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18.

Practitioner Research

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There is considerable justification for the belief that research methodology will not begin to have the influence that it might have on American education until thousands of teachers, administrators, and supervisors make more frequent use of the method of science in solving their own practical problems.

(Corey, 1953, p. 18)

This fourth edition of the *Handbook of Research on Teaching* is the first time that a chapter has been included about practitioner research. It has always been assumed, in these handbooks at least, that researchers do research about someone else's practice, despite the long history in which those directly involved in educational work have done research on their own practice. Rather than regard practice itself as a form of systematic knowing, the practitioner's role in this view is merely to consume the research produced by others. This same neglect of the knowledge that educators generate in enacting and studying their own practice has been true for most histories of educational research. According to Lagemann (1996), teachers—if mentioned at all in these histories—are seen as research subjects and consumers of research and not as producers of educational knowledge.¹ Despite the volume and variety of practitioner research that has been conducted by teachers and academics, Dewey's (1929) statement about teachers' contributions to educational research being an "unworked mine" remains true in many ways 70 years later.

The little attention that has been given to practitioner research in the academic educational literature, including the handbooks, has viewed it as a form of professional development for practitioners (e.g., Clifford, 1973; Good, 1963). The expres-

sion of this perspective, which often acknowledges the high value that practitioners place on self-study, does not generally address the research as having implications for our understanding of different ways of knowing, nor does it treat seriously and seek to disseminate to others the knowledge produced through research by practitioners. Yet, as Bridget Somekh notes,

If action research is not recognized as a research methodology, the knowledge generated from action research is neither taken seriously nor disseminated widely and effectively. The knowledge is seen merely as an outcome of a professional development process, devalued into something which concerns only the individual who carried out the action research—local, private, and unimportant. In this way, the operation of power in the social system works to neutralize the voice and influence of practitioners and promote the hegemony of traditional academic researchers. (1993a, p. 28)

This century has seen several major criticisms of the involvement of teachers in researching their own practices. The first criticism is that teachers are not properly trained to conduct research and that the research they have conducted has not been up to an acceptable standard (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Corman, 1957; Foshay, 1994; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Over

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¹ The term "teacher" will be used in this chapter as a generic term to refer to P-12 educators. The term "academic" will be used to refer to college and university-based educators.

the years, even among those who have acknowledged practitioner research as a form of educational scholarship, some have viewed it as an inferior form of research with less rigorous standards than those of academic research.

Although action research uses the same methods as regular educational research, many of the rigorous criteria applied to regular educational research can be relaxed in doing action research. (Borg, 1981, p. 249)

Instead of recognizing practitioner research as an indicator of an emergent form of educational science, Hodgkinson (1957) equated practitioner research with "easy hobby games for little engineers" and believed that "research is no place for an amateur." He argued that teachers are unfamiliar with the basic techniques of research and that the inquiries they engage in should be classified as "quantified common sense" rather than as a form of scientific study. (Also see Travers, 1958.) The second criticism, which is based on a positivist view of external validity, is that practitioner research is of questionable value because many studies do not involve the investigation of groups that are representative of larger populations. Therefore, some have felt that it is not possible to generalize from these smaller examined situations and to apply the research to others.

Third, and apart from concerns about teachers' qualifications to conduct research, were concerns that the demands of teachers' jobs make it difficult for them to find time to do research and that, when they do so, their attention is drawn away from their main task of educating students. It is felt that practitioner research is a form of exploitation of teachers that undermines the quality of education for students.

If the teacher becomes a researcher, there is no reason why she should not be made to become a guidance counselor, nurse, musician, or psychiatrist, in the name of professional responsibility. (Hodgkinson, 1957, p. 77)

It was also felt by some that practitioner research could lead not to teacher development, but to self-delusion and to the greater stagnation of teachers who would use their research merely to justify their current practices.

Teachers would have greater cause to become stagnant, if they did incorporate action research findings into their teaching, as they could then defend their techniques on the grounds of scientific objectivity, saying that "this is the best way because four years ago we tested it through action research." (Hodgkinson, 1957, p. 77)

Despite the emergence of a context in which the socially constructed nature of all scientific inquiry has been recognized (e.g., Harding, 1986), these and other criticisms of the legitimacy of practitioner research as forms of educational inquiry have continued today while self-study research has gained in popularity and while claims about its status as a unique research paradigm have emerged.

For example, Biddle and Anderson (1986), in their chapter on "Theory, Methods, Knowledge, and Research on Teaching" in the third edition of the *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, describe trends in action research (a particular form of practitioner research) briefly in a section titled "Other Discovery

Methods." They link action research to Kurt Lewin and the process of involving social scientists in social policy in "countries whose institutions are controlled by the state, such as the Soviet Union" (p. 239). They also specifically note the use of action research in Scandinavian social policy research and development and comment: "It appears less often in countries where social policy is allowed to drift or is planned largely through political means, as in the United States . . ." (p. 239). Although they comment on the connections between action research and the concept of "praxis" (i.e., action informed by reflection), on the use of observation as an adjunct to teacher education, and note that "talented teachers sometimes claim to have adopted such an orientation in their classroom practice," (p. 239) they appear quite skeptical of the usefulness of its outcomes. "However, few systematic insights and findings seem to have been generated as yet for our understanding of teaching by means of action research" (p. 239).

Huberman (1996), as well, has raised important questions about the adequacy of the evidence for many of the claims made about the value of practitioner research and its effects on teaching practice and classrooms. Echoing the criticisms of Hodgkinson (1957), Huberman has questioned the ability of those who study their own practices to rise above or bracket their preconceptions and avoid distortions and self-delusion.

Despite these continuing criticisms of practitioner inquiry as a legitimate form of educational research, there has been growing support for its knowledge-generating potential. In a widespread shift, the conception of teachers as merely consumers of educational research is changing to one of teachers as producers and mediators of educational knowledge (Richardson, 1994a). There has also been a challenge to the notion of college and university academics as the sole producers of educational knowledge (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Others have challenged the idea of applying the norms and standards of academic educational research to the assessment of practitioner research and have made proposals for a variety of different indicators of research quality. Continuing the line of argument first made early in this century (Buckingham, 1926), Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993) have asserted that teachers, because of their position in the classroom, can offer special insights into the knowledge-production process that those studying someone else's practice are unable to provide.

While in this chapter we will not examine the adequacy of specific claims that have been made about the value of conducting practitioner research and its impact on practice, we will discuss the general issue of the criteria that should be used to assess the trustworthiness of claims made in practitioner research. In doing so, we will support the view of practitioner research as a legitimate form of educational inquiry that should be evaluated with criteria that overlap with, but that are somewhat different from, those used to assess the trustworthiness of academic educational research.

In the third edition of the *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, Frederick Erickson came very close to bringing practitioner research into his chapter on qualitative research by discussing research collaborations involving academics and teachers: "A few steps beyond collaborative research involving teachers and academic researchers is for the classroom teacher to become the researcher in his or her own right" (1986, p. 157). Erickson went

on to argue that more teachers need to take on the responsibility of conducting educational research and that supports should be built into their jobs to make such research possible:

If classroom teaching in elementary and secondary schools is to come of age as a profession—if the role of teacher is not to continue to be infantilized—then teachers need to take the adult responsibility of investigating their own practice systematically and critically, by methods that are appropriate to their practice. . . . Time needs to be made available in the school day for teachers to do this. Anything less than that basic kind of institutional change is to perpetuate the passivity that has characterized the teaching profession in its relations with administrative supervisors and the public at large. (p.157)

In this chapter, we take that next step and address several specific aspects of practitioner research as a form of educational inquiry. In so doing, it is important for us to acknowledge that we are ourselves practitioner researchers who have—over a period of time—conducted research into our own work as teachers, teacher educators, and facilitators of the practitioner research of others (e.g., Noffke, 1994b; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1999; Zeichner, 1995a). In the first section, we discuss the similarities and differences among the various traditions of inquiry that have been associated with this broad movement in educational research. We begin with efforts toward the scientific study of education at the end of the 19th century and continue on to contemporary varieties of practitioner research. Throughout that section and in the rest of the chapter, we limit ourselves largely to the English-language literature on practitioner research from several countries.

In the second section, we discuss the various motivations that have been associated with conducting practitioner research—the motives of people who have conducted this research and those of others who have encouraged them to do so. In the third section, we consider the kinds of issues and questions that have been considered in practitioner research together with the methodologies that have been used in collecting and analyzing data. The reader will note that although some practitioner research looks very much like research conducted by academics in colleges and universities, other self-studies carried out by practitioners are quite different from conventional academic research.

In the fourth section, we discuss the issue of trustworthiness in practitioner research, and we will consider practitioner research as a way of knowing the following: What are the grounds for placing confidence in the findings of practitioner research? What criteria should be used in distinguishing good work from work that is of a lower quality? Who should make judgments about the quality of practitioner research? Here we address the question of whether practitioner research is a different research paradigm from academic research requiring different evaluative criteria or whether conventional academic standards should be applied in assessing the quality of practitioner studies. We also briefly consider some of the moral and ethical issues that arise

in practitioner research, such as the relations among the participants in the research. Finally, we highlight the limitations of our analyses and identify areas for further inquiry that we feel will strengthen the contribution of practitioner research to the general field of research on teaching.

Multiple Traditions of Practitioner Research

Many scholars (e.g., Wann, 1953; Adelman, 1993) have attributed the origins of practitioner research in education to the work of social psychologist Kurt Lewin and of John Collier, U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933 to 1945. Both men were involved in work that was outside education and that, among other things, sought to counteract racism and oppression and improve intergroup relations (e.g., Collier, 1945; Lewin, 1946).² While theirs was clearly an important influence, we see, along with others (e.g., McKernan, 1996; McTaggart, 1991), several other factors contributing to the adaptation of practitioner research as part of the study of educational problems.

Forms of practitioner research today are the culmination of long processes of evolution and contestation, which included efforts both inside and outside education (Noffke, 1997a, 1997b). One such influence arose from tensions within the movement for the scientific study of education, beginning in the late 19th and early part of the 20th century. Hopkins (1950), for example, identified a number of curriculum study projects in the early 1920s (e.g., in Los Angeles and Denver) as well as others in the 1930s, including the well-known “8-year study” (Aiken, 1942) that evidenced many of the characteristics of practitioner research. Thus, he highlighted the benefits as well as the tensions between the work of practitioners and the growing body of external consultants.

Besides the movement for the scientific study of education, other factors affected the development of practitioner research, such as the progressive educational philosophy of John Dewey (Dewey, 1938; Schubert & Lopez-Schubert, 1997) and the sociopolitical conditions of the time, which stimulated a greater concern for promoting democratic means of decision making in many aspects of life (see Kemmis, 1980/1988). As evidenced by the work of Ida B. Wells, W. E. B. DuBois, and Carter G. Woodson, as well as by that of turn-of-the-century feminists (see Reinhartz, 1992), the idea that social research can be directly connected to social reconstruction has long been an important parallel to practitioner research. (See also Altrichter & Gstettner, 1993.)

As Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (1994) point out, a number of calls emerged during the early part of this century for teachers to actively participate in research carried out in their classrooms in cooperation with academic researchers. This cooperation in educational research was, according to Buckingham (1926, 1939), something that would lead to the greater professionalization of teaching and to raising its status in the society even though, in reality, teachers were to serve merely as data collectors for the research of university academics:

² It has been argued that the Austrian physician, social philosopher, and poet Jacob Moreno was a pioneer in developing the idea of practitioner research (Gunz, 1996).

The teacher has opportunities for research which, if seized, will not only powerfully and rapidly develop the technique of teaching, but will also react to and vitalize and dignify the work of the individual teacher. (Buckingham, 1926, p. iv)

Cooperative research activity between academic researchers and teachers was seen as a way to improve the quality of educational research and to bring it closer to the needs of the field because of the important contributions that teachers could make from their perspective within the classroom (Cutright & Dahl, 1939). Despite the call for teachers to become researchers, the role of teachers in research was mainly to be limited to data collectors in studies designed and controlled by academic researchers. The ideas (a) that teachers could independently design and carry out inquiries on their own practice and (b) that the results of those efforts could have meaning and value for others beyond the settings in which the research was conducted were not commonplace in the early part of this century (Olson, 1990).

At least five major traditions of practitioner research in education have developed during the 20th century. We will not attempt to present a detailed history of those traditions in this chapter. A literature has emerged in the past decade that does a good job of this (e.g., Adelman, 1993; Elliott, 1991; Foshay, 1994; Kemmis, 1980/1988; McKernan, 1996; McTaggart, 1991; Noffke, 1994a, 1997a, 1997b; Olson, 1990; Park, Brydon-Miller, Hall, & Jackson, 1993; Wallace, 1987). Our purpose here is to briefly identify and define those different traditions of practitioner research.

First is the action research tradition that developed out of the work of Collier and Lewin in the United States and that was brought into schools in the United States by Stephen Corey and others at the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute at Columbia University in the 1950s. Second is the British teacher-as-researcher movement that evolved in the 1960s and 1970s out of the curriculum reform work of British teachers and the supports provided by several academics, such as Lawrence Stenhouse and John Elliott, who were based at the University of East Anglia, and the participatory action research movement in Australia that has many direct links to the British movement.

Third is the contemporary teacher researcher movement in North America that has been developed primarily by teachers, often with the support of their university colleagues and subject-matter associations. Fourth is the recent growth of self-study research by college and university educators who— as teachers and teacher educators— study their own practice. Finally is the tradition of participatory research that (a) evolved out of work in Asia, Africa, and Latin America with oppressed groups and (b) was then adapted to community-wide research in North America that included, but went beyond, the educational sphere.

The Action Research Tradition

Although the central impulse behind action research can be understood to lie in the efforts of many disenfranchised groups to attain greater social justice through careful study, the first use of the term in the United States can be found in the writings of social psychologist Kurt Lewin and U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, who used it as a way to counteract

racial prejudice, to reform agricultural practices, and to promote more democratic forms of leadership in the workplace. Building on the Deweyan idea of inquiry, but also influenced by the movement for the scientific study of education noted earlier, Stephen Corey, Dean of Teachers College at Columbia University and head of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute for School Experimentation, and his colleagues brought the term "action research" into educational work. The institute was formed in 1943 to improve the rate of curriculum change in schools and to reduce the gap between research knowledge and instructional practices in classrooms (Olson, 1990). Corey believed that teachers would make better instructional decisions if they conducted research to determine the basis for those decisions and that teachers would be more likely to pay attention to research that they conducted themselves (Corey, 1953).

Corey and his associates at the institute worked cooperatively with teachers, principals, and supervisors in school districts across the United States in the late 1940s and 1950s on various group research efforts in what was referred to as the cooperative action research movement (e.g., Corey, 1953; Cunningham & Miel, 1947; Foshay, Wann, & Associates, 1954). Teams of educators worked together with the staff of the institute in addressing a numerous problems of curriculum, instruction, and supervision. Like Lewin, Corey (1953) saw action research as a cyclical process with each cycle of research affecting subsequent cycles of planning, acting, observation, and reflection. Corey outlined the significant elements of the action research methodology, as follows:

1. The identification of a problem area about which an individual or group is sufficiently concerned to want to take action.
2. The selection of a specific problem and the formulation of a hypothesis or prediction that implies a goal and a procedure for reaching it. This specific goal must be viewed in relation to the total situation.
3. The careful recording of actions taken and the accumulation of evidence to determine the degree to which the goal has been achieved.
4. The inference from this evidence of generalizations regarding the relation between the actions and the desired goal.
5. The continuous retesting of these generalizations in action situations. (Corey, 1953, pp. 40-41)

This understanding of the action research process was generally similar to Lewin's in terms of (a) the focus on the group and (b) the emphasis on the recursive nature of action research process (i.e., the need to allow the initial understanding of a problem defined by practitioners to shift to remain relevant to changing situations):

In a program of action research, it is impossible to know definitely in advance the exact nature of the inquiry that will develop. If initial designs, important as they are for action research, are treated with too much respect, the investigators may not be sufficiently sensitive to their developing irrelevance to the ongoing action situation. (Corey, 1949, pp. 40-41)

Corey's view of the action-research process differed from Lewin's in its emphasis on hypothesis formulation and testing.

In the eyes of Corey's students and those who followed him at the institute, action research was increasingly viewed as a linear problem-solving process as opposed to the recursive cyclical process that it had been under Lewin and Corey. In the work of Hilda Taba (e.g., Taba & Noel, 1957) and others, action research lost the notion of a spiral and became a series of steps to follow. It also became increasingly associated as a form of in-service teacher education as opposed to a methodology for knowledge production (Noffke, 1997b; Shumsky, 1958; Wiles, 1953).

Corey spent much time defending action research as a legitimate form of educational inquiry in terms of the positivist standards of research that were dominant at the time, but he was largely unsuccessful in doing so. Action research was ridiculed and judged by conventional academic standards as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, and it largely disappeared from mainstream U.S. educational literature until the late 1970s, when a new teacher research movement appeared in North America. A shift in the funding of educational research to the federal level; the establishment of the National Institute of Education; the disassociation of the American Educational Research Association from the National Education Association (in 1967); and an increased reliance on a research, development, and dissemination model of educational research in the establishment of research and development centers at universities across the country—all signaled the decline of the cooperative action research movement in the United States (Noffke, 1997b).

The Teacher-as-Researcher Movement in the United Kingdom and the Participatory Action Research Movement in Australia

Following the decline of action research in the United States by the early 1960s, the idea of action research in the field of education emerged in the United Kingdom in the context of school-based curriculum development in the 1960s. According to John Elliott (1991, 1997), who was one of the central players in this movement both as a secondary teacher and as a university academic, this teacher-led movement arose in response to large-scale student disaffection in British secondary modern schools in the 1960s. In Elliott's view, it was from attempts by teachers in some innovative secondary modern schools to restructure and reconceptualize the humanities curriculum that the ideas of teacher-as-researcher, teaching as a reflexive practice, and teaching as a form of inquiry emerged.

It should also be noted that another influence on the development of action research in the United Kingdom before this was the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, which was set up in 1947 to further practices that psychologists had used during World War 2 to train officers, resettle prisoners, and so forth. There were strong parallels between the work of this institute, which adapted those methods to deal with problems of human relations and group dynamics in industrial settings, and the Research Center for Group Dynamics that Lewin had set up in the United States (Wallace, 1987). Some evidence shows that Lawrence Stenhouse, one of the major proponents of action re-

search in Britain, had been influenced by the work of the Tavistock Institute (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

According to Somekh (1998), two other influences on development of the teacher-as-researcher movement in Britain were the Educational Priority Areas Programme, which involved collaborative inquiries among academic researchers and teachers (Halsey, 1972), and the U.S.-developed "Man: A Course of Study" (MACOS) social studies curriculum, which emphasized the idea of students as researchers (Bruner, 1965). According to Somekh, Lawrence Stenhouse was strongly influenced by MACOS, and for many years his university served as the British distributor of the curriculum.

The "bottom up" curriculum reform work initiated by British teachers and later conceptualized and recorded by academics like John Elliott, Lawrence Stenhouse, Jean Rudduck, and Clem Adelman involved many different initiatives designed to make the curriculum more relevant to the lives of students, such as (a) restructuring the content of curriculum around life themes instead of subjects, (b) transforming the instructional process from a transmission mode to a more interactive and discussion-based mode, (c) using multi-age-grouping patterns, and so forth.

A number of major curriculum reform projects were initiated in the 1960s and 1970s by Stenhouse, Elliott, and others who used and further developed the notion of practitioner inquiry as curriculum development. These projects included the Humanities Curriculum Project, which dealt with teaching controversial issues (Stenhouse, 1968); the Ford Teaching Project, which dealt with implementing an inquiry-discovery approach to teaching (Elliott, 1976-77); and the Teacher-Student Interaction and Quality of Learning project, which focused on the problems of "teaching for understanding" within the context of a system of public examinations (Elliott & Ebutt, 1986). All of these projects involved university academics working with teachers and represented a rejection of a standards- or objectives-based view of curriculum development in favor of one that is based on a pedagogically driven conception of curriculum change that depends on teachers' reflections about their practice. According to this view, the act of curriculum theorizing is not so much the application in the classroom of theory learned in the academy as it is the generation of theory from attempts to change curriculum practice in the school (Elliott, 1991). Stenhouse (1975), one of the early academic supporters of this movement, coined the term "teacher as researcher" to signify the dependence of pedagogical change on teachers' capacities for reflection.

Elliott (1997) argues that action research cannot be distinguished as a unique paradigm of research in terms of data-gathering methods. He argues that what distinguishes action research from other forms of educational research are its transformative intentions (i.e., to change practice) and the methodological principles such intentions imply. He summarizes the methodology of action research, as follows:

It is directed towards the realization of an educational ideal (e.g., as represented by a pedagogical aim),

It focuses on changing practice to make it more consistent with the ideal.

It gathers evidence of the extent to which the practice is consistent/inconsistent with the ideal and seeks explanations for inconsistencies by gathering evidence about the operation of contextual factors,

It problematizes some of the tacit theories which underpin and shape practice (i.e., taken-for-granted beliefs and norms), [and]

It involves practitioners in generating and testing action-hypotheses about how to effect worthwhile educational change. (p. 25)

The efforts of John Elliott, Peter Holly, Bridget Somekh, and many others at the University of East Anglia led to the establishment and development of the Collaborative Action Research Network. This network has sponsored conferences and published many accounts of action research and many works that have furthered discussions about action research methodology (e.g., Edwards & Rideout, 1991; O'Hanlon, 1991). More recently, the group has played a central role in establishing the journal, *Educational Action Research*, which provides an international forum for reports of action research and for the exchange of ideas about action research.

Stephen Kemmis, who had spent some time with Elliott and his colleagues at the University of East Anglia, took action research with him to Australia, and, together with Wilfred Carr, a British educational philosopher, developed an epistemological basis for action research in the critical theory of Habermas (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). This view of "emancipatory" action research that is based in critical theory effectively challenged other models of action research as conservative and positivistic. As in the United Kingdom, Kemmis, Robin McTaggart, and others at Deakin University were able to build on a strong movement among teachers for school-based curriculum development and a context for grassroots involvement in policymaking (Grundy & Kemmis, 1988). Using ideas later articulated in *Becoming Critical*, teachers and other staff members developed a methodology for use in various action research courses and projects (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988a, b). This model, which was conceptualized as a series of recursive cycles of plan, act, observe, and reflect, has a clear definition of the aims of the research process, as follows:

Action research is a form of *collective* self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988b, p. 5)

Although a number of projects of the critical emancipatory type are described in various publications (e.g., Kemmis & Grundy, 1997; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988a; Tripp, 1990), there is some question as to the degree to which the teachers throughout Australia who became engaged in action research took on the critical-emancipatory purposes that Kemmis and his colleagues emphasized in their work at Deakin (Grundy, 1982). As was the case in the United Kingdom, academics like Kemmis and Tripp (who had also spent time in Britain) worked hard to legitimate action research as research within Australia. Grundy (1997) argues, though, that various political, social,

and educational circumstances had already established the conditions for the further development of practitioner research in Australia:

It is . . . wrong to see the development of participatory action research as a missionary venture in which the gurus, who had come to see the light in a far country, now brought the news to a waiting population. It is clear . . . that there was, both socially and educationally, a milieu already oriented toward teacher participation in the production of educational knowledge. (p.135)

Grundy (1997) identifies a series of political, social, and educational conditions that had fostered a receptivity to the idea of teachers as producers of educational knowledge. Among those were three projects in the 1970s funded by the Commonwealth Schools' Commission: The Innovative Grants Project, the Language and Learning Project, and the Curriculum Development Center. Those projects, as well as (a) changing conceptions of in-service teacher education at the state level and (b) a growth in practitioner research in tertiary institutions, stimulated a lot of school-based curriculum development and evaluation and teachers studying their own practices in Australian schools. Grundy argues that, although the tradition of Australian participatory action research developed with a direct link to the British teacher-as-researcher movement, it eventually developed its own practices and epistemology that distinguished it from British action research.

The North American Teacher Research Movement

In the 1980s, a new movement for teacher research emerged in North America in response to several factors. Anderson et al. (1994) argue that this movement was not derivative of the British teacher-as-researcher movement or a reemergence of the cooperative action research movement of the 1940s and 1950s. They identify many influences on the development of this movement, including (a) the growing acceptance of qualitative and case-study research in education that more closely resembles the narrative forms of inquiry used by practitioners to communicate their knowledge; (b) the pioneering work of many teachers of writing such as Nancy Atwell (1987), who conducted case studies on the teaching of writing; (c) the increased emphasis on action research in university teacher education programs (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Zeichner & Gore, 1995); and (d) the reflective practitioner movement that was inspired by the work of Schön (1983) and that sought to reclaim teachers' knowledge as valid.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) also discuss other influences on teacher research in North America, such as the National Writing Project; the Breadloaf School of English (Goswami & Stillman, 1987); the National Council of Teachers of English (supporter of many teacher researchers in English-Language Arts education) (e.g., Mohr & Maclean, 1987); Patricia Carini and the teachers at the Prospect School in Bennington, Vermont, who developed methods for documenting the progress of children's learning (e.g., Carini, 1975); and the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation guided by Vito Perrone (e.g., Perrone, 1989).

This teacher research movement followed a number of years of "interactive research and development" and other forms of collaborative research among university researchers and teachers (e.g., Jacullo-Noto, 1984; Oja & Smulyan, 1989; Tikunoff & Ward, 1983) that involved teachers in some aspects of the research about their practices but that was not a process fully owned by the teachers. This collaborative research, like the research stimulated by the work of Lewin and Corey, involved collaboration between professional researchers and the teachers whose practice was under study. Practitioner research was not then considered as a process that could be identified primarily as the property of individuals who were not professional researchers by vocation (McTaggart, 1991).

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) describe the different varieties of inquiry that have emerged under the rubric of teacher research in North America. Rather than outlining a series of phases or steps of the research process, a practice that was common in the British and Australian action research movements and in the cooperative action research movement in the United States in the 1950s, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) define teacher research very broadly as "systematic intentional inquiry by teachers about their own school and classroom work" (pp. 23-24). They outline two major categories of teacher research: (a) conceptual research, which is theoretical and philosophical, and (b) empirical research, which involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data gathered from teachers, schools, and classrooms.

In the category of empirical teacher research, Cochran-Smith and Lytle include (a) journals that provide accounts of classroom life over time (e.g., Streib, 1985), (b) oral inquiries that consist of teachers' oral examinations of their practice in a group setting (e.g., Kanevsky, 1993), and (c) classroom studies that represent teachers' explorations of their work using data based on observations, interviews, and document collection (e.g., Bissex & Bullock, 1987). Under the category of conceptual research, they include teachers' essays and books that represent extended interpretations and analyses of various aspects of schooling. These essays include the works of teachers like Gallas, (1994, 1995, 1998), Hawkins (1969), Kohl, (1967), Kozol (1967), and Paley (1979).

The category of classroom studies includes work that most closely resembles the earlier cooperative research studies in the United States, British action research studies, and traditional forms of academic educational research. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) argue that it would be a mistake to limit the concept of teacher research to the category of classroom studies, as many have done, because this limitation does not enable us to benefit from much of the empirical and conceptual work conducted by teachers. Cochran-Smith and Lytle, as well as Anderson et al. (1994), essentially argue that practitioner research represents a different paradigm of research from academic research, because it gives us access to insider or local knowledge about educational settings. This point of view has important implications for how we think about the epistemology of practitioner research, which is the subject of a later section in this chapter.

A large part of the research that has been conducted by North American teachers within this teacher research move-

ment has not been included in mainstream academic publishing outlets, although some, such as Grimmett and MacKinnon (1992), have described and analyzed practitioner research within conventional academic publishing outlets. In the academic world, few journals (such as *Language Arts*) and certain publishers (such as Heinemann, Stenhouse, and Teachers College Press) have regularly published practitioner research. Several new journals (e.g., *Teacher Research*, the National Educational Association's *Teaching and Change*, and *Network*, the electronic teacher research journal based in Toronto) focus exclusively on practitioner research.

Much practitioner research, however, still remains as part of a fugitive literature that is accessible only locally (Richardson, 1994b). Even here, norms and circumstances often discourage the sharing of work in local settings (McTaggart, 1989; Zeichner, Marion, & Caro-Bruce, 1998). A number of teacher research networks like those in Fairfax County, Virginia; in Madison, Wisconsin; and at the Cooperative Research and Extension Services (CRESS) center sponsored by the University of California at Davis have developed listings by research topics of the abstracts of studies conducted within their networks. In some cases, like the Madison, Wisconsin, school district, those abstracts have been made available on the Internet. The CRESS Center has also published a language arts journal (*Visions and Revisions: Research for Writing Teachers*) and a math journal (*Translation, Rotation, and Reflection*) that provide a forum for the work of teacher researchers. Much practitioner research that is done by teachers in North America is not published anywhere but is shared orally at several regional and national teacher research conferences that occur on a regular basis.

The Tradition of Self-Study Research

Although many of the reports of practitioner research have involved the work of elementary and secondary school teachers and other staff members who have studied their practice, there has also been a growing tradition of research in which college and university faculty members conduct research on their own practice. This research tradition recognizes the fact that we are all practitioners in some sphere of our work (Somekh, 1995). It rejects the ideas that the only role for academics is to generate theories for others to consume and that academics should have a monopoly on knowledge production in education. There has been growing acceptance of self-study research within colleges and universities, especially within the teacher education community.

Although there have long been calls for this kind of research by teacher educators (e.g., Corey, 1955) and college and university faculty members who have conducted inquiries on their own teaching practice (e.g., Duckworth, 1987; Lampert, 1985), recently there has been a tremendous growth in the publication of self-study research (e.g., Feiman-Nemser & Featherstone, 1992; Loughran & Russell, 1997; Richardson, 1997; Russell & Korthagen, 1995; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991). There have also been calls for the academy to recognize the legitimacy of high-quality self-study research in tenure and promotion decisions (e.g., Adler, 1993). In 1992, a special interest group, Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices, was formed in the

American Educational Research Association. Just 7 years later, it has become one of the largest interest groups in the association.

The self-study research conducted by college and university faculty members has used various qualitative methodologies and has focused on a wide range of substantive issues. For example, some studies in this genre use narrative life history methods and describe the connections between teacher educators' life experiences and their current teaching practices (Cole & Knowles, 1995; Zeichner, 1995a). In this form, the self-study research most closely resembles the essays and narratives that are commonly found in the North American teacher research movement, and it parallels developments in life history research generally (e.g., Neumann & Peterson, 1997; Thomas, 1995). Although research in this genre seldom follows the pattern of the action research cycles common in the U.S. cooperative action research movement and in the British and Australian teacher researcher movements, some studies, many emanating from the University of Bath and Kingston University in the UK, have connected action research and self-study (e.g., Lomax, 1997). Some self-study research involves inquiries about (a) the use of particular instructional strategies (e.g., Grimmer, 1997; Moje, Remillard, Southerland, & Wade, 1999; Richert, 1991; Teitelbaum & Britzman, 1991) or (b) the implementation of particular educational philosophies in teacher education programs (e.g., Carson, 1997; Macgillivray, 1997; Maher, 1991; Richardson, 1997). Many recent studies focus on the struggles of teacher educators with issues of race, class, and gender (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1995; Lima, 1998; Martin, 1995) and with working within institutions that do not place a high value on the activity of teacher education (McCall, 1996).

Self-study research has found its way into the academic journals and into a flurry of recent books. Some journals, like *Teaching Education*, have actively recruited and published self-studies on a regular basis. Two teacher education journals, *Action in Teacher Education* (Manning & McLaughlin, 1996) and *Teacher Education Quarterly* (special issue, 1995), have recently published special issues on self-study research.

The Tradition of Participatory Research

Although much of the research in this tradition has taken place in Third World countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (e.g., Fals-Borda, 1988; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Freire, 1982; Tandon, 1988), similar ideas and practices have developed in North America, Europe, and Australia with groups that share characteristics of oppression and domination experienced by many Third World peoples (e.g., Park et al., 1993; Stringer, 1996). According to Hall (1993), the International Council for Adult Education's Participatory Research Project in 1977, which is based in Toronto, was the means by which an initial sharing of methods and practices of participatory research occurred in North America. Other accounts discuss the role of the Highlander Center in the United States in developing and disseminating information and strategies for conducting participatory research (Horton, 1990; Noffke, 1997a).

This research tradition has been closely associated with adult education and literacy movements, although it has also dealt

with other social issues and problems, such as land ownership and use, environmental contamination, unemployment, crime and drugs, and so forth. Torres (1992) argues that the development of the ideas of liberation pedagogy and popular education are responsible for the origins of participatory research in Latin America. According to Reason (1994), participatory research has the following double objective:

One aim is to produce knowledge and action directly useful to a group of people through research, adult education, and sociopolitical action. The second aim is to empower people through a second and deeper level through the process of constructing their own knowledge. (p. 328)

The explicit aim of participatory research is to bring about a more just and humane society, and the research process provides a framework in which people who seek to overcome oppressive situations can come to understand the social forces operating in a situation and can gain strength to engage in collective action (Park, 1993). This broad scope of participatory research, which leads to an examination of issues within a societal framework, is very different from the individual and group foci in other traditions of practitioner research (Brown & Tandon, 1983).

According to Gaventa (1991), three strategies of participatory research have emerged in the North American context. They are as follows:

1. The reappropriation of knowledge—gaining access to knowledge and skills normally considered to be the monopoly of a knowledge elite. This includes what Gaventa refers to as community power structure research in which communities of people gain access to such things as courthouse records about property transactions, housing codes, land and mineral ownership, government records about company finances, and so forth (e.g., Adams, 1975).
2. The development of the people's knowledge—the production and reclaiming of the common person's knowledge and wisdom. An example of this strategy is the housewife researchers who analyzed and documented the health experiences of people in the community in the vicinity of Love Canal, which resulted in a campaign to clean up toxic waste dumps (Levine, 1982).
3. Popular participation in the social production of knowledge. This strategy involves forms of democratic participation and control in defining problems to be studied, setting research priorities, and in determining how the results are to be used. One example is the case of relatively powerless groups in Appalachia demanding a voice in the allocation of public research funds. (Gaventa & Horton, 1981)

Although a numerous research methods are used in participatory research, a general structure of research in this tradition and a set of assumptions are shared by researchers. A key concept in this research is that the subject-object relationship between researcher and researched typical in conventional academic research is turned into a subject-subject relationship (Fals-Borda, 1991; Freire, 1982). Although often an outside

person intervenes to mobilize and organize a community for investigation and action, the people in an area being studied assume active roles in the investigation and do not serve as passive objects of study. Typically, ordinary people engage in activities like making up questionnaires and interview schedules that are commonly reserved for technically trained personnel.

Hall (1993) points out that participatory research is based on the epistemological assumption that knowledge is constructed socially through a process of dialogue and that the issues studied and ways of studying them should flow from those involved and should promote dialogue within the community of researchers. The first step in the process is the definition and exploration of the problem to be investigated. The outside researcher typically acts as a discussion organizer, a facilitator, and as a technical resource person.

The researchers (outside and inside) then decide on how data are to be collected and analyzed. Participatory research draws upon a wide range of research methods used in the social sciences, including field observation, archival and library research, personal histories, interviews, and observations. The specific methods that are selected in particular projects take into account the technical and material resources of the community and traditions within the community of communicating and disseminating knowledge (e.g., Hinsdale, Lewis, & Waller, 1995). Hall (1993) describes the selection of approaches according to their potential for drawing out knowledge and analysis in a social and collective way. He identifies a number of research methods not typically found in conventional academic research, including

Community meetings, video documentaries, community drama, camps for the landless in India, use of drawing and murals, photo novels, sharing of oral histories, community surveys, storytelling, shared testimonies, and many more. (pp. 4331-4332)

Gaventa (1991) argues that once people begin to view themselves as researchers who are able to investigate and change reality for themselves, they will invent indigenous ways of gathering information from the power structure, what he calls "guerrilla research" methods. One example that he gives of this phenomenon is a situation in Appalachia, where coal miners needing information about their employer gained a great deal of useful data by monitoring garbage cans at company headquarters. The data assembled in the research, by whatever methods, serve as topics for collective reflection through dialogue within the community of researchers and provide researchers with ammunition for improving their material conditions.

Those who are engaged in participatory research are typically very critical of nonparticipatory research and often argue that it serves the dominant groups in a society by monopolizing the development and use of knowledge to the disadvantage of the communities in which research takes place, thereby exploiting those communities (Reason, 1994). Participatory research aims to democratize the political economy of knowledge production and to empower oppressed groups so they take effective actions toward improving the conditions in their lives.

These five traditions of practitioner research—action research, the teacher-as-researcher and participatory action re-

search movements in Britain and Australia, the teacher research movement in North America, self-study research, and participatory research—reflect a variety of personal, professional, and political motivations for conducting research. The next section of this chapter will look across those five traditions and will discuss the various motivations that have stimulated practitioner research in education.

Frameworks of Purpose in Practitioner Research

But can you expect teachers to revolutionize the social order for the good of the community? Indeed we must expect this very thing. The educational system of a country is worthless unless it accomplishes this task. (Woodson, 1933/1977, p. 145)

This quote represents the thoughts behind but one of the many frameworks of purpose in practitioner research. At its core, practitioner research shares with other forms of educational research an emphasis on developing and deepening the understanding of educational practice. Yet practitioner research is both about changing practice as a result of study and about changing practice to understand it. As noted earlier, to some, especially those writing in the British action research tradition, its claim as a distinct research paradigm is based to a large extent on its potential for changing practice (Elliott, 1997). The nature and extent of the change intended, though, is a contested area that varies not only across but also within traditions of practitioner research. Through changing practice, teachers and other educational practitioners become producers, as well as mediators and consumers, of knowledge. For many advocates of and participants in practitioner research, the concept of practice as knowledge production is essential in that it can both embrace the value of individual development and move beyond the local and private context to contribute more broadly to educational and societal improvement.

Fischer (1996) notes that teacher researchers often pursue their own interests in their classroom. He suggests the following categories for understanding the many kinds of reasons one might engage in practitioner research:

- (a) an interest in knowing more about how students learn; (b) wanting to try something new, to innovate in a curriculum area; (c) a desire for change in one's teaching; and (d) a search for connections and meanings in one's work. (p. 39)

Such motivations are similar to those outlined by Zeichner (1997), who highlights the various kinds of questions that pre-service and in-service teachers in Madison, Wisconsin, have pursued. These include questions that are designed

1. To improve practice (e.g., how can I hold better discussions in my classes and have a more learner-centered classroom?);
2. To better understand a particular aspect of practice (e.g., do I conduct my classes in a manner where students feel free to express different opinions and even to disagree with me?);
3. To better understand one's practice in general (e.g., what is going on in my classroom?) (a specific question emerges later);

4. To promote greater equity (e.g., how can I help the girls in my math class feel more confident about their abilities in math and to participate more in class activities?); and
5. To influence the social conditions of practice (e.g., how can I get the school district to reallocate funding to support teacher-initiated professional development work?) (Zeichner, 1997, pp. 10–11).

In addition to identifying examples of the various starting points for practitioner research in their respective contexts, both Fischer (1996) and Zeichner (1997) depict practitioner research as a recursive process that often shifts in focus and that is connected to the dynamics of the school year. This depiction contrasts with linear models of the action-research process, models that are often described in the literature.

The closeness of the relationship between change and practice implied by the term "practitioner research" serves as a reminder that the work of education takes place in a complex social context. As Kemmis and McTaggart (1988a) emphasize in their definition of action research noted earlier, the focus of this version of practitioner research is not only on advancing understanding and practice, but also on improving the situation in which the practice occurs. Although we will differentiate the motivational structures of practitioner research in terms of the personal, professional, and political, all three dimensions are inherently political because they involve issues of power and control (Noffke, 1997a). In practice, those dimensions are interwoven categories rather than orientations belonging to a particular tradition of practitioner research. The separation into categories is thus a construct for illuminating emphases rather than a typology for identifying the worthiness of purposes or traditions.

In this section and the next, an important caution must be understood. Practitioner researchers, like many traditional researchers, do not always report their reasons for engaging in inquiry. Their purposes often must be inferred from the topics of their research (addressed in the next section) and from the tone of their presentation. As with other analyses of practitioner research, we still rely too heavily on works written by academics, which set out theoretical or conceptual frameworks derived from social science theories or which comment on what has been gleaned from studying practitioners, often using traditional research methods. Although we recognize this weakness, we hope the present work represents a continuing step in recognizing practitioners' voices in research on teaching.

Up Close and Personal: Seeing Children, Seeing Oneself

The personal dimension of practitioner research is evident in several ways. First, much of practitioner research involves the careful study of the participants in educational practice, very often involving the students or children—what and how they learn. The research is personal, because it represents not only the search for general principles or theories of school curriculum or classroom instruction but also the search for understanding and improving one's everyday practice.

From the work in the 1950s at the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute at Teachers College (Foshay et al., 1954), through the work of the Ford Teaching Project (Elliott & Adelman, 1973),

to much of the work in the current traditions of North American teacher research and self-study, a major purpose for engaging in practitioner research has been to gain a better understanding of individual students' thoughts and actions (Banford, 1996; Gallas, 1998; Osborne, 1997) or teachers' experiences with particular educational innovations (Griffiths & Davies, 1993). This purpose recognizes the inherent process of generating and examining theories that are part of educational practice (Elliott, 1991; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Posch, 1993). In some ways resembling the early child-study movement or case study approach, practitioner research brings us very close to everyday classroom experiences. As such, the research (e.g., Short, Schroeder, Laird, Kaufmann, Ferguson, & Crawford, 1996; Steffy & Hood, 1994) offers great potential for building a case-study literature in education, as has been done in other professions.

Many practitioner researchers have expressed concern about both the current educational context and children's lives. As teacher researcher Barbara Morgan noted in the 1994 *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*:

I think that those of us who tend toward the silent "making do" often do not effectively resist the stupidities of policy and institution. To act in this way harms children. However safe we keep them for the time they stay with us, we cannot protect against damage done by schooling. We must enter the conversation because we are closest to the children, and we have the possibility of bringing the children's voices into the conversation too. We have not spoken enough. We need to speak not as "raw data" but as analytical women (and men) who have rigorously considered their environment and are ready to add new interpretive frames (Threatt, Buchanan, Morgan, Strieb, Sugarman, Swenson, Teel, & Tomlinson, 1994, p. 230).

Morgan's clear concern with the lives of the children in her classroom is strongly linked to a commitment to the potential within teachers for creating new ways of sharing their experiential knowledge with others. The care and nurture of students is integrally connected to the perception of self as teacher (Nias, 1989). Although Morgan's research experience is personal and valued in its individuality, it is also part of an overall political strategy (Noffke & Brennan, 1997) embedded in her classroom practice. As practitioners change their practices and document what they do, they live out as well as problematize particular orientations to the larger social order, including ethical stances on how one should "be" with children in the classroom, and the uneven distribution of knowledge and privilege in society (Griffiths, 1994; Maher, 1991). Although not all teachers embrace a social transformation orientation, all practice embodies a political stance, whether directly or tacitly (Noffke & Brennan, 1997).

A second aspect of the personal dimension is a heightened self-awareness by the practitioner, including the clarification of assumptions about education and the recognition of contradictions between espoused ideas and actual classroom practices. This pattern, evident in the Ford Teaching Project (Elliott, 1976–77) and in subsequent projects in the United Kingdom, parallels early practitioner research in the United States (Shumsky, 1958). Particularly noteworthy here is that curriculum and pedagogical theorizing are being examined in light of the practitioners' experiences (Fecho, 1996). Along with this examina-

tion is a strong emphasis on what one is actually doing, rather than intending to do, in P-12 as well as in university classrooms (Peterman, 1997). The personal, in this sense, encompasses both individual classrooms and the theorizing of individual practitioners.

A third aspect of the personal in the practitioner research literature is the examination of the impact of the research process on the practitioner (e.g., Dadds, 1995; McNiff, 1993; Noffke & Zeichner, 1987). Resonating with the work of Lewin and others, the focus of practitioner research often shifts from classrooms, teachers' theories, and children to changes in teachers' basic orientations to practice. Motivations for engaging teachers in research have ranged from creating a greater receptivity among teachers to traditional academic educational research (Tikunoff & Ward, 1983), to encouraging changes in teachers' belief structures and practices, to having practitioners offer contributions to existing lines of theory production in the field (Johnston & Proudford, 1994). Although some attention has been devoted to this personal and often transformative aspect of practitioner research, the impact of such efforts on practitioners' basic belief structures and concepts of self has been largely unexamined in the literature.

One exception is the growing salience in the self-study tradition of narrative, life history, and autobiographical research (Cole & Knowles, 1995; Elijah, 1996), which illustrates how practitioner research often fosters reexamination of tacit views. Although such explorations offer many insights into the role of the personal in change processes, the role of teachers' cultural identities in the transformation of practice has been largely ignored and is clearly an area in need of study.

Another exception is the recent effort to study the impact of conducting practitioner research on teachers' professional development in North America (e.g., Richert, 1996; Troen, Kamii, & Boles, 1997; Zeichner, 1999; Zeichner, Marion, & Caro-Bruce, 1998) and the United Kingdom (e.g., Dadds, 1995). Richert (1996), for example, concludes that participation in a 6-year teacher research project sponsored by the Bay Region IV Professional Development Consortium in California had many important effects on teacher researchers, including the following:

1. It resulted in a renewed feeling of pride and excitement about teaching and in a revitalized sense of self as teacher.
2. The research experience reminded teachers of their intellectual capability and the importance of that capability to their professional lives.
3. The research experience allowed teachers to see that the work that they do in school matters.
4. The research experience reconnected many of the teachers to their colleagues and to their initial commitments to teach.
5. The research experience encouraged teachers to develop an expanded notion of what teachers can and ought to do.

It is important to note that practitioner research does not always, nor perhaps even often, occur in isolation. Many practitioner researchers work in collaboration with children (e.g., Gallas, 1994; Stumbo, 1992). Much work is also "facilitated" by others, often those in universities (e.g., Dockendorf, 1995;

Hollingsworth, 1994; Miller, 1990), or is supported through group meetings with other practitioner researchers (Caro-Bruce & McReadie, 1995; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Evans, Stubbs, Frechette, Neely, & Warner, 1987; Marion, 1998). Some of this collaborative inquiry by teachers takes place in the context of teacher study groups (e.g., Saavedra, 1996) or teacher networks (e.g., Watt & Watt, 1993). Questions about "who owns the process" (Johnston & Proudford, 1994) are vital in evaluating the purpose of the research. An understanding of the legacy of Lewin's work in action research is crucial to evaluating whether the personal dimension—the focus on children and self—is also a means to changing the practitioner through involvement in participatory processes (Noffke, 1997b). Participation, a key aspect to many forms of practitioner research, has a very strong impact on the acceptance of innovation and the improvement of "productivity" (Adelman, 1993). Especially in a context in which practitioner research is seen as a strategy for school improvement (Calhoun, 1994; Sagor, 1992), the potential for administrators to manipulate the goals of practitioner researchers needs to be examined.

Finally, a related purpose for engaging in practitioner research within the personal dimension highlights the fine line between research and learning. Perhaps because of the frequent focus on individual teachers in their classrooms, some practitioner research is dominated by psychological, rather than sociological or anthropological, frameworks. Although this work strongly emphasizes research as "systematic inquiry made public" (Stenhouse, 1983, p. 185), it also focuses clearly on research as an individual learning process for the researcher (e.g., McNiff, 1993; Winter, 1989). The work is particularly interesting in its focus on the value of experiential knowledge. Yet it is also important in highlighting the difficulty of articulating the relationship between the personal and social spheres, which is integral to educational practice, and the absence of discussions of identity (Noffke, 1991).

Considered together, these four aspects of the personal emphasize the ways in which many forms of practitioner research have as their central purpose the improvement of practice (Elliott, 1991) and the ways in which the personal aspects form an integral part of that process. As will be seen in a subsequent section, judgments about the quality of the research have to take into account the practice as well as the study of practice.

Knowledge and the Profession of Education

Closely related to the focus of practitioner research on individual improvement of practice is its connection to the overall education profession. This linkage can be seen along three strands: (a) as a contribution to the profession's "knowledge base," (b) as a means of professional development, and (c) as an enhancement of the profession's status. This professional dimension of practitioner research has a long tradition. Corey (1954) emphasized the potential of practitioner research for helping teachers better understand what they are accomplishing in their classrooms. In the Ford Teaching Project, much attention was paid to creating better congruency between teachers' beliefs and practices as they articulated and problematized previously tacit theories. Teachers generated and tested hypotheses and then sought alternative explanations for what they carefully ob-

served. In those efforts, they also considered how such activities contributed to the overall education profession. Practitioners' descriptions of teaching techniques represented substantial contributions, not only as research findings but also as material for further reflection by other practitioners. Both Stenhouse (1975) and Elliott (1991) have highlighted the vital role for teachers in the articulation of curriculum theory and the continuing efforts for its development in practice.

In Australia as well, considerable attention has been paid, at least at the level of academic writing, to practitioner research as a form of knowledge production. Building on Lewin's emphasis on action research as contributing to both the generation of theory and the improvement of the human condition, Carr & Kemmis (1986), writing from a critical social theory perspective, shaped a claim for action research as a distinct form of educational research. In a framework where all forms of knowledge production are seen as representing particular interests, some teachers, administrators, and researchers have developed projects that embody a transformative and emancipatory theory and practice, rather than ones that appear to seek only the accumulation of knowledge (Kemmis & Grundy, 1997).

Such efforts in the United Kingdom and Australia contrast strongly with the early Interactive Research and Development in Teaching projects that emerged in the United States during the same era. With a purpose of bridging theory and practice by uniting university researchers and practitioners, those projects used empirical analytical methods and focused attention primarily on teaching techniques. Rather than shifting the base of educational knowledge to include moral and social issues, the projects intended to create opportunities for practitioners to add to a narrowly proscribed knowledge base for teaching (Jacullo-Noto, 1984; Tikunoff & Ward, 1983). In some ways, that same accumulative stance toward knowledge is evident in the early work of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), but with significant differences:

Research by teachers represents a distinctive way of knowing about teaching and learning that will alter—not just add to—what we know in the field. Furthermore, we have argued that, as it accumulates and is more widely disseminated, research by teachers will represent a radical challenge to our current assumptions about the relationship of theory and practice, schools and universities, and inquiry and reform. (p. 85)

Although practitioner research is accepted as an emergent form of creating knowledge, the purpose here is to challenge, rather than reinforce, existing forms of knowledge.

Others emphasize practitioner research less as a contender in the knowledge production arena and more as a potential resource for professional development and educational management (Dadds, 1995; Lomax, 1996; O'Hanlon, 1996; Richardson, 1994b; Zuber-Skerritt, 1996). Although the potential of practitioner research to contribute to educational knowledge is not discounted (see Whitehead, 1993), there is more emphasis on its impact on building collaborative professional communities (e.g., Troen et al., 1997) and on informing educational policy (e.g., Atkin, 1994). Although this focus can be seen as connected to the earlier era in the United States when action research was considered more a means of staff development

than as a means of producing knowledge, a significant difference is that, in the contemporary era, the role of practitioner research in enhancing the status of the profession is emphasized more strongly (Sagor, 1992). Constructed in this way, practitioner research highlights the need to examine the meanings of professionalism in educational organizations in light of the interests they represent (Popkewitz, 1994).

As in the personal dimension, struggles over the meaning and status of the profession and professional knowledge occur in political contexts and are representations of various political, economic, and social agendas. In many ways, the current movement in North American teacher research is a clear example of contestation, through research, over the meanings of schooling in the lives of teachers and their students. For example, Wagler (1996) focused his attention not on the individual classroom level, but on ways in which school districts and teacher education institutions could better support networks of innovative teachers. Along similar lines, Russell (in Gitlin, Bringhurst, Burns, Cooley, Myers, Price, Russell, & Tiess, 1992) not only highlights her own voice in educational discourse, but also documents her efforts to establish "professional dialogue sessions" involving teachers and administrators throughout her school.

The self-study tradition focuses beyond individual classrooms. For example, some self-study research is related to the status of teacher education and teacher educators in university structures, particularly those at research universities (e.g., McCall, 1996). By the same token, the British literature on teacher research has long been concerned with issues of professional accountability and autonomy (Elliott, 1991).

Taken together, all of these efforts are an attempt to extend practitioner research beyond the classroom and point to what Lawn (1989) referred to as the "schoolwork research" potential within practitioner research. Rather than relying on external analyses of their work contexts, practitioner researchers directly study and seek to influence aspects of the social and institutional contexts in which they work.

The Political Dimension of Practitioner Research

Although this section outlines aspects of practitioner research that assert a social justice agenda, we assume that all forms of educational research embody particular stances, either to maintain existing lines of power and privilege or to transform them along more just and caring lines. Works that are silent on issues of racial equality, for example, assume political positions as much as those that explore the meaning of such issues. Works that take unproblematic stances toward the role of teachers, the nature of the curriculum, or the processes of learning are likewise political and representative of particular educational positions. Efforts to make schools fulfill their functions more efficiently in relation to given social and economic structures are no less political than those that challenge the form of these structures and their relationship to educational work.

In the participatory research tradition, an overt agenda of social change is integral to the research process. This agenda is explicit in its commitment to economic and social justice issues in both the larger social context and the research process itself. If the political is conceptualized in terms of power issues, then

a major political focus in this tradition involves shared power over knowledge issues. The research, therefore, is "from" and "with," rather than "on," and has full participation by those affected by the research process. Participants' knowledge is valued and developed, it uses skills appropriated from dominant groups, and it is then transformed to serve the interests of the larger community (Gaventa, 1991; Park, 1993).

Such agendas are present in other practitioner research traditions, albeit in different forms. For example, an emancipatory agenda often framed by critical social theory is advocated in Australian participatory-action research (Atweh, Kemmis & Weeks, 1998; Carr, & Kemmis, 1986; McTaggart, 1997). The British teacher research tradition has a strong political agenda to shape and retain control over the profession (e.g., Elliott, 1991). Finally, as noted earlier, some efforts in both the self-study and the research traditions within North American teacher research focus on classroom change and embody a pedagogy explicitly tied to developing more humane and just teaching.

Several practitioner research projects have directly addressed issues of gender and schooling. Some projects have been foundation-funded or university-based efforts (Chisholm & Holland, 1986; Johnston & Proudfoot, 1994; Kelly, 1984; Lock & Minarik, 1997; Tiess in Gitlin et al., 1992; Whyte, 1986) that link teachers and researchers in efforts to uncover and address gender differences in student success. Others have sought ways to understand and change practices that promote racism in education (Donald, Gosling, Hamilton, Hawkes, McKenzie, & Stronach, 1995; Krater, Zeni, & Cason, 1994; Lyman, 1996) or ways to help their pupils understand and challenge social class inequalities (Sylvester, 1994). Some practitioner researchers have focused on teachers' growing awareness of racial identity and of the important role their understanding of culture plays in learning (Cochran-Smith, 1995; McIntyre, 1997; Miller, 1996; Murphy, 1991). Still others have taken on work aimed at creating more inclusive schools (Taylor & Parmar, 1993). This growing literature is still a small part of practitioner research reports, yet it bears much promise for creating educational practices that will make students' experiences in schools more just and equitable.

Open debate about the political agenda question in practitioner research has been limited, at least in public arenas. Whatever forums for discussion of issues of politics in practitioner research emerge, teachers' personal commitment to the children in their classrooms represents a version of the political located in the private, rather than public, sphere. Although much has been written in the academic literature on the tensions between personal and social aims in practitioner research (e.g., Weiner, 1989; Zeichner, 1993), commentators on practitioner research often have not sought to reconcile the tensions between calls for social action beyond the classroom and what many practitioners see as the site of their struggle in the classroom (Griffiths & Davies, 1993). It may be, for example, that the individual nature of some forms of practitioner research, and the frequent focus on individual children or on children as individuals, may help frame research politically in ways similar to other kinds of political movements in the public sphere beyond the classroom.

Melanie Walker (1995), writing about the potential of action

research efforts for both personal development and collective political struggle in the new South Africa, asks fundamental questions important to the overall issue of purposes in practitioner research:

Finally, then, under new conditions of possibility we must still contest the purposes of action research: Whose problems do we try to understand? Who speaks to and for whom? Who writes and who is written? Who, in the end, benefits? (p. 25)

Although the individual, classroom-focused nature of much practitioner research is necessary for social transformation, it may not be sufficient. Collaborations may be needed that provide individual teacher researchers with potentially greater leverage to challenge institutional and social structures (e.g., Hursh, 1995, 1997).

Practitioner researchers need to explore any types of resources and supports. For example, much of the recent work on critical race theory (e.g., Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) could be very useful to practitioner research groups. Also, the emerging community emphasis in some recent teacher research in North America (Banford et al., 1996; Burch & Palanki, 1993; Shockley, Michalove, & Allen, 1995) and the work in the participatory research tradition of practitioner research may be useful in exploring social justice issues more collectively. New ways to communicate about research are still very much needed—ones that recognize and value multiple ways of knowing and forms of theorizing and that assume all educational work, whether in classrooms or university research centers is a form of practice with political implications.

Vision and Voice: The Nature of Practitioner Research

Last year, I noticed that the children in my class were creating groups segregated by gender, and I wrote about it in my journal as I wrote about other issues and events. What I did *not* do last year was to start out by saying, "I'm going to study gender issues in my classroom," and to limit my observations and notes to that (Strieb, in Threath et al., 1994, p. 237).

I am struck by how hard it is to talk about teacher research apart from the students we teach. This is what makes the teacher part of teacher research so important and also what makes it so hard to figure out how to deal with the big questions of time, support, purposes, and audiences for this work. (Buchanan, in Threath et al., 1994, p. 237)

These comments by teachers about their work as researchers give small insights into what it is like to do practitioner research. Questions about the research areas addressed, the methods used to gather and analyze perspectives on practice, the forms and spheres of communication used to share research, and the kinds of claims made on the basis of research need an exhaustive review far beyond the scope of this chapter, especially given the range of traditions and the varied purposes for engaging in the work. Asking questions about the nature of practitioner research is like asking similar questions about other branches of the methodological families of education research. The topics, the procedures for data collection and analysis, and the forms of communicating the research are wide-ranging.

Beginning with the early work of Corey (1953) in the United

States, the nature of action research has been tied to its search for legitimacy in the academic world. Initially conceived as a cyclical process, the research gradually became seen as a more linear, problem-solving, or learning process. Yet even during that era, there were signs that the methods of data collection and analysis were expanding to meet the demands of the kinds of questions that practitioners were interested in studying (Foshay et al., 1954). The inability of accepted research techniques to address the questions most directly tied to practice may have contributed to the decline in action research in the United States noted earlier. Despite this decline, many reports of collaborative action research presented in the Corey and Foshay volumes use a relatively high degree of narrative and first person voice.

By the time the British teacher research movement emerged, great changes were under way in academic educational research. New forms of inquiry, primarily qualitative, were constructing new boundaries for research acceptability (Carr, 1995). The growing acceptance of a search for meaning and for individual cases, rather than for predictability and control, as well as the growth in classroom-based research by academics, may have created a context more conducive to developing new research techniques and forms of communication. Although not excluding surveys and questionnaires as sources of data, practitioner researchers used examples of children's work, teachers' journals, transcripts of class sessions, and classroom photos. These new sources of information were chosen to respond directly to teachers' concerns. Also evident in the publications of the Collaborative Action Research Network and the more recent volumes of *Educational Action Research* is a mixture of project reports, essays, conference talks, and articles examining aspects of the development of the field itself (e.g., Edwards & Rideout, 1991; O'Hanlon, 1991). In those publications, the growth of new forms of research (e.g., Griffiths, 1994) and an expanding international voice are evident. *Educational Action Research* displays a clear ecumenicism in the inclusion of examples from a broad range of practitioner research traditions. In addition, examples in the literature come from higher education, health-related occupations, and other contexts beyond P-12 education.

In Australia as well, the literature includes compilations of historical documents related to the development of the field in a variety of contexts (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988b), works documenting specific projects (e.g., Bunbury, Hastings, Henry, & McTaggart, 1991), and works showing a growing connection to international projects (e.g., McTaggart, 1997). In the latter works, there has been a turn to identifying the projects as "participatory action research," thus showing a strong affiliation with the participatory research tradition. As in the United Kingdom, the research techniques suggested in the Australian literature reflect a predominance of qualitative data gathering methods. In contrast to much British and North American work, the Australian literature places a greater emphasis on critical collaborative reflection as the primary means of data analysis, closely following a suggested framework for sociopolitical analysis (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988a). Taken together, the works originating in the United Kingdom and Australia contribute strongly to a widely based discussion of purposes and processes in practitioner research. However, as clearly as the literature on

these forms of practitioner research lays out a cyclical process of problem identification, planning, observation, action, and reflection, it may not adequately describe how practitioner researchers actually engage in the process (Elliott, 1991). For example, research topics often emerge over time and are refined and redirected as the process takes place, often in response to the context of the practice, thereby resulting in a messier process than the various conceptual models suggest (Burnaford, Fischer, & Hobson, 1996).

Although reports by practitioners outside North America were difficult for us to access, we can note that in the United Kingdom and Australia attempts have been made to include both conceptual and empirical studies in the same publications. This trend is also evident in several North American publications (e.g., Anderson et al., 1994; Carson & Sumara, 1997; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Hollingsworth, 1997; Noffke & Stevenson, 1995; Wells, 1993).

In some parts of the North American tradition of teacher research, considerable efforts have been made to generate research techniques that, although modeled on qualitative methods, attempt to respond more directly to the needs of practitioners in classrooms. Many issues of the journal *Teacher Research*, for example, include discussions of particular techniques, and practitioner research handbooks contain detailed descriptions of research methods adapted for classroom use (e.g., Anderson et al., 1994; Hubbard & Power, 1993).

Although methodological issues are salient in the works, even more prominent is the subject matter of the research. As in the earlier Ford Project in the United Kingdom, pedagogical and curricular innovations best characterize much of the work. North American work often focuses on innovations in literacy education or on inquiry-oriented approaches to teaching in different subject areas. Perhaps because of this focus on specific intended changes in individual classroom practices, academic social theory seems to play a much smaller role in analysis here than in other traditions.

Practitioner research has been related to academic educational research and theory in several ways. For example, Troen et al. (1997) describe three patterns that emerged in their analysis of teacher researchers' work in collaborative inquiry seminars in Brookline and Boston, Massachusetts. Teacher researchers in one group began their work by consulting the academic educational research literature and used concepts and ideas from this work in their research plans.

Teachers in this group found that the ideas that they encountered in books and journal articles resonated with their intuitions about students' and teachers' intellectual lives. The ideas seemed to explain some of the puzzles the teachers had been wrestling with regarding children's approaches to learning and performance on certain classroom tasks. It gave them a language for talking about something they had seen. The teachers suspected the ideas, now articulated and named, had powerful implications for their design of curriculum and their teaching practices. (Troen et al., p. 22)

A second group of teacher researchers began answering their research questions by working in their classrooms and systematically collecting data and reflecting on it. Those teachers deliberately avoided consulting the academic literature at the

onset, because they wanted to listen to and learn from their students and to think about what it meant before connecting their research to the work of academic researchers.

Their strategy was to collect their data and to do a preliminary analysis of it before consulting the research literature. They approached the research literature with findings in hand, looking for corroborating evidence and language to use in discussing their work. (Troen et al., 1997, p. 22)

A third group of teacher researchers focused their work in the classroom and school almost exclusively and selected their teaching colleagues as the audience for their work. Those teachers deliberately bypassed the academic educational research literature because they felt no need to connect with it.

More often than not, they found it unhelpful and even demeaning and offensive, as much because of the style in which it is written as because of what it had to say. (Troen et al., 1997, p. 22)

Generally, little interaction has occurred between the teacher and academic research literatures in North America (Zeichner, 1995b), although the three patterns noted in the Massachusetts teacher research groups have been described elsewhere (e.g., Fischer, 1996). It is more likely that one can find teacher researchers citing academic research in their work than that one will find academic researchers citing teacher research. This pattern is beginning to change, however, as more teacher research is finding its way into journals and books.

The self-study research tradition in many cases shares with the North American teacher research tradition an individual focus. There are, however, several differences. Perhaps because of their greater proximity to academic debates about research methodology, some self-study researchers emphasize research techniques less and personal-autobiographical methods more. Because of the position of many self-study researchers as both teachers and teacher educators, the examination of their practice often raises issues related to university structures (Adler, 1993). Frequently, those practitioners problematize their own assumptions, as well as the potential for the imposition of their beliefs on preservice teachers (e.g., Ahlquist, 1991; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Macgillivray, 1997; Zeichner, 1995a).

As noted earlier, participatory research often involves the development of research strategies by the participants themselves. Those strategies include developing ways to gather specific information and finding means to communicate the research that fit the particular context in which the research has been carried out. In some works, the reporting takes forms such as songs, poetry, festivals, drama, and storytelling to communicate the research to those inside the situation. Although written and published texts are sometimes produced in the participatory research tradition (e.g., Hinsdale et al., 1995), those texts are not always the primary focus. Rather, social transformation is the central concern in much participatory research, and the results are reported in forms other than the typical academic report. In most cases, the focus and processes of the research are developed collaboratively by all participants. In a few cases, the research resembles other forms of academic qualitative research, probably a reflection of the researcher's need to negotiate the study in relation to academic requirements (e.g., McIntyre, 1997).

This brief overview was intended to sketch out some of the ways in which practitioner research varies both within and across traditions. In the next two subsections, we attempt to let practitioners' voices form the basis of the description, along with comments by others who have noted patterns in the literature. Although we touch on several traditions, we focus primarily on the teacher research movement in North America. Here, it is important to remember the earlier characterization of practitioner research as a fugitive literature. This characteristic of the research may benefit practitioner researchers, because the external imposition of forms and standards of quality (addressed in the fourth part of the chapter) may be less likely to occur and the sources for further clarification remain close by. For the purposes of this chapter, however, this characteristic is presented as a point of tension.

Although more places have been created for practitioners to share their work, and both of us have collected practitioner reports not published in academic sources and have sought out those collected by others, practitioners have done much work that is not widely available beyond local sites. In addition, (see Cochran-Smith & Lytle's 1993, typology), some research is produced in forms that cannot be easily circulated. Many practitioner researchers strongly feel that the central focus of their studies lies in the practice within classrooms and communities and in the production of alternative forms of communication rather than in the creation of documents for publication. We hope this more in-depth look at the voices from one tradition will enable subsequent analyses to expand to works from other places and traditions, thus adding new dimensions to our understanding of practitioner research.

Closely Watched Children

From the earliest work on practitioner research, a strong emphasis has been placed on the valuable insights to be gained through the careful observation of classroom practice by those most "inside" it. Much work of the Ford Teaching Project in the United Kingdom in the 1970s, for example, involved teachers analyzing transcripts and photos of their classes to understand how students actually worked through attempted curricular innovations (Elliott & Adelman, 1973). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) highlight the strong classroom focus in much of the teacher research work in North America, including a focus on individual children's learning, single class experiences, children's conceptual development and relationships, and documentation of long-term reflections on teaching and learning. A collection edited by Wells (1993) also focuses on efforts to examine in detail the process of working through an inquiry approach to teaching and learning. The progressive nature of many of the changes in practices being studied is fairly consistent. Many studies address pedagogical innovations connected to a developmental approach to curriculum (Kliebard, 1995) and framed in a version of current constructivist theory (Richardson, 1997).

This link to developmental and constructivist academic theories might lead one to conclude that practitioner research frequently consists of studying the implementation of academic reformers' ideas. Indeed, many reports, although carefully detailing the many pitfalls of a particular approach, seem not to

critique fundamental assumptions. However, as Tomlinson (in Threat et al., 1994) notes:

For many years I studied and thought about how students learn. Over time, I gave very little thought to the perceptions the students had about their own learning. What I have learned from the teacher research I have been a part of has created much pain for me. Through interviews with students eligible for special education services, I have gained new insights into their feelings about themselves and the message the process of special education has sent. (p. 235)

For many researchers, such clear struggle with the contradictions in their practice has its roots not in the academic literature alone, but in the confrontation with the evidence elicited through careful attention to students.

As evident in Brankis's (1996) report of research, important differences exist between practitioner research and traditional research development dissemination models:

At first I felt compelled to read everything that was even remotely related to the topic of using journals in a classroom. However, after some experience, I became more selfish and discriminating. I was drawn to those pieces of research that were done by teachers. There was such a personal element to their writings. Their investment in searching to make a difference for their students was so inspiring. I found a camaraderie with those authors. Those researchers have a story to tell. Their motivation to change their teaching and involve students intimately in the learning process was evident. (pp. 20-21)

What is evident here is that the sharing of practitioner research serves a function perhaps quite different from that of academic writing. It supports classroom practice directly through the substantive detail of the work and the development of supportive networks. Academic reports can be seen to support practice, but in different ways. First, the practice supported is the process of research and not necessarily teaching. Second, although the intention is often to influence classroom practice, the practitioner is not the primary audience. In contrast, the sense of fellow practitioners as audience is carried through much of the practitioner research literature.

Also common in reports of practitioner research is the use of details of classroom conversations (Maher, 1993; Gallas, 1998) and students' work as sources for analysis (e.g., Brankis, 1996; Gallas, 1994). In many cases, much space is devoted to the presentation of excerpts from classroom life with less, but often still significant, attention to critique or connections to academic theory and research. This practice may be a function of the intended audience—the community of other practitioner researchers, as well as the focus on the rich understanding of the participants in practice.

Many handbooks for practitioner research (e.g., Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993; Anderson et al., 1994) present fairly standard methods of qualitative data collection, including ways to record and collect classroom events and artifacts. However, they include caveats about the need to adapt the strategies to fit into the routines of everyday practice. Hubbard and Power (1993), for example, present clear methods for data collection and analysis as well as ways to connect with "distant teachers"—the writings of others who have wondered about similar things. Many practitioner-research accounts share details about data (e.g., Hammatt-Kavaloski, 1996; Hindley, 1996), whereas

others make connections to the academic literature (e.g., Brankis, 1996).

In a recent volume of *Teaching and Change*, Kochendorfer (1997) analyzed the 73 reports of practitioner research that the journal had published. He classified the studies in terms of "what it was the investigators wanted from their research" (p. 157). In many cases, studies sought a "quantifiable answer," wanted to determine the "effects of change," or formulated yes-no research questions about the use of particular instructional strategies (p. 158). More than half the reports were of that form, which serves as a good reminder that some practitioner research mirrors traditional process-product research and uses quantitative rather than qualitative methods.

The nature of practitioner research varies not only across but also within traditions. The process-product research orientation frequently found in some North American works contrasts directly with the more personal and narrative style found in others. In the United Kingdom, the works presented in the Collaborative Action Research Network publications frequently have a very different tone and focus from those in the Bath area. Articles presented in *Educational Action Research* represent a broad range of practices from different fields and countries and show a mixture of narrative, commentary, and methodological discussions. The influence of a particular university or a particular funded project, such as those of the National Writing Project, may play a major role in the nature of the work that is done (Kennedy, 1996). As much as practitioner research may draw on or resemble academic research in its written form, the relationship between the two groups of researchers is sometimes unclear. As Threatt notes:

Despite my excitement at having other people to talk with, people with unique perspectives and interesting and sometimes valuable information, in some ways, at this point, those relationships seem to me to have a colonial flavor to them. The more friendly and equanimous the relationship, the harder it is for me to explain that feeling and perspective. . . . But it seems to me that someone else is having the discussion we need to have for ourselves and that someone else benefits in an economy that rewards their making sense of our work. (Threatt, et. al., 1994, pp. 231-232)

Although the focus on practice and improving the lives of those in schools is a very salient aspect of practitioner research, this form of research raises questions of voice much in need of addressing.

Who Gets to Tell the Story?

As with the participatory research tradition, the authorship of the story of practice is a major issue in the teacher research tradition in North America. As noted earlier, much practitioner research appears as individual narratives (Gallas, 1994), collective stories of practice (e.g., Marsella, Hussey, Emoto, Kaupp, Lee, Soares, Takushi, & Ushijima, 1994), essays (e.g., Turchi, 1996), or oral inquiries (Anderson, Butts, Lett, Mansdoerfer, & Raisch, 1995). (See Cochran-Smith & Lytle's 1993 typology.) Such reports have several different functions. For example, they allow various audiences to hear teachers' stories. In this sense, they might be seen as teacher narrative studies (Neumann & Peterson, 1997; Thomas, 1995), which use the forms and stan-

dards of that genre. Yet one could argue that those pieces, written perhaps out of a strong sense of growing identity as a practitioner researcher, are qualitatively different. Vida Schaffel (1996) describes the way she "rethinks" her practice through her research, as follows:

Without learning there can be no growth, and without growth there can be no change. This holds true for both the student and the teacher. I see myself more now as a facilitator rather than as the purveyor of knowledge. I am constantly collecting data in my classroom while I analyze my own teaching and learning. I view children in a more holistic and developmental way than I did previously. I am more conscious of "process" and see "product" as being multidimensional and multifaceted. I am not the same as I was before. (p. 30)

The conscious recounting of change in practice and the self-reflection on her role as educator can be seen as signs that the intended audience for such narratives may be a significant factor in why such narratives differ from others in the qualitative research literature.

A recent issue of *Teacher Research* (Power & Hubbard, 1995) explores this topic of audiences. Although much practitioner research focuses on other teachers as the audience, other aspects are identified. First, teaching narratives need to be seen against the backdrop of years of course work in preparation for teaching that included "research that didn't speak to real stories of classroom life" (p. iii). As is still the case in much teacher education, this audience of teachers has been largely ignored by academic educational research (Zeichner, 1995b). Second, and perhaps similar to other narratives, some of the reports seem to deliberately attempt to give the audience insights into the more difficult aspects of educational change, thereby almost conveying a message of shared struggle and risk taking.

Change is not easy. It is lonely being a majority of one and it is hard working against the grain. The need to connect with other educators is essential for me. . . . It is difficult not to do what I believe; for to do otherwise, I would not be true to myself. (Schaffel, 1996, p. 31)

The personal narrative in this sense may be seen as an attempt to form a collective identity and a sense of shared struggle. Yet the telling of the story by the author may have the additional function of developing a strong sense of identity with that practice. As in participatory research, the description is affirming and potentially makes the critiquing and building of collectivities more possible.

Practitioner research reports, whether narratives, plays, oral inquiries, poems, or the many other forms of representation emerging in the literature, might be compared usefully to testimony. As in the work of Menchu (1983), there can be a direct connection between the recounting of stories of experience and the struggle for empowerment. As Benmayor (1991) notes: "'Testimonial' speech acts help foster strong peer identification, bonding, and a sense of collective" (pp. 161-162). In the literature on participatory research, as well as in the Lewinian tradition of action research, this aspect to sharing one's work is very important. Arguably, the reports of practitioner research taken together represent the struggle for a "pedagogy of hope" (Freire, 1992).

The breadth of the social vision that sustains practitioner research is sometimes unclear. Whereas some works seem to speak to individual practitioners involved in similar work, others appear to work toward more collaborative actions (e.g., Gitlin et al., 1992; Wagler, 1996). In the later works, the enhancement of professional practice is integrally tied to structural changes in the work of teaching (Lawn, 1989). Some, but by no means all, appear to embody social critique. As Gitlin and Thompson (1995) have noted, though, the meaning of politics varies considerably, even in those versions of practitioner research that accept it as a major goal.

As with academic research, it remains to be seen whether the various versions of practitioner research will recognize and critique the affiliative power that they gain through participation in their research communities. For example, as Labaree (1992) outlined in his work on the professionalization of teaching, the enhancement of the authority of teachers through means such as forming practitioner research groups could increase the isolation of teachers from the communities they seek to serve. (See also Zeichner, 1991.) A major question for all forms of practitioner research is whether researchers will continue to find ways to address the unexamined assumptions and tacit beliefs the different research traditions embody. The articulation of such a process of self-critique may begin to form a core of ideas around which an understanding of trustworthiness in practitioner research may be developed.

Practitioner Research as a Trustworthy Way of Knowing

I don't think we've done enough work in explicating or validating the ways in which we teachers already inquire and make sense in our classrooms or the ways in which we already communicate what we know. I do not happen to agree that we are a "less theoretical" group. Our "theoretical discussion" is carried out differently, more embedded in material from the contexts in which we work, in descriptions of the classroom dynamic, in what we do and say. (Threatt, in Threatt et al., 1994, 232-233)

In the decade since the last *Handbook of Research on Teaching* was published, the area of what is usually called *validity* has been greatly contested in educational research. Clearly, much of this current incarnation of the handbook is devoted to emergent debates in this area. For practitioner research, the current research context offers much in the way of intellectual resources for thinking about the issue of quality in practitioner research. We have chosen the term *trustworthiness* as an alternative to the term *validity* for its invocation of knowledge in relational terms. As Lincoln (1995) argues:

Just as the naturalistic/constructivist paradigm effectively brought about the irrelevance of the distinction between ontology and epistemology, so too does this paradigm and interpretive social science in general bring about the collapse of the distinction between standards, rigor, and quality criteria and the formerly separate consideration of research ethics. In effect, many of the proposed and emerging standards for quality in interpretive social science are also standards for ethics. (pp. 286-287)

For us, the idea of trustworthiness better captures the need for practitioner research to justify its claims to know in terms

of the relationships among knowers and knowledges. We agree with Fenstermacher (1994), who argues that the claim to have generated knowledge through practitioner research does not relieve us of the obligation to show the justification or warrant for our claims. Uncritical acceptance of all knowledge that is generated through practitioner inquiry without any attention to research quality will serve only to undermine the acceptance of practitioner research as a legitimate form of knowledge generation in education. The comments in this section are directed to practitioner inquiry where researchers have chosen to make their research public so that others may benefit from it. When practitioner researchers choose to make their inquiries available to others, their work becomes a potential source of knowledge (a) for other researchers and practitioners, (b) for the curriculum of teacher education and professional development programs, and (c) for educational policymakers. We recognize that some practitioners choose to engage in research primarily as a professional development activity and do not wish to make their work public. The following discussion about research quality is not intended to apply to those cases.

When practitioner inquiry is conducted in a P-12 school context, it seems to us that P-12 educators should be the ones who have the most to say about the criteria and procedures that are used to determine the quality of practitioner research studies. Much practitioner research, however, is conducted within the context of award-bearing courses and degree programs in colleges and universities, a situation that necessarily involves academics in assessing the quality of practitioner research. In this chapter, we generally support a situation in which a democratic negotiation of both the criteria and procedures is used to determine research quality and to broaden the way in which the academy thinks about the issue of research quality, including ways of addressing trustworthiness that originate outside the boundaries of conventional academic educational research.

Practitioner research is always deeply contextual. Its claims on truth are integrally related to its realization in practice. For many practitioner researchers, the justification of their labor is as much in the lives of those who practice as it is in its acceptance by those outside the situation. We have chosen to present this portion of the chapter in sections that reflect the juxtaposition of knowledge communities that have an impact on the understanding of practitioner research as a trustworthy way of knowing. In the first section, we frame important trends in the understanding of issues of validity and trustworthiness in academic research against the backdrop of the historical struggle of practitioner research for acceptance as a legitimate way of knowing. In this way, potential resources from academic educational research for thinking about issues of quality in practitioner research are identified and assessed. The second section traces developments in the exploration of those issues within the practitioner research literature itself.

The question of trustworthiness in practitioner research is not a straightforward one. As will be seen, it matters by whom and if criteria are to be developed or allowed to emerge. As was discussed in the earlier description of the uses of data in participatory research, this process, to many practitioner researchers, is one that is fundamentally grassroots and collective in nature. Academic theory and frames can be useful (see Walker, 1995), but they must also be seen in terms of their po-

tential for colonization (Carr, 1995). The section ends with some tentative conclusions that are about issues of quality in practitioner research and that are based on our analysis of the literature and the tremendous diversity of motivations, along with research forms within the practitioner research umbrella.

Academic Sources for Thinking About Issues of Quality in Practitioner Research

The quality of fundamental research and the quality of action research are judged by different criteria. The value of the former is determined by the amount of dependable knowledge it adds to that already recorded and available to any people who want to familiarize themselves with it. Conversely, the value of action research is determined primarily by the extent to which findings lead to improvement of the practices of the people engaged in the research. (Corey, 1953, p.13)

Stephen Corey, one of the leaders in the cooperative action research movement in the United States in the 1950s, spent a lot of time trying to legitimate action research within the academic community by developing alternative versions of standards of validity (e.g., vertical instead of horizontal generalization). He argued that those standards were more appropriate to the different purposes of action research. As the paper by Hodgkinson (1957) discussed earlier indicates, Corey and others were not very successful in convincing the educational research community in the United States of their point of view. Researchers continued to judge the quality of action research as inferior research by the prevailing positivistic view "that research should be modeled on the natural sciences, using quantitative methods in controlled experiments whose ultimate aim was to establish broad generalizations" (Wallace, 1987, p. 101). For the most part, there was acceptance of practitioner research as a professional development activity of benefit to its participants, but not as a knowledge production activity that could be of benefit to others. Despite pressures to evaluate the quality of the research by positivist criteria, there was also some ambiguity among mainstream educational researchers about the grounds for placing confidence in an action research study:

Are we to judge according to how much the teachers change, how much the pupils change, how classroom practice is altered, or how good the statistics are? Ordinarily in true research, validity and reliability can be used, but the reports never seem to mention how valid or reliable an action research study was. What are the grounds for placing confidence in action research? (Hodgkinson, 1957, p.78)

Before the emergence of qualitative forms of research in education on a wide scale, the standards of internal and external validity outlined by Campbell & Stanley (1963) served as nearly universal benchmarks to assess the worth of a piece of educational research. Internal validity refers to the credibility of inferences that experimental treatments cause effects under certain well-defined circumstances. External validity refers to generalizing the effects observed under experimental conditions to other populations and contexts.

When educational research entered the so-called postpositivist era and when alternative forms of qualitative and critical inquiries began to gain acceptance within the educational re-

search community, much attention was focused on reconceptualizing the notion of validity and on finding ways to establish the trustworthiness of inquiries for those alternative research methodologies. Very little of this discussion, however (see Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Watkins, 1991; Whitehead, 1989; Winter, 1987, for exceptions), included practitioner research. There were several responses to the task of developing standards to assess the worth of alternative paradigm research. One response exemplified by the work of Denzin (1989) was to show how different research paradigms (or, as he called them, "methodologies") were able to minimize the threats to internal and external validity that had been outlined by Campbell and Stanley (1963). He showed that each design (e.g., survey, participant observation) has different strengths and weaknesses with respect to minimizing the threats to validity.

A similar tact was taken by Goetz and LeCompte (1984), who developed analogs for conventional types of internal and external validity and for construct validity, which they argued were more appropriate for ethnographic research. They added a set of global criteria for determining a study's validity, such as clarity—the degree to which it is easy to figure out what the study is about and why it was designed in the way it is—and credibility—the degree to which the results are believable. Denzin as well as Goetz and LeCompte focused on adapting conventional notions of validity to encompass alternative research paradigms but did not break away from them completely.

A somewhat more radical position about establishing the validity of educational research was taken by Erickson (1986) and Lincoln and Guba (1985). As Eisenhart and Howe (1992) point out, the work of Erickson, Lincoln, and Guba reflects a deep skepticism (in the case of Erickson) and an outright rejection (in the case of Lincoln and Guba) that conventional notions of validity can be applied to alternative paradigm research that falls outside the bounds of positivist experimental designs. Erickson's (1986) ideas about validity place a lot of emphasis on the way the story is told and the quality of the evidence that is provided for its authenticity. Erickson adds another dimension of validity that is concerned with meeting criteria of quality (e.g., clear, appropriate, useful) with regard to different audiences, including teachers.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) take a more radical turn than Erickson; they advocate for the development of an entirely different set of standards by which to judge the quality of "naturalistic research." In fact, they propose that, because of the different ontological and epistemological basis of naturalistic research, the term *validity* should be abandoned altogether and the term *trustworthiness* substituted instead. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define trustworthiness as follows:

The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue? (p. 290)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) go on to propose various standards of trustworthiness that they feel are appropriate for naturalistic inquiry. For example, in relation to the criterion of truth value,

they argue that the main issue is being able to show that the researchers' interpretations of data are credible to those who provided the data. They provide an alternative to a conventional view of external validity, similar to what Stake (1995) has termed *naturalistic generalization*. They argue that the establishment of external validity in naturalistic inquiry is an empirical matter to be largely determined by those who wish to apply the findings of research to other settings. The potential users of research must determine for themselves whether their own contexts are sufficiently similar to the context of the research to make the transfer of results possible and reasonable. Despite the break from the conventional standards of Campbell and Stanley by Lincoln and Guba (1985), their emphasis on the researcher not influencing or manipulating the conditions in the research to any great extent limits the usefulness of their ideas for establishing the trustworthiness of practitioner inquiry where such interventions are at the very heart of the research process.

Another response to reconceptualizing the idea of validity in the postpositivist era of educational research has been to propose a set of general standards that cut across all forms of educational research. This approach is taken by Eisenhart and Howe (1992) and by Eisenhart and Borko (1993), who define all research studies as arguments open to public scrutiny and debate.

The validity of educational research, regardless of the specific design used, can be determined by how carefully the study is designed, conducted, and presented; how sensitively it treats human subjects; and how well it contributes to important educational issues, including debates about educational theory and practice. (p. 93)

Eisenhart and her colleagues go on to elaborate a set of five general standards for determining the validity of educational research. They argue that these five standards set broad boundaries within which to determine the validity of research using different methodologies, and the standards do not determine the specific strategies and techniques for researchers to use within the different methodologies. Instead, they recognize the need for developing design-specific standards that are subsumed by the five general standards and that articulate the different kinds of knowledge, technical skills, evidence, and so forth required in the different research forms.

First is the issue of the fit between research questions, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques. Here the concern is that the data collection and analysis techniques be suitable for answering the research questions posed and that the research questions should drive the data collection and vice versa.

Research studies qua arguments have questionable validity when methodological preferences or matters of convenience, rather than research questions, drive the study design. Validity requires carefully developed designs. (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p. 658)

The second standard states that the data collection and analysis techniques used must be competently applied in "a more or less technical sense." Here there is reference to the various guidelines that have been developed on how research in

ments should be designed, how sampling should be done and interviews conducted, and so forth. Eisenhart and Howe (1992) argue that

It is incumbent on educational researchers who wish to demonstrate that their techniques have been competently applied, to locate their work in the historical, disciplinary, or traditional contexts in which the methods have been developed. (p. 659)

The third proposed standard states that educational research studies must be judged against a background of existing theoretical, substantive, or explicit practical knowledge. According to this standard, for research to be considered valid, it must be built on some theoretical tradition or it must contribute to some substantive or practical area. This standard calls for researchers to make explicit their own personal interpretations, a stance that directly contradicts the call for researcher neutrality in positivist and some new paradigm research such as "naturalistic inquiry."

The fourth standard proposed by Eisenhart and Howe (1992) concerns both external and internal value constraints. Initially, with regard to external value (whether the study is worthwhile), the researcher must show how the research is important for informing and improving educational practice. They argue that, although research may be well designed and conducted in a technical sense, this criterion alone is insufficient. To be considered worthwhile, a study must deal with important issues and problems that arise for practitioners, and it should be accessible to the general education community. This approach means that the research must be communicated in ways that are understandable to and debatable by various audiences. With regard to internal value constraints or research ethics, Eisenhart and Howe state that the ethical dimensions of how the researcher interacts with the other participants are crucial for establishing the credibility of research studies. They refer to such elements of human subjects protection as confidentiality, privacy, and truth telling.

The fifth and final standard, comprehensiveness, brings together the first four standards in a holistic way and refers to three things: (a) having the overall clarity, coherence, and competence of the research; (b) balancing the overall technical quality of the research with the risks to participants, and (c) being alert to and able to use knowledge from outside a particular perspective and tradition in which one is working as well as to consider various explanations for what is discovered in a study.

These five standards for determining the validity of educational research are proposed as a unitary construct that must be considered together. Eisenhart and Howe (1992) state that the standards have been formulated in a way that can encompass—without undue constraint—the specific standards and norms of particular research designs. The implications of this work for determining validity in practitioner research have yet to be explored. To do so would require taking each of the five standards and developing their meaning with reference to the paradigm of practitioner research. That task is complicated by the existence of the five different traditions of practitioner research described earlier, by varying motivations for conducting practitioner research, and by the diverse research forms

within this genre. It seems unlikely to us that one broad set of discipline-specific standards within these five general standards could be developed to encompass all of the different traditions, forms, and motivations. None of what is discussed by Eisenhart and her colleagues addresses the specific situation of researchers studying their own practice or the case of openly ideological research that seeks to promote greater social justice.

VALIDITY AND ADVOCACY

Other radical breaks from conventional notions of research validity can be found in the feminist and critical-emancipatory work of Roman (1989), Roman and Apple (1990), and Lather (1991). Those works come close to addressing the issue of the trustworthiness of some aspects of practitioner research, although the thrust of this work is on altering power relations and encouraging research that promotes greater social justice from the perspective of academic researchers. Their work does not explicitly acknowledge practitioners as producers of their own knowledge on their own. Neither Lather nor Roman link their proposals to the tradition of participatory research, which, among all of the traditions of practitioner research, comes closest to their proposals.

Both Lather and Roman question the ways that conventional academic research perpetuates and reinforces power relations in the wider society. They call for a democratization of the research process, where decisions about (a) what to study, (b) how to study it, and (c) what the relations are between researchers and other participants must be worked out with greater respect for the voices and interests of all participants. Adoption of their proposals would result in an ethical standard for judging the quality of educational research, in part, according to the processes used in doing the research. Lather (1986) calls for an interactive and dialogic research process where meanings are negotiated, a process very similar to what is advocated in the tradition of participatory research.

Both Roman and Lather criticize the call for researcher neutrality that was commonly advocated in the naturalistic research community, and they call for a more explicit political stance by educational researchers and for educational research that is more openly committed to building a more just social order. This view of research as praxis is very similar to the emancipatory intent in participatory research.

Lather (1986, 1991), in particular, gives a lot of attention to addressing issues of what she calls empirical accountability, the need to offer grounds for accepting or establishing the trustworthiness of a researcher's description and analysis. She argues that a lack of concern for data credibility in praxis-oriented research will serve to decrease the legitimacy of the knowledge generated and warns that, if we do not develop agreed-upon procedures for determining the credibility of this research, "our theory building will suffer from a failure to protect our work from our own passions and limitations" (p. 69).

Lather proposes systematic attention to triangulation and reflexivity as well as an emphasis on face validity and catalytic validity. With regard to the process issue of triangulation—a method for bringing different kinds of evidence into relation with one another so that they can be compared and contrasted—Lather proposes an expansion of the psychometric def-

inition of multiple measures to include the criteria of multiple data sources, methods, and theoretical schemes-perspectives. The issue of triangulation is a standard of quality that has been a central part of the teacher-as-researcher work in Britain (e.g., Elliott, 1991) and is usually discussed as an important feature of practitioner research in most practitioner research methodology books (e.g., Altrichter et al., 1993). It has also been a standard of validity that has been frequently identified for qualitative research (Erickson, 1986).

In her discussion of construct validity in educational research as praxis, Lather (1991) emphasizes the importance of a self-critical attitude on the part of researchers about how their own preconceptions are affecting the research. She calls for disclosure and self-scrutiny by the researcher of his or her own preconceptions as well as a respect for the "experiences of people in their daily lives to guard against theoretical imposition" (p. 67). Lather (1991) also discusses the importance of reconsidering the concept of face validity. In research as praxis, face validity is addressed by feeding the descriptions, the emerging interpretations, and the conclusions back to research participants and by refining those findings in light of the researchers' reactions.

Finally, given the emancipatory intent of praxis-oriented research, Lather (1991) proposes that the concept of catalytic validity be addressed. She defines catalytic validity as "the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it" (p. 68). This aspect of validity proposed by Lather is highly similar to Freire's (1970) notion of conscientization (critical consciousness), and is another link between praxis-oriented research and the tradition of participatory research. Despite similarities between the praxis-oriented and emancipatory approach to educational research advocated by Roman and Lather and practitioner research, there is no discussion in their work of practitioners as producers of their own knowledge independent of professional academic researchers. Although Lather's proposals about establishing the credibility of research address research that is emancipatory in intent, not all practitioner research reflects this motivation. The situation of establishing the credibility of research, where practitioners produce knowledge about their own practices and the situations in which they practice, requires attention to the specific conditions of practitioner research.

Although efforts to establish criteria for the validity of qualitative or for praxis-oriented educational research do not explicitly address the situation of self-study, they do contribute to creating a climate within the educational research community that is more receptive to alternative forms of research that fall outside the dominant research paradigms. Because many of the emerging criteria for determining the quality of new paradigm research address the quality of relations among the participants in the research, this body of work (see also Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Altrichter, 1986; Erickson, 1989; Lather, 1993; Lincoln, 1995; Maxwell, 1992; Mishler, 1990; Reason & Rowan, 1981) has contributed to a situation where the boundaries between epistemological and ethical issues that are commonly experienced in discussions of positivist research are beginning to break down. The ethical dimensions of the research process are

now commonly viewed as a central part of the process of determining the quality of a piece of research.

New paradigm inquiry is not, and never will be, second-rate conventional inquiry. It is scientific inquiry that embraces a set of three new commitments: first to new and emergent relations with respondents; second to a set of stances—professional, personal and political—toward the uses of inquiry and toward its ability to foster action; and, finally, to a vision of research that enables and promotes social justice, community, diversity, civic discourse, and caring. (Lincoln, 1995, p. 277–278)

ISSUES OF QUALITY IN NARRATIVES

Another line of work that addresses issues of quality in educational research concerns narrative inquiry. Because of the prevalence of narrative inquiry in some forms of practitioner research, these discussions are relevant to the task of developing ways to assess the quality of practitioner research. Here, as in discussions of trustworthiness in qualitative research, there has been much debate between advocates and critics of narrative inquiry about what makes a good piece of research. Advocates of narrative inquiry, such as Connelly and Clandinin (1990), argue that we have to move beyond the epistemic warrants of reliability, validity, and generalizability in the conventional sense to judge the worth of narratives and propose several alternative criteria including verisimilitude, plausibility, transferability, and the invitational quality of a study. (See also Polkinghorne, 1988.) Their work echoes Bruner (1986), who argued that good narrative leads to "good stories, believable though not necessarily true" (p. 13). Barone (1992) proposes accessibility, compellingness, and moral persuasiveness as criteria to determine the worth of educational stories. Finally, Van Manen (1990) focuses on the degree to which narrative descriptions are animating and evocative.

Phillips (1994) questions the sufficiency of using such criteria as these in determining the quality of research, and he argues that narrative researchers need to deal much more thoroughly with the issue of truth. He also argues that, because narratives often have important practical consequences (e.g., using them in the formulation of policy), they must be much more than accessible, compelling, and morally persuasive descriptions. Acknowledging Geertz's (1973) point that even a paranoid's delusion and a swindler's story sometimes have coherence and hang together, Phillips proposes what he sees as a number of epistemically relevant tests that could be applied to narrative inquiry to avoid problems of outright lying and self-delusion. In the end, Phillips is quite skeptical about the epistemological respectability of narrative as a knowledge-bearing or explanation-giving genre of research in education. He feels that pronarrative educational researchers often tend to have sociopolitical rather than epistemic grounds for their enthusiasm.

O'Dea (1994), while agreeing with Phillips that narrative researchers cannot afford to skirt the issue of truth, feels that Phillips's critique "somewhat misses the mark by holding up empirical quantitative truth and its attendant virtues, reliability, validity, and generalizability as the hallmarks of epistemic respectability" (p. 162). She argues from the perspective of liter-

ary criticism that these criteria are simply not relevant to the purposes and nature of narrative research and proposes a notion of artistic truth grounded in the idea of authenticity, in being true to oneself. Here, there is the requirement that the researcher honestly take account of what actually occurs in a situation and that she or he also exercises existential freedom in questioning his or her adherence to norms, roles, and attitudes perpetuated by external society. This self-critical attitude is the same kind as that advocated by Lather (1986, 1991). While O'Dea's arguments are compelling and persuasive, she does not provide much guidance in helping us judge whether a narrative study is, in fact, authentic in the literary sense that she defines it.

Fenstermacher and Richardson (1994), in commenting on Phillips's (1994) position, make an important distinction among (a) the narrative itself (the outcome of the narrative method, written or spoken), (b) narrative inquiry (ways of constructing, remembering, or eliciting a story), and (c) narrative use (as devices to promote change in practice). They argue that such analytic distinctions help us to see the need for different forms of warrant with regard to narrative inquiry and to see that epistemic warrant is not always called for in reading or using stories. With regard to narrative as the product of narrative inquiry, Fenstermacher and Richardson believe that there are ways of judging the quality of narratives independent of epistemic warrant. They discuss several literary criteria such as believability and the power to convince or to evoke support—criteria similar to those proposed by advocates of narrative inquiry and discussed above. In considering the process of narrative inquiry, Fenstermacher and Richardson identify several examples of work on narrative method (e.g., research techniques), examples that they feel enhance the epistemic warrant of certain elements of narratives, while they admit that such research methods cannot guarantee their truth in a way that would satisfy Phillips. Finally, in terms of the use of narratives, Fenstermacher and Richardson point out ways that render truth unimportant or irrelevant in relation to other literary criteria such as believability. They conclude that only certain elements of narrative may be warrantable in the traditional scientific sense. They agree with O'Dea's general thesis that certain elements of quality in narrative are more suited for evaluation by literary criteria.

Sources of a Concept of Trustworthiness from within Practitioner Research

There have been several efforts by academics involved in supporting practitioner research (and sometimes involved in conducting it on their own practices) to propose a set of criteria for determining the trustworthiness of practitioner inquiries. One of the most comprehensive discussions of this issue within the academic literature on practitioner research is by Anderson et al. (1994), who share many of the political motivations of Lather and are advocates of practitioner research with a critical spirit. Anderson et al. (1994) argue that, because of the dual goals of understanding and improving practice, academic conceptions of validity are of limited use to the practitioner researcher. They call for a different conception of validity that responds to the purposes and conditions of practitioner re-

search. Because practitioners conduct self-study research for different reasons, Anderson et al. (1994) suggest that the specific purposes for conducting practitioner research should influence the way in which validity is defined.

If the purpose of practitioner research is to produce knowledge for dissemination in fairly traditional channels (e.g., dissertations, journals), then the criteria for a "valid" study may be different than the criteria of practitioners who organize their research around specific problems within an action context. (p. 29)

Adopting this notion of different conceptions of validity for different kinds of practitioner research would also mean that different kinds of journals would use different criteria in judging the quality of research. For example, the National Education Association-sponsored teacher research journal in the United States, *Teaching and Change*, would use different standards for assessing the quality of research from those used by the *Harvard Educational Review*. This position does not imply that the standards of quality used within an academic context are somehow superior to those used in the school setting.

Anderson et al. (1994) suggest a set of five criteria for assessing the validity of practitioner research. Much of what they propose is highly similar to Lather's proposals for research-as-praxis and draws on some of the ideas set forth in discussions of the validity of academic qualitative research. They do reflect, however, a distinctive quality that is consistent with the specific situation of insiders generating knowledge about their own practice. The intent is that practitioner researchers will draw on different aspects of those criteria, depending on the motivation for and circumstances of their research. The five criteria proposed by Anderson et al. (1994) are as follows:

1. Democratic validity—the extent to which the research is done in collaboration with all parties who have a stake in the problem under investigation, and multiple perspectives and interests are taken into account.
2. Outcome validity—the extent to which actions occur that lead to a resolution of the problem under study or to the completion of an research cycle that results in action.
3. Process validity—the adequacy of the processes used in the different phases of the research such as data collection, analysis, etc. This validity includes the issue of triangulation as a guard against viewing events in a biased way. It also goes beyond research methods to include several general criteria such as plausibility.
4. Catalytic validity—taken directly from Lather's (1991) work. This validity describes the degree to which the research energizes the participants to know reality so they can transform it.
5. Dialogic validity—the degree to which the research promotes a reflective dialogue among all of participants in the research.

Anderson et al. (1994) discuss the issue of generalizability. Like many who have written about this issue in relation to qualitative and interpretative research, they essentially adopt the notion of naturalistic generalization or transferability advocated by Stake

(1995), where those who wish to use the research also make judgments about the similarities between their own context and that of the research. Anderson et al. (1994) argue that this conception of the usefulness of research beyond the context in which it was conducted fits well with practitioner cultures, where stories are shared regularly among practitioners as part of an oral craft tradition.

The tentative validity criteria proposed by Anderson et al. (1994) draw heavily on postpositivist discussions of validity in academic research and seem broad enough to encompass all of the different traditions of practitioner research and motivations for conducting practitioner research discussed earlier. However, the criteria are still proposed by university academics for researchers who are largely P-12 teachers, a situation that is inconsistent with the goals of Anderson et al. to further democratize educational research. Anderson et al. (1994) imply that evaluative criteria used in the world of P-12 teachers might be different from those used in the academy. They mention two examples of very broad criteria that teachers regularly apply in their work with their students: (a) rigorous vs. sloppy work and (b) analysis vs. mere opinion. But they provide no discussion of the issue of how P-12 teachers might go about assessing the quality of practitioner research.

Another example of an attempt by a university academic to propose a set of criteria for assessing the validity of practitioner research is found in the work of Stevenson (1996). Drawing on the Deakin University definition of action research cited earlier as encompassing the three-fold purpose of improving (a) one's practice, (b) one's understanding of that practice, and (c) the situations in which those practices are carried out, Stevenson proposes a set of 10 criteria that address both the quality of the process of generating knowledge and the quality of the actual changes or improvements in one's practices and the situations that result. Consistent with much of the work on validity in academic qualitative research, those criteria go beyond the epistemological issues of drawing inferences from data and generalizing research to other settings to include attention to issues of ethics, relationships, and politics.

The first criterion requires that the researcher articulate the rationale for and educational significance of the study in a way that connects it to his or her own value commitments and to experiential or theoretical knowledge. The purpose here is to establish the worthwhileness of engaging in the particular piece of research.

Second, the researcher must be able to articulate and justify his or her own intentions and beliefs, a criterion similar to much of the validity literature in qualitative research that challenges the idea that the researcher must remain neutral. Asking for researchers to remain neutral in a research form that is based on commitment, intervention, and action does not make much sense.

The third criterion proposed by Stevenson is identical to the idea of democratic validity proposed by Anderson et al. (1994). Here, there is a requirement that the research be genuinely collaborative in that all parties who are affected by the research are included in the research and their perspectives are respected.

The fourth criterion addresses a problem discussed in the literature as "arrested action research," where the researcher aborts the project before actually taking any action to change

the situation or after a single action research cycle that does not resolve the concern. Here the trustworthiness of an action research study would be assessed according to whether or not the research was prematurely aborted.

The fifth standard concerns the representation of multiple perspectives data sources in the research, the criterion of triangulation discussed earlier in relation to Lather's (1991) work.

The sixth criterion for determining the validity of action research requires that there be a constant dialectical interplay between the researcher's values and actions where the values inform the actions and vice versa. This is yet another point where the neutrality of the researcher and the idea of the detached observer are challenged.

The seventh criterion examines the degree to which the research has been systematically conducted (also see Whitehead, 1989) yet is responsive to evolving understandings and circumstances in the research. This standard would place a positive value on a very common occurrence in action research: the changing of the research question or focus over the course of the research.

The eighth criterion refers to the degree to which the research has been transformative, thus leading to a change in the researcher's understandings, actions, or situation. This standard is identical to the notion of catalytic validity proposed by Lather (1991) and by Anderson et al. (1994).

The ninth criterion requires that the researcher make the results of his or her research public and engage in a dialogue about it.

The tenth and final criterion addresses the issue of the external validity or transferability of the research to other settings. Here, like most scholars who have examined this issue in relation to nonexperimental research methods, Stevenson (1996) adopts the idea of "naturalistic generalization" proposed by Stake (1995) and asks for action researchers to provide sufficiently rich descriptions of their contexts so that others will be able to draw analogies to their own situations.

In proposing these 10 criteria for the assessment of the validity of action research, Stevenson acknowledges the limitation of university researchers formulating criteria for determining the quality of action research when so many of those who conduct action research are Kindergarten through Grade 12 educators. While not providing any specific suggestions for how to deal with this problem, Stevenson (1996) argues that

Practitioners must be a central part of the dialogue on standards for the research they conduct and be allowed to formulate criteria for sound action research that is grounded in their own experiences of action research practice. (pp. 9-10)

Another limitation in Stevenson's proposals is that they are aimed only at the action-research tradition and possibly the British and Australian teacher-as-researcher traditions, and they are less applicable to the other traditions. For example, much teacher research in North America does not follow the improvement-oriented, action-research spiral characteristic of the action-research tradition. The goal is often a deeper understanding and fuller documentation of current practices, and there is not always an immediate motivation to change practice or even answer a specific research question. Despite these limi-

tations, Stevenson's work joins the work of Anderson et al. (1994) as one of the few attempts to develop a comprehensive conceptualization of validity specifically for practitioner research.

Another effort to develop ways to assess the trustworthiness of practitioner research comes from the field of adult education. Jacobson (1998), like Stevenson (1996) and Anderson et al. (1994), argues that criteria for the integrity of practitioner research must rest both on the quality of the actions taken by the researchers on the basis of their data (see also Lomax, 1994; Munby, 1995) and on the quality of the data itself:

The data itself must faithfully represent actions in their contexts, collected through procedures which make it possible to distinguish what is actually happening from what I see happening. Furthermore, data needs to be thorough, based on a variety of sources and probing for meanings associated with actions. . . . Conclusions which are drawn from the data must be applicable to practice and must lead to actions that are critically responsive; that is, responding to what is happening and at the same time questioning what is happening and my own responses to it. Actions taken must be justifiable, grounded in the research rather than in the comfortable routines of teaching. (Jacobson, 1998, pp. 12-13)

Jacobson (1998) developed these ideas about defining the quality of practitioner research while working as an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instructor at the university level. After presenting his ideas, he goes on to analyze his own practitioner research in relation to them. One additional issue emphasized in Jacobson's perspective on the quality of practitioner research is that the conclusions reached in a study be consistent with the nature of the data.

Probably the most extensive discussion of the issue of trustworthiness in the practitioner research literature is Dadds's (1995) analysis of the validity of three action-research studies completed by Vicki, 1 of 27 teachers enrolled in Dadds's advanced diploma course leading to a master's degree at Cambridge Institute of Education in the United Kingdom. Dadds frames her analysis of this one teacher's research as part of her study of her own practice as a teacher educator. It is her hope that this self-study will help her better understand the learning of the teachers who take her course and will help her improve the course to support teachers' action research.

In framing the discussion of Vicki's research, Dadds proposes the concept of the democratic validation of teacher action-research studies as an alternative to a situation where the academy is the sole arbiter of worthwhileness. This position stems, in part, from Dadds's discomfort in using only academic criteria to assess the action-research projects of the teachers in her classes.

Many of the teachers' research studies for academic assessment were generating practical processes and outcomes in school of which I had little previous understanding and which our validation criteria failed to capture. (Dadds, 1995, p. 112)

Dadds's position also is a consequence of her general concern about issues of power in validating action research, one that she

shares with several others who have written about determining the quality of action research.

Power is an issue, too, for there is a shared concern about "outsiders" enforcing unnegotiated and inappropriate criteria on teacher action research (Clarke, Dudley, Edwards, Rowland, Ryan, & Winter, 1993; Lomax, 1994). In an essentially democratic research methodology such as action research, it is incongruous to rely upon one, sole arbiter of worthwhileness, so the monolithic validating voice of the academy does not sit comfortably, even though it is an important voice, and one which may thoughtfully enhance the debate. (Dadds, 1995, p. 112)

Under the concept of democratic or multiple perspective validation, the quality of a practitioner research study is determined through a process of negotiation in which the different purposes and audiences served by a piece of research are taken into account. Members of the various audiences served by a research study would contribute their perspectives about the worthwhileness of the research. (See also Gitlin et al., 1992.) In addition to including the academic examiner, any research completed as part of award-bearing courses at colleges or universities could include the teachers' colleagues, her students, and the researcher's own validation reflections.

Dadds (1995) offers a discussion of her developing ideas related to five broad areas within which discourses about the validity of teacher action research could be conducted within a democratic framework. She prefers the use of the term *valuing* rather than *validation* because of the more visible positive respect and regard for teacher knowledge that she thinks it publicly conveys. In this discussion, Dadds argues that action research needs to be assessed in relation to (a) the knowledge that is generated by the research, (b) the quality of the text that is produced to represent the research, (c) the impact of the research on the researcher's practice or situation or both, (d) the impact of the research on the researcher's professional learning and growth, and (e) the quality of the collaboration in the research.

For each of these five areas, Dadds (1995) offers her thoughts about criteria that could possibly be used. For example, with regard to the quality of the knowledge produced through action research, she considers, among other things, the originality of the knowledge in relation to the context of the study (i.e., the degree to which it provides the researcher and others with new insights about their situation), the degree to which multiple perspectives have been taken into account in constructing the research knowledge, and the contribution of the research to others' thinking outside of the situation.

In her analysis, Dadds (1995) makes an important distinction between the research and its representation in textual form. She argues that much of the complexity and richness of action research is often not articulated in the texts that teachers submit in their college and university courses. She raises a number of important questions about the representation of action research that challenge the academy to rethink its approach to validation, an approach that usually requires a written research report.

If we confine our view of "text" to the more conventional academic research genre . . . we may ignore the appropriateness of other

forms of communication, written or spoken, that may have greater potential for shaping and communicating meaning, for putting the action in action research, for acting as catalysts for institutional action and change. (Dadds, 1995, p. 132)

Dadds raises the possibility of the production of different texts for different audiences, something that Vicki does do in the case example, but she worries about the demands this activity makes on busy teachers. Dadds is more inclined to have the academy broaden its view of what counts as legitimate ways to represent action research to include ways of communicating research that are more relevant to school contexts.

In her discussion of the practical validity of action research, Dadds suggests that "good arguments which gather dust may be less helpful than shaky arguments which oil the wheels of purposeful action" (1995, p. 135). She argues that the determination of practical validity cannot be divorced from consideration of the ethical or moral validity of the work. It is not so much a question of whether practice was affected by the research as it is of whether these changes are desirable within some ethical or moral framework. She argues that we cannot remain neutral in the validation process. Also, like many of those in the postpositivist literature on research quality, Dadds argues that the quality of relations among all of the participants in the research needs to be considered as part of this moral and ethical analysis of the research.

In summary, Dadds, like most of those within the practitioner research literature who have addressed the issue of determining research quality, believes that criteria, standards, and validation processes need to be developed that are more congruent with the nature and purposes of practitioner research than are traditional practices in the academy. She further argues that, given the diversity of this research genre, attempts to develop a common set of criteria for the entire practitioner research community are probably misguided.

The efforts of Anderson et al. (1994), Dadds (1995), Jacobson (1998), and Stevenson (1996) to discuss the issue of establishing the trustworthiness of practitioner research, as well as Eisenhart and Howe's (1992) attempt to propose a set of general criteria to provide the basis for generating quality criteria in different research genres, all make important contributions to creating a situation where practitioner researchers can talk to each other and to others about the quality of research that they do. However, as we have alluded to several times throughout this chapter, there is a serious ethical issue involved in positioning university academics (however well intentioned) as the sole determiners of standards of quality in a field of research where the majority of the researchers are P-12 educators. The silencing of P-12 educators by academics has been a serious problem in educational research and teacher education for many years (Evans et al., 1987; Zeichner, 1995b). It is inexcusable to perpetuate this situation in practitioner research where the intent is to democratize the research process. P-12 educators need to assume a central role in formulating and applying standards for assessing the quality of their own work. This role is likely to assume a form that is very different from the academic accounts summarized in this chapter. One example of the interactive and relational nature that this discourse could assume is a recent dialogue among eight P-12 teacher researchers about a wide

range of issues concerning teacher research in North America, including issues of quality (Threatt et al., 1994).

While it is not possible for us to offer any firm resolutions to many of the debates now in progress concerning the basis for determining quality in practitioner inquiry, we can offer a few conclusions based on our assessment of these debates in relation to the nature and purposes of practitioner research. First, it is clear to us that, whatever criteria eventually emerge to define quality in practitioner research, they will need to reflect the different forms and multiple purposes associated with this research genre. In many cases, this means taking into account that most of those who do practitioner research are also, full-time teachers. The idea of applying conventional notions of reliability, validity, and generalization to judge practitioner research does not seem justified given the diverse purposes and forms of this research. (See also Altrichter, 1993; Brennan & Noffke, 1997; Chaudhary, 1997; Feldman, 1994; Noffke, 1991.) While in some circumstances it may be appropriate to apply criteria of validity or trustworthiness or both that are adapted from those used to evaluate conventional academic research, there will be circumstances where the use of aesthetic, literary, educational, or moral criteria will be most appropriate. Furthermore, alternative criteria will need to take into account the very diverse contexts associated with the different traditions of practitioner inquiry. These contexts include such things as teachers participating in teacher-initiated research groups, teachers enrolled in school district professional development programs, teachers enrolled in graduate university courses, and teachers who are writing master's papers and PhD dissertations. Assessing the quality of a practitioner research doctoral dissertation will certainly need to be different from judging the quality of a proposal to present research at a practitioner research conference or from making decisions about whether to archive particular research studies in a local database. The idea proposed by Eisenhart and her colleagues to apply and adapt one universal set of general criteria to assess the merit and worth of diverse forms of research remains to be tested, but we are fairly skeptical about the usefulness of this approach with regard to practitioner inquiry.

While academic researchers need not necessarily be involved in assessing school-based practitioner research that is not directly connected to a college or university setting, much practitioner research is done by P-12 teachers who are enrolled in award-bearing courses and degree programs. It is in those situations where we think the democratic negotiation of quality criteria suggested by Dadds (1995) offers much promise.

Given the development of new forms of representation of practitioner inquiry (i.e., we cannot assume a written report as the product of research), criteria for judging the quality of research will need to take into account different forms of representation in addition to the conventional research report. The different forms might include educational action, oral presentation and structured discussion, drama, still photography, film, short story, and poetry (e.g., Lomax & Parker, 1995; McNiff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 1996). We also need to take into account the particular audience to which the representation of the research is directed. Communicating findings to academic researchers, P-12 teachers, policymakers, and the general public or to some combination of the above suggests the need for

different strategies for representing research. It is probably important in all contexts, though, for the researcher to make fully transparent the processes used in conducting the research (Lomax, 1994).

Also, as we have noted repeatedly throughout our analysis, the question of who determines the trustworthiness and quality of research is a matter of great importance in a field like practitioner research, where many researchers are P-12 educators. In our view, those educators must have a say in how the issues get resolved with regard to their own work and in practitioner research generally, even when the assessment is situated within the context of award-bearing courses and degree programs. It is ethically questionable to have academics debate the issues only among themselves and then seek to impose their resolutions on P-12 educators.

Ways must be found to include the voices of P-12 educators in the development of ethical guidelines and standards. This may involve the publication of their opinions about practitioner inquiry (e.g., Threatt et al., 1994). In other cases, the meetings of groups such as the annual International Teacher Research Conference, which is held in conjunction with annual American Educational Research Association (AERA) meetings, can be used for this purpose. In one case several years ago, the U.S. Department of Education organized a meeting of P-12 educators and university academics from across the country to discuss a variety of issues related to teacher research, including issues of determining research quality. More of those kinds of efforts are needed to reach out and bring P-12 educators into the public dialogue about research quality. It is important to see that such educators are well represented among those who review practitioner research for presentation at regional and national conferences, including AERA, and for publication in journals and books.

Finally, it is critical that P-12 educators be well represented on the panels that make decisions about the funding of practitioner research initiatives by private entities such as the Spencer and MacArthur Foundations and by public funders such as the U.S. Department of Education. These organizations have funded and continue to fund practitioner research while involving P-12 educators in funding decisions.

From the discussions reported above about validity and trustworthiness in educational research in general, in qualitative research, in narrative research, and in practitioner research, it is clear that the ways that eventually emerge to determine the quality of practitioner research will have a strong moral and ethical component that includes attention to the quality of relationships among the participants in the research. The relationships include those between researchers and their students as well as those among all people affected by a research project. The criteria that emerge will also need to address both how the research was done and what the quality of its representation is.

Finally, because knowledge generation is only one of several potential purposes of practitioner research, criteria for assessing its quality will need to take into account the transformative impact of the research on the researcher's understandings, actions, and situations. Practitioner research that helps researchers to gain new and deeper insights into their practices, to improve the learning situation for their students, and to

change their situations will need to be valued for these transformational qualities (see Lomax, 1994; Northfield, 1996) in addition to the attention that is given to the warrants for claims to know.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we first provided a framework for understanding the various traditions of practitioner research and their varied purposes. We have done so with the recognition that this is a small step in working toward addressing the many issues this form of research represents. One issue that needs to be addressed in the future is the development of a dialogue across the various traditions of practitioner research. Currently, there is very little reference in work within one tradition to work from the other practitioner research traditions. This lack of cross-reference is particularly true in the case of participatory research, which seems to have been ignored by many who have written about practitioner research, even by those who appear to share the emancipatory political perspective that is central to participatory research. In our view, much can be gained by looking at literature across the various traditions when examining general issues related to practitioner research, such as issues of research quality and the legitimacy of claims to know. This cross-fertilization of ideas could be useful as it furthers our understanding about the methodological aspects of conducting and representing practitioner research.

A second focus in this chapter has been a discussion of the different purposes associated with practitioner research grouped under the broad categories of personal, professional, and political. We analyzed the different reasons people engage themselves in or are engaged by others in practitioner research, ranging from an interest in better understanding one's own students and improving one's teaching, to generating knowledge about teaching and schooling that can be shared with others, to improving the various social and institutional contexts in which their educational practice is embedded.

A third emphasis in the chapter has been to discuss the nature of practitioner research by focusing on the teacher research tradition in North America. While we hope this analysis has captured some of the important similarities and differences between teacher research and other forms of research, much work in relation to other practitioner research traditions is clearly needed.

Finally, our discussion of issues of quality in practitioner research in this chapter has drawn on literature from different traditions of practitioner research as well as on literature about the quality of academic educational research. We have supported the idea of democratic negotiation of both the criteria and the procedures used in determining the quality of research. We have made a number of general assertions about the issue of quality in practitioner research on the basis of our analysis of both academic and practitioner research literature. We are aware that this discussion barely begins to scratch the surface of what needs to be done to collaboratively develop ways in which the quality of practitioner research can be determined in different contexts. We hope, though, that we have outlined some of the major issues that will need to be resolved in this work. We also hope that our efforts will encourage similar efforts by

those in the various practitioner research communities and will stimulate academic researchers to recognize the great potential of practitioner research to inform the development of academic educational research and theory.

In this chapter, we very briefly raised a variety of specific issues that need further inquiry and discussion. For example, constructions of the political dimensions of practitioner research need to be understood in ways that help in seeing not only the political platforms embedded in programs and policies, but also those platforms embodied in classroom practice. Ways need to be found to bridge the current divide between academic discussions of critical and emancipatory goals for practitioner research and practitioners' discussions of the classroom as a site for political struggle.

Another important issue that merits further study is the effect of external funding on the nature of practitioner research. As private foundations such as Spencer and MacArthur and public agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education become more involved in funding practitioner research, we need to examine how this involvement helps shape both the nature of the studies and the ways in which they are represented to the broader public. In doing so, we need to investigate the extent to which the external funding of practitioner research serves to legitimate or challenge particular educational, social, and economic policies.

Another related issue that needs further analysis is the way in which the linking of practitioner research to school improvement efforts by administrators and government officials influences the nature and impact of practitioner research. What happens to practitioner research when the focus for the research is provided by a larger educational reform effort instead of being generated by practitioners within their own classrooms? It is important to investigate the degree to which the increased use of practitioner research as a reform strategy by administrators and government officials signals a use contrary to the intentions of many practitioner researchers—one of regulation and control rather than of discovery and enhancement (Johnston & Proudford, 1994).

Closely related to the increased availability of external funding for practitioner research and the efforts to tie it to broader institutional reforms by administrators is the increased use of practitioner research in preservice teacher education programs. There has been very little investigation of the purposes toward which this work has been directed and the research foci and methodologies used by prospective teacher practitioner researchers. There has also been little study of the impact on learning to teach of the introduction of practitioner research into teacher education curricula.

New ways of understanding and valuing the knowledge of practitioners are clearly emerging, a situation in a sense signified by the very inclusion of this chapter in the handbook, but as we have stated repeatedly throughout the chapter, much of the research of P-12 educators remains very difficult to access beyond and even at the local level. Much effort needs to be devoted to figuring out ways to make this research available to others within and beyond the local communities in which it has been conducted (see, for example, Somekh, 1993b) and to include the perspectives of P-12 educators about the process of

practitioner research in the public dialogue about research quality. The potential influence of electronic media on the availability and discussion of practitioner research is a relevant area for further study.

Yet another issue that merits further attention is the expansion of our analysis that has emphasized practitioner research conducted in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia to include the growing attention to practitioner research in other European countries (e.g., Brezmes, 1997; Brock-Utne, 1980; Gómez 1996; Ruiz de Gauna, Diaz, Gonzalez, & Garaizar, 1995; Mayer, 1997; and Schindler, 1993), in Latin America (e.g., Barabtarlo y Zedansky & Poschner, 1998; Dinan & Garcia, 1997; Fals-Borda, 1997; Fosas, 1997; and Geraldi, 1996), in Africa (e.g., Davidoff, Julie, Meerkotter, & Robinson, 1993; Walker, 1988, 1993; 1995; and Zeichner, Amukushu, Muukenga, & Shilamba, 1998), and in Asia (e.g., Chaudhary, 1997; Chuaprapaisilp, 1997; and Phaik-Lah, 1997). While some of this work has been written in or translated into English, greater effort needs to be devoted to studying works that are not available in English and to analyzing how cultural conditions influence the processes and outcomes of practitioner inquiry.

A final issue that deserves study is the organizational context needed to support practitioner research. We need close investigation of the conditions that facilitate and obstruct the ability of educators to conduct research on their own practice. Questions about the importance of research groups and external facilitators to the research process, and of ways in which to lessen the inevitable tensions between teaching and researching are but a few examples of the kinds of issues in need of further study. We hope that this first chapter on practitioner inquiry in an American Educational Research Association *Handbook of Research on Teaching* will stimulate further work on these and other issues.

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