TEACHING AS RESEARCH: A CASE IN PRACTICE

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Whilst a great deal of research within the teaching research nexus is done on or with teachers, clearly some of the most emic insights into classrooms come in the form of practitioner research. The need to present research as something polished and finished that meets the requirements of academic journals can lead to a ‘distancing effect’ (Ushioda, 2021), and may create a divide between the two activities where the nexus meets. Furthermore, there is a tendency for published research to further distance itself from reality by presenting only the sanitized and ‘ideal’ version of the process and findings (Rose & McKinley, 2017).

In this presentation, I reflect upon my own journey to becoming a practitioner researcher by discussing one of the projects I have undertaken which was every bit as much part of my teaching as it was part of my research. I will discuss how conducting this research helped me broaden my horizons and develop as a practitioner. I will discuss the types of data and evidence that I collected in order to question any assumptions about my practice, thus allowing me to arrive at more solid and evidence-based conclusions (Walsh & Mann, 2015).

During this short talk, I will explain what I do in my classes and how I make my research a part of my teaching practice by employing an approach that utilises elements of autoethnography, exploratory practice and evidence-based reflective practice. I will mainly describe some of the methods I employ in day-to-day classes and how data is generated as a natural by-product of the type of teaching I do. I will also comment briefly on why I feel this is also an ethical approach and why it can benefit my students and my own practice as both a teacher and a researcher.
KEY WORDS

- Autoethnography
- Exploratory practice
- Evidence-based reflective practice
- Potentially Exploitable Pedagogical Activities
- Metacognitive strategies
- Ethics
WEARING TWO (OR MORE) HATS
MANY HATS?
DICHOTOMOUS VIEW OF RESEARCH & PRACTICE

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ONE BIG HAT

Praxis
Most ESOL teachers are natural researchers. We’re used to working out the needs of our students, evaluating the effects of particular approaches, spotting things that work or don’t work and adjusting our teaching accordingly. Very few teachers approach their work mechanically and nearly all of us reflect on what we do in the classroom.

K. Richards (2003, p. 232)

*Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
MY OFFICE
• Collected circa 2008
• Never looked at it
• No longer relevant
• Probably in breach of data protection laws
• I still remember what is in there!!!
SUBJECTIVITY NOT A BAD THING

REVERSE THE OBSERVERS PARADOX

AUTO IS MORE THAN JUST SELF

INTROSPECTIVE TECHNIQUES ALL ROUND

- Metacognition
- Built into coursework and assignments

- A ‘small lens approach’
EXAMPLES OF DATA

- MULTIMODAL DATA TYPES
- REFLECTIONS AND PREDICTIONS (METACOGNITION)
- SELF-ASSESSMENTS & VIGNETTES
- ESSAYS, REACTION PAPERS AND COURSEWORK
- AUDIO DATA AND TRANSCRIPTS FOR CLASSROOM DISCOURSE
EMIC INSIGHTS

Communities of practitioner-researchers

Broaden Horizons
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

- The teaching IS the research
- Both the researcher and students benefit from projects like this
- Time to DO the research is integrated, minimal impediments on teaching time

- Sharing findings, writing up and disseminating research?
How can we encourage the dissemination of research projects like this?

Community of researchers in practice

Other Questions?!
Thank you