

How can I Reconceptualise International Educational Partnerships as a Form of 'Living Citizenship'?

SoE staff research seminar – 17-Jan-2012



Purposes of The Research Project

To make a difference to people's lives.

- Embed and sustain the international educational partnership
- Reflect on and evaluate how the education of the (principal) researcher, colleagues and students have been influenced through the activities of the partnership
- Address questions about how to deliver the goal of more informed citizens through citizenship education and to address the question put by Gearon (2003) in the BERA professional user review of 2003: How do we learn to become good citizens?
- Research the transferable pedagogical protocols for designing and developing international education as part of a new CPD framework
- To provide advice for government ministers on how best to extend educational partnerships and international CPD between UK and South African Schools?

Key Methodological Issues

1. How to be methodologically inventive (Dadds and Hart, 2001), synthesising existing methodological approaches to create one which best suits the researchers' professional working needs (Gardner and Coombs, 2009).
2. How to generate knowledge that is useful.
3. How to analyse the extensive amount of qualitative data, including video footage.
4. How to overcome researcher bias?
5. Ethical issues

Methodological Inventiveness

- Aim to find a different perspective on action research from which to synthesise a useful and unique approach that develops Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) concept of a living educational theory as narrative-based inquiry.
- Using a typology of research that distinguishes between the experimental paradigm assumptions of “prove” versus “improve” (Coombs & Smith, 2003), this work lies firmly in the “improve” social manifesto paradigm (Coombs, 1995 and Gardner & Coombs, 2009).
- By engaging in a self-study reflective research paradigm one's practice as a professional educator can be improved through such narrative-based inquiry and fed back as improvement to teaching (Doyle & Carter, 2003)
- Importance of encouraging participation and democracy through research (Reason and Rowan, 1981)

2. Generating Useful Knowledge

Difficulty

How overcome

- Persuading others of the validity of the approach.
- Lack of generalisability of findings.
- Lack of proof
- Unplanned approach that is high risk

Tie the approach in to existing frameworks and emphasise validity checks. Subject claims to public scrutiny via co-participants, critical friends, validation groups.

Recognise that generalisations are difficult, that knowledge is uncertain and ambiguous. Develop own standards of judgement for the work based on carefully articulated values.

Improve a situation not prove. Claims made are provisional, open to further testing.

Open ended, experimental approach, learning is never complete. Claims made are

3. Use of manual and electronic techniques for analysing qualitative data

- Develops further reflection (inner conversation) on the social episodes captured and this helps to identify critical learning events.
- Personal Construct Theory (Kelly 1955) – self analysis as a systematic method of re-construing events leading to experiential learning.
- Unearthing of subsumed themes.
- Enables analysis of the two sets of findings – how are they similar/different?
- Triangulation of findings from different sources to make sense of research questions.
- Some removal of bias.

4. Methods used to overcome researcher bias and increase validity of the findings

- Data analysis techniques used – Manual and electronic
- Action research approach means evidence gathered on several occasions, evaluated and checked
- Other participants collected and interpreted data
- Triangulation from a range of sources
- Corroborative checks made
- The data that was analysed is included as appendices for perusal by the reader
- Peer group review at Bath Spa University

5. Ethical issues

- Issue of 'whiteness' overcome through building trust and focus on 'Ubuntu'
- Consent for shooting of and use of video footage
- Purposes of the research made clear to participants
- Narratives checked with the participants concerned
- Permission gained for use of real name
- Data kept securely

Original outcomes of the project

1. Development of an original and transferable way of analysing qualitative data to increase validity
2. Recognition of the significance of shared values in international educational partnerships
3. Transferable pedagogical protocols for teaching citizenship through international educational partnerships (IEPs)
4. Explaining the features of living citizenship
5. Development of the notion of 'living citizenship' as a means of CPD for participants in international projects.

1. Tools for analysis of qualitative data

- Content-free tools
- Researcher independent
- Transferable set of conversational learning procedures
- Systematise the knowledge resources of teachers (Snow 2001)
- Encourage the use of video as a tool for learning (Harri-Augstein and Thomas, 1991), (Stigler and Gallimore 2003)

2. The Significance of Shared Values

- Developed through dialogues
- Shared values create a shared vision
- “Sense of connectedness” (Martin, 2007)
- Sachs (1999) activist teaching profession
- Coombs (1995) social manifesto approach that levers authentic change.

3. Pedagogical Protocols for the use of IEPs in Citizenship Education

- Develop shared socio-educational values
- Develop activities that touch the hearts of others.
- Develop activities that tackle stereotypes and negative prejudice
- Aim for meaningful social change by raising awareness of injustice
- Sustainable activities, widening participation
- Encourage participants to construct narratives that are put in to the public domain

4. Living Citizenship

1. The way that participants in international educational partnerships can live out their values in a practical way, through their actions.
2. Based on shared values.
 - Ubuntu - By 'doing Ubuntu' participants are showing their humaneness and their respect for each other and demonstrating community connectedness, and cross-cultural understanding.
 - Social Justice - By taking actions to help those that are marginalised by society to have equal access to education, participants are promoting social justice in the Rawlsian (1971) sense of the creation of a more just or equitable society.
 - Equality of opportunity - Their actions are an attempt to address inequality of condition (Chomsky, 1976) and create fairer equality of opportunity .

4. Living Citizenship

3. The actions must be as a result of genuine dialogue that values the voice of all of the participants and that gives priority to the southern participants so that they are able to drive the partnership forward to realise their own vision of progress and development.

4. The notion of living citizenship carries with it a message of hope for humanity. The participants in the partnership are actively engaged in living out their social values more fully through the activities of the partnership and in so doing lives are improved.

5. Living citizenship is a creative act. It can be linked to the values and aspirations of the 5x5x5 = Creativity project. Living citizenship is about the development of human relationships to unlock participants' creativity in their response to situations where they see the need to live out their values as citizens more fully.

4. Examples of Living Citizenship

Ways of doing Ubuntu (showing respect for each other, connectedness, cross-cultural understanding) and furthering social justice and equal opportunities.

- Black Dust – Bursaries for South African students

“You can change the world for one person” (Joyce, 2005)

- Fair trade – Making and selling Beautizulu Jewellery
- Arts projects

5. How to embed 'Living Citizenship' as a form of international CPD learning?

Government should be encouraging the establishment of IEPs as a vehicle for social and educational change to support the work of DFID and other organisations.

Government should provide guidelines which emphasise the importance of values in establishing an IEP. The Partnership Agreement should reflect these values and be re-visited regularly.

Participants in international partnerships should be encouraged to develop channels of communication to facilitate dialogue so that they can reach agreement on the underpinning values.

Guidelines should emphasise the importance of the adoption of a democratic approach to decision making. This is on two levels, between schools and in each of the communities, whilst recognising that the existence of hierarchies in some communities makes the democratisation process difficult.

5. How to embed 'Living Citizenship' as a form of international CPD linked to learning?

Guidance can be given on the sorts of activities that can encourage wider participation and that promote learning and active citizenship.

Emphasis to be given to those activities that challenge values, change dispositions and lead to actions and the embedding of the partnership as a form of 'Living Citizenship'.

Consideration of the second order impact tools, those tools that have most impact for those who cannot afford, or do not have the opportunity to have, direct experience of the other culture through the partnership.

Implications for the design of international CPD with a focus on an action research approach with attendant accredited postgraduate qualification.

Encouragement of participants (teachers and others involved in international development work) to put the findings from research projects in to the public domain and to have them validated through accreditation by universities.

Possible transferability to other cultural contexts, e.g. disability.

How successful was the project?

What went well?

- Example of teacher research – autobiographical self-study approach
- Improved lives
- Sustainability of the partnership. Visit planned for Easter 2012
- Partnership and values have transferred across three school structures in UK
- Original outcomes

Even Better if...

- Improved methods for secondary impact could be found
- Further analysis of partnerships using the AR approach
- Radicalised participants

Dissemination of the Project

So far

- BERA presentations and papers 2008-2011
- IACSEE 2010 Conference presentation and paper
- British Council website CPD materials
- Article in Global Schools published by GSP

Future developments

- Co-authored books on methods for analysing video data and on 'Living Citizenship' - Palgrave
- Development of materials for British Council
- Masters level module on partnership exchange available to any participant in an international exchange.
- Masters level course for those engaged in international development work, eg VSO

“We love the America in us (or can appreciate it). We love the Europe in us (or can reason with it). The Asia in us we are beginning to respect (This is long overdue). Only the Africa in us is unloved, unseen, unappreciated. The first step towards the regeneration of humanity is making whole again all these great continents within us. We are the sum total of humanity. Every individual is all of humanity. It is Africa’s turn to smile. That will be the loveliest gift of the 21st century: to make Africa smile again. Then humanity can begin to think of the universe, even the most remote stars, as its true home.” (Okri, 2004)

