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# Teacher Research in Language Teaching

A critical analysis

*Simon Borg*

*University of Leeds*



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For Helena, Nina, and Luca

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## *Series editors' preface*

Many applied linguists see classroom research as critical to the improvement of second language teaching and learning. Accordingly, the role of the teacher in such research is an ongoing topic of interest and discussion. Some argue that classroom research is a critical part of teacher education and that teacher involvement in research is a necessary aspect of their professional activity. Others take a position which they claim is more realistic – that language teachers have neither the time nor motivation to participate in research. This important debate within the field has continued without the benefit of clear definitions about the nature and scope of language teacher research or empirical evidence about existing practices of language teachers in research. This book will enlighten the debate considerably.

Rather than taking a position on one side or the other, the book establishes the grounds for an informed debate on the subject by defining the concepts and issues, reporting on research projects which investigate the practices and attitudes of key players in language education, and describing attempts to engage teachers in research. It is based on an extensive series of international language research projects carried out by the author over a number of years. Their purpose was to investigate teachers' attitudes towards research, the extent to which teachers currently engage with research by others or themselves, and the contextual considerations that assist or hinder this work. Extending beyond these studies on teacher research, the book demonstrates how teachers can be taught to conduct research within teacher education programs.

The book lays out the problem of teacher research in a scholarly manner, drawing upon a range of perspectives and research in general education and in language education. The overall result is a book that moves forward a topic that is not well understood, but is important in view of the fact that so many applied linguists are engaged in

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teacher education. Some of the data and discussions in this book will be immediately useful in informing language teacher education by, for example, providing models for research concerning teachers' attitudes and practices, and showing how to construct research projects in a teacher education program. Other aspects of the book express the clearly defined concepts and empirical data that are needed to move the field forward. We are therefore very happy to welcome this book to the Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series.

Carol A. Chapelle and Susan Hunston

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