



● Sarah Earle



The *Journal of Emergent Science (JES)* is designed to bridge the gap between research and practice. In this Editorial, I would like to consider ways to make this a 'two-way street'.

Traditionally, research has been the remit of academics, looking at practice from outside but, more recently, the lines between the researcher and the researched have blurred. Collaborative and practitioner-led research have risen in prominence, with the aim of bringing research closer to practice, removing the void between research outcomes and practitioner application. Of course, as with any approach to research, there are advantages and disadvantages. Moving closer to practice may help recommendations to become more practical and take account of the complications of the environment, but may also mean that data are inextricably linked to a particular context and key insights may be lost in the everyday busyness of a classroom or early years setting. Nevertheless, practitioner involvement in research arguably raises the authenticity and applicability of findings, supporting research and theory to do 'real work' in real contexts (Cobb *et al*, 2003). In addition,

inclusion in research can support both teacher agency and teachers as agents of change (Priestley *et al*, 2015).

This issue aims to support the involvement of non-academics in research in three ways:

- Providing support for Action Research (AR) in the form of an extended *Research guidance* article from an expert in the field, **Deb McGregor**. Deb explores the definition of AR, scaffolding questions to help with the set-up of an AR project, together with detailed consideration of data collection during the cyclical process.
- Creation of a new *Practitioner perspective* article category for *JES*, with the first two articles in this section within this issue. Firstly, **Kate Sutton** researched how to support careers education by trialling activities with her class. Secondly, **Helen Spring** puts forward a case for outdoor learning by exploring research around its benefits.
- An invitation to apply to join the *JES* Editorial Board – do get in touch if you would like to review future articles for the biannual editions of *JES*. With some board members retiring, there are spaces for both practitioners and academics.

I am also pleased to introduce three new *Original research* articles. Firstly, **Diana Varaden, Heather King, Elizabeth Rushton and Benjamin Barratt** present an innovative citizen science study, whereby the scientists worked with the children to monitor air pollution with data-collecting backpacks, whilst also considering the effect on children's and teachers' ideas about air pollution as a result of being involved in the project. Secondly, **Polly Bell** explores the nature of creativity in arts and science as part of her PhD



with Deb McGregor. She draws on questionnaire data from over one hundred teachers, to consider ways to promote creativity both across subject disciplines and within science. Finally, **Cherry Canovan and Naomi Fallon** consider the ongoing impact of school closures due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. They surveyed parents and teachers in the UK to compare perceptions of science provision between the first closures from March 2020 and the more recent closures from January 2021.

Whether you identify as an academic researcher, a practitioner researcher, or a mix of both, I encourage you to utilise the articles in this issue to reflect on your practice, and to consider how you could continue the conversation through writing your own article. The deadline for the next issue is the end of October 2021. Prospective authors are encouraged to make contact if they would like to discuss submissions for this or future issues. Authors working in or with practitioners in the Early Years would be particularly welcome. For further details about contributing to *JES*, please see the details on page 55.

## References

- Cobb, P., Confrey, J., diSessa, A., Lehrer, R. & Schauble, L. (2003) 'The Role of Design in Educational Research', *Educational Researcher*, **32**, (1), 9–13
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G.J.J. & Robinson, S. (2015) 'Teacher agency: what is it and why does it matter?' In: *Flip the System: Changing Education from the Bottom Up*, Kneyber, R. & Evers, J. (Eds.). London: Routledge

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