

Musings on Research in Practice

by Esther Nordin

■ Research in practice can also greatly enrich and deepen the learning that takes place in community-based settings. In a sense, a great deal of learning that occurs in community-based programs is a form of research. We research our various childhoods, we research our cultural traditions, we research our work goals and our experiences with work, we research our understanding of a novel or even a word. Once we reframe our everyday learning and insights as forms of research, we can become conscious researchers of our own experiences, histories, situations and communities, and a new world of content and form opens up to us. We can explore topics that are critical to us, in new and novel ways, not only through academic language but also through poetry and the arts, social activism and advocacy. By becoming conscious researchers and merging our



research with our learning, our learning is further validated and takes on a new social and artistic potency.

I guess my view is that as long as research in practice carries the assumptions and language of current dominant thinking in literacy and educational policy it will have a negative impact on community literacy programs. But if it can embrace social and economic change

and equity, or can serve as a catalyst for equity—helping us to understand the many oppressions that have carried us here, or helping us to explore learning—it has the potential to support and even transform community literacy. ■

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