In Chapter 1, we discussed the gap that exists between what is learned as a result of researchers—typically university professors or others trained as researchers—who conduct and report their research on educational topics and the needs of practicing classroom teachers. In an effort to reduce this gap between theory and research and actual practice, it is imperative for teacher-researchers to share the results of their action research projects. A wide variety of options exist for teacher-researchers to share their research, ranging from local presentations to professional conferences and academic journals. In addition, there are numerous electronic means for communicating the results of action research. Although
both Chapters 8 and 9 address issues related to publishing or otherwise disseminating the results of your action research studies, it is important to note that the focus of the present chapter is on the big picture—namely, presenting and discussing alternatives for sharing your action research. In contrast, Chapter 9 is more technical, focusing on the how-to of writing up your action research studies. After presenting information on these various alternatives for disseminating research results in this chapter, I will once again reiterate the importance of professional reflection as part of this process.

Communicating the Results of Action Research

For quite some time, a gap has existed between research conducted in the broad field of education and the ultimate, and supposed, users of that research (i.e., teachers). In Chapter 1, this gap was described as follows: Educational research tends to occur in the ivory towers of higher education, whereas the practical application (i.e., the education of children) takes place in schools and classrooms. What goes on in public school classrooms often does not reflect research findings related to instructional practices and student learning (Johnson, 2008).
Research is routinely written and published in such a way that does not consider a teacher’s typical day-to-day schedule. The resulting research articles are often overly descriptive and highly technical and utilize research methods that do not fit with the daily needs of and resources available to teachers (e.g., they use true experimental designs, complete with random selection and assignment, or highly labor-intensive and longitudinal data collection methods). The research findings do not appreciate or often take into account teachers’ points of view or factor in the practical challenges teachers must address in their classrooms on a daily basis. This has been alluded to numerous times throughout the book: In a manner of speaking, the teacher-researcher—through the act of designing and conducting action research studies—becomes the missing link between the theoretical researchers and the practicing educators.

However, simply conducting an action research project will not automatically facilitate the reduction of this gap. Sharing the results—either formally or informally—is the real activity that helps bridge the divide between research and application. Communicating your results lends credibility to the process of conducting action research because teachers and others in the education profession tend to see this process as one that gives teachers a voice. Suddenly, research is not far removed from the classroom; they have, in a way, become one. Research is no longer an isolated activity, separate from the instructional process. It has become an integrated process such that the advantages of research (e.g., research designs, data collection methods, validity, and reliability) and the advantages of teachers’ “voices” (e.g., knowing about the instructional process, having familiarity with teachers’ day-to-day schedules, resource availability, and time constraints) can be realized in concert with one another. Perhaps more important, the act of sharing, communicating, or otherwise disseminating the results of your action research allow other educators to see this as well.

Not only does sharing the results of teacher-led action research projects with members of the teaching profession help narrow the gap between theory/research and practice, but it also provides the teacher-researcher with the opportunity to gain additional insight into the topic under investigation, as well as into the research process itself (Mills, 2007). If at the outset of your study you believed that the topic you had decided to investigate was an important one and in fact worthy of studying, in all likelihood there are other teachers, administrators, counselors, and so on who would feel the same way and would also be interested in your findings. This act of sharing—and, in fact, celebrating—the findings of your action research can actually be a very satisfying and rewarding professional experience (Mills, 2007). There is a tendency for teacher-researchers to feel intimidated at the thought of presenting or publishing their research, almost to the point of outwardly resisting the notion. As human beings, none of us likes to feel the wrath of our critics. However, I would strongly encourage you to take this next step in the action research process. Regardless of the types of reactions garnered by communicating your results, whether they be unfavorable or overwhelmingly positive, you will almost certainly experience professional growth.

Locally

There are several possible audiences for local presentations of your research, but probably none will be more interested than your colleagues (Johnson, 2008). More than anything, these presentations tend to promote professional discussion among teachers, counselors, and principals. These types of discussions are essential for facilitating professional reflection and growth in the teaching profession (Johnson, 2008). Do not become concerned about the notion of a full-blown presentation; it may not be necessary. These “presentations” may run the gamut from formal to informal. They may take the form of a formal teacher
inservice session, a brief talk at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting, or perhaps an ongoing discussion among teachers within a school. Regardless of the level at which the presentation occurs, Johnson (2008) recommends that your audience of colleagues will tend to find your presentation more interesting if you keep it brief and focused and include only the details that other teachers might find helpful in their classrooms.

I would also strongly urge you to use some sort of visual aids to assist you in your presentation. Most of our students—regardless of the age or grade level at which we teach—do not like to simply be talked to or at; your colleagues will probably also appreciate visuals that increase the quality of your presentation and keep their attention. These visual aids might include overhead transparencies with a bulleted outline of your discussion, a handout of your major points and results, or perhaps even a technology-enhanced presentation using such software as PowerPoint or Keynote. The main aspects of a presentation should include the following:

1. **Background information.** Briefly summarize the literature review you conducted, trying not to mention everything you read. Simply mention three or four key aspects of your review, focusing on anything that provided you guidance in your study.

2. **Purpose of your study.** Share with your audience why you chose to study what you did. What personal experience led you to this topic? What were you trying to find out as a result of your study? Try to make a compelling argument for why your topic was worth investigating.

3. **Methodology employed.** Briefly describe the methodology used, focusing on the data you collected and how you collected them.

4. **Results.** This portion of your research presentation, along with Numbers 5 and 6 below, should comprise the majority of the time you have for your presentation. The results, along with your conclusions and action plan, are the aspects that your colleagues will be most interested in learning about. Tell your audience what you discovered by succinctly describing your findings. This may be an excellent time to use visuals, such as tables, graphs, or charts, if appropriate.

5. **Conclusions.** Share with your colleagues what you think your results mean. How do your results relate back to the original purpose of your study? What kinds of implications (i.e., for practice) can you draw from your conclusions?

6. **Action plan.** Based on your results and conclusions, describe what you plan to do from this point forward, in terms of both practice and future cycles of your action research. You may want to seek additional input from your colleagues regarding your action plan.

7. **Questions and answers.** Finally, always be sure to leave at least a few minutes for questions and answers. This is yet another opportunity for professional discussion and reflection.

Another possible audience for your presentations is an audience consisting of your district’s administration. This includes members of the school board, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, directors of curriculum and instruction, directors of special education services, and so on, as well as building-level administrators (i.e., principals, assistant principals, deans of students, etc.). Often, district-level decisions regarding teaching and learning are made apart from considering any research
related to them. Johnson (2008) believes that this can result in bad educational practice or perhaps even educational malpractice. The results of action research can be used as an effective means of enabling your school or district to make educational decisions that are better informed. These decisions then are based on actual data collected, as opposed to being based on hunches or simply on what “looks good” to those making the decisions.

**Action Research Communities**

Along similar lines of sharing action research with audiences local in nature is the notion of creating action research communities. An action research community can be defined as a learning community made up of educational professionals driven by a common goal of practicing reflective teaching as a means of improving classroom instructional practice. Action research communities can be established within an individual school building or school district but can also “branch out” to include multiple buildings or even perhaps multiple districts (typically within a relatively small geographic area). These can be very meaningful professional development organizations, not only for sharing the results of action research but also for lending encouragement and support to teachers during just about any stage of the action research process. In addition, they can play an important role in the process of experienced teachers serving as mentors to novice teachers. These types of formal “learning communities” can provide significant levels of professional support. They can offer opportunities for both formal and informal sharing and reflecting on classroom teaching practice. Communities can be set up within a formal structure—perhaps with monthly meetings—or can be less formal. In the case of the latter, meetings might occur on an “as needed” basis. However you and your fellow colleagues decide to structure your action research community, I strongly encourage its use as you will likely view it as an important part of your ongoing professional development as an educator.

**Professional Conferences**

Local presentations are certainly acceptable outlets for presenting research and are typically beneficial to the teacher-researcher from the local point of view. However, sharing your research among a much broader community of educators provides even greater opportunities for professional dialogue, reflection, and brainstorming. Professional conferences are wonderful environments for communicating the results of research, sharing ideas for future cycles of action research, and networking with other educators who have similar research interests. Professional conferences are typically sponsored by state, regional, or national organizations and are usually held annually. The organization releases a call for proposals anywhere from 4 to 10 months in advance of the conference. Included in the call is a description of everything you need to include in your proposal. The proposal usually consists of a three- to four-page summary of your study. Once you have submitted it to the organization, it is sent out to other professional educators for a blind review, meaning that they do not know who the authors are at the time they review it. They review your proposal based on a preestablished set of criteria and either recommend it for inclusion in the conference program or not. If it is accepted, you receive notice a couple of months in advance of the conference in order to have time to prepare your research report and presentation. The seven main aspects to include in a presentation that were provided in the previous section also apply to presentations made at professional conferences. Depending on the nature and size of the professional conference, you will likely have anywhere from 15 to 75 minutes to present your study. If you are not
familiar with professional conferences in your areas of interest, a search of the Internet will lead you to the
Web sites of various organizations, which typically include links to information about their conferences.
I am a big supporter of presenting research studies at professional conferences, as they can truly open the
door to so many new opportunities and ideas!

### Academic Journals

Since academic journals have the potential to reach larger audiences than professional conferences can, you
might want to consider submitting your study to a journal in your particular field—one that focuses on
the topic you studied or that focuses broadly on classroom-based action research. Similar to proposals
submitted to conferences, academic journals are also refereed, meaning that any study submitted
receives a blind, peer review by a minimum of two reviewers who provide comments on the quality of the
study, as well as on the written manuscript detailing the study. Typically, comments provided by reviewers
are both positive and constructive. Good reviewers will provide complimentary feedback about the good
things done in the study. They will also provide suggestions for improving the quality of the manuscript.
Their final comment is usually a recommendation to publish the paper or not. There are usually three
types of recommendations:

1. **Accept as is.** If your paper receives this recommendation, no revisions are necessary. The paper is
ready to be published in its current form. This type of recommendation is seldom given by any
reviewer.

2. **Accept with revisions** (also referred to as conditionally accept). This is a much more typical
recommendation for well-written papers of well-conducted studies. Almost every paper accepted
for publication in an academic journal will require some revisions.

3. **Reject.** If your study had substantial methodological flaws or if the research paper was written
poorly or simply not written clearly, perhaps because you did not pay attention to common stylistic
conventions of academic writing (see Chapter 9), you may receive this recommendation. If this
occurs, try not to become too discouraged—it happens to all of us! Consider taking the feedback
provided by the reviewers, revising your paper, and submitting it to another journal. Sometimes
when a manuscript is rejected, the editors may suggest that you “revise and resubmit” the paper.
This may occur when the paper is poorly written and may need a complete reworking, but the topic
may be of great interest to the readers of the journal.

As an example of this process, I have included in Figure 8.1 a copy of a letter I received from a journal
editor, whose recommendation was to “conditionally accept” my manuscript. You will also notice that, as I
made revisions to the final version of the manuscript, I marked off each suggested revision appearing in
the letter. Although this process can be a bit intimidating at first—and can create anxiety throughout one’s
professional career!—receiving this type of feedback and specific comments on your action research
studies and ability to write them up is one of the best ways to improve your writing (Johnson, 2008).

Mills (2007) offers some sound guidelines to keep in mind when considering submitting your study to
a journal. First, it is important that you peruse the journal(s) that you are considering for your
submission(s). Realize that the articles you are reading represent those that have been accepted for
publication. Pay close attention to the writing style, as well as the structure and format of the articles
Figure 8.1 A Sample Letter From a Journal Editor; Manuscript Conditionally Accepted for Publication

December 16, 2003
Craig A. Mertler
Bowling Green University
College of Education & Human Development
Division of Educational Foundations & Inquiry
School of Leadership and Policy Studies
Bowling Green, OH 43403
Re: “Secondary Teachers’ Assessment Literacy: Does Classroom Experience Make a Difference?”

Dear Dr. Mertler:

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I am pleased to report that your manuscript is conditionally accepted for publication in American Secondary Education. Reviewers felt that the article dealt with a timely topic that “has not been emphasized enough in the literature” and that it was “professionally crafted.” To prepare it for publication, however, please address the following issues:

- The article could be strengthened through an increased attention to audience. Although the topic of assessment is clearly one of general interest, the article should make some reference to the relevance of the topic for secondary educators since that is the focus of this journal. Similarly, the discussion should include some implications for the secondary teachers and administrators who read the journal as well as some suggestions for researchers.

- One reviewer felt that the Conclusions should include a discussion of why preservice and in-service teachers score differently in their highest category. Another felt that some reference should be made to the testing emphasis in No Child Left Behind. Do you recommend more preservice instruction, or do you believe that the emphasis should shift to “on-the-job” learning—perhaps through ongoing professional development?

- Reviewers raised a number of questions about the design and reporting of the study:
  - Clarify participants’ characteristics
  - Add a table with frequencies by item or at least by aggregated items by standard
  - Describe what “correct” means on the scale (congruency with the standards?)
  - Address the low reliability coefficient for in-service teachers as a limitation of the study. Should it be used in future research?
  - Address psychometric properties of your modified instrument since it is different from the original
  - Cite some support for the assertion that the “trend is changing” away from an emphasis on standardized testing in teacher preparation (p. 17)
  - The section of the results on page 17 that talks about “5 of the 35 items” etc. is rather confusing. Readers cannot see what those items said, and the relevance of this finding to the research questions is unclear. Suggestion b. above might help, or you might just omit it.

(Continued)
themselves. Do not feel that you have to copy the particular format and style; rather, use them as guides for your paper as you prepare it for submission. Second, it is suggested that you use a clear, reader-friendly writing style. Action research should be written up using straightforward language and vocabulary. Do not try to impress your readers with flowery language or polysyllabic words, especially when their use is not necessary. Let your data and your interpretations of those data speak for themselves. You should strive to make your paper readable and understandable not only by those who are knowledgeable about your topic but also by those who are not. Third, Mills suggests that you develop a paper that guides your readers to the site at which your study occurred. Provide a description of the setting, the participants, the length of the study, and the focus of your investigation. Fourth, you should also include a brief description of what you actually did in the course of your study. Focus on explanations of your research design, data collection, data analysis, and ultimate interpretations. Also, do not forget to attend to other various data collection considerations, such as validity, reliability, and ethics regarding your participants. Finally, it is critical that you make every effort to keep your readers’ attention. Granted, academic journal articles of classroom-based teacher research will probably never make a best-seller list, but that does not mean that they cannot be interesting and rewarding to read. Enjoyable and engaging reading does not have to be mutually exclusive in academic writing, but it does take some effort on the part of the author.

Source: Reprinted with permission of the American Secondary Education journal.
There are several journals—all of which are refereed—whose articles focus on classroom-based, teacher-conducted research. This list of journals includes the following:

- Action Research International
- Educational Action Research
- Networks: An On-line Journal for Teacher Research
- Reflective Practice
- Teaching & Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice
- The Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- The Ontario Action Researcher

More information about these journals, including information available at their Web sites, has been included in the Related Web Sites section appearing later in this chapter.

**Sharing Results Electronically**

More and more opportunities are being created for teachers to share the results of their research electronically, especially in various online environments. There are various types of electronic media in which results can be shared or ideas exchanged. Before I discuss them, however, let me offer a word of caution. The Internet can be a wonderful place to find information and materials that one might not have access to otherwise. However, it is important to be cautious about information and research results that you read online. There exists a common misconception that if something is “published” (that is to say, if it appears in print), it must be important, meaningful, and of high quality. Just because something appears in print—even if it is refereed—does not necessarily mean that it is of substantial quality. It is important to be a critical consumer of anything you read online.

One of the nicer aspects of sharing research and ideas in an online environment is that teachers can be provided with the sense that the world is a much smaller place and that input and feedback are readily accessible from literally all corners of the globe. Online resources typically fall into one of three categories: action research Web sites, electronic mailing lists, and electronic journals (Mills, 2007). We will briefly look at each of these, although additional information—including URLs for various Web sites—appears in the Related Web Sites section.

There are numerous action research Web sites available on the Internet. These sites are sponsored and hosted primarily by institutions and individuals in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Most of them offer a variety of features, including electronic journals, electronic discussion boards, print as well as electronic action research resources, and links to other action research sites. The sites featured later in this chapter include the following:

- Action Research at Queen’s University
- Action Research Resources
- Educating as Inquiry: A Teacher/Action Research Site
- EmTech’s Action Research Page
- Teacher Research
In addition to worldwide Web sites, many school districts are also developing and hosting their own action research Web pages on district Web sites. The specific purpose of these sites is to allow teachers in the particular district to share their results of action research, primarily districtwide, although with the World Wide Web, dissemination would not be limited only to members of that district. As a concrete example of this relatively new electronic means of sharing action research, let me highlight one district’s efforts. On several occasions throughout this book (primarily in the Related Web Sites sections at the end of various chapters), the Madison (Wisconsin) Metropolitan School District has been featured. The district’s action research Web site (http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/sod/car/carhomepage.html) includes links to all types of helpful information related to conducting classroom-based action research. One link in particular (http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/sod/car/search.cgi) takes you to a searchable index of abstracts of action research studies conducted by their teachers from 1990 through 2006. Several of the abstracts also include links to the complete research papers written by the teachers themselves. This is an absolutely wonderful outlet for teacher-conducted action research projects, as well as being a very valuable resource for teachers’ professional development. If your district does not currently have such a means for locally (and more broadly) sharing the results of your action research, pursuing such an opportunity with district-level administrators may be time well spent for the benefit of all teachers in your district. Another example of a school that maintains its own action research Web site is Highland Park High School (http://www.dist113.org/hphs) in Highland Park, Illinois. The school’s Action Research Laboratory page (http://www.dist113.org/hphs/action/table_of_contents.htm) contains more than 25 complete action research reports and presentations written by Highland Park teachers and administrators.

An electronic mailing list is an online discussion forum conducted via e-mail, typically located on a large computer network and hosted by a university (Mills, 2007). Electronic mailing lists provide opportunities to participate in discussions on a wide variety of topics within a given field (e.g., action research) with individuals from all over the world. Information and links to several of them are included in the sites listed above. If you subscribe to an electronic mailing list, you should be aware that you will likely receive several e-mail messages per day on one or more discussion topics, known as “discussion threads.” The messages can add up quickly if you do not check your e-mail on a regular basis. Although it can be interesting and educational to simply sit back and read the various postings to an electronic mailing list, do not hesitate to post your own questions or ideas; electronic mailing lists tend to be very collaborative and collegial environments. I have been able to offer suggestions to members of an electronic mailing list, as well as to seek their advice for my own projects. In addition, I have been able to establish several professional relationships over the years with individuals who have interests similar to mine by doing just that. These are individuals with whom I likely would never have come into contact had it not been for the electronic mailing list.

Finally, the Internet has also enabled publishers to put entire journals online. Over time, more and more full-text, refereed teacher-researcher electronic journals are becoming available online. Several of the journals listed earlier in this chapter are entirely electronic or online journals, including Action Research International, Educational Action Research, Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research, and The Ontario Action Researcher. These electronic journals make the submission process relatively painless, since the manuscripts are typically submitted electronically via e-mail as attachments. Furthermore, the turnaround time from submission to (hopefully) publication tends to be several months less, simply due to the technology involved. Another benefit of these electronic journals can be experienced by the teacher-researcher as a consumer of action research. Electronic journals make access to teacher research articles
much easier. Since they are available in full-text format, one does not even have to travel to a local university
library and make a photocopy of the article, as was necessary in the past and still is for print journals. The
articles are usually available in HTML or PDF formats and can therefore easily be saved to a hard drive or
computer disk or printed out. The fact that nearly all of these online action research journals are only a few
years old serves as an indication of the extent to which teacher research is truly a field that is experiencing
a great deal of growth and that is creating progressively more interest across the broad field of education.

Reflecting on the Action Research Process

At the risk of once again sounding repetitive, professional reflection is a key component of the action
research process and should be integrated thoroughly throughout each of the steps along the way. The acts
of sharing, disseminating, and communicating the results of your action research provide yet another
opportunity to reflect on the process itself. Reviewing all that you have done and accomplished in
conducting your study—which is necessary when preparing to put pen to paper and draft your final
research report or when developing an outline for a presentation of your study—is another way that you
can introspectively examine your practice of teaching. It is essential to your professional growth and
development that you seize each and every opportunity—prior to, during, and following your action
research study—to engage in reflective practice.

Writing Up Action Research: Reflecting on Research

Recognizing that there is an incongruency between my teaching beliefs and my teaching practice
is the first step. I now wish to explore several options which should help me facilitate better
teacher-student communication in my classroom. Some of these are: giving written directions so
students can refer to them during the lesson as needed; providing students with an outline,
covering important points in the lesson; asking questions that promote thinking, relating
questions to students’ previous experiences; and encouraging students to talk freely amongst
themselves in groups.

Conducting this study has given me insight into my classroom. I now realize that students come
to class with a sense of inquiry. They are ready to explore and find answers on their own. I feel
students are excited about engaging in the process of science, and they show this by their
willingness to share ideas and beliefs with others. It is my job to step back and trust this sense of
student inquiry. By not monopolizing the classroom I feel I can now provide rich opportunities for
students to investigate the world of middle school science at a much deeper level than ever before.

One of my primary focuses for this study was to carefully choose my groups so that they were
clearly heterogeneous from both an academic and cultural standpoint. Another main focus was
to assign specific roles or jobs within the groups so that each member would be perceived as a
valued player. The roles worked, were also designed to make the group members more
dependent on each other and less dependent on the teacher. However, according to the
respondents of Kathy’s survey, 92% indicated that they would have changed their jobs if they
could. When the jobs were assigned, the intent was to “bring out” the very behaviors that were
not being observed. For example, when one student was observed as being passive and
unsmiling, we assigned her the job of Principal Investigator to bring out more assertive behavior
in her. All of the roles were assigned to all of the students with similar objectives in mind. Perhaps allowing the students a part in the decision making for jobs would be a good idea next time.

Cooperative group learning is much more than just putting students in groups and giving them assignments to complete. In doing this study, I set higher expectations of my students than I ever had before. The conceptual learning and creative problem solving that took place was clearly indicated from the data sources. The rocket science unit of instruction challenged all of the students, especially in terms of the difficult mathematics concepts. However, all of the other aspects of the unit were equally challenging, and the sharing of ideas and group problem-solving strategies were prevalent throughout the unit. Student motivation was higher than I had ever seen when we were in the midst of rocket science. In fact, one student became so motivated about rocket science that he won third place in the 1995 State Science Fair and an overall “Best of Show.” If anyone else can benefit from the model of middle school teaching that I developed, I would be ecstatic, but the model was truly for myself and the students that I teach. I certainly intend to keep improving the model in the years to come.

ACTION RESEARCH PORTRAIT 1
Enhancing Academic Performance Through Improved Classroom Assessment

Recall that the purpose of this action research study is to improve teachers’ classroom-based assessments in an effort to improve student achievement.

Following the development of their action plan, Susan, Larry, Cathy, and John approached their building principal about sharing the results of their action research study with the rest of the teachers at Jones Middle School. She had always been quite supportive of the teachers engaging in growth activities, and she agreed to let them give a brief presentation at the last faculty meeting of the year in June. The team believed that this would also be a great opportunity to share with their colleagues the action plan for next year’s cycle of implementation of Improving Student Achievement by Improving Teachers’ Assessments.

In preparation for their presentation at the end-of-the-year faculty meeting, the team of teachers met to develop an outline for their 20-minute presentation. They developed an outline and divided up the presentation as follows:

Improving Student Achievement by Improving Teachers’ Assessments

Jones Middle School Faculty Meeting

June 15, 2:45 p.m.

1. Background to the study (Why did we decide to do this?)—Susan

2. Related research and purpose of the study (What were we trying to investigate? Had anyone done anything like this before?)—Cathy

3. Methodology (So, how did we do it?)—Larry

4. Results (And what did we discover?)—John

5. Conclusions (What does this all mean for our teaching? Our students? Our school?)—Susan
6. **Action plan** *(Where do we go from here . . . ?)—Larry*

7. **Questions and answers** —you!

The team printed out the outline and provided it as a handout for the other teachers in the meeting. In addition, because they knew that they had limited time for their presentation, they highlighted their main statements in a brief PowerPoint presentation. They felt that bulleted points under each of the first six items on their outline would help them stay on task. An example of one of their PowerPoint slides appears below:

**Improving Student Achievement by Improving Teachers’ Assessments**

- Results
  1. Team North scored higher than Team East on all 4 subsets
  2. Two scores (LA & MATH) were significant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBTEST</th>
<th>Mean Difference (Gp. 1 – Gp. 2)</th>
<th>t test value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA_2</td>
<td>34.0833</td>
<td>3.532</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH_2</td>
<td>40.9167</td>
<td>2.046</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCI_2</td>
<td>13.8542</td>
<td>1.684</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS_S</td>
<td>19.0833</td>
<td>1.302</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>.198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the presentation, their principal suggested that the group make the same presentation of the study to the board of education and other district administrators. The teachers agreed, and their principal set up the presentation for the July board meeting.

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**ACTION RESEARCH PORTRAIT 2**

**Improving Reading Comprehension in a Title I Program**

Recall that the purpose of this action research study is to improve students’ reading comprehension skills within a Title I context.

Kathleen was very happy with the results of her action research study and was excited about her plans to continue it into the next school year. She felt fairly sure that her fellow Title I teachers from within the district would also find the results interesting and very meaningful. She approached the director of the district’s Title I program and requested some time at their monthly meeting at the district’s offices. The director willingly agreed to provide Kathleen with some time to share her study and results with the other Title I teachers.

Following the meeting where Kathleen presented her study, several of the other teachers approached her about the possibility of publishing it. Kathleen was a little hesitant at first, but the teachers offered (Continued)
to support her and even help her with editing and putting the finishing touches on a draft of a research report that she had been working on. They brainstormed ideas for possible publications, and all agreed that a popular reading journal, *The Reading Teacher*—a publication of the International Reading Association—might be a very appropriate outlet for her study. Included in each edition of *The Reading Teacher* is a section where teachers and other researchers can publish the results of research studies in the form of brief articles. The teachers went online, first to the main page for the International Reading Association (http://www.reading.org) and then to a page titled “Writing for *The Reading Teacher*” (http://www.reading.org/publications/for_authors/rt.html) or “Writing for the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*” (http://www.reading.org/publications/for_authors/jaal.html), where they found information specifically directed toward individuals wishing to submit articles for possible publication. There they found information about the nature of articles published in *The Reading Teacher*, the desired length of published manuscripts, and the length of time that authors could expect the review process to take. Specifically, they found the following passage:

Authors are generally notified of a decision within three months of receipt of submission. Articles are judged primarily for their contribution to the field, usefulness to teachers or researchers, timeliness, freshness of approach, and clarity and cohesiveness of presentation.

Kathleen was very excited about the prospect of having her action research published, although she was aware that there was no guarantee. She would do her best to put together a sound manuscript, focusing specifically on her study and the process of reflection she used in order to make meaning of her results.

Recall that the purpose of this action research study is to improve students’ understanding of the processes of mitosis and meiosis.

Upon completing this initial cycle of her action research study, Sarah decided to write up her results in the form of a two-page bulleted list of “highlights.” She listed her preliminary concerns about her students, the list that she developed of possible curricular topics to study, and then her plan to closely examine ways to improve her students’ understanding of mitosis and meiosis. She included an overview of the resources she found, how she had incorporated them into her instructional unit, and then how she assessed her students’ mastery of the two cellular processes. She asked her department chair, Paul, if she could have 15–20 minutes at the next department meeting to share her findings with the rest of the science teachers. He agreed, and her brief presentation was ultimately very well received by their fellow science teachers.

After the science department meeting, Paul suggested to Sarah that she ask their principal to provide her with some time at the next full faculty meeting to share her results with all teachers in their school. Sarah said, “I don’t really think that teachers in other subject areas are going to be interested in how I helped my students improve their understanding of mitosis.” Paul responded, “You might be right, Sarah.
However, I think they’ll be really interested in hearing how you used the blogs to help you identify where your students were really struggling and how that technology enabled your students to actually help each other learn the material. That aspect of your study alone was very impressive.” Sarah reworked her presentation in order to highlight the use and impact of the classroom blogs and presented it the following week at the full faculty meeting. After seeing how excited several of the teachers became about what she had shared, Sarah suggested that they form a school-based action research community in order to further study the use of blogs across curricular areas within a high school setting.

Initially, four of her colleagues signed up to participate in the newly formed action research community in their school. Their first step in the next cycle was to discuss plans for investigating the continued use of blogs in their school and for each of the five teachers to begin to develop a research plan for how each would incorporate blogs into their instruction and how they would determine the impact in student learning.

Related Web Sites: Communication and Discussion About Action Research

This annotated list of related Web sites provides information about several online action research organizations, electronic journals, and electronic mailing lists. You will notice that several of the electronic mailing lists and electronic journals are sponsored by organizations also appearing below.

Action Research Web Sites

- **Action Research at Queen’s University** (http://educ.queensu.ca/~ar/)
  
  This action research site is maintained by Queen's University, located in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Included on the university’s site are links to action research reports, several articles on reflective practice, and numerous action research reports from both undergraduate and graduate students at the university.

- **Action Research Resources** (http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arhome.html)
  
  This site is a wealth of resources! Sponsored by Southern Cross University in Lismore, New South Wales, Australia, it includes links to *Action Research International* (an online journal), a 2-week online course in action research and evaluation, various resource papers, five different electronic mailing lists (see below under Action Research Electronic Mailing Lists), and abstracts from several action research theses and dissertations.

- **Educating as Inquiry: A Teacher/Action Research Site** (http://www.lupinworks.com/ar/index.html)
  
  Developed by Dr. Judith M. Newman of Mount Saint Vincent University, this site features articles by teachers who have conducted action research on a number of topics and an online conference on the *Reflective Practitioner*. There are also links to a number of related sites.

- **EmTech’s Action Research Page** (http://www.emtech.net/actionresearch.htm)
  
  EmTech, or Emerging Technology Consulting, provides a lengthy Webpage of links to useful sites related to action research.
Teacher Research (http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/)

Run jointly by Dr. Diane Painter from the Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools and Dr. Leo Rigsby from the Graduate School of Education, George Mason University, this site discusses a variety of issues in action research and also provides numerous links.

Action Research Electronic Journals


This journal consists of an electronic discussion list to which papers can be submitted for comment and another list that provides papers that have been accepted. Extensive author guidelines are also included for potential authors at http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/ari-auth.html.

Educational Action Research (http://www.triangle.co.uk/ear/)

EAR is published by Routledge, a member of the Taylor and Francis Group. Similar to other journals, guidelines for prospective authors are provided. By clicking on the eJournal: Online Contents button, you can review sample issues of EAR, going back to its first edition in 1993 (http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t716100708).


Networks is arguably the premier online journal for teacher action research, mainly because it is the first journal dedicated solely to teacher research. Sponsored by the University of Wisconsin–Madison, the journal provides a “place for sharing reports of action research, in which teachers at all levels, kindergarten to postgraduate, are reflecting on classroom practice through research ventures. It also provides space for discussion of other ways in which educational practitioners, alone or in collaboration, use inquiry as a tool to learn more about their work with the hope of eventually improving its effectiveness.” The editors of the journal strongly encourage teachers to share their classroom research with colleagues from around the world! By clicking on Current or Archives, readers can view and print the full text of all articles published in Networks since its inception in 1998.

Reflective Practice (http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/14623943.asp)

This journal is published by the Taylor and Francis Group. Reflective Practice includes “papers that address the connections between reflection, knowledge generation, practice and policy.” Its focus is entirely on the nature and meaning given to the process of professional reflection.

Teaching & Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice (http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/ehd/journal/)

This journal is sponsored by the College of Education and Human Development at the University of North Dakota. Its focus is on the “values of thoughtful observation as an educational method.” The articles, all of which are available on the site in full-text (HTML or PDF) format, center on naturalistic inquiry in educational settings.


Chapter 8 • Sharing and Reflecting

- **The Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning** ([http://www.iupui.edu/~josotl/](http://www.iupui.edu/~josotl/))
  
  *JoSoTL*, sponsored by Indiana University, encourages educators to share their knowledge and experiences about the teaching-learning process. The editors specifically state that “submissions that include reflective commentary about the result of the investigation will be considered of greater value to our readership and more appealing for publication.” All articles are available both for preview (in your Web browser) and for download (in PDF format).

- **The Ontario Action Researcher** ([http://www.nipissingu.ca/oar/](http://www.nipissingu.ca/oar/))
  
  *OAR* is sponsored by Nipissing University in North Bay, Ontario, Canada. It is made possible through a partnership of the Grand Erie District School Board, the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, and Nipissing University. As a goal, *OAR* tries to mend “the rift between the researcher and the practitioner. Within this context, the journal strives to:
  
  - Publish accounts of a range of action research projects in education and across the professions with the aim of making their outcomes widely available, providing models of effective action research and enabling educators to share their experiences
  - Demonstrate connections between practice and theory through articles of a general nature on methodological and epistemological issues related to action research
  - Disseminate reviews of books, websites and products related to action research
  - And finally, to provide a forum for dialogue on the various action research projects that are taking place around the province.

  Similar to many of the other journals in this list, all articles in *The Ontario Action Researcher* are available online in full-text format, free of charge.

- **Voices From the Field** ([http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/voices/](http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/voices/))
  
  This online periodical was produced from the fall of 1999 through the spring of 2002 by the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory, a program of the Education Alliance at Brown University. The purpose of this free publication was to present issues from the perspectives of teachers experiencing change, challenges, and growth as education reform took shape. Although no longer in production, there are some wonderful articles of action research written by teachers.

### Action Research Electronic Mailing Lists

Most electronic mailing lists operate in a similar fashion. You simply send an e-mail message to the specified e-mail address for the given electronic mailing list, with nothing in the subject line and no signature included. The contents of the e-mail message—in a generic format—usually read as follows:

```
subscribe <name of electronic mailing list> <your first name> <your last name>
```

Another added advantage of electronic mailing lists is that there is no cost to subscribe or participate in the electronic discussions.
Summary

1. Sharing the results of action research studies conducted by teacher-researchers can help reduce the gap that exists between research/theory and practical application in educational settings.
   - Sharing the results of research studies also provides an opportunity for teacher researchers to gain additional insight into their study and ultimate findings.
   - The act of sharing and celebrating the findings of action research can be a very rewarding professional experience.
   - Results can be shared locally, with fellow teachers, students, and your district's administration.
   - Keep any local presentation brief and focused, highlighting the following: background information, purpose of the study, methodology, results, conclusions, and action plan. Remember to always leave time at the end for questions and answers.
   - Action research communities can serve as outlets for sharing the results of action research, for lending encouragement and support to teachers, and for mentoring other teachers.

2. Results can also be shared at professional conferences and in academic journals.
   - Most professional conferences and journals are refereed, meaning that they use a blind peer-review process to determine the merits of a proposal submitted for presentation or publication.
   - When writing for a journal, it is important to keep your audience in mind, use a clear and reader-friendly writing style, and strive to keep your readers' attention.

3. In increasing fashion, results of action research studies can be shared electronically via action research Web sites, electronic mailing lists, and electronic journals.
4. The act of communicating the results of your action research provides yet another opportunity to reflect not only on the topic of your investigation but also on the action research process itself.

Questions and Activities

1. Describe ways in which presenting or publishing your action research is beneficial in terms of professional reflective practice.

2. Develop a list of alternative techniques, not discussed in the chapter, for sharing the findings of your action research. These techniques may simply be adaptations of other forms of professional communications.

3. Conduct a Web search for other types of outlets for sharing findings from action research studies, perhaps in a specific area of education (e.g., mathematics education, special education, early childhood education, gifted and talented education) that is important to you. Describe your search and what you found online.

4. Subscribe to one of the electronic mailing lists identified in this chapter. Monitor and/or contribute to the online discussions over the course of several days or weeks. What did you learn? Did you contribute to any of the discussions? If so, what was your reaction to that experience?

5. Visit one of the electronic journals listed in the chapter. Review and make a list of the steps involved in the process of getting an article published in that particular journal.

Web-Based Study Site

The companion Web site for the second edition of *Action Research: Teachers as Researchers in the Classroom*

http://www.sagepub.com/mertler2study

Visit the Web-based study site to enhance your understanding of the chapter content. The study materials include chapter summaries, practice tests, flashcards, Web resources, and PowerPoint slides.