
COMMENT

Researchers are always hopeful that the findings of their work will inform policy development and influence the thinking and actions of practitioners. A researcher's job, however, is not finished when the research report is completed – this is just the beginning. For research to speak to the audience of interest, it needs to be transformed and translated into forms that are relevant and accessible. The *Early Childhood Folio* is one example of a publication that is designed to convey important research findings to a community of interest, in this case the early childhood community.

Communication through an increasing range and variety of publications is one avenue researchers can use for purposefully disseminating the findings of their work. The growing focus on practitioners working in partnerships with researchers and/or being practitioner-researchers provides a further opportunity to extend the impact of research in the educational sector. There are two significant drivers in the call for researcher-practitioner partnerships. First is the recognition of the importance of the interactions between teacher and students, and so the need to develop a greater understanding of this dynamic. If such research is to enable the building of new knowledge about the dynamics of teaching and learning, then teachers obviously need to be central to the focus of any project, as well as centrally involved in it. The second driver is the argument that a “vibrant professional culture depends on a group of practitioners who have the freedom to continuously reinvent themselves via their research and knowledge production” (Kincheloe, 2003, p.19).

It is these researcher-practitioner collaborations that are being promoted through the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI). NZCER has been contracted to co-ordinate this research initiative;

to provide leadership; and to build awareness of the initiative, its research programme, and findings. One aim of the initiative is to build educational research capacity and capability. This includes the capability of researchers to undertake quality research in the context of teaching and learning, and the capability of teachers to teach better by engaging with the findings of research. Equally, it could be viewed as researchers developing a deeper understanding of teaching and learning through engaging with teachers, and teachers gaining expertise as teacher-researchers, supported by researchers.

The TLRI provides an exciting opportunity for educational researchers and practitioners working within the early childhood sector, as do the Centres for Innovation project and the range of work associated with the 10-year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood in New Zealand. This edition of the *Early Childhood Folio* illustrates the depth and breadth of work already being undertaken in the sector. With the increasing recognition of the importance of these early years, and so the growing research focus in this area, we look forward to further publications where new knowledge and evidence-based critique is shared with the community of interest.

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Reference

Kincheloe, J.L. (2003). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*. London: Routledge Falmer.