

Editorial introduction to special issue on teacher agency

This special issue on teacher agency offers a landmark vehicle for documenting the agentive spaces English language arts (ELA) teachers are able to forge, amid the constraints of current education contexts. Our call for papers for this special issue invited literacy researchers and practitioners to consider, among other provocations, the contextual factors that give rise to different forms of agency in research; how sociocultural environments in which teachers work mediate agentive action in theory; how teachers work agentively, in relation to specific curriculum and discipline-related conditions, to establish an ethic of care and humanize education in practice; and how specific educational policies around the world shape teacher agency, identity and culture in policy. Paper authors in this special issue:

- provide a scoping review of the literature on English teacher agency, 2008-2018 (Chisholm, Alford, Halliday and Cox);
- examine the policies and reforms that have forced English teachers in England over the past 50 years to exercise an evolving, adaptive agency (Goodwyn);
- illustrate teachers' agency through little p-policy-making (i.e. teachers' creative enactments of their values across day-to-day classroom events) to solve problems created by Big-P policies (i.e. formal policies regulated by national institutions) (Wessel-Powell, Buchholz and Brownell);
- analyze the narratives of teachers who reflected on their experiences with "problematic" content and practices to cultivate activism, agency and transformation in their teaching (K. Taylor, Taylor, Hartman, Woodard, Vaughan, Coppola, Rocha and Machado);
- reveal how positioning analysis may be used to uncover possibilities for agency even in environments characterized by high-stakes testing (L. Taylor);
- study how an action-oriented community of practice promoted collaboration, agency and autonomy through teacher research into teaching for creativity (Cloonan, Hutchison and Paatsch);
- describe the resources teachers drew on to be agentic through action-reflection cycles and how students responded to the ways teachers exerted their agency around assessment (Willis, McGraw and Graham);
- investigate how agency supported teachers' reform ownership and the development of professionalism, expertise and student learning (Godfrey and Olson); and
- document ELA teachers' learning through transformation, movement and activism evidenced in their narratives of solidarity as they participated in a grassroots movement committed to social justice (Rogers).

These papers collectively reimagine English teacher agency within a global neoliberal agenda and the concomitant policies that seek to reinforce standardization and the primacy



of measurability. They advance the field by establishing new ways to conceptualize agency in theory, research, practice and policy. Guest editorial

James S. Chisholm

College of Education and Human Development, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky, USA, and

Jennifer Alford

School of Teacher Education and Leadership, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

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