



Educational Action Research

Connecting Research and Practice for Professionals and Communities

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/react20>

To recognize oneself and others in teacher-researcher collaboration

Anette Olin, Jonas Almqvist & Karim Hamza

To cite this article: Anette Olin, Jonas Almqvist & Karim Hamza (2023) To recognize oneself and others in teacher-researcher collaboration, Educational Action Research, 31:2, 248-264, DOI: [10.1080/09650792.2021.1897949](https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2021.1897949)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2021.1897949>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 18 Mar 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1739



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 3 View citing articles [↗](#)

To recognize oneself and others in teacher-researcher collaboration

Anette Olin^a, Jonas Almqvist ^b and Karim Hamza ^c

^aDepartment of Education and Special Education, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden;

^bDepartment of Education, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden; ^cDepartment of Mathematics and Science Education, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden

ABSTRACT

Research is needed to explain in more depth what happens and why in teacher-researcher collaboration. Previous research on collaboration points out issues such as asymmetric power relations and cultural differences between professions that can potentially cause problems. This paper examines a Swedish action research project in which teachers and researchers worked together to write a textbook for pre-service teacher education. To study the collaboration, theory on recognition was used to interpret how teachers and, to some extent, researchers understand and value themselves and each other's participation and contribution. Data was collected from a two-day dialogue meeting in the middle of the process where teachers and researchers met to discuss their on-going writing. The result shows that, through well-structured dialogues, the participants transformed their understanding and valuing of both themselves and others in relation to the task of producing new didactical knowledge. This is interpreted as transformed self-recognition for the teachers, who started to acknowledge themselves as knowledge producers. This transformation was crucial for developing the mutual recognition through which new didactical knowledge emerged as a result of the collaboration.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 9 February 2020
Accepted 26 January 2021

KEYWORDS

Teacher-researcher collaboration; recognition; teaching dilemmas; practice-based research; dialogue

Introduction

Practice-based research, involving teacher-researcher collaboration, has been argued for as a means to bridge the gap between research and practice and to contribute to school development and professional learning (Gibbons 1994; Oancea and Furlong 2007; Schenke et al. 2017). In educational research in Sweden, discussion has been ongoing since the beginning of the 21st century about the need to strengthen practice-based research (Carlgren 2005, 2011; SOU 2018:19). The main purpose of this is to benefit students' learning and teachers' teaching. This trend can be viewed as a homogenising ambition to standardise teaching on the basis of 'best practice', but also as the opposite, the intention being to professionalize teachers by increasing their opportunities to participate in knowledge production in and for their own profession (Biesta 2007; Hardy, Heikkinen, and Olin 2020). The establishment of the Swedish Institute for

Educational Research (SIER) in 2015 was motivated by an ambition to promote practice-based research. The overall aim was to start with issues and questions which sprang from the teaching profession itself and to use various theoretical orientations to find answers (Langelotz and Rönnerman 2015). One way to ensure that the profession's own questions come into focus is to conduct the research in collaboration with teachers, and this is a requirement for funding from SIER. However, teacher-researcher collaboration is not an unproblematic or uncontested area in itself, in particular concerning issues of power and epistemic relations between teachers and researchers.

In this article, we report from a study on teacher-researcher collaboration, and introduce the notion of recognition as a way to understand and support this kind of collaboration. Building on Ricoeur's (2005) work on recognition, this notion is lifted to the fore as an essential, existential aspect, which addresses how the participants, teachers and researchers, relate to and value themselves and each other's contributions and participation in collaboration.

The study is grounded in two research fields with an interest in teacher-researcher collaboration; action research and didactics. Action research has a long tradition of teacher and researcher collaboration for educational change (Carr and Kemmis 1986; Somekh 2005). Didactic inquiry emphasizes both researchers and teachers as crucial actors in development of disciplinary knowledge about teaching (Ingerman and Wickman 2015; Wickman 2015).¹

The overall aim of the study is to explore how recognition of one's own and each other's contributions and participation appears and develops through collaboration in a project where teachers and researchers together wrote a textbook for pre-service teacher education about didactical dilemmas.

Possibilities and constraints for contribution and participation in teacher-researcher collaboration

There are many research and development projects in the educational field where collaboration between teachers and researchers are expected to take place (e.g. McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins 2004; The Design-Based Research Collective 2003). Collaboration develops in various ways, for various reasons and with various outcomes. Most often, the aim has been an advocacy for developing educational practice through enhanced teacher learning (Dimmock 2016; Hemsley-Brown and Sharp 2004). Sometimes there is a complementary focus on developing researchers' practices and knowledge through collaboration (Hamza et al. 2017; Olin, Karlberg-Granlund, and Furu 2016). In action research there is a long tradition of exploring issues around collaboration and partnerships between academia and schools (Bruce, Flynn, and Stagg-Peterson 2011; Platteel et al. 2010). Mostly, the focus has been to develop understanding of different forms of collaboration and how successful they might be in relation to different aims (e.g. Andersson and Herr 1998; Bevins and Price 2014); however, some studies also look into more specific areas, such as ethical dilemmas around collaboration (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2007).

A recurring problem when it comes to teachers participating in creating knowledge about their own practice is their position in such work. On a structural level, a systematic oppression is enacted, which is well described in research on the teacher profession in contemporary times (e.g. Carlgren 2009; Carr and Kemmis 2005; Hargreaves 1994). These researchers point out that teachers are seen as implementers of research rather than

actors in their own professional area. This tendency is problematic since, in the end, teachers are responsible for the choices leading to certain teaching in their classrooms. In that way, they have 'the last word' in educational practice and, so, should reasonably have the last word in educational change. Actually, the didactic research field has been developed with the ambition to support teachers' selection of content and methods, and in that way to be the teachers' own professional discipline (Seel 1999). Even so, when conducting didactical research, the problem of hierarchical relations between researchers and teachers is always potentially present. One example is a didactic project where two groups of researchers and teachers were supposed to work together to make theoretical models useful in classrooms (Hamza et al. 2017; Ingerman and Wickman 2015). The researchers reported crises in both groups when the teachers felt that their questions and concerns were not addressed at the outset of the collaboration. The researchers had to rethink their own practice in order to handle the situation and that involved taking on risks by concretely engaging in the practical development of teaching. Over time, the teachers also became involved in interpreting and using the theoretical concepts that the researchers had brought into the project, but this development was dependent on long-term, trustful relations that had to be built through mutual engagement in all aspects of the educational knowledge building and development.

Another problem, reported in the same project (Olin and Ingerman 2016), is the different traditions characterising the researchers' practice and the teachers' practice. Researchers, for example, have time for and are supposed to reflect on, discuss and study research as part of their work. Teachers are supposed to base their work on research, but seldom have time to actually read and reflect on different kinds of research or to consider its usefulness for the educational practice and situation they are part of (cf. McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins 2004). To challenge such circumstances, Carr (2007) concludes that 'an educational practice is a discursively formed and socially situated practice that can only be learned by acquiring the largely unarticulated and usually tacit body of practical knowledge and understanding endemic to the social context with which educational practices are conducted' (276). His argument aims at strengthening the role of teachers when it comes to knowing about educational practices. According to Carr, education practice is characterised by specific purposes (e.g. enhancing learning, fostering democratic values, forming a world worth living in) that are more or less hidden dispositions of the educators. With reference to Aristotle, this educational stance is described as practical wisdom and judgement about what best to do to achieve educational ends. The way to inform such a social practice is not to infuse it with externally produced theories and evidence-based teaching methods but to develop a research practice 'that allows practitioners to reconstruct their practice as an educational practice in a rational and reflective way' (282). To achieve this, time for reflection and dialogue with others are necessary in order for teachers to be able to work collaboratively with the aim of inquiring into and developing educational practice.

Research context and focus of the study

The context for this study is a collaborative project in which 13 teachers and nine researchers worked together to write a textbook (Almqvist, Hamza, and Olin. 2017)² for pre-service teachers. The book aimed to fill a gap in Swedish teacher education

concerning literature on collaborative, practice-based research and school development. The project was conducted in Sweden during a two-year period from 2015 to 2017. The three authors of this article were project leaders as well as book editors. The book contains nine cases of teaching (each one presented and discussed in its own chapter), an introduction and an epilogue. A researcher working as chapter editor was responsible for editing the content of each chapter, and these nine researchers coordinated and supported the other authors in their chapter. Each of the chapters is organised in the same way:

It starts with a description of a didactical dilemma about which an experienced teacher (or occasionally a group of two or three teachers) has chosen to write.

After the description of the dilemma, there are three short comments, two from researchers with expertise in relation to the dilemma and one from a teacher with expertise in school development.

The chapter editor then summarizes the dilemma and the three comments.

Finally, there is a conclusion written by the teacher/teachers. In the conclusion, the teacher/teachers reflect on the significance and usefulness of the three comments in relation to his or her teaching practice and the teachers' own professional development.

The nine researchers, who acted as chapter editors, were chosen for the project on the basis that they were already involved in collaborations with teachers, either in action research or in didactic research projects. They each brought one to three teachers with them into the book-writing project. All together 13 teachers participated. These pre-existing collaborations between the teachers and the researchers acted as the starting point for the project.

Our position as researchers and project leaders was that teachers and researchers could and should contribute different kinds of knowledge (e.g. experiential, theoretical, and analytical) and competences (identifying what is important, narrating, and analysing) to the writing process. We already knew from our previous research (Hamza et al. 2017; Olin, Karlberg-Granlund, and Furu 2016) that we should expect obstacles such as different hierarchical positions for teachers and researchers in relation to producing didactical knowledge in different domains (the school vs the university). In addition, teachers and researchers would probably start with different purposes in mind (e.g. developing classroom practice vs developing didactical theory), but both teachers and researchers may benefit from the collaborative work of writing a book in different, possibly unequal, ways (when it comes to development in classrooms and to producing a publication). However, as both researchers and project leaders, we were concerned about how the teachers and researchers could and would contribute from different positions and build on each other's contributions. In particular, the focus of this study is how the teachers and researchers actually related to and valued themselves and each other's contributions and participation in the collaboration.

Recognition as a conceptual tool for analysing collaboration

In partnerships and collaboration between different professional actors, such as teachers and researchers, differences become visible (Edwards-Groves, Olin, and Karlberg-Granlund 2016). In productive partnerships, those differences are seen as strengths and everybody is considered equally important on the basis of their unique knowledge and

competences (Gustavsen 2001). However, concerning the issues of power and unequal epistemic relations described in earlier research above, we would like to contribute with a conceptual framework for explaining how such obstacles may be addressed and even overcome by the actors themselves through collaboration. Here, the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's (2005) concept of recognition is taken as a base and used as a theoretical framework that brings existential dimensions to the fore to explain how collaboration may contribute to development and renewed knowledge.

A major theme in Ricoeur's work is philosophical anthropology through which he seeks to give an account of the fundamental capabilities and vulnerabilities that human beings display in the activities that make up their lives (Pellauer and Dauenhauer 2020). Additionally, he wanted to show how these capabilities enable responsible human action and life together. His hermeneutic phenomenology was challenged and criticized from structuralism approaches for not addressing the societal and structural forces on humans. In his later work, he acknowledges this by more explicitly explaining the broader implications of his anthropological accounts and emphasising the fact that we live in time and in history. In addition, he shows a more direct concern for making sense of selfhood as something that goes beyond the epistemological subject, and for ethics at the individual as well as the societal and political levels. This is obvious in his book *'The course of recognition'* (Ricoeur 2005), where he explored the meaning of recognition through a hermeneutic inquiry that ended up in a description of three central dimensions of recognition: the recognition of something (identification), self-recognition and mutual recognition.

In this study, focus is mainly on the two latter dimensions for understanding how the participants value themselves and each other's contributions. Even so, to some extent, also the first dimension, identifying an object, is relevant since the recognition between teachers and researchers is connected to the aim of creating a common content in a book (Almqvist, Hamza, and Olin 2017). Ricoeur explains in his theory how it is possible to see things clearly and to distinguish 'the truth'. He talks about critique of each other's view and the power in people joining together which affect the identification of 'something'. The joining together and critiquing of each other's view, forms what is considered important.

The second dimension in Ricoeur's theory has to do with recognising oneself, self-recognition. Firstly, it involves recognising within oneself how one understands the world, how 'reading a life' (Ricoeur 2005, 68) affects the way I understand the world I am part in. As long as one's own way of understanding the world works well, from one's own perspective, there is no problem and 'I' might not bother to recognise 'myself'. According to Ricoeur, situations of suffering are essential in the process for human beings to start recognising themselves. This could happen when there are many actors involved, which opens up urging questions about whose identification and judging of the world that should count. When my way of understanding my world is challenged by others this becomes a driver for recognising myself, which makes me able to defend and argue for my way of seeing things. This involves not only recognising my way of understanding the world but also the understanding of me as capable of handling the situation. This second part of self-recognition contains self-attestation of one's own capacity to act and to change things. Through self-attestation I can be an agent who acts responsibly in relation to my understanding.

Mutual recognition, Ricoeur's third dimension, brings explanations about how actors may affect each other. Mutual recognition requires a view of human beings as narrative creatures. This means that a person's way of understanding the world can change if she meets, believes in and makes use of someone else's way of interpreting the world. Ricoeur talks about imputability, which depends on several voices that must be involved in the decision-making of what is important and best to do. To make a worldview reliable for others, as some kind of truth, it needs to be reinforced by many voices and perspectives, 'they are claimed by collectivities and submitted to public evaluation and approval' (Ricoeur 2005, 134). Ricoeur points out the fragility of the human narrative identity. A person could easily be manipulated depending on the situation. At the other end, there is a moral responsibility for the vulnerable 'other that is in my charge' (108). Agreements and collective identities bridge the individual and social forms of human capacities. Individuals' relating to the collective calls for a second-order reflection reconstructing themselves and in this interpretation act, Ricoeur argues for a critical turn which also feeds the power to act.

Mutual recognition relates to the 'ideas of plurality, alterity, reciprocal action, and mutuality' (Ricoeur 2005, 149). Mutual recognition as 'Anerkennung' solves problems, such as dissymmetry between people and comparison between incomparables, in peaceful ways (171). Conflict is at the other end of a continuum, which constitutes the situation that one wants to avoid. To achieve mutual recognition comprises self-reflection, orientation towards the other and dynamism from disregard toward consideration, and from injustice toward respect.

The set-up of collaboration and methodological considerations

The project rested on the four methodological aspects of action research described by Reason and Bradbury (2001), 1) dealing with practical issues, 2) supporting human development, 3) being founded on knowledge-in-action and, 4) aiming at participation and democracy. The teachers' own questions from practice (practical issues), described as didactical dilemmas, were the starting-point in the knowledge production (knowledge-in-action). The teachers and researchers participated in a process of creating new didactical knowledge together (human development). An aim was to give voice to everyone concerned with the matters at stake and especially to the teachers, who are not always listened to, to democratise the knowledge production process (participation and democracy).

The set-up of specific activities to engage the teachers and researchers collaboratively was a way for us as project leaders to stage the developmental part of action research aiming at supporting the writing process. We used ideas from Nordic action research (Gustavsen 2001; Rönnerman and Salo 2012) when planning those activities (actions) and specifically one meeting became crucial in the process. It was a so called dialogue meeting where the 13 teachers and nine researchers (chapter editors) participated for two days. At this time, the cases of didactic dilemmas were written and the comments from other teachers and researchers (commentators) had just arrived. The aim of the meeting was to read and reflect on the comments and to discuss how to write the two last parts of each chapter, that is, the researchers' reflective summary and the teachers' conclusion. We as project leaders suspected that some of the problems we were foreseeing from earlier

experiences of collaboration would have to be taken care of at this time in the project, like overcoming fear for being critiqued and finding ways to make the written dialogue constructive and relevant for the reader. These were underlying aims for us to handle through planned forms of dialogical collaboration in the meeting.

In the Nordic traditions of collaborative action research there is a strong emphasis on democratic perspectives, which expresses itself through the development of many different forms for dialogue with the aim of making all voices heard (Rönnerman and Salo 2012). When planning the dialogue meeting ideas were taken from the dialogue conferences (Gustavsen 2001; Lund 2008; Shotter and Gustavsen 1999), which is an arena where theoretical and practical features are presented with equal status (e.g. similar amount of time) and groups are put together very deliberately. The aim is to form the dialogues to support the participants' possibility to be heard and to learn from each other. The set-up of the dialogue meeting is described in Table 1.

Data and analyses

As project leaders, we expected the dialogue meeting to make a difference for the participants and the writing process. Therefore, we decided to focus on those two days in our inquiry on how collaboration would (or would not) affect the participants' recognition of their own contribution and the mutual recognition.

We decided to gather written material from the two days as empirical data. It was done in mainly three ways, I) through participative observations by us as project leaders, II) through individually written notes from participants, both teachers and researcher, before and after every activity, and III) through individually written reflections from all participants just before ending, as an evaluation of the dialogue meeting.

Our participative observations were compiled to a narrative (Heikkinen 2002) about what happened during the meeting in discussions between us three project leaders in

Table 1. Activities, groups and aims in the dialogue meeting.

Activity	Composition of working groups	Aim of the activity
Introduction	All together	Sharing information
Discussions (in triads) about the comments	Teachers and researchers in separate groups	Sharing reactions and reflections, support
Reports from the discussions	A teachers' group meets a researchers' group	Meeting another perspective
Reports from the groups discussions	All together	Sharing and widening the perspectives
Peer mentoring on how to respond to the comments	Mixed groups of 4–5 participants	Dealing with dilemmas, support
Summarising the discussions so far	The teacher(s) and the collaborating author	Sharing, summarising and way forward
Dinner	All together	Socialising
Dialogue about how to write summaries and the last discussion part relating to the comments	Teachers and researchers in separate groups	Decision-making, sharing and working on ideas for further writing, supporting and challenging each other
Reports from the discussions	All together	Sharing and complementing each other's ideas
Writing summaries of the dialogue meeting	Individually	Individual reflecting and remembering

retrospect, where notes were taken and interpretations discussed with the theories of recognition in mind. The findings consist of the narrative of how the participants met in the dialogical collaboration, which follows chronologically the events in the meeting described in [Table 1](#). Additionally, two critical incidents were identified as specifically interesting in the light of Ricoeur's notion of recognition. Both incidents demonstrate a subordination of the teachers in relation to the situation of producing didactical knowledge in collaboration with researchers (which was expected according to previous research). However, the incidents also point towards a transformation, namely that the teachers gradually become more agentic in the collaboration (which was the aim for the set-up of the whole book project as well as for this specific dialogue meeting).

Ricoeur's notion of recognition was used for interpretation of how the dialogical collaboration eventually transformed the participants' recognition of themselves and each other. The three dimensions of identification, self-recognition and mutual recognition contributed with existential explanations to how the transformation happened.

Writing the narrative has involved an interaction between laying out the plot in accordance with the participative notes from us project leaders and developing the interpretations with the help of the other participants written notes. Those individually written notes were both a way for all the teachers and researchers to prepare before the dialogues in the meeting as well as an empirical data collection. Right after every dialogue there was time to write notes as a reflection and memorising tool for the teachers and researchers, since everyone were supposed to make use of their thoughts in the writing process for the book after the meeting. In the reporting meetings (see [Table 1](#)), two persons were always chosen to take notes, one teacher and one researcher. Those notes were also gathered as data.

The last activity before closure of the meeting was 15 minutes of individual reflective writing on the questions: 1) In what ways have the dialogue meeting contributed to your writing process? 2) What could have been done differently?

All notes were sent to us project leaders after the meeting as data. The participants were asked for their consent of using their notes for research purposes, which all participants accepted (except three of the teachers who never sent in their notes).

Findings

The narrative about the two-day dialogue meeting to support continued writing, focuses on how the teachers and to some extent, the researchers, reacted and reflected over the comments they had received and how especially the teachers' reactions transformed during the dialogue meeting. Situations and reflections are followed and described chronologically interwoven with explanatory interpretations with the help of Ricoeur's notion of recognition.

The start of day 1 – the first critical incident

The meeting started with a critical situation. A group of teachers stopped at the doorstep and hesitated to join the meeting. They explained that they felt uncomfortable with some comments they had received on their dilemmas and that they did not want to meet the researchers who had written those comments (they had not understood that the

commentators were not joining the meeting). The teachers had to be persuaded to join the meeting by one of the project leaders, who listened to their worries and calmed them down. They told about how they had struggled to write interesting texts, which they felt were not met with respect by all commentators.

The situation shows, as we interpret it, that there were important issues at stake for the teachers. The teachers' hesitation and expressed worries shows that they felt criticised on a personal level. The writing of the dilemmas with the help of the chapter editors had led to ways of expressing their practices in new ways. They had exposed acts of teaching that they were struggling with and wondering about. This opened up a space of vulnerability since they had described weak spots in their teaching. With Ricoeur's perspective on recognition, the situation can be interpreted as that the 'reading' of educational situations and telling of the teachers' didactical dilemmas was an act of identification for the teachers. They identified what was important and difficult to handle from their perspective as teachers. This act also involved an element of self-recognition, of seeing themselves as responsible professionals with the ability to judge their own actions, even though they felt unsure about parts of it. The critique from others at this stage became an interruption in their narrating, or identification, of their teaching that they were not prepared to handle at this point of the meeting.

Initial reactions on comments before and during the first dialogues at the meeting

The teachers' written notes, which were discussed during the first dialogue, show different reactions on the comments. Some of the teachers felt criticised and expressed a self-defensive approach:

He believes that as a teacher who likes chemistry, you should start a little cautiously and arouse interest in the students. Isn't that what I do? (Teacher)

In several cases, the teachers meant that the comments could be interesting, but they were not sure how the comment contributed to the described case. They were wondering about the aim of the comment and sometimes commented that it seemed like the commentator just wanted to open up their own reasoning or perspectives instead of contributing in a dialogue about the case.

I am wondering about the other commentator. That researcher has a more linguistic perspective, where we have been writing about reasoning. In addition, there are no connections to our work, but the comment mostly seems to be the commentator's own thoughts. (Teacher)

Some of the teachers did not agree about ideas of teaching or arguments they received and even, in a couple of the comments, expressed surprise over the commentators' perspective, based on their teaching expertise.

I experienced her comments as if she was not familiar with central content versus knowledge requirements.³ (Teacher)

These reflections from the teachers in this initial stage of the meeting show that they are mainly interested in whether the commentators have understood their written cases and the teaching context properly or not. Many of the researchers (chapter editors) at the meeting were also occupied with defending the teachers' right to be respected as

knowledgeable authors (actors), which made them question the commentators' way of critiquing the dilemmas. As one of the researchers reflected:

One comment wasn't in line with the idea of the book. How shall I handle it? Can I ask the commentators for revisions? In what sense? Help the commentators not to be judicial, but still critical in a constructive way. Should I defend the relevance of what the teachers have been writing about the case? (Researcher)

However, other reflections opened up to the commentators' ideas by recognising what the commentator ('the other') had to say. Many teachers highlighted interesting new concepts that deepened their own descriptions and understandings of the dilemmas.

I experience this text as a real deepening and theorising of my case, which means that I understand what I have done in the classroom in a better way. (Teacher)

Some started realising what they needed to add in their own texts because the commentator had asked for more information or misunderstood something.

These latter reflections are starting-points for the possibility of finding ways of working together professionally, through a critique of each other's view (using Ricoeur's theory). This could lead to commonly agreed worldviews, or the identification of 'something' that is commonly considered important, in Ricoeur's words, when the actors start affecting each other through the use of each other's voices in the dialogue.

Shifts in ways of recognising the comments during the first day's dialogues

In the dialogues in different groups during the first day of the meeting, the teachers and the researchers started to bridge each other's different understandings of the comments and the usefulness of them for the common writing of the book. The researchers who were responsible for editing each chapter had a focus on how to handle the comments and the commentators:

Can we exclude someone's comment - who is shooting outside the goal? How much are they willing to rewrite? (Researcher)

The teachers picked up this possibility of demanding the commentators rewrite. The teachers and the researchers also helped each other to see in what ways the comments could be seen as valuable, even though they might be critical, giving inspiration for further writing and argumentation.

How should critical comments be treated in a forward-looking way? (Teacher)

The last dialogue of the day was organised as a peer mentoring session where the teachers and researchers were supposed to raise problems they saw for their own upcoming writing of the last parts of the chapter, the researchers' summary and the teachers' conclusion. The others in the group deepened the problem by questioning it and bringing in advice. Many of the formulated problems targeted similar questions, which are summed up in the following example of a problem from one of the teachers:

... if one is to give the commentators 'a chance' to correct or should one use texts as they are and work from them? What is beneficial to the target group - the pre-service teachers? Can it

even be exciting to keep the comments as they are? Who should one mainly take count of: The authors of the dilemmas (us teachers)? The commentators? The pre-service teachers who are the readers? (Teacher)

This reflection illustrates a shift in the discussions, from the defensive approach at the beginning where the dilemmas were seen as the teachers' ways of knowing the teaching, which had to be advocated, to a more open approach where different voices and messages are considered for the sake of the reader. One of the teachers described how the dialogues helped her to take an interest in the comments and start reflecting on how to respond in the concluding part of the chapter:

I had many new thoughts, got a clearer picture of the message from the comments and was helped to get a grip of what I wanted to say in my last comment. That help and support came from the dialogues in different groups during the meeting, by listening to experiences from others and by talking about my own. (Teacher)

The start of day 2 – the second critical incident

The next morning, a second critical incident happened. Along with the plan for the meeting, the teachers and the researchers were discussing in two separate groups how to go on with writing their different last parts of the chapter. After a short while, the teachers brought the project leader (researcher) into their meeting and asked him to explain how they were supposed to write their last reflective conclusions. The project leader told them he could not give them any instruction since he did not know what would be relevant for them as teachers to write about. He urged them to decide together what to write. After their meeting, the teachers reported the following back to the researchers, describing what they had decided:

- It would be important not to write in a defensive manner but rather to develop arguments and reasoning around raised issues to deepen the understanding of complexities, rather than trying to simplify the problems.
- The role would be to tie the ends together but without suggesting simplistic answers or quick fixes.
- Emphasised the need to keep the pre-service teachers as readers of the book in mind all the time to be aware of the aim of the writing.

The fact that the project leader was brought into the meeting shows that the teachers, even this late in the meeting, were not confident enough as knowledge contributing authors to trust that they could make their own decisions about how to write. However, becoming an author happened throughout the process of dialogues in the meeting. The decisions made in this last dialogue between the teachers indicate that they found their voice and in this sense became more agentic.

Transformed recognition at the end of the two-days dialogical meeting

Using Ricoeur's perspective, we see how the teachers deepened their self-recognition as important contributors in the dialogical writing process. A growing self-attestation made

them take on responsibility in relation to the book production and not just for their teaching in classrooms. Especially, this responsibility concerned the pre-service teachers as the readers of the book. Ricoeur explains that humans have a narrative identity that implies that it is possible to re-create one's own position. This happened through the dialogues throughout the meeting in which the teachers' and researchers' positions in relation to the content and the writing process were negotiated and reformulated. The teachers realised that they had the power to act, both in relation to the commentators, and in the written dialogue for producing knowledge.

Importantly, in the meeting there was a growing insight that the writing of the book was primarily for someone other than the participants themselves, namely the readers. For the teachers, this meant that their knowledge and dilemmas, which were initially just their own, were given a wider purpose through the involvement of several voices in decision-making on how best to understand it and what was best to do in the future. The knowledge became imputable, in a Ricoeurian sense, through the written dialogue in the book. This condition however, had to be discovered by the teachers, and this happened through the oral dialogues at the meeting. When, through the dialogical collaboration, the participants eventually came to understand that the comments, especially the critical ones, could offer new insights into the dilemmas, mutual recognition of each other's knowledge and competences started to emerge. After the teachers' meeting on the second day, one of the teachers concluded that:

We will not be defensive against the comments. It is better to find a theme or thread, to try to interpret and nuance a critical comment and elaborate and develop the reasoning. Create some new knowledge, building on the comment. (Teacher)

In conclusion, the teacher-researcher collaboration in the dialogue meeting seems to have nurtured a capacity to become someone else through a changed self-recognition and self-attestation. The teachers took on the capacity of knowledge producing authors, which involved receiving and using both positive and critical responses on their own knowledge-in-action. Another contribution of the collaboration was the emerging mutual recognition that enabled the use of the capacity of creating new positions and actions for the readers of the book ('the life of others'). The teachers and researchers concluded the meeting by agreeing how to continue the writing process. In this sense, they had achieved a 'collective identity' as co-authors, in a much more noticeable way than before the meeting when the researchers were leading and the teachers were trying to follow. Hence, the development of mutual recognition seems to be dependent on a development in the way the teachers recognised themselves. Without the teachers' changed self-recognition, the development dialogue in the book would likely have lacked the constructiveness reached through mutual recognition of the authors' contributions, which is necessary for common teacher-researcher knowledge production. According to the participants, the dialogical collaboration in the two-days meeting was crucial to achieving this.

Discussion and conclusions

Through thoroughly planned dialogues in the two-day dialogue meeting, transformation of the teachers' self-recognition emerged, which opened up possibilities to participate in the

collaboration of writing a book in new ways. In the end, everyone became clearer about their own and each other's contributions to the book writing process and how those contributions could be beneficial in reaching the aim of creating knowledge together.

To deepen the understanding of and overcome the often-reported problems (Carlgren 2009; Carr and Kemmis 2005; Hargreaves 1994; McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins 2004; Plattel et al. 2010) between researchers and practitioners collaborating for, as in this case, common knowledge production, one argument in this article has been that collaboration in itself must be well informed. Another argument has been that the dimensions of recognition might be significant for inquiring into and being able to understand how productive collaboration works. Following and expanding Ricoeur's argumentation, we claim that focusing on the individual and collective level in an anthropological inquiry adds knowledge that can also contribute on the societal and political levels, if those insights are taken into account when new activities are planned and carried out.

We have found that recognition of one's own as well as of the others' contributions is needed, and that an establishment of such recognition has to develop, if it is not there from the start. In the book-writing project, the development of self-recognition and mutual recognition was made possible through the set-up of dialogues aiming for democratic working forms. The teachers do have a mission to contribute to school development and knowledge production in schools, but they need time and scaffolding structures if they are to become actors in such processes.

The notion of recognition widens the discussion on the teaching profession and its relationship to didactical knowledge. Of course, it would be possible to use knowledge produced in research and try to implement it in educational practices. The whole discussion about evidence based research and practice deals with this (cf. Biesta 2007). However, from our point of view there are two limitations to such approaches when it comes to teaching.

First, teaching practice is a complex activity including contingency, many dimensions and, not least, many situations that are dilemmatic in character (c.f. Carr 2007). There is not one solution that fits all situations. Rather, teachers often find themselves in tricky, multifaceted situations that they need to handle in their practice. They need to choose one way of acting or another and a single-solution alternative is not optimal to deal with this.

Secondly, if the relationship between research and practice is supposed to be a one-way communication, we miss the contribution that teachers' knowledge about teaching and learning provides. In the didactical development dialogue, the teachers' cases convey their initial knowledgeable approach to their dilemmas. They also use the commentators' contributing knowledge and their own experiences to explicate, reflect on and further develop their knowledge in teaching. For the researchers, the common knowledge that was produced through didactical development dialogue represented a genuine standpoint in teachers' knowing, but also development through dialogue with research. For the teachers, the new knowledge became significant because it actually represented changes in their teaching practice and/or understanding of their teaching. Through mutual recognition, teachers and researchers together managed to develop readiness and a widened repertoire of acts for practice, which they presented for the readers of the book. In this way, the researchers participating in the collaboration also learned and developed new kinds of knowledge compared to their everyday research work at the university.

Dialogue is a form of collaboration that has been widely used and studied (Shotter and Gustavsen 1999; Edwards-Groves, Olin, and Karlberg-Granlund 2016). There seem to be possibilities through dialogue, even when disagreeing, to be able to contribute to the construction of knowledge together. Our results add to this by indicating that the written dialogue between teachers and researchers, although potentially productive in itself, was significantly supported by the two-day dialogue meeting involving teachers and researchers. Partly, this has to do with the fact that many, although definitely not all, teachers lacked experience in receiving and interpreting, as well as in responding to, sometimes rather harsh academic critique. In the dialogue meeting, the process of the teachers becoming authors, with the position and responsibility to define how knowledge should be presented to the readers, was facilitated through them being able to process the critique, both among peers and together with the researchers. In this situation, the researchers also had to develop new kinds of competences (which in itself could be further studied). In this way, the dialogue meeting may be considered as a constructive collaborative way to redefine the boundaries between teachers and researchers, which was needed to create significant common knowledge for others.

Just as there is a tendency to lean towards an easy solution when it comes to teaching, namely that there is a 'best practice' for everyone to follow, it is equally easy to believe in recipes when it comes to how collaboration between professionals should work. Even the presentation of didactical development dialogue could be taken to be such a suggestion. Much of the literature drawing on research where teacher-researcher collaboration has been undertaken is characterised by telling the story of successful collaboration, sometimes without problematising the collaboration at all, and in some cases drawing conclusions about what works and, sometimes revealing interesting aspects of why it works or not.

This study contributes to the research area by suggesting that a focus on recognition makes it possible to explain how, on an existential level, relations between teachers and researchers influence what happens in collaboration. This knowledge brings to the fore the potential of transformation by the actors in the practice, despite all the structural constraints that we know so much about. Such knowledge indicates what could and should be considered when setting up new partnerships and collaborations. Practice-based research including a teacher-researcher collaboration assumes the possibility of 'inhabiting each other's castles', as Somekh phrases it (2005). However, if we want this to happen, we need to give space, time and support for professional growth for participants stepping into new professional domains. The findings of this study show that this may be realized by building up self-recognition in a new role with different kinds of competences, as well as the self-attestation to be able to act responsibly and to contribute on equal grounds.

Notes

1. We use the term didactics as it is used in the French, German and Nordic traditions to name the scientific discipline about teaching and learning (c.f. Ligozat and Almqvist 2018).
2. In working with the book project, we were inspired by the approach developed by Kathleen Armour that has been used in two different volumes (Armour 2014; Casey, Goodyear, and Armour 2016).
3. Central content and Knowledge requirements are two key rubrics in the Swedish national curriculum.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This work was supported by the Vetenskapsrådet [2012-5023].

ORCID

Jonas Almqvist  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2910-7800>

Karim Hamza  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4051-3698>

References

- Almqvist, J., K. Hamza, and A. Olin. 2017. *Undersöka Och Utveckla Undervisning. Professionell Utveckling För Lärare [Investigating and Developing Teaching. Professional Development for Teachers]*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Anderson, G.L., and K. Herr. 1998. "The New Paradigm Wars: Is There Room for Rigorous Practitioner Knowledge in Schools and Universities?" *Educational Researcher* 28 (5): 12–21. doi:10.3102/0013189X028005012.
- Armour, K. 2014. *Pedagogical Cases in Physical Education and Youth Sport*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Bevins, S., and G. Price. 2014. "Collaboration between Academics and Teachers: A Complex Relationship." *Educational Action Research* 22 (2): 270–284. doi:10.1080/09650792.2013.869181.
- Biesta, G. 2007. "Why 'What Works' Won't Work: Evidence-Based Practice and the Democratic Deficit in Educational Research." *Educational Theory* 57 (1): 1–22. doi:10.1111/j.1741-5446.2006.00241.x.
- Bruce, D.B., T. Flynn, and S. Stagg-Peterson. 2011. "Examining What We Mean by Collaboration in Collaborative Action Research: A Cross-Case Analysis." *Educational Action Research* 19 (4): 433–452. doi:10.1080/09650792.2011.625667.
- Carlgren, I. 2005. "Praxisnära Forskning – Varför, Vad Och Hur?" In *Forskning Av Denna Världen II – Om Teorins Roll I Praxisnära Forskning*, edited by I. Carlgren, I. Josefsson, C. Liberg, J. Anward, A.-C. Evaldsson, F. Marton, T. Nordenstam, I. Orre, and G. Weiner, 7–16. Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådets rapportserie.
- Carlgren, I. 2009. "Lärarna I Kunskapssamhället – Flexibla Kunskapsarbetare Eller Professionella Yrkesutövare?" *Forskning Om Undervisning Och Lärande* 2 (9): 9–26.
- Carlgren, I. 2011. "Forskning Ja, Men I Vilket Syfte Och Om Vad? Om Avsaknaden Och Behovet Av En 'Klinisk' Mellanrumsforskning." *Forskning Om Undervisning Och Lärande* 5: 65–79.
- Carr, W. 2007. "Educational Research as a Practical Science." *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 30 (3): 271–286. doi:10.1080/17437270701614774.
- Carr, W., and S. Kemmis. 1986. *Becoming Critical: Education Knowledge and Action Research*. London: Falmer Press.
- Carr, W., and S. Kemmis. 2005. "Staying Critical." *Educational Action Research* 13 (3): 347–358. doi:10.1080/09650790500200316.
- Casey, A., V. Goodyear, and K. Armour. 2016. *Digital Technologies and Learning in Physical Education. Pedagogical Cases*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Cochran-Smith, M., and S. Lytle. 2007. "Everything's Ethics: Practitioner Inquiry and University Culture." In *An Ethical Approach to Practitioner Research Dealing with Issues and Dilemmas*, edited by A. Campbell and S. Groundwater-Smith, 24–41. London: Routledge.
- The Design-Based Research Collective. 2003. "Design-Based Research: An Emerging Paradigm for Educational Inquiry." *Educational Researcher* 32 (1): 5–8. doi:10.3102/0013189X032001005.

- Dimmock, C. 2016. "Conceptualising the Research-Practice-Professional Development Nexus: Mobilizing Schools as 'Research-engaged' Professional Learning Communities." *Professional Development on Education* 42 (1): 36–53. doi:10.1080/19415257.2014.963884.
- Edwards-Groves, C., A. Olin, and G. Karlberg-Granlund. 2016. "Partnership and Recognition in Action Research: Understanding the Practices and Practice Architectures for Participation and Change." *Educational Action Research* 24 (3): 321–333. doi:10.1080/09650792.2015.1129983.
- Gibbons, M. 1994. *The new production of knowledge : The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*. London: Sage.
- Gustavsen, B. 2001. "Theory and Practice: The Mediating Discourse." In *Handbook of Action Research*, edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 17–26. London: Sage.
- Hamza, K., O. Palm, J. Palmqvist, J. Piqueras, and P.-O. Wickman. 2017. "Hybridization of Practices in Teacher–Researcher Collaboration." *European Educational Research Journal* 1–17. doi:10.1177/1474904117693850.
- Hardy, I., H. Heikkinen, and A. Olin. 2020. "Conceptualising and Contesting 'Fast Policy' in Teacher Learning: A Comparative Analysis of Sweden, Finland and Australia." *Teacher Development* 24 (4): 466–482. doi:10.1080/13664530.2020.1776761.
- Hargreaves, A. 1994. *Changing Teachers, Changing Times. Teachers' Work and Culture in the Postmodern Age*. London: Cassell.
- Heikkinen, H.L.T. 2002. "Whatever Is Narrative Research?" In *Narrative Research. Voices of Teachers and Philosophers*, edited by R. Huttunen, H.L.T. Heikkinen, and L. Syrjälä, 13–28. Jyväskylä: Yliopisto: SoPhi.
- Hemsley-Brown, J., and C. Sharp. 2004. "The Use of Research to Improve Professional Practice: A Systematic Review of the Literature." *Oxford Review of Education* 29 (4): 449–471. doi:10.1080/0305498032000153025.
- Ingerman, Å., and P.-O. Wickman. 2015. "Towards a Teachers' Professional Discipline: Shared Responsibility for Didactic Models in Research and Practice." In *Transformative Teacher Research*, edited by P. Burnard, B.-M. Apelgren, and N. Cabaroglu, 167–179. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Langelotz, L., and K. Rönnerman. 2015. "Praktiknära Forskning Och Avhandlingar I Pedagogiskt Arbete." *Kapet* 12 (1): 34–151. E- 2002–3979.
- Ligozat, F., and J. Almqvist. 2018. "Conceptual Frameworks in Didactics – Learning and Teaching: Trends, Evolutions and Comparative Challenges." *European Educational Research Journal* 17 (1): 3–16. doi:10.1177/1474904117746720.
- Lund, T. 2008. "Action Research through Dialogue Conferences." In *Nurturing Praxis - Action Research in Partnerships between School and University in a Nordic Light*, edited by K. Rönnerman, E.M. Furu, and P. Salo, 176–192. Rotterdam: Sense.
- McLaughlin, C., and K. Black-Hawkins. 2004. "A Schools-University Research Partnership: Understandings, Models and Complexities." *Journal of In-Service Education* 30 (2): 265–284. doi:10.1080/13674580400200319.
- Oancea, A., and J. Furlong. 2007. "Expressions of Excellence and the Assessment of Applied and Practice-based Research." *Research Papers in Education* 22 (2): 119–137. doi:10.1080/02671520701296056.
- Olin, A., and Å. Ingerman. 2016. "Features an Emerging Practice Professional Development in a Science Teacher Team Collaboration with a Researcher Team." *Journal Science Teacher* 27 (6): 607–624. doi:10.1007/s10972-016-9477-0.
- Olin, A., G. Karlberg-Granlund, and E. Furu. 2016. "Facilitating Democratic Professional Development: Exploring the Double Role of Being an Academic Action Researcher." *Educational Action Research* 24 (3): 424–441. doi:10.1080/09650792.2016.1197141.
- Pellauer, D., and B. Dauenhauer. 2020. "Paul Ricoeur". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2020 Edition)*, edited by N.Z. Edward. URL =<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/ricoeur/>
- Platteel, T., P. Hulshof, J. Ponte, J. Van Driel, and N. Verloop. 2010. "Forming a Collaborative Action Research Partnership." *Educational Action Research* 18 (4): 429–451. doi:10.1080/09650792.2010.524766.

- Reason, P., and H. Bradbury. 2001. "Introduction: Inquiry and Participation in Search of a World Worthy of Human Aspiration." In *Handbook of Action Research. Participative Inquiry and Practice*, edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 1–14. London: SAGE.
- Ricoeur, P. 2005. *The Course of Recognition*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP.
- Rönnerman, K., and P. Salo. 2012. "Collaborative and Action Research within Education: A Nordic Perspective." *Nordic Studies in Education* 32: 1–16.
- Schenke, W., J.H. Van Driel, F.P. Geijsel, and M.L.L. Volman. 2017. "Closing the Feedback Loop: A Productive Interplay between Practice-based Research and School Development through Cross-professional Collaboration in Secondary Education." *Professional Development in Education* 43 (5): 860–880. doi:[10.1080/19415257.2016.1258654](https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2016.1258654).
- Seel, H. 1999. "Didaktik as the Professional Science of Teachers." *TNTEE Publications* 2 (1): 85–93.
- Shotter, J., and B. Gustavsen. 1999. *The Role of Dialogue Conferences in the Development of Learning Regions: Doing from within Our Lives Together What We Cannot Do Apart*. Stockholm: Stockholm School of Economics.
- Somekh, B. 2005. *Action Research: A Methodology for Change and Development*. England: McGraw-Hill International.
- SOU 2018:19. *Forska Tillsammans – Samverkan För Lärande Och Förbättring*. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.
- Wickman, P.-O. 2015. "Teaching Learning Progressions: An International Perspective." In *Handbook of Research on Science Education*, edited by N.G. Lederman and S.K. Abell, 145–163. New York: Routledge.