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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTS

- DRAMA AND THEATRE IN EDUCATION
- RESEARCH LITERACY PART 2: SUPPORTING TEACHER RESEARCH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

ETAS J - linking the needs of English teachers and language professionals

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Research literacy Part 2: Supporting teacher research in English Language Teaching

F O R E W O R D

DANIEL XERRI

This is the second Special Supplement on supporting teacher research through the development of research literacy. As I mentioned in my foreword to the first Supplement (Xerri, 2017), teacher research is commonly defined as research that classroom practitioners conduct in a systematic fashion in their own context with the purpose of forming a better understanding of their practices (Borg, 2013).

However, as argued by some of the contributors to these two Supplements, teacher research can be considered broader than that. This is partly due to the view that for teachers to be convinced of the role of research in their professional identity, they might need to be encouraged to consider some of the practices they regularly engage in as reifying and fostering a highly democratic conception of research.

The contributors to the two Special Supplements are teachers, teacher educators, teacher association leaders, and academics working in different international contexts. By showcasing the views of some of the world's leading experts on teacher research, *ETAS Journal* is underscoring the significance of this form of research for teachers' professional



development and for the enhancement of language teaching and learning.

Special Supplement Part 2

The Special Supplement Part 2 consists of an interview and five articles. In the interview, Richard Smith builds on the idea – suggested by a number of contributors to the first Supplement – that some teachers

might be reluctant to associate themselves with research because their conceptions of what this entails might be influenced by definitions of academic research. He argues that some of the practices that teachers regularly engage in are a form of research. Thus, they might need to be encouraged to embrace this idea and – if interested – shown how to improve and share these practices.

Teachers who wish to conduct research in their own contexts may choose from a number of approaches. Donald Freeman discusses four different approaches that teachers can adopt to give their classroom practices a research-oriented perspective. He argues that these approaches require teachers to combine both inside and outside perspectives on what is happening in the classroom.

As one of the more popular approaches that teachers can choose from, action research has a number of advantages to it.

Lynn Williams-Leppich provides an overview of action research and discusses how it can prove useful to teachers. Building on the latter notion, Bushra Ahmed Khurram and Steve Mann outline the steps that a teacher would need to follow in order to successfully plan and implement an action research project.

Teacher research can act as a springboard for further research-related activities. Despite the fact that teacher research need not be shared in the traditional manner in which other kinds of research are typically disseminated, some teachers may choose to do so by writing academic articles. Susanne Oswald provides some advice on academic writing from her experience as a tutor of students following a Master's level qualification in TESOL and Applied Linguistics.

Postgraduate qualifications may serve as a means for teachers to hone their research knowledge and skills as well as enable them to position themselves as professional researchers. By sharing experiences of her doctoral journey, Patricia Daniels manages to illustrate some of the steps that are usually followed once teachers decide to formalise their interest in research in this manner.

References

- Borg, S. (2013). *Teacher research in language teaching: A critical analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Xerri, D. (2017, Winter). Foreword. Research literacy: Supporting teacher research in English language teaching: Special Supplement I. *ETAS Journal*, 35(1), 13.