

RESEARCH REPORT

Entering Research

Ann Lawless and Barbara Sedorkin

The 'Research report' section of the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* was 'rebooted' in 2006 after a short absence from the pages of this journal. The goal of the editorial team was to have at least one research report appear in each issue of the journal, and to rebuild the section in order to support dissemination of research works-in-progress and completed research projects, support first time and relatively inexperienced authors while also welcoming more experienced authors and researchers, and create a forum for dialogue about real-world practices in educational research. One member of the team took responsibility for prompting and eliciting submissions (Ann Lawless), and another for receiving and editing them (Roger Harris).

Understandably this editorial approach to an un-refereed publication tends to attract authors who are research students at a university, practitioner researchers and community-driven researchers.

One such author is Barbara Sedorkin who in 2006 submitted an extract from a book she is researching on the Parks High School in South Australia, shaping her research around a community perspective of educational issues, and for which she has consciously chosen to find an authorial voice which is accessible to the local community. She deliberately avoided dense academic language and abstract theorisation in order to privilege a grounded voice which can be recognised by (and comes from) the community with which she engages and of which she is a member.

As Barbara and Ann worked together, they realised they had common concerns and life experiences. Each proudly identifies as working class Australian, each is involved with studying at a university, each has a mobility disability and each values strong family and community connections. They were able to swap ideas about how to access and support local community resources. They discussed together why and how they use written language to represent the issues and communities that inspire their research.

As they talked they came to realise that amidst their common concerns and life experiences was a determination to live an active life while also managing their mobility disabilities; that they had each had critical moments in their lives when they had refused to surrender to pain and misery but make those difficulties assets and strengths in their lives. They asked each other – well, why haven't you become a victim of your disability? Each felt that social engagement was not a burden but a liberating force in their lives that contributed to their health and positive attitude to the aches and pains of life.

And out of that conversation came a decision to work together on a future 'research report' on how recent breakthroughs into

the sociology of health can help educators in their work with marginalised populations. In this short story of two researchers, we have shown you how we have 'entered research', that is, entered the earliest conception of research and the early formation of research collaboration.

BOOK REVIEW

Workplace learning: principles and practice

Robert W. Rowden

Melbourne, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, October 2006

ISBN: 1-57524-268-0 (cloth), 160 pages, US\$26.50

This book (one in The Professional Practices in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Series) should be required reading in Australia or anywhere else for those people who are trying to solve the problem of skills shortages. This includes the managers of organisations that are feeling the pain of skills shortages; the educators who have the task of producing people with the necessary skills, and the agencies that fund the training and development programs and feel the need to quantify the outcomes.

Robert Rowden has been examining the various ways that workers learn to do their jobs for more than 15 years. He has done that from the standpoint of both industrial and academic positions. As a