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Practitioner Know-How in Education: What Is It, and Why Is It So Important?

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Practitioner Know-How in Education: What Is It, and Why Is It So Important?

In Plato's dialogues, we hear Socrates talking with a lot of people about many important things. Often, the conversations end up revolving around knowledge, somehow, and when they do, an interesting comparison comes out, often causing the reader to want to go back to the original language.

Epistêmê is one of the words used in Attic Greek for 'knowledge,' and from it we get our word 'epistemology.' This word refers to theoretical knowledge, for the most part, although sometimes we see Socrates wanting it to have more to do with real life. It is beyond the scope of this editorial to go on and on about this at the moment, but our current social construct that theory and practice have miles to go before they can unite does not actually date back to Socrates, in my estimation.

But we want it to unite, we want our theory to be informed and enriched by practice, and we want our practice to have the virtue that theoretical knowledge can bring. We do not want the chasm we feel we have today; hardly anybody does. This brings us to *technê*, from whence we get our words 'technique' and 'technology.' It has often been translated as "art" or "craft-knowledge," but in the way American English is actually used in everyday life today, it seems to make more sense when translated as "know-how," because that is the kind of knowledge being discussed. If you have the *technê* of a thing, you have what you need to be able to do that thing properly. *Epistêmê* should not be totally separate, because if you have that kind of knowledge, then you can recognize the thing, and talk about it. *Epistêmê*, then, may be construed as knowing-about. This, too, is very important for knowledge-transmission.

Now, out of Greece and into the situations we find ourselves in today: If we want to have any hope of knowing about what is going on in education fields, it seems the best way to go about it is to go directly to those people who have the know-how, and are doing things in real life.

This journal aims to encourage practitioners to take their *technê* and write research articles about it, putting it into the realms of access for consideration in terms of *epistêmê* and thereby, we hope, increasing the chance that what is actually going on in the real worlds of education may be taken into account in policy-making spheres.

We would also like to take a moment to state that education takes place—and practitioners of education practice—in many places other than schoolrooms. For example, museum curators and community health nurses are educational practitioners. Here's hoping the word gets out to them that we are interested in their research as well!

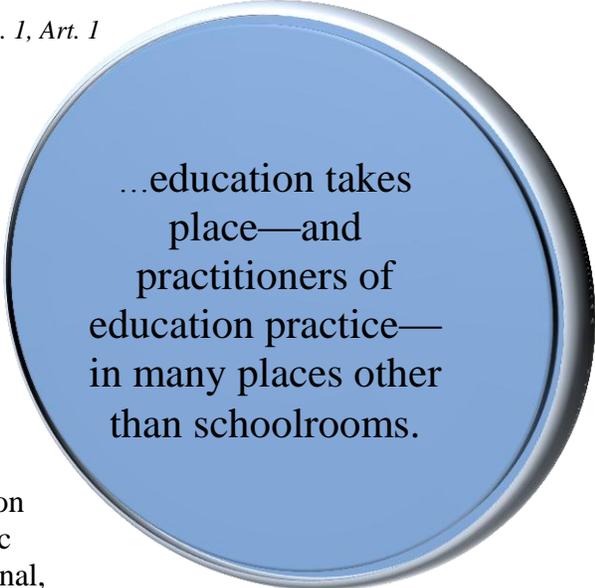
In this issue, we begin with Jowanna's discussion of an action research project investigating whether implementation of an honor code is an effective means to improve academic integrity in the classrooms of a Catholic school, using original, quantitative survey instruments distributed both to students and to faculty and analyzed with descriptive statistics and *t*-tests.

Blumenreich details the interweaving of action research and inquiry-based learning in a project where urban teacher candidates reassess their educational philosophies through the experience of crafting an oral history project. In addition to following the students through their processes, Blumenreich provides links to the multimedia final projects in order to make visible emergent themes.

Harkins offers an autoethnographic portrait of his own practitioner research. Drawing from a phenomenological discussion of his career over time as "lived experience," he writes of the historicity of special education issues such as "mainstreaming" and the challenges of implementing inclusive practices in schools.

Lattimer compares two teacher preparation programs within the teacher education department at her university. One is a new combined program that offers both a teaching credential and master's degree through a twelve month, 45-unit course of study. Action research is a defining feature of the combined program. The other is a traditional credential program that includes many of the same courses and fieldwork expectations as the new program, but does not include the action research component. We invite you to read the nuanced reflection of this comparison.

Finally, Rademaker provides a brief portrait of the Center for Practitioner Research at National Louis University—the impetus for the formation of this journal.



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