OST World
Søndergaard, Bettina Dahl

Published in:
AERA OST SIG Series

Creative Commons License
Other

Publication date:
2015

Document Version
Publisher’s PDF, also known as Version of record

Link to publication from Aalborg University

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at vbn@aub.aau.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from vbn.aau.dk on: december 05, 2018
Next year marks AERA’s 100th anniversary. What role has AERA played in advancing youth development research?

Since 2008, the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation (DASTI), which is part of the Ministry of Education and Research, has run a bibliometric research indicator program. DASTI publishes annual authority lists of journals and publishers through which faculty can earn points: 3 points for a paper in a very highly acknowledged journal (Category 2), 1 point for a medium journal (Category 1), and 0 points for journals not on the list. If there are two authors for a 1-point paper, each author receives 0.5 point. If the authors are not from the same university, each can multiply by 1.25 points. This is to enhance collaboration across institutions. Each subject area has a board consisting of researchers who each year suggests adding or deleting journals on the list, including upgrading or downgrading journals.

Exploring this question, I logged into my university’s system to search how many times someone had published within any of the seven AERA journals. Six are Category 2. AERA Open is not ranked. Aalborg University has 3,300 faculty, but the total number of publications in these journals was one! A paper published in 2014 in American Journal of Educational Research, but the paper was not about youth development. I contacted DASTI to get information about how often Danish researchers use these journals, and they kindly send me lists of publications 2009-2013, including overview of how the six journals are ranked in Norway and Finland in 2014. As seen in the table, there are some differences, particularly in Educational Researcher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Educational Research Journal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Evaluation &amp; Policy Analysis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Researcher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Educational Research</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Research in Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“To my surprise, all six journals had zero Danish universities represented. If the publication record is an indicator, then AERA’s role is very limited in Denmark.”

Does AERA want authors from all over the world to publish in its journals? Has no one from Denmark tried to submit a paper? Are the papers submitted by the Danish researchers of poor quality? Or, does the profile of AERA journals not fit with the focus of Danish researchers, and do they ought to, given that AERA is an American organization? Perhaps the OST SIG could produce proceedings of papers presented (and submitted) at the annual meetings. Such proceedings should be with a separate ISSN-number in order to be recognized and easily identified, as well as being put on authority lists; it would aid to advance the research.

The 2016 AERA theme is Public Scholarship to Educate Diverse Democracies. How does your research support the theme?

One of the things mentioned by Oakes, Welner, and Reneé in the online description and
invitation to the 2016 AERA Meeting is that research should strengthen public education, as this is one of society’s most democratic institutions. One aspect is to “produce scientific knowledge that educators could use to improve large school systems.” Having such a goal for one’s research can seem overwhelming. How can I, just one person, do something that will have any significant impact?

This question brings me back to a discussion with a former lecturer. We were a class of graduate students all wanting our theses to have a real impact on teaching and learning, but we all became increasingly aware that we had to be very focused and narrow in our research, which was frustrating. How would our work actually have any importance then? The answer we received from our lecturer was that we had to learn to see our research as a ‘brick in the wall.’ Being just a brick might not sound very heroic, but any wall consists of several bricks. Bricks form a wall, or a body of knowledge, which then would point in some direction and hopefully have an impact.

What is the route from “walls” of research to actual teaching? Teachers do usually not read research papers even if they are about education. The reason is that teachers do not have time for it, they often do not know where to find relevant papers, the language of research papers is aimed at other researchers and are not easily accessible to teachers, and finally, the conclusions of such papers are not easily translated into something a teacher can use in practical teaching. A similar line of reasoning can be made for politicians. This is a shame, since this means that a lot of research, which is potentially useful to teaching and education, never gets out into the world of teaching. Researchers need to disseminate their research in more popular papers, newspaper op-ed’s, and textbooks. Another way to do it is to use the research when we teach.

In Denmark, by law, universities are required to provide so-called ‘research-based teaching.’ It means that students should get involved with research activities as part of their studies, and university teachers should use their research to inform the content of the teaching. This is an important route, in my opinion. I try to do both. Writing textbooks and more popular versions of own research is a different, and a difficult type of writing, but it is actually an interesting process where I also become a little wiser on what it is I am actually doing.

You have been actively engaged in OST STEM education research. Tell us about your research and findings.

I have been involved in many levels with OST STEM education and in several countries. Sometimes my involvement has been that of co-organizing events like “Mathematics Circus” for school children on a pedestrian area in the city center of a major Norwegian town with the purpose of creating interest in mathematics. The children were involved in mathematical bowling, bingo, card tricks, kite building, and sack race. Many times in both Denmark and Norway, I have served as a judge in competitions created to foster interest in STEM. One example is FIRST LEGO League where children built robots to perform various tasks and compete in friendly competitions to show both how well their robots performed and to learn how to present their designs and be good teammates. Another example is CEDAR’s (Coal Education Development and Resource) Regional Coal Fair in the US, judging mathematics coal-centred school student projects. But other times, the audience in the competitions were not students with a lack of interest in STEM, but rather talented Danish high school students with a high interest in STEM. OST was a way to keep their interest and to develop their knowledge further. Common to all events is that children always appeared to enjoy it. ‘Enjoy’ and ‘learn’ however, are not the same thing. The long-term effects of such events are hard to test. Our hope is that, together with others things, they will point
towards students’ consideration of a STEM career.

I have also participating in projects where we tried to monitor and assess outcomes. One example is a study of the use of mathematics computer games in an OST activity. Girls appeared to spend less time deciding if a game was worth playing compared to the boys but common for all was that 5\textsuperscript{th} grade students appeared more adventurous in trying our more difficult games compared to the 7\textsuperscript{th} graders who were more hesitant (Dahl, 2004). For many years, I was also involved with a project organized by Aarhus University called “Nature in the Tent.” During the annual town festival, the Faculty of Science put up a tent and had students from the departments disseminate knowledge about their subject. The morning audience were mainly K\textsuperscript{9} students. In the afternoons, the tent was open to anyone. The first years I was involved as an evaluator of the project (Dahl, 2007), where I concluded that most K\textsuperscript{9} students were very happy to participate and some of them even experienced so-called “breakthrough behaviors” (Barriault, 1999) but the university students’ ability to disseminate their knowledge needed to be improved. The following year, a colleague and I put a three-day workshop in order to help the students. We monitored these students for two years and were able to conclude that even such a short workshop was able to both change the students’ knowledge and views of dissemination in an OST context (Dahl & Stald, 2013).

References


Mathematics and Science Education (MONA), 9 (1), 22-37.


Next year, 2016, marks the Out-of-School Time SIG’s 10th anniversary. What have been some key trends that have shaped the OST field over the past decade? What should be one key element on the OST research agenda in the next decade?

“The OST SIG has aimed to be a place to collect and discuss evidence-based knowledge about how out-of-school time and after-school programs provide a useful context for learning a subject and also how to create attitude toward the subject and other people, as well as to develop talents and creativity in youth of various ages.”

The OST SIG has aimed to be a place to collect and discuss evidence-based knowledge about how out-of-school time and after-school programs provide a useful context for learning a subject and also how to create attitude toward the subject and other people, as well as to develop talents and creativity in youth of various ages. It has also helped document related issues. One issue is the difficulty in retaining staff in such programs. We have also discussed what learning takes place. At various points we have discussed how OST relates to informal learning, and we have collaborated with the informal learning SIG to the benefit of both. At the same time we have found it beneficially to keep the SIG separate in order to stay focused. Something I personally think could be an interesting angle for the next decade is to become even more international in order to exchange knowledge for the benefit of all. OST is something done in various ways in different countries. Both the differences and commonalities may provide opportunities to take the next step in enhancing out understanding of how learning and growth happens in OST and how such events can be organized.
Dear members,

We welcome you to the second year of the OST SIG e-newsletter series, designed to connect you to each other and to the emerging and groundbreaking scholarship in the out-of-school time field. We hope the series will introduce you to new ideas, concepts, and spark a connection in your work.

With warm regards,
The officers of the OST SIG

Dr. Bettina Dahl (Søndergaard) is Associate Professor at the Aalborg Centre for Problem-based Learning (PBL) in Engineering, Science and Sustainability under the auspices of UNESCO at Aalborg University (DK). She has a M.Sc. in Mathematics from Aalborg University, a M.Sc. in Educational Research Methodology from University of Oxford (UK), and Ph.D. is in Mathematics Education from Roskilde University (DK). Previously, she was Associate Professor of Aarhus University (DK) working with educational development at higher education in science and mathematics and Out-of-School Time learning. Prior, she was Assistant Professor at Virginia Tech (USA) working with mathematics teacher training for middle schools and high schools and before that, she was Advisor at the Norwegian Centre for Mathematics Education at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology where she worked on developing the first mathematics national tests for the Norwegian compulsory education. She has more than 100 publications.