porath, through our memberships in professional organizations. When the co-editors were approached about guest editing a special edition titled, “*Classroom Research: Catalyzing Education through Inquiry*” of *Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research*, we knew we would need her assistance. Dr. Porath has been gracious every step of the way in leading us through the guest editing process, offering sage advice on reviewing, formatting, and final submissions. To say that we could not have done this without her is an understatement. We are grateful.

As co-editors, we would also like to thank our invited reviewers for this special edition of *Networks*. The reviewers shared their time and talents to provide meaningful feedback to the authors. We wish to thank these Assistant Professors from Northwest Missouri State University’s School of Education for serving as reviewers for this special edition: Dr. Travis Dimmitt, Dr. Linda Gray Smith, Dr. Everett Singleton, and Dr. Sara Taylor.

Action research is near and dear to us. We believe it is paramount to changing teaching and learning in classrooms and empowers educators to implement research-based strategies in methodical ways. Each of the processes from conducting a literature review to reflecting on results and developing new questions for the next action research cycle assists a classroom teacher in embarking on effective ways to inform their practice. Schutz and Hoffman (2017) note that action research “has the potential to give teachers voice for themselves, voice within local

communities of practice, and voice in the broader academic and political conversations” (p. 10). Action research is a powerful step in professionalizing careers in education.

This special edition, “*Classroom Research: Catalyzing Education through Inquiry*”, contains the action research of four first-year teachers, each of whom earned their Master’s Degree in Curriculum and Instruction during that time. All four work in an urban school district in a large metropolitan city. Three of the four authors were part of a partnership between a university and urban school district whereby first-year teachers earn their Master’s degree with a cohort of educators. Each of the teachers completed their research in courses devoted to academic inquiry and meeting requirements through a capstone. With action research being an avenue to give teachers a voice, we are proud of these authors for sharing theirs.

The teacher’s voice in academic conversations can be found in **Stephanie Nagl’s** article, “*The Power of Workshop*” where she found power behind a model that was often thought to be more for elementary classrooms. The researcher sought to discover whether the Readers’-Writers’ Workshop (RWW) model would impact the engagement level and the attitudes toward reading of secondary students.

Christina Hall’s article on family engagement provided a voice within communities of practice as it pertained to the impact family engagement has on student learning and achievement throughout the school year. Many families do not know exactly how to support their students in finding academic success. Family engagement as a motivator for student achievement is an important practice, which has seen impressive results and therefore was important to research.

Leia Baker explored teacher self-care and provides an example of a way to give teachers a voice for themselves, while handling the stress of the demands of teaching. Her article, “*Self-Care Among First Year Teachers*” discusses the impact that practicing and not practicing self-

care has on first-year teachers' attitudes and attendance. If teachers are not at their personal best, then they cannot be at their best for others, especially their students and they are the ultimate impetus for this study.

Caitlin Gritz utilized action research while implementing practices to respond to the voice of political conversations after dyslexia legislation passed in recent years. This action research examines the impact of spelling interventions for students who show signs of dyslexia. The action research also shows how using growth mindset can help students with characteristics typical of low self-esteem. There is great importance in teachers knowing the signs of those struggling with dyslexia, strategies to intervene, and how to support these students.

We feel confident these teachers, who are now authors, will continue to share their voice as they plan for the next school year. They will be developing new questions for the next action research cycle in order to examine effective ways to inform their practice. Through publication of these articles in this special edition, their voices will carry on to others in the profession as well.

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References

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