



APA DIVISION 15 PRESENTS

▶ **ONE TIP**

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**When I began doing research about**

self-regulated learning, much of the work in this field involved the administration of survey self-report questionnaires (research about classrooms) or the implementation of researcher-designed interventions, which rarely led to lasting changes for learners because teachers were not involved in their design or invested in their implementation. Often they didn't attend to the situated problems of practice.

I wanted my research to differ from much of the research that had gone before mine.

**1. I wanted to do research in classrooms.**

**2. I wanted to do research with teachers.**

However, as a junior faculty member at a research intensive university, some of my colleagues discouraged my participatory approaches to research, advising that I would not get funding for it, and that it would hamper my progress through the professorial ranks.

I didn't listen. And it hasn't hurt me. I have received internal as well as external funding from Canada's national research funding body throughout my career, managed to publish in "top" journals, and moved through the professorial ranks on schedule. I currently hold the Dorothy Lam Chair in Special Education at my university with a mandate to conduct research that both advances knowledge and improves practice in education.

So I would say to others who want to pursue scholarship that includes researcher practitioner partnerships, follow your bliss! But be strategic.

Connect your teaching and professional engagements to your research. In my case, I have made the study of how teachers can be helped to support children's SRL a focus of my research. Specifically, I have studied how teachers (preservice and inservice) develop SRL promoting practices through their engagement in guided and sustained professional learning (e.g., participation in communities of practice and teacher learning teams). Most recently, in the context of a longitudinal study of children developing SRL, I've

partnered with teachers to design and implement curriculum-linked, formative assessments of children's SRL in the context of regularly occurring tasks and activities in grade 3 and 4 classrooms. In this project, teacher-researcher collaborations have led to the creation of powerful tools for capturing children's SRL in situ that both researchers and teachers can use to inform their work.

Look for methodological approaches that advance the state of knowledge, but also translate and mobilize knowledge for practical purposes. There are many. I have framed my research with teachers as action research, collaborative inquiry, and most recently research-practice partnerships. These approaches distinguish themselves from transmission models of professional development and traditional approaches to intervention research by positioning teachers centrally in efforts to enhance or change outcomes for learners. I believe they lead to robust, ecologically valid and sustainable findings because they are sensitive to variations in contexts and take advantage of local knowledge generated within schools and communities.

I used to counsel students and early career colleagues to avoid including labels like "action research" in grant proposals and manuscripts—advising them instead to "just describe what you do." Fortunately for contemporary early career educational psychologists, professional organizations, such as APA and AERA, are promoting our role in improving educational practice, so "selling" participatory approaches is getting easier. Hopefully this will incentivize young scholars who feel passionate about linking their research to practice communities to engage in researcher-practitioner partnerships that move us closer to closing gaps between research and practice.

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## ONE TIP IS PUBLISHED

bi-monthly by the Membership Committee of APA Division 15 (Educational Psychology). In One Tip, senior scholars tell their stories and share insights for junior scholars. If you would like to contribute a piece, please contact Division 15 Membership Committee Chair, Serena Shim at [sshim@bsu.edu](mailto:sshim@bsu.edu).

