



An On-line Journal
for Teacher Research

Editorial Introduction

Catherine Compton-Lilly, University of Wisconsin Madison

Welcome to Volume 15, number 2 of *Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research!* As we end a decade and a half of publication, we are proud to present a rich set of articles that highlight educators' voices and knowledge.

In "The Value of Why for Student and Teacher Learning" Guarino, Sykes, and Santagata, bring together classroom teaching experiences with teacher education perspectives, to explore what happens when students are asked to reflect on their thinking as they explore relationships among mathematical ideas. They argue that when student thinking is made visible in the classroom, opportunities are created for students to seek clarification and challenge each other's ideas. In this paper, rich classroom examples are used to explore the benefits of having students explain their thinking. The authors note the importance of appreciating student-centered mathematics teaching as a means to improve instruction and foster learning.

As conversations about the reported success of Finnish teachers continue to circulate around the globe, Røj-Lindberg offers an insider look into the ways "Finnish Mathematics Teachers Talk about Restructuring Practice." In particular, Røj-Lindberg explores the metaphors used by five Finnish mathematics teachers to describe their efforts to refine their teaching and learning practices. The five teachers involved in this study were part of an action research collaborative focused on change and reflection. This paper highlights the emergence of metaphors such as 'miracle' and 'paradox' while suggesting that fundamental changes in teaching and learning do not emerge through minor adjustments in teachers' language or pedagogical

strategies; significant change requires shifts in teachers' beliefs, values and understandings.

In "Communicative Elements of Action Research as Teacher Development," Ryan explores how human communication operates within collaborative action research contexts. Various understandings of action research and collaborative action research are presented and explored in terms of how they contribute to professional development. Ryan identifies both nonverbal and verbal channels that he argues combine to produce meaning in as collaborative action researchers investigate issues of interest in schools and classrooms. Reflexivity within communicative, inquiry-oriented acts is identified as contributing to teacher development.

Albaugh invites us to explore blogging in her article, "Blogging about Books: What We Can Learn From Our Students." In this article, a classroom teacher investigates how the use of blogging in the language arts classroom influences student communication about their independent reading of novels. Albaugh uses the classroom blog and accompanying blog comments as data sources. She reports that blog conversations benefitted students resulting in both academic and social gains. In "Digging Deeper Into the Culture of Writing: Do Mentor Texts Inspire Male Students to Write?", Gericke and Salmon respond to a growing trend in schools across the United States in which girls outperform boys in literacy. As classroom teachers, they observed and explored gender differences during writer's workshop. They report that using mentor texts during writer's workshop mini-lessons motivated male students to write using author's craft. They hope that their work provides early educators with instructional examples that will motivate male students to write.

This issue also features a short article authored by Thomas, Mott, and Burnette. This article presents the preliminary findings of an intriguing look into how lighting, color, temperature, and luminosity may affect learning. In this article, third grade teachers apply action research techniques to explore the use of a dynamic lighting system for improving

educational performance. This system offers four light settings: focus, energy, calm, and normal. Prior research has revealed a positive relationship between dynamic light use and student cognition, motivation and concentration. Teacher data (journal entries) shed light on how teachers might make use of all four settings in their classrooms.