

Editorial: What is Innovation?

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The mission of the Association for Science Teacher Education (ASTE) is to promote excellence in science teacher education world-wide through scholarship and innovation. This mission is especially crucial during a time when there is much attention focused on science education reform, improving science teacher quality, and science teacher accountability. Accordingly, science educators around the globe are called upon to respond to these challenges through innovative and cutting-edge efforts. The ASTE is poised to address these challenges through the creation of its official practitioner journal, *Innovation in Science Teacher Education (Innovations)*. The *Innovations* journal provides the ASTE's internationally renowned membership with a key outlet to share their innovative efforts regarding the preparation of preservice and inservice science teachers.

As the inaugural editors of the *Innovations* journal, the most frequent query that we receive from authors is whether or not we think that their idea is a good fit for the journal. To help inform and to provide our readership with a response to this important question, we would first like to share a few comments that we have received from our amazing editorial review board members regarding manuscripts that they have reviewed:

"Yes, I would love to see this article published – it is exactly the sort of article that reflects the goals of *Innovations in Science Teacher Education*. I know I already got ideas for modifying my similar course out of reading it, and I am sure others will too! I especially appreciated how many details were provided and the thinking/planning behind implementing this pedagogical change" (Reviewer).

"This is a good write-up of an excellent activity with important implications for teachers and teacher educators" (Reviewer).

"I liked reading about the activities and will most likely include them (or some) in my instruction. I think that other science educators will also find this interesting" (Reviewer).

We believe that the litmus test for whether something is innovative is that if you share your idea (e.g. lesson; course redesign; common theme for a course; teacher education program redesign; professional development settings; or a collaborative effort with other departments involved in science teacher education) with a colleague, and they provide you with comments such as those mentioned by our reviewers, your idea is likely innovative. Accordingly, we encourage you to share your passion and your exceptional work via the *Innovations* journal. It is also evident from the reviewers' comments that the transferability of the innovative work to other settings is often an important aspect of the manuscript. *Innovations* readers will look to the journal to inform their practice and contemplate new and

innovative ways of engaging the preservice and/or inservice science teachers with whom they work. As such, the extent to which the ideas shared are applicable in other contexts and settings is an important factor *Innovations* reviewers are keenly aware of as they review manuscripts. The articles found in this inaugural issue meet this litmus test. According to the authors, they were able to determine that their work was innovative by discussing their ideas with colleagues at the ASTE International Conference and being mindful of how their ideas were received by their peers.



The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines innovation as a new idea or method, or the act or process of introducing new ideas or methods (innovation, n.d.). Although we believe that innovation can refer to this definition, we also believe that innovation can simply be a change made to an existing idea, but with a fresh new lens or perspective. Since science teacher education is constantly changing, we are continuously in need of fresh new perspectives. Thus, we encourage science teacher educators, scientists, science coordinators and supervisors, and informal science educators who prepare and provide professional development for teachers of science at all grade levels to share their innovative ideas with our international science education community through the *Innovations* journal.

Innovations is the official peer-reviewed online practitioner journal of the ASTE that serves as a forum for disseminating effective instructional practices that are innovative and inspirational. This notion is in accord with Akpan (2010) who suggests that innovation draws attention to the important role of science teacher education associations, whereby its members not only have the insights, but also the interest in helping science teacher colleagues. Akpan (2010) further emphasizes that the key role of such professional bodies in developing science teacher educators, and the sharing of experiences at a collaborative

level is essential to developing a more productive, innovative, and enthusiastic science teaching force. Thus, the articles published in *Innovations* are truly written by science teacher educators for science teacher educators, in the broadest sense of the word.

Over the summer, take some time to reflect back on the innovative aspects of your lessons, classes, collaborations, and programs. Do you have an innovative idea to share with your colleagues? Will you be providing professional development for science teachers this summer? Consider sharing your ideas and lessons learned with colleagues by submitting a manuscript describing your outstanding work with preservice and inservice science teachers!

Also, be sure to check out our website to learn more about publishing in *Innovations in Science Teacher Education* by using the following link: <http://innovations.theaste.org>. Please be sure to review the instructions for authors section prior to submitting to ensure that your manuscript adheres to format guidelines and addresses each criterion. We look forward to receiving your manuscripts and want to thank everyone who is, and will be, participating in the submission and review of manuscripts. We hope that you enjoy the inaugural issue of the *Innovations* journal!

If you have any questions regarding the *Innovations* journal, please contact Rommel Miranda (Rmiranda@towson.edu) or Ron Hermann (Rherrmann@towson.edu).



References

Akpan, B.B. (2010). Innovation in science and technology education through science teacher associations. *Science Education International*, 21(2), 67-79.

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