

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose statement

The purpose of this study was to explore how the researcher-practitioner relationship is expressed, experienced and preferred by researchers and practitioners. The study involved a sample of researchers comprising postgraduate education students and lecturers at a university and a sample of practitioners comprising teachers practising at schools.

1.2 Background

What is the relationship between educational research and practice? More specifically, in what ways, and to what extent, does educational research inform practice? Southworth (1999) claims that the influence of theory on practice is near negligible. Although his work is based only on primary schools in England, this weak theory–practice relationship, also often known as the huge research-practice gap or low research utilisation, has been observed by numerous authors across a wide range of areas of research (Berliner, et al., 1997; Bostrom & Suter, 1993; Caldwell, 1991; Donmoyer, 1998; Glaser, Lieberman, & Anderson, 1997; Robinson, 1998).

The concepts of *theory* and *research* are not identical. Oliver defines theory as “systematically organised knowledge”, or as “a belief” or “an assumption” (Oliver, 2000), in other words, a finished product – an output. However, since this study was interested in not only the output, but also the process, the concept of *research* was used instead of *theory*.

The way in which theory influences practice is usually captured and explored in literature by the concept of research utilisation. Conceptually, this notion of research utilisation is broad and embraces many different meanings. These include two important types of utilisation, namely, *instrumental utilisation* and *conceptual utilisation* (Beyer, 1997; Weiss, 1979).

History reveals that early social scientists focused mainly on *instrumental use* (applying research results in specific ways, often denoting actions) (Caplan, 1974; Knorr, 1976; Rich, 1975; Weiss, 1976). It was only later that it was suggested that this kind of use is indeed rare, particularly in social science (Weiss, 1980). It is rather *conceptual use*, as general enlightenment, building an inventory of personal knowledge bank (March & Simon, 1958), or in certain conceptualisations, as a stage towards instrumental utilisation (Bostrom & Suter, 1993; Knott & Wildawsky, 1980), that occurs more frequently.

Logically, this suggestion leads to the conclusion that instrumental utilisation is not necessarily the only desirable result of social research. However what prevails in educational practice is not merely a low level of direct use of research (*instrumental utilisation*), but also often a disinclination on the part of practitioners to participate in research and a reluctance to acknowledge the value of research (*conceptual utilisation*). One vignette, drawn from an informal discussion with a fellow researcher, follows as an illustration of the latter phenomenon.

I am a PhD student and my study was on classroom practice. I was so excited when my proposal was approved and I finally could start fieldwork. I expected that all teachers would be as excited as me and queue there to participate in my data collection. To my surprise, there were no volunteers. Indeed, when I approached them, the majority seemed quite indifferent. In the end, the only possible sampling that I could do was convenience, as long as they fit into my basic requirement, I simply took the ones that said 'yes' to me.

In the search for explanations for this research–practice gap, literature often points to the differences that exist between the researchers and the practitioners. Factors usually cited often include different logics driving research and informing educational practice; the cultural differences between these two institutions (academic universities and schools); and different aims, requirements, expectations and values (Caldwell, 1991; Randall, 2002). Nevertheless what is the actual explanatory force of this *two-community theory*?

In his explanation of the researcher–practitioner relationship, Randall describes the image which practitioners usually associate with researchers:

Social workers, like many other front-line practitioners, see researchers...good at identifying what is wrong, generate ideas and raise expectations, but disappointingly weak in sustaining commitment long enough to make things work (2002, p. 117).

Similar perceptions also emerged during my casual conversations with some teachers. “They [researchers] just come in, take over the school, use us as subjects, conduct an information ‘raid’ and leave”.

Meanwhile, it is not only the practitioners who manifest a low level of interest, together with hesitation and doubt in respect of research and researchers, but the researchers’ own attitudes towards engaging the practitioners, not only in research dissemination but also in the research process, is also often not optimistic. Certain researchers view the conducting of research dissemination activities as a threat to professional prestige (Rich, 1979). The research process is also sometimes characterised by minimum engagement with the practitioners – leading Greenwood and Levin to conclude that an anti-praxis orientation is observable in most university-based social research (2003).

In fact, this two-way mistrust has been pinpointed in numerous reports: many researchers are able to relate disagreeable instances about the uncooperative nature of practitioners and their unwillingness to pay attention to the findings of research. On the other hand, many practitioners themselves reflect distrust and wariness, as they perceive researchers as having a narrow focus, and also as too theoretical, too idealistic, and too general to relate directly to practical realities (Levin, 2004; Levin & Wong, 2004; Lewison & Holliday, 1997; Nuthall, 2004; The Central New York Practice Research Network (CNY PRN), 2002).

Certainly, a good relationship alone will not guarantee a successful transition from theory to practice. And this double-sided mistrust could also be seen as another aspect of the cultural differences that exist between researchers and practitioners, or as a consequence of these cultural differences. However, this lack in a positive attitude towards and an understanding of each other and the presence of scepticism in the two communities could be another important constraint between research and practice. If Lather’s critique is true – “the characteristic of mainstream social science: career advancement of researchers built on their use of alienating and explorative inquiry methods” (1986, p. 261) – then this anxiety and mistrust should come as no surprise.

So, to what extent does mutual respect and trust exist between educational researchers and practitioners? Do they have a favourable attitude towards one another and does a sense of partnership exist? How do these two communities understand their mutual responsibility towards each other? How willing are they to understand

the world and the needs of the other?

This research adopted the *interaction* model of research utilisation, and, more specifically, Huberman’s general model (1990), as a theoretical framework. The research set out to explore the nature of the researcher–practitioner interaction through the perceptions and experiences of both parties, and aimed to discover a link that could shed light on the research–practice puzzle.

1.3 Rationale and uniqueness of this study

The rationale behind this research stemmed from a concern about the possible consequences of a weak research–practice relationship. Indeed, to investigate this relationship was also to investigate the value of research – something which is often taken for granted. I echo the sentiment of Feuer, Towne and Shavelson when they state that “educational research relies critically on relationship between research and those engaged in professional practice ... the educational research enterprise could not function without this relationship, and its vitality depends in part on the willingness of practitioners to participate in, or otherwise, support, research” (2002, p. 7). Furthermore, the concern was also that a low level of research utilisation could mean that the increasing volume of research – conducted at huge public expenses¹ – is rendered meaningless, or, as stated by Hargreaves, educational research could be of “poor value for money in terms of improving the quality of education provided in schools” (1996, p. 1). If, as Caldwell (1991, p. 177) insists, “In a practical sense, all research knowledge is intended to be diffused and utilised”, then this scenario is even more worrying.

During the course of the literature review, it became obvious that this topic was receiving far less attention in the field of education than in other fields, such as anthropology and the medical field, including nursing. Furthermore in the meagre literature that does exist in the field of the education, the focus is often either pragmatic (presenting plans to facilitate such gaps), or else the topic is only indirectly touched upon during discussions on ethical/methodological issues (such as Dickert & Grady, 1999), but it is seldom empirically reported and examined (a description of what happens during the process of a research study). These

¹ The pressure to produce more research is constantly increasing. In South Africa, government encourages research output by providing monetary incentives linked with publication in certain accredited journals. Some institutions and faculties also give research high priority by way of promotion.

observations are supported by a report from the National Education Research Forum which states that “there is a surprisingly small amount of literature on the impact of educational research on policy and practice, including an underdeveloped language in which to explore such topic” (National Education Research Forum, 2000, p. 1). The observations are also supported by Huberman’s claim that “the bulk of writing on the gap between research and practice, and on ways of bridging the gap, is of a rhetorical nature, much of it in the form of keynote speeches or occasional papers” (1990, p. 364). Thus, the practical rationale behind this study was to contribute empirically to the existing knowledge on the research–practice gap in education.

Another observation which emerges from current literature in the field was that “despite its centrality, very few theoretical or empirical studies have directly addressed participants’ perspectives on research” (McGinn, 2005). Therefore, another aim of the study was to address this lack by making extensive use of the voices of practitioners, not only to provide a more holistic picture, but also to provide a triangulation with the accounts presented by the researchers. This was achieved by targeting completed studies as units (cases) and comparing data from the written reports and interviews of researchers, as well as the data from the interviews of researchers and the original participants.

Existing literature also reveals a lack of contextualisation within developing countries. Developing countries often face multiple social and economic challenges, yet little attention seems to have been directed to research utilisation issues within these developing contexts that can least afford wasted resources. Furthermore, the country in which this study was carried out – South Africa – also provides a background of a fundamental social transition. Would this also affect the researcher–practitioner relationship as experienced in this country? This context rendered the research more interesting and more imperative.

1.4 Explanation of the boundaries

As the title suggests, the study targeted qualitative studies only, in other words, those studies which used surveys or questionnaires as the sole data collection technique (quantitative research) were excluded. This was out of the concern that such methods may not only offer little room to report real interaction, but also that the researchers may not have intended to interact with their participants because of the objectivity/detachment

often advocated by such methodology.

This study also adopted the narrow concept of education, in terms of which it targeted schools or classrooms studies only. This was because a broader notion of education would have meant including all studies with learning implications and thus, potentially, all research studies.

Another boundary of the study also merits mention. During the ongoing literature review process, long after the preliminary literature review and the fieldwork had been completed, I realised that anthropology (including ethnography) is a field in which the researcher-researched relationship has been discussed and explored extensively. Yet, because of the timing of this discovery, the sheer volume of the literature which would have had to be included, as well as the possible difference in learning about culture (one's life) and teaching practice (one's profession), it was decided to exclude anthropological studies about culture from the study.

1.5 Theoretical framework

In a literature view theorizing knowledge utilization, Landry, et al. (2001) identified four alternatives, namely the *science push model*; *dissemination model*; *demand pull model* and *interaction model*.

The *science push model* stresses the supply side of research findings as the major determinant of research utilization. In this model, utilization follows a linear flow from the supplier to the users—the researchers are the sources to direct research, and the users are there only to receive the result. On the other hand, the *demand pull model* suggests that instead of the researchers (suppliers), the users are the major source to direct research (Rich, 1991; Weiss, 1979; Yin & Moore, 1988). In this model, research utilization is explained only by the needs of these users, meaning that the needs of the users are more of a focus to the researchers than the advancement of scholarly knowledge (Chelimsky, 1997; Frenk, 1992; Orlandi, 1996; Silverside, 1997). The *dissemination model* ascribes the lack of impact of research to the fact that a large amount of research is never widely or properly disseminated (MacLean, 1996). Lastly, the *interaction model* suggests that knowledge utilization depends on various interactions between the researcher and the users. This model points out that research utilization, which depends heavily on information transfer, occurs best in the context of relationships

based on familiarity and trust, often built over time through a two-way interaction (Bogenschneider, Olson, Linney, & Mills, 2000). Empirical work such as Caplan, Morrison, & Stambaugh (1975), Landry, Amara, & Lamari (2001) and Yin (1981) suggests that the *interaction* model offers a better explanation than other alternative utilization models. In this study, this *interaction* model also serves as my theoretical framework.²

1.6 Conceptual framework

Although the central issue of this study is the research–practice gap, this must not be taken to imply that I, as the researcher, regard theory and practice as dichotomous. In fact, together with the critique of positivism, the dichotomy of these two concepts has been contested since the early 1970s. Currently, the emergence of terms such as *practice-based research*, *practice as research*, *research-informed practice*, and *research into practice* (Douglas, Scopa, & Gray, 2002; Humphreys, Berridge, Butler, & Ruddick, 2003; Jarvis, 1999; Piccini, 2002) has challenged the boundaries between research and practice, and also the researcher–practitioner distinction. As will be explained later in this chapter, I align myself with this new movement. However, the dichotomous view still carries much weight in the current academic discourse, particular within the South African context. In addition, it was also observed that, in this particular context, researchers and practitioners still seem to constitute two separate entities and that research often refers to projects carried out by a researcher (from an academic setting) in a school with practitioners (often teachers). Therefore, it is this type of research only – most common in the context – that was the target of this study. To be more specific, the researchers included in this study were either postgraduate students who carried out research for degree purposes or lecturers at a university who carried out research as part of their academic activities; meanwhile the practitioners only referred to teacher-practitioners who participated in a research study mainly to provide data.

In addition, the term *practitioner* as used in this study needs clarification. In the study, the term *practitioner* refers to the *research subjects* only. In other words, the researcher–practitioner relationship addressed in the study is the relationship between *the researcher* and *the researched*. Although I was aware that *the practitioner* and *the researched* were not identical, these two terms were used interchangeably in the study for the following reasons.

² For more details, please see par 2.1.

- In the broad sense the term *the practitioner* could refer to anyone who may be affected by the research and not necessarily only those who participated in the research. The focus of this study was on those who participated in the research study (*the researched*) only resulted from a concern that the researcher–practitioner relationship, if endorsing the term *practitioner* in the broad sense, could be far more indirect, remote and vague, and thus more difficult to identify.
- In reality the term *the researched* might also refer to a bigger group than merely *practitioners*. In the educational context *the practitioners* could refer mainly to the teachers, while *the researched* could also refer to policymakers, community members, students, parents, etc. Policy makers were excluded in this study because they occupied different positions of power to the usual practitioners. Furthermore, the lack of existing empirical data and therefore the explorative nature of this study indicated that unnecessary noises caused by including different groups of *the researched* was better shut out. Lastly, parents and students were excluded out of a concern for access³ and the level of articulation needed for a complex issue such as the researcher–practitioner relationship.

1.7 Methodology

1.7.1 Paradigm, epistemological assumptions and research approach

Given the topic of this study, the qualitative research approach was used to investigate the research phenomenon. The qualitative approach was chosen particularly because the focus of this study was unpacking how different researchers and their participants understood and described their researcher-practitioner engagement. This underlying assumption gave acknowledgement to individuals’ subjectively constructed knowledge and allowed space for difference in understanding from different individuals. This understanding is situated in the interpretivism and constructivism paradigm which recognises multiple realities.

1.7.2 Research design

The qualitative multiple case study method was found to be well suited as it explores the diversified perceptions, understandings, feeling and experiences of different groups. This is because “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p3). Denzin and Lincoln view the researcher as *bricoleur*—a Jack-of-all-trades who uses any methods, strategies or empirical material that are available in the

³ The concern about access was particularly important to me because of my foreigner status. Detail explained in par 7.2.

context to produce the *bricolage*, that is a solution to the puzzle. In a qualitative case study, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection, analysis and interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

I chose to use a qualitative case study research design for the following reasons: first, epistemologically, I accepted reality to be a subjective concept that needed to be interpreted rather than measured. Second, the flexibility of the design allowed me to follow a planned process, yet also to be open to any surprises and to use the information gathered in the earlier research stages to alter subsequent stages; in other words, to “move with goalposts” (Paechter, 2000). Third, a qualitative case study is guided by the ethic of remaining loyal or true to the phenomena under investigation and is not confined to any particular set of methodological techniques or principles (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). Methodology thus serves rather than leads the research. And lastly, this research sought to account for the two communities’ experiences and perceptions and to pose questions regarding meanings and interpretations. It was therefore important to have a flexible design that could accommodate this diversity.

Because of the explorative nature of this study, the research design can be best described as an exploratory multiple case study (Cohen *et al*, 2000), which investigates a relatively unknown research area, opens the way for further studies and generates new researchable hypotheses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) and examines initial assumptions on which to base other studies (Merriam, 2001).

To be more specific, the research phenomenon investigated in this study was explored, firstly, through a document analysis of twenty-eight Masters and PhD dissertations where the evolving relationship of the dissertation authors with their participants was examined. This was followed by six empirical qualitative case studies.

The choice of including the document analysis as part of the research design was based primarily upon one finding from the literature review reported in par 2.4. According to this finding, there were relatively few reports on the empirical disclosure of the researcher/practitioner relationship in published journals. The expectation was that this could be caused by the restraint imposed by journal space. Furthermore, the expectation was that dissertation authors would be less confined in terms of number of pages and also more

willing to report on what had happened between them and their participants.

The distribution of the six empirical cases was as follows:

- One student-researcher case chosen from each of the categories classified in the document analysis database (see par 4.1, three categories in total);
- Two experienced researchers cases (defined as those researchers who had completed their PhDs more than five years before the study);
- The interaction between researcher and participants (Chapter 7).

The aim of including the student-researcher cases was to allow for a comparison between document (dissertations) and narratives (interviews); to approach the experienced researchers was to examine further whether/how the student-researcher cases differed from the experienced researcher cases in terms of the relationship. Extensive reflection of the way in which my participants reacted with me as a researcher was to provide more firsthand insight.

1.7.3 Research questions

The main research questions framing this research were:

- **How do researchers and practitioners perceive and experience the researcher–practitioner relationship?**
- **What kind of researcher-practitioner relationship do the researchers and the practitioners prefer?**
- **How does such a relationship (both experienced and preferred) link with the researcher/practitioner context⁴ and research utilisation?**

In order to answer these questions three main sets of sub questions were drawn up to “obtain rich and varied information by approaching the topic from several angles” (Kvale, 1996, p. 130). They were designed parallel to the way in which a research study usually unfolds.⁵

1. Pre-research phase – What is the motivation for conducting/participating in the research? What expectations do the researchers and their participants have of each other? How do both parties understand

⁴ The researcher/practitioner context refers to the organisational factors that the researcher or practitioner brings into the research setting. For a detailed explanation please see conceptual framework of Huberman’s general model and the relevant literature review in Chapter 2.

⁵ For detailed interview guidelines, please refer to par 3.3.3, interview protocol.

their responsibilities towards each other?

2. Interim phase – How do the researchers and their participants encounter each other and engage during the course of the research? How do both parties perceive and experience the engagement?
3. Post-research phase – Was the relationship continued in any way after the research? In retrospect what are the impressions of the researchers and their participants of each other and how do they evaluate the relationship?⁶

These questions were posed to both the researchers and their original participants in order to draw a holistic picture of the relationship, as well as to explore convergences or contradictions.

The following questions were developed through brain storming and discussions with other educational researchers⁷ and were used to frame the document analysis, as well as the literature review, since it is, in fact, very difficult to define the quality of a relationship and there is no specific literature from which I can draw:

- What was the extent of the disclosure of the researcher-participant relationship?
- According to this disclosure what was the researchers' experience of the researcher-practitioner engagement⁸ (both in and beyond data collection period)?
- To what extent were the voices of the participants (direct quotes or those filtered through the researcher) included in the disclosure?
- How did these researchers describe their relationship? In other words, what was the main tone of the descriptions and the extent of self-reflection?

1.7.4 Data collection

Lengthy in-depth interviews were used as the main data collection method.⁹ This was supplemented by observation and reflection, particularly for the last case.

Face-to-face interviews with original researchers and their original participants from the sampled research

⁶ Although the data collection period was essential I did not imply that the periods both prior to and post data collection were peripheral when examining the researcher-practitioner engagement. Indeed, ignoring those periods and focusing on data collection only could have made the practitioners feel *they were being used* and therefore uneasy. In accordance with the theoretical framework I specifically included these two periods in the exploration of the topic.

⁷ Other educational researchers included my mentor for the bigger study and colleagues and fellow researchers in the education faculty where I was registered.

⁸ The issues investigated regarding the researcher-practitioner engagement included accommodating the participants, the involvement/detachment decision etc.

⁹ A pilot study was not carried out because a qualitative study design, by nature, comprises adaptation, changes and refinement. Thus the necessary changes concerning interview questions asked or probing were constantly kept in mind and directly influenced the interviews in the next round.

projects were done. I initiated the interviews with the original researchers first and used the questions (semi-structured interview) contained in chapter 3.3.3 as guidelines. Then I requested the researcher to seek the permission of the original participants. In some occasions, however, the researcher either did not do so or else could not do so. In these cases I asked for the contact details of the original participants and approached them myself directly. Selected researchers and practitioners were also interviewed about their understanding and perceptions of the interactions with me in the last case.

1.7.5 Data analysis

I analysed the data manually, using both pre-determined codes derived from literature and ongoing open codes emerged from fieldwork. I followed the step-by-step procedure of coding, categorising the data and clustering the data into families and eventually searching for the patterns, recommended by Tesch (1990) and McMillan and Schumacher (2001).

The tape-recorded interview data was first transcribed into text. Then the data were broken into sections and classified into codes, guided by the research objectives. The correlations and connections between the categories were then studied and similar codes and codes that connected to each other were further clustered into one category. The same procedure was carried out for each category until all categories were clustered into families. During this procedure, patterns that emerged from the data were identified.

1.8 Significance of the research

This research was among the first to investigate the research–practice issue from the perspective of the researcher–practitioner engagement. The accounts obtained from the practitioners contributed significantly to a more holistic and richer and better defined picture of the researcher–practitioner relationship. The findings of this study also contributed to a greater understanding of the linkages between the researcher/practitioner context, researcher–practitioner interaction and research utilisation.

The design of this study required an extraordinary amount of self reflection. Other factors such as incorporating extensive critical analysis of Masters and Doctoral dissertations as data sources were also very

uncommon in similar studies.

1.9 Limitations of the study

One salient feature of this study was its retrospective nature. The intensive use of retrospect in this study certainly allowed the respondents to evaluate their experiences from a perspective which had matured over time. However, there are also disadvantages inherent in this retrospective aspect. Retrospection relies heavily on recollection, and, therefore, the extent to which people remember and, more importantly, recall correctly determines the quality of their stories and the findings from the data. Furthermore, since such retrospective stories are based mainly on self-reporting, the possibility certainly existed that the self reported stories were affected by a *social desirability bias* to colour a past event or even to fictionalise the experience (Shisana & Simbayi, 2002). In an effort to address this limitation, I included my interactions with the participants for first hand and on site data. Extensive built-in triangulation (multiple cases, multiple sources, as well as multiple methods) also allowed for interrogation of the relationship between written and oral description, between novice researchers' experience and that of the experienced ones, and between the perceptions from the researchers and those from the practitioners.

Another limitation arose from the sampling strategy used. Since the *researched* included in this study comprised those participants who had taken part in previous research, those who either did not participate or were not willing to participate were filtered out. Furthermore, since in the empirical case studies *the researchers* had had the opportunity to select the original participants whom I accessed, there could also have been bias in the sense of choosing only their participants who had favourable perceptions about the research and the researcher. Although I had asked *the researchers* to provide at least two participants in order to address this problem, the findings need to be applied with caution.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier, my own characteristics strongly influenced many aspects of this research. For example, the possible selection bias of what to include and what not to include in the literature review and document analysis, and the way in which to describe my review and analysis could have resulted in a different display and interpretation of the data if carried out by another person. Furthermore, my own ideology and

commitment to the utility value of research, my expectations of what should/could be and my understanding/expectation of the relationship itself could also have impacted on my judgement. I could not discard my biases, so, instead, I provided detailed traces of the evidence for my conclusions, including the way in which the dialogue evolved.

A fourth limitation resulted from the documents that I used for analysis. Although the choice to include these Masters and Doctoral dissertations was a choice I made due to the limited scope of the existing publications, I did realise that what I discovered from these *student-researchers* could differ from what had been discovered from the experienced researchers. This was, in fact, the reason why the two cases of experienced researchers were included in the empirical section of this study.

The time and facilities available for this study also meant that my inquiry could not cover all the dimensions that I planned initially – dimensions such as distinguishing whether and how different motives for carrying out research could affect the researcher–practitioner relationship, whether and how contract and non-contract research could result in a different relationship, whether classroom–based research manifests differently from non-classroom based research, whether researcher–practitioners (practitioners conducting their own research) conduct their research differently from the researchers defined in this study, as well as the way in which policy studies differ from general practice studies, etc. Although I could not cover all these dimensions, I regard this research as explorative research to initiate debate and strongly encourage further investigations into these dimensions.

1.10 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces the background of the study, the research questions and research design, together with reflections on the significance and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 describes the conceptual framework of the study and presents a literature review.

Chapter 3 describes the epistemological assumption and the methodological decisions.

Chapter 4 contains a critical document analysis of the researcher–practitioner relationship described in 28 Masters and PhD dissertations in order to present a synthesis of the relationship from the perspectives of these novice researchers. It also lays the foundation for further comparison and discussion of the empirical study in the next two chapters, as well as identifying and classifying the dissertations from which the empirical cases were selected.

Chapter 5-6 provide detailed descriptions of the five empirical case studies, of which three were the cases of student-researchers selected from the document analysis database. The other two were the cases of the experienced researchers.

Chapter 7 describes in detail how the participants interacted with the researcher in the study, reflects on how decisions were made throughout the study, and also provides a more detailed data analysis.

Chapter 8 synthesises the overall findings, revisits the conceptual framework and other literature, and proposes two theories regarding research utilisation and the insider/outsider positioning.

2 THE PATTERNS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE RESEARCHER–PRACTITIONER RELATIONSHIP – A LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains, firstly, a presentation of the research utilisation models and Huberman’s (1990) general model. Next, relevant debates about different aspects of the researcher–practitioner relationship are examined, as well as limited publications which empirically report on this relationship.

2.1 Research utilisation model

Weiss (1979) proposes seven research utilisation models in her article *The many meanings of research utilisation*. These models are the *knowledge-driven model* (linear flow from knowledge creation to usage), *problem-solving model* (linear flow initiated from a problem that needs to be solved), *interactive model* (research is among the many sources of decision making and the process is “a disorderly set of interconnection and back-and-forthness” (1979, p. 428), *political model* (research is used to justify oneself after a stance has already been taken), *tactical model* (research is used for purposes such as enhancing the prestige of a decision or deflecting criticism, or simply as a bureaucratic politics), *enlightenment model* (research influences consciousness), *research as part of the intellectual enterprise of the society* (research responds to current thought, all explanations are adopted from the original text).

Although her categorisation initiates a comprehensive way of viewing research utilisation and also led to many other subsequent works, her categorisation suffers from repetition and lacks consistency in the criteria adopted. The *political* and *tactical* model are virtually the same, while the *enlightenment model* is also very similar to *research as part of the intellectual enterprise of the society*. Furthermore, the first few models pinpoint the possible drives behind research utilisation, while the latter models focus more on possible methods of research usage.

To address the discrepancies in the inconsistent criteria used in Weiss’s seven models, the discussion below is

organised around the following two themes:

- different models of research utilisation, explaining the possible drives behind research utilisation and reasons for its under-utilisation; and
- the debate on instrumental/conceptual utilisation.

2.1.1 Modes of research utilization

In literature theorising knowledge utilisation, Landry et al. (2001) identified four alternatives, namely the *science push model* (corresponds closely with the *knowledge-driven model* identified by Weiss); the *dissemination model*; the *demand pull model* (corresponds closely with *problem-solving model* identified by Weiss) and the *interaction model* (corresponds closely with *interactive model* identified by Weiss).

The *science push model* stresses the supply side of research findings as the major determinant of research utilisation. In this model, utilisation follows a linear flow from the supplier to the users – the researchers comprise the sources from whom to direct research, and the users are there solely to receive the result.

According to this model the dimensions that research could use to influence utilisation are the following:

- Content attributes, such as compatibility, complexity, validity, applicability and radicalness (Dearing & Meyer, 1994; Edwards, 1991; Lomas, 1993)
- Types of research: basic/applied; general/abstract (Machlup, 1980), qualitative/quantitative (Huberman & Thurler, 1991, as cited in Landry, Amara, & Lamari, 2001), particular/concrete (Rich, 1997), research domains and disciplines (Oh, 1997; Rich, 1997)

Criticisms of this model include a lack of empirical evidence for the relation between the technical quality of research results and utilisation (Dunn, 1983; Edwards, 1991; Huberman, 1987), as well as the assumption that the transfer of knowledge is automatic and that raw research information is usable without any adaptation.

These criticisms stimulated the emergence of the *dissemination model*. The *dissemination model* suggests that, besides the type and content of research, the dissemination effort is also an important factor in explaining knowledge utilisation. Such a dissemination effort includes the identification of useful knowledge and the adaptation of such knowledge in ways suited to potential users. This model explains the absence of any significant impact of research in that much of the research is neither widely nor properly disseminated (MacLean, 1996). Although this model still views the relationship between the knowledge producer and the

user as linear, and users, as predicted in this model, are still not involved in the selection of transferable research information, the important role of the users is clearly more advanced.

The *demand pull model* maintains the emphasis on users. This model suggests that, instead of the researchers (suppliers), the users are the major source with whom to direct research (Rich, 1991; Weiss, 1979; Yin & Moore, 1988). This model also often points to a customer–contractor relationship, in terms of which the practitioners behave like customers who define what research they want, and the researchers behave like contractors who execute contracts. In this model research utilisation is explained only by the needs of the users – the needs of the users are more important to the researchers than the advancement of scholarly knowledge (Chelimsky, 1997; Frenk, 1992; Orlandi, 1996; Silverside, 1997). As regards an explanation as to the reason why some research is still put aside even when it has been initiated by the practitioners, this model pinpoints the fact that the organisational interests of the users could possibly conflict with the research findings. The main criticism of this model includes:

- It is applicable only in cases in which users initiate the research, while much research is still initiated by the researchers;
- It follows a linear flow, although the path is from the user to the producer;

In response to the criticisms on the linear view, the *interaction model* abandons this view and suggests that knowledge utilisation depends on the various interactions which occur between the researcher and the users. This model identifies a lack of two-way interaction between the researcher and the user as the main reason for under-utilisation (Huberman, 1987; Leung, 1992; Lomas, 1997; Oh & Rich, 1996). The cultural differences between these two groups are also often identified as one of the obstacles to engagement. The model further points out that research utilisation, which depends heavily on the transfer of information, occurs best in the context of relationships which are based on familiarity and trust, and often built up over time (Bogenschneider, Olson, Linney, & Mills, 2000). Therefore, unlike the previous models, this model suggests greater attention be given to the relationships between the researchers and the users at different stages of knowledge production, dissemination and utilisation.

Empirical work such as the studies of Caplan, Morrison, and Stambaugh (1975), Landry, Amara, and Lamari (2001) and Yin (1981) suggests that this model offers a better explanation of the under utilisation phenomenon

compared to other alternative utilisation models. This could also be supported by a theoretical observation that this model integrates the explanatory factors identified in other models, particularly the importance of a match between the type/content of the research and the interest of the user (*science push model*) and the importance of a mechanism with which to facilitate the credibility of both the researcher and the research (*dissemination model*).

The *interaction* model serves as the theoretical framework in this study.

2.1.2 Instrumental/conceptual utilization debate

Another angle from which to approach the issue of research utilisation is that of the instrumental and conceptual debate. Although this debate also arose from the attempt to explain the research–practice gap in many disciplines, it highlights the possible disciplinary difference between natural science and social science.

The many meanings of research utilisation model of Weiss (1979) points out that research could be among the many factors influencing decision making. It may also be used to justify after a decision has been taken, or serve as general enlightenment. In accordance with this, the most commonly accepted classifications of research use are instrumental, conceptual and symbolic.

Instrumental use involves applying research results in specific, direct ways. Conceptual use involves using research results for general enlightenment: results influence actions but more indirectly and less specifically than in instrumental use. Symbolic use involves using research results to legitimate and sustain predetermined positions (Beyer, 1997, p. 17).

The remaining discussion will be limited to only the instrumental and conceptual use, since symbolic use is of a very different nature compared to the other two types (in terms of the role to inform decision making/legitimate predetermined decision) and often remains the least desired type of research utilisation.

Instrumental use has been in use from way back in history. During World War II when programme evaluators found that their recommendations had no significant impact on policy decisions, they complained. “At that time, expectations of programme evaluators and university researchers were that decision makers

would have made direct use of their research results” (Amara, Ouimet, & Landry, 2004, p. 76). During the period following World War II the social sciences endeavoured to demonstrate their utility, often in the same sense (Lewis, 2002).

It was only in the 1980s that some researchers began to challenge this view, arguing that research could be useful for other purposes, such as for general enlightenment or conceptual use (Caplan, 1980; Cohen & Garet, 1975; Feldman & March, 1981; Knorr, 1977; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979; Pelz, 1978; Rich, 1975; Rich, 1977; Weiss, 1979; Weiss & Bucuvalas, 1980).

This view quickly gained popularity and, in the social sciences, it is now commonly accepted that conceptual use does indeed happen more often than instrumental use. In fact, both Weiss (1980) and Dunn (1980) state that instrumental use seems to be rare. This dominance of conceptual utilisation is claimed to be related to the characteristics of social science itself, for instance, its nature of being both tacit and context bounded; the lack of strength, authority and efficacy of an individual study (Hammersley, 1997; Hargreaves, 1996; Herie & Martin, 2002); and lack of incentives for rapid and direct knowledge dissemination (compared with the patent or other reward system existing in natural science). To conclude, Weiss (1980) names such utilisation as *knowledge creep* and claims that the use of social science knowledge ought not be viewed as having a direct impact on specific decisions as is the case in instrumental use; rather it has a diffuse relationship with practice, and often permeates practice in the form of new concepts, frameworks and world-views. Many other writers also support this view and echo that the research practice relationship follows an indirect path, often through the collective power of several research studies over time (Hellstrom & Raman, 2001; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979; Rich, 1977; Weiss, 1979; Weiss & Bucuvalas, 1980).

The above discussion can be summarised as follows:

- Instrumental utilisation exercises greater influence on actions; yet it seldom occurs in social science.
- Conceptual utilisation is a more realistic way in which to view research impact; it is indirect, occurs over time, or, in other words, is less influential.

Taking the two above statements into account, research utilization from the social sciences into practice is expected to be weak.

This conclusion is also in line with studies investigating the way in which practice is informed. Weiss's (1979) suggestion that research could be one among many other sources of knowledge usage is confirmed by the studies of DeMartini and Whitbeck (1986) and Patton et al (1977) in which they conclude that an experiential knowledge source is the most important in informing practice, and is followed by interpersonal and theoretical knowledge. Research into evidence-based practice or into the reasons why practice does not follow research findings also points out that professional habits, routines and norms, personal beliefs, and general resistance to change (Ben-Peretz, 1994/95; Caldwell, 1991; Kirk, 1999; Lomas, 1993) are often more powerful in shaping practices than are theories.¹⁰

In his explanation of why “the relations between theorist and practitioner of pedagogy have in general been neither close or highly productive”, Bolster (1983, p. 294) highlights again the difference that teachers, as practitioners, often operate in a particular situation and are interested in what could explain or work within that particular situation, while theorists are, in general, more interested in establishing general principles or defining/demonstrating the principles across similar situations. This could surely be regarded as a typical two-community explanation, yet it also points to the ultimate dilemma faced by social science – if context-specific is recognised as one of main characteristics of social science (Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons, 2002) as well as multiple realities (implying that there is no absolute truth or universal principle), why are social scientists still interested in developing general principles or theory in general? From this point of view, the emphasis on the existence and prevalence of conceptual utilisation in social science might also be viewed as an excuse rather than a proper explanation. If teachers were naturally more interested in their particular situation and, if this interest also often accompanies a desire to find things that work in the specific situation, then the idea of instrument utilisation (at least in that specific context) should indeed be revived instead of abandoned or ignored. In the same vein, the meaning of theory, whether it could/should refer to a general principle only or whether it could also refer to an explanation that is context specific, might also need to be revisited.

¹⁰ Although the source of conceptual utilisation may also be understood as an umbrella that includes work environment, past experiences, beliefs and educational background, or even tradition itself, not all these elements actually result from research, so, although they may be viewed as good examples of conceptual utilisation in a broader sense, one may not simply conclude that they indeed stem from theoretical knowledge, or research findings.

2.2 Huberman's general model

The *interaction* model of research utilisation is relevant to this study as it points to the importance of examining the interactions between the researchers and their participants, while Huberman's general model (1990) further extends a primary interest for the researcher–practitioner relationship beyond the isolated relationship manifested in the research process itself, to both the pre- and the post-research period. In other words, Huberman's general model (1990) not only provides a comprehensive framework within which to view the researcher–practitioner relationship as an ongoing process, but it also pinpoints the importance of locating this relationship in a flow of from where it comes and to where it goes. This provides not only a more holistic, but also a more realistic view of the researcher–practitioner relationship. This model did not influence the analysis of data in this study *per se*, but it did, however, inform the overall design of the research.

As co-author of *Qualitative data analysis* (Miles & Huberman, 1984), Huberman has exerted a tremendous influence on the literacy researchers who, at the time, were attempting to bring qualitative paradigms to enquiries into teaching and learning. At that time qualitative and ethnographic research had started to claim a central position in the field of literacy, and many other methodologists have since joined with Miles and Huberman to inform and instruct the ways and means of qualitative research.

Huberman first proposed his General Model in 1987 in an attempt to build an integrated model to explain research utilisation, with particular emphasis on the conceptualisation of those variables which account for the variations between different research utilisation patterns from different research projects. Accompanying this general model, Huberman also provided three specific models: the researchers' organisational model, the users' organisational model and the dissemination effort model that spelt out the variable sets in the boxes in the general model, for example, organisational factors, linkage to user organisation, impact on user, etc.

To summarise these models, Huberman views the researchers and practitioners (referred to as *users* in his model) as people from two organisations and he regards the researcher–practitioner relationship mainly as an organisational tie. According to him, the interaction between the respective organisational factors of these two groups of people (defined as *researcher/user context* in the model) informs the type and degree of the

researcher–practitioner relationship (*linkage/network*). He also views this relationship not as a once off tie, but as an ongoing process that takes place "not only on completion of the study, but also during, and ideally, before the conduct of the study" (1990, p. 365). Furthermore, he claims that this relationship influences what happens after the research, namely, the dissemination effort resulting from the readiness on the part of both the researchers and the practitioners to embrace the research findings, and thus the concrete effects of the study (research utilisation, both *instrumental* and *conceptual*) and secondary effects (mainly a longer-term influence, or *conceptual* in nature).

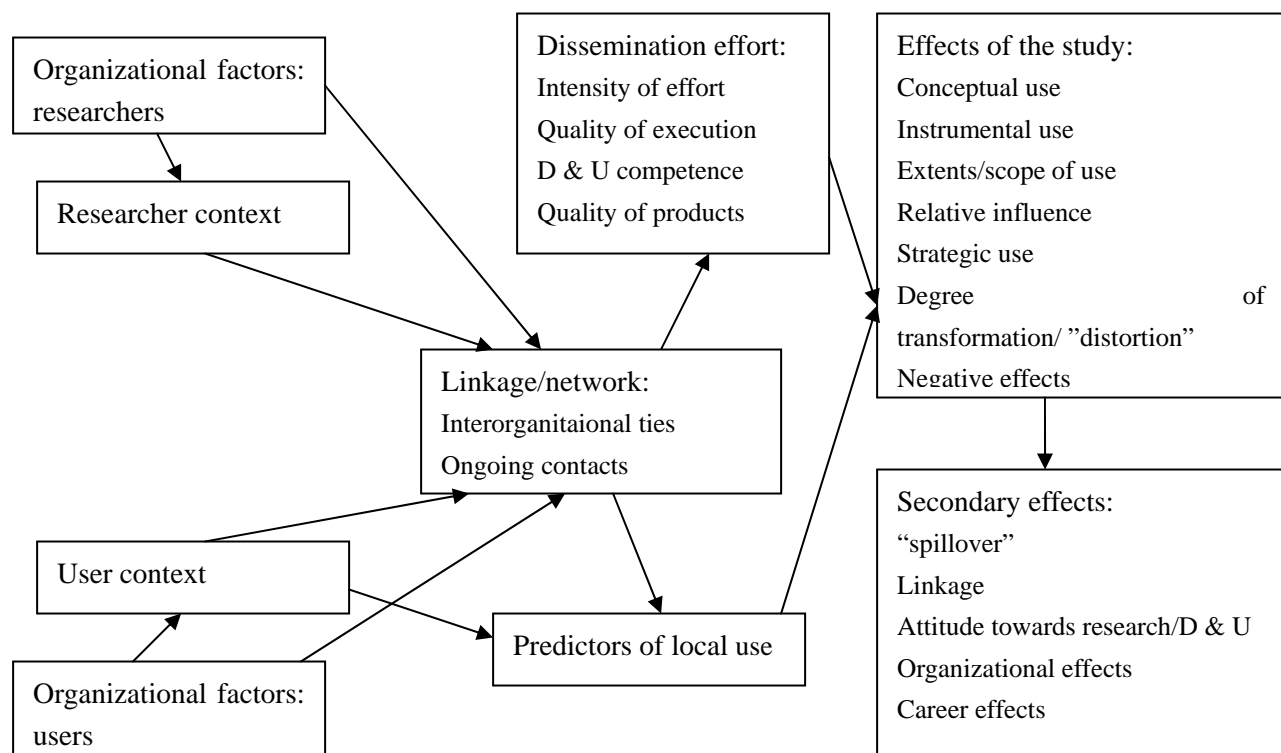


Figure 1: General model (Huberman, 1990)

In 1990, Huberman published another work that re-presented the 1987 general model in a more concise and neat manner. In addition, he proposed two categories with which to assess the several research cases he had included in the discussion. Altogether these two categories included five possible scenarios in terms of the way in which the researcher–practitioner engagement affects the relationship both before and after a study. It is anticipated that these scenarios will be useful in examining the empirical data in the study. For these reasons

the 1990 reference is used instead of the 1987 reference as the theoretical framework of this study.

Category 1: Stable levels of linkage prior to and after the project

1. "Hello-goodbye"- no links before, none after
2. "Two planets"- weak links which remain weak
3. "Standoff"- moderate links remain stable

Category 2: Increasing levels of linkage prior to and after the project

4. "Reciprocal engagement"- weak links which strengthen
5. "Synergy"- moderate links which strengthen

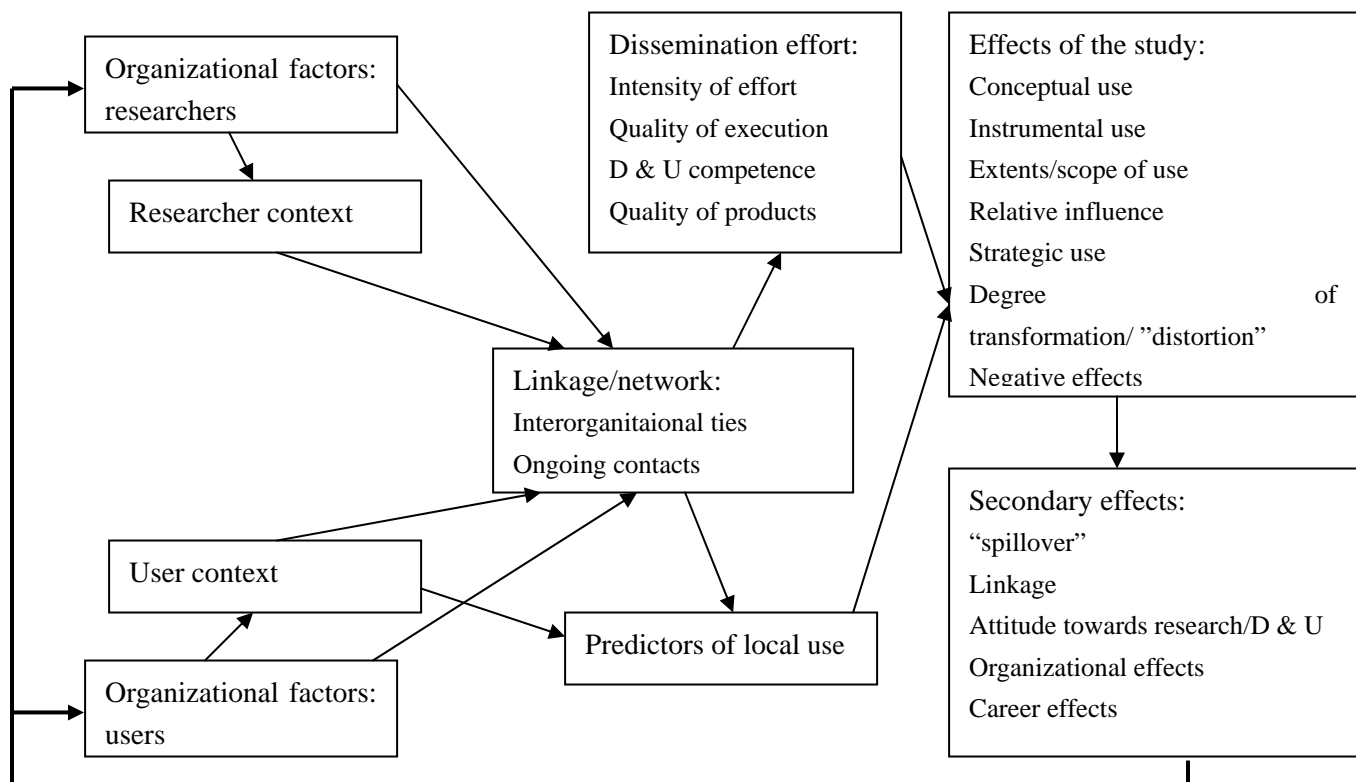


Figure 2: Revised Huberman's model

A literature search of references to this model reveals that the majority of the references simply describe the model, and neither provides any sustained criticisms of the model nor do they pose any questions about the model itself. My own intuition did predict the overall usefulness of this model, however, my initial criticism about the model was that it should include a link that feeds the *secondary effects* back to the

researcher/practitioner context for the next potential engagement (as I show in Figure 2).¹¹

2.3 Researcher/practitioner context—what influences the researcher–practitioner relationship?

Since Huberman’s model indicates the importance of viewing the researcher–practitioner relationship as a result of those organisational factors that feed into the researcher/practitioner context, it was considered necessary to search for possible factors that exist within this researcher/practitioner context and to discover the ways in which these factors could have influenced the researcher–practitioner relationship during the research.

Huberman’s general model does not specify what these factors may be. However, when the model first appeared in 1987 Huberman did propose certain variables. These variables include organisational experience with dissemination and utilisation (D & U), status, the priority of D & U in an organisation, rewards, disincentives for D & U activity and the researchers’ network. Except for the last factor all the others factors seem more applicable to the organisation as a whole rather than to the researcher. Since my interest in this research was focused more on the people involved than on the organisation as a whole, I found it necessary to seek out other factors that describe the influences of an organisational culture on individual researchers.

For this purpose I conducted an intensive literature search. However it was still a problem to derive indicators directly from literature. Therefore, through a synthesis of the literature, I came up with the following factors myself – detachment/involvement decisions, aims of conducting research, beneficence.

2.3.1 Detachment or involvement—a choice deeply rooted in the epistemological stance?

The British Sociological Association suggests that, in order to maintain the professional integrity of both the researchers themselves and the sociological inquiry as a discipline, researchers “should be clear about the limits of their detachment from and involvement in their areas of study” (British Sociological Association (BSA), 1996, p. 1). However the literature on the detachment/involvement decision does show that not only are the notions of detachment and involvement complex, multifaceted, dynamic and situational (Acker, 2000;

¹¹ More criticisms of the model, which arose out of the findings from this research, are presented in par 8.2.2.

Banks, 1998; Kanuha, 2000; Sherif, 2001), but that the insider-outsider boundary is also often problematic and highly unstable (Visser, 2003).

Although there is no direct guidance on how close the researcher and practitioners could/should be, Gold's (1958) typology of the role and level of involvement of the observer could provide a guideline to the general researcher-participant distance.

In his typology, Gold's outlines four modes by means of which an observer may gather data: *complete observer*, *observer-as-participant*, *participant-as-observer* and *complete participant*. A *complete observer* is an outsider who does not interact in any way at all with the participants. According to the traditional ideal of *objectivity*, this constitutes the most perfect observer. An *observer-as-participant* starts to interact with the participants, although his identity does remain strongly research-orientated and no personal involvement is recommended (Adler & Adler, 1998). *Participant-as-observer* is one-step further as relationship occurred in the fieldwork, sometimes even friendship, is granted. In this role the development of trust is important. A *complete participant* covers his identity as a researcher in the field so that he is able to interact with the participants as naturally as possible.

Three types of membership roles classified by Adler and Adler (1998) later evolved from the above typology: *complete-member-researcher*, *active-member-researcher*, and *peripheral-member-researcher*:

Researchers in peripheral membership roles feel that an insider's perspective is vital to forming an accurate appraisal of human group life, so they observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership...The active membership role describes researchers who become more involved in the setting's central activities, assuming responsibilities that advance the group, but without fully committing themselves to members' values and goals... Researchers in the complete membership role are those who study scenes where they are already members or those who become converted to genuine membership during the course of their research...to immerse oneself and grasp the complete depth of the subjectively lived experience (1998, p. 84).

An epistemology divide, particularly between the qualitative and quantitative paradigm, is deeply rooted in the roles identified in both categorisations of Gold and Adler & Adler.

Traditionally, only positivism and post-positivism (related to the quantitative paradigm) are thought to have scientific rigour and worth. This position advocates highly the necessity for neutrality in research in order to acquire true knowledge. It regards detachment and objectivity as highly desirable, and perceives involvement or subjectivity as a source of bias that needs to be eliminated (Finlay, 2002). Such traditional discourse also emphasises a separation between research and practice, as well as a separation between the role of a researcher and that of the practitioners. It preserves the researchers as “academics and scientists who have had the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct research” and “practitioners have been expected to abide by and implement their findings” (Jarvis, 1999, p. 3).

In the 1920s and 1930s, a group of researchers who were not satisfied with this stance proposed an alternative paradigm. Initially this proposal met with rejection and strong resistance, but gradually recognition as well as acceptance and, in certain circumstances, even popularity, was granted, especially in social science. It became known as the qualitative paradigm – an umbrella concept covering critical theory, interpretivism and constructivism. The advocates of this paradigm challenge the necessity and feasibility of objectivity (e.g. Rabinow & Sullivan, 1979) and promote an alternative that grants *intimacy* and a close, interactive, emancipatory relationship between the knower and the known (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Together with the criticisms of traditional positivism, this movement also witnessed the emergences of certain other concepts, such as *practice-based research*, *practice as research*, *research-informed practice*, and *research into practice* (Douglas, Scopa, & Gray, 2002; Humphreys, Berridge, Butler, & Ruddick, 2003; Jarvis, 1999; Piccini, 2002), which not only challenge the boundaries between research and practice, but also the researcher–practitioner distinction. For example, Jarvis defines those practitioners who conduct their own research as *practitioner-researchers* (1999, p. 3), or, as Heron views it, all those involved in research should indeed be known as *the researchers* (1981, p. 20).

Gibbons et al.’s (1994) two modes of *how knowledge is generated* respond well to these two paradigms (traditional quantitative paradigm versus qualitative paradigm) and may further be used to explain the differences between them. Table 1 explains the characteristics of both Mode 1 and 2.

Table 1: Modes of knowledge production, adapted from Gibbons, *et al.* (1994)

	Mode 1	Mode 2
Hierarchy of knowledge	Ascribe to basic, strategic and applied research as a hierarchy of esteem and virtue. Basic or pure research is more highly regarded than applied works.	The hierarchy between basic, strategic and applied is irrelevant, what counts is the advancement of knowledge.
Advancement of knowledge within disciplines	Knowledge advances within disciplinary boundaries.	See knowledge as fostered by trans-disciplinarity, has no predilection for particular discipline.
Quality control	Peer review is necessary and sufficient for assessment.	Inputs from potential users are also regarded as valid contributions to quality assessment.
Individualism	Individualism is emphasised.	Teamwork, with involvement from other departments, institutions or the practitioners, is preferred
Flow of knowledge	Linear. The academic role is confined to the early stages of the knowledge follow from the researchers to the practitioners, with a clear distinction between producers and users of knowledge.	Interactive, acknowledge joint production of knowledge.

A further examination of Mode 1 reveals that *privilege* is at its core. The perception that the production of knowledge is a privilege for the researchers only means that researchers are moved up in the hierarchy and a *man-made* gap is created between the researchers and the practitioners. Another unspoken assumption of this mode is the low value ascribed to the knowledge of the practitioners, which in turn reinforces the low status of the practitioners, and further widens the gap.

Since knowledge in this mode is regarded as a one-way flow, the issue of the researcher–practitioner relationship in this scenario has mainly to do with ways in which to bridge the gap (still linearly). There are many organisations, researchers and journals working on this aspect, for example, the *Making Research Count* network in the UK (Humphreys, Berridge, Butler, & Ruddick, 2003), the American Laboratories Centres and the Pedagogical Research centres in many European countries (Huberman, 1999). However, few challenge the perception of the privileged status of the researcher and the presumption that the gap between the researcher and the practitioner is inevitable.

As a traditional mode, Mode 1 has been widely accepted in the academic world. For example, as Rogers (2000) points out, the nature and main assumptions underpinning Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) in England – an influential research assessment exercise – are largely Mode 1.

The strong influence of Mode 1, for example, the value-neutral orientation, may even be discerned within the Mode 2 community (Apple, 1996). Jacobson, et al. (2004) point out that, while Mode 2 is increasingly becoming the popular choice for researchers in social science, many academic units continue to operate under the traditional mindset (Mode 1) which emphasises the primacy of disciplinary authority. Such organisational factors exert a strong influence on the way in which researchers position themselves. Way (2005) also points out a similar phenomenon that, although many scholars have abandoned the notion of pure objectivity, they continue to believe that their ultimate goal is that their research be as objective as possible.

From my own conversations with fellow new researchers and observation of researchers through published articles, it also appears that a deliberate naïveté and an advocacy of the absence of presuppositions are still often strongly present among those researchers who conduct qualitative research, positioning themselves in the new paradigm and following the guidelines of Gold's role *participant-as-observer* or Adler & Adler's role of *active-member-researcher*. In practice, these researchers often choose not to voice their own opinions and to avoid answering questions. In certain instances they not only adopt a one-way approach (only ask, not answer) in their research process, but a *remote* tone also remains, as well as *facelessness* and *invisibility*. One example can be seen in the study of Blodgett et al. (2005) in which the researchers claim that considerable attention was devoted to establishing a positive, friendly relationship with their participants and they themselves indeed claim that they became *insiders*. However, in the report of the same study, when one practitioner began to discuss personal matters after the interview the interviewer responded by saying, 'I'm sorry, we cannot give advice on parenting. We are most interested in hearing about your thoughts and experiences.'" Such examples not only illustrate the difficulties in detachment/involvement positioning, but also raise questions as to whether it reflects a conflict between a theoretical and a practical position or in fact represents a conflict within the mindset of the researchers.

2.3.2 Purpose of conducting research

2.3.2.1 Intrinsic/extrinsic debate

Briefly, the aim of the intrinsic argument is to acknowledge the value of pursuing knowledge for its own sake

or to accede that academic curiosity is sufficient reason for conducting research. The extrinsic argument claims that it is not possible for research to escape its social obligation, and therefore requests research/researchers to provide certain practical benefits, such as influencing educational practice (to improve/disapprove certain practices), empowering the participants, or influencing the formulation of a policy.

In academia there are supporters of both arguments. The issue of the social relevance of research has been raised by many researchers (e.g. Bodone, 2002). Among them several academics who advocate action research even claim that action research, of which the most important aim is the empowerment of individuals, is the only form of social research that is able to enact the social obligation to increase fairness, wellness and self-determination (Greenwood & Levin, 2003). Meanwhile the intrinsic argument is still favored by many. As Greenwood & Levin (2003) observe with the addition of knowledge often being used as a comfortable and common justification for a research study, an anti-praxis orientation does, in fact, exist in much of the university-based social research. Not only does the notion of the inferiority of *applied research* (improving practice) compared to pure *basic research* (adding knowledge) still exist widely, but I, as a young scholar, have also been advised, by people including my supervisor, on numerous occasions that “practical reasons are not a *scholarly enough basis* for carrying out research, especially at a PhD level” (emphasis added).

The question, however, is in a social science field that focuses directly on human issues, such as education, whether extrinsic obligation is an excessive requirement or it is indeed inevitable? Winch’s identification (2001) could provide some insight into this issue. After identifying four possible aims of educational research (corresponding markedly with the intrinsic/extrinsic categories elaborated upon earlier), Winch then suggests that, besides these aims and consequent responsibilities, another possible area for which educational researchers need to assume responsibility is that of *accounting for the money spent on educational research to those who provide it* (2001, p. 449). Although he does not explore this notion further, I would like to use it in the following argument.

Firstly, I would like to make a further subdivision of this proposed accountability into *short-term accountability* and *long-term accountability*. *Short-term accountability* refers mainly to contract research, and, by definition, contract research clearly serves certain extrinsic obligations. *Long-term accountability*, on the

other hand, refers to the situation in which the research system is often sustained by public funds. In this scenario extrinsic obligation, as a need to account for a general belief that it would be possible to channel money collected from the taxpayers back as a social benefit for the public, could be remote, but still inescapable.

As noted by Albert (2003), the debate in academia between intrinsic and extrinsic argument also demonstrates a divide between those who favor the traditional autonomy and those who advocate collaboration with non-university actors.

Rich claims that “the notion of adapting knowledge to the needs of society dates back to the Greeks and is the theme running through much of Western thought. scientists were clearly not the only ones to recognise the need to weave knowledge into the fabric of society” (1979, p. 15). However, if one were to review the history and tradition of the universities, it would become obvious that freedom and autonomy have been, at least partly, defined as important academic values.

Universities were established within a liberal environment and it is generally believed that this independent and uncontrolled environment has been both beneficial and necessary. However, it is interesting to note that, this preference for an *independent environment* was due mainly to opposition to interference from authority or political power, it was never the aim to separate academic value from social value. Nevertheless, the notion of the *ivory tower* arose around this idea of independence, and later the creation of an own identity was advanced to preserve authority and power, from which all non-academics were excluded. Meanwhile, as Jacobson, et al. point out, the tradition of evaluation and rewards within universities “continue to value traditional types of within-group activities” (2004, p. 249), and reinforce the ideology that knowledge is an authoritative and self-regulating universe. Whether so intended or not, this institutional culture creates and reinforces, in terms of the researcher–practitioner relationship, a gap between one group known as academics and another group comprising non-academics (including the practitioners) who are often considered not sufficiently competent to participate in intellectual dialogues.

To account for the money could also be viewed from another angle. Although motives such as the

establishment of peer recognition, scientific prestige, and academic tenure, have been recognised in certain literature (for example, Lor & Britz, 2005; Yarborough & Sharp, 2002), such extrinsic reasons have usually been omitted from the discussion on either intrinsic or extrinsic aim of conducting research.

To summarise I would like to expand the existing intrinsic/extrinsic argument explaining the purpose of conducting research in the following categories:

- Pure intrinsic reasons: to acknowledge the value of pursuing knowledge for its own sake;
- Pure extrinsic reasons: to acknowledge social obligation and request research to provide certain practical benefit to the community or society, or to anyone other than the researcher him/herself;
- Other extrinsic reasons: for practical reasons benefiting the researcher him/herself, including promotion, recognition and completion of a study degree.

2.3.2.2 Public/private good debate

The intrinsic/extrinsic debate is also closely related to the debate on whether knowledge should be regarded as a public good or as a private good.

In this respect the summary of Lor and Britz (2005) provides a good starting point for further discussion. In brief, Lor and Britz identify and categorise six kinds of value of knowledge according to the two categories of public/private good:

Table 2: Value of knowledge, categorised according to public/private good, explanation adopted from their text. Source: Lor & Britz (2005, p. 64).

Public good	Private good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Instrumental value</i>: application of knowledge to improve the capacity of humankind to cope with its environment. ➤ <i>Accumulative value</i>: the value of knowledge for the further development of knowledge. ➤ <i>Educational value</i>: to equip successive generations of human to improve the quality of their lives and environment. ➤ <i>Cultural value</i>: to strengthen the cohesion of communities or society. ➤ <i>Transcendent value</i>: to enhance non-material quality of life, satisfying aesthetic, religious, spiritual or other self-actualisation needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Competitive value</i>: giving the knower a scarce resource that may be exploited to gain competitive advantage.

This summary gives the impression that the public good side of knowledge weighs much more than the private

side. However, the categorisation suffers from the following problems:

- There are similar values repeated in the public good side. For example, *educational* and *cultural* value, in essence, involve the application of knowledge to improve the capacity of humankind; therefore they are duplications of *instrumental* value;
- Not all values in the public good side constitute values for the public. For example, *transcendent* value is a value more for individuals rather than for the public as a whole.

However, although I propose that the revised table (Table 3) is a better representation and gives a totally different impression to that given by table 2, I do not intend to suggest that both categorisations contribute in a meaningful way in judging which side is, overall, more important, because it is still virtually impossible to weigh and compare each value. This difficulty, together with the problem of reaching consensus, probably brings Badash to the conclusion that “social responsibility in science seems increasingly a matter of personal choice rather than a community maxim” (2004, p. 291).

Table 3: Revised understanding of value of knowledge as public/private good

Public good	Private good
➤ <i>Instrumental value</i>	➤ <i>Competitive value</i>
➤ <i>Accumulative value</i>	➤ <i>Transcendent value</i>

Nevertheless, I do want to highlight one more problem related to the conceptualisation of the notion of public good. This problem is associated with the main boundary of this research, namely, qualitative studies. As stated earlier, the qualitative paradigm has an epistemological stance that is fundamentally different to that which underlies the traditional quantitative positivism paradigm. One important assumption in this new paradigm is the recognition of multiple realities, instead of a single absolute truth and reality. Against this background, it would be imperative to ask the following question – to what extent are we able to view the public as homogenous or as a whole? Or, in other words, who represents the public? And if it is not possible to provide a meaningful answer to this question, then the longstanding belief that scientists, including social scientists, contribute greatly to the pursuit of human welfare (Oh, 1997), and thus implicitly assuming that society can be perceived as a whole, is sadly flawed.

2.3.3 Beneficence

The advancement of knowledge to improve the well-being of human kind has been constantly and comfortably

used in academia as justification for a research study. However, as I explained earlier, a universal standard of *useful* does not fit into the qualitative paradigm, neither does the concept of society or the human world as a whole. This means that to ask the question of who benefits from research is not only important but also imperative.

2.3.3.1 Mutual benefit or benefits in conflicts

According to the Belmont report (1979), the principle of beneficence includes the promotion of social benefits and individual benefits for the research subjects. There would be no problem if these two benefits are indeed mutual. In fact, literature often portrays such a view, and depicts personal benefit as a practical gain (for example, the availability of a new medicine) when the whole knowledge base is advanced (when such medicine is developed, tested and proved to be effective). This argument appears sound at a theoretic level; however, it is only sound if we refer to the individual as *anybody* or else view the individual in the abstract sense. When we take the standpoint of the research subject – the person who participates in the research study – the scenario looks quite different.

Let us first consider the example of medical research. For the mutual benefit argument to be true, medical research must fulfil each of the following conditions:

- The person is suffering from a certain disease;
- The research study in which he/she participates is specifically to test the medicine that could cure this disease;
- This very study proves the effectiveness of the medicine under investigation (thus the knowledge base is advanced and social benefit achieved);
- There is no need to test the medicine further;
- A short time will elapse before this medicine is produced and sold on the market;
- This very person has the chance to access the medicine on the market because it is now available (his/her benefit realised).

Any of these conditions that are essential to make the argument stand could easily not be met. And furthermore the scenario described above is not usually what happens. Instead, what normally transpires is that this person would benefit if the medicine tested in the research proves to be effective. However this is achieved by trading an unknown benefit with an unknown risk in terms of whether the medicine works or not (both unknown at the time of participating in the research). This is vastly different from the ideal argument because in the ideal

situation, there is no unknown factor involved, while uncertainty is at the very heart of the normal situation.

In fact, as certain writers claim, research is, by its very nature, not for the benefit of the research participants (Veatch, 1987) and, for the person involved, he/she always needs to sacrifice something (possible risk associated, body in medical research, time and energy in others) for the advancement of knowledge so that social benefit may take place (Miller, 2004; Yarborough & Sharp, 2002). The best a research participant may hope is that, since one benefits from the sacrifices of others, there are chances that one would be able to exchange sacrifice in one situation to gain in another and perhaps break even in the end.

In the domain of education it is even less likely that these two benefits will occur simultaneously because, in education, it is even more difficult to define and realise social benefit. Not only are there disagreements about the value of a study, but, since the research utilisation that is more likely to occur conceptually in social science, education included, the chances that social knowledge would flow from one single research study are even more remote.

The next question is, if these two benefits are, indeed, in conflict, what would/should a researcher do? As the public good argument and the traditional preference for theoretical contribution still prevail, it comes as no surprise that a researcher would take a similar stance to that of Miller – “research [clinical research in his case], which is not aimed at personal benefit, would be impossible if all the risks of research interventions had to be justified by their potential benefits for participants” (2004, p. 112). In other words, individual benefit should be sacrificed, if necessary, in order to serve the common good – the social benefit.

2.3.3.2 Who benefits of what?

Is there anyone who does benefit from research? And what is this benefit?

The advancement of knowledge, or empowerment, has traditionally been one of the most prominent and often targeted benefits of research. However, such an advancement of knowledge is more likely to occur in the case of the researcher, as it is not uncommon that the data from the practitioners results in either a change of view or even a change of the entire conceptual framework of the researcher (Huberman, 1999; Sehlola, 2004), while,

for the practitioners, the acquisition of knowledge is often no more than goodwill, particularly in the light of the weak and indirect impact of social research. In addition, given that a large proportion of research is interested mainly in the establishment of general principles but not in the exposition of a particular situation in depth, even such an indirect knowledge gain is not always guaranteed. A typical thought of a practitioner is:

I don't know why we agree to participate in these studies. First, you take our time. Then you draw generalizations about us, and then the government makes up all kinds of rules that interfere with our private affairs. Be fair, tell me—what's in it for us? (Yassour-Borochowitz, 2004, p. 179)

In the mean time, while “the participants may never directly experience the long-term benefits that dissemination of the findings aims to bring about” (Zigo, 2001, p. 352), the practical, immediate or direct benefit, on the other hand, is also more for the researchers rather than for the participants. For a researcher, possible direct gains include both academic (peer recognition) and practical benefit (promotion or other monetary rewards); while, for the practitioners, the direct benefit could be almost nothing. The opportunity to improve/change practice often goes a begging because the aim of a research is often to uncover what is happening and, thus, any interference, including the giving of advice, is strongly opposed. The contribution of the participants is also often not recognised because of confidentiality has been advocated. Furthermore, a token of appreciation, especially in the form of money, is also, in many cases, strongly discouraged or even forbidden.¹² My own experience was that my initial ethical statement, including the following sentences, was rejected by the research ethical committee because I “have the tendency of inducing the participants” (comments from the rejection letter).

Fully aware of the necessary reciprocation of *give* and *take* in the research process, I will try to define what I expect of my participants and what they may get in return (knowledge, other ways of empowerment, money¹³ or just a sympathetic ear). Such issues would be discussed with the participants before the interview starts.

Until I had removed the word *money* in the above paragraph and added, “However, to ensure the principle of voluntary participation, no inducement will be offered.”

¹² Although in certain countries, such as the US, the UK and Australia, and in certain fields, such as medicine and market research, compensation is common (College on problems of drug dependence, 1995; Fry, et al., 2005; Wright, Klee, & Reid, 1998) or at least acceptable.

¹³ I planned to offer it after the interviews, instead of informing them in advance, to avoid the possible charge of inducement.

Understandably, the rationale for the objection to inducement may have stemmed from the concern about violating the ethical principle of voluntariness. However, most choices in life are at best *partially voluntary*, as Hewlett (1996) suggests, rather than *fully voluntary*, as the theoretical principle suggests. And there is also no sound evidence for the argument that inducement could significantly impact on a decision on whether or not to participate.¹⁴ Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that the receiving of an inducement would compromise the overall welfare of the participant, as stated by Wilkinson & Moore, “altruistic motives aside, why should people accept inducement unless they judge themselves better off for receiving them?” (1997, p. 379) The argument that “it encourages people to expose themselves to risk of harm” (McNeill, 1997, p. 395) appears plausible because it presents the negative side of the risk-benefit balance only, while decisions in life are usually based on an overall risk-benefit consideration. The concern of McNeil that a considerable sum of money may expose participants to unnecessary substantial risks also does not stand up to scrutiny because not only all not all risks necessarily lead to harm, but also not all harm is substantial to offset the benefit. In fact, it is only when inducement has been forbidden, and, as a consequence, the possible benefit is reduced, that the risk side becomes more prominent.

Many people would not work if they were not paid, however, few people would conclude that, since a wage constitutes an inducement, it is wrong to offer wages or that the workers should receive less pay. In fact, the more risky or dangerous (or unknown risk or danger) an occupation, the bigger wage (inducement) is required. Accordingly, McNeill’s concern about substantial (unknown) risks should be addressed by providing greater inducements, and not, as he advocates, forbidding inducement.

It is also interesting to note that, particularly in research carried out including mainly the poor as participants, “volunteering might be a perfectly prudent use of their time, when compared to their alternatives” (Wilkinson & Moore, 1997, p. 380). Indeed, when comparing the provision of an inducement to providing nothing, the latter (traditional sense of fully voluntary) is more explorative.

¹⁴ In fact, there are studies that either confirm or disprove the impact of payment on decision, no matter whether these studies investigate small inducements, ranging from a token 2 cents to \$1, or big inducements, from \$100 to \$ 500 (Casarett, Karlawish, & Asch, 2002; Cook, Schoeps, & Kim, 1985; Dawson & Kass, 2005; Rudy, Estok, Kerr, & Menzel, 1994), and thus neither statement is conclusive.

Lastly, if the concern is indeed to help the poor, it is also difficult to be convinced that denying them the option of gaining something, including money, through the research, is a way to help them.

There is a fine line between a potential exploitive under-acknowledgement and a potential undue inducement. But what constitutes *undue* inducement? If we adopt the suggestion of Emanuel *et al.* (2005, p. 337) that there are four conditions to be fulfilled simultaneously for there to be undue inducement, we would probably conclude, in accordance with Emanuel, *et al.* do, that such situations are indeed rare.

- an offered good;
- the offer is excessive;
- the offers results in poor judgment;
- and the poor judgment results in risk of serious harm,

The final problem linking this issue with the researcher–practitioner relationship is the extent to which researchers may/should expect the practitioners to participate solely from altruistic motives, in view of the fact that it is the researchers, and not the practitioners, who derive the most benefit (direct and indirect).

2.4 Empirically reported researcher–practitioner relationship

There is no shortage of literature about the research–practice gap. Yet as indicated in the rationale, a literature search for empirically reported researcher–practitioner relationship proved to be rather unfruitful. Although one possible explanation for the paucity of literature is that, since this relationship is often not the main focus of a study and due to limited space in journals, this is not discussed in detail. However, as the audience for academic publications is usually fellow academics and reflection on research practice could facilitate better research and serve the academic audiences well, it can be expected that at least some descriptions of what happens between the researcher and the practitioners in research would appear in a report. However, even a deliberate search for ethical and methodological discussion and reflection did not yield a good number of references. This is certainly not consistent with the call for the process of qualitative study to be more transparent and qualitative researchers to be more reflective (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002).

As indicated in Chapter 1, the following questions were used to frame the literature review:

- What is the extent of the disclosure of the researcher-participant relationship?
- According to what is disclosed, how do the researchers experience the researcher–practitioner engagement (both in and beyond data collection period)?
- To what extent is the voice of the participants (direct quotes or those filtered through the researcher) included in the disclosure?
- How do these researchers describe their relationship? In other words, what is the main tone of the description and what is the extent of self-reflection?

Keywords that describe the nature of the researcher–practitioner relationship are difficult to identify and no proper subject terms exist in various databases, therefore different words and sometimes combinations of words were used to search for this literature review, including “theory-practice relationship”, “research/practice gap”, “research utilization”, “knowledge spillover”, “the researcher”, “the researched”, “the participants”, “the practitioners”, “insider”, “outsider”, “detachment”, “involvement”, “collaboration in research”, “power/politics in research”, “partnership in research”, and “objectivity/subjectivity”. Databases used include mainly EBSCO host Academic search Premier (now called Academic search complete) and Eric. This process was further accompanied by snowballing the search from the reference list of each article that was identified as relevant, and a further inclusion of methodological journals such as the *International Journal of Research and Method in Education* and the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. To ensure that the content of this review is time-relevant, this review only includes publications from 1990 onwards.

The search results reveal that the researcher–participant collaboration is the most popular framework for these empirical descriptions and reflections. Therefore, in what follows, reviews of publications that adopt such a framework are presented first, and reviews of those that do not specifically indicate the usage of this framework follow thereafter.

2.4.1 Researcher-participant collaboration

Cole and Knowles (1993) provide three examples (empirical reports) of researcher–participant collaboration in their proposal for an alternative approach to research on teaching (collaborative relationship) to the more traditional researcher-oriented relationship.

The two examples that Knowles describes are both studies conducted with his students as participants. In one case, reflection on why the participant eventually “chose to remove herself from the study” (1993, p. 482) is provided. This case does not entail much case description besides the several contributors to the withdrawal suggested by the author. On a closer look at these contributors, although they do incorporate the voice of the participant, it sounds more like what the researcher thinks. The other case examines the reasons why one of his students fails to become a prospective teacher. The motive for this research is the insistence of the participant to pursue the study and collaboration is used to describe the relationship during the research, where the researcher and the participant co-write a publication. Knowles also reflected that an original relationship was a traditional one “and this faded into the background because the agenda as originally conceived became quite inappropriate and *her* agenda became compelling” (1993, p. 487, original emphasis). More details of the relationship could not be detected.

The example Cole describes is a study exploring “the spontaneous aspect of teaching practice through an examination of their [the teachers’] implicit attitudes, beliefs and theories about teaching and learning” (1993, p. 484). The mutual benefit derived from the collaborative partnership, as perceived by the participants (teachers), is reported extensively. Many other issues that are negotiated between the researcher and the participants, including logistical matters, the researcher’s participation in the classroom, and the interpretation and representation of the participants, are also touched upon, although not to the extent of as the mutual benefit section. Some self-reflection, such as on equity in participation, is also provided, although it is also not extensive.

Both the title¹⁵ and abstract¹⁶ suggest that the main focus of Mould’s report (1996) is the role of the researcher-teacher relationship in enhancing the effectiveness of early learning. Confusingly, however, in examining the content the largest portion of this report is devoted to describing the study itself and its result (how a intervention programme contributes to more effective learning), while the limited reflection on the teacher-researcher collaboration and its impact on the study is not only marked by a rather vague description

¹⁵ The influence of researcher-teacher collaboration on the effectiveness of the early learning of four year olds in schools in England.

¹⁶ “This paper explores the potential of enhancing the effectiveness of the early learning experiences of young children, as a consequence of a genuine collaboration between researchers and teachers” (Mould, 1996, p. summary).

but also an overall overly optimistic picture. The challenge of developing a relationship is recognised, yet the author does not describe in any way how a positive relationship is achieved before simply mentioning “by the autumn term a positive relationship had developed with the four schools. The teachers and myself had adopted an open learning stance within an environment of security, acceptance and trust” (1996, p. 11). It is claimed that “for the study to positively evolve, it had been vital that the teachers were provided with a high level of sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy” (1996, p. 12), yet it is not clear how the teachers are provided with a high level of sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy, how the level of teachers’ involvement develops, how this is a result of the former, and how *synergism* (the word the author used to describe the “true nature of our relationship”) is achieved, as well as what really happens in the collaboration besides “research articles and literature were sent to the teachers at their request” (1996, p. 12). Although it is recognised that “the voices of the researcher and teacher may never have been completely equal, but everyone’s voice was heard” (1996, p. 13), the statement that everyone’s voice has been heard remains a claim without further evidence. Furthermore, little reflection is provided, except for rosy pictures, such as:

As the fieldwork progressed the voices became harmonious and the overall quality of the whole learning experience was enriched ... as the fieldwork progressed these positive feelings were reflected in our experience (1996, p. 13).

Boostrom, Jackson & Hansen (1993) describe and reflect on the success and challenges of using a specific tool (meeting between the researchers and teachers) to bridge the research–practice gap in a three-year study of how moral concerns permeate school life.

The essential format of the meetings never changed: the first hour or so was devoted to dinner and conversation; the remaining two hours were spent in open-ended discussion, usually with the participants facing each other in a large circle (1993, p. 37).

The authors claim that there are three ways in which the meetings help in bringing the researchers and participants together and cultivating trust, namely the importance of conversation, the decision to pass the responsibility for chairing the meeting to the teachers, and the inclusion of meals. Examining the whole report, nevertheless, the major portion is devoted to describing the tensions that arise in the research process, not the three methods mentioned above or other aspects of the researcher–practitioner relationship.

Johnston reports a collaborative project that “was both an educational programme and a research project” (1990, p. 173). To be more specific, the educational programme refers to a graduate degree programme for in-service teachers (particularly aimed at promoting reflectivity, two consecutive programmes are reported), and the research refers to her investigation of the changes in teachers’ beliefs and practices that occurred as a result of this programme.

Collaboration is said to lie in both the educational programme and the research. In terms of the educational programme, the first programme was “somewhat a top-down model. Theories and research were at the top, and teachers’ concerns and practice were at the bottom ... in the second programme, the goal was to give teachers’ practical knowledge equal weight in our deliberations ... the result was a more equal collaboration in our interactions” (1990, p. 174). Similarly in the research, “the research for the first programme was carried out in a fairly standard, non-collaborative way ... as the second programme began, increased collaboration with the school district and growth in my own understanding led to a more genuinely collaborative research project” (1990, p. 175).

The main focus of this report is the author’s evolving understanding of collaboration. For example:

I wanted to dispel some of the consequent difference in power as control, but I did not know how to do it or even how to talk about it clearly ... [later], there was a growing sense that we were co-labouring in a more extensive way. Clearly we were sharing ideas more openly than in my former research project (1990, p. 176).

Overall, her description and discussion of the research process remains limited, and she uses many of these descriptions as examples of her reflections. For example,

At the start our roles were differentiated clearly. I was the researcher, and I supposedly knew how research worked. They were participating but, as one teacher put it, “totally naïve about research”. Over time several teachers began to take more responsibility for the topics we discussed during the interviews ... our talks began to feel more like conversations than interviews, although I continued to ask more questions of them than they did of me (1990, p. 176).

2.4.1.1 Co-teaching

Co-teaching seems to be a popular strategy used in enhancing the researcher-participant collaboration.¹⁷

Zigo reports her experience of a research study exploring “the literacy strategies students with reading and writing difficulties possess and make use of, both in and out of school” (2001, p. 354). One strategy of her entry to the school under investigation is to offer her “services as tutor or assistant in their classrooms in any way they believed beneficial” (2001, p. 355). According to her, this offer serves several purposes:

First, I wanted to develop as much of a mutually respectful and trustworthy relationship as possible with the teachers who might allow me to learn from their classrooms. Although I did not intend to engage in a teacher-researcher partnership in the most complete sense, I nonetheless wanted to develop relationships of reciprocity, with each member’s agency honoured in our ongoing considerations of teaching and learning. I hoped that by making myself available as a teaching assistant, I would be communicating the seriousness of my concerns for issues of equity and access in education, as well as my degree of respect for these teachers. Second, I was becoming cognizant of my emerging beliefs in reciprocity as collaboration in service ... I felt a need to offer more tangible contributions to the Michigan Avenue community ... my hope, then, was to earn trust through demonstrating a commitment to the teaching and learning (2001, pp. 355–356).

In other words, such an offer appears to serve her ethical consideration of the necessity of reciprocity, trust and offering benefits. To a much lesser extent, another purpose of such strategies – to facilitate data collection, particularly access to other participants (students and their parents) through teachers– is mentioned later in the article. From the report itself, it is not clear whether these two are pursued with similar emphasis or whether one is more of a by-product of the other.

Her involvement includes not only facilitating small groups for student discussion and giving one-to-one assistance to needy students, but also helping the teacher to manage the class, stop the disruptive behaviour of certain learners and participate in informal conversations about class instruction and preparation.

It is not clear whether she asked the teachers about how they felt about the engagement, but from what the teacher does, such as helping to facilitate her interview with the parents, trust clearly exists. To summarise her

¹⁷ It is necessary to explain the exclusion of Moje’s (2000) work in this category. Although Moje describes and reflects on her co-teaching with Diane, and Moje uses this co-teaching opportunity to carry out her research, the focus of this publication is mainly on how power is perceived, not particularly about how power is played out in the research study.

six months of “constant collaborative labour”, she believes that it “led to a variety of results that I believe were beneficial to both students’ academic needs [acknowledged both by the teachers and students] and to my more formal research processes” (2001, p. 358).

She also reflects on her understanding of *objectivity* and *subjectivity* and claims that “trustworthiness is strengthened when researchers foreground their attempts to monitor and account for their natural subjectivities” (2001, p. 357).

However, the lack of any description of a post-research relationship leaves one to wonder how she negotiates her way out of the classroom after such a close and mutual beneficial engagement. One could also ask how she possibly left out such an important issue, especially since her awareness of collaboration always seems so high.

There are two more articles (Coldstein, 2000; Schulz, Schroeder, & Brody, 1997) that describe co-teaching with the teacher. Both start from the notion of collaborative research and both relate such an approach to the advocacy of care from feminism. Coldstein (2000, p. 520) “attempted to design methods of gathering written data that would be equitable and mutual”. To achieve such an equal and mutual relationship, “it was important to me that Martha [the teacher] benefit from her participation in this study” (2000, p. 522), and her understanding of the benefit at the time of data collection was “one of the ways that I understood this project to be of any benefit to Martha was in that it would give her an opportunity to be heard, to share her views” (2000, p. 520). However, Martha does not seem to be interested in “craft[ing] well-written response narratives” to become part of the finished work. In an attempt to reflect retrospectively, Coldstein acknowledges that she probably needs to “re-read my desire that Martha benefits from her role in this project as a scam to help me feel less guilty about the fact that I was using Martha for my own purpose” (2000, p. 522). Furthermore, although she intends the relationship to be collaborative and equitable, she reflects that probably she has achieved collaboration, but that the relationship is not equal.

Brody starts her project with a similar understanding that “co-teaching appeared to me the most ethical way to experience Marilyn [the teacher]’s decision making, while contributing to her need as a teacher” (Schulz, et al. 1997, p. 479). She acknowledges that her agenda and that of Marilyn are different, where “the categories and

questions for our investigation were more of my concern, Marilyn was interested in them to the extent these affected the time we spent together solving pedagogical problems” (1997, p. 480). And for the author, “it was not only right for Marilyn, the students, and our relationship, but right for me as a university researcher” (1997, p. 480) to have her own research interest become “secondary to Marilyn’s professional development as a teacher” (1997, p. 480), although how so is not clear. How Marilyn perceives the collaborative relationship is not reported.

2.4.1.2 Co-presenting (co-author)

Co-presenting the collaboration (co-author with the participant) also seems to be popular.

Lewis & Holliday (1997), one an author from a university and the other a school principal, describe in detail the experience of a partnership in a study to experiment with new forms of professional development (teacher development) by using a collaborative form (both among teachers and also between the school and the university). As the authors are clearly aware of the distrust and wariness that are commonly held by many teachers towards researchers, equalizing power and encouraging collegiality were constantly and consciously sought. For example, the authors are aware that in this project,

teachers had little choice or control over the content, format, and mode of their participation ... we felt it was critical to design this project as a collaborative effort with teachers so that they had freedom and control over participation, initiating topics, creating agendas, developing structures, and if they did participate, choosing the amount and manner of that participation (1997, p. 110).

The university partner and the principal took a back seat as the teachers negotiated the topics and structure of the meetings (1997, p. 112).

In practice, of thirteen teachers who decided to participate in the study, each could decide to participate in any one of three forms of activity (monthly study group sessions, reading research or theoretically-based reading, and keeping weekly journals) and also how each study group session would be run. The result is “a remarkable change in school climate during the first year of the partnership. For the overwhelming majority of teachers, the study group sessions satisfied a hunger to meet and discuss issues of teaching and learning in an informal setting. They felt the study group sessions cut down isolation and created closer bonds with their colleagues”

(1997, p. 116).

However, such achievement seems to be related to the methodology used (the three activities that aim at promoting collegial relationship among the teachers), rather than the primary concern of the project – the collaboration between the university and the school. Throughout the report, the use of the term “partnership” seems confusing and refers to different meanings at different times. As demonstrated above, it seems to originate from a concern for a university–school partnership, yet soon it turns to describing a partner relationship among the teachers.

Furthermore, this university partner seems far more concerned with the principal than the teachers. For example, initial trust building is a major concern for the university partner, however, what is revealed in the report is that many different strategies are used to form partnerships with the principal (1997, pp. 119–120), while for the teachers, an hour-long pre-interview seems to be the only strategy that is as used. Furthermore, towards the end of the article, the university author once again emphasises that “*more important than working with teachers were the continuing conversations between the university partner and the principal about issues of writing, collegiality and power*” (1997, p.122, emphasis added).

In addition to the lack of documentation of how teachers perceive the process of collaboration between the university and the school, there are occasions that yield subtle implications of the presumptions the university partner has:

The university partner found that although the teachers were very amenable to sharing their stories, they really *did not want to help with analysing data* (1997, p. 114).

The university partner attempted to adopt a *nurturing stance* during the meetings (1997, p. 121).

Even though they were given control, the teachers wanted the university partner to facilitate the study group sessions – *no teacher would volunteer for this role. This troubled the university partner*, but she couldn’t force leadership on someone who didn’t want it (1997, p. 121, all emphasis added).

Furthermore, the voice of the report is predominantly that of the researcher. Not only can few direct quotes from the teachers or the principal be found, but one might also wonder why the university partner chose to

co-author with the principal when the voice of the principal is almost non-existent.

Zajano & Edelsberg (1993) also choose to co-author a paper describing different phases of how their relationship evolves in a project investigating the way in which a new state testing policy affects the work of educators. How each party felt about the relationship in each phase is presented, from the point where the researcher is seen as a suspect stranger, cordial acquaintance, welcome guest, expert recourse, valued colleague to the final phase of confidante (also referred to as phase 1-6).

The researchers describe an incident (see below) which “signalled a growing trust in the researcher-researched relationship, a trust which affected the rest of the study” (1993, 146) in Phase 2. “One of my first opportunities was to observe Chip [the participant] at a meeting of high school teachers who were attempting to complete a form initiated by Chip’s office. On the form, teachers were to indicate whether they taught each instructional objective assessed on the upcoming state proficiency test. The meeting was marked by confusion among teachers regarding how to respond to the form. The next day I sent Chip a memo summarizing what I felt were the items needing clarification as well as the concerns teachers had expressed about the state testing policy. This memo became important to our evolving relationship as the first instance in which the research process assisted practitioner action. It signalled a growing trust in the researcher-researched relationship, a trust which affected the rest of the study” (1993, p. 146).

However, in examining the incident itself, two questions arise:

- without the acknowledgement from the practitioner himself, whether this memo is appreciated or indeed assists in the relationship development is questionable
- even assuming that such an action of handing over the memo is appreciated by the practitioner, how it signals trust is still not clear because logically the trust would come from the practitioner, not the researcher.

Interrogating the participant’s description, it in fact sounds more likely that it is the researcher’s “*compelling and accurate accounts (quote from below)*” that help in developing the trust.

Nancy’s [the researcher] careful description of what she was observing resulted in compelling and accurate accounts ...
The more she expressed her interpretations of what she saw happening in the district, the more willing I became to

share concerns with her and to test my hunches and ideas (phase 3 & 4, 1993, 146-148).

Benefiting the participants is one of the researcher's concerns from the beginning. However, keeping in mind that objectivity is often associated with positivism and quantitative paradigms and not the qualitative paradigm, when the opportunity to offer benefit arises (to assist in preparing test data reports), the researcher "felt grateful that I was able to assist the practitioner whom I was indebted for my dissertation data" (1993, p. 148), yet at the same time, "I felt a nagging sense of having lost an 'independent' research view" (1993, p. 148). Ironically, the participant reveals that it is only "when Nancy got involved in helping him prepare the presentation to the school board (the test data report) that he starts to feel less like a 'subject' of the study and more like a collaborator in the research" (1993, p. 151).

The researcher's decision when facing the stranger/friend dilemma also seems to be inconsistent, and probably resulted from being torn between remaining objectivity and a consideration for the benefit of the participants. On one occasion, the researcher faces a "stranger/friend" dilemma regarding what to do with an ongoing conflict between the participants and another person in the district, and she decides:

I decided to ask Chip about this conflict. He acknowledged it and offered his perspective on it. The next question to myself was: what, if anything, would I do about the conflict? Should I offer to play mediator – to try to get them understand each other's professional competence, and find a way to work together for the betterment of the district? Or should I just acknowledge that their conflict was a part of the organizational context and let it go at that? I took the latter course (1993, p. 149).

In another incident, however, when she notices that Chip's presentation of the test result is not clear, using too many jargons and technical terms, she chooses to talk to the participant about it.

	Toledo (one researcher and one participant)	Flint (one researcher and two participants from two different schools)	Detroit (two researchers and three participants from the same school)
Entry	<p>Welcome researchers (who are on the cutting edge of research) into classroom is reported as the general attitude of the particular participant.</p> <p>Participant particularly expected to learn.</p>	<p>With both participants, entry is based on previous relationship (one from previous research, where the experience was described as comfortable and trusting; the other had co-worked with the researcher before in the researched school).</p> <p>Both participants state they might otherwise have felt threatened by been inspected.</p> <p>Both participants expect to learn.</p>	<p>Started when one researcher (the other being her research assistant) talked with one participant at a meeting, where the researcher showed interest in the participant's stories.</p> <p>While the other two participants describe their initial feeling as scared and reluctant, the other participant agreed that it could be risky.</p>
The nature of the collaboration	<p>Co-teaching happened outside the classroom through planning and dialogue, rather than inside the class.</p> <p>Both the researcher and participant are satisfied with the situation.</p>	<p>The researcher described her work as co-teaching; the relevant participant described it as learning from the researcher.</p> <p>The participant in the other venue also described the relationship as a team (both in and outside the classroom).</p>	<p>Student researcher mainly sits in as a silent observer in the class (sometimes also helps with group work).</p> <p>One participant describes being observed as good when teaching is smooth, but embarrassing when teaching is not going well.</p> <p>The other participant mentions that the mere silence of the researcher could be negative (communication should be open).</p>
Dissemination	<p>Participant mentions that although attending conference can be informative, most teachers don't go to those meetings.</p>	<p>One participant mentions that participation in research can be an extra requirement.</p> <p>The other participant mentions that credibility is central to dissemination, thus teacher themselves would be better disseminators.</p>	<p>The time constraints many teachers face (research is not part of job description, thus they could feel guilty about spending school time on research work) is mentioned by one participant.</p>

Table 4: How various aspects of collaboration is reported in Clark *et al.* (1996)



Collaboration is also clearly the main focus of Clark, Moss, Goering, Herter, Lamar, Leonard et al., (1996)'s report, which looked at the way in which all the researchers and participants in three graduate projects (named Toledo, Flint and Detroit, all under one supervisor) perceive issues such as entry, the nature of the collaboration, relationship with students¹⁸ and dissemination (detail provided in table 4 in the previous page). The participants' voice is clearly extensively present in this report, as well as many reflections from some researchers.

2.4.2 Other publications

Blodgett, Boyer & Turk (2005) reflect on their role as insider and outsider in a large qualitative study inquiring into the development of self-regulation in early childhood. Ethical consideration is clearly at the heart of this study, since not only almost endless sensitivity, but also a similar effort to establish trust and obtain real and on-going informed consent, is reported in the article. As the authors claim, they attempt "a level of ease and friendliness without abandoning our professionalism" (2005); friendliness refers to an introduction to the participants by a familiar and trusting source and a warm and welcome setting (by informal chat and juice and cookies) before starting the interviews; while by professionalism, they mention one specific example where one parent "began disclosing personal matters *not related to the research topic*" (2005, emphasis added) and asked for advice in solving personal and family matters:

In order to maintain an outside status and to *respect the contribution of the participant*, the interviewer gently reminded the parent of the researcher's role by stating, "I'm sorry, we *cannot* give advice on parenting. We are most interested in hearing about your thoughts and experiences, and we thank you for your time in answering *our* questions" (emphasis added).

What is not clear, however, is not only how this response effectively "*respects the contribution of the participant*", but also why it is necessary to use this situation as "an opportune moment to establish the role of the research to the parent and increase outsider status". If a warm and respectful relationship is, as the authors claim, a major concern of their approaches, how can it be achieved without reciprocity and how would this parent feel when he/she is turned away just because what he/she asks is not *related to the research topic*? Furthermore, why this is no longer a concern to the authors who are obviously so considerate? What dominates the article is also a rosy portrait of the research group, implying how

¹⁸ The relationship between the teachers and the students is not included in this discussion for its irrelevance.



considerate, trustworthy and professional they are, while almost no self-reflection, especially self-critique, exists.

2.4.3 Summary

This review reveals the following:

Firstly, there is a rather limited number of empirical publications on the researcher–practitioner relationship and this limited amount of description in relevant publications signals a fairly limited interest in this topic in the education field. Furthermore, a fairly large number of authors that this review identified are indeed student-researchers. Among the eleven publications that are identified, seven involve a student-researcher as the main author (Zigo, 2001; Coldstein, 2000; Brody from Schulz, Schroeder, & Brody, 1997). The first author, as well as another two authors in Clark, et al. (1996), are students; two out of three authors, including the first author in Blodgett, Boyer, & Turk (2005), are students; the first author of Lewison and Holliday (1997) and Zajano and Edelsberg (1993) is both students (second authors are teachers/school administrators). The exception are Cole and Knowles (1993), Boostrom et al. (1993) and Johnston (1990). The case with Mould (1996) is not clear from the descriptions in the publication.

Secondly, the notion of collaboration seems to have started spreading; yet the understanding of the notion itself seems to be still limited. Many authors equate collaboration with a simple notion of giving up the researchers' power to achieve equity and many are also preoccupied with an attempt to transform the practitioners into researchers, suggesting that the more practitioners are involved in research activities – particularly writing up – the better. As yet there seems to be no awareness of building on each others' strengths. This could subtly imply a hierarchic view of researchers and practitioners that still exists.

Thirdly, exploring and fulfilling practitioners' expectations is lacking since their voice is rather weak overall, even in some co-authored publications. On some occasions, it is claimed that the participants' voices are respected, yet their participation in research decisions seems rather limited (not necessarily research activities, but issues such as how to handle informed consent, what kind of feedback to provide and so on).

Other noteworthy points include:

- Descriptions of how the researchers negotiate their retreat from the field and the post-research



relationship hardly exist.

- With a few exceptions, self-reflection, particularly researchers' self-critique, is also largely lacking.
- Overall, there seems to be a tendency to portray the researchers themselves as considerate.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter started with a brief introduction to the four alternatives research utilisation models, particularly the *interaction model*. This was followed by a discussion on the instrumental/conceptual utilisation debate and a question regarding the meaning of theory itself. Huberman's (1990) general model was presented next, not only in terms of pinpointing the importance of viewing the researcher–practitioner relationship as an ongoing process, but also in terms of extending the interest of the relationship itself to a broader theoretical frame that seeks to explain the patterns and consequences of such an engagement.

This was followed by references to relevant literature and debates about possible elements that exist within the *researcher/practitioner context* and the way in which these elements could possibly influence the researcher–practitioner relationship.

As the most important element within the *researcher/practitioner context*, the detachment/involvement decision was discussed against the framework developed by both Gold (1958) and Adler and Alder (1998), as well as the two modes of *how knowledge is generated* of Gibbons, et al. (1994). This discussion further pointed out the powerful influence of the traditional epistemological stance guiding quantitative paradigm (Mode 1) among the qualitative community (Mode 2).

A discussion of motives for conducting research was presented next as another possible important element within the *researcher/practitioner context*. The notion of *to account for the money* of Winch (2001) was borrowed in order to address the question raised in the intrinsic/extrinsic motive debate. This discussion concluded by proposing an extension to the traditional argument of intrinsic/extrinsic to include an *other extrinsic* dimension. Certain misleading messages regarding the categorisation of the value of knowledge according to public/private good of Lor and Britz (2005) were pointed out. A further problem associated with the notion of public good was raised next, namely, that against the background of the qualitative paradigm that acknowledges multiple realities, is it possible to view the public as homogenous, and by



whom is the public represented. Questions such as these also cast doubt upon common notion of theoretic contribution, which implicitly assumes that research work would be of benefit to society as a whole.

Since a universal standard of *useful* does not fit into the qualitative paradigm, the question of who benefits from research was raised next. The mutual benefiting theory (that it is possible for both the social and individual to benefit at the same time) was disputed first, and then both knowledge and practical benefit were examined in order to answer the question of whom it is who actually benefits from research. Two further question were raised – how justifiable is it for the researcher to sacrifice any consideration of the benefit to participants in order to serve the social benefit, and to what extent may/should a researcher expect the practitioners to participate solely from altruistic motives, while, in fact, most benefits (direct and indirect) accrue to the researcher.

The last section of this chapter is devoted to a literature review of the empirically reported researcher–practitioner relationship in published articles. Few publications could be identified, but those that were identified were analysed critically. Significant observations arise from this literature review include that overall disclosure of such relationships is limited; most publications involve student-researchers as the main authors; the notion of collaboration is spreading although the understanding of it is still limited; descriptions of the way in which the participants experience and view the engagement as well as self-reflection and criticism on the part of the researchers are largely missing; and, finally, descriptions of the retreat from the field and a post-research relationship are also largely nonexistent.