



Dear *NHSA Dialog* Readers,

Winter 2019

In this season of thanksgiving, I am grateful for your interest in research and practice in that most important of all learning windows of opportunity, early childhood. Stepping up to take the editorial helm of this important journal is professionally energizing and humbling. I am grateful to Dr. Richard Lambert for both his mentorship along the way (I have published in, and guest-edited prior issues) and for his trust in me to pick up where he has left off in this important work. He still maintains an important role on the Editorial Advisory Board, and fortunately his office is but a few steps down the hall from mine, so his sound advice is close at hand!

As you likely read in Dr. Lambert's farewell editorial address in the last issue, my background is in secondary education work; former teacher and high school administrator for 28 years. Spending almost three decades rather desperately addressing secondary school reform, while at the same time raising two children of my own, naturally lead to fervent advocacy for high quality early childhood education for all children. In my role in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, I work to ensure that future school principals and superintendents see the critical importance of understanding child development as well as cultivate their own important roles as educational leaders who work for policy change. My ultimate vision is to see a "free and appropriate" high quality education begin on our maternity wards and I know that if you are reading this journal, you understand this quest.

I titled this issue "Letters, Words, Books, and Video Tape" as it moves from that most preliminary of literacy components, teaching sounds and shapes of letters, on to word usage in language development, book usage for literacy development, and ultimately the impact of video self-reflection on teacher practice in Head Start classrooms. Keeping with the journal's formatting, these articles sharing research studies are followed by articles aimed at translating this research into practice.

In our opening research article, Hope Gerde and her team from Michigan State University (Lori Skibbe, Megan Goetsch, and Sarah Douglas) share with us how 48 Head Start teachers teach preschool children about letter knowledge while also exploring the influence of teachers' beliefs and practices on teaching and learning. In her follow-up research-to-practice article, Dr. Gerde shares practices from her study as well as additional research-based practices for teaching letters and letter-sound knowledge to young children.

In our second research article, Dr. Judy Hicks Paulick of the University of Virginia shows important connections between teacher-child interactions during Free Choice Time and results on the CLASS instrument regarding language development. In her research-to-practice article she delves more deeply into the usage of "rare" words during teacher-child interactions, as well as compares categories of interactions such as those aimed to "direct," "inform," "question," and/or "discuss." The work has implications for teacher training and suggests that Head Start teachers need access to professional development on how to support oral language development throughout the preschool day, even (and particularly) during Free Choice Time.



Our third research article explores the effects of a whole-classroom repeated book reading intervention on language development of 63 children across 4 rural Head Start classrooms. Alina Mihai of Indiana University Kokomo and Gretchen Butera of Indiana University Bloomington found that the children who experienced the repeated book reading approach registered significant gains in their discourse ability scores compared to children in the control group. Their research-to-practice article shares with practitioners how to best use the repeated book reading model and includes strategies to help develop children's inferential language skills which may be critical to support reading comprehension.

This issue concludes with a study focused on teacher self-reflection using video-voiceover coaching by Michelle Grantham-Caston and Cynthia DiCarlo of Louisiana State University. Teachers involved in analyzing their teaching videos with voiceovers provided by coaches, became more aware of the CLASS Toddler tool criteria they were using. The experience influenced their reliability in scoring, and the children of teachers who participated enjoyed increased CLASS scores. In their research-to-practice article, Grantham-Caston and DiCarlo break down precisely what technology is required to replicate the video production with voice-over coaching, as well as strategies for a variety of improvements based on targeted outcomes.

We hope you enjoy your journey from letters to words to books to video, exploring new research and practices to improve educational environments for young children. Feel free to send any comments or thoughts to me at rshore6@uncc.edu and encourage fellow researchers and educators to share our issue with others, and their own research with us!

Future Issues:

For our next issue of *NHSA Dialog: The Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field*, I am bringing aboard a former colleague, Dr. Pamela Shue, to serve as Co-Editor. We are currently brainstorming themes for special issues and welcome your ideas for that project. Meanwhile, I will be presenting at the **NHSA Parent and Community Engagement Conference** in Anaheim, California next month and if you are in attendance, please stop by and introduce yourself to me. I would love to treat you to coffee and brainstorm ideas for future journal themes and other ideas for sharing your work.

Gratefully,

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