Dear *NHSA Dialog* Readers,   Summer 2020

After a brief hiatus, I appreciate the opportunity to return as co-editor of the NHSA Dialog journal with Dr. Rebecca Shore. Rebecca and I began our careers in higher education together and continue to remain close colleagues and friends, so I am thrilled to co-edit the journal with her. However, I would be remise if I did not acknowledge and thank Dr. Rich Lambert – years ago as editor he stepped forward to save this journal and offered me an associate editor position, an amazing opportunity for someone early in her academic career, and to which I am very thankful. It is good to be back!

Our world has changed so much since the last issue. As we all learn to navigate a new way of life - via social distancing, working remotely from home, Zoom calls with family, friends and colleagues, and behind a mask to get the weekly groceries – I cannot help but think of all the early childhood educators out there facing this pandemic straight on. How can our world continue to prosper and support the individuals who are essential to the health, safety, care, and economic survival of all of us without someone willing to step forward and care for the youngest of our population? We all are facing so much uncertainty right now but for our world to continue we need these selfless individuals that support all of us.

Covid-19 has forever changed how we care and educate these young children. So, until a vaccine or cure is available, we need to rethink how we do what we do. It has impacted how we: operate child care programs; support and educate pre/in-service early childhood professionals; conduct our early childhood research. As states begin to lift stay-at-home restrictions and as information on the virus is updated, these child care professionals will need to pivot and adjust to a new set of protocols to keep themselves and children safe, in addition to providing care and experiences they know are best for young children's growth and development. Because of what they do, we have dedicated this issue to all of the **child care heroes** out there, who continue to care for our youngest population. Thank you!

In this issue you will find two research articles, along with their research-to-practice summary. The first article, *Implementing Systemic Informal Assessment in Early Education Settings* by Classen, Kang, and Cheatham investigates early educators' current practices, knowledge, beliefs and training for informal assessments methods. Although systematic informal assessments should be used to inform the early educator in making instructional decisions, the findings in the study demonstrate that Head Start teachers used fewer informal assessments compared to teachers in other child care settings and that anecdotal notes and event/frequency were the most popular. Research continues to demonstrate that an educator "buy-in" is related to the quality and frequency of using informal assessments.

The second article, *Teacher's Beliefs Regarding Dual Language Learners (DLL) in Head Start* by Ramírez, Cycyk, Scarpino, López, and Hammer examines Head Start teachers' beliefs towards

DLLs and determines if their belief is supported by what current research tells us is best practice for a child's DLL development. In this study, six major themes emerged: definition of DLL, value of DLL home language and culture, ease of learning English, primary classroom language, home language use in the classroom, language difference vs language delay vs language disorder. The implications of these findings is further addressed in the research-to-practice summary providing recommendations on professional development and training that can enhance educational experiences for children from DLL backgrounds.

We hope you enjoy this issue and share it with your fellow researchers and educators. Please feel free to send any comments or thoughts to me at shuepl@appstate.edu or Dr. Rebecca Shore at rshore6@uncc.edu.

Thank you to the heroes out there!
Stay well and safe!

Sincerely,

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