

Reflexivity in action research: Exploring the role of narratives

Magdalena De Stefani (doctoral researcher, The University of Manchester)

This paper is based on an action research intervention occurring over a three-year period (2008 to 2010) in which I designed a blended professional development programme for teachers of English in provincial areas of Uruguay. Being immersed in the field, I established a relationship with participants as a teacher educator, course designer and researcher which affected not only the professional but also the personal dimension. To ensure the trustworthiness of my research, I needed to be aware of such complexity and explore it, which is why I purposefully attempted to make reflexivity an explicit aspect of my research. In this paper, I foreground the use of narrative as a tool to enhance reflexivity in action research by presenting examples of how I engaged in reflexive thinking via the narratives in my research, acknowledging the two-way process in which the researcher affects and is affected by the study. Drawing on Georgakopoulou's (2006) notion of 'small stories', I show how the narratives contained in two of the research tools I used, namely my research journal and Cooperative Development (Edge 2002) e-mail exchanges, illuminated my reflexive journey of identity re-construction as an action researcher, thus enhancing both the transparency and rigour of the study.

Edge, J. (2002). *Continuing cooperative development: a discourse framework for individuals as colleagues*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

Georgakopoulou, A. (2006). Thinking big with small stories in narrative and identity analysis. *Narrative Inquiry*, **16**(1), 122–130.