

Emergent teacher-researchers: A reflection on the challenges faced when conducting research in the English classroom.

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ABSTRACT: The following narrative reflects on the dilemmas and problems faced by inexperienced researchers working within the field of education. Focusing on a research project completed in fulfilment of an MA in Teaching and Learning, the article recounts the decisions made by one emergent researcher and evaluates how far the chosen methods may have helped or hindered the exploration of reader-response theory in terms of its practical application to the teaching of A Level English Literature. In addition, the author highlights the possible benefits and difficulties encountered when applying the findings of small-scale studies to the teaching of English. Lastly, the article reemphasises the validity of action research projects and suggests the importance of maintaining a tradition of teacher-researchers in the secondary English classroom.

KEYWORDS: Action research, emergent researchers, practitioner research, reader-response theory, teacher-researchers.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that research conducted by practising teachers can be both empowering and illuminating. Indeed, it is arguably vital that we, as teaching professionals, develop a critical approach to our work (Burton & Bartlett, 2005). Undertaking research in one's own classroom might be considered especially beneficial when undertaken in conjunction with Masters or Doctoral study. However, there are a number of real difficulties which can hamper the progress of the first-time researcher, and failure to acknowledge and deal with these problems may simply lend further ammunition to those critics who believe that educational research is best left in the hands of research professionals. These problems may include positionality, the slippery notions of objectivity and validity, reconciling the competing demands of school and university in terms of project focus or outcomes, as well as more practical issues such as finding the time (and energy!) to undertake research and gaining access to relevant literature, tools and facilities.

Despite these difficulties, however, I firmly believe that practitioner-based research can be a powerful tool for improving teaching at grass-roots level and, furthermore, can be of genuine interest to the wider research community. In order to explore the difficulties and decisions facing emergent researchers, this narrative will reflect on my personal experience of conducting a small-scale, action research project as part of an MA in Teaching and Learning. In the first section of the article, I provide a brief outline of the project, whilst in the latter half I will discuss the strengths and limitations of the project and draw attention to some of the difficulties which I faced as a new researcher.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT: CONTEXT, GENESIS, THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND AIMS

At the time of the project's instigation, I had been teaching English Language and Literature for five years. Although by no means an established teacher, I had taught students of a wide range of ages and abilities in a number of different countries and institutions; my position at the time was that of a Teacher of English at an international school in Zambia. In terms of academic background, I had been working towards my MA at the University of Reading for one year before moving overseas. As part of this course, I had already undertaken a number of small, research projects which involved reflecting on and improving my own classroom practice. This study, however, which was to be the subject of a dissertation of 30,000 words, was the first time I had conducted research on this scale. Having previously focused on topics relevant to my subject specialism such as the use of questioning within the English classroom in the teaching of poetry, and employing media to inspire writing skills, an exploration of the ways in which students respond to texts was a natural extension of this earlier work.

The initial idea for the subject of the investigation was generated during a discussion with one of my university professors. As someone who had taught in international schools in both Sri Lanka and Zambia, I was keen to reflect on my personal experiences of teaching English Literature to students overseas. Having debated a number of reader-response theories with my lecturer, I decided to attempt to evaluate the ways in which international students are currently taught and establish if current teaching actually encourages genuine personal response. I would then use these findings to inform my own teaching. Once I had read widely around the subject of reader-response, the focus of the study shifted slightly to deal specifically with aesthetic and efferent teaching responses, as identified by Louise M. Rosenblatt (1978).

In her seminal work entitled *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*, Rosenblatt describes what she refers to as "the transactional theory of literary work". For Rosenblatt, every reading of a text is unique, because every reader is different and "brings to the text his past experience and present personality" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 12). Rosenblatt argues that as readers we undertake two main types of reading: efferent and aesthetic. "Efferent", derived from the Latin meaning "to carry away", suggests that a reading of a text is undertaken to acquire information, "find a logical solution or understand actions to be carried out" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 24). Conversely, an aesthetic reading is less concerned with the information which is to be taken away after the reading has taken place, and more concerned with what happens "during the actual reading event" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 24). In this type of reading, the focus is on what the reader "is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 25).

Using Rosenblatt's work as a starting point, Zarrillo and Cox (1992) suggest that "efferent" teaching in the English classroom usually focuses on the information that can be obtained from the text and can include the use of the text as a means of teaching grammar or vocabulary, a study of the typographical features of the text or as a means of teaching form or rhyme and rhythm. It is, however, apparent that the most common "efferent" use of a text is the traditional process of literary analysis. This

may include an exploration of character, setting, style or genre, the simple identification or “feature spotting” of literary techniques, or a comparative analysis with a secondary text. On the surface, a close examination of a text may appear to allow students a chance to respond to the text on a personal level. However, a teacher with an efferent stance will direct students to adopt a certain response to a text, which makes it “difficult for children to create and share personal interpretations of what they read” (Zarrillo & Cox, 1992, p. 237). On a very basic level, aesthetic teaching does allow students to respond to texts from a personal point of view. Zarrillo and Cox (1992) describe how, in the aesthetic classrooms they encountered, students were “encouraged to shape individual responses to the text” and therefore the “scenes, associations, images and feelings called to mind by students whilst reading” were the “substance” of the teaching (Zarrillo & Cox, 1992, p. 242). According to these authors, a “prerequisite context for aesthetic teaching is choice” (Zarrillo & Cox, 1992, p. 248), emphasising the need to give students the opportunity to choose the setting in which they read and also how they read and respond to texts.

The final aim of my own study, therefore, was to explore how the adoption of “aesthetic” and “efferent” teaching approaches might influence the way international students respond to literature in the A Level English classroom. The work started with the premise that if students are to genuinely engage with texts, aesthetic teaching methods must be employed. The principal aims of the study were:

1. To explore how aesthetic and efferent teaching approaches affect international students’ responses to literature;
2. To establish if these contrasting teaching methods affect the way in which students respond to subsequent literary works;
3. To investigate whether an aesthetic method or an efferent teaching method alone can sufficiently prepare students for terminal examinations.

As has previously been implied, the research project itself was undertaken in the English department of a small international school in Kitwe, Zambia. The chief reason for the selection of this educational establishment was the fact that I was, at the time of undertaking the research, employed as a Teacher of English by the school! This meant that the school, teachers and pupils were easily accessible and the process of seeking permission for the research was relatively straightforward.

The selection of the school may be seen as beneficial in a number of other ways, however. Firstly, in its size and student population, it might be considered typical of international schools in Zambia and, therefore, one might be justified in considering it as being duly representative of schools of its type in this area. Secondly, although for most of the school’s students English was a second language, it was also the official language of the school and all lessons were delivered using this medium. As described above, I wished to analyse the responses to literature of students for whom English was a second language so this was therefore considered a necessity. Finally, it was apparent that the school had previously had a strong tradition of English Literature teaching. In the five years before the study, however, the number of students wishing to pursue GCSE and A Level examinations in this subject had declined dramatically. An investigation which sought to establish students’ views about English Literature

and also wished to expose students to different styles of teaching was largely viewed in a favourable light by the existing English department and, indeed, the senior management team.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

On reflection, it is clear that the study was essentially interpretative in its approach; my limited knowledge and understanding of my position as a teacher-researcher and the paradigm within which I was working are issues which I shall discuss later.

In terms of research design, the first part of my research consisted of an informal questionnaire distributed to all Lower Sixth Literature students. Due to the limited size of the school, this meant that I sought the responses of just six young people. Using a mixture of both closed and open questions, the questionnaire focussed on students' reading habits, the ways in which they had been traditionally taught and sought their opinion about the attributes of a good teacher of Literature. For example, the students were asked to "Describe a typical English Literature lesson", comment on the "qualities possessed by a good teacher of English Literature" as well as responding to more personal prompts such as "Do you read for pleasure?" and "Is there a text which you have particularly enjoyed studying in school? Why?" Although not explicitly using the terms "aesthetic" or "efferent", the survey aimed to elicit student opinion about different types teaching methods and provide insight into how they viewed themselves as students of Literature.

The second and largest part of the study involved the analysis of students' responses to poetry once they had experienced aesthetic, efferent and a combination of both teaching methods. This section of the research focussed on a series of lessons delivered to my AS Level Literature class over a period of six weeks. As part of their AS examination, students have to answer an essay question on the Cambridge Poetry Anthology. The series of lessons, therefore, was designed to help students prepare for this examination. Using my research on efferent and aesthetic teaching, the lessons were planned to elicit an aesthetic or efferent response from the students and attempted to put into practice many of the activities suggested by leading proponents of reader-response theory. To provide a brief flavour of my work with the students, I have concentrated here on the teaching of three specific poems and my attempts to establish whether an "aesthetic" or "efferent" teaching method is most suitable for those students undertaking A Level Literature studies.

The first lesson I shall look at focused on the teaching of "Sonnet Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" by William Wordsworth. In this lesson, I used many of the strategies described by Zarrillo and Cox (1992) as being typically efferent. For example, students were provided with contextual and biographical detail about the poet before approaching the text. After a typical grammatical/vocabulary-based task, students were given a brief opportunity to discuss their ideas before being led through annotation of the poem by the teacher. The lesson concluded with a writing task where students were asked to produce a critical analysis of the poem. From informal conversations with my colleagues before beginning this research project, it became apparent that this was the response that they favoured and that therefore was encouraged throughout the department. As four of the six pupils had recently

undertaken GCSE English Literature at the same school, this was therefore the teaching method with which the students were most familiar.

The next section of the scheme of work was more “aesthetic” in nature. For example, in helping students respond to “A Birthday” by Christina Rossetti, I decided to adopt an almost entirely “aesthetic” approach to the text. The first lesson, therefore, encouraged students to explore the concept of love, particularly the idea that it is possible to fall in love at first sight. Using cartoons and a clip from Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo and Juliet*, students were asked to imagine or recall typical emotions experienced when falling in love. These ideas were collated and displayed on the whiteboard and then students were given the task of producing a piece of creative writing about first love. Whilst the second lesson about this poem focussed much more on the text, time was still allowed for students to identify feelings they had experienced on their birthday and make explicit connections between those emotions felt when falling in love and those experienced on one’s birthday: a key idea of the poem. This lesson also allowed students the chance to use previously neglected reading journals and encouraged them to note down their personal response to the poem on two separate occasions, both before and after a whole class discussion. Finally, students were asked to write their own poetry about love using Rossetti’s poem as their inspiration.

The final two lessons I shall explore were devoted to the exploration of “The Planners” by Kim Boey Cheng and were amongst the last lessons of this scheme of work. Whereas the previous lessons had been either almost entirely “aesthetic” or “efferent” in their approach, in planning these lessons I aimed to adopt a combination of these two approaches. In the first lesson, therefore, I introduced the text by concentrating on its main theme, that of urban development. Using the lyrics of a popular song and photographs of their town during various stages of its industrial expansion, I asked students to consider their own feelings about urban regeneration and the potential destruction of a city’s cultural and historical heritage. After students had listened to a performance of the poem on CD, they were then asked to make a note of their initial reactions to the poem, before working in pairs to generate a series of questions they would like answered about the text. These questions were then randomly distributed to other class members who were given the task of producing possible answers.

In the second lesson, after a brief recap using their reading journals, students were asked to present their answers to the class and a discussion about the possibility of multiple interpretations of a poem ensued. Only at this point were students given biographical information about the poet and asked to discuss if the information given was relevant and if it informed their understanding of the poem. Finally, students were asked to re-examine their reading journals and complete a second journal entry about their response to the poem. This time, however, they were given headings as a means of ensuring their journal entry was sufficiently detailed. These headings included “language”, “imagery”, “form”, “structure”, “context”, and also required students to assess the relevance of the poem to their own lives. As this was the final lesson in the scheme of work, as a plenary activity students completed a chart in which they made links between all of the poems they had studied.

After the scheme of work, students were asked to respond to each text by answering a typical, exam-style question. Although the lessons on “A Birthday” and “The Planners” had given students the opportunity to respond to the text in a more creative and personal way, it was felt that the students’ understanding had to be assessed according to the A level criteria. As part of my research, therefore, I analysed these responses and attempted to evaluate the success of both aesthetic and efferent approaches in preparing students for their examinations.

Once the student responses were collated into one large corpus, they were analysed according to the method by which the students were taught. Prior to the students being given the writing tasks, I had compiled a list of words that I considered likely to be present in an aesthetic response to poetry. I then did the same for an efferent response. Generally, as part of an aesthetic response, I expected to find words suggesting a student’s *emotional and creative response* to the poem, evidence of their *personal involvement* and also a marked emphasis on the *role of the reader* in constructing a text. Conversely, within the efferent responses, I sought to find words that suggested a *lack of involvement* with the text, a focus on the *context* of the poem, evidence that the student viewed the analysis of the poem as a *fact finding process*, a greater use of *poetic terms* or a more technical vocabulary and a concentration on the *role of the writer* in creating the text. As part of my analysis, the frequency of these words was established and findings presented in a series of spreadsheets and charts.

The final part of my research involved a written course evaluation, which sought students’ opinions about the course and the teaching they had experienced. The questionnaire was made up of five main questions. The first three questions were open-ended and simply asked students to identify what aspects of the course they had most enjoyed and comment on the poem(s) they would feel most confident writing about in the final examination. Whilst the fifth question was again open-ended and gave students the opportunity to make any additional comments, the fourth question required respondents to use a rating scale to evaluate how effective they had found certain classroom activities. These activities were loosely based on the aesthetic or efferent teaching methods they had experienced during the scheme of work. Students were asked to label these fifteen activities “helpful” or “unhelpful” using a simple tick box. They were, however, given the chance to express their uncertainty by an additional box labelled “Not Sure”.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT: KEY FINDINGS

As the research project was essentially divided into three different components, the findings were presented in three separate sections. To begin with, having asked students about the teaching of literature they had experienced in the past in the form of a written questionnaire, it was apparent that the pupils in the sample group had all been taught in a traditional “chalk and talk” classroom with their teacher assuming a didactic and authoritative role. It was clear that there had been little room for “aesthetic” approaches and the students largely associated English lessons with “efferent” teaching methods. The students were, therefore, keen to be allowed to form their own ideas before embarking on class discussion in future and they expressed a need for their teachers to cease “spoon-feeding” them and encourage more independent learning.

In the second and largest section of the project, students were taught from a scheme of work which attempted to explore several poems using efferent, aesthetic or combined teaching methods. They were then asked to complete a piece of written work in response to each poem which was then analysed according to a previously generated set of words which were classified as being “aesthetic” or “efferent” in nature. Overall, it can be stated that aesthetic teaching methods led students to respond to the poems in an aesthetic manner. This was apparent in the lexis that they used to suggest an emotional and creative involvement with the text, evidence of a personal engagement and the links that were made between the texts and their own personal experiences. It was also broadly concluded that efferent teaching methods inspired writing that was efferent in nature. It is too simplistic to suggest, however, that this evidence was conclusive, and there were a number of anomalies in this data set.

Interestingly, the responses generated by a combination of aesthetic and efferent teaching methods tended to be more aesthetically focussed, with the students using many words that had been previously identified as being aesthetic in nature. Indeed, in several categories, there was more evidence of an aesthetic focus in these responses than in the responses generated by aesthetic teaching methods alone! These responses, however, did not fail in their close analysis of the texts, a fact that can be supported by the increased use of relevant critical terminology in these essays. In fact, the combined responses contained more uses of terminology, one of the key indicators of an efferent response, than the efferent responses themselves, though in these responses students tended to undertake minute textual analysis to describe how they had “experienced” the text aesthetically.

In the final section of the project, students were asked to evaluate the course. The completed course evaluation forms revealed that the students responded positively to the scheme of work and individual lessons. Overwhelmingly, they expressed a preference for classroom activities which might be deemed aesthetic in nature, namely the opportunity to undertake creative writing and student-led class discussion. Students claimed that the activities defined as aesthetic earlier in the study were far more helpful in assisting their preparations for their final AS examinations. It was clear, however, that a combination of these responses was considered useful.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Having outlined the project itself, I would now like to reflect on the experience of both conducting and writing the research. In retrospect, there are several aspects of the project which perhaps should have been conducted differently. As a (slightly!) more experienced researcher it is apparent that as a novice researcher I was blissfully unaware of some key issues surrounding the notion of teacher-research. To begin, I will focus on my role as a teacher-researcher within the school in which I worked.

As discussed by Oliver (2004), undertaking ethnographic research in a familiar setting has both advantages and disadvantages. It is possible to argue that in carrying out research within my own school I was in an excellent position to observe both staff and students, as I had a sophisticated understanding of the educational setting and already had meaningful relationships with other members of this setting. Furthermore, as the

class teacher, I obviously had a clearer idea of my own intentions and motivations than an outsider would and therefore, as Hammersley (1993) outlines, was in the best position to understand my own behaviour.

However, as Oliver (2004) suggests, “teacher-researchers may also fail to note significant social events” (Oliver, 2004, p. 135) in the classroom as they have become routine to them as employees of the school. As Thomas (2009) argues, as a practitioner-researcher, you may know the “stage” and recognise yourself as an “actor” on it, but you will have to take extra measures as a researcher to ensure that you see the research setting and your role within it in a “fresh light” (Thomas, 2009, p. 120). It is therefore possible to suggest that my status as an employee of the school may have limited my observation of this educational setting. As a “teacher-researcher”, I may have failed to note these “significant social events” (2004, p. 135) in the classroom as they had become routine to me as a member of staff.

Furthermore, my role as a class teacher of the group of students may have had an impact on the way in which the students responded to the questionnaire and course evaluation. Because I was their teacher, the students presumably wished to please me and therefore were perhaps inclined to answer any questions with the responses they presumed I wished to hear. Similarly, the fact that I introduced and described the study to the students before the beginning of the project would have clearly transformed the dynamics of the classroom situation and students’ behaviour and responses may then have been subtly altered. In this way, the study’s validity as a reflection of students’ genuine responses to literature and literature teaching may be debated.

To dismiss the project or, indeed, any form of action research as being limited simply because of its subjectivity is, however, rather to have missed the point of this research practice. Indeed, Elliott (1991), as cited by Hopkins (1993), claims that action research depends not so much on notions of objectivity or generalisability, but rather the “usefulness in helping people to act more intelligently and skilfully” (Elliott, 1991, as cited in Hopkins, 1993, p. 48). In undertaking this project with a view to improving my own practice, therefore, my apparent subjectivity was irrelevant. What I should have done differently, however, was acknowledge my position very early on in the research project. As Thomas (2009) suggests, the difference between subjective and biased research lies in our acknowledgment of our positionality, namely the recognition that our “likes and dislikes”, “backgrounds” and “vested interest and expectations” may affect our observations and interpretations (Thomas, 2009, p. 110). In fact, as Gitlin, Siegel and Boru (1993) argue, the researcher should not have to pretend that he/she approaches the research with a “blank slate”, but rather should make sure that the research “acknowledges the embedded pre-judgements and allows them to be critically scrutinised” (Gitlin et al., 1993, p. 205).

It is also possible that some researchers may have found fault with the size of my sample group. Focusing on the experiences of just six students did make the project manageable, but some may call the usefulness and generalisability of my findings into question. Can such a small sample group be considered truly representative of international students’ opinions and experiences? I would argue that not only is it not relevant, it is also not desirable within interpretive research for generalisations to be made. As Carr and Kemmis (1993) emphasise, action research simply seeks to

influence the practitioner-researcher's own teaching and is ultimately concerned with providing "authentic insights, rather than universal truths" (Carr & Kemmis, 1993, p. 239). In exploring the understanding and attitudes of these students, I was able to gain valuable insight into the ways in which A-Level students respond to literature. This fresh understanding definitely had an impact my own teaching and may, in the future, prove useful for other teachers.

However, in retrospect, some of the methods of data collection I used in this project do seem rather limited. This was largely due to my inexperience as a researcher and my limited understanding of research methods and data-gathering techniques. For example, the use of written questionnaires seemed somehow a "safe" and knowable option whereas carrying out interviews, focus groups or lesson observations may, in fact, have proved more beneficial. Similarly, the use of three methods of data collection: questionnaires, students' work and then a course evaluation could have been more tightly constructed to gather more useful data. Or the way in which I drew up the list of "efferent" and "aesthetic" words could have been more rigorous. In future research projects, I would be keen to use other tools to gather data and perhaps would now be in a better position to judge which method would yield the best results and, perhaps most importantly, help me to address my research objectives.

A more practical problem I experienced when beginning my research was agreeing on the project's aims with the school leadership team. Although generally very supportive of research, particularly if it sought to improve classroom practice, the principal was keen to establish that I had no ulterior motive in undertaking this project. As discussed by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), as teacher-researchers we must be particularly sensitive to the hierarchy of our research setting and be aware that difficulties may arise if our chosen area of research conflicts with another staff member's "perceived area of jurisdiction and responsibility" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 41). In this study, I also had some difficulty convincing a member of staff within my own department of the value of the project. As someone who had been teaching at the school for over twenty years, she initially viewed the research with suspicion and felt that by experimenting with teaching styles and approaches I may undermine her own professional practice. Thankfully, in this case, such concerns were easily addressed but objections such as these may pose a significant problem to other emergent researchers carrying out research in their own educational setting.

One of the major difficulties I experienced in undertaking this study was trying to plan and organise the project whilst still undertaking a full-time job as a teacher. Indeed, the lament that teachers are "too busy" to consider carrying out research is a familiar one to us all. Even when I did manage to identify a time in which I personally could commit to the research, it was actually very difficult to fit the research into a packed school calendar. With the competing demands of school development plans, department syllabi, and examination board criteria, it proved extremely problematic to find enough time with the students in question to generate adequate data. As such, the project was undertaken over the course of just one academic term, in part because of my own commitment to leave the educational setting at the end of the summer term. These time constraints had a particular negative impact on the fulfilment of one of the secondary aims of the project, which required an investigation into the long-term effects of aesthetic and efferent teaching methods. Ultimately, a research design

which allowed a more detailed and prolonged investigation may have resulted in a more meaningful set of data.

Another problem I faced when undertaking this research was my lack of access to relevant tools and facilities. As I have outlined above, at the time of the study I was working and living in Zambia in a relatively rural area with a poor internet service and limited communication with the academic community. All analysis of data, therefore, was undertaken using rather primitive tools such as those found on the average home computer. For example, when analysing the data generated in the second phase of the project, I used the “Find” function in Microsoft Word, a simple search tool which allows users to search for specified text or formatting. Using this function, I was able to accurately establish the frequency of the words (or words from the same family) I had previously generated and was able to manually record the results on an Excel spreadsheet. As will be understood, this was rather a time-consuming and clumsy method which may have inhibited rigorous data analysis. Having now had experience of CAQDAS programmes such as NVivo and Atlas.ti, I feel that access to these tools, and the advice of other members of the research community, would have enabled me to undertake more meaningful analysis of the data I collected.

In a similar vein, when completing this project, my access to academic material in terms of university libraries, online journals and so on, was extremely limited. The gathering of literature for this project was actually confined to one brief visit to the UK and the University of Reading library. Although my own experience was perhaps an extreme example, it must be acknowledged that accessing relevant research and literature is a key issue for researchers who also have a fulltime job. Whilst the emergence of online journals can only improve the situation, accessing relevant and up-to-date literature must surely be one of the biggest challenges facing novice researchers. Just knowing where to look, what constitutes “good” previous research, how to judge work critically but fairly and identifying who are the leading proponents of your chosen research field are clearly huge hurdles to overcome.

Facing these difficulties, however, must surely be an important part of a researcher’s “training”. Making mistakes in the course of research, and learning how to reduce potential pitfalls in future, must surely strengthen one’s position as a researcher in the long term. Furthermore, actually reading accounts such as these may also be considered useful. If we wish to undertake successful educational research, we should aim to learn from the mistakes of others and approach our own projects with a good understanding of the problems we may encounter.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the obvious difficulties facing emergent researchers, therefore, there is little doubt in my mind that participating in educational research has the potential to be enormously liberating. As a teacher-researcher who has engaged in several action-research projects, I have found it immensely rewarding to make practical changes within my own educational setting and believe the project I have detailed above has been hugely influential in the way I approach the teaching of English Literature to A Level students. As Hopkins (1993) claims, teachers often regard traditional

educational research as having little relevance to their own practice. Participation in research projects such as these, therefore, should be viewed as a means of empowering teachers to investigate and ameliorate their own classroom practice, thereby making educational research a valuable tool for change.

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