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## Towards More Equitable Classrooms: A Review of The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research

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## Towards More Equitable Classrooms: A Review of The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research

### Abstract

This is a book review of *The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research: Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn Through Practitioner Inquiry* (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020), a non-fiction book written to inform and guide in-service and pre-service teachers from development of teaching inquiries through to publication and presentation of findings. The authors also address the role of inquiry in the creation of more equitable classrooms. The book is easy to read and goes right to the heart of the information that busy teachers need to engage in organized and reflective inquiry. The authors summarize and organize key information in visual formats for quick reference. The book is sequentially organized, with reflective exercises at the end of each chapter. Teachers move forward in their inquiry with step-by-step instructions and real teacher inquiry examples, many of which are qualitative inquiries.

### Keywords

teacher inquiry, wonderings, classroom research, job embedded professional development

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## Towards More Equitable Classrooms: A Review of *The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research*

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This is a book review of *The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research: Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn Through Practitioner Inquiry* (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020), a non-fiction book written to inform and guide in-service and pre-service teachers from development of teaching inquiries through to publication and presentation of findings. The authors also address the role of inquiry in the creation of more equitable classrooms. The book is easy to read and goes right to the heart of the information that busy teachers need to engage in organized and reflective inquiry. The authors summarize and organize key information in visual formats for quick reference. The book is sequentially organized, with reflective exercises at the end of each chapter. Teachers move forward in their inquiry with step-by-step instructions and real teacher inquiry examples, many of which are qualitative inquiries.

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*The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research: Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn Through Practitioner Inquiry* (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020), is a non-fiction book, written to inform and guide in-service and pre-service teachers from development of teaching inquiries to review of the literature, and development of a research plan, all the way through to publication and presentation of findings. The title of the book, although long, correctly captures its purpose. However, something the title does not capture is that in this edition the authors address the role of inquiry in the creation of more equitable classrooms (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020).

Nancy Fichtman Dana received an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education and a Master of Science in Gifted and Talented Education from the State University of New York in 1986 and 1988 respectively. She went on to receive a Doctoral degree in Philosophy from Florida State University in 1991. She has been a Professor in the School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL since 2003. She has received numerous awards and honors and has authored and co-authored various books and research articles around topics related to her research interests: teacher inquiry, teacher and principal job embedded professional development and practitioner inquiry.

Diane Yendol-Hoppey is a Professor and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, FL. She received her Master of Science in Educational Theory and Policy and a Professional Teaching Certificate from Pennsylvania State University in 1986. She went on to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Curriculum & Instruction from the same university in 1999. Her “research specifically focuses on facilitating student learning within urban contexts through partnerships, enhanced job-embedded professional development, field-based teacher education, and teacher leadership” (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020). She too has received numerous awards and has

written, and co-authored, a variety of books and research articles related to her research interests.

Although there is no book jacket, the first page after the cover contains several mini reviews by various University Professors and Lecturers from across the nation, who provide succinct yet emphatic recommendations in support of the book. On the back cover, the reader can find a synopsis of the book that is very informative.

Written sixteen years after the initial edition and six years after the last edition, some of the differences between this 4<sup>th</sup> edition and previous ones include an intentional focus on the role of teacher inquiry in addressing inequality in schools and society. More specifically, the authors indicate they added a new section to Chapter 1 titled “Why inquire? Inquiry as a pathway to equity,” with several equity-focused teacher inquiry examples (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020) to address this topic.

As the title suggests, the purpose of the book is to guide teachers through the process of teacher inquiry/classroom research. To this end, the authors (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020) organized the book to follow a sequence which they describe as a “journey.” The journey begins with defining the term teacher inquiry (Chapter 1); moves through to developing a wondering/inquiry (Chapter 2); reading the literature (Chapter 3); considers the importance of collaboration (Chapter 4); walks readers through the process of developing a research plan (Chapter 5); discusses important ethical considerations (Chapter 6); goes over the process of analyzing the data collected (Chapter 7) and making inquiry public (Chapter 8). More importantly, Chapter 9 provides a great discussion regarding considerations for the creation of more equitable schools. This topic is well paired with the discussion in Chapter 10, how to become a better teacher through teacher inquiry.

The authors organized the chapters in simple, easy to follow formats that vary according to the topic addressed in the chapter. For the most part, the chapters contain a question followed by a multi-step answer. In addition to content, sample work, such as field notes, suggested forms or email samples, and data analysis samples may be included in a chapter. Each chapter ends with an exercise section, a discussion section, and an online material section. These resources are meant to enable teachers to engage with the chapter’s content at a deeper level for greater understanding.

This new edition also differs from previous editions in that this one includes the topics of collaboration, the use of Twitter, Google forms, collaborative inquiry, and presentations as effective teacher inquiry tools that can effectuate equitable change in schools (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020).

In a world where social media has taken over every aspect of our lives and given the rising movement toward social justice and equitable access to education, including these topics in the book certainly added value to this new edition.

Also, among the differences between this new edition and previous ones are the topics of doctoral programs’ equity and practice-based inquiry, and dissertations-in-practice, which were added to previous editions’ discussions of professional learning communities; student teaching and other clinical experiences; professional development schools and networks. Additionally, changes to the organization of and the addition of two new data analysis tools in the data analysis chapter (data analysis memoing and how to create new visual displays of data) are also some of the differences between this new edition and previous ones (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020).

Throughout the book the authors make great use of tables, diagrams, and drawings to summarize concepts in a visual format, something usually helpful for reference and future use. Moreover, pictures of teacher’s field notes, journal notes, interview notes, samples from classroom data walls, and pictures of collaborative teams appear within the book. These visuals

provide the reader examples of what each portion of the inquiry may look like in real life teacher inquiries.

Readers can also find numerous examples of teacher inquiries that may provide ideas to help them generate research questions, design, and organize their inquiries. As expected, many of the examples provided are qualitative in nature, something that appealed to me and may appeal to others.

I found Chapter 7 to be particularly helpful as the authors provide, an overview of data analysis, a variety of visuals, step-by step instructions, samples, tables, and vignettes, along with commentaries and prompts to facilitate the reader's thinking and comprehension as they consider analysis of qualitative data.

Overall, this book is easy to read, and it goes right to the heart of the information that busy teachers need to engage in well organized and reflective inquiry. The authors did a great job of summarizing and organizing key information in easy-to-follow tables and charts that serve for quick reference in the future. Moreover, the book is arranged in sequential order, with reflective exercises along the way to help get teachers started with their own inquiry process. Teachers move forward in their inquiry journey with the help of step-by-step instructions and various real-inquiry examples at each level of the inquiry process.

As a doctoral student and future teacher educator, I found that this book provides an easy-to-follow sequence of the inquiry "journey," which is precisely what I would want to have in my early years as a teacher educator. I can see how having this guidance will enable me to guide pre-service and in-service teachers on a straight path, during the early period in my career, when I too am working toward "earning my wings."

For these reasons, in my opinion, *The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research: Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn Through Practitioner Inquiry* (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2020) is perfect for job-embedded professional development opportunities within schools, and for new teacher educators.

Furthermore, I believe this book is a great addition to previous books by these authors, because it is a great "how to get started with inquiry" book for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

Other inquiry books by these authors have dealt with embedding inquiry through professional learning communities (PLC), coaching inquiry within PLCs, engaging principals in inquiry, and other general or introductory books.

To obtain online resources, a free review copy of the book, and to buy the book go to <https://resources.corwin.com/reflectiveeducatorsguide>.

## References

Dana, N. F., & Yendol-Hoppey, D. (2020). *The reflective educator' guide to classroom research. Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Corwin and Sage Publishing Company.

## Author Note

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