

BOLD VISIONS IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The Future of Educational Research

**Perspectives from beginning
researchers**

Noleine Fitzallen, Robyn Reaburn and
Si Fan (Eds.)

SensePublishers

The Future of Educational Research

Bold Visions in Educational Research

Volume 37

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Bold Visions in Educational Research is international in scope and includes books from two areas: *teaching and learning to teach* and *research methods in education*. Each area contains multi-authored handbooks of approximately 200,000 words and monographs (authored and edited collections) of approximately 130,000 words. All books are scholarly, written to engage specified readers and catalyze changes in policies and practices. Defining characteristics of books in the series are their explicit uses of theory and associated methodologies to address important problems. We invite books from across a theoretical and methodological spectrum from scholars employing quantitative, statistical, experimental, ethnographic, semiotic, hermeneutic, historical, ethnomethodological, phenomenological, case studies, action, cultural studies, content analysis, rhetorical, deconstructive, critical, literary, aesthetic and other research methods.

Books on *teaching and learning to teach* focus on any of the curriculum areas (e.g., literacy, science, mathematics, social science), in and out of school settings, and points along the age continuum (pre K to adult). The purpose of books on *research methods in education* is **not** to present generalized and abstract procedures but to show how research is undertaken, highlighting the particulars that pertain to a study. Each book brings to the foreground those details that must be considered at every step on the way to doing a good study. The goal is **not** to show how generalizable methods are but to present rich descriptions to show how research is enacted. The books focus on methodology, within a context of substantive results so that methods, theory, and the processes leading to empirical analyses and outcomes are juxtaposed. In this way method is not reified, but is explored within well-described contexts and the emergent research outcomes. Three illustrative examples of books are those that allow proponents of particular perspectives to interact and debate, comprehensive handbooks where leading scholars explore particular genres of inquiry in detail, and introductory texts to particular educational research methods/issues of interest to novice researchers.

The Future of Educational Research

Perspectives from Beginning Researchers

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PREFACE

The Future of Educational Research: Perspectives from Beginning Researchers showcases the work of higher degree by research (HDR) students from the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania. It aims to provide an avenue for the students to contribute to research literature early on in their career and supports the notion of publication throughout one's study. The book provides a snapshot of the current state of research across a broad range of fields in education. Each chapter makes a genuine contribution to knowledge in the relevant area and so the book will be useful to a broad range of education researchers. For supervisors and HDR students the book is useful as a set of examples of student writing, suggesting to supervisors and their students the sorts of writing that research higher degree students in education can undertake and the contribution they can make as they progress their candidature.

Contributions to this book cover the spectrum of education from the early years through to tertiary education. In terms of researching teachers, they cover topics as diverse as teachers' time allocation, how teachers manage the introduction of new technology, how the creative endeavour can be affected by the process of teaching and how teachers manage the introduction of new curricula. In relation to students, they cover topics such as mathematics anxiety, the effect of membership of garage bands, and the effects of the transition from primary to secondary school on literacy. From a parents' point of view there is a contribution about the effects of an early learning intervention. There are also chapters on diverse topics such as techniques to assist learning for children with autism, why males find it difficult to become primary teachers, and the role of philanthropy in university funding.

Apparent in the chapters is that research in education can involve a wide variety of methods of data collection and analysis. Some writers have used questionnaires, others interviews, and others a mixture of both. Some have used their own classroom experiences, classroom observations or students' work samples. Yet another has used narrative research. There is also a diverse range of quantitative and qualitative analyses. Evident in all the chapters is the passion the researchers have for their area of interest and their desire to contribute to a better understanding of educational practices and issues.

All but one of the beginning researchers in this book presented aspects of their research at a Post Graduate Research Conference hosted by the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania. Following the conference the students used the feedback received at their presentations to expand upon their initial ideas and write the chapters presented in this book. In some cases the students collaborated with their supervisors to write the chapters. All the beginning researcher chapters in the book are first-authored by an HDR student. The introductory chapters for each of the sections in the book are authored by established, and in some cases eminent,

PREFACE

researchers in the relevant fields from the University of Tasmania, with an interest in Education.

The chapters in the book underwent a double blind peer-review process. First the students' chapters were reviewed by the researchers responsible for writing the introductory chapter for the section within which the individual chapters were positioned. Feedback was incorporated into the chapters before undergoing an external peer review process. The external reviews were conducted by established researchers in the relevant fields, in most cases external to the University of Tasmania. A list of external reviewers is provided after the chapters.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book is divided into five sections each of which is introduced by a chapter written by an established researcher/s in the field. The sections are: Researching Policy and Curriculum, Researching Teachers' Experience, Researching Educational Technologies, Researching the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics, and Researching Literacy Development.

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To publish requires a publisher who can be convinced to support the underlying proposal and conceptualisation of the book. We acknowledge Sense Publishers for their support to publish this book, and assistance in managing the publishing process. In particular, the advice and communications of Michel Lokhorst assisted in bringing the book to publication.

We acknowledge the support from the Faculty of Education, the Centre for Pathways and Partnerships, The Institute of Learning and Teaching, and colleagues at the University of Tasmania, who provided support throughout the process of compiling the book. Especially, we thank Associate Professor Kim Beswick who got us started on this endeavour and Nick Walkem who provided invaluable administrative support and facilitated the external review process.

We thank Abbey McDonald for allowing us to use her painting on the cover of this book. Abbey is one of the chapter authors and we are excited that this book provides her with the opportunity to showcase her work as an artist as well as a researcher. The image is representative of all the beginning researchers who contributed to this book. In the same way that the bird takes flight, through the publication of this book, the students take flight as researchers.

We express our sincere appreciation to the beginning researchers who so willingly shared their research stories. Finally, we acknowledge the supervisors who supported their students in the writing process by either contributing as co-authors or by providing feedback on early versions of the chapters.

The Editors
Noleine Fitzallen, Robyn Reaburn, and Si Fan.