This article was downloaded by: [Dr David Walters]
On: 12 December 2013, At: 03:00
Publisher: Routledge
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Educational Action Research
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/reac20

Grounded practice: putting the 'self' back into self-evaluation

David Walters[a]
[a] Centre for Teaching Thinking and Dialogue, Exeter University Graduate School of Education, Exeter, UK
Published online: 09 Dec 2013.

To cite this article: David Walters , Educational Action Research (2013): Grounded practice: putting the 'self' back into self-evaluation, Educational Action Research, DOI: 10.1080/09650792.2013.851612

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2013.851612

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions

Educational Action Research, 2013
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2013.851612

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Grounded practice: putting the 'self' back into self-evaluation

David Walters*

Centre for Teaching Thinking and Dialogue, Exeter University Graduate School of Education, Exeter, UK

(*Received 8 November 2012; accepted 9 May 2013*)

Inspired by Whitehead and McNiff's 'living theory' approach and the 'Thinking Schools International' programme, this paper focuses on issues surrounding self-evaluation practices in schools and research aimed at school improvement, with specific consideration given to grounded theory and action research. Specifically, the inclusion of the 'self' in a process of practitioner research that seeks to grow schools from the 'inside out' is suggested. As a result of a proposed synergy between grounded theory principles and action research, a new model of practitioner research is offered in order to advance existing notions of 'grounded action', 'grounded action research' and 'grounded practice'. An illustration of how the model has been applied for the purposes of both practitioner research and self-evaluation is outlined in a bid to redefine current perceptions of the self-evaluation process. In conclusion, a move towards research-based evaluation is proposed as a vehicle for widening teacher involvement in educational research and in doing so promotes the 'Stenhousian' view of research as the basis for teaching.

Keywords: evaluative research; grounded practice; living theory; school improvement; self-evaluation; thinking schools

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

Introduction

In this paper I draw on the work of Whitehead and McNiff (2006), in particular their 'living theory' approach to action research (AR) that places the 'I' and 'We' at the heart of the research process. As a serving Deputy Principal in a UK secondary school, I often experience self-evaluation practices that remove the 'self' as defined by one's values only to replace it with the 'self' as a data collection tool aligned to external accountability/inspection processes. Also, in my early doctoral studies, I became aware of the absence of the 'I' and 'We' in much of the academic writing and research I encountered. I am not alone in drawing attention to these issues. Hunt also points to influential pressures found in higher education circles:

> Of more concern is that powerful gatekeepers, whilst apparently upholding an evidence-base of research that demonstrates 'quality', 'rigour' and so on, seem to be effectively excluding the 'self' of the researcher from the discourses of educational research. (2009, 1–2)

Hunt goes on to make the point: 'I suggest that learning to "*be*" a researcher involves the embodiment of knowledge and, therefore, that the "*self*" of the

*Email: dw226@exeter.ac.uk

© 2013 Educational Action Research

researcher is central to the research process' (2009, 6; emphasis original). It is an aim of this paper to put *my* 'self' into its content and style of writing to include the 'I' and 'We'.

The notion of school improvement coming from the 'inside out' has come to prominence in recent years and can be detected in the criteria for becoming a 'Thinking School'.[1] In essence this sees schools as learning organisations where practitioners take ownership of the improvement process through professional enquiry. Indeed, the criteria specifically refer to *evaluative* research. The growth of the 'Thinking Schools International' programme across the globe makes this a truly international development as schools and school systems in Ethiopia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Norway, South Africa, New Zealand, the USA and the United Kingdom have taken up this challenge. The move towards teachers engaging in research also features specifically in the described role of teaching schools' alliances and the new professional standards for teachers in the United Kingdom (DFE 2012).[2]

In taking 'living theory' and 'thinking schools' as two sources of inspiration, I start with the context of the issue in terms of school improvement before going on to illustrate, via a paradigmatic framework, the values I bring to this topic and education generally. From here I develop my perceived links between a social constructivist view of learning, the grounded theory method (GTM) and participatory action research (PAR). Out of this discussion I propose my own model of grounded practice (GP) based on the merger of GTM principles and PAR processes. My paper concludes with an illustration of how I have used my GP model to support educators in conducting educational research and self-evaluation in a UK secondary school, and then how the future of evaluative research may develop. By taking you on this journey, I aim to take steps towards answering the research question: How can we more fully engage practitioners in evaluative research?

School improvement as organisational learning

That schools and educational systems should continually seek to improve is an established theme of international education discourse. The following comment by West is illustrative of the drive for continuous improvement:

> We do not believe that any school can feel entirely satisfied with its current provision – even the most successful of our schools could, indeed must, continually seek out ways to improve the quality of outcomes and of experiences for its students. (2005, 99)

Learning, unsurprisingly, appears to be the main focus in terms of both students and schools as a whole. Hattie (2009) draws together a 15-year study of over 800 meta-analyses relating to the influences on achievement in school-aged students in his ground-breaking book *Visible Learning*. On a school and systems level, Whelan (2009) identifies key factors underpinning school development from over 40 countries on every continent in his text *Lessons Learned*. Given this learning union of students and school systems, the notion of school improvement being about the organisation as a whole seems appropriate. The term 'organisational learning' is not new (see Argyris and Schön 1996). However, I would like to take the opportunity to strengthen the theoretical principles underpinning learning, so that in subsequent sections I can draw on them for the purposes of aligning them to research,

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

specifically GTM and AR, and authentic school improvement. This takes on real significance due to the danger of taking narrow and often flawed student/school outcome measures and treating these as goals rather than maintaining the focus on learning (Wroe and Halsall 2001; Newton 2005; Mansell 2007; Gorard 2010). My interest in organisational learning is founded upon educators learning through a process of self-evaluation in order to make sense of change and to make 'history' (I address the notion of making history later in this paper). Before addressing the issue of learning, I would like to set out an overview of the values I bring to this topic and education generally. In so doing I hope to provide a lens through which I view the issues to be discussed.

Values in rhetoric or in practice?

The importance of living one's values in the educational research process and practice is stressed by Whitehead and McNiff (2006). Indeed, these authors make it clear that the extent to which living theory action researchers achieve this forms the basis of criteria and judgements relating to the validity, legitimacy and significance of their work. Smith (2011), drawing on the work of Collins and Porras (2004), aligns successful schools and businesses in stressing the common factor of both being the preservation of core values and purpose in all that they do. Covey (2004, 42–43) outlines the need for a new level of thinking, 'Inside-out', in contrast to what he refers to as the 'Personality Ethic', the latter characterised by superficial and shallow approaches to thinking and acting. Covey situates this view at an individual level: '"Inside-out" means to start first with self; even more fundamentally, to start with the most *inside* part of self – with your paradigms, your character, and your motives' (2004, 42–43).

In setting out my core values at this early point, I follow the sentiment of the authors mentioned in the above paragraph – start with the self, paradigm and values; and then extend out from there. In reality, however, it is often very difficult to clearly locate one's paradigm and values in specific terms. On approaching 25 years in secondary school teaching, I have only relatively recently been able to frame my core values and purpose in a holistic educational sense. For me this has been achieved through a continuous process of critical self-reflection based on research and practice.

Thus, the summary shown in Table 1 serves to illustrate the combined approach to framing my values in relation to an analysis of paradigms based on the work of Sparkes (1992), Ernest (1994), Crotty (1998), Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), and Whitehead and McNiff (2006).

This paradigmatic framework, which derives substantially from Ernest (1994), draws together consistencies in thinking. However, I readily accept that when one creates a framework of this nature, it becomes an amalgamation that others may not identify with. It therefore must be stressed that I view it as a *personal* mechanism for ordering my thinking that others may also use to more clearly locate and frame theirs. It is not my purpose here to provide a detailed analysis of the various facets of each paradigm (authors such as Sparkes [1992] do this effectively) but to place my values in contrast with alternative perspectives.

My own values are best located within the critical paradigm in that I embrace the world as 'out there' in its material form *and* the internal meaning-making that individuals bring to the world. I identify with a social constructivist view of

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

Table 1. Comparison of the three main paradigms – a framework.

	Scientific paradigm	Interpretive paradigm	Critical paradigm
Ontology	Objects in physical space, external-realist	Subjective reality, internal-idealist, relativist	Persons in society, external-realist or internal-idealist
Epistemology – view of knowledge	Absolutist, objective knowledge, behaviourism	Personal knowledge, subjectivist, interactive, the individual	Socially constructed knowledge, subjectivist, interactive, societies, groups and individuals
Epistemology – theory of learning	Cognitivist	Constructivist, the individual, interactive	Social constructivist, interactive, societies, groups and individuals
Methodology	Quantitative and experimental seeking general laws, nomothetic, manipulative, research from the outside, macro	Qualitative case studies of the particular, ideographic, hermeneutical, dialectical, research from the inside, micro	Critical action research on social institutions, ideographic, participative, transformative, participant researchers, macro and micro concepts
Methods	Sampling, measurement and scaling, statistics, experiments	Non-statistical, questionnaire, observation, interview, interpretive methods, document analysis, conversation analysis	Non-inferential statistics, questionnaire, observation, interview, interpretive methods, document analysis, conversation analysis, focus groups
Interest(s)	Prediction and control of the world, technical	To understand and make sense of the world, practical	Social justice, emancipation, criticism and liberation
Intended outcome	Objective knowledge, truth and laws	Illuminative subjective understandings	Intervention for social reform, social justice
Pedagogical aims	Subject-centred or social utility	Child-centred	Empowerment and critical citizenship

Note: Adapted from Ernest (1994) – reproduced with kind permission.

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

knowledge and learning (this will be further explored in the next section) and translate that into my preferred AR methodology using multi-methods. My values have transformation, empowerment, emancipation and social reform at their core.

The 'Thinking Schools International' programme, in partnership with The Cognitive Education Development Unit at Exeter University, UK, provides a core practical purpose to which I aspire. In short, my core purpose as a researching professional is to apply my working practices to the pursuit of developing the school in which I work as a 'Thinking School'. Thus the following definition of a Thinking School may serve to illustrate my core purpose:

> A Thinking School is 'an educational community in which all members share a common understanding and vision of the nature of the high quality learning and teaching for all students, and are committed to working together to make this vision a reality. They think deeply about their work, reflectively, critically and creatively, and spend time discussing the best ways to co-construct both a meaningful and purposeful curriculum and associated activities, drawing on a wide range of learning opportunities. They are committed to their own learning, keep abreast of research, learn from each other

> and are open to new ideas, considering these carefully before deciding whether they will usefully contribute to their vision for a thinking school.
>
> A school which is successfully developing as a thinking community will strive to ensure that all students are developing and demonstrating independent and co-operative learning skills using a range of thinking tools and strategies. The school will generate high levels of achievement and an excitement and enthusiasm for lifelong learning. All members of the community will interact with and show consideration for each other, in such a way as to enable the positive psychological wellbeing of both students and staff to flourish.' (Knapp 2006)

My core values and purpose illuminate the following sections and also stand as the criteria by which to judge the extent to which I have fulfilled the main aim of this paper – putting the 'self' (in this case 'me') back into the self-evaluation process I outline. This is not to say that *my* 'self' is the universal self, but rather that taking readers through this journey may go some way towards allowing them to place their *own* 'self' into their practice. Critical reflection on whether one's values are just abstract theorising or whether they are alive in one's practice is a good starting point in this respect.

Of course, living one's core values and purpose is not always easy and can often mean 'swimming against the tide'. Hunt (2009, 1) refers to an occasion where her work was deemed 'too risky' to be entered for what was at the time the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise in the United Kingdom. For me, the current problem I face daily is that of what has become known as the 'Audit Culture' (Sparkes 2007; Shore 2008; Burrows 2012), more closely aligned to the positivist aspects of the scientific paradigm. Bravery and determination are required in order to avoid being swept away by this particular current as the pressure to give in to it is ever present. A recent personal example of this relates to an interview I had for the post of principal in a UK secondary school. Although I narrowly missed being appointed to the post, it was the reason the panel gave me afterwards that is of relevance here. When the interview focused on school improvement, I outlined in some detail, and with practical examples, how I saw the process of self-evaluation in schools as needing to move towards evaluative research (an aspect I address later in this paper) and away from the mere collation of facts and figures relating to 'raw' pupil outcome measures. I argued at interview that this more closely reflected my core values and purpose. It was my firm defence of this stance that 'tipped' the panel's decision in favour of not appointing me. My position on this issue was viewed by key panel members as being 'too academic'. On a more positive note I sense a growing change in the educational landscape as the work of Whitehead and McNiff (2006) and 'Thinking Schools International' gain momentum. I will hold my nerve and retain my allegiance to the social constructivist approach to learning. It is this aspect I turn to next.

A social constructivist approach to learning

It is not my intention here to trace the historical trajectory of developments in theories of learning. Rather, I would like to offer an insight into what has become an increasingly supported view of learning (Cobb 1994; Williams and Burden 1997; Sfard 1998; Shepard 2000; Illeris 2003; James 2006; Gergen and Gergen 2008; Stobart 2008) reflected in what has become known, amongst other titles, as 'social constructivism'. My rationale for this is to make my discussion relating to

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

methodology transparent – to provide a lens through which I intend to view GTM and AR.

Informed by Blumer's (1969) view of symbolic interactionism, social constructivism's origins may be said to stem from the Chicago school of psychology. I mention this as a point of interest in that Anselm Strauss and Kurt Lewin, early proponents of GTM and AR respectively, had links to the University of Chicago. Strauss studied under Blumer, and Lewin drew on Blumer's interactionist perspective in producing his theory for the interaction of nature and nurture as explanations for human behaviour.

Illeris's (2003) model of learning, where cognitive, emotional, social and environmental dimensions interact, fits largely into both Williams and Burden's (1997) and Stobart's (2008) description of social constructivism in that the dynamic interplay of learner(s), task(s) and context is seen as core.

Although Williams and Burden (1997) outline these general characteristics of social constructivist learning principles, a more nuanced understanding of the various 'branches' and the contested nature of associated terminology provides a clearer picture. Gergen and Gergen (2008, 160) use the term 'social constructionist' as distinct from social *constructivist* in order to stress the importance of human relationships in the former. Other authors (Cobb 1994; Sfard 1998; Shepard 2000; James 2006) see social constructivist theories of learning as a fusion of active meaning-making and socially supported interactions – a joining of socio-cultural and constructivist principles. Indeed, Cobb (1994) suggests that constructivist and socio-cultural perspectives are complementary active processes, with socio-cultural aspects informing theories of the *conditions* for learning and constructivist aspects underpinning the *process* by which learning takes place. In short, a social constructivist view of learning, based on this discussion, removes the *forced* choice between socio-cultural and constructivist perspectives in favour of a fluid interaction of both. This interaction tends to view learning as a process of individual construction *and* a process of enculturation into the practices of a wider community or society.

It is against this backdrop of social constructivist principles that I will examine and discuss the issues surrounding GTM and AR, particularly in relation to their application to educational research geared towards school improvement.

Constructivist grounded theory

At its most fundamental level, grounded theory is where theory is *grounded* in data – it emerges through what has become known as 'the constant comparative method' (an inductive process of data, category and concept comparison). Although Glaser and Strauss's (1967) seminal text *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* perhaps laid the foundations for the GTM, it has undergone various adaptations over time. Indeed, Glaser and Strauss themselves diverged in their view of GTM in the 1980s. Once again, it is not my intention here to trace the historical developments but instead I would like to draw attention to, and outline a view of, GTM that has strong links with a social constructivist epistemology. This branch of GTM is probably most clearly outlined by Charmaz (2006) in her book entitled *Constructing Grounded Theory*.

If we compare the title of Glaser and Strauss's (1967) text with that of Charmaz (2006) we get an indication of the distinction between the two perspectives. The former seems to imply that theory is waiting to be discovered; the latter creates a

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

sense of theory undergoing active construction through making sense of multiple meanings. In other words, Glaser and Strauss's (1967) perspective sees data as 'out there', whereas Charmaz (2006) sees data as created through interpretation, social interaction and the shared experiences this creates. When one delves deeper into Charmaz's (2006) work, there emerges a real emphasis on actions, throughout the GTM process, beginning with the initial coding of data as illustrated below:

> Initial coding should stick closely to the data. Try to see actions in each segment of data rather than applying pre-existing categories to the data. Attempt to code with words that reflect action. At first, invoking a language of action rather than of topics may feel strange. Look closely at actions and, to the degree possible, code data *as* actions. This method of coding curbs our tendencies to make conceptual leaps and to adopt extant theories *before* we have done the necessary analytic work. (Charmaz 2006, 47–48; emphasis original)

Charmaz's (2006) emphasis on action extends from initial coding to the more refined coding (focused coding and axial coding). It also permeates into memo-writing (a process of self-conversation and analysis of codes that allows categories to emerge), the formulation of categories (raising pivotal codes to the conceptual level) and subsequent theory creation (where key theoretical categories surface and become concepts of the theory). For now, the theme of 'action' will lead my discussion of AR.

Participatory action research, social constructivism and changing histories

Kemmis raises a pertinent question relating to 'action' and AR: 'If action research concerns transforming people's practices, their understanding of their practices and the conditions under which they practice, is it always achieving that goal?' (2010, 417). The issue explored here relates to the degree of emphasis placed on AR making an original contribution to *knowledge*, and AR making *history* by changing what is done. Kemmis's position is clear from the outset when he states, 'The central argument of this paper is that, while action research certainly does contribute to theory, it also, and perhaps more importantly, contributes to history' (2010, 117). I will explore the synthesis of theory and action in more detail when I discuss various 'hybrid' models combining principles from both GT and AR camps. However, at this point it is worth reminding ourselves that both theory and action play a role in the transformation of practice and I whole-heartedly support Kemmis's (2010) powerful statement that if the balance is right then AR will change histories.

When one examines the various descriptions of key features of AR, together with associated models, some commonality emerges. Not surprisingly, 'action' is one such commonality, although Kemmis's (2010) concerns over the degree of emphasis this sometimes takes, echo here again. For the purposes of this paper I will continue the theme of social constructivism by focusing on a specific branch of AR that has come to be known as 'participatory action research' (McNiff with Whitehead 2002). Here the underlying emphasis is on collaboration, reciprocal dialogues, and learning that is critical and dialogically supported. The aim is to transform practice so that it reflects the needs of the community and is not merely prescribed policy.

In my experience, whilst PAR undoubtedly involves a planning phase, it is not necessarily the first phase. In my own PAR investigations, I typically undertake a great deal of monitoring and observation to establish current working practices before any plan for change is attempted. As a practitioner researcher, this approach

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

has helped me to strike a balance between the demands of undertaking research with those of my professional role as teacher and leader. This practical problem is highlighted by Winter (1996). In the first edition of *Action Research: Principles and Practice*, McNiff (1988) refers to the inherent chaos of AR and the need to acknowledge this facet. Bloor and Wood (2006) also draw attention to this. However, in McNiff's second edition she more explicitly outlines a 'generative transformational process' (McNiff with Whitehead 2002, 56) that more closely relates to my experience of conducting PAR. In respect of this process McNiff comments:

> In developing my own theory of the nature of action research, I have come to see it as a spontaneous, self-recreating system of enquiry. I like the notion of a systematic process of observe, describe, plan, act, reflect, evaluate, modify, but I do not see the process as sequential or necessarily rational. It is possible to begin at one place and end up somewhere entirely unexpected. The visual metaphor I have developed is an iterative spiral of spirals, an exponential development process. (McNiff with Whitehead 2002, 56)

The essence of this perspective is illustrated in McNiff with Whitehead (2002, 57) and takes the form of a 'core' spiral with potential 'spin off' spirals. This metaphor more closely resembles my experience of conducting PAR, in that it takes the form of building reflectively from a firm platform of data via an iterative process where the journey and destination evolve. Although surprises tend to be a feature of this approach, I view this to be its biggest asset (McNiff with Whitehead 2002) in that it adds an authentic creative and innovative dimension. I share McNiff's view (McNiff with Whitehead 2002) in that it is possible to begin with one focus and end somewhere unexpected. In a recent PAR project, I began with the issue of inconsistent practice in the school in which I work as raised by lesson observation data. As the iterative process developed, the focus gradually moved from the classroom setting to the wider leadership and organisational structure. This resulted in the creation of 'schools within a school', a structure and culture of paradoxical division into smaller 'family' units that integrated the larger school community through the provision of greater opportunities for collaborative work across age and ability groups. The generative transformational process has continued, and new dimensions appear on a regular basis. As I write this paper we are developing a pupil leadership and research dimension linked to the 'ASPIRE' programme led by Exeter University Graduate School of Education UK, the aim of which is to develop the aspirations of pupils by growing peer leadership from within the organisation.

It is the iterative nature of the AR process outlined by McNiff (McNiff with Whitehead 2002) that provides a link with GTM. McNiff also makes the following point in relation to sorting AR data that also strikes a chord with GTM principles: 'It is also important to start sorting your data as soon as you can. This will help you to make sense of the project in an ongoing way' (McNiff with Whitehead 2002, 98). The next section relating to the merger of GTM and AR principles explores this link further and culminates in a proposed model of PAR that I have come to identify as best representing my own methodological approach.

From grounded action to grounded practice

The notion of merging GTM and AR is not new, and a number of researchers have either discussed this area or adopted it as a methodological approach (Dick 2003; Simmons and Gregory 2003; Poonamallee 2009; Butterfield 2009). Indeed,

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

Simmons and Gregory (2003) take a rather literal approach in the development of what they call 'grounded action' (GA). This definition takes the premise that if GTM is a theory inductively derived from the data it represents, then it follows that GA is a response that is inductively derived from first the data and then the theory it represents. In short, it takes the stance that GTM provides the framework from which to extract theory from data, while GA provides the operational response to the generated theory. In this way GTM may be said to define whilst GA transforms.

Although I can identify with the concept of GA, I do not hold the view that it is a logical end point for GTM studies or educational developments. Moreover, the constantly shifting educational landscape means that any notion of arriving at 'the end' is futile. That said, I do hold the view that there is a point beyond which GA takes us. It is a point where inductively derived actions become part of the working culture of the organisation; where actions become embedded in practice through a process of evaluation, constant comparison and refinement. The result of this process forms my working definition of 'grounded practice'.

At the core of my proposed model of GP is Burden's (1998) 'SPARE wheel' approach to illuminative evaluation. I view Burden's (1998) emphasis on the *setting* (situation or context) in the first instance to be particularly important in retaining a GTM dimension as it is the setting that provides us with the rich data from which we can derive our theory-based *plan*. Using the constant comparative technique at this point allows the theory-based plan to inductively evolve. Since AR has action as a fundamental component, it may come as little surprise that the next phase is *action* – where what actually happens 'on the ground' is gauged. Burden makes the following point in relation to this:

> This is where the match and mismatch will occur, particularly when the plans are those of powerful figures who seek to act or bring about change without full consultation or have not fully thought through the likely consequences of their actions. (1998, 18)

Here the constant comparative and inductive process becomes dual facetted in terms of looking at data to gain a clear picture of the actions, and also referencing actions back to intended plans. By definition, PAR (the branch of AR I favour due to its close alignment with social constructivist principles) relies on participants. It therefore makes sense that from action we move to *reaction*. This is where we attempt to gauge the extent to which we have won the hearts and minds of our participants, as Burden points out:

> Basically, what do the participants think and feel is going on? What is their level of involvement and commitment to the success of the project? Where do they see its strengths and weaknesses lying? By taking this kind of approach we are able to provide another surface to the prism through which we are trying to make sense of what we see and what we hear. (1998, 18)

It is through the action–reaction interface that we can gain insight into the extent to which planned actions are grounded in practice or embedded. *Evaluation* is the next phase in what must be stressed as a *cyclical* process. This is where decisions are made about whether to continue with the original plans, to change them, or to discontinue completely. As it is rare in my experience that original plans work first time, or that the educational setting or context remains stable, evaluation leads us to

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

the original *and* new data and the inductive process continues. It is from this cycle that saturation and consistency begin to emerge through the constant comparative process of data analysis. At this point we may lay claim to GA becoming GP. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed process of GP diagrammatically.

At first glance, Figure 1 may appear to be a re-framing of Burden's (1998) 'SPARE' model. However, the addition of GTM elements sets the GP methodology apart and contributes to the advancement of AR theory and practice. Specifically, the initial detailed focus on the setting and context has the added sophistication of systematically moving through the GTM process of converting data to codes that then are extended to memos which give rise to theory. The generation of a plan *from* this theory adds a new dimension to Burden's (1998) model. It also means that the researcher must develop and refine his/her GTM research skills in order to generate a plan of this nature. Further, continuing the iterative process beyond the evaluation point into theoretical sampling and on to saturation creates opportunities for generative transformational developments to flourish. More importantly, the GP model I propose has a 'living theory' driver in that one's values and core purpose should permeate the whole process and should be clearly identified from the outset as part of the setting and context. These are also key components of the constant comparative technique. Indeed, one's values and core purpose should be the key reference point for comparative purposes if one is to accept them as key criteria for judging the validity, legitimacy and significance of one's work. In this way, the 'thinking schools' philosophy of organisational growth from the 'inside out' is maintained.

Although the synergy of GTM and AR can provide an alternative lens through which one may view the process of research, it is worth noting a fundamental dimension that distinguishes GP from GTM – *time*. The time dimension in GP differs from that of GTM due to the nature of PAR – a concept at the heart of the proposed model of GP. The urgency of PAR comes out of the practical situation.

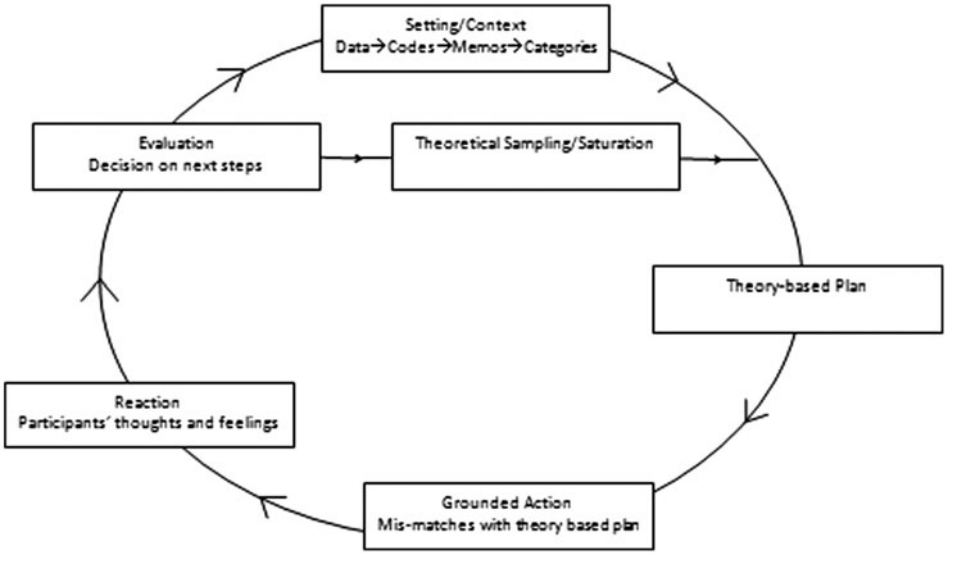

Figure 1. A model of grounded practice.

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

Schools are very busy places and the intensity of the working environment means that developments need to keep pace. GTM, by comparison, takes a more in-depth reflective approach to the data analysis process of converting codes to categories via memos, for example. GP, through PAR, takes a more concise, and to an extent superficial, approach to data analysis and relies on the action–reaction interface along with formative evaluation to refine theory-based plans and actions. GP could therefore be described as dynamic, whereas GTM is more reflective.

The model of GP illustrated in Figure 1 provides a methodological overlay for the research and research-based evaluation/evaluative research examples I present next.

Grounded practice – a model of research

Figure 2 outlines the research method/process diagrammatically and should be viewed through the methodological lens illustrated in Figure 1.

A detailed discussion of the aims, methods, outcomes and implications of the research presented next is beyond the scope of this paper. My focus therefore remains on the research methodology and process as it relates to the GP model discussed in the previous section and illustrated in Figure 2.

The setting for the research is the school in which I teach. It is a state 11–18 secondary school in the United Kingdom situated in a semi-rural part of South West England. I undertook the research as part of a Doctor of Education programme with the University of Exeter Graduate School of Education. By placing the research methodology lens, illustrated in Figure 1, over the research method/process, illustrated in Figure 2, I was able to position stages 1–3 (Figure 2) as representing the specific context of the research via the gathering and analysis of data in a bid to answer the question: 'What have we got here?' In practice, Hyerle and Yeager's (2007) notion of the 'frame of reference' proved valuable for me here as it fostered a critically reflective approach to data analysis (to include coding, memo-writing and category construction through the constant comparative method). It focused my attention on questions of 'How do I know what I know?', 'What is influencing the information?' and 'Why is this information important?' Out of this process, the areas of formative assessment and evaluation emerged as areas in need of development in the school. Thus, the research question 'How can we embed formative assessment and evaluation in our working practices?' was born. The use of the words 'we' and 'our' in the research question were significant as they aligned my roles of researcher and school leader to the social constructivist principles of collaboration and shared meaning-making. This style of research question is also consistent with Whitehead and McNiff's living theory approach to AR, as their description of the essence of this stance illustrates:

> From living theory perspectives, the unit of appraisal is the practitioner's own account of their educational influence in learning as they ask, research and answer questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?' (2006, 88)

Returning to the research method/process in Figure 2 as viewed through the methodological lens illustrated in Figure 1, stages 4 and 5 formed the planning phases and subsequent actions I undertook in collaboration with the research participants. This was characterised by collaborative dialogue via focus group interviews,

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

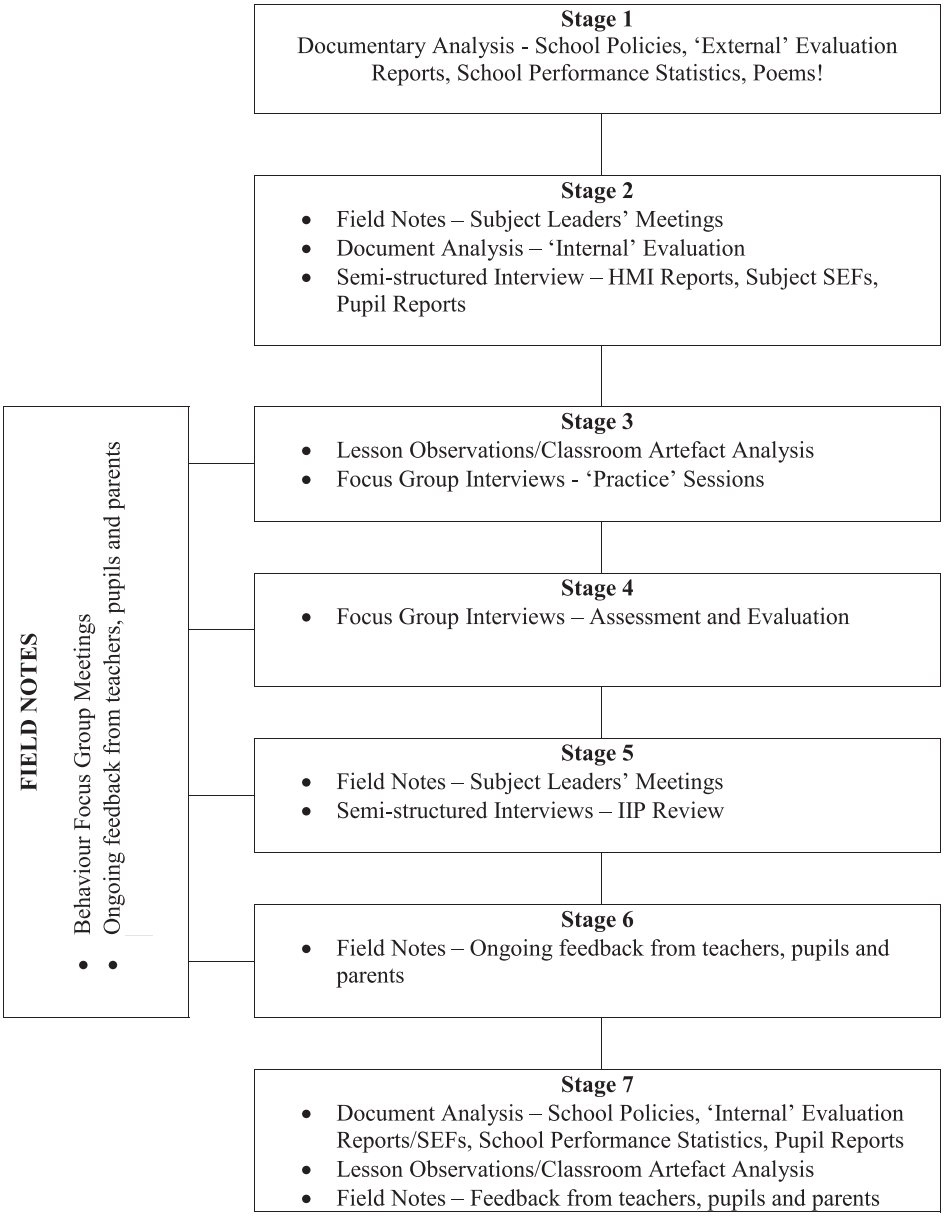

Figure 2. The research method/process.
Note: HMI, Her Majesty's Inspectorate; IIP, Investors in People; SEF, self-evaluation form.

meetings and semi-structured interviews supplemented by field-notes that were also checked collaboratively for credibility, dependability, trustworthiness and transferability. Stages 4 and 5 were pivotal to the success of the research in terms of the extent to which we were true to our values and core purpose as educators. Although collectively we did not *specifically* align ourselves to the critical paradigm elements illustrated in Table 1, or the definition of a 'thinking school' presented earlier in this

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

paper, we did establish some clear generic values we wished to retain throughout the research process and into the outcomes. Our values were those of transformation, empowerment, emancipation and social reform (we all espoused these in one guise or another from the outset) and our core purpose was to develop the school as a learning organisation. We wanted to develop formative assessment and evaluation practices that were fresh and 'different', rather than merely doing what we already did but better. Moreover, we wanted people to generate ideas and 'run with them' in creative directions rather than bow to external pressures. We accepted that this may challenge our leadership skills at all levels but that not to take this line would mean sacrificing our values. Further, we held firm to the belief that no individual or group should be disadvantaged as a result of developments. The resulting changes in practice hold up well when judged in relation to our values and core purpose. Specific changes in practice included changes in classroom practice such as improved written and oral feedback, better use of rich questioning, and increased use and quality of peer and self-assessment. Evaluative changes included the routine sharing (with pupils and parents) of data relating to pupil attainment, achievement, behaviour, attendance and punctuality via dialogic mentoring, so that all parties had involvement in identifying barriers to learning and how they might be overcome. Stages 6 and 7 were viewed through the reaction and evaluation phases, which took the form of ongoing feedback together with theoretical sampling supplemented with a return to both the original and emerging data sources. To encourage practitioners to reflect on their core values, the constant comparative method was used as a reference point to ensure that developments were in tune with our value-based intentions. Giving specific consideration to the *context* at all stages where practitioners were asked to relate discussions, debate and suggestions to their own experiences as a teacher, tutor, leader and learner retained the 'selves' of the participants as integral features of the research process.

The 'bolt-on' field-notes in Figure 2 relating to the behaviour focus group are an example of the 'generative transformational process' outlined by McNiff (McNiff with Whitehead 2002), in that the original focus on formative assessment and evaluation took an unexpected turn towards behavioural issues. This new dimension emerged as a key component of assessment and evaluation developments. In this particular example the generative transformational process was an integral consequence of the research process at the time. However, this has not always been the case in my experience and I have found that it can appear much later on when developments have been embedded for some time. Whitehead and McNiff (2006) draw attention to this phenomenon by outlining how new developments, once established, often go through repeated cycles of refinement and adaptation. Schön (1971, 84), in outlining what he calls the 'proliferation of centers', refers to a similar process where the original central idea gives rise to satellite developments.

In the next section I take the proposed model of GP out of the research arena and examine two examples of how it has been applied to self-evaluation in the school in which I work.

Grounded practice – models of self-evaluation

My rationale for applying the GP model in Figure 1 to the self-evaluation practices, in both of the cases I present, was to place 'the self' at their core and also stimulate reflective thought on the part of those involved – including me. I have used the first

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

Teacher/Tutor/Department/Year Team:

Date:

Line Manager:

Evaluative Research Question: How can I / we improve……..?

S P A R E*

S etting: What is the context or situation? You should relate this to (i) your experience (as a teacher/tutor/leader and learner) so far, (ii) what the data appears to suggest, (iii) how the students see it, (iv) how teachers/tutors in your team see it, (v) what the theory suggests (literature/research)
(See Brookfield S D (1995) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass)

P lan: What is your theory based plan? What did you set out to do and say, and in what order? Why did you think this might be appropriate?

A ction: What did you actually do and say? This is where the match and mismatch will occur.

R eaction: This is where you gauge the extent to which you have won the hearts and minds of your participants. What do the participants think and feel is going on? What is their level of commitment to the success of the project? Where do they see its strengths and weaknesses lying?

E valuation: This is where decisions are made about whether to continue with the original plans, to change them, or to discontinue completely. What aspects of the whole process worked well? What aspects didn't?

Note: this pro-forma may be used directly as a writing template/frame *or* as a structure for your narrative evaluation**.**

***The SPARE approach is based on the model of Illuminative Evaluation – Burden R L (1998), Illuminative Evaluation *Educational and Child Psychology*, Vol. 15 (3).**

Figure 3. Evaluative research.

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

Trainee name: **School:** **Subject:**

Agenda Focus: **Date:** **Observer:**

ITE – DETAILED REFLECTION (AGENDAS)

Agenda-focused research question: How can I improve……?

S P A R E*

S etting: What is the context or situation? You should relate this to (i) your experience (as a teacher and learner) so far (ii) how the pupils see it, (iii) how teachers in the department see it, (iv) what data suggests (v) what the theory suggests (literature/research)
(See Brookfield S D (1995) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass)

P lan: What did you set out to do and say, and in what order? Why did you think this might be appropriate? (Relate to your agenda.)

A ction: What did you actually do and say?

R eaction: What impact did your actions have on those involved? What feedback did you get? (Positive and Negative.)

E valuation: What aspects of the whole process worked well? What aspects didn't? Will you continue with this approach, refine it or do something completely different? What agenda focus will you have next?

Note: this pro-forma may be used directly as a writing template/frame *or* as a structure for your narrative evaluation

***The SPARE approach is based on the model of Illuminative Evaluation – Burden R L (1998), Illuminative Evaluation *Educational and Child Psychology*, Vol. 15 (3).**

Figure 4. Detailed reflection.

example (Figure 3) for individual teacher, individual tutor, subject department, year team and whole school development. I have used the second example (Figure 4) as part of our Initial Teacher Education partnership with Exeter University Graduate School of Education, UK.

Figure 3 outlines what I have called 'Evaluative Research'. Figure 4 relates to what I have called a 'Detailed Reflection' where the trainee teacher selects an

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

'agenda' focus (which is a specific aspect of their practice) in need of development. Figures 3 and 4 specifically identify a *research* question of the nature 'How can I improve my practice?' in line with Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) living theory approach to AR. I will examine the evaluation/research interface specifically in the last section of this paper where I look to the future use of research-based evaluation. For now, Figure 3 stands as a model of self-evaluation and Figure 4 as a model of detailed self-reflection.

The processes, outlined in Figures 3 and 4, closely relate to Burden's (1998) 'SPARE' framework. Although each stage is presented in what may be viewed as a linear arrangement, it has to be stressed that the journey should follow more of a cyclical pattern consistent with the GP model in Figure 1. The key mechanism for placing the 'self' at the heart of the process is starting with a reflective analysis of the *context* or setting in which the development is to take place. *Personal* experiences are illuminated by a range of data and theoretical concepts gleaned from previous research. Out of the reflective process the 'living theory' research question emerges, where the 'I' and 'We' come into focus. This maintains the 'self' as an integral component. From here, the processes of planning, action, reaction and evaluation take shape.

Although the 'self' should be located in the context and research question, one needs to also ensure that one's decisions and actions at all stages are consistent with any articulated values and purpose. This is a point I will return to later in this paper. With whole school developments or team initiatives, this means that actions need to be consistent with both the individual 'self' and also the collective 'selves' of the organisation as espoused in statements relating to ethos, values, purpose, mission and the like – 'walking the talk' so to speak. The examples of research questions used in the school in which I work (see below) may serve to show how the developments fit with the values of the critical paradigm and the core purpose of creating a 'thinking school' outlined earlier in this paper:

> How can I improve the quality of collaborative group work in my Year Eight Geography class?
>
> How can I foster dialogic talk in my Year Nine English class?
>
> How can I challenge the behaviour of a group of Year 10 boys in my Science class in a way that improves their commitment to learning?
>
> How can we embed a range of cognitive tools across the school?
>
> How can we embed formative assessment and evaluation across the school?
>
> How can we more fully integrate the school community so that its members can play a part in leading the learning of others and also develop their own knowledge, skills and understanding in an effective and consistent way?

Although these questions are referred to as 'Evaluative Research Questions' and 'Agenda-focused Research Questions' in Figures 3 and 4, the extent to which evaluation may be judged to have *research* qualities that merit this title needs to be explored further. It is this aspect that I turn to next in my concluding section relating to the future of evaluative research.

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

The future of evaluative research – a 'Stenhousian' perspective

In order to return to my 'living theory' research question outlined at the beginning of this paper – namely, 'How can we more fully engage practitioners in evaluative research?' – I feel it is first necessary to explore the research–evaluation interface.

I am drawn to McKernan's (2008) reminder of the work of Lawrence Stenhouse, in that it proposes that AR should form the basis of teaching and professional development. Indeed, Stenhouse argues, 'It is not enough that teachers' work should be studied: they need to study it themselves' (1975, 143). When looking to articulate what is meant by moving from evaluation to evaluative *research*, I go back to the definition of *educational* research offered by Stenhouse: 'Research, I have suggested, is systematic and sustained enquiry, planned and self-critical, which is subjected to public criticism and to empirical tests where these are appropriate' (1981, 18). Although evaluation and research may be seen to share some common methods (questionnaires, interviews, observation, documentary and visual evidence; Aspinwall et al. 1992), one must remember that research does have unique qualities which set it apart from evaluation. By identifying these qualities it may be possible to 'tip' evaluation into evaluative research in a more *authentic* sense.

In the school in which I work, this 'tipping' of evaluation into evaluative research will take the form of moving us from the models illustrated in Figures 3 and 4 more towards the model of GP as outlined in Figure 1. For schools that have not yet made the shift from an evaluative process that involves collating evidence to fit into some form of prescribed self-evaluation form (SEF, as it is called in the UK) so that *objectives* can be generated, I propose that the models in Figures 3 and 4 provide the first step in moving towards GP as a form of evaluative research. Here the areas of school life are explored in a way that leads to the generation of research questions that are subsequently pursued. In this sense it is more about developing a *process* model of curriculum development rather than the 'traditional' objectives model (McKernan 2008). For the school in which I work, undertaking the GP research into formative assessment and evaluation (outlined earlier in this paper) has allowed the organisation to more fully recognise its identity – its collective self. This led it to connect with the core purpose of developing as a 'thinking school' and seeking formal recognition for this by Exeter University's Cognitive Education Development Unit (accreditation achieved in September 2012). Using the SPARE model in Figure 3 has allowed teachers in the school in which I work to develop the use of cognitive tools in their practice, so that their teaching extends beyond content and into the development of pupils' thinking. Some colleagues have already made the transition to using the GP model for accredited master's or doctoral enquiry. Trainee teachers, based in the school in which I work, have used the SPARE model in Figure 4 to strengthen critical reflection on their own practice and many have gained recognition as 'outstanding trainees'; some taking the GP methodology into their master's studies. By taking the components of Stenhouse's (1981) definition of educational research and showing how they may be realised through the model of GP in Figure 1, I hope to provide a possible route for others who may want to develop evaluative research as part of their practice.

Once again, I would like to stress the importance of beginning the GP process with the *setting*. Whilst experienced GP practitioner researchers may closely align their approach with the spirit of Charmaz's (2006) constructivist philosophy, where the area for development emerges from the data in a holistic sense through system-

atic and sustained enquiry focused on the current life of the school, this may prove too demanding for those embarking on this form of research for the first time. Thus, retaining established self-evaluation categories such as the achievement of pupils, pupil behaviour, the quality of teaching, and so forth, may help to focus the researcher's reflections. However, I would argue that it still remains important to get 'underneath' these areas specifically. For example, the area of pupil behaviour is multi-faceted (Rogers 2011) and needs to be 'unpacked' so that specific research questions and lines of enquiry can be developed. Systematic and sustained enquiry is a key feature of the GP model in Figure 1. It permeates through the initial analysis of the setting/context in the form of coding data, memo-writing and the formulation of categories from which a theory-based plan is constructed. The systematic and sustained enquiry is also an intrinsic and continuous part of the constant comparative method that links plan to action, action to reaction, and reaction to evaluation. Theoretical sampling/saturation relies on meticulous attention to re-visiting old data and exploring new avenues, again using the constant comparative method. Using Hyerle and Yeager's (2007) 'frame of reference' mentioned earlier allows what Thomson and Hall refer to as '… sense-making for change' (2011, 385) by addressing the questions 'How do you know what you know?', 'What is influencing the information?' and, 'Why is this information important?'

Hyerle and Yeager's (2007) 'frame of reference' questions also have the potential to promote critical self-reflection and aid in the process of *public* criticism – both of which should be viewed as continuous and formative processes within the GP model. I would argue also that being critical (self and public) means being open to questions relating to validity (or credibility, dependability and trustworthiness), legitimacy and significance. When drawing on a living theory approach, the judgements relating to these aspects include the extent to which the expressed paradigm and associated values and purpose (of the individual or the collective) are being lived in practice (Whitehead and McNiff 2006). Therefore, keeping the 'self' or 'selves' (as they may appear in team or whole school developments) as a reference point throughout the research process is vital in order that developments reflect core values and purpose.

Whitehead and McNiff (2006) stress that judgements relating to validity, legitimacy and significance, and associated claims to knowledge, also involve the extent to which one has influenced the learning of oneself and others. The inductive, collaborative and constructivist nature of my proposed model of GP has the potential to provide rich learning experiences for those involved in the adoption of it as a mode of enquiry due to the open-ended and exploratory nature of its PAR and grounded theory roots. Kemmis (2010), in suggesting that AR contributes to history, provides a more long-term dimension to the critical judgement process in the form of the extent to which practices have been changed *and* embedded. The model of GP in Figure 1 embraces this through moving beyond existing notions of GA to a more generative transformational landscape of continual refinement and progress.

In my experience, Stenhouse's (1981) inclusion of enquiry needing to be open to public criticism as part of his definition of educational research can be difficult to achieve in reality. GP researchers may be following an accredited programme of study at master's or doctoral level where public criticism is an integral part of the process via presentations, assignments, publication, conferences and formal thesis defence. However, not all GP researchers follow this pathway. 'Thinking

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

Schools International', through its 'Advanced Thinking School' criteria, encourages researching professionals in schools to offer articles relating to best practice to publications such as the school magazine, local newspaper, school website and professional publications. Claxton et al. provide accounts of practitioner researchers in schools who have formed 'teacher learning communities': 'The essence is a small group of teachers who meet together regularly to deepen their understanding of an approach, trying out new things and reflecting on and sharing their experiments with each other' (2011, 211). McKernan (2008, 139) outlines a similar approach in what he calls an 'action research seminar'. Whitehead and McNiff provide an educational leaders' account of successfully promoting AR on a whole organisation level with public scrutiny as a key feature:

> I encouraged all members of staff to undertake their action enquiries, and to regard professional development as an ongoing enquiry. To encourage and support their writing, I provided writing workshops, and arranged for inexperienced colleagues to receive critical feedback from the more experienced ones. This has enabled many to write papers for publication and apply for funding for their academic projects. (2006, 130)

This account is relevant because it draws attention to the important issue of guiding and supporting practitioner researchers in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding of the research process. Thus, colleagues from higher education institutions may serve as valuable partners in developing the model of GP illustrated in Figure 1.

Although I have presented a case for my proposed model of GP being a workable form of evaluative research, with the potential to engage practitioners more fully in the research process, I am aware that this is only one model and that there are contextual and cultural factors in need of development if it is to better serve the guiding and supporting of practitioner researchers. Additional time needs to be created for practitioners to more fully engage in the crucial process of critical self-reflection. Schools may wish to re-think the style and nature of meetings and professional development opportunities in this respect. In outlining my experience of undertaking an interview for the post of principal in a UK secondary school earlier in this paper, the issue of school leadership teams and governors seeing practitioner research as 'too academic' for practical relevance may prove to be a significant barrier if allowed to go unchallenged. Perhaps moving through a development process that begins with the SPARE templates (Figures 3 and 4) and then onto the GP methodology will provide a new direction for schools and school systems to consider. This new direction would appear to be at odds with the 'audit culture' of self-evaluation and inspection. However, given the challenges practitioner researchers face, I would like to end as I started by drawing attention to GP's key feature; that of putting the 'self' and 'selves' of the people involved back into the process of enquiry. The cautionary words of Saint Augustine, as cited by Hunt, echo in my ears as I conclude this paper:

> People travel to wonder at the height of the mountains; at the huge waves of the seas; at the long course of the rivers; at the vast compass of the ocean; at the circular motion of the stars; and yet they pass by themselves without wondering. (2009, 2)

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

Notes

1. See Thinking Schools International and criteria developed by the Cognitive Education Development Unit, University of Exeter, UK: http://education.exeter.ac.uk/projects.php?id=31.
2. See http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/index/support-for-schools/teachingschools-research-and-development.htm.

References

Argyris, C., and D. A. Schön. 1996. *Organizational Learning II. Theory, Method and Practice*. New York: Addison-Wesley.

Aspinwall, K., T. Simkins, J. F. Wilkinson, and M. J. McAuley. 1992. *Managing Evaluation in Education: A Developmental Approach*. London: Routledge.

Bloor, M., and F. Wood. 2006. *Keywords in Qualitative Methods. A Vocabulary of Research Concepts*. London: Sage.

Blumer, H. 1969. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. London: Prentice-Hall.

Burden, R. L. 1998. "Illuminative Evaluation." *Educational and Child Psychology* 15 (3): 15–23.

Burrows, R. 2012. "Living with the H-Index? Metric Assemblages in the Contemporary Academy." *The Sociological Review* 60 (2): 355–372.

Butterfield, J. 2009. "Using Grounded Theory and Action Research to Raise Attainment in, and Enjoyment of, Reading." *Educational Psychology in Practice* 25 (4): 315–326.

Charmaz, K. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage.

Claxton, G., M. Chambers, G. Powell, and B. Lucas. 2011. *The Learning Powered School: Pioneering 21st Century Education*. Bristol: TLO Limited.

Cobb, P. 1994. "Where is Mind? Constructivist and Sociocultural Perspectives on Mathematical Development." *Educational Researcher* 23 (7): 13–20.

Cognitive Education Development Unit. 2012. http://education.exeter.ac.uk/projects.php?id=31

Cohen, L., L. Manion, and K. Morrison. 2000. *Research Methods in Education*. 5th ed. London: Falmer.

Collins, J. C., and J. I. Porras. 2004. *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*. New York: Harper Collins.

Covey, S. R. 2004. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Crotty, M. 1998. *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: Sage.

DFE (Department for Education). 2012. *Teachers' Standards*. London: DFE.

Dick, R. 2003. "A R and Grounded Theory." Paper prepared for the research symposium at the Australian and New Zealand ALARPM/SCIAR conference, Gold Coast, May 4–5.

Ernest, P. 1994. *Educational Research, Its Philosophy and Purpose: An Introduction to Research Methodology and Paradigms*. Exeter: Exeter University Research Support Unit.

Gergen, K. J., and M. M. Gergen. 2008. "Social Construction and Research as Action." In *The Sage Handbook of Action Research*, 2nd ed., edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 159–171. London: Sage.

Glaser, B. G., and A. L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Gorard, S. 2010. "Serious Doubts about School Effectiveness." *British Educational Research Journal* 36 (5): 745–766.

Hattie, J. A. 2009. *Visible Learning – A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. London: Routledge.

Hunt, C. 2009. "'They Pass by Themselves without Wondering': Using the Self in, and as, Research." Paper prepared for the 39th Annual SCUTREA Conference – Really Useful Research: Critical Perspectives on Evidence-based Policy and Practice in Lifelong Learning, University of Cambridge, UK, July 7–9.

Hyerle, D., and C. Yeager. 2007. *Thinking Maps: A Language for Learning*. Cary, NC: Thinking Maps Inc.

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013

Illeris, K. 2003. "Towards a Contemporary and Comprehensive Theory of Learning." *International Journal of Lifelong Learning* 22 (4): 396–406.
James, M. 2006. "Assessment, Teaching and Theories of Learning." In *Assessment and Learning*, edited by J. Gardner, 47–60. London: Sage.
Kemmis, S. 2010. "What is to Be Done? The Place of Action Research." *Educational Action Research* 18 (4): 417–427.
Knapp, F. 2006. "The Definition of a Thinking School." http://education.exeter.ac.uk/projects.php? id=29
Mansell, W. 2007. *Education by Numbers: The Tyranny of Testing*. London: Politico's.
McKernan, J. 2008. *Curriculum and Imagination: Process, Theory, Pedagogy and Action Research*. London: Routledge.
McNiff, J. 1988. *Action Research: Principles and Practice*. London: Macmillan Education.
McNiff, J., with J. Whitehead. 2002. *Action Research: Principles and Practice*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge Falmer.
Newton, P. E. 2005. "The Public Understanding of Measurement Inaccuracy." *British Educational Research Journal* 31 (4): 419–442.
Poonamallee, L. 2009. "Building Grounded Theory in Action Research through the Interplay of Subjective Ontology and Objective Epistemology." *Action Research* 7 (1): 69–83.
Rogers, B. 2011. *Classroom Behaviour: A Practical Guide to Effective Teaching, Behaviour Management and Colleague Support*. 3rd ed. London: Sage.
Schön, D. A. 1971. *Beyond the Stable State*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
Sfard, A. 1998. "On Two Metaphors of Learning and the Dangers of Choosing Just One." *Educational Researcher* 27 (2): 4–13.
Shepard, L. A. 2000. "The Role of Assessment in a Learning Culture." *Educational Researcher* 29 (7): 4–14.
Shore, C. 2008. "Audit Culture and Illiberal Governance: Universities and the Politics of Accountability." *Anthropological Theory* 8 (3): 278–298.
Simmons, O. E., and T. A. Gregory. 2003. "Grounded Action: Achieving Optimal and Sustainable Change." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 4 (3): Article 27.
Smith, A. 2011. *High Performers: The Secrets of Successful Schools*. Carmarthen: Crown House Publishing.
Sparkes, A. C. 1992. *Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Visions*. London: The Falmer Press.
Sparkes, A. C. 2007. "Embodiment, Academics, and the Audit Culture: A Story Seeking Consideration." *Qualitative Research* 7 (4): 521–550.
Stenhouse, L. 1975. *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
Stenhouse, L. 1981. "What Counts as Research?" In *Research as a Basis for Teaching: Readings from the Work of Lawrence Stenhouse*, edited by J. Rudduck and D. Hopkins, 8–19. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
Stobart, G. 2008. *Testing Times: The Uses and Abuses of Assessment*. London: Routledge.
Thompson, P., and C. Hall. 2011. "Sense-Making as a Lens on Everyday Change Leadership Practice: The Case of Holly Tree Primary." *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 14 (4): 385–403.
West, M. 2005. "Quality in Schools: Developing a Model for School Improvement." In *Fundamental Change: International Handbook of Educational Change*, edited by M. Fullan, 98–119. Dordrecht: Springer.
Whelan, F. 2009. *Lessons Learned. How Good Policies Produce Better Schools*. London: Fenton Whelan.
Whitehead, J., and J. McNiff. 2006. *Action Research: Living Theory*. London: Sage.
Williams, M., and R. L. Burden. 1997. *Psychology for Language Teachers: A Social Constructivist Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Winter, R. 1996. "Some Principles and Procedures for the Conduct of Action Research." In *New Directions in Action Research*, edited by O. Zuber-Skerritt, 13–27. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
Wroe, A., and R. Halsall. 2001. "School Self-Evaluation. Measurement and Reflection in the School Improvement Process." *Research in Education* 65: 41–52.

Downloaded by [Dr David Walters] at 03:00 12 December 2013