From the Editor

Red Wine, Research, and Technology Education

In the last issue, James Haynie presented an analysis and critique of the articles published in the *Journal of Technology Education* since its inception. Haynie argued that there is a dearth of experimental research, attributing it in part to the manner in which editorial reviewers consider research manuscripts. In this issue, Steve Petrina presents another critique of the *JTE*, addressing not only research, but the very nature of the scholarship of technology education as manifested by what has been published. Petrina takes aim at what he feels is the insular nature of our scholarship, pointing out the lack of connectedness with the broader educational community.

There is no doubt that our research and scholarship are lacking. In fact, there are few research findings upon which to justify what we do in practice in technology education today, nor the direction in which we seem to be headed in the future. In fact, there was little research evidence to support the abandonment of past practices.

When I began re-exploring the areas of science and mathematics a few years ago, I expected to be embarrassed about how much more "they" know about what they were doing in educational practice than we do. My face did not turn very red, for other subjects seem to be just as short of research-based knowledge as we are, at least relatively speaking. What's more, there are inconsistencies and unanticipated outcomes in research results across the board. Even in this issue, there is an interesting, unexpected result in the article by Boser, Palmer, and Daugherty. Again, we should not be particularly ashamed about this, especially when we consider the medical community. The inconsistent research results in studies of the influence on health of red wine, along with aspirin, sodium, and coffee, are examples. Plus, these inconsistencies have occurred even with the resources necessary to tighten experimental control and to use larger, more representative samples.

As educational researchers, there is no doubt about our commitment to the scientific approach in our methodology. Ironically, though, we rarely repeat experiments, an equally essential ingredient in the quest for scientific theory and law. We encourage our research novitiate, our doctoral students, to strike out in new directions in their dissertations. In doing so, they build upon the work of others. Yet, the differences from one study to another are often significant enough to void any substantial addition to our theory. Encouraging, even expecting, doctoral research to be innovative is justified. However, when the most substantial portion of the research in a field is embodied in doctoral dissertations, it causes one to pause and ponder.

Over the past 20 years, I have asked a rather straightforward question of a number of experienced teachers with whom I have interacted: "Cite one

example of your teaching practice that is based on research." My question has been answered only on rare occasions. In a lot of ways, it seems an even more formidable task to get research results infused into educational practice than doing the research itself.

We have some shortfalls and some challenges to meet. We need more experimental research upon which to base our practice and we need to connect ourselves with the larger educational community. Nonetheless, I am encouraged by how far we have come in this regard and *JTE*'s contribution to it. The international influence of the *JTE*, the breadth of scope of the articles that have appeared, the diversity of the authors who have contributed to it, and the number of people around the world who are accessing it via the World Wide Web are some of the things that come to mind. Once we get the teachers who are actually delivering our programs fully infused into our "community of inquiry," then we may begin to determine just how good that red wine is that we are now sipping and sharing with others.

JEL