



Unlock Research Research for Physical Educators

Research Journal of the Month
FEBRUARY 2005

The Elementary School Journal.

The Elementary School Journal (ESJ) has just reached its one hundred and fifth year of continuous publication. That venerable journal is now guided by an editor (Thomas Good) who probably knows his way around educational research about as well as any scholar alive today. With that kind of longevity and quality of leadership, ESJ has achieved status as the world's premier English language outlet for data-based research on teaching and curriculum in elementary and middle schools. And does it serve the field of physical education? Absolutely, yes. Through the pre-World War II days of Brace, Cowell, Fisher, and McCloy, and into the present time of Chen, Ennis, McBride, Rovegno, Solmon, and Xiang, we have been among those present on the prestigious pages of ESJ.

With a paid circulation of 2,500, the journal is widely available in a paper edition at college and university libraries. In November, 2004, however, it was announced that an electronic edition would be available at the publisher's (University of Chicago) website <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/ESJ/>. At the time of this writing, that appears not yet to have been accomplished, but the web address does access the journal's home page with provisions for subscription, instructions for authors, a listing of the Board of Editors, sources for reprints and back-issues, and a table of contents listing that presently runs from 1996 through May of 2004. If you are fortunate to have access to a library with database subscriptions, full text (or abstracts) for ESJ reports are available at the following:

- EBSCO (09/1900 to present)
- Gale Expanded Academic (01/1997 to present)
- Gale General Reference Center (01/1997 to present)
- JSTOR US Arts and Sciences Collection (1914 to 1999)
- ProQuest Wilson Education Abstracts (01/1998 to present)

The EBSCO system has only a short lag-time for updating, so it is the preferred source.

Since 1900 the journal has appeared under a variety of titles, but in 1915 the sponsors permanently settled on the present name. For many years editorial services were provided by the education faculty at the University of Chicago, but by 1955 that responsibility moved to outside editors (who included Walter Doyle and Phillip Jackson, among others). The present editor, now on faculty at The University of Arizona, assumed the post in 1980, but ESJ has remained as a house journal with University of Chicago Press.

Issued 5 times each year on a September to May volume cycle, ESJ is peer-reviewed by the members of an Editorial Board. Over many years the membership list for that entity has always read like a Who's Who of educational research. Among the 31 presently serving are Debra Loewenberg Ball, Hilda Borko, Jere Brophy, Carolyn Evertson, Thomas Guskey, Robert Slavin, and Deborah Stipek. The typical issue contains between 3 and 6 items (plus book reviews), and at least one special thematic issue appears in each volume year, usually under the aegis of guest editors.

The primary audience includes teacher educators, practitioners, and researchers. The journal gives preference to studies that contain data about school and classroom processes in elementary and middle schools. Research reviews and articles concerning educational theory are included from time to time, particularly when they contain clear implications for practice. Finally, occasional articles appear that serve to relate research in child development, cognitive psychology, sociology, and anthropology to school learning and teaching. Investigations utilizing a qualitative perspective have appeared with growing frequency, and several mixed method studies have indicated yet another methodology to be included. Reference style is that of the American Psychological Association (5th ed. 2001).

Studies related to physical education have continued to appear throughout the last decade. Here is a partial listing of some that you might find useful.

- Green, L., & Adeyanju, M. (1991). Exercise and fitness guidelines for elementary and middle school children.
- Ennis, C.D. (1991). Discrete thinking skills in two teachers' physical education classes.
- Rovegno, I. (1992). Learning to reflect on teaching: A case study of one preservice physical education teacher.
- Solmon, M.A., & Carter, J. (1995). Kindergarten and first-grade students' perceptions of physical education in one teacher's classes.
- Kientzler, A.L. (1999). Fifth- and seventh-grade girls' decisions about participation in physical activity.
- Chen, W. (2002). Six expert and student teachers' views and implementation of constructivist teaching using a movement approach to physical education.
- Ping, X., McBride, R.E., & Solmon, M.A. (2003). Motivational climates in ten teachers' elementary physical education classes.
- Ping, X., McBride, R.E., & Bruene, A. (2004). Fourth graders' motivation in an elementary physical education running program.

A special issue devoted to sport and physical education appeared in May, 1991 (guest edited by Richard Coop and Robert Rotella). With the singular exceptions of the thinking skill study reported by Ennis and the article on fitness standards by Green & Adeyanju (both noted above), however, the effort will be a disappointment for anyone whose primary interest is in teaching and physical education. Most of the page space was devoted to youth sport, and includes some lengthy transcriptions of interviews with professional athletes.

Among the occasional delights to be found in ESJ are the contributions of Editor Tom Good. In case you wondered, he is the author, with Jere Brophy, of the textbook *Looking in Classrooms*, now in its 9th edition, and, again with Brophy, the influential 1986 *Handbook of Research on Teaching* chapter that summarized the findings from a decade of teacher-effects studies. Good recently assigned himself the task of directing two special issues of ESJ dealing with the non-subject-matter outcomes of schooling (May, 1999 and May, 2000). For each he contributed an introductory editorial. In those he argued that when the full range of data concerning school outcomes is examined, there is good cause to regard the American school as an enormous success.

If you are tired of hearing about the utter failure of teachers to provide a quality education for our children, Good's analyses and the ESJ reports they introduce will come as a sweet alternative to the constant carping of political candidates and conservative commentators. Without the reasoned (and data-based) commentaries of Tom Good in ESJ, Marilyn Cochran-Smith (in the *Journal of Teacher Education*), Gerald Bracey (in *Phi Delta Kappan*) and David Berliner & Bruce Biddle (in their book *The Manufactured Crisis*) I surely would have long since been retired to watch the grass grow in Montana. Their voices of sanity, however, have made that seem too much like cowardice. In times when shameless falsehoods can masquerade as reform, the national treasure represented in our schools needs champions. ESJ is one place where they can be found ready for the good fight.

You can purchase a year's subscription of 5 hard copy issues for the modest price of \$40.00 USD. In this day of inflated journal prices, it is a real bargain to have the very best on your desk for less than the tab for a meal at your local bistro – and those journals will never suffer a collapse of the local server, fail to appear on the publisher's website, or disappear from the library.

Your comments on this review will be welcome at lflocke@hotmail.com.

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