



Editorial: Understanding the Scholarship Behind Scholarship

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Editorial: Understanding the Scholarship Behind Scholarship

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"We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience." (John Dewey)

As I write this editorial, I find myself pausing often, not because I lack words, but because this experience has given me so much to reflect upon. Serving as the Editor-in-Chief of *CERJ Volume 12* while navigating my own doctoral journey has been both rewarding and humbling, filled with lessons that extend far beyond editing or publication management.

There are two main points I wish to address in this Editorial. First, I reflect on what the editorial role has revealed about the unseen structure of academic publishing: the *behind-the-scenes* coordination that supports our scholarly community. Second, I aim to share specific improvements and achievements of Volume 12, offering insights into CERJ's mission and process for prospective authors and reviewers.

Understanding the Editorial Work

What makes this journey truly special is understanding what lies *behind the scenes* of academic publishing. Before stepping into this role, I had only seen journals through their polished final outputs: those published papers, the author bios, and their neatly formatted references. Everything appeared *seamless*. But now that I have become part of this *behind the scenes*, I understand the intricate ecosystem that makes this seamlessness possible: the careful coordination between editors and reviewers, the dedication of authors revising their work through multiple rounds of feedback, and the quiet, resilient commitment of a team that works voluntarily to ensure every detail aligns with CERJ's standards of excellence.

This glimpse into the editorial infrastructure has deepened my respect for scholarship itself. Every submission represents an individual's intellectual effort, and every decision reflects the collective judgment of scholars who have invested in advancing educational research. Understanding this has reinforced that editorial service is fundamentally about stewardship; holding the space for emerging scholars to develop their voice while maintaining rigorous standards.

Balancing this role alongside full-time PhD research has presented genuine challenges. There were moments when deadlines blurred together, when personal and academic calendars overlapped, and when motivation and endurance were put to the test. Yet these difficulties illuminated something essential: that much of *academia operates on goodwill, intellectual curiosity, and genuine community*. Our reviewers, authors, and editorial team give their time and expertise because they believe in the value of shared knowledge. This realization transformed the experience from obligation into privilege.

CERJ Volume 12: Efforts and Achievements

The transition from experience to publication is a crucial step in early-career research paths. CERJ remains committed to supporting researchers during this important phase, and this volume showcases several deliberate improvements to our editorial process.

Submission and Acceptance

This year, we received 57 submissions from researchers across the United Kingdom, China, India,

Indonesia, the United States, and other countries. Out of 57 submissions, 23 were accepted after our initial review and subsequent rigorous double-blind peer review process. This balance shows that while our process is rigorous, it remains inclusive and supportive. Our authors comprise both early-career researchers and seasoned academics, underscoring the diversity and inclusivity in educational research.

To better assist emerging scholars, we enhanced our early-submission feedback system by systematically informing authors about their submissions. Authors who submitted their work with CERJ received initial guidance on whether it aligned with our standards, enabling them to improve their submissions prior to formal peer review. This change aims to support first-time authors unfamiliar with CERJ's expectations and to reduce barriers to participation in the journal.

Furthermore, we improved our communication strategies and management system by providing clearer guidance, tools, and more structured email correspondence. These enhancements foster a more collaborative and transparent process within our team and with authors. Our enhanced accessibility underscores CERJ's mission as a platform for scholarship that transcends institutional and geographic boundaries.

Peer Review

For CERJ Vol.12, we received 98 expressions of interest from potential reviewers. Reviewers are accepted based on their availability, interest, and expertise that match our current manuscripts. We view peer review not only as a quality control measure but also as an opportunity for growth for both authors and reviewers. To support this, we provided clear guidance and offered training for those new to the process. By reaching beyond our immediate networks, we obtained more valuable feedback and successfully matched manuscripts with the most suitable experts. Our review process emphasizes constructive feedback, encouraging reviewers to support and improve scholarship by offering comments that enhance clarity, rigor, and confidence in authors' work. Witnessing each article evolve through revisions has been one of the most rewarding aspects of this editorial journey.

Themes and Areas of Focus

The accepted papers in Volume 12 span topics that reflect both the diversity and interconnectedness of contemporary educational research. These contributions are organized across several themes: *Equality and Access in Education*; *Language and Education*; *Teacher Professional Development*; *Pedagogy and Teaching Approaches*; *Assessment and Evaluation*; *Early Childhood, Secondary, and Higher Education*; and *STEAM Education*.

It is important to note that this thematic grouping is intended solely for organizational purposes. The selection of these themes does not imply that each article fits strictly within a single category, nor does it restrict the breadth of scholarly discourse presented in this volume. Rather, these themes offer a framework for understanding the collective dialogue on how education continues to be reimagined across contexts and communities.

From studies on gender and underrepresentation in STEM to explorations of inclusive pedagogy and teacher learning, these papers collectively demonstrate the richness of educational scholarship when multiple voices, methodologies, and perspectives are brought into conversation.

Acknowledgments

This volume could not have been achieved without the dedication of our editorial team. I sincerely thank our Deputy Editor, Dr. Husam Helmi Alharahsheh, whose expertise, calm guidance, and steady support helped us navigate the most challenging stages of publication. I also appreciate our Event Manager, Agnes Purwoko's professionalism in handling tasks.

I am deeply grateful to my colleagues and former committee members, Max Aantjes and Rasman, for their ongoing support and availability throughout this journey. Special thanks to Giovanna Lucci, who has consistently provided support and design expertise over the years. She has designed all the logos, covers, and designs for Volume 12.

My heartfelt thanks go to the FERSA committee for their trust and for fostering an environment where student-led scholarship can flourish. I also thank our Faculty advisors, Dr. Angharad Butler-Rees, Dr. Morag

Morrison-Helme, and Dr. Pallavi Banerjee, for their ongoing support of our publication efforts. Additionally, I am grateful to Justin from the IT team at the Faculty, who has been offering his expertise with our website update.

To all our authors and reviewers, your generosity, intellectual rigor, and professionalism are greatly appreciated. Your ideas, constructive feedback, and willingness to revise have kept CERJ a true learning community. The voluntary contributions of our authors and reviewers exemplify the collaborative spirit of excellent scholarship.

Looking Ahead

As we close this chapter, CERJ remains committed to its core mission: nurturing early-career researchers and expanding conversations in education across borders, disciplines, and epistemologies. The journey of serving as Editor-in-Chief has taught me that editorial work is fundamentally about people: understanding their struggles, celebrating their contributions, and creating conditions where rigorous, thoughtful scholarship can flourish.

Every manuscript tells a story, and every story adds a new voice to the collective dialogue that enriches our field. We are honored to be the stewards of this conversation and grateful to everyone who makes *the CERJ Volume 12* possible.

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