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Reflection on my Action Research Journey

This year's IBSC Action Research theme, *Boys as Makers*, especially interested me as I am all about making and creating in the classroom. Currently my boys participate in "Genius Hour" each week, during which they are given time to research any topic of interest and create something to reflect their learning. A *Boys as Makers* theme seemed like a natural fit for my classroom.

While I have had some informal experience as an action researcher, I have not participated in such an in-depth and focused action research process. At first glance, the process with all of its benchmark due dates seemed dauntingly overwhelming. Honestly, I was a bit intimidated as some of the tasks required were new to me. However, thanks to the great leadership of Margot Long, her suggestions and feedback were invaluable as I manoeuvred through the process. The Skype conversations were particularly helpful and a wonderful way to further connect with team members.

As I reflect on this past year, I am so thankful to have taken part in this project. Not only did I learn how to conduct action research, but I also learned so much about my research topic. I plan to implement the strategies and lessons on developing empathy that I created for my research, during the course of next year. I also developed a new approach to the way I teach. I became a teacher-researcher. As a teacher, I still needed to impart knowledge to my students but as a researcher, I wanted to understand the how and why of their learning. Keeping a journal of my observations of the boys and their behaviors helped me become a more authentic teacher in that I was present with the boys and able to respond to their learning and discoveries. As a teacher-researcher, I became more reflective of my teaching and, therefore, more deliberate in my actions in the classroom and in my responses to the boys.

I want to thank the leadership team of the IBSC Action Research program for their support throughout the year. Thank you to Laura Sabo who was always available to answer questions or provide insight. Finally, thank you to Margot Long for providing support, encouragement, and friendship. What a wonderful experience!

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