

Developing a conversational learning paradigm from which to analyse action research video data evidences

Research position paper presented to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) conference 5-8 Sep-07, Institute of Education, London, UK

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Abstract

This paper considers how video evidence can be captured and used to support action research fieldwork. The main project is part of a PhD study that aims to design professional development opportunities for teachers engaged in international education. In particular, a team of teachers engaging with students from a black township school in South Africa. This is an autobiographical study undertaken from the perspective of a lead teacher operating as a participant action researcher. Evidence in the format of pictures and narrative commentary are to be captured throughout the period of this project. The problem is to be able to make sense of video data captured as part of the qualitative research methodology. In particular, the research methods include the recording of an autobiographical video diary, along with video transcripts of focus groups.

The paper aims to explain the conversational action research paradigm by drawing on the work of Reason and Rowan (1981) and Heron (1981) to highlight the importance of common dialogue and a participative ethical approach to field research that enables rich and valid conversational learning (Thomas and Harri-Augstein, 1985).

The narrative action research methodology builds on the work of Connelly and Clandinin (1999) and McNiff, (2006) and is grounded in the framework suggested by Doyle and Carter (2003). We also agree with Snow's (2001) assumption that the knowledge resources of excellent teachers constitute a rich resource, but one that is largely untapped because we have no procedures for systematizing it. A major contribution of this research project will be the development of a conversational learning taxonomy from which to make sense of and analyse the real-life video captured narrative and other reflective data evidences obtained through participative action research. This conversational learning taxonomy will build upon the self-organised learning action research paradigm of Thomas and Harri-Augstein (1985) and Coombs (1985).

The aim is to convert case study video narrative into conversational qualitative data. Such raw data from participant learning conversations (Harri-Augstein & Thomas, 1991) can be systematically analysed into impact evaluation professional development findings. This paper will share case study findings of the international education activities engaged in by the UK teaching staff working in a South African partner school. We will also explain the qualitative research process adopted and suggest a transferable set of conversational learning procedures for capturing and analysing professional learning knowledge as impact evidence.

Introduction

The principal researcher for this PhD project is an educational practitioner-researcher who seeks to live out his values more fully in his professional life, with the aim of making an original contribution to educational knowledge and theory that will inspire others to do the same. Building on the African notion of Ubuntu the project seeks to bring humanity closer together and to influence the education of others through the establishment and development of a partnership between a UK and South African school. Putting values at the heart of education, this autobiographical self-study research into professional practice seeks to reflect on and evaluate how the education of the (principal) researcher, colleagues and students have been influenced through working with some students and their families in the township of Kwamashu in Durban, South Africa.

The stages to developing an international partnership were identified as establishing, sustaining and embedding continuing professional development (CPD). Engaging in this project the researcher seeks to show that there is a CPD process involved in developing an international link which has educational significance and that this link can be developed in different ways. The reader can then critically engage with this process and develop his or her own approach toward developing a similar partnership.

The researcher validates his actions with reference to capturing conversational evidence as case study narrative accounts from participants engaged in the partnership activities. This will be in the form of video and text data as evidence that will be conversationally analysed to show the influence of these activities on the learning of others.

This PhD research project addresses the following action research questions:

- 1) How can I improve my professional practice through an autobiographical self-study approach?

- 2) How have I promoted the values of Ubuntu, equal opportunities and social justice through my work in developing, establishing and sustaining the partnership with Nqabakazulu School?
- 3) What have I learned of educational significance in developing this partnership?
- 4) How can I develop the sense of the voices of others within my narrative and show what I mean by influencing their learning? What evidence can I bring to show that others are learning from the journey that I have taken through this story?
- 5) How can I validate my narrative and answer questions about the quality of rigour within my research?
- 6) How do I design and evaluate successful international professional development programmes?
- 7) What are the pedagogical protocols for development of international education?

Several of these questions will be addressed through the use of an impact evaluation methodology as a means of assessing the impact of this research on the Schools concerned and on the teaching profession in general. Coombs and Harris (2006) linked CPD action research with that of developing school-based impact evidences in the workplace and maintain that:

This approach towards integrating CPD teaching and learning with new professional-led research to deliver impact evidences for evaluation and ownership by the teaching profession is considered as being timely by the UK's Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) p.1.

The Research Methodology

Using a typology of research that distinguishes between the experimental paradigm assumptions of “prove” *versus* “improve” (Coombs & Smith, 2003), this work lies firmly in the “improve” social research paradigm. We further recognise that this approach to research is not a traditional one and that it sits firmly within the so-called category of “new paradigm research” (Rowan and Reason 1981). Consequently, the preferred research framework that is commensurate to the research questions and objectives of this project is that of a participant action researcher operating within a small-scale ethnographic study. We have built upon on the work of Schön (1995), Hall (1981), Holloway (2004) and Chomsky (1969) to support and develop this approach.

The researcher's aim is to find a different perspective on action research from which to synthesise a useful and unique approach that also develops McNiff's (2006) concept of a living educational theory as narrative-based inquiry. Thus, the researcher intends to extend his own learning of South African culture and education from which to develop his own and other participant teacher values as international educators.

This authentic action research field approach enables methodological inventiveness within practitioner research and validates the importance of allowing practitioners the opportunity to account for their own learning and the learning of others through a range of creative means and methods. Such a biographical case study approach towards action research is validated by McNiff (2006) who proffers the living educational theory paradigm of developing case study narrative as authentic research evidence. This will be achieved through the extensive recording of images and video data for subsequent qualitative analysis.

Engaging in a self-study reflective research paradigm one can see how practice as a professional educator can be improved through such narrative-based inquiry and fed back as improvement to teaching (Doyle & Carter, 2003). Such an applied research process underpins Doyle and Carter's concept of 'Learning to Teach' and espouses the ethical virtues of Schön's (1995) reflective practitioner as a means of authentic on-the-job CPD . Consequently, the researcher has formulated his own question(s) and has found meaningful ways of solving it. Wright-Mills (1959) maintains that the "methods must not prescribe the problems; rather, problems must prescribe the methods".

In designing this PhD project the researcher (as co-author of this paper) describes the nature of inquiry through the conversational first person voice:

I have chosen to take an action research approach to my study as I have found it to be one which enables me to get on the inside of the issue. I find that I can be creative in the way that I approach the subject matter. It drives me to act and to challenge the way that I am acting. It provides a creative energy that I can turn in to action. So when I want to raise money to help students in Nqabakazulu School I am spurred on to do so and to involve others in a democratic way.

We draw on the work of Reason and Rowan (1981) and Heron (1981) to highlight the social inquiry importance of dialogue within a participative approach to research that leads to conversational learning (Thomas and Harri-Augstein, 1985). This participative approach is also strengthened by the ethical arguments for a more democratic approach to research that is advanced by Hall (1981) and Chomsky (1999)

The methods used to capture qualitative data are as follows:

- Video footage of events and interviews;
- A reflective diary kept by the principal researcher as action researcher; and,
- Interviews and questionnaires with participants.

This range of qualitative methods will enable triangulation across the diverse sources of evidence.

A Video Pedagogical Research Protocol

The project has developed a transferable set of conversational learning procedures (Coombs, 1995 & Harri-Augstein and Thomas, 1991) for capturing and analysing professional learning knowledge as impact evidence. Conversational procedures such as Talkback have been used to both elicit, record and analyse video data and operates within the epistemology of Thomas and Harri-Augstein's (1985) self-organised learning (S-o-L). The pedagogical theory of S-o-L provides the following epistemological rationale for Coombs' (2000) concept of a critical thinking scaffold:

1. elicitation of items of meaning;
2. sorting of their relationships; and,
3. display of the final pattern.

These critical thinking steps also underpin the nature of qualitative analysis and represents what Coombs (2000 & 2001) refers to as a knowledge elicitation system (KES).

These KES conversational tools have been designed by the authors of this paper to facilitate the systematic qualitative analysis process of converting raw video data into impact evaluation professional development findings. Action research S-o-L tools such as Coombs' (1995) Spidergram and Talkback conversational templates have been adapted for this research project from which exhibits have been illustrated in the next section.

The project video author has identified some clear educational purposes from which the research rationale defines the choice of filming. Four aspects of South African life have been identified from which to capture the social evidence to address the research questions:

- South African cultural life;
- Reflections by staff and students on the impact of the partnership;
- Life in the South African School; and,
- Life in the South African communities and the inequality between communities

In a practical sense there are two key project stages regarding the use of video as a qualitative data source.

1. **Capturing the teaching and learning events themselves.** This can be called an *observational phase of video* with the action researcher as the observer. Ethical arrangements with the necessary permissions and agreements about the purposes and uses of the footage are put in place. The researcher's own UK school obtains permission for the use of video for educational purposes through a consent letter sent out to parents. Filming in two different countries means that one also needs to be aware of the cultural aspects of ethics, so that, for example, filming students in South Africa does not require the same permissions as in the UK. The ethical rationale and

use of video in South African schools is built upon the existing practice of video captured for entertainment and marketing purposes.

2. **Capturing participant reflections.** Validity is gained for the initial observations made by using video, by carrying out a second video phase that aims to capture the reflections of the teacher (or performer) and the perspective of the students (or a third party). This participant reflection of the observed practice can be prepared for by using key focus questions drawn from the initial video observations that are also linked back to the original research questions.

A critical thinking scaffold in the form of Coombs' (1995) Spidergram can be used to provide a rationale for the choice of events to film and for the key participant focus questions – see figures 1 and 2 below.

Spidergram Giving Rationale for Filming Learning Events

Figure 1

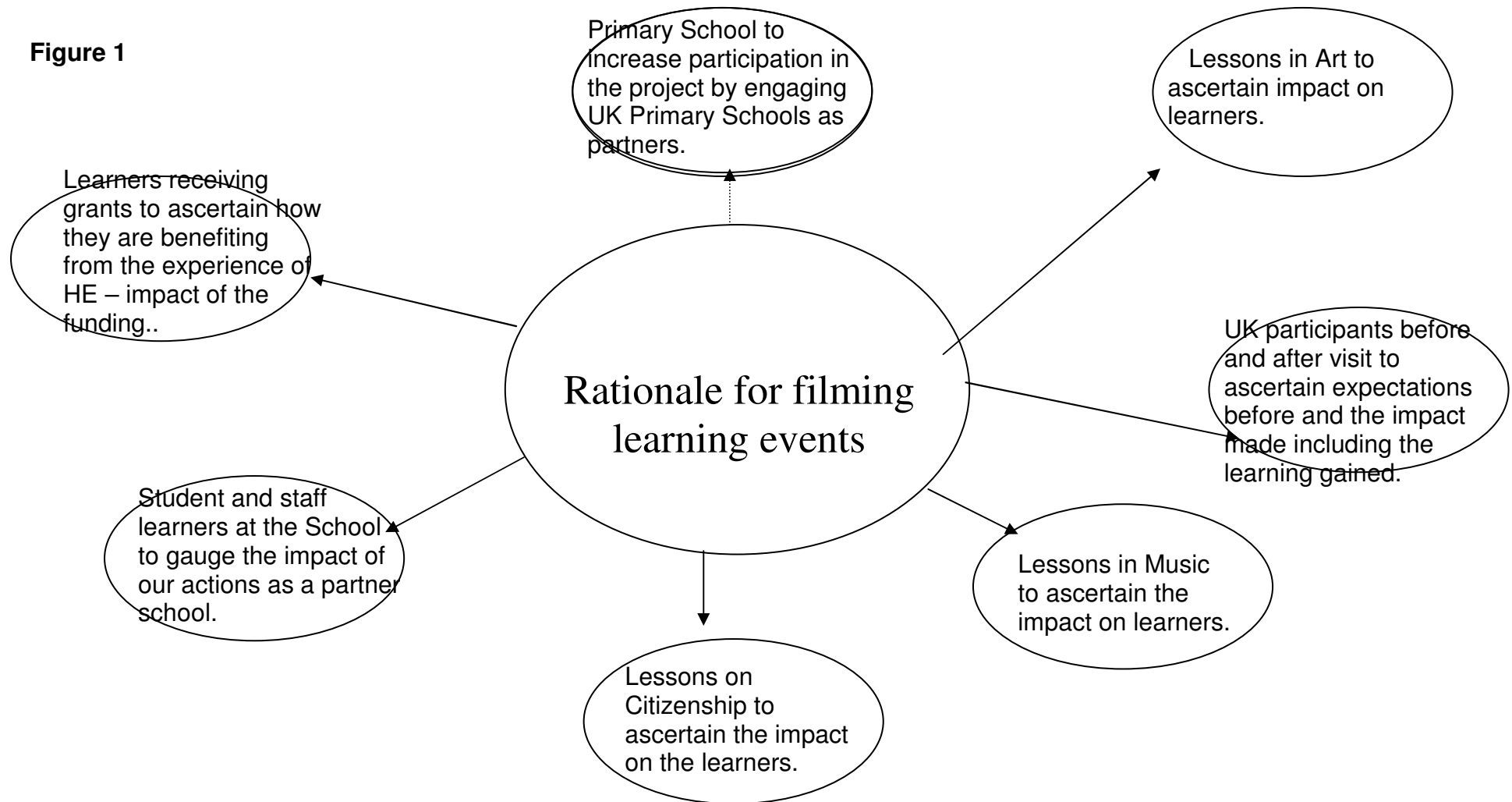
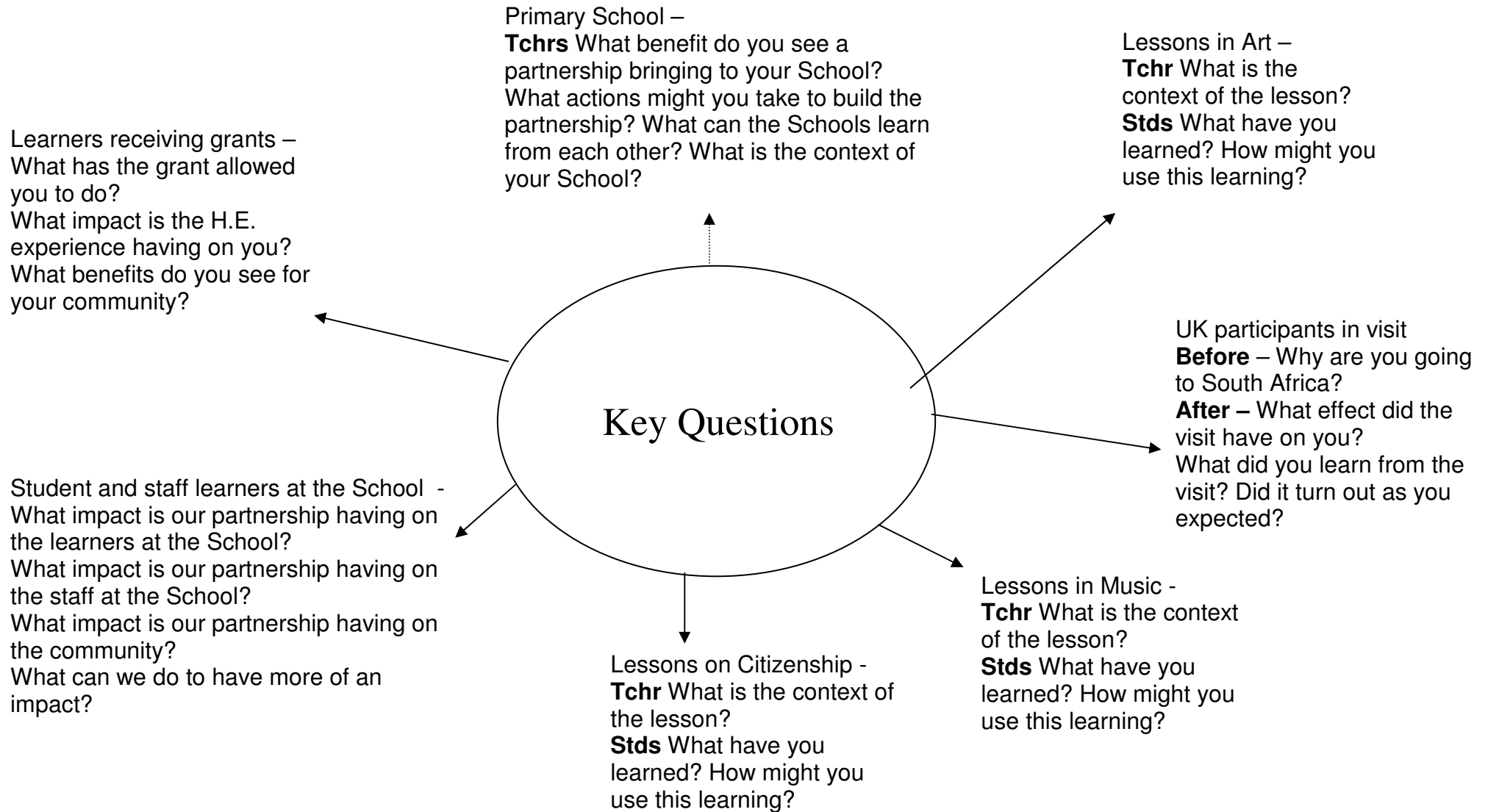


Figure 2

Spidergram Showing Key Focus Questions for Learning Events



Qualitative analysis and findings

From figure 1 it is clear that the researcher had planned to capture certain critical learning events and aspects of South African life. Unsurprisingly, having undertaken the in situ filming the researcher responded to real life events and newly discovered learning opportunities and therefore deviated from this anticipated plan to some extent. The *analysis tool 1* below in figure 3 shows the degree of variation and the rationale behind it:

Figure 3 Analysis Tool 1 – Data Capture Rationale

Video Source Planned	Video Source Captured	Research Purpose	Video Author's Post Reflection
Interview with learner receiving grants for HE	Yes. Interview with Lunga	Understand the influence of the partnership on him and his community	This was a worthwhile interview which should make a contribution to my findings.
Interviews with staff and learners at the School	Yes. Teaching staff, Headteacher and several students interviewed	To gauge the impact of our actions on the School and the community.	A range of perspectives were gained from these interviews. This should allow me to draw on these for my findings..
	Interview with Thiris Arumugam	To ascertain the impact of the partnership on him, the School and the community.	This was not planned prior to the trip but circumstances allowed me to interview Thiris. As the person with whom I had first started the link it was useful to get his perspective on the influence that it is having.
Footage of the Primary School	Footage of a discussion at the Primary School	To broaden the link by engaging partner Primary Schools.	Using this footage with Primary Schools in the UK should enable them to get a perspective on nature of the School.
Footage of lessons being taught.	I captured some of a tourism lesson and small parts of a music lesson being taught.	To identify the specific content learning.	I decided that this was not what I was concerned with. The short term gains in knowledge about art, music or tourism are less significant than the longer term influence on learning through the partnership.
Discussions with UK participants.	I interviewed some UK student participants and a Governor on their	To identify their learning from participation in the link.	The post-visit responses from participants are indicative of the influence that the visit has on their

	return.		cultural perspectives.
	I captured images of the black township community and the predominantly white areas.	To raise awareness of the economic divide in the country and raise the issues of social justice and equality of opportunity.	This is a powerful message that can be used to raise consciousness of the economic differences between communities and to galvanise further action to address the inequality.
	School events, such as the welcoming Assembly and the memorial service for a student.	To illustrate the cultural differences between our two countries and to show UK learners examples of the musical ability of the South African students.	This footage will be used by staff at the UK School to provide stimulus material for curriculum projects to enhance learning. It will strengthen our bid for the International Schools Award.

Some of the footage taken was planned prior to the visit, some was unplanned. In the latter case, the researcher took the decision to take the footage as it presented itself, very much akin to Coombs' (1995) rationale of recording authentic social episodes as they occurred in real life as part of the action research learning environment. Such social episodes represent key learning events over time and can be recorded as episodic events. From this 'situated learning' perspective the research purpose became apparent to the action researcher as he was experiencing the event. One question that was reflected upon by the researcher during his experiencing of South Africa was: How can I filter out misconceptions of South Africa? This notion of myth busting occurred fairly early on in the visit and it became a key focus issue in determining the choice of filming. The researcher was conscious of the pre-conceptions that people, and in particular his school students may have of South Africa from the media and this was an educational opportunity to challenge those pre-conceptions.

Our second analysis tool, shown in the four examples, figures 4, 5, 6 and 7, is designed to avoid "viewer" misconstruing. This enabled the researcher to make his own sense of the responses given to the focus questions and to put them in the context of the aims of the partnership for the viewer. Making the meaning explicit in this way is also a means of

avoiding viewer misconstruing. Note that the researcher is operating in the conversational paradigm and hence the research narrative is recorded in the first person and represents his authentic voice. This type of conversational procedure and narrative-based analysis of action research events was developed by Coombs (1995) as part of a Talkback qualitative analysis approach of authentic field data obtained *via* Thomas & Augstein's (1995) conversational psychology paradigm. The Talkback procedure and template has been developed here to analyse the project findings developed from figures 4 to 7, i.e. figures 8, 9 and 10 represent the Talkback record. Note that the Talkback procedure involves a systematic cluster analysis of identified narrative themes, but that the qualitative process employed is experientially 'content free' and transferable.

Figure 4**Analysis Tool 2****VIDEO SOURCE - Interview with Lunga**

Descriptor – Interview with learner receiving a bursary from us to study a degree at a Higher Education institution in South Africa.

Research Purpose – To ascertain the impact that our actions are having on him and his community.

<i>Observational Questions</i>	<i>How does this connect to the video clip?</i>	<i>What are the implications for the project goals?</i>
1. Lunga, can you tell us about what has happened to you and what you have been doing since we saw you two years ago?	Lunga’s response is as follows: “Since you guys came to South Africa and I asked you for financial support due to the financial constraints that I had from my family there has been a great change, because I am at the University of South Africa doing B.Com specialisation in marketing and I’m doing quite well. So from what you have contributed I am at a higher level now”	One of the aims of the partnership project is to influence the education of others. Lunga’s response is clear in that our partnership activities have given him an opportunity to further his education that he would otherwise not have had.
How do you think this will help your family and your community? Will it help them?	Lunga’s response is that there is a lack of finance available at home “and if I get the opportunity to complete my degree and to work, it will bring (provide) bread at home. My young sisters and brother who are still at School would be able to get educated, so that initiative (the bursary support) is part of building the community. Without me being in the labour force, there wouldn’t be bread at home.”	Again, Lunga in his response refers to the education of others, in this case his own brothers and sisters who are more likely to be able to stay on at School and get an education rather than having to try to find a job to provide bread for the family. One of the key aims of the partnership is to impact on the education of others.

Author Reflection/Discourse re: context

Lunga is one of several recipients of bursaries provided through our own fundraising activities. The bursaries are given to students chosen by the South African school teachers and they pay for the fees for the first year at the University. The students then have the opportunity to access bursaries for the remaining two years of their degree from the institution itself. Lunga is a very talented artist. One of our group, having visited Nqabakazulu School in 2005, decided to raise funds to support him through University. She got her tutor group involved in a range of activities and within a few months they had raised sufficient funds. The School does not feature Art as a curriculum subject and he therefore was unable to do an art degree. Lunga’s plan is to complete his degree in marketing and then to pay for himself to do a further degree to become an architect.

Figure 5**Analysis Tool 2****VIDEO SOURCE - Interview with Headteacher**

Descriptor – Interview with the Headteacher of Nqabakazulu School in South Africa.
 Research Purpose – To ascertain the impact that our actions are having on his School.

<i>Observational Questions</i>	<i>How does this connect to the video clip?</i>	<i>What are the implications for the project goals?</i>
1. Can you explain a little bit about how the partnership has developed at Nqabakazulu School?	Mr Shezi says that the partnership has proved to be of great value to the School. “We are benefiting a lot”, he says. He gives examples as the air conditioning of the computer lab financed by us, the learners who have been assisted to register for further studies at College and University, the payments for the extra learners to visit the UK in July. “It is of great value and we hope and trust that it is still going to develop”.	The examples that he gives are ways in which we are having an impact on the education of others, in this case the learners in his School.

Author Reflection/Discourse re: context

As a Deputy Headteacher and a member of the senior management team at Salisbury High School, I recognise that Mr Shezi, as Headteacher, has an overview of the School and the context in which he is working. I feel that it is important to get his perspective on the partnership so that I can gauge its’ significance to the School. I conclude from his response that the partnership is significant to his School and is contributing to the achievement of the Schools’ aims.

Figure 6 Analysis Tool 2
VIDEO SOURCE - Interview with Mr T Arumugam, former teacher at Nqabakazulu School.

Descriptor – Interview with Mr Arumugam, former ICT teacher at Nqabakazulu School. He was the man with whom I communicated in the first few years of the partnership. He has visited our School as part of a teacher exchange.
 Research Purpose – To ascertain the impact that our actions are having on the School and the wider community.

<i>Observational Questions</i>	<i>How does this connect to the video clip?</i>	<i>What are the implications for the project goals?</i>
1. How do you think the partnership between Salisbury High School and Nqabakazulu School has developed since we set it up five years ago?	Thiris thinks that the partnership has “progressed tremendously” He expresses pride at where it is going. “It is wonderful to see that kids are coming over (to the UK) from Nqabakazulu School”, he says. He expresses the desire to see it develop so that there is an annual exchange of staff and students taking place. It will, he says, give the “poorest of the poor an opportunity to see how	Increased motivation of students is one of the ways that the partnership can impact on the education of others. If students strive to achieve more in order to access a bursary from us for Higher Education or for a visit to the UK, then our actions are impacting on their education.

	other people live, inculcating them with the motivation and drive to really progress in life”.	
Is that what you think they will learn from coming over (to the UK)?	Thiris’ response is that this is part of what they will learn and that they will also learn from the exchange in culture and he reminds us that we will also learn from the vibrant zulu culture. “There is a lot that we can share and learn from each other”, he says. He makes the point that the students that have been chosen to visit the UK are “setting benchmarks for the others that are coming up”.	The project aims to impact on the education of my own School community as well as on the education of the South African school community. Thiris’ response is a reminder that we also have much to gain from the partnership in terms of cross cultural learning.
Do you think the partnership is having an impact beyond the School, in the community of Kwamashu?	“Most definitely”, says Thiris in response. “In fact, it goes beyond Kwamashu because you visited my wife’s School” This is in another part of Durban, outside the black township of Kwamashu. .	We are seeking through our actions to have as wide impact an impact as we possibly can.

Author Reflection/Discourse re: context

This discussion gives me an insight in to the impact that our partnership is having on the learners at Nqabakazulu School in terms of acting as a motivator for them. It also confirms my belief that we are impacting on the community as well, though I still feel that I need to seek further evidence of this. The reminder of the potential impact on students and the community at Salisbury High School of the cross-cultural exchange makes me think of ways of showcasing the South African culture when the students and staff visit in July.

Figure 7 Analysis Tool 2
VIDEO SOURCE - Interview with Students at Nqabakazulu School.

Research Purpose – To ascertain the impact that our actions are having on the School and the wider community.

<i>Observational Questions</i>	<i>How does this connect to the video clip?</i>	<i>What are the implications for the project goals?</i>
1. First of all can you tell me about your community and some of the problems that it faces?	A student responds by saying that it is a good community but that due to poverty some of the youth resort to crime and that there is a lot of crime in the community. She goes on to say that they are proud of their community and are trying to develop it themselves by forming groups such as drama and singing groups. Development of such groups helps to prevent crime by providing an alternative focus. Another student talks about the problems created by	Such descriptions of the problems faced by the community make the achievement of the project goals more urgent. The need to help and support this community and to have an impact on the members of the community is made more apparent through these responses. Putting the African concept of Ubuntu (togetherness) in to a global

	HIV/AIDs, the high infection rates in the community, the resulting hunger and the problem of looking after orphaned children.	context there is an urgent need for us to show Ubuntu to these people.
What are you learning from the partnership between Salisbury High School and Nqabakazulu School?	There is a long pause before a student responds with, “I think it’s the difference between the two”. She goes on to say that we are learning from each other how we are different and how we can relate to each other. She talks about learning about each others culture. “I think mostly that we learn from this partnership that we can communicate with people who are not from our country and that we can have a relationship (with them)”.	The project aims to impact on the education of both School communities. This student eloquently sums up the educational impact that the partnership can have in terms of learning from each other and developing respect for each other.

Author Reflection/Discourse re: context

This discussion gives me an insight in to the problems faced by the learners at Nqabakazulu School. It confirms my belief that our actions in developing the partnership are worthwhile and that we need to ensure that our activities impact on the community as much as possible. Again a respondent encapsulates the learning intentions of the partnership. The confidence that it provides our students with to communicate with members of another community and to build relationships with them is a skill for life. The exchange visits provide rich opportunities for the development of this skill.

Having analysed the footage in this way I can now review my qualitative data through the use of a Talkback record. First, in Figures 8 and 9 I consider one of my key focus questions and ladder-up my thoughts and ideas related to the issues that arise from the responses to these questions in my video sources:

Figure 8 Talkback Record – Review of Qualitative Data Key Focus Question Issues

Focus Question/Descriptor – What impact is the partnership having on the education of people in the South African community?

<i>Narrative Item (Data Source)</i>	<i>Flag</i>	<i>Laddered-up thoughts and salient ideas related to issues in recorded abstracts.</i>
Interview with Lunga	1	The impact on him and others like him that have received the bursaries are considerable. It has enabled them to access higher education when they would not otherwise have been able to do so. I later met another student who had received a bursary from us and he had in his second year obtained a scholarship from a university in the USA to study there.
Interview with Headteacher	2	It is impacting on the users of the computer facilities, those students receiving bursaries and the students that have been chosen to visit the UK.
Interview with Mr	3	The impact goes beyond the direct recipients of bursaries or

T. Arumugam		financial support for visiting the UK. The partnership has a motivating effect on other students who see that there are opportunities to participate in these activities. When I later spoke with one of the teachers that visited the UK he said that it had been a tremendous motivator for him in the past year, knowing that he had been chosen to visit the UK. He described it as the “best thing that had happened to him in his teaching career in the past 25 years”. The significance of the motivational effects on staff and students had not been apparent to me before.
Interview with Students	4	What stands out for me here regarding impact is the impact on their learning about other cultures and the confidence that it gives them to communicate and develop a relationship with people from a different culture. This interview led me to conduct an interview with each of them after they had visited the UK three months later to check their learning and whether they had experienced in the UK what they had expected.

Cross Source Comparisons

<i>Number of Sources Compared</i>	<i>Laddered-up thoughts and salient ideas regarding common issues across above data sources.</i>
1 and 2	Both sources refer to the impact on the recipients of the bursaries as being significant in terms of providing them with the opportunity to access higher education. I recognise that there are issues here about whether in doing this we are concentrating our efforts on a few fortunate recipients at the expense of the many other learners. However, our bursaries are funded from a particular project, the Black Dust book project that several authors contributed to. We engage in other activities that raise funds for other projects in the School, such as the staff and student exchange and for developing curriculum links. The motivational effects of the bursaries on the students must not be under estimated. Furthermore I am seeing evidence that the recipients of these bursaries will benefit their own communities in the long run as they gain jobs that enable them to contribute to their family and the wider community.
3 and 4	Both these sources refer to the impact on the education of the student visitors to the UK. These students have been chosen by the teachers because of the contribution that they can make to the development of the partnership. Our focus curriculum areas for this year are the arts and Citizenship, therefore they have particular skills in these areas. Both sources express their belief that they will learn a great deal from the experience. Both sources also see the impact as going beyond those students directly participating in the trip, through motivational effects (Source 3) or through the communication and building of relationships between students from the different schools. We have established a pen pal project where students from the Schools write to each other.

**Figure 9 Talkback Record – Review of Qualitative Data
Key Focus Question Issues**

Focus Question/Descriptor – What is the socio-economic context of the School and how can we alleviate the impact on the learners?

<i>Narrative Item (Data Source)</i>	<i>Flag</i>	<i>Laddered-up thoughts and salient ideas related to issues in recorded abstracts.</i>
Interview with Lunga	1	He refers to the financial circumstances of his family and their inability to provide any financial support for him at University. Thus, he is relying on us for financial assistance.
Interview with Mr T Arumugam	3	He refers to the learners as the “poorest of the poor” and talks about our actions giving them an opportunity to experience other circumstances that will motivate them to succeed in their own lives.
Interview with students	4	They outline very clearly the problems of poverty and HIV/AIDs in the community. They also link the problem of crime to the poverty in the community. They talk about steps that they are taking to alleviate the effects of these problems and to improve their communities. There is a civic pride in their community and a desire to improve matters.

Cross-source comparisons

1,3 and 4	All three of these sources refer to the financial and social circumstances surrounding the students at the School. Mr Arumugam refers to them as “The poorest of the poor”. Lunga refers to his families’ difficult financial circumstances and the students describe the problems of poverty and HIV/AIDS in the community. It is this socio-economic context that motivated me to develop the partnership in the first place and it is with this in mind that I continue to sustain and build the partnership and to engage others in doing so. The data from these sources reminds me of the thinking behind one of my key research questions; How have I promoted the values of Ubuntu, equal opportunities and social justice through my work in developing, establishing and sustaining the partnership with Nqabakazulu School?
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Having laddered-up my thoughts on these issues I am now in a position to consider what themes emerge from the responses to the focus questions and what arguments I can elicit from them. An example is shown below in Figure 10.

Figure 10 **Talkback Record – Review of Qualitative Themes**
Cross Focus Question Issues

<i>Focus question areas compared and synthesised</i>	<i>Laddered-up comparative thoughts and arguments of key issues and salient points elicited from the data and emergent themes.</i>
Focus questions 1 and 2	The key themes that emerge from these two focus questions are: The impact of the partnership activities on particular individuals. The impact of the partnership activities in a wider context in ways that are more difficult to measure and calculate, eg motivation, confidence, moral and spiritual development. The difficult socio-economic circumstances surrounding the School community and it’s members that impact on the learning. The moral imperative to act to alleviate these circumstances.

Key Constructed Arguments Synthesised from Qualitative Data Themes

<i>Laddered-up thoughts of key elicited arguments synthesised from the above emergent themes</i>	<i>Qualitative data sources identified with supporting quotes and cross references</i>
There is widespread recognition that the partnership is having an impact.	Source 1 – “There has been a great change” Source 2 - “We are benefiting a lot” Source 3 - The partnership has “progressed tremendously”
The partnership activities are having an impact beyond those that are directly receiving financial assistance.	Source 1 - “If I get the opportunity to complete my degree and to work, it will bring (provide) bread at home. Source 3 - The students that have been chosen to visit the UK are “setting benchmarks for the others that are coming up”. Source 4 – “We are learning from each other how we are different and how we can relate to each other”.
My motivation to develop and sustain the partnership emanates from the socio-economic circumstances in which the School finds itself.	“It is this socio-economic context that motivated me to develop the partnership in the first place and it is with this in mind that I continue to sustain and build the partnership and to engage others in doing so.”

Conclusions

Through the use of these various conversational learning tools and procedures we have so far been able to convert case study video narrative into qualitative data and use this raw data from participant learning conversations to systematically analyse them into impact evaluation professional development findings. These ‘content-free’ tools represent a transferable set of conversational learning procedures for capturing and analysing professional learning knowledge as impact evidence.

In relation to the significance of our research as a contribution to educational knowledge we also agree with Snow’s (2001) point that the knowledge resources of excellent teachers constitute a rich resource, but one that is largely untapped because we have no procedures for systematizing it. Hence, a major contribution of this paper has been the development of a

conversational learning taxonomy for qualitative analysis of action research narrative findings. This allowed the action researcher to make sense of and analyse the real-life narrative and other reflective data evidences obtained through participative action research.

The follow-up video recording of the participant responses to the focus questions means that these responses can be re-visited and not forgotten. This suggests that there is not only the potential for the initial learning through the reconstruction of thought processes, but also for subsequent learning from the same conversation when the video sequence is played back and interpreted again. This can lead to another reconstruction of thought processes from the same *outer* conversation, i.e. a laddering-up of knowledge through deeper reflective experience via a conversational procedure of learner-learning. In our view the video is a tool that supports the role of Harri-Augstein & Thomas' (1991) learning coach metaphor in developing deeper learning through enabling the internal self-organised learning conversation.

Video also acts as a potentially motivating tool for learning and therefore represents a rich learning resource. Seeing oneself on camera is often a novel experience for people and the intensity of the learning experience is greater and more enriched, thus enhancing the learner's Capacity-to-Learn (Harri-Augstein & Thomas, 1991). Video therefore serves as a useful tool for learning and has the ability to enhance the criticality of a learner-learning event, which is where it can support field learning of the participatory action researcher.

Use of video represents one type of engaging visual learning environment that can be used to successfully manage and motivate a learner's experience to elicit new knowledge and understanding. However, there are other types of visual learning tools and environments

from which to scaffold new knowledge and understanding; concept maps, graphical taxonomies, flowcharts and networks.

The antithesis to self-organised learning would be an unsupported learning environment, whereupon the learner would have no useful cognitive tools from which to make sense and reflect meaningfully upon experience. Coombs (1995) maintains that S-o-L is not:

“...an unsupported discovery learning paradigm: To leave each person to discover how to become a S-O-Ler without support takes too long, many do not succeed and many only acquire a small part of their real capacity for learning” (p.95).

Thus, supporting learners to reflect meaningfully and construct new knowledge requires intervention. Tools and procedures from the conversational paradigm represent a useful approach.

The key partnership conclusions drawn so far from this project suggest the next stage of the PhD, which will be to develop further new approaches around international partnership working that link more closely to the design and evaluation of international CPD programmes. The interim results obtained so far suggest that the partnership is widely recognised as having a meaningful educational impact and that this has also happened upon others outside the immediate participant remit of this project.

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