Introduction

Denice Adkins

*School of Information Science & Learning Technologies, University of Missouri, 303 Townsend Hall,
Columbia, MO 65203, USA*
E-mail: adkinsde@missouri.edu

This special issue of *Education for Information* focuses on innovative pedagogies and informed teaching for the LIS profession. The eight articles in this issue show clear evidence that professors, instructors, librarians, and educational staff are reflecting on their practice and working to improve that practice. In short, they are engaging in action research.

Action research is research which has direct workplace application [2, p. 54]. Noffke identifies three areas within action research that help to differentiate it from other research methods: "the professional, the personal, and the political" [1, p. 7]. Professionally, action research extends the definition of 'teacher' to include conducting research, reflecting on practice, and creating a new 'way of knowing'. The personal dimension is manifest in the professional development of action researchers. Politically, action research is used to connect classroom practice with social justice concerns and highlight the contributions of marginalized populations. Action research "embodies various epistemologies, varied ways of establishing its knowledge claims" [1, p. 21].

Action research is "an inherently local activity – it derives its primary impulse from the needs of people in a locality" [1, p. 18]. Most of the authors of these articles issue focus on students and classrooms in their particular institutions, and they make conclusions based on those groups, their needs, and their abilities. Articles in this issue cover a variety of levels, from information literacy delivery in freshman seminars and undergraduate courses in informatics to graduate-level LIS courses and professional development MOOCs. Many of the articles deal with the need to enrich online instruction. While results are not generalizable in a quantitative sense, the interventions used may well be adopted by other instructors in similar situations, or may spark ideas for solving problematic teaching situations.

References

[1]   S.E. Noffke, Revisiting the professional, personal, and political dimensions of action research, in: *The SAGE Handbook of Educational Action Research*, S.E. Noffke and B. Somekh, eds, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, 2009.

[2]   R. Powell and L.S. Connaway, *Basic Research Methods for Librarians*, 4th ed. Libraries Unlimited, Westport, Connecticut, 2004.