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Editorial Introduction

Suzanne Porath

Kansas State University, litprofsuz@gmail.com

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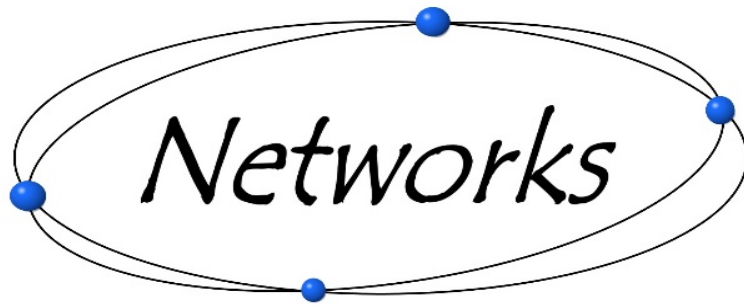


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**An On-line Journal for
Teacher Research**

Editorial Introduction

Suzanne Porath

Editor, *Networks: An On-line Journal for Teacher Research*

Kansas State University

Action research begins with a question about practice, and this volume of *Networks* presents a variety of questions teacher educators asked about their work with teacher candidates and graduate students. Several of the studies also highlight the cycles of inquiry that can change practice over time.

Recognizing that physical education educators tend to be held to higher levels of fitness than other educators, Hill and Thornburg asked the questions: 1) What were P.E. teacher candidates' attitudes and beliefs about fitness testing? 2) What would be reasonable cut-off scores in their teacher education program? During their inquiry, Hill and Thornburg involved the teacher candidates in their investigation through sharing the goals of the study and the ongoing results of the surveys, open-ended questions, and potential impact of suggested cut-off scores. Getting their candidates' feedback was an important goal of the study.

Gonzalez built her inquiry of the internship course she supervised on the needs of the students enrolled in the course, identified through a survey. The candidates expressed an interest in improving their instruction for English Language Learners (ELL). From their comments, Gonzalez decided to introduce a sheltered instruction lesson plan template and asked the question: How do teacher candidates use sheltered instruction to plan for English for Speakers of Other Languages instruction? Her findings showed an ongoing need for supporting teacher candidates in using the template which may lead to more research on the use of assessment of ELLs in conjunction with using the template.

A shift in scheduling brought a dilemma to the forefront for Keleher. Previously, college-level writing courses were offered for developmental English students, however, with reduced sections, the students who spoke English as a Second Language (ESL) had been scheduled into writing classes with native English speakers. Keleher recognized that there were some pedagogical challenges and opportunities with this change. He observed that native speakers and non-native speakers grouped themselves together and had limited interactions. He wondered how introducing cultural course content and assignments that

required students to work pairs or groups would impact interactions among native and non-native English speakers.

Listening to student concerns about “doing math” in a math, technology, and science methods course framed Boeke Mongillo’s study with her graduate students. She questioned if having graduate students engage in hands-on activities and view video teaching models would influence their teacher self-efficacy for math. After the initial phase of inquiry, new concerns from the graduate students emerged about teaching math according to Common Core State Standards which impacted how Boeke Mongillo taught and conducted her inquiry in Phase 2. Like Keleher’s inquiry, this is action research at its best – cycles of inquiry that inform action and further inquiry.

Research on teacher research helps us understand how teachers learn to engage in personal inquiries into their own practices. Recognizing that many graduate teachers in her Teacher as Researcher/Leader course saw the research class as one final box to check on the way to their master’s degree, Kammerer Myers wondered how conducting teacher research shaped one teacher’s identities of teacher and researcher and how the context of the school environment impacted the identity shifts. Working through both opportunities and obstacles, the teacher in this study found continued hope in her work as a teacher because of the research she conducted.

Rogers designed a project in her early field placement course for elementary education teacher candidates to support the development of a positive disposition towards uncertainty. Called the “Not So Sure” project, her students completed three steps to defining and investigating an issue of interest to the teacher candidate. Using inquiry cycles like Keleher and Boeke Mongillo, Roger made adjustments to encourage deeper research and reflection over several semesters.

To wrap up this volume of *Networks*, Kesler provides a review of Dyson’s book *Negotiating a Permeable Curriculum: On Literacy, Diversity, and the Interplay of Children’s and Teachers’ Worlds*. This book is a republication of Anne Haas Dyson’s extended essay from 1993 with an introduction by Bobbie Kabuto and an interview by Kabuto with Dyson. Reflecting this volume’s focus on teacher educators’ responsiveness to teacher candidates’ needs, Kabuto emphasizes Dyson’s focus on the permeability or responsiveness of curriculum that is being overshadowed with the increase of standardization in American schools.

Action research is one way teachers at all levels can systematically inquire into their students’ learning and the impact of their own practice on learning. I hope this volume will inspire you to ask questions of your own practice and design cycles of inquiry to support deeper student learning.