

Derek Allan Alexander Philip
The Open University, UK

**ACTION RESEARCH AND THE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OF EFL ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHERS: A GENERAL LITERATURE REVIEW.**

Review Focus and Rationale

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a major industry worldwide with many schools, private and public, employing native English speakers as teachers. Whilst there are minimum qualifications, once employed, a teacher's professional development is dependant on the school he or she works at and is not always consistent. Many school professional development programmes comprise a series of workshops or training sessions. Although teachers can contribute to the choice of topics, the majority are chosen and presented by senior managers as they see appropriate. However, there are often problems transferring the workshop theory into classroom practice.

This issue may be linked to the idea of EFL being considered an industry rather than a profession due to the lack of a central body of research knowledge and the lack of an extensive and ongoing training programme for new teachers (Study Guide, p16). As a result, EFL teaching policy tends to be more managerialist in nature with decision-making being determined by senior managers rather than by the practitioners in the classroom.

One alternative to the above is that of action research used for professional development. This allows teachers to investigate and reflect on their own

classroom practice, enabling them to produce research that can inform the decision-making process as well as enhance their professional development.

(217 words)

The reviewing process

It was decided that a general literature review would be carried out as it would be more appropriate to conduct a detailed but not exhaustive search of the literature. Whilst there is a great deal of literature concerning action research and professional development, less addresses EFL. Consequently, this review will attempt to address this gap in knowledge. Furthermore, it is hoped that any theories presented can be transferred into practice.

A structured search of the literature was conducted as detailed in Appendix 1. Following a search to determine whether anything similar had been written, a more detailed search was conducted. Parameters such as geographic, chronological and keyword restrictions were used to narrow the search and, as a result 27 articles were saved for further consideration. Using the Open University's ECA Guidance, the list was further reduced to 12 articles from which the final 2 were selected.

(149 words)

Reasons for selecting the two articles

Ponte et al (2004) and McGee (2008) were selected for in-depth review. The initial reasons for selection are that the articles were within the search parameters. They were also published in reputable journals that are peer reviewed, editor screened and refereed. Consequently, these journals can be said to be of a high academic standard. Furthermore, Ponte et al's article has been cited 7 times according to the ISI Web of Knowledge and 13 times on Scopus which improves its credibility and academic standing. Although McGee's article had no citations, this may be because it was published within the last year.

Whilst the articles discuss both action research and professional development, they do so in different ways which made for a potentially interesting comparison and contrast. One focuses on a case study in European state schools, with the other presenting an ESOL case study in the Middle East, which is more in line with my professional experience.

(162 words)

The Review

Introduction

This general literature review will analyse and synthesise two academic articles relating to action research used for professional development purposes found as

a result of a structured literature search. Following a brief discussion of the issue under investigation, the articles will be analysed and then synthesised before making final conclusions.

The issue under investigation

I currently work for a private English Language School providing instruction in EFL to students of varying levels of ability. One important aspect of this work is professional development and is conducted as part of a series of training workshops based on a variety of topics chosen, in the main, by senior managers although with input from the teachers. Both Ponte et al (2004, p587) and McGee (2008, p239) indicate that with more traditional professional development, there are often difficulties transferring theory to practice. Knight (2001, p230) agrees when he indicates his uncertainty as to whether professional learning occurs as a result of workshops and courses alone. He states that because some professions are highly practical in nature, gains in professional development may not be made as a result of more traditional modes of delivery (2001, p230). Whilst he uses engineering and architecture as examples, EFL has a significant practical element. Consequently, if more traditional methods of professional development are seen as lacking, what alternatives are available? Therefore, this review will consider whether action research, as one such alternative, can assist in the professional development of English language teachers.

Summary of the main articles

Before discussing the two articles, it is important to understand what is meant by both professional development and action research. Evans (2002, p125) describes professional development as, "*a process of enhancing teaching's professional status by expanding the knowledge base upon which the profession draws*". Grossman (cited in Evans 2002, p126) adds to this by suggesting that as part of the professional development process, teachers move away from being "restricted professionals", where they are more intuitive and conduct classroom activities without the necessary rationale, towards being "extended professionals". Many EFL teachers at the present time would fall into the restricted professional category. In order to move them towards extended professionalism, teachers should gain an understanding of what is going on in their classrooms and why. One way of doing this is through action research, "*research done by practitioners using their own site as the focus of their study*" (Atay 2008, p139). Halton (2004, p135) manages to bridge the gap between professional development and action research by stating that, "*the pursuit of professional knowledge, grounded in practice, is the chief aim of educational action research in the view of academics involved in educational professional development*".

Both McGee (2008) and Ponte et al (2004) see action research as being important in terms of professional development. McGee's (2008) research was

conducted in a Middle Eastern Gulf state and is related to my own professional situation. The study required the involuntary participation of 67 'English as a Second Language' (ESOL) advisers employed by that country's Ministry of Education and working at various schools throughout the state. The research was conducted over the period of a year and was facilitated by a Professional Development Team based at the state's American accredited University. Professional development was seen as extremely important in terms of educational standards and also to raise the level of English of university entrants (McGee 2008, p235). However, traditional forms of professional development, such as lectures and workshops, were not seen as successful as there were difficulties in transferring theory into practice and there was still thought to be a considerable gap between that theory and practice (McGee 2008, p239). Action research was, therefore, seen as a way of informing professional practice and improving teaching and learning. In order to collect data, qualitative methods were used during the project. The data collection involved various sessions facilitated by the professional development team, journals for shared reflection and discussion, oral discussion of project work, oral progress reports, written evaluations and the final written reports. Although the data collected appears appropriate for this type of project, little information is given concerning the analysis of the data, which could have a negative effect on validity.

Ponte et al's (2004) research was similarly based in secondary schools. Their research was conducted as part of the Action Research in Teacher Education (ARTE) international project in which schools from Russia, the UK, the USA and the Netherlands participated, although this article concentrates on the Dutch project. 35 teachers initially volunteered for the project although this fell to 28 by the end of the project. The participating teachers were based within 6 secondary schools within the Netherlands. Ponte et al's justification for conducting their research is that little research had previously been conducted on the effects of action research on professional knowledge (Ponte et al 2004, p573). Consequently, the authors are trying to fill the gap in knowledge through the presentation of their own work. They believe that through action research, teachers can improve their own practice and become more professional. They consider 2 levels of knowledge, the first involving three domains of knowledge: technological, empirical and ideological and the second level involving greater understandings of these domains of knowledge as a result of conducting action research (Ponte et al 2004, pp574-575). Ponte et al present a facilitation model of professional development through praxis whereby the facilitators, or teacher educators, provide guidance which is continual and process oriented. In other words, the facilitators, "*focus repeatedly on different aspects of professional knowledge at the same time and on the job as the teachers carry out their action research*" (Ponte et al 2004, p587). This is contrasted with the more traditional linear-sequential method of professional development whereby the subjects to

be taught are arranged into units and taught separately and in order. Like McGee, qualitative methods were used in order to collect data. Specifically, logbooks, analysis of fragments of recorded discussions, interviews and document analysis were used. These seem appropriate and the authors discuss the analysis and triangulation of the data in order to strengthen validity.

Analysis

A full analysis of both articles was conducted, the results of which appear in Appendix 2. The first stage of the analysis is to consider the values upon which the research is built as this can determine its relevance. Both articles actually have very similar values although they are implied rather than being explicitly stated. Nevertheless, it may be possible to "*map the various features we would expect to find [...] if each of the values identified had been pursued exclusively and effectively as a goal*" (Hammersley 2007, p269). McGee implies that the improvement of educational standards through professional development, the improvement of the levels of English of university entrants and the professional development of teachers are important values underpinning her research (McGee 2008, p238). Ponte et al (2004, p577) similarly imply the professional development of teachers and teacher educators and improving the "*guidance*" of school students are important values. Although not stated, it is thought that this guidance is closely related to educational standards. Consequently, values concerning the improvement of educational standards and the professional

development of teachers are closely related to the rationale and justification given by both authors for conducting the research. These values also link in to the relevance of the research conducted. Educational standards could certainly be considered to be of importance and, as both authors indicate, as there is a gap in research knowledge, they have the ability to contribute to existing knowledge. Therefore, both articles are relevant.

The values of both articles should also link into the claims being made, as is being suggested in Hammersley's quote above. McGee's argument (2008, pp241-244) is that action research for professional development purposes can help solve the issues resulting from more traditional forms of professional development. She claims that action research is situated in practice and, due to its bottom-up approach can be very motivating. There are necessarily cycles of review and reflection which often helped settle disputes among the ESOL advisers. The gap between theory and practice evident from more traditional forms of professional development was reduced through the reconstruction of knowledge of the participants. Finally, action research enabled the participants to question their practice and learn from it as well as collaborate more effectively with other project members. The claims presented by McGee are more focused on the professional development of teachers rather than the improvement of educational standards, although it is assumed that the former will lead to the latter. Whilst the research is still relevant, the improvement of

educational standards is one goal that would be worth investigating to determine the effectiveness of professional development. After considering the plausibility and credibility of the main claims it was felt necessary to examine the quality of the supporting evidence. Whilst the evidence was taken from oral discussion with the ESOL advisers, due to the lack of triangulation and also the lack of information given concerning the methods of data analysis, there could be threats to validity. However, if triangulated, validity may be strengthened.

Ponte et al's claims also concentrate more on the professional development of teachers and teacher educators. They claim that if left to themselves, teachers will concentrate on what they plan to do (the technological domain) rather than what they want to help students to achieve (the ideological domain) (Ponte et al 2004, p586). Connected to this is a lack of focus on how to achieve these student needs (the empirical domain) which relates to teachers not being able to give full attention to their own practice and teaching situation. However, if the teacher educators/facilitators paid attention to all three domains and encouraged links to be formed between them, the teachers similarly did so. If this was achieved, the reflective abilities of the teachers were greatly improved (Ponte et al 2004, p584). Another important aspect concerned the freedom of choice teachers had in selecting the objectives they wanted to work on. However, they mostly did not work on these by themselves, stating that it was “*safer and less confrontational*” working with objectives chosen by others (Ponte et al 2004,

p581). Therefore, by giving proportionate attention to each domain of knowledge, finding links between them in their own practice and having freedom of choice, teachers will move to the second level of knowledge. Giving consideration to the plausibility and credibility of the main claims and a subsequent analysis of the supporting evidence, it was thought that the evidence was of high quality due to its triangulated nature resulting in a strong degree of validity.

Synthesis

As a result of the analysis, the main assumption made in both articles is that traditional forms of professional development delivery have been ineffective. Furthermore, it appears that both assumed that professional development leads to educational improvement, which may be why it has been researched from the perspective of the teacher. There is no doubt that the professional development of teachers is extremely important, but the effects on the students must be considered as educational improvement does not automatically follow professional development. Other literature found during the search similarly focuses on the teacher. For example, Brown and Macatangay (2002, p35) indicate that professional development is vital if educational standards and student achievement are to be improved. However, Kemmis (2006, p460) suggests that action research that focuses solely on the improvement of practice from the point of view of the practitioner is ineffective as it does not consider

the voices of others involved in the process, such as students. Consequently, it is felt that more attention needs to be paid to the effects of professional development on the students to determine the extent of their benefit.

The analysis of both articles also revealed a number of other similarities and differences. One of the major differences between both studies was the voluntary nature of participation. In McGee's study, the ESOL advisers had to participate as professional development was a stated job requirement. However, the teachers in Ponte et al's study participated voluntarily. The democratic nature of action research is very important, and indeed is highlighted by McGee (2008, p245) as being an issue with her research. This would be especially important in an EFL environment where the decision-making remains very much top-down.

Another important factor concerns the teacher educators and facilitators participating in the action research. Ponte et al consider the effects of professional development on both teachers and facilitators. The ESOL advisers participating in McGee's study are also teacher educators responsible for assisting teachers in other schools throughout the country. Both suggest that teacher educators or facilitators can positively affect the professional development process, although this is more apparent from Ponte et al's research. Nevertheless, both agree that action research is based around practice or praxis,

involving cycles of review and reflection which can be enhanced by teacher educators.

One final similarity, which is also apparent in other literature such as Brown and Macatangay (2002), is the lack of generalisation of the conclusions. The conclusions presented by McGee (2008) and Ponte et al (2004) are not applied to a wider population with McGee (2008, p247) stating, “*the aim of action research is not to generalize*”. This is due to the fact that each situation to which action research is being applied is different in terms of culture and organisation. Consequently, these are important considerations to make when conducting such research.

Therefore, the main organising principles of an action research project used for professional development purposes should be as follows:

- Consider the effects of professional development on the teachers;
- Consider the effects of professional development on the students;
- Consider any cultural or organisational differences that may impact on the project;
- A need for voluntary participation;
- A focus on practice and praxis leading to a bottom-up approach to decision-making;

- A cycle of review and reflection;
- The adoption of a facilitation model of delivery.

These organising principles have a number of implications for EFL schools. If it is to work successfully, these schools would have to change their organisational structure from managerialist, to accepting more of a bottom-up approach to decision-making. It is this bottom-up approach that is significant as it could be likened to Appadurai's "*globalization from below*" (cited in Somekh and Zeichner 2009, p6). One example is that of a small number of teachers at the local level undertaking action research projects which gradually expands into a larger, stronger and more important group continuing over a long period of time (Somekh and Zeichner 2009, p18).

Halton (2004, p136) suggests that such innovations as action research may not be accepted by school managers and may even be viewed by others as another way of making teachers accountable. Zamorski and Bulmer (2002, p290) believe that if used for accountability purposes, research would have the effect of de-professionalising and de-skilling the teacher. Consequently, if used to improve classroom practice, action research could successfully re-professionalise teachers at the local level in EFL schools and potentially lead to globalization from below, being something like Eisenhart's (1998, p394)

groundswell that has the power to change the current EFL industry into a new and dynamic EFL profession.

(2530 words)

Concluding comments

To conclude, both articles were analysed and synthesised to determine the main organising principles to be considered when conducting action research for professional development purposes. Taking student perspectives into account is an important addition as professional development does not necessarily lead to educational improvement. A facilitation model of action research for professional development could result in a bottom-up approach to decision-making resulting in the re-professionalism of teachers as well as the creation of a body of research knowledge and a reduction in managerialism. In the first instance, this is likely to have a greater effect at the local level although it has the potential to affect EFL on a wider scale although this would require collaboration not only between teachers but also between schools.

(126 words)

(Total 3194 words)

References

Atay, D. (2008) 'Teacher research for professional development', *ELT Journal*, 62, (2), pp139-147.

Brown, M. and Macatangay, A. (2002) 'The impact of action research for professional development: case studies in two Manchester schools', *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 25, (1), pp35-45.

Eisenhart, M. (1998) 'On the subject of interpretive reviews', *Review of Educational Research*, 68, (4), pp391-399.

Evans, L. (2002) 'What is teacher development?', *Oxford Review of Education*, 28, (1), pp123-138.

Halton, M. J. (2004) 'Putting professional development into action by putting action into professional development in second level schools in Ireland', *Educational Action Research*, 12, (1), pp127-144.

Hammersley, M. (2007) "An appraisal of 'Labouring to Learn'", in Hammersley, M. (ed) *Educational Research and Evidence-based Practice*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd. in association with The Open University (the Course Reader), pp 263-275.

Kemmis, S. (2006) 'Participatory action research and the public sphere', *Educational Action Research*, 14, (4), pp459-476.

Knight, P. (2002) 'A systematic approach to professional development: learning as practice', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, (3), pp229-241.

McGee, A. (2008) 'Critical reflections of action research used for professional development in a Middle Eastern Gulf State', *Educational Action Research*, 16, (2), pp235-250.

Ponte, P., Ax, J., Douwe, B. and Wubbels, T. (2004) 'Teachers' development of professional knowledge through action research and the facilitation of this by teacher educators', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, (6), pp571-588.

Somekh, B. and Zeichner, K. (2009) 'Action research for educational reform: remodelling action research theories and practices in local contexts', *Educational Action Research*, 17, (1), pp5-21.

Zamorski, B. and Bulmer, M. (2002) 'Engaging teachers in research: teacher engagement in research as professional development', *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 10, (2), pp279-291.

Bibliography

Atay, D. (2008) 'Teacher research for professional development', *ELT Journal*, 62, (2), pp139-147.

Avis, J. (2002) 'Work based knowledge, evidence-informed practice and education', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 51, (4), pp369-389.

Bailey, B. and Robson, J. (2002) 'Changing teachers: a critical review of recent policies affecting the professional training and qualifications of teachers in schools, colleges and universities in England', *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 54, (3), pp325-342.

Brown, M. and Macatangay, A. (2002) 'The impact of action research for professional development: case studies in two Manchester schools', *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 25, (1), pp35-45.

Burns, B. and Haydn, T. (2002) 'Engaging teachers in research: inspiration versus the daily grind', *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 20, (2), pp301-321.

Christenson, M., Slutsky, R., Bendau, S., Covert, J. Dyer, J., Risko, G. and Johnston, M. (2002) 'The rocky road of teachers becoming action researchers', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, (3), pp259-272.

Crookes, G. (1993) 'Action research for second language teachers: going beyond teacher research', *Applied Linguistics*, 14, (2), pp130-144 .

Daoud, S. A. (1999) 'EFL/ESP teacher development and classroom innovation through teacher-initiated action research', Warwick University, Available from: <http://hdl.handle.net/10068/582625> (accessed 14 August 2009).

Elliot, J., Battersby, J., Boddington, D., Brown, K., Doherty, P., Haydn, T., Nardi, E. and Shreeve, A. (2002) 'Working 'against the grain': a conversation piece from the academy about the experience of sustaining collaborative research with teachers', *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 10, (2), pp323-348.

Elliot, J. and Tsai, C. T. (2008) 'What might Confucius have to say about action research?', *Educational Action Research*, 16, (4), pp569-578 .

Evans, L. (2002) 'What is teacher development?', *Oxford Review of Education*, 28, (1), pp123-138.

Halton, M. J. (2004) 'Putting professional development into action by putting action into professional development in second level schools in Ireland', *Educational Action Research*, 12, (1), pp127-144.

Harrison, J., Lawson, T. and Worthey, A. (2005) 'Action research and the professional development of induction tutors: some unforeseen impacts and pitfalls. What do we learn?', *Journal of In-service Education*, 31, (1), pp83-104.

James, E. A. (2006) 'A study of participatory action research as professional development for educators in areas of educational disadvantage', *Educational Action Research*, 14, (4), pp525-533.

Kemmis, S. (2006) 'Participatory action research and the public sphere', *Educational Action Research*, 14, (4), pp459-476.

Knight, P. (2002) 'A systematic approach to professional development: learning as practice', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, (3), pp229-241.

McGee, A. (2008) 'Critical reflections of action research used for professional development in a Middle Eastern Gulf State', *Educational Action Research*, 16, (2), pp235-250.

Ponte, P. (2002) 'How teachers become action researchers and how teacher educators become their facilitators', *Educational Action Research*, 10, (3), pp399-422.

Ponte, P., Ax, J., Douwe, B. and Wubbels, T. (2004) 'Teachers' development of professional knowledge through action research and the facilitation of this by teacher educators', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, (6), pp571-588.

Reis Jorge, J. M. (2000) 'On becoming a teacher researcher in an academic context of in-service education: case study of a group of EFL teachers', Bristol University, Available from: <http://hdl.handle.net/10068/566716> (accessed on 14 August 2009).

Shifferaw, M. and Burton, J. (2008) 'Action research in adult education: academic practitioner partnership in Washington D.C.', *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal*, 2, (2), pp109-112.

Smeets, K. and Ponte, P. (2009) 'Action research and teacher leadership', *Professional Development in Education*, 35, (2), pp175-193.

Somekh, B. and Zeichner, K. (2009) 'Action research for educational reform: remodelling action research theories and practices in local contexts', *Educational Action Research*, 17, (1), pp5-21.

Stevenson, R. (1991) 'Action research as professional development: a US case study of inquiry-oriented inservice education', *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 17, (3), pp277-292.

Thorne, C. and Qiang, W. (1996) 'Action research in language teacher education', *ELT Journal*, 50, (3), pp 254-262.

Vogrinc, J. and Zuljan, M. V. (2009) 'Action research in schools: an important factor in teachers' professional development', *Educational Studies*, 35, (1), pp53-63.

Zamorski, B. and Bulmer, M. (2002) 'Engaging teachers in research: teacher engagement in research as professional development', *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 10, (2), pp279-291.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Literature Search Profile, Example Searches, Bibliographic Notes and Citation Reports.

Literature search profile

<p>Topic Action research and the professional development of EFL English Language Teachers.</p>
<p>Abstract <p>What do we want to know? We want to know if Action Research can help encourage professional development among English Language teachers. Currently, the EFL industry is not considered a profession under the definition of the model of professionalism contained in the Study Guide (also see TMA01). Research is a common theme in other professions so can it help English language teaching?</p> <p>Who wants to know and why? This would be of interest to practitioners, practitioner-researchers (who are mainly conducting research that impacts at the local level), school managers and policy makers, other stakeholders and other researchers in general.</p> <p>What did we find? So far, that action research can help promote more effective professional development particularly within educational contexts.</p> <p>What are the implications? More effective professional development programmes for EFL teachers thus building up research knowledge that might promote the movement of the EFL/ESOL industry towards a state of professionalism. The re-professionalism of the industry and practitioners/school managers.</p> </p>
<p>Inclusions and exclusions categories <p>Dates: Between 1990 and 2009 for academic studies/work. Anything beyond 20 years reject.</p> <p>Language(s): English only</p> <p>Country: the UK, the USA, Australia & New Zealand and the European Union.</p> <p>Include studies containing combinations of keywords below</p> </p>
<p>Key words <p>Teacher research, teacher researcher Action research for language teachers Teachers becoming action researchers Educational action research Professional knowledge Professional development (in ELT/EFL/TESOL/TEFL) Continuing professional development, CPD</p> </p>
<p>Search strategy: Stage 1 <p>Initial search for similar literature: Social, Psychological, Educational and Criminological Trials Register (SPECTR), Evidence for Policy and Practice Information Coordinating Centre (EPPI Centre), the Cochrane Library.</p> <p>Detailed search:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Electronic databases: Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), British Education Index (BEI), Australian Education Index (AEI) and Academic Search Complete. (b) Websites: Thesis.com, The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC.com), the Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN), World Cat and Google Scholar. (c) Journals: ELT Journal, Educational Action Research through the Open University library (d) Bibliographies: TEG Bibliography (from Teaching and Learning Research Programme) (e) Search for grey literature using Open SIGLE (Search for Information on Grey Literature in Europe). This found 2 theses of potential interest although finding full copies proved difficult. </p>
<p>Has a review been conducted before on this subject? This is difficult to tell but looking through the EPPI database and the Cochrane Library did not reveal any similar systematic literature reviews.</p>
<p>Stage 2: Screening studies found following the initial stage 1 search. Consider using the OU's ECA guidance "<i>25 things you should look for in selecting and reviewing articles for the ECA</i>". This should help reduce the stage 1 results down to a manageable few for the final selection of the 2 main articles for review. Final selection could be based on professional relevance and the number of citations on ISI Web of Knowledge and SCOPUS.</p>
<p>Key Authors Steven Kemmis, Christopher Candlin, Anne Burns, D.A. Schon, Lawrence Stenhouse</p>

Example article search 1

Titles

To view one or many selected titles scroll down the list and click the corresponding boxes. Then click display at the bottom of the page. To view one particular document click the link above the title to display immediately.

[next titles](#) [remove duplicates](#) [save search](#) [print screen](#) [copy to clipboard](#)

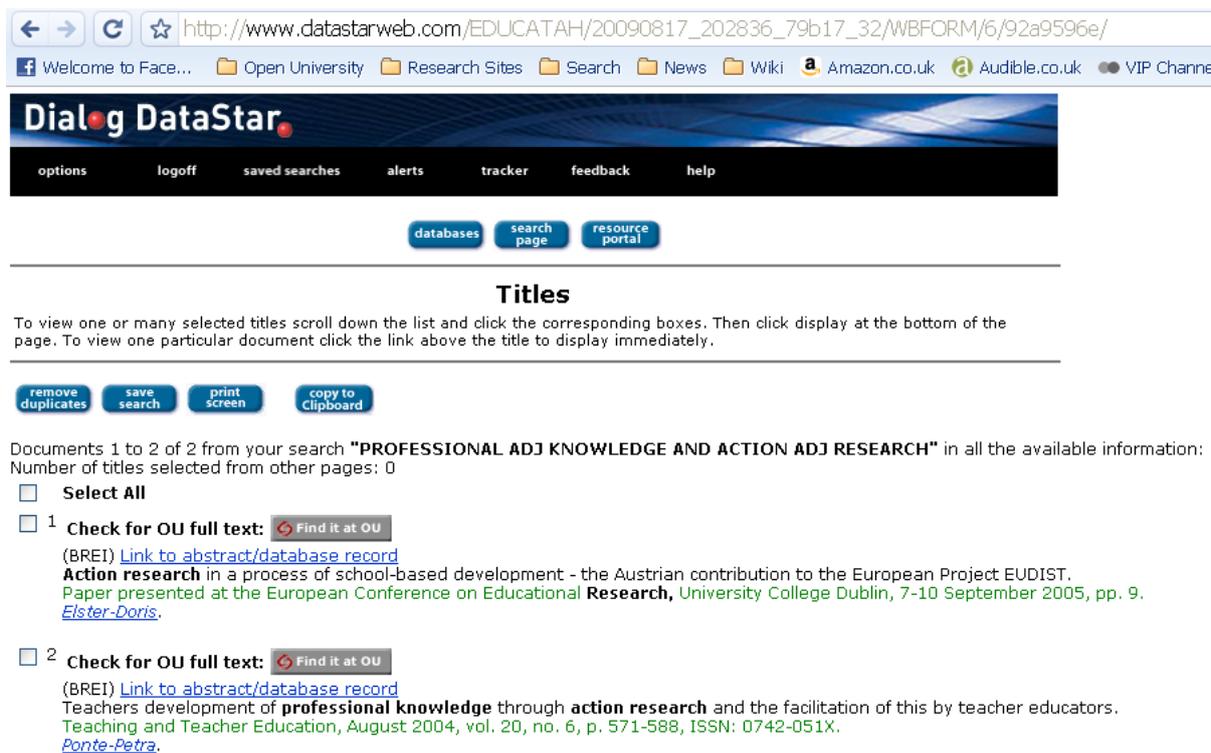
Documents 1 to 20 of 121 from your search "PROFESSIONAL ADJ DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION ADJ RESEARCH" in all the available information:
Number of titles selected from other pages: 0

Select All

- 1 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Coaching - does it have perceived and potential benefits in a higher education context? What can I learn from the experience?
Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Conference, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, 3-6 September 2008, pp. 13.
[Barrington-Ruth](#).
- 2 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Creating case studies of practice through appreciative inquiry.
Educational Action Research, September 2006, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 407-422, ISSN: 0965-0792.
[Clarke-Helen](#), [Egan-Bridget-A](#), [Fletcher-Lynda](#), [Ryan-Charly](#).
- 3 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Learning during the first three years of postgraduate employment - The LINEA Project.
Paper presented at the American Educational Research Conference, Chicago 2003. **Research** funded by the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme, 2003, pp. 25.
[Fraut-Michael](#), [Steadman-Stephen](#), [Burner-Judith](#), [Maillardet-Fred](#), [Miller-Carolyn](#), [Ali-Amer](#), [Blackman-Claire](#).
- 4 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Action research and policy.
Journal of Philosophy of Education, August 2008, vol. 42, p. 145-163, ISSN: 0309-0940

- 8 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Action research in schools - an important factor in teachers **professional development**.
Educational Studies, February 2009, vol. 35, no. 1, p. 53-63, ISSN: 0305-5698.
[Voqrinc-Janez](#), [Zuljan-Milena-Valeri](#).
- 9 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Learning in academia is more than academic learning: **action research** in academic practice for and with medical academics.
Educational Action Research, December 2008, vol. 16, no. 4, p. 495-515, ISSN: 0965-0792.
[Trevitt-A-Chris](#).
- 10 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Using a virtual learning environment to develop academic writing with first year dance students: facing the challenge of writing through digital images.
Research in Dance Education: Innovations in Arts Practice, November 2008, vol. 9, no. 3, p. 277-292, ISSN: 1464-7893.
[Andrews-Ben](#), [Thorns-Victoria](#).
- 11 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Teacher CPD: an opportunity for teachers to develop their talents and create, value and offer their educational gifts?
Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, 3-6 September 2008, pp. 18.
[Huxtable-Marie](#), [Whitehead-Jack](#).
- 12 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Critical reflections of **action research** used for **professional development** in a Middle Eastern Gulf State.
Educational Action Research, June 2008, vol. 16, no. 2, p. 235-250, ISSN: 0965-0792.
[McGee-Alyson](#).
- 13 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
I know its not proper **research**, but...: how **professionals** understandings of **research** can frustrate its potential for CPD.
Educational Action Research, March 2008, vol. 16, no. 1, p. 73-84, ISSN: 0965-0792.
[Clayton-Stephen](#), [OBrien-Mark](#), [Burton-Diana](#), [Campbell-Anne](#), [Qualter-Anne](#), [Varqa-Atkins-Tünde](#).
- 14 **Check for OU full text:** [Find it at OU](#)
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Action research in initial teacher education: an explorative study.
Educational Action Research, March 2008, vol. 16, no. 1, p. 55-72, ISSN: 0965-0792.

Example article search 2



Dialog DataStar

options logoff saved searches alerts tracker feedback help

databases search page resource portal

Titles

To view one or many selected titles scroll down the list and click the corresponding boxes. Then click display at the bottom of the page. To view one particular document click the link above the title to display immediately.

remove duplicates save search print screen copy to Clipboard

Documents 1 to 2 of 2 from your search "PROFESSIONAL ADJ KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION ADJ RESEARCH" in all the available information:
Number of titles selected from other pages: 0

Select All

1 Check for OU full text: Find it at OU
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Action research in a process of school-based development - the Austrian contribution to the European Project EUDIST.
Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University College Dublin, 7-10 September 2005, pp. 9.
[Elster-Doris](#).

2 Check for OU full text: Find it at OU
(BREI) [Link to abstract/database record](#)
Teachers development of **professional knowledge** through **action research** and the facilitation of this by teacher educators.
[Teaching and Teacher Education](#), August 2004, vol. 20, no. 6, p. 571-588, ISSN: 0742-051X.
[Ponte-Petra](#).

Bibliographic notes (the two selected articles are in blue)

Name	Date	Title	Journal	Notes
Atay, D.	2008	Teacher research for professional development	ELT Journal, 62, (2), pp139-147	Search of ELT Journal AR is research done by practitioners using their own site/classroom as the focus of study. It is a means of fostering positive professional development for teachers (p139) Aims at discovering, developing or monitoring changes in classroom practice by interrogating one's own and others' practice (p139-140) Research as a means of questioning their own belief systems, understanding what happens in the classroom with a view to initiating change (p145) Although demanding and time consuming, teacher research was found to have positive effects on the professional competence of teachers. (p146) As school administrators seem to lack the required research knowledge, such programmes should be conducted by university educators. Particularly relevant and of educational interest. There is a brief discussion of the literature in the introduction section. The project is described in brief along with the participants in the study (sample). Data collection and analysis is discussed although rather briefly. Triangulation? Conclusions are appropriate given the evidence discussed. Potential article for review.
Avis, J.	2003	Work based knowledge, evidence-informed practice	British Journal of Educational Studies, 51, (4), pp369-389	From the Teacher Educational Group (TEG) Bibliography Lacks focus on professional development but does have some interesting comments on systematic reviews. Interesting commentary on practitioner research although this article is

Name	Date	Title	Journal	Notes
		and education		likely to be more for background purposes.
Bailey, B. and Robson, J.	2002	Changing teachers: a critical review of recent policies affecting the professional training and qualifications of teachers in schools, colleges and universities in England.	Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 54, (3), pp325-342	TEG Bibliography Focus of this article is more on policy changes that have led to the introduction of professional standards. This is less relevant to my topic. Potentially useful for background information.
Brown, M. and Macatangay, A.	2002	The impact of Action Research for Professional Development: a case study in 2 Manchester schools	International Journal of Research and Method in Education, 25, (1), pp35-45	TEG Bibliography Potential article for review. Academic journal, peer reviewed, editor screening and anonymous refereeing. Interesting case study which could contrast with McGee's ESOL based article. It is of educational interest, there is a literature review to justify the research, the methodology is set out along with data collection techniques. Interestingly, in the conclusion section, Brown and Macatangay do not generalise their results (similar to McGee and also Ponte et al). However, no citations on ISI Web of Knowledge or Scopus, yet it was published 7 years ago. CPD of teachers is important if national targets of creating more effective schools and raising standards of pupil achievement are to be achieved (p35) AR had a significant impact on the teachers in the case study. Positive impact on their approach to work. Taught them to deal with problems in a more reasoned and methodical manner. Learnt to become more critical and reflective (p42).
Burns, B. and Haydn, T.	2002	Engaging teachers in research: inspiration versus the daily grind	Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 10, (2), pp301-321	TEG Bibliography Good discussion on research but not professional development. It satisfied the requirement to be of educational interest although the lack of focus on professional development removes it from being chosen as a final article for review.
Christenson, M., Slutsky, R., Bendau, S., Covert, J., Dyer, J., Risko, G. and Johnston, M.	2002	The rocky road of teachers becoming action researchers	Teaching and Teacher Education, 18, (3), pp 259-272	*This article is based on how teachers become Action Researchers. Action Research (AR) is defined as being cyclical, fluid and emergent and has the ability to empower teachers and lead to changes in teaching practice. One stated goal of AR is to promote professional development (this links to the article by Oja and Pine 1987). Although the article concentrates on teachers going through the process of becoming AR's and not on professional development, it is potentially interesting when trying to establish AR in an EFL environment when EFL teachers are attempting to use AR for the first time. This is a good background article, possibly not suitable for one of the main selections due to its lack of academic rigour.
Crookes, G.	1993	Action research for second language teachers: going beyond teacher research	Applied Linguistics, 14, (2), pp130-144	More related to action research. Quite theoretical. Certainly of educational interest and cited other literature to make its case. However, there is a lack of focus on professional development.
Daoud, S. A.	1999	EFL/ESP teacher development and classroom innovation through teacher-initiated action research	http://hdl.handle.net/10068/582625 Warwick University	Grey literature – Thesis Open SIGLE, Thesis.com Unable to locate a full copy of this thesis.
Elliot, J. Battersby,	2002	Working 'against the grain': a	Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 10, (2),	TEG Bibliography This is written in the form of a discussion between members of

Name	Date	Title	Journal	Notes
J., Boddington, D., Brown, K., Doherty, P., Haydn, T., Nardi, E. and Shreeve, A.		conversation piece from the academy about the experience of sustaining collaborative research with teachers	pp323-348	a project team and, therefore, does not really meet the requirements of the “25 things you should look for”. Useful for background information.
Elliott, J. and Tsai, C. T.	2008	What might Confucius have to say about action research?	Educational Action Research, 16, (4), pp569-578	Search of Educational Action Research volumes online Interesting background reading.
Evans, L.	2002	What is teacher development?	Oxford Review of Education, 28, (1), pp 123-138	TEG Bibliography Useful definitions of teacher development and professional development. P125, “professional development as a process of enhancing teaching’s professional status by expanding the knowledge base upon which the profession draws” Talks about the teacher moving from being a restricted to extended professional. Teacher development as personal, professional and social development. The teacher development process involving new ideas and suggestions, trying them out in a collaborative manner. P125 professional development involves investigating their practice to construct their own theories of teaching. There is a clear educational purpose to the article and the literature is reviewed to provide justification. However, action research is only really hinted at and does not form a main component of the article which should, therefore, be used for background purposes only.
Halton, M. J.	2004	Putting professional development in to action by putting action into professional development in second level schools in Ireland	Educational action research, 12, (1), pp127-144	TEG Bibliography Very interesting article. AR as a possible vehicle for professional development. P132, “the teacher who adopts a research stance is still an innovator” P135, the purpose of AR as professional development is knowledge, autonomy and responsibility. P135 KEY QUOTE, “The pursuit of professional knowledge is a chief aim of educational action research in the view of academics involved in educational professional development. The aim of all research should be the pursuit of new knowledge, whether improved practice or improved conceptual understanding”. P135 KEY QUOTE, “practitioners develop new knowledge about their own practice through action and reflection on that action”. P135, action research will not be accepted with open arms. There needs to be teacher involvement from the outset. Issues of privacy, territoriality and hierarchy are not going to be relinquished easily. But action research is collaborative and teachers can support one another. Certainly of educational interest with justification through a literature review. The Marino project is outlined although in more of a descriptive manner than analytical. The methodology, sample and data collection sections are weaker with regard to this article.
Harrison, J. Lawson, T. and Worthey, A.	2005	Action research and the professional development of Induction Tutors: some unforeseen impacts and pitfalls. What do	Journal of In-service Education, 31, (1), pp83-104	TEG Bibliography Interesting article with educational value and backed up by literature. Somewhat outside of my professional area although still has relevance. Keep this for background purposes.

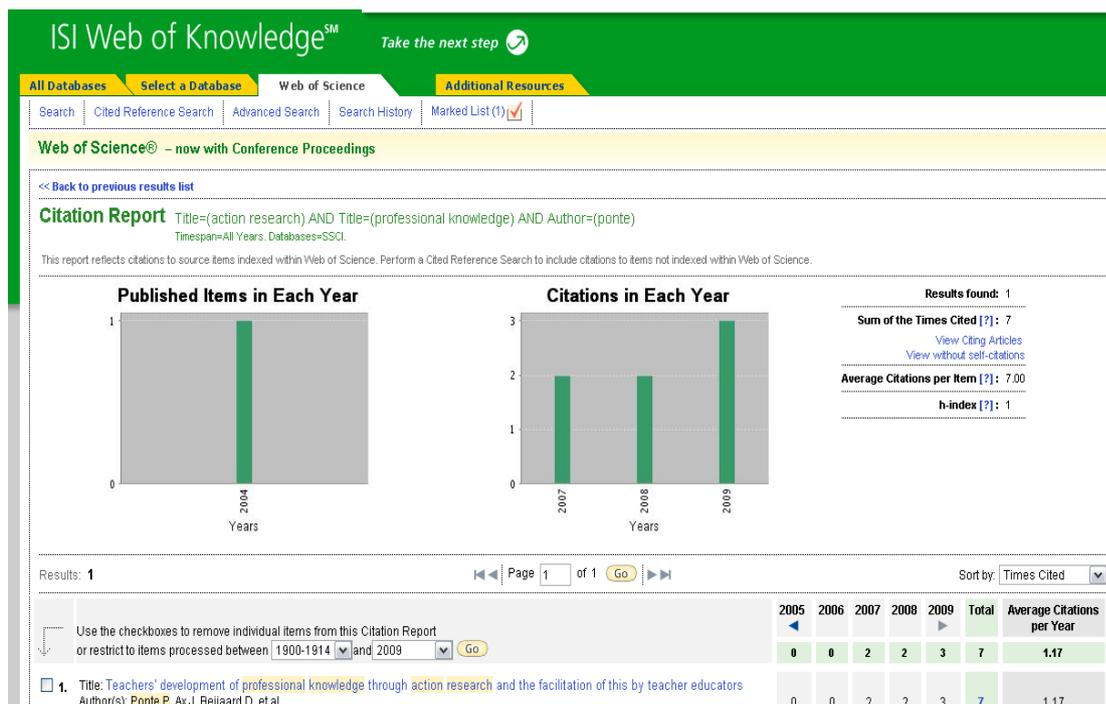
Name	Date	Title	Journal	Notes
		we learn?		
James, E. A.	2006	A study of participatory action research as professional development for educators in areas of educational disadvantage	Educational Action Research, 14, (4), pp525-533	Search of Educational Action Research journal online *Interesting article about the use of PAR to engage administrators and teachers as well as the use of PAR in the process of professional development through which to address educational disadvantage. Greenwood and Levin's quote about AR creating social change because of the involvement and engagement of the participants in solving a problem as well as researching it. Overall, the evidence showed that the PAR methodology when used as a professional development tool enhanced participants' capacity to address the issues they studied. They developed a feeling of their own expertise. The greater the 'healthy dissatisfaction' the educator had with the issue being studied, the greater the increased awareness of their own professional capacity. This methodology also emerged as a way to enlist educators in a cycle of action and measurement, resulting in increased belief in their own expertise.
Kemmis, S.	2006	Participatory action research and the public sphere	Educational Action Research, 14, (4), pp459-476	Search of Educational Action Research journal online More focused on action research and 5 methods of action research which are deemed less appropriate. Kemmis suggests that one inappropriate form of AR is when improvements in practice are seen from the perspectives of the practitioners only and the voices of other participants, such as students, are ignored. This privileges the voices of the professionals over those of other project participants. This is an important contrast to both McGee and Ponte et al. Although more for background, due to its focus on AR and not professional development, the above comments are very useful.
Knight, P.	2002	A systematic approach to professional development: learning as practice	Teaching and Teacher Education, 18, (3), pp229-241	TEG Bibliography Does professional learning really happen in the ways assumed by 'delivery models' which concentrate on the provision of courses, workshops and other events? Compare this with current EFL professional development workshops. The heart of professional development is good, everyday practice that purposefully keeps improving itself through fresh problem-working. "If professional work is highly practical then it will be largely unsuited to enhancement by conventional lecture or other mainly verbal forms of presentation". EFL may be in the same boat here. Will a series of workshops being planned at present at my school lead to an enhancement in professionalism or professional development?
McGee, A.	2008	Critical reflections of action research used for professional development in a Middle Eastern Gulf State	Educational Action Research, 16, (2), pp235-250	Search of BEI and ERIC, keywords "Action research" AND "professional development" Potential article for review. Professionally relevant to my work in EFL and with experiences with professional development. Peer review, editor screening, anonymous refereeing. No citations on ISI Web of Knowledge or Scopus although professional relevance may be of more importance here. Also, the article was only published in 2008. The article is of educational interest and there is a literature review to justify the research. The methodology and sample is outlined and data collection is discussed although the analysis less so. This may have an impact on validity. In terms of the claims and the evidence, analysis of the evidence will be required due to reasons of plausibility and credibility of the claims. One main assumption is that professional development leads to educational improvement, yet educational improvement does not form part of any of the claims. The conclusions do not generalise beyond the scope of the author's

Name	Date	Title	Journal	Notes
				research project although some basic generalisations are made.
Ponte, P.	2002	How teachers become action researchers and how teacher educators become their facilitators	Educational Action Research, 10, (3), pp399-422	Search of Educational Action Research journal online *Consideration of 5 developments in professional attitudes that teachers go through as they master AR: attitudes to practice, research, understanding, initiative, demarcation and functionality. The development and application of professional knowledge are aspects of a cyclical process that teachers are themselves responsible for. There are also definitions of professional knowledge given (p402). Interesting angle on teachers becoming AR's and the professional skills and attitudes they develop along the way. Praxis – reflective knowledge in and through action. Schon argued that teachers develop professional knowledge through a process of defining and solving problems – theorising. There would be a discrepancy between the 'desired manifestations' and the 'real manifestations'. Action research tasks – vision, evidence, interpretation and explanation, dialogue, improvement and ethics. This is of educational interest and there is a distinct academic style to the article. The focus is more on AR itself although there is mention of professional development.
Ponte, P., Ax, J., Douwe, B. and Wubbels, T.	2004	Teachers' development of professional knowledge through action research and the facilitation of this by teacher educators	Teaching and Teacher Education, 20, (6), pp571-588	Very relevant. Potential article for review. Academic quality article from peer reviewed journal, editor screening and refereeing. 7 citations according to ISI Web of Knowledge and 13 citations on Scopus. European case study. Could be generalised to an EFL context? Good balance between theory and practice. Discusses two levels of professional knowledge, the first containing 3 domains of knowledge – ideological, empirical and technological – and the second involving greater insights and understanding of these first level domains through action research. Traditional delivery of professional development, through lectures and workshops, remains within the first level of knowledge. Furthermore, it could be argued that due to the managerialist top-down approach in EFL, the ideological and empirical domains of knowledge are not as open to question by practitioners, leaving them only able to question the technological domain. Consider this in relation to Ball's "discourse of right" (Reader 2007, p111). Moore's pathologization may also be relevant (Reader 2007, p130). Teachers only being able to question the technological domain of knowledge is like the "confessional technique" (Ball, 2007, p111) whereby any divergence from the school curriculum is seen as requiring correction. Reflective practice is seen as "symptomatic" (Moore, 2007, p122) whereby you try and discover what went wrong and suggest how to make improvements. This is because reflective practice attempts to achieve best practice. This article is certainly of educational interest and a detailed literature review is presented. The methodology behind the study is presented in detail, as is the sample, data collection and analysis of the data. Triangulation is specifically mentioned which should strengthen validity. The claims are backed up by evidence which comes from different sources. As with McGee, there seems to be an assumption that professional development leads to educational improvement. Is this necessarily the case? Again, educational improvement does not form part of the main claims. The conclusions are based on the evidence provided and little generalisation is attempted.
Reis Jorge J.M.	2000	On becoming a teacher researcher in an academic	Available from: http://hdl.handle.net/10068/566716	Grey literature – Thesis Open SIGLE, Thesis.com Full copy of the thesis not available

Name	Date	Title	Journal	Notes
		context of in-service education case study of a group of EFL teachers	Bristol University	
Shifferaw, M. and Burton, J.	2008	Action research in adult education: Academic practitioner partnership in Washington DC.	Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal, 2, (2), pp109-112	Search of BEI and ERIC, keywords “action research” AND “professional development” *This project was set up to test the effectiveness of AR as a professional development model for adult basic education in Washington DC. It was discovered that teachers gained professionally from their experiences in the AR projects and were encouraged to reflect on their practices and to take actions to improve teaching and learning. There was also a positive effect on the students with examples of increased attendance and improved reading ability. Teachers were also using more relevant and authentic materials in class. Of educational interest although less academic in style.
Smeets, K. and Ponte, P.	2009	Action research and teacher leadership	Professional development in Education, 35, (2), pp 175-193	The focus of this article is different from the topic I am investigating. It is of educational interest and meets the requirements of the “25 things to look for” in terms of literature reviews, explanation of methodology, sampling and data collection and analysis. The focus on teacher leadership makes it less useful in terms of an article for review so it should be used for background purposes.
Somekh, B. and Zeichner, K.	2009	Action research for educational reform: remodelling action research theories and practices in local contexts	Educational Action Research, 17, (1), pp5-21	Not focused on professional development although does have some interesting comments on “globalisation from below” which may be useful from an EFL point of view.
Stevenson, R.	1991	Action research as professional development: a US case study of inquiry-oriented inservice education.	Journal for Education for Teaching, 17 (3), pp 277-292	Less focus on professional development although interesting background on AR.
Thorne, C. and Qiang, W.	1996	Action research in language teacher education	ELT Journal, 50, (3), pp254-262	ELT Journal search “anyone who learns some English can teach the language, regardless of whether or not they know anything about teaching and learning” – the state of teaching in China and similar in some respects to EFL although most EFL schools to have minimum qualification requirements like the CELTA. “no notion of methodological improvement enters into their calculations” – this could link into professional development, teach using the same methodology only do it better. Symptomatic and confessional approach. What if the methodology is flawed?
Vogrinc, J. and Zuljan, M. V.	2009	Action research in schools – an important factor in teachers’ professional development	Educational Studies, 35, (1), pp53-63	Search of BEI and ERIC, keywords “action research” AND “professional development” *This article includes some very useful definitions and discussions on what is meant by professional development and makes links between research and professional development. It suggests that the teacher should be a reflective practitioner and that they should be continuously motivated to undertake research work. A “research culture” should be developed at school. Perhaps one of the 2 articles to select for review as it does contain very useful rationale section on professional development and action research.

Name	Date	Title	Journal	Notes
Zamorski, B. and Bulmer, M.	2002	Engaging teachers in research: teacher engagement in research as professional development	Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 10 (2), pp279-291	P290, concerning the de-professionalism and re-professionalism of teachers as a result of the function of research being conducted – research for accountability or research for curiosity.

ISI Web of Knowledge Citation report for Ponte et al (2004)



SCOPUS Citation Report for Ponte et al (2004)

SCOPUS
[Search](#) [Sources](#) [Analytics](#) [My Alerts](#) [My List](#) [My Profile](#)

Quick Search

[Citation Overview](#) Citations received since 1996

This is a citation overview for a set of 1 documents.

Overview options [Close](#)

Exclude from citation overview: Self citations of all authors

Sort Documents: Year descending

Date Range: 2007 to 2009

1 Cited Documents save to list		Citations						total
		<2007	2007	2008	2009	subtotal	>2009	
<input type="button" value="Delete"/>	Total	3	5	3	2	10	0	13
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2004 Teachers' development of profess...	3	5	3	2	10		13

Display Documents 1 to 1

[Search](#) [Sources](#) [Analytics](#) [My Alerts](#) [My List](#) [My Profile](#)

SCOPUS Citation Report for McGee (2008)

SCOPUS
[Search](#) [Sources](#) [Analytics](#) [My Alerts](#) [My List](#) [My Profile](#)

Quick Search

[Citation Overview](#) Citations received since 1996

Author: McGee, Alyson

Overview options [Close](#)

Exclude from citation overview: Self citations of selected author Self citations of all authors

Sort Documents: Year descending

Date Range: 2007 to 2009

1 Cited Documents save to list		Citations						total
		<2007	2007	2008	2009	subtotal	>2009	
<input type="button" value="Delete"/>	Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2008 Critical reflections of action r...					0		0

Display Documents 1 to 1

[Search](#) [Sources](#) [Analytics](#) [My Alerts](#) [My List](#) [My Profile](#)

Appendix 2: Analysis of the Two Articles Selected for Review

Summary and Analysis - McGee, A. (2008) Critical reflections of action research for professional development in a Middle Eastern Gulf State, *Educational Action Research*, 16, (2), pp235-250.

SUMMARY	COMMENTS
<p>The focus of the research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The “research focus” – a general set or type of phenomenon about which the article is drawing conclusions. ➤ The rationale as to why the author is doing this research. ➤ Why is the focus of the research important? ➤ Is there an Initial Statement? 	<p>The continuous professional development of teachers is seen as being vitally important to the achievement of educational standards. If teachers are able to research their own practice then that will greatly assist in their professional development. Action research is a particularly good way of doing this as it helps to produce knowledge and can also lead to changes in practice. This action research project was introduced to try and improve teaching practice and to create more effective teaching and learning situations. It was seen as necessary to improve the levels of English of students entering universities in this State and quality professional development was seen as a way of improving the ESOL teachers’ practice and thus the English levels of the students. The ESOL advisers had experienced more traditional forms of professional development in the past, such as lectures and workshops, but these had not been so successful particularly in respect of how to transfer the knowledge gained from these workshops into practical classroom situations. Furthermore, despite gaining in knowledge, the ESOL advisers still considered there to be a large gap between theory and practice. As a result, the action research project was introduced to try and improve the teaching and learning situations for the ESOL advisers and to inform and improve their professional practice.</p>
<p>The information about the cases investigated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The focus of the research relates to the general phenomenon about which the study makes claims. ➤ The cases studied relate to the specific phenomenon located in a place or time about which data has been collected. 	<p>This action research project was conducted in a Middle Eastern Gulf State (which one is not stated). 67 ESOL advisers employed by the State’s Ministry of Education and working at various schools throughout the country took part in the project although their participation was a requirement of their job rather than being voluntary. It lasted one year and was facilitated by the Professional Development Team, comprising 4 members from the American accredited university.</p>
<p>The main sources of data used and how the author accessed them</p>	<p>Four one-day sessions were facilitated by the Professional Development Team at 2 of the university’s main campuses located in 2 main cities. The participants travelled to whichever place was closest to them. These sessions were designed to act as forums for the participants to discuss and share ideas and concepts as well as methodological and ideological issues. Members of the professional development team kept journals for shared reflection. Some ESOL advisers chose to keep reflective journals during the project for shared discussion. Because they were written in Arabic, the contents of the journals were discussed orally. Many of the ESOL advisers were not comfortable with recorded interviews so much of the project’s work was discussed orally with members of the professional development team taking co-constructed notes (field notes). Each group meeting at the university gave oral progress reports. At the end of these sessions each adviser gave a written evaluation of the session, these being anonymous. The final written reports also contained the groups’ written reflections not only of their action research projects but also on the professional development process and what they learned from it.</p>
<p>The central claims made by the authors and the evidence offered in support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conclusions relate to the focus of the study. ➤ The main claims relate to the cases investigated. ➤ The main claims are findings that refer specifically to the cases investigated. 	<p>The main argument is that action research for professional development offers answers to the problems created by more traditional forms of professional development. The claims made in this regard are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR has a focus on practice and is situated in practice, with participants finding it motivating due to its bottom-up approach. • AR involves cycles of review and reflection. Sharing reflection encouraged the resolution of disputes and avoided the polarization of views. This moved the participants from a position of relative subjectivity to one of critical subjectivity.

SUMMARY	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Everything else over and above this should be left for the conclusions. ➤ Types of claims: definitions; factual (descriptions and evaluations); value claims (evaluations and prescriptions). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gap between theory and practice was reduced through the reconstruction of knowledge by the participants. This knowledge was situated in practice and also socially constructed in the context of this Middle Eastern country. • AR helped to create a culture of learning and questioning. • AR encouraged collaboration among the participants and increased their levels of motivation as they felt that this collaboration was assisting their learning. • Ownership and control of the project along with the non-voluntary nature and competitive nature of the project were cited as being problematic.
<p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Theoretical inference ➤ Empirical generalisation 	<p>Action research can be a powerful and positive force in educational professional development. It promotes research that is “democratic, participatory, empowering and life-enhancing”. AR should not be reduced to a method, with the theories and values informing it being forgotten. When planning out an AR project, the culture and context should be taken into account.</p>

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION	COMMENTS
<p>The focus of the research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relevance of the rationale ➤ Justification for the research ➤ Validity of the research ➤ What values is the study based on? 	<p>The research was justified on the basis that previous traditional professional development had not been successful and had not managed to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Also, professional development is linked to improvements in educational standards. There is evidence to suggest that sustained professional development can be achieved through inquiry led research. However, little research has been done on action research with in-service teacher educators like ESOL advisors.</p> <p>The research is based on a number of values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The improvement of educational standards • Concerns about the level of English of students entering university • Professional development of teachers as a means of improving standards <p>These values are discussed in the paper although are only to be implied as values. They appear legitimate thus making the focus relevant.</p>
<p>The information about the cases investigated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is there any reason to consider this inaccurate? 	<p>It is unlikely that this information be inaccurate as much could be obtained through basic observation. Has enough information been given to make a judgement on validity? It is uncertain at this point.</p>
<p>The main sources of data used and how the author accessed them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Quantitative and qualitative methods/mixed methods. ➤ Have the authors provided a detailed description of their data collection methods? ➤ Have the authors explained how the data was analysed? 	<p>Mainly qualitative methods have been used.</p> <p>Basic information has been given about the methods of data collection. There was a great deal of oral discussion of projects, journals (because they were written in Arabic) although it is not clear if this was recorded for analysis purposes.</p> <p>How were the oral progress reports structured and analysed? How were the written evaluations structured and analysed?</p> <p>Interviews were not conducted as the participants did not feel comfortable doing these. Is this significant?</p> <p>It is necessary to have more information about how the data was collected and, in particular how it was analysed.</p> <p>Is the data appropriate and valid? The collection of the data and the data itself would appear appropriate but in order to consider its validity it is necessary to see how the data was analysed and triangulated.</p>
<p>The central claims made by the authors and the evidence offered in support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is there a link between the rationale and the values the study is based on? ➤ Is this evident in the case study? ➤ Quality of the evidence presented in support of the main claims. ➤ Any omissions? 	<p>The rationale and the values upon which the study is based appear closely related. Relevance and validity?</p> <p>Relevance – the research should be of importance and should contribute to existing knowledge. Both of these are relevant here. Improving educational standards through professional development would certainly be considered important. The research also has the potential to add to existing knowledge due to the lack of previous research done.</p> <p>What about the values and the main claims?</p> <p>One of the values concerns the improvement of educational standards through professional development of teachers. Did the action research project actually manage to do that? Through the improvement of professional development of teachers, did the students similarly benefit, did the level of English ability of university entrants improve? If this is one of the values</p>

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION	COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consideration of validity. 	<p>underpinning the research, you would expect one of the main claims to be related to it. Instead, the research focuses on the benefits of professional development for the teachers. This is a potential omission (which also relates to Ponte et al's research). However, as one of the other values concerns the professional development of teachers, the research can be considered to be of relevance.</p> <p>Quality of the evidence? Are the main claims plausible and credible? For them to be plausible they would have to be capable of being accepted at face value without further evidence. In this case, evidence would be required to back up the claims. Credibility relates to the researcher's judgement underlying the main claims and any threat to validity. The lack of information about the collection and analysis of the data is the immediate threat to validity. Consequently, an assessment of the evidence is necessary.</p> <p>Much of the evidence provided in support of the main claims are quotations from the ESOL advisers, presumably either from journals, written feedback or from discussion groups (it is not stated). The evidence would benefit from triangulation which would help strengthen validity. Including data from students who are trying to improve their English would help triangulate results.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are the conclusions appropriate? ➤ Are they supported by evidence? ➤ What about the generalisations made? ➤ Or the theoretical inferences made? 	<p>The conclusions appear appropriate based on the evidence used. In terms of generalisation, it is stated that some of the problems related to this research may be relevant in other situations. However, generalisations are not made since the cultural situations in each context needs to be taken into consideration.</p>

Summary and Analysis - Ponte, P., Ax, J., Douwe, B. and Wubbels, T. (2004) ‘Teachers’ development of professional knowledge through action research and the facilitation of this by teacher educators’, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, (6), pp571-588.

SUMMARY	COMMENTS
<p>The focus of the research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The “research focus” – a general set or type of phenomenon about which the article is drawing conclusions. ➤ The rationale as to why the author is doing this research. ➤ Why is the focus of the research important? ➤ Is there an Initial Statement? 	<p>Teachers can make their practice more professional through action research. It is geared towards the teacher’s own practice and involves reflection, dialogue with other teachers who are seen as an important source of information. “The idea that teachers can improve their practice through action research is inspired by the idea that development and use of professional knowledge interact as action research is carried out” (p572). Little research has been conducted in the past on how professional knowledge is developed through action research. Therefore, the authors are attempting to fill a potential knowledge gap with this new research which would be an important rationale for doing it. The main problem considered by the article is how and to what extent the teachers develop professional knowledge and the extent to which they are helped to do this by the teacher educators/facilitators.</p> <p>It is stated that professional knowledge arises as a result of teachers and their students trying to realise certain educational and moral norms and values (p574).</p> <p>Need to consider what insights or understandings teachers need to develop and how they should do that, when professional knowledge is defined as the knowledge of a teacher who is acting with purpose and is taking responsibility for his actions. As a result, the authors introduce first three domains of knowledge and second two levels at which knowledge can exist.</p> <p>The three domains of knowledge: ideological, empirical and technological. These exist within the first level of knowledge. The second level of knowledge involves insights and understandings of these domains of knowledge through the use of action research.</p> <p>The facilitators in this project, who were the teacher educators, had to help move the teachers into the second level of knowledge rather than teach them about how to teach, which would be in the first level of knowledge. These insights and understandings develop the more teachers devote proportionate time to each of the domains of knowledge, continuously link between these domains, have freedom of choice in how they link the objectives of others with their own objectives and how they deal with the knowledge of others critically.</p>
<p>The information about the cases investigated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The focus of the research relates to the general phenomenon about which the study makes claims. ➤ The cases studied relate to the specific phenomenon located in a place or time about which data has been collected. 	<p>This project was part of the Action Research in Teacher Education international project involving schools in the UK, Russia, the USA and the Netherlands. This article considers only the Dutch part of the project.</p> <p>Initially 35 teachers were involved in the project although by the end only 28 remained. The participating teachers formed 7 groups at 6 secondary schools.</p> <p>The ARTE project was part of an in-service program in which teachers were asked to help improve the guidance of their pupils through action research. The teachers had to form their own questions for study.</p> <p>The project was voluntary and there were no rewards for participation.</p> <p>Each of the small groups was supported by a facilitator/teacher educator.</p> <p>Neither the teachers nor the facilitators had any formal experience of action research in the past.</p>
<p>The main sources of data used and how the author accessed them</p>	<p>During the project, the project groups met around 7 times a year. In addition, three 1-day meetings were held for all the Dutch teachers together.</p> <p>The researchers used four different methods to collect data: logbooks, fragment analysis, supplementary interviews and documents.</p> <p>Logbooks – these were used throughout the whole program and were used to collect information about what progress the teachers were making with their action research projects and how they were being assisted by the facilitators. There were a number of open questions the teachers and facilitators had to answer both before and after a meeting, the results of which would be recorded in the logbook. The types of questions asked of the teachers and facilitators were kept as consistent as possible so that the logbooks could be compared.</p> <p>Fragment analysis – this was intended to supplement both the teachers’ and facilitators’ logbooks. Each meeting was recorded and the facilitators would select a short fragment of the recording, transcribe it and then analyse it using a series of questions like, Why did I do this, what was achieved here? Etc. Fragments were selected on the basis of whether there had been a turning point in the thinking or action of either the teachers or facilitators, whether either had had a sudden insight, the facilitators’ or teachers’ interventions had had an impact</p>

SUMMARY	COMMENTS
	<p>or a situation had occurred regularly.</p> <p>Interviews – 3 interviews were conducted with teachers and 2 with facilitators. They were usually asked to clarify something from the logbooks or fragment analysis. The teachers were also asked what they had gained from the experience.</p> <p>Documents – the written case study reports prepared by the teachers were also analysed.</p> <p>In order to achieve validity, the triangulation of data sources and the triangulation of methods was conducted</p>
<p>The central claims made by the authors and the evidence offered in support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conclusions relate to the focus of the study. ➤ The main claims relate to the cases investigated. ➤ The main claims are findings that refer specifically to the cases investigated. ➤ Everything else over and above this should be left for the conclusions. ➤ Types of claims: definitions; factual (descriptions and evaluations); value claims (evaluations and prescriptions). 	<p>The main problem considered by the article is how and to what extent the teachers develop professional knowledge and the extent to which they are helped to do this by the teacher educators/facilitators.</p> <p>It is argued that there are two levels of knowledge, the first comprising of three domains of knowledge (ideological, empirical and technological). The second level involves greater insight and understanding of these domains of knowledge as a result of action research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should devote proportionate time to each of the domains of knowledge, continuously link between these domains, have freedom of choice in how they link the objectives of others with their own objectives and deal with the knowledge of others critically. • Rather than teach teachers how to operate within the first level of knowledge, facilitators should assist in moving teachers into the second level of knowledge through action research and questioning what is being done and why. • Proportionality and linking between domains of knowledge – if teachers are left to themselves they focus on insights into what they plan to do (technological domain) rather than on insights into what they want to help the student to achieve (ideological domain). Teachers also did not focus on how they could actually achieve these objectives (empirical domain). Consequently, teachers do not usually try and gain insight into their current practice and their actual teaching situation. This is quite common in EFL whereby teachers are mainly concerned with what they plan to do rather than what would be good for the students and how to achieve that. Lessons are selected because the students have not done them rather than this would be best for the student (although it is supposed to be that the lessons are geared towards student needs). • Freedom of choice – teachers formulated personal objectives on what they wanted to work on although this was normally done in collaboration with others. They also did not consider the objectives of the school etc and integrating them as part of their own objectives. Considering objectives from others was felt safer and less confrontational. • Facilitators and teachers went through the same process of development. • Facilitation helped especially in achieving proportionate attention to the domains of knowledge and making links between them. If the facilitators concentrated on the domains of knowledge, so did the teachers. As a result, the teachers’ reflections were enriched by focusing on all domains of knowledge.
<p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Theoretical inference ➤ Empirical generalisation 	<p>Teachers concentrated first on the technological domain of knowledge followed by the empirical and ideological domains in that order. If left to their own devices, teachers focused on the technological domain, focusing on knowledge on what they want to do. Reflections were mainly on desirable action and not on what they were actually doing. Knowledge being developed was mainly in the technological domain and excluded the empirical and ideological domains. As teachers developed links between the three domains of knowledge through action research, they were able to develop knowledge in the empirical and ideological domains.</p> <p>Facilitators were most effective when they offered their support to teachers on the spot and repeatedly throughout the action research project. Those who are supporting teachers in action research projects should pay explicit attention to the domains of knowledge and their associated action and skills from the outset.</p> <p>Facilitators need to be direct although this was different from traditional transfer models of professional development. In traditional models, the facilitator is working mainly at the first level of knowledge. In a facilitation model involving praxis, the facilitator is mainly directing knowledge at the second level. Secondly, in traditional transfer models, the facilitator offers guidance in a linear-sequential manner, whereby the material is broken down into units which are then taught separately and sequentially. In a facilitation model, the facilitators’ guidance is cyclic and process-oriented, whereby they focus on various aspects of professional knowledge at the same time and on the job whilst teachers are doing their action research projects.</p>

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION	COMMENTS
<p>The focus of the research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relevance of the rationale ➤ Justification for the research ➤ Validity of the research ➤ What values is the study based on? 	<p>The research is justified through a lack of previous research conducted on how professional knowledge is developed through action research. Furthermore, there is justification through the improvement of the guidance of pupils in the classroom, in school departments and within the school as a whole (this is also one of the values of the research).</p> <p>Values underpinning the research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the guidance of pupils within the schools (educational improvement) • Professional development of teachers.
<p>The information about the cases investigated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is there any reason to consider this inaccurate? 	<p>Unlikely that this information is inaccurate as it can be collected through basic observation. Has enough information been collected to make a judgement on validity?</p>
<p>The main sources of data used and how the author accessed them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Quantitative and qualitative methods/mixed methods. ➤ Have the authors provided a detailed description of their data collection methods? ➤ Have the authors explained how the data was analysed? 	<p>Predominantly qualitative methods have been used. Fairly detailed information has been given about how the data was collected, and more importantly, how it was analysed. The authors specifically mention trying to triangulate the data in order to strengthen validity. The data collection and analysis seems to be appropriate and the authors have discussed both collection and analysis.</p>
<p>The central claims made by the authors and the evidence offered in support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is there a link between the rationale and the values the study is based on? ➤ Is this evident in the case study? ➤ Quality of the evidence presented in support of the main claims. ➤ Any omissions? ➤ Consideration of validity. 	<p>There are strong links between the rationale and the values underpinning the research – that practice can be improved through action research and thus assists in the improvement of guidance of pupils within the school. It would appear to be quite a strong link.</p> <p>The research is relevant as it is of importance and contributes to existing knowledge (in the same way as McGee’s article does).</p> <p>Values and the main claims – again, through improving the professional development of teachers, did this have any effect on the students? Was guidance improved?</p> <p>In terms of plausibility and credibility, like McGee, the evidence requires to be considered as the claims cannot be accepted at face value. However, there is a high degree of credibility as the evidence has undergone triangulation which helps strengthen validity.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are the conclusions appropriate? ➤ Are they supported by evidence? ➤ What about the generalisations made? ➤ Or the theoretical inferences made? 	<p>The conclusions are appropriate and are in line with what the evidence suggests. Generalisations are not made, rather like in McGee’s study.</p>

Appendix 3: Copy of article 1 - McGee, A. (2008) ‘Critical reflections of action research for professional development in a Middle Eastern Gulf State’, *Educational Action Research*, 16, (2), pp235-250.

Appendix 4: Copy of article 2 - Ponte, P., Ax, J., Douwe, B. and Wubbels, T. (2004) 'Teachers' development of professional knowledge through action research and the facilitation of this by teacher educators', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, (6), pp571-588.