Action Research in Education

Overview

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Introduction: Whither Action Research? An Introductory Essay

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This three volume collection of articles, chapters and reports that give voice to the nature of action research and professional learning in schools covers the many issues and challenges from a range of perspectives. The series provides salient examples that illuminate the great range of practices associated with the term ‘action research’, itself one that is problematic. The first volume, Historical Perspectives in Action Research in Schools: *From Curriculum Development to Enhancing Teacher Professional Learning*, traces the evolution of action research in schools from a focus upon curriculum development in the 1960s and 1980s to teacher professional learning and classroom pedagogies in the 1990s to the present day. It draws upon the range of work that has evolved from Dewey's concept of democracy related to research on teaching; through Lewin's advocacy of research needed for social practice and which gave voice to the concept of action research. It contextualises this development in terms of broader issues associated with ‘participatory action research’ that carries with it a strong emphasis upon liberatory policies. This volume takes up the understandings that developed from these fundamental positions and informed classic action research that engaged school based practitioners. Commencing with the practice, as it was understood by Stenhouse and Elliott in UK, and later elaborated by Kemmis and Carr and the body of work developed through Deakin University in Australia through the work of such writers as McTaggart and Grundy. The writings of Zeichner and Cochran-Smith and Lytle provide a US perspective. This opening volume also recognises the impact of changing socio-political contexts that have proved to be turning points in classroom research, from the 1980s research into classroom pedagogies to evidence based practice and what that term might encompass.

The second volume in the series, *Distinctive Methodologies Employed in Action Research in Schools*, takes up major methodological issues in action research in

schools, while recognising that action research itself is not a methodology but an orientation to research informed action. As Richard Winter (1998) puts it ‘what is specific to action research as a form of inquiry is that it uses the experience of being committed to trying to improve some practical aspect of a practical situation as a means of developing our understanding of it’.

The volume draws upon critiques of action inquiry in both small and large scale projects and also seeks to further illuminate matters in relation to the methods employed in school focused action research This volume turns to specific approaches that have emancipatory characteristics. It demonstrates the range of different interpretations that are currently emerging in English speaking countries via the work of academics such as Zeichner, Cochran–Smith and Lytle in the United States and in Continental Europe with some reference to more recent South East Asian initiatives. Finally the volume refers to state-wide initiatives that have been seen as means of aligning classroom research to government policies and some of the challenges that this move presents. The third and final volume in the series, *Key Examples of Action Research in Schools Within Different National Settings*, draws on major research projects focusing on classrooms from the 1970s to the present day. This third volume in the series breaks new ground in bringing together very recent work on the engagement of consequential stakeholders (students, community members) in the conduct of action inquiry; moving from consultation to active participation.

This introductory article is not designed as a digest of the contents of the three volumes, rather it is developed as an argument for action research as an orientation and process that can make a powerful contribution to school improvement, through teacher professional learning, in a wide range of contexts. It recognises that the provenance of action research cannot be directly attributable to one clear source, but is best understood as hybrid, drawing on a range of philosophical positions and traditions. Our observations, as academics with considerable experience in the conduct of action research in schools in the UK and in Australia, will be voiced throughout the article, in the first person. Thus we have chosen to place ourselves into the narrative of this introduction. This enables us to use our experience in the field reflexively to look more deeply at its culture and nature. Our personal, lived experience may be seen as a source of theoretical production, itself open to debate and critique. We commence with a discussion of context and its impact upon practice giving it primacy

in our discussion. We then continue to argue for action research as an essentially emancipatory project that has the social good at its heart and continue with some discussion of the various ways in which action research has been commandeered and appropriated for implementation purposes, although often with positive and effective results. Finally we consider the impact of action research upon teacher professional learning.

Considering Context [1]

Context is not merely a *background* to what is undertaken in the name of action research; it is a complex amalgam of social and material conditions *within* which action research takes place. The very word 'background' implies a stage set, a cardboard construct that suggests a time and place, but which is itself static, a mere simulacrum. When speaking of context it is essential to see it as a construct that is far more dynamic and problematic than merely a superficial painting of the landscape. In effect, it is what Schatzki (2002) refers to as *The Site of the Social*. Importantly, context is not only referring to those places wherein individuals, qua individuals, engage in practice. Individualism is something Schatzki eschews. He argues that those embracing individualism 'maintain that social reality is a labyrinth of individuals and (they) seek to analyse social affairs in these terms' (p. 125). Instead he sees that lives hang together through a range of specific situations, intersecting arrangements and physical connections in a mesh of practices and orders. Even the smallest, one-teacher school in a remote location, whether in Australia, South Africa or Thailand, functions as a complex social network governed by a series of interactions, local, regional and national, like ripples on a pond: the teacher with the students; the students with each other; the teacher and students with community members; the teacher with the local authority; the local authority with the region and so on.

Understanding context as the 'site of the social' is a critical factor when considering the nature of action research, because the view that we hold of action research is one that believes that it is undertaken in the company of others hence it is essential that we have an understanding, not only of who those 'others' are but the context in which they act, a context that shapes their actions, a context that has a history and social

geography. Thus, Just as the members of a group of action researchers interact one with the other intersubjectively, they also do so under a range of conditions and in a variety of practice settings that that give shape and substance to what they can imagine, undertake and reflect upon. While the intentions and principles of action research may be shared across many such practice settings, the enactment must necessarily vary in accordance with the material, socio-political and cultural formations within which they are constructed. In effect action research is itself mediated by place.

Tuan (2002) describes place as ‘humanized space’ (p. xii). He sees people as having an emotional bond to the space that they occupy and then transform into place. Place can be seen as a container of relationships. It is organic and dynamic, constantly building and re-building. Lefebvre (1991) in company with Tuan, is concerned with space and place and the impact of these upon aesthetics, architecture and the arts.

> In short, every social space has a history, one invariably grounded in nature, in natural conditions that are at once primordial and unique in the sense that they are always and everywhere endowed with specific characteristics (site, climate etc.) (Lefebvre, 1991 p. 110)

As an example of exploring the further importance of context and place in society and social life through action research, one of the authors is about to embark on a project on Placemaking with The Arts Council in England. The project will gather intelligence on Placemaking through action research projects and related cultural, economic, design and social policy. A major aim of the project is to identify and invite individuals such as artists, cultural practitioners, curators or project managers, or enlightened planners, architects or regeneration officers to the action research programme who can then research, evaluate and look at their own work.

The project hopes to open up processes and thinking within the design team, ask questions and provide new solutions to conventional design responses, raise design standards, and create a greater sense of community stewardship of the design process by local people through judicial artistic interventions. A number of such projects have been undertaken in the sphere of public art and planning. Sharp et al. (2005) demonstrate the powerful connections with inclusivity issues and Carp (2004), was based on Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space and emphasized

the decisiveness of material outcomes in gauging the depth and effectiveness of participatory processes.

But it is not only the natural environment that shapes the lives that people live. More importantly the built environment with its pleasures and its many formidable challenges bears down on us all; manifesting itself in different ways. As Doreen Massey (1994) has long reminded us, while some are in command of time and space most are not; but are themselves driven by the policies and practices of the powerful. Indeed she further develops her argument (Massey, 2005) to argue that ‘space inflects our understanding of the world’ (p.75). Autobiographies and biographies invariably draw upon place as a significant, but not exclusive set of conditions, influencing later behaviours and practices, ideologies and values.

Furthermore, Carr (2006, in which he cites Gadamer) reminds us that we should consider contexts within whichever epoch prevailed that conditioned the practices that arose within them. So that when we examine David Hargreaves (1999) powerful article on the knowledge creating school, included in Volume 1, we recognise that it was generated in a socio-political context where debates on the impact of educational research in general and action research in particular were being vigorously pursued; as indeed were matters related to evidence based practice, a term that is itself contestable (Davies, 1999). Or when we analyse the evolution of the Queensland Productive Pedagogies program as described by Lingard, Mills and Hayes (2006) we find a sophisticated framework for developing educational practices designed by Education Queensland. It is one that has four interlocking major elements: The new basics (what is taught); productive pedagogies (how it is taught); rich tasks and authentic assessment (how it is demonstrated). In essence the new basics are seen to deal with new student identities, new economies and workplaces, new technologies, diverse communities and complex cultures.

The productive pedagogies elements are:

The program was developed as a major educational reform project in an Australian State that had long been one of that nation's most conservative and had been preceded by an intensely conducted substantial research study that sought to identify and explain

dominant conservative practices and their consequences. In effect, it is a child of its times.

In this introduction we wish to connect to the ways in which action research is undertaken in conversation with context, from the local to the global; from the micro to the macro. We argue that action research is enacted within what Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) refer to as ‘practice architectures’ (pp. 57–61). As they argue:

> The way these practice architectures are constructed shapes practices in its cultural-discursive, social-political and material-economic dimensions, giving substance and form to what is and can be actually said and done by, with and for whom (pp. 57–58).

In this sense practice architecture's purpose is to ‘design’ by regulating, informing, enabling and even constraining what is possible. It acts in such a way as to prefigure practice, just as a building itself makes possible what may take place within it. The Placemaking project, mentioned earlier, presents an ambition to create interdisciplinary approaches, with the engagement of professionals and communities, to create humane and livable cities, towns and neighbourhoods that are sustainable, attractive to investors and that offer access and local ‘ownership’ and participation in the shaping of its public spaces and places.

In a way similar to the arguments of Kemmis and Grootenboer, Altrichter and Posch (2009) examine issues in what they call ‘social coordination’ in terms of the interactions between actors and the systems of which they are a part. They see such an interplay as governed by: rules and regulations; material and immaterial resources; intentions, motives, value judgements and world views; and, competences, knowledge, instruments and means (p. 218). As we argue, all of these elements contribute to the ways in which schooling is constructed and understood.

To depart for a moment from our discussion of action research in context, consider the contemporary shopping mall. Its purpose is to be seductive, to entice us into its very heart, to spend, to envy, to desire. As we move through it's glittering halls, upwards and onwards we are both subliminally and overtly invited to participate, to laden ourselves with those things for which we have no need. The spatial relations designed into the

building determine, to a large extent, our behaviours within it. The building has a narrative and the story is consumerism. In the same way grand public buildings around the world, be they Houses of Parliament, Churches, Mosques, Museums or Galleries, signal to us their serious purpose. More to the point we can look at our schools and the ways in which they are designed to enable (and at times even impede) the teaching and learning that will take place within them. As Loris Malaguzzi reminds us that while peers and adults can be seen as the first and second ‘teachers’ of the child the school buildings, their interiors, textures, colours and dynamics are ‘the third teacher’ (Burke … Grosvenor 2008: 119).

So, how do we now apply these notions of context to the many ways in which action research is enacted?

Our first example comes to us from the history of education. Catherine Burke (2005) has documented a remarkable history of the evolution of a school that greatly challenged notions of physical and pedagogical spaces for learning in a small mill factory midway between Manchester and Bolton in the town of Kearsley in the North of England. While not recorded as action research, for us it meets all of its requirements. It is an ‘experiment in education’ conducted over many decades by Edward Francis O'Neill as the headmaster of Prestolee County Elementary School. His approach was a deeply humanitarian and moral one and his work was consistently made public through the agency of the Ideals in Education Conferences conducted over many decades.

O'Neill challenged the orthodoxy of the day that arranged young people in classrooms around notions of authority and deference while he was more captivated by learning through research, discovery, construction and invention. Burke quotes O'Neill as rejecting the Punch and Judy style of teaching, ‘Hands up, Hands down’ as though students are puppets, manipulated by the teacher-puppeteer (p. 267). He preferred instead to confront young people with real tasks that they had designed for authentic purposes. He was influenced by the work of, among others, Montessori and Dewey. He believed that young people should actively construct their own learning environment and all that it contains. A notable feature of the school was its lack of timetable with the school day running well into the evening. Educational workers, whether functioning in metropolitan or rural schools in countries across the globe would recognise the courage that such risk-taking requires as bureaucracies seek to stamp their authoritarian mark

upon practice and trammel them with all of the rules and regulations associated with the reduction of risk.

While this brief account can in no way do justice to such remarkable work it is important here to note that it stands as an example of action research in context; in the context of a prevailing social view that young working class children in England's industrial North would be best served by an education that would fit them for a subservient and compliant role where there was little place for initiative, autonomy and experimentation.

In the third volume of this series we draw upon the work of the late Orlando Fals Borda as another example of the power of action research. As a sociologist and activist in Colombia his work was inestimable. He is attributed with developing the notion of participatory action research that combined research and theory with political participation. He believed, with passion, that academic researchers should take on, as full partners and co-researchers, the communities in which both had an interest, in particular grass roots communities in Colombia. He spoke for the Southern Americas in the face of what he saw to be the Western-American, Eurocentric domination of economic, political and cultural processes. He asserted that ‘care should be taken for blind imitations of incongruent ideas originated in institutions and practices of advanced countries…’ (Fals Borda, 2000, p. 631). He advocated drawing upon the local social realities with which peoples may be faced, avoiding the trivial and refusing to be seduced by powerful and entrenched interests. He was not arguing for research to be reduced in its impact and power by wider engagement; to the contrary, he believed that through its democratisation it would bring about a greater creativity and flexibility.

In their celebration of the work of Fals-Borda, Flores-Kastanis, Montoya-Vargas and Suarez (2009) point out that while little has been published in international journals regarding the work of participatory action research in Latin America, in particular, Colombia, Mexico and Argentina, it nonetheless has had a considerable impact on schools where the otherwise ‘silent’ voices of social actors are heard. But they also argue that much still needs to be achieved to bring academia and field based practitioners to the same table:

> We need a language that is less dogmatic, less ‘critical’, less orthodox and less exclusionary, more inclusive, more focused on finding common

> ground, more accepting of heterodoxy and more Latin American and less Anglo-European. Opposites in traditional linear reasoning clash and attack each other. Opposites in dialectic reasoning are the necessary requirements to achieve new knowledge that synthesises both. At last in Latin America opposites are visible. (p. 464)

The road map that they present is one that reminds us how powerful contexts are; for no matter how different their three countries may be in some respects, in others they share a common concern for the great divide between the academy and the field in nations that are suspicious of forms of liberatory participation.

Nonetheless, participative action research has been taken up in countries and continents far afield, many recovering from the long-term effects of colonialism, among others: Africa, with a focus upon public health, in particular HIV/AIDS; South East Asia among those concerned with health and aging; Australia and New Zealand with respect to the needs and rights of Indigenous people; and Papua and New Guinea in terms of land rights and agricultural practices. In each instance the objective is to improve the conditions for those whose needs are greatest an aspiration so significantly voiced by Kurt Lewin (1948) whose work is also represented in this opening volume. Yet, the contribution of John Collier should not be overlooked. In the post-war era when the disturbing problems of racial tension and conflict between the American Government and the Native American Indians overshadowed human affairs within the United States, John Collier was both a founding member and president of the Institute of Ethnic Affairs (IEA). In a brochure written in support of the institution, Collier (1945/2005, p. 57) described the IEA as ‘an action research agency.’ In his model of action research Collier highlights the need for knowledge to be fed directly into action. The knowledge he identifies is not simply the academically approved works of research but the layman's lived understandings and experiences.

Another way to reflect upon context is to imagine it through the eyes of different actors within a given context, those with ‘disabilities’ of one kind or another, those whose economic circumstances force them to reside at the margins, those who have the least status and power. The manner in which they understand and can act upon their conditions are themselves mediated by histories and geographies. Siska and Vann (2007) trace the ways in which the political and economic changes in the Czech

Republic following the collapse of the totalitarian system in 1989 have affected public policy towards people with disabilities. They argue that new ways of thinking about human differences has been closely allied with an increasing political activism and an insistence upon those who have hitherto been labelled as ‘disabled’ having a voice. They propose that a form of participative inquiry based upon lifestory work as a method that allows disability to be differently constructed and lends dignity to human lives. In effect to liberate them from the labels and practices hitherto acting as constraints upon what is possible.

Action Research as an Emancipatory Project

Kemmis (2006) has suggested that ‘some believe that the notion of education for emancipation is utopian’ (p. 463) and sees this is as a narrow and pessimistic view. For us, Action Research in whichever field of practice should always be educative and thus have a capacity to be emancipatory. It has the power to bring us to a greater understanding of the many great challenges facing various communities today, whether we speak of disease, environmental devastation, economic meltdown, civil wars and wars between nations. It provides a capacity to act, even in small ways, to behave as decent, informed human beings within our varied and differently experienced, lived lives.

The purpose of action research as emancipatory is to *uncover*, discover and recover practices in a variety of contexts and through a variety of means and to render them available for public scrutiny and debate. Kemmis (2006) has written on the need for action researchers and practitioner researchers to be willing to tell *unwelcome truths*. He believes that action research and practitioner research that discovers no unwelcome truths, that avoids or shrinks from them, or avoids telling these truths is not the kind of research needed to transform practices, our understandings of our practices, or the institutional and historical circumstances in which we practise. However, it has become clear to us that the consequences for telling of unwelcome truths greatly varies from one context to another. For some it can be literarily life threatening while for others merely uncomfortable.

Of course, the very concept of ‘truth’ is a problematic one. Some would argue, in a Platonic sense that truth is an objective ‘thing’ that exists, independent of the knower of it; that one is seeking for a correspondence between the ideal and the actual. Others would extend this argument to truth being static and detectable waiting to be discovered. While still others see truth as relative and subject to argumentation based upon values. Richard Pring (2000) distinguishes between the physical world governed by ‘facts’ and the social world mediated by culture, tradition, ritual and relationships. He sees the pursuit of ‘truths’ as having a moral purpose (Pring 2001:102) and is concerned that schooling, as we know it, has become detached from its moral purpose: ‘There remains no driving or unifying ideal, no coherent set of values from which to engage morally and critically with the powerful agencies who seek to use ‘education’ for their own material or political ends’.

Countering this view Grundy (1987:154), whose work has been widely published in the field of action research, notes that emancipatory action research ‘promotes emancipatory praxis in the participating practitioners; that is, it promotes a critical consciousness which exhibits itself in political as well as practical action to promote change.’ In effect her argument reminds us that taking an emancipatory stance moves beyond merely solving a local problem and requires that we critically examine the policies and practices that underlie that problem. It requires that those undertaking the enquiry themselves have a sense of their own agency in determining the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of the investigation and that they are impelled by purposes directed towards the social good.

Jurgen Habermas, a critical social theorist presents a theoretical model for understanding emancipatory action research. (as cited in Grundy 1982) Habermas presents a framework within which social critique may be developed. ‘It is through the development of critique that the mediation of theory and practice is possible. The development of action-orientated critique has three phrases: theory, enlightenment and action’ (Grundy 1982:358). Theory is not something to be avoided in the undertaking of action research; rather it is there to be scrutinized and developed leading to a form of authentic insight that challenges the established norms and develops into further action.

In his work *Truth and Justification* (Habermas 2003) revisits the underlying conditions for participants to authentically engage one with the other in the process of critique:

all participating voices have a right to be heard; no one with a legitimate claim can be excluded; participants must have a belief in what it is that they espouse; and communication must be free of restriction and coercion. For some, these conditions, have been dismissed as too ideal. More properly they can be regarded as a kind of yardstick that allows us to ‘measure’ the degree to which communication is distorted by the power of others and the self-deception of individuals. These principles can apply at the micro or macro levels.

One of us, for example was involved at the local level, with a values education project where the practitioners were examining procedures for young people to develop greater sensitivity to issues around the consequences of poverty in their community. The practitioner researchers decided to consult the literature on moral development and thought to employ a procedure building upon Lawrence Kohlberg's stage theory that emphasizes good intentions as opposed to what were called ‘hedonistic’ consequences (punishment, reward and exchange of favours). This theory they intended to use as a scaffold, but as they began to interview their young students it became evident to them that in a context where life was something of an economic struggle then consequences take on a different shade than when drawn out from young people with privileged backgrounds. As they explored the disparate results the teachers begin to critique the theory itself. How was it derived? What do others have to say about it?. Through their questioning they began to evolve their own theory of moral development and the ways in which it might serve them in developing their project. They did this in a context that allowed their voices a primacy, previously claimed by those in command of grand research narratives. Their theory building, in a very real sense has become transformative.

The issue of collaboration in action research is an interesting one which provokes discussion. Many feel collaboration is an integral and necessary part of action research and indeed many of the examples in this essay are of collaborative ventures. However, there are ‘lone’ researchers who undertake first person action research. First-person Action Research, known as Self Study, involves working with experience and seeks to bring more moments of action and being into focus in order to study them. This act of ‘experiencing’, Marshall (2004: 310) proposed, allows the researcher to ‘find ways to assess effects in the worlds in which she participates.’

In discussing teachers' action research McNiff (1993) and Whitehead (2009) identify the notion of the living 'I.' Both authors argue that for experience to be valid it must be experienced. It is something that must be accepted into one's own personal space so that they are consciously aware of what is happening and why it is influencing them as people. Similarly, they argued that the abstract theories passed down to teachers will have little or no relevance for them until they have made it part of their own practice and experienced it. McNiff and Whitehead (2005: 4) proposed that:

> … theory is not only an abstract body of knowledge 'out there', which is one kind of theory but also is located in teachers' professional experience 'in here', which is another kind of theory.

Despite the obvious gains to be made for the practitioner in engaging in action research generally, and first-person action research specifically, Campbell et al. (2004) further acknowledged that despite the work of Stenhouse, Elliott and colleagues the paradigm was still not recognised by some. The objections levelled at teacher, first-person and practitioner research are such that practitioners are not seen as expert enough in research to carry out research (Robson, 2002). Another concern is that teachers are seen as expert doers not expert knowers (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). Arguably, it can also be viewed as self indulgent.

When reflecting on action research as an emancipatory project we are indeed in interesting territory. We are attracted to the notion, advanced by Lawrence Stenhouse, that the development and use of teacher professional judgement is inextricably linked to the emancipatory or transformative dimensions of education. Stenhouse wrote:

> ' The essence of emancipation, as I conceive it, is the intellectual, moral and spiritual autonomy which we recognise when we eschew paternalism and the rule of authority and hold ourselves obliged to appeal to judgement. Emancipation rests not merely on the right of a person to exercise intellectual, moral and spiritual judgement, but upon the passionate belief that the virtue of humanity is diminished in man when judgement is overruled by authority.' (Stenhouse, 1983)

However, it has been argued that for many engaged in action research as part and parcel of government policy it is well nigh impossible to tell extended unwelcome truths. In the UK there are several critiques of teacher or practitioner research projects which were funded by governments, Foster (1999); Campbell (2003); Stronach (2002); Furlong et al. (2003). These critiques focus on issues of quality and of independence from government control. If the paymaster for a given project is a government authority whose desire is to assist in implementing given policy how freely can the practitioners develop a critique of that policy? Campbell et al. (2007) document the difficulties and dilemmas in maintaining independence and freedom from strong steering in research projects which relate to policy, not just for practitioners, but also for academic partners

Action Research – Means and Ends

Why do practitioners engage in action research? Is it to fulfil the requirements for a higher degree, or to investigate the ways in which a policy can be better enacted, or perhaps to find a new voice in considering pedagogy? Can it be considered as a form of ‘audience research’ such that consumers of a service such as education can be consulted? Not enough of the literature in the field examines the motivation behind the undertaking of action research in education and the impact that such motivation has on its practices. A consequence may be that accounts of action research tend themselves become a celebratory narrative.

To return for a moment to Kemmis's notion of ‘unwelcome truths’; he argues (Kemmis: 459) that current action research practices, that he deems inadequate, aim to:

However, for many practitioners who are encouraged to undertake action research or action learning projects there is little room for manoeuvre. The funding that they receive is conditional. They are expected to improve practice without seeking to critique or challenge government policy. Their resources are such that they can do little but work within their own school communities. For them the ends justify the means in that they are provided with an opportunity, albeit a limited one to investigate and improve practice at the local level. Examples of these in the UK would be the Best Practice Research Scholarships Programme Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Networked Learning Communities, (National College for school leadership and children's services)

and the Practitioner Led Research Programme, Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC), see web references at the end of this essay.

In their discussion of the complexities of professional learning in a context that is governed by an expectation of compliance to government educational policy at the local and national levels (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009) wrote of the concept of ‘knotworking’. The metaphor is of particular significance when we consider the ways in which practitioners engage in action research. As teachers become immersed in new and demanding patterns of activity they may find themselves, literally, in knots. They may identify one dilemma after another as they uncover what they may previously have considered straightforward and easily resolved problems. As represented by Engestrom (2004) knotworking is subject to pressures and power struggles that can emerge as action learning, teams with their varied beliefs and epistemologies, come into contact with each other and others who may hold power in the organization.

While Fenwick (2007: 151) concludes that knots are not ‘benign islands of interconnectivity’ (p. 151) and that their unravelling requires a continuous negotiation of meanings and procedures. Groundwater-Smith and Mockler argue that by employing well considered, transparent, ethical inquiry practices that transcend mere problem solving it is possible to both uncover and act upon the unwelcome truths, at least at the local level where they may reveal themselves.

Somekh and Zeichner (2009: 10–11) have developed a framework for analysing action research practices in local-within-global contexts based on an analysis of 46 publications dated between 2000 and 2008 across a large number of countries. They identified eight dimensions to their framework, namely: [2]

In their conclusion they indicate that varying models of action research have emerged that are commensurable with the cultural and political contexts and that are ‘locally appropriate’ (p.19). Without question action research is a change model. The critical questions are to do with change for whom?

When Kemmis expressed a concern that the views of the practitioner are those that prevail we do not believe that he took account of the burgeoning number of studies where the students themselves, as consequential stakeholders, are active agents in

the research processes. In the first volume of this collection the article by Groundwater-Smith (2007) demonstrates the efficacy of consulting and working with young people as research activists, while Fielding's influential article (2004) appears in the third volume and discusses the theoretical underpinnings and some of the challenging realities that such work entails.

In spite of some of the reservations regarding the emancipatory potential of action research there is general agreement across the field that it is a powerful form of teacher professional learning.

Impact of Action Research on Teacher Professional Learning

There can be no question that professional learning is a career long endeavour. However, the critical issue is how efficacious is it and does it lead to improved learning conditions for the young people in our schools? Ingvarson, Meiers and Beavis (2005) undertook to investigate the effects of structural and process features of professional development programs [3] on teachers' knowledge, practice and efficacy. Among other findings generated by this highly technical study it is clear was that teachers who were actively engaged in their own learning provided a critical condition for that learning to then translate to improved learning outcomes for students. The researchers argued that active learning has a ‘pervasive and generative influence on factors that increase teachers' confidence and ability to meet students needs than making specific changes in practice alone’(p. 14).

Many analyses of teacher professional learning have pointed to what may well be an ‘unwelcome truth’ for educational managers, that is that one-off training sessions, especially of the ‘cascade’ kind will be of little value in seeking for improvements in our schools (Hayes 2000). The pervasiveness of the cascade model would seem to rest on the belief that it is an economic form of professional development. It may be relatively inexpensive, but seemingly it has little impact. The notion is that a corps of ‘trainers’ are exposed to an innovation or method; they in turn teach the next level down and so on. Thus the innovation cascades from one tier to the next and in doing so

becomes more diluted and remote from the actual experiences of the practitioners. It is essentially a transmissive model and a flawed one at that. Dissatisfaction with this form of professional development has come not only from within the teaching profession itself but has also been more widely criticised.

Of course government education policies span a significant range of issues ranging from introducing new technologies into classrooms such as interactive white boards, through to matters associated with child protection. They may embody pedagogies associated with the teaching of literacy or numeracy and often seem based upon a premise that one size fits all. It is inescapable that governments will generate educational policies and find ways of leveraging them, and that they have every right to do so; however, it seems often to be the case that the variability of context discussed at the beginning of this essay is not accounted for. Darling Hammond's (2006) powerful argument regarding inequalities in education in the United States of America, makes the case, not for simplistic solutions, but for high standards that incorporate ‘deep understanding of content and how to teach it, a strong appreciation for the role of culture and context in child development and learning, and an insistence on ongoing assessment and adaptation of teaching to promote learning for all students’ (p.18). Among other things, she argues for schools to be good places for teaching and learning. We would assert that schools that are good places for teaching and learning are ones where teachers have a sense of their own professionalism and have a capacity to continually and productively grow in terms of their professional learning.

Judith Warren Little (2002:917) argues that one of the most significant resources for teacher professional learning is to be found in the teachers themselves and their interactions one with the other when they ‘collectively question ineffective teaching routines, examine new conceptions of teaching and learning, find generative means to acknowledge and respond to difference and conflict and engage actively in supporting professional growth’. Having professional conversation of this calibre does not come about by chance but requires the school to behave intelligently and develop as a learning community as described in detail by Lieberman and Miller (2008).

Thinking about the school as having a capacity to learn, in ecological terms that is, is helpful when we are considering the professional learning of the teachers who inhabit

them. MacGilchrist, Myers and Reid (2004: 108–149) have proposed that schools need to function with all of the nine intelligences that they identified, these being:

Vision

Action and Sustainability

Connecting Vision to Action

We have found when working with schools in England and Australia that taking an ‘audit’ of the school's intelligences provides us with a helpful starting point in considering ways in which an action research project may be designed. If there are significant gaps then the plan can commence by developing priorities so that the whole school can take some collective responsibility for what they undertake. The process is a collegial one that enables the plan to be strategic; in that it not only focuses upon what it may be that people are seeking to improve, but also provides a framework within which that improvement might evolve.

Which brings us to the case for employing action research and action learning as powerful resources for improving practice, through teacher professional learning, in a context that also questions that practice and its antecedents. Volume 2 in this series points to the many issues and controversies surrounding the employment of action research as a means of enhancing teacher professional learning. Among its contents we have included a reading on the ways in which lesson study can be utilised (Lewis, Parry & Murata, 2006). For those initially exploring action research as a form of systematic inquiry leading to reconceptualisation and transformation of practice, lesson study provides an opportunity for teachers to work collaboratively in a context where they are focused upon students and the ways in which they learn. For this reason we shall consider, in greater detail, some of the merits of lesson study as a form of action research for teacher professional learning; always, of course, with the proviso that it is one of many forms.

As we have argued, teaching can become professional learning when the activity is collegial and where the learning arises, principally from the students' own engagement and behaviours. In their advocacy for the study of teaching and learning through the study of lessons, Fernandez and Yoshida (2004) place their greatest emphasis upon the culture of collegiality that brings teachers together to deeply consider their practice in the context of the classroom and the diverse needs of students therein. In a similar vein it may be argued that sustained lesson study may work as a vehicle for helping teachers build a shared body of professional knowledge.

What then is the lesson study concept? In essence it could be characterised as ways of seeing; that is observing how learners respond to a teaching episode that has been prepared collaboratively by a group of teachers with the intention of developing, refining and improving the lesson in the light of such feedback. It is based upon the foundation of teachers as researchers – where the classroom practitioners are engaged in systematic inquiry regarding what it is that take place during the teaching episode, which can be characterised as a natural experiment [4] .

Rock and Wilson (2005: 78) see these 'research lessons' as being:

They argue that lesson study is based upon principles of constructivism: that is that knowledge is constructed through social interaction rather than as a result of individual experience; that knowledge is acquired as an adaptive experience; and that knowledge is the result of active mental processing by the individual in a social environment. Clearly, once again, we can see how critical the issue of context is in developing this or any other action research strategy. Lesson study, then, becomes a potent vehicle for teachers to systematically explore practice, on the basis of evidence, with an intention of improving it. It is a process that is described by Lewis (2002) as 'developing the eyes to see children.'

A particular form of action research is now gaining currency as a means of informing teacher professional learning that is 'action learning'. Thus we take action learning to be a subset of action research. It has been defined by Revans (1982:65) as 'a means by which people learn with and from each other by attempting to identify and then implement solutions to their problems/issues'. Action learning was originally used in industry but has now emerged as a valuable training and problem solving device for the

private and public sector, in the works of Stark (2006) and Mumford (1997). It is closely related to practitioner and action research as they can all be classified as learning from experience. Action learning is often a forerunner of practitioner action research which requires more research training and dissemination opportunities. Dewar and Sharp (2006:230) define Action learning as,

> ‘a process of learning and reflection that happens with the support of a group or set of colleagues working on real problems with the intention of getting things done’

Unlike its more robust parent, action research, the process does not have as a central tenet the belief that the outcomes should be in the interests of equity and social justice. Rather it is a practical tool for improvement. The definition does present us with some further difficulties. It is not clear who the participants in the process are and how much power and control they may have over the processes with which they are engaged. Nonetheless, it is the working definition that has guided the New South Wales element of Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP) in its many manifestations. Hoban et al. (2005)) provide an account of the action learning aspect of this program which is included in Volume 3.

There is much to affirm about the Quality Teaching Action Learning (QTAL) project as it is manifest in New South Wales. In the first place, rather than dividing funding into very small packages and delivering it to a large number of schools (as was the case for many other AGQTP projects) the project devolved a significant grant to a smaller number of schools, allowing for sustained time for professional development and learning. Second, one requirement of the project was that schools whose projects were funded work with an academic partner – a member of a university community with expertise related to teacher professional learning. Rather than this relationship being entirely defined within the parameters of the QTAL project, schools and academic partners were able to negotiate the parameters of the relationship based on the school's particular needs and the academic partner's expertise (Armstrong, Ewing, Groundwater-Smith, Loughland, Mockler, Simpson & Way, 2009). Third, schools were required to develop their own focus for action learning that emanated from local needs and concerns, albeit within the government's policies regarding what constitutes Quality

Teaching, and as such, a wide variety of areas for investigation were identified and examined over the course of the project's life.

Thus the implementation focus of the QTAL project on a meta-level meant that ultimately, regardless of the local focus chosen by schools, the project was an implementation tool used in the establishment of Quality Teaching in NSW Department of Education and Training schools. In our experience, these dual focus areas were not always ‘comfortable bedfellows’, and in some cases an overt clash came about between the processdriven aims of action learning and practitioner research (with their emphasis on reflection and changing practice) and the desire on the part of schools to demonstrate that they were complying with the requirements of Quality Teaching (with an associated emphasis on celebrating and demonstrating successes). While we do not conceptualise these two dynamics as mutually exclusive, neither do they always work together in harmony, and it is this disconnect that we regard as having the potential to erode authentic professional learning.

Nonetheless, it remains clear that providing for teacher learning through them being active agents in that learning has clear advantages over the earlier described ‘cascade model’ and the many short courses that are offered to teachers that detach them from their schools and their communities. It may be timely to remind ourselves that if we are to retain and sustain teachers in the profession in the future, then providing them with a voice and empowering them through active participation in research which allows them to investigate and shape the knowledge base of their teaching may be a key factor defining in their professionalism and underwriting their commitment to education.

Whither Action Research?

In spite of the many concerns and reservations raised in this introductory essay it is our contention that action research has great power in interrupting many of the prevailing discourses with respect to teacher professional learning. The metaphor that we find most powerful in considering the direction of action research is that of the ‘braided river’. Found in New Zealand's South Island, braided rivers weave, part, and rejoin around glacial outwash following alpine fault lines out to the sea. They replenish the earth and provide a rich habitat for the wide valleys’ inhabitants. Like the braided river system

action research is composed, also, of many waters, many traditions; some are but tiny tributaries while others are stronger and faster flowing. The braided river of action research has its traditions and its narratives, it comes across impediments and may, at times, be in danger of exploitation, but in the end it has a common goal to improve the learning for all.

Notes

1. Some of the material in this section was delivered as a panel presentation by Susan Groundwater-Smith to the Collaborative Action Research Network Annual Conference, Liverpool, 7th–9th November, 2008, *Recognising the Social Political and Material Conditions for the Evolution of Practice through Action Research*.

2. The dimensions identified here are a synthesis of those presented in the article.

3. The elision from professional learning to professional development should be noted here. The slide is one that often occurs in the literature. However, we would note that, for many, *professional development* remains as something that is ‘done to teachers’ while *professional learning* is something that is ‘done by teachers’. While our preference is for the latter, the former is so frequently used that we cannot ignore it.

4. Experiment in the sense that a hypothesis is formed and evidence collected that test the hypothesis; but not an experiment in the sense of a scientific, randomised controlled trial.

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Introduction: Methodologies in Action Research: A Contested Area

Anne Campbell & Susan Groundwater-Smith

Whereas in our introductory essay that opens Volume I we put forward a sustained discussion regarding action research and its place in developing teacher professional learning here we shall briefly and lightly touch upon the contents of Volume Two, more in the form of an editorial found at the beginning of a journal.

Our first claim is to assert that, strictly speaking, action research is not a methodology as ordinarily understood and vigorously argued for in the article by Noffke and Somekh (2005). It can be posited that a methodology refers to the coherent theoretical analysis of the methods that have been employed, not to the methods themselves. In action research the theoretical analysis is far more eclectic than the term 'methodology' suggests – the analyses are subject to the nature of the problems being studied and these may be several and varied and are, in turn, driven by the needs and requirements of the practitioners, rather than the academy. While methods are the tools that are employed to study a phenomenon, methodology applies to the principles underlying them. This assumes the possibility of an *a priori* standpoint against which the study can be judged to be efficacious or otherwise.

Action research as we argued in the introductory essay to Volume One is far more organic and dynamic, it is an orientation to inquiry with an obligation to action. As such it does not bear the hallmarks of the technical rational aspects of positivism and empiricism where research is seen as mainly concerned with the prediction and control of practice based upon generalisations taken as evidence – a position that is discussed with some vigour by Robinson and Norris (2001). Instead it seeks to illuminate the local; to provide practitioners and other participants in action research such as community members with insight and understanding through forms of systematic inquiry that address issues and questions that are of significance to those concerned with human enterprises, be they in education, health care, social work or the like.

However, this should not be taken as an argument that the practitioner knowledge that results from various forms of action research has been less rigorously obtained, or is of a lesser quality than that conducted exclusively within the academy. A number of the articles in this volume make the case for such work to be subject to the same tenets and standards required for a critical educational science as might be expected in other fields of human endeavour. For example the article by Anderson and Herr (1999) or indeed the now classical discussion by Carr and Kemmis (1986) give voice to important and persuasive justifications for various modes of practitioner inquiry and its participatory nature as articulated by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005). Furthermore, David Berliner's article (2002) reminds us that educational research, per se, can always be said to be challenging given the complexity of the field with its many overlapping discourses and boundaries. All the same, in our selection of articles for this volume we were also mindful that the case for action research is one that is subject to examination and critique as argued by Hammersley (2004).

At its most essential action research can be said to be transformational. It seeks to enhance social justice in education through the maximisation of participation and a conscious mindfulness of what is fair and right. Central to practice in any professional context is the need to understand that practice, beyond a grasp of the technical skills required to conduct it, important as these may be. In effect it is necessary to apprehend the commonplace by disassociating from it, thus it is essential that fully actualised practitioners have a capacity to stand back from what is done and ask the difficult questions regarding the ways in which the practice is evolving and its range of impacts. Some of the writers represented in this volume have an interest in considering ways in which practitioners may engage in action research while at the same time being understanding of their own positioning and biography. Self study, can be said to be one of the many methods that are adopted by practitioner researchers with writers such as Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) and Feldman, (2003) raising significant questions regarding the ways in which reflective practice can be characterised as a form of self study. In particular, we have included in this volume an article by Donald Schon (1983) where he draws attention to the centrality of reflection in professional practice. As well, we have selected Smyth's (1992) article that draws focuses on the politics of reflection in the knowledge that teachers’ work, along with other social enterprises, is always

political in nature, subject to the many internal and external expressions of power and coercion that operate in social interactions.

Today, it is well understood that being reflective, is itself not a sufficient condition for engagement in action research that meets standards of quality and excellence. This volume also contains articles that brings to our attention how essential it is that matters of quality can and must be addressed. Oancea and Furlong (2007) have articulated a framework that enables us to better organize the many issues and arrangements that govern the quality of work in what they have termed ‘applied and practice based research’. Their discussion is underwritten by matters of relevance and purpose, issues that are taken up by Noffke (2008) Gifford and Gabelko (1987) and Koutselini (2008) each of whom set their discussions in different contexts.

Relevance and purpose are keys to not only this volume, but to all three in this series. Over the past decades a great deal has been written about the nature of action research, in its many manifestations, and we well understand that much of the work in action research, in particular participatory action research(PAR) covers many human activities directed to social justice, health and wellbeing. What is distinctive about the selections that we have made is their application to teacher professional learning. The relationship between professional knowledge and professional action is crucial to reinventing teaching, learning and pedagogy as practices which are based upon careful and systematic inquiry as opposed to routines and regulations. Practitioners are enabled to test the assumptions that are implicit in their practice through their investigations. Cole and Knowles (1993) make the case for such investigations to be conducted in partnership as a means of understanding that the inquiry itself is a practice to be considered and examined; something well understood by John Elliott (2003).

Elliott's work has been seminal to our understanding of action research as a form of practical democracy that opens up teachers’ work to rational scrutiny by those who have a stake in its impact and outcomes. This is not to be taken as a process of surveillance but rather as a means of fostering genuine dialogue and action across the education spectrum. In the article included here he discusses case study methods and techniques which teacher action-researchers have used to develop and communicate their insights and understandings of the teaching and learning processes, paying particular attention

to triangulation that he sees as both involving data collection and analysis contributing to a process of progressive focusing.

Finally we conclude with two examples of ways in which various methods can enable such a dialogue to take place. Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) article gives insight to the power of narrative that gives precedence to the ways in which professional work might be told, debated and critiqued. While Lewis, Perry & Murata (2006) draw our attention to the merits of lesson study whereby teachers collaboratively plan and enact and observe ‘research’ lessons. In the latter case, the merit lies in the importance placed upon observing the learning in the classroom, including the learning of the teacher.

The selections in this volume have not been made in order to provide some kind of toolkit for conducting action research, but rather to draw attention to the complexity of the endeavour and the arguments and debates that necessarily swirl around matters related to methods for investigating teachers' professional work. Underlying the various articles is a shared understanding that teaching is a human service provision that requires a high level of intellectual capacity, an ability to engage in scholarship and inquiry and is driven by optimism and hope.

Introduction: Key Examples of Action Research in Schools within Different National Settings

Anne Campbell & Susan Groundwater-Smith

Doing the Work

The previous two volumes in this series traced the emergence of action research as a powerful means of investigating educational practices in order to reconceptualise and transform them. The first volume traced the evolution of action research in schools from

a focus upon curriculum development in the 1960s and 1980s to teacher professional learning and classroom pedagogies in the 1990s to the present day. At the same time the discussion recognised that many of the antecedents to action research, as it applies to education, were crafted in settings more generally related to human services such as health and other enterprises directed to the social good. The second volume concerned itself with the range of methods and methodological debates that are associated with action research as a practice. In this, the third and final volume of the series we have selected a range of articles that demonstrate the ways in which action research has been undertaken in a variety of educational contexts and serving a number of different purposes. As with the introduction to the second volume we have constructed this short piece in the form of a brief editorial.

Important to the discussion is the article by Elliott (1991) in that it draws upon three case studies that illustrate the ways in which action research can contribute to teacher professional learning. The first of these, The Humanities Curriculum Project was undertaken in the late 1960s and was followed by the Ford Teaching Project undertaken 1973–1975. The final study The Teacher Interaction and Quality of Teaching Project (TIQL) came about in the early 1980s. Thus we have three projects spanning almost two decades from which Elliott has harvested much of the wisdom that informs teacher research to this day.

A common theme that runs through the variety of projects reported in this volume is that of the benefits of cooperation between academics in higher education settings and teachers in schools. In the development of actionable knowledge it is clear that there are reciprocal benefits as each party learns both from their own practice and that of those persons with whom they are interacting. Certainly not all of the models are the same. One that is pervasive in the North American context is the professional development school that has a specific relationship with a given university. Crocco, Faithfull and Schwartz (2003) report on a partnership between Teachers' College, Columbia, and a large metropolitan school in New York. Importantly the presentation does not ‘sanitise’ the difficulties that studentteachers, as action researchers, face when presented with challenging settings. Knight, Wiseman and Cooner (2000) place particular emphasis upon the impact of such partnerships upon school student learning outcomes and argue that the results can have significant benefits across the board.

A number of the articles in this volume are ones that have been directed to learners living with poverty and the many challenges associated with deprivation in varying international contexts. The Beveridge, Groundwater-Smith, Kemmis and Wasson study (2005) records the ways in which Australian schools, supporting the learning of students from difficult socioeconomic circumstances, were funded to undertake local action research projects. With the assistance of academic partners, projects were documented employing a collective school learning portfolio that recognised that it was not only the individual teachers who learned from the process, but the school as an organization also benefited. Cooper and White's work (2006) addresses the development of critical literacy in a high poverty area of Toronto, while Ladson-Billings and Gomez (2001) also examine early literacy development through teachers' professional learning communities in school districts with a high density of low-income apartments.

Aligning school based inquiry with school improvement has become an increasingly specific objective in relation to teacher professional learning. James, Black, McCormick, Pedder and Wiliam (2006) bring our attention to the use of mixed methods that draw together the work of academics and school based practitioners in the Learning how to Learn Project linking the ways in which pupils' beliefs and teachers' beliefs about learning interact and influence the learning outcomes. Being members of a larger networked professional learning community has become of interest when considering ways to break out from the isolation of the classroom. Warren Little, Gearhart, Curry and Kafka's writing (2003) describes a number of projects that have enabled teachers to investigate and reflect upon student work as a means of school improvement that carries greater authenticity than the more traditional 'tick the box' process where schools check off the attributes of a 'successful school' with little insight into what actually makes and contributes to those attributes.

Karin Ronnerman (2005) points out that, in the Swedish context, teachers are expected to be involved in the development of the whole school. She takes the discussion into the realm of early childhood education and emphasises the critical relationship between academic researchers and school based practitioners as that which is most generative of developing new insights and understandings. In a similar way, but a very different context, Hong Kong, Yuen-Ling (2008) sees action research as an opportunity for practitioners to actively evaluate their own practice as Kindergarten teachers. The study demonstrated that teachers learn from the concrete examples of their own

practice that can then be related to the appropriate research literature and discussion. It was seen, in this and a number of the other examples offered in this volume, that classroom practitioners require opportunities to engage in wider professional dialogue that is conducted within an agreed framework and takes them beyond their singular workplaces.

Many, but not all, of the examples offered here are of action research activities within large funded programs. While we are cautious of the ways in which such enquiries may themselves become little more than implementation strategies for government policies we believe that the articles represent important advances beyond small, individualistic projects that are unlikely to be widely disseminated. Pollard's editorial (2007) summing up the British Teaching and Learning Research Project addresses important issues such as professional knowledge building and knowledge synthesis and developing capacity through dissemination and looks to the future of technology-enhanced learning and all that may entail.

Hoban, Herrington, Kervin, Ewing, Anderson and Smith (2005) formed a team to evaluate a large state-based quality teaching program built upon the principles of action learning. Teachers across a number of schools were supported by academic partners in investigating the ways in which they understood and implemented the State of New South Wales' Quality Teaching Framework. This is an example of teachers imaginatively dealing with the program's requirements while moulding them to their own specific needs within their individual schools.

Single cases, too, have their place in this volume. Milner (2007) provides a poignant account of his own personal ‘racialized’ story as an African American male teacher educator and its consequences for the ways in which he taught his students. In Volume Two of this series there were several articles devoted to the notion of narrative inquiry and self study. Here we have an account of the ways in which biography assists in our understanding of the self in the research and illustrates the power of the personal. Ravitch and Wirth (2007) also report upon a single case, drawing our attention to the ways in which the insider perspectives function. The study attends to the conditions under which roles are negotiated between colleague researchers and the school leader.

Hall, Wall, Higgins, Stephens, Pooley and Welham (2005) deal with two action research projects within the Campaign for Learning to Learn Program. They discuss the interaction between parents and schools through dialogue and the ways in which a shared understanding of educational purposes, from both perspectives, can be obtained. Dialogue is also central to the paper by Taylor and Pettit (2007) that draws upon two international discussions that have been conducted to establish the learning needs of action researchers, particularly how to acknowledge and integrate processes for challenging power asymmetries and imbalances that affect understandings of agency and identity.

Power asymmetries also occur within schools where often students have little agency in school based inquiry. Fielding (2004) explores the theoretical underpinnings to innovative approaches to student voice and addresses a number of practical issues that require consideration if such moves are to be made. Like many who are advocates of student voice as a means of young people becoming more significantly engaged in their schooling Zyngier (2007) reports on a project that not only documented teaching and learning, but also provided a means for students to actively and consciously critique their experiences and to suggest ways in which they might be more deeply and substantively engaged in their learning. While Roberts and Nash (2009) report on the ways in which students, as researchers across several schools in the UK, established viable working partnerships with their teachers in the interests of learning for all.

The idea that teacher professional learning can and should be informed by active inquiry has been at the heart of this series of publications. The arguments have been made, the means have been discussed and the evidence has been provided. Professional knowledge is never static. The range and variety of articles spanning many decades lend support to Dewey's notion that in the practice of the education profession we cannot be spectators, but we need to take our educational ‘experiments’ seriously (see Dewey, 1929). The work of those both in the academy and in the field are constantly contributing to an ever-expanding body of knowledge about educational practices contributing to human development and wellbeing.

It is fitting that the last inclusion is a ‘think piece’ by the late Orlando Fals Borda whose work is also discussed in the introductory essay to Volume One. Fals Borda reminds us of our obligations and responsibilities as we bridge the academic and practical fields.

He argues how essential it is to combine knowledges gained in both spheres; that there should be a moral purpose to our endeavours; and, that there should also be a personal commitment on the part of all who participate in the many forms of action research that are abundant in the world today.

References

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