

**From the Editor -**

**WELCOME**

In keeping with the mission of the College of Education at The University of Iowa, the Division of Educational Policy and Leadership Studies is pleased to present the *Journal of Research for Educational Leaders*. The *Journal* is an electronic professional resource provided at no charge as a service to educational leaders, their boards, and their faculty and staff.

The goal of the *Journal of Research for Educational Leaders* is the timely dissemination of interdisciplinary research findings and their practical implications as they identify and/or affect best practice in K-12 schools. The *Journal* is focused on the improvement of America's schools, student learning, and educational leadership, knowledge and skills. Each issue contains articles on current research and informed opinion in a variety of disciplines and their practical applications important to educational leaders.

***About the Journal of Research for Educational Leaders***

All articles published in the *Journal of Research for Educational Leaders* are refereed and peer reviewed under the supervision of our Editorial Board Members. The Editorial Board of the *Journal of Research for Educational Leaders* is national in scope and is composed of both professors of education and public school practitioners.

School superintendents and principals are encouraged to share *Journal* articles with their colleagues, staff, board members, community members, and parents. Copyright will be waived for not-for-profit educational purposes.

*Journal* articles must meet three criteria:

1. The article must contribute to knowledge, theory, and practice
2. The article content must be accurate and scholarly
3. The article must conform to the editorial guidelines of the *Journal*:
  - Manuscripts should be written for a general audience of educators in a usable, easily understood format
  - Technical jargon should be avoided
  - Manuscripts should be interesting to a significant body of educational leaders
  - Manuscripts should focus on the relevance and implications of the research findings for educational leaders
  - Manuscripts should avoid detailed descriptions, technical information about methodology, and unnecessary details about data findings
  - Articles will include author contact information. Readers desiring technical information and details are encouraged to contact the author(s) directly.

### **You, the Reader**

While the members of the Editorial Board and The University of Iowa are pleased to offer the *Journal of Research for Educational Leaders* to the education community, we are quite dependent upon you, the reader in the following areas:

1. Manuscripts: In order to provide timely dissemination of interdisciplinary research findings and their practical implications for K-12 schools, the *Journal* requires at least 35 to 40 quality manuscripts annually. To date, the most difficult step in creating this publication has been the solicitation of appropriate manuscripts. If you have a manuscript describing recent research or views of a scholarly nature that are of value and interest to educational leaders, please consider allowing the *Journal* to review them for publication.
2. Readership: A publication is of value only when it is read. If you think the *Journal* has something to offer school leaders and others involved in educating children, please share news of this journal with your peers and colleagues.
3. Input and feedback: Your ideas on topics for future research, comments on articles we have published and suggestions on how we might improve our publication are desired and encouraged. Please contact us, either directly or through our Editorial Board Members.

Sincerely,

Gerald L. Portman, Managing Editor

### **LITTLE TEDDY STODDARD**

This is the story of an elementary classroom teacher, Mrs. Thompson. One year, as Mrs. Thompson stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she told the children a lie. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said that she loved them all the same. But that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard.

Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he did not play well with the other children, that his clothes were messy and that he constantly needed a bath. She knew Teddy could be unpleasant. It got to the point where Mrs. Thompson would actually take delight in marking Teddy's papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then putting a big "F" at the top of his papers.

At the school where she taught, every teacher was required to review the past records of each child in their class. Mrs. Thompson had put Teddy's off until last. However, when she reviewed Teddy's file, she was visibly surprised. Teddy's first grade teacher had written, "Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners...he is a joy to be around." His second grade teacher had written, "Teddy is an excellent student, well liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother

has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle." His third grade teacher had written, "His mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best but his father does not show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if some steps are not taken." Teddy's fourth grade teacher had written, "Teddy is withdrawn and does not show much interest in school. He does not have many friends and he sometimes sleeps in class."

Mrs. Thompson now recognized the problem, realized her mistake and was ashamed of herself. Toward the end of the semester, she felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents, wrapped in beautiful ribbons and bright fancy paper. Except for Teddy's; his present was clumsily wrapped in the heavy brown paper that he got from a grocery bag. Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing, and a bottle that was one quarter full of perfume. But she stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist.

Teddy Stoddard stayed after school that day, just long enough to say, "Mrs. Thompson, today you smelled just like my Mom used to." After the children left, she cried for at least an hour. On that very day, she quit teaching reading, and writing, and arithmetic. Instead, she began to teach children. Mrs. Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest children in the class and, despite her lie that she would love all the children the same, Teddy became one of her "teacher's pets."

A year later, Mrs. Thompson found a note under her door, from Teddy Stoddard, telling her that she was still the best teacher he had ever had in his whole life. Six years passed before she got another note from Teddy. He wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and that she was still the best teacher he had ever had in his whole life.

Four years after that, Mrs. Thompson got another letter from Teddy Stoddard, this one saying that while things had been tough at times, he had stayed in school, had stuck with it, and would soon graduate from college with the highest of honors. Teddy assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still the best and favorite teacher he had ever had in his whole life. Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time Teddy explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favorite teacher he had ever had. But now his name was a little longer. The letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, M.D.

The story does not end here. There was yet another letter that spring. Teddy said he had met a special girl and was going to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years before, and he was wondering if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit in the place at the wedding that was usually reserved for the mother of the groom.

Of course, Mrs. Thompson did. And, she wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. And she made sure she was wearing the perfume that Teddy remembered his mother wearing on their last Christmas together. They hugged each other, and Dr. Stoddard whispered in Mrs. Thompson's ear, "Thank you, Mrs. Thompson for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference."

Mrs. Thompson, with tears in her eyes, whispered back. She said, "Teddy, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. I didn't know how to teach until I met you."

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Editor's note:

On 10/26/2004, the Journal of Research for Educational Leaders received an e-mail, excerpted below, from Mr. Ben Thomas, of Twelvetreets Media Consultancy (TMC).

The webpage published in January 2002 by JREL . . . features an unattributed story entitled "Little Teddy Stoddard". While this story may have been contributed to JREL as the work of an anonymous author, its origins are neither anonymous nor biographic.

The heartwarming tale of little Teddy Stoddard and his inspirational teacher, Mrs. Thompson, is a plagiarism based on an original work of fiction. The original story first appeared in significantly different form in the magazine *Home Life* in 1976, was written by Elizabeth Silance Ballard (now Elizabeth Ungar) and was entitled "Three Letters from Teddy." Aside from numerous changes made to the original author's text, the featured character's given name was Teddy Stallard, not Teddy Stoddard. . . . [A]nother EDU . . . has been republishing the original written work for educational purposes since 1998: <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/home/hblim/passages/teddy.htm>.

The Journal of Research for Educational Leaders thanks Mr. Thomas for his interest in the accurate, respectful and legal acknowledgement of original published work/s.