PARTICIPATORY
RESEARCH IN PRACTICE: DISCLOSING DIFFERENCE

RICHARD GUY
UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Introduction
Difference is a concept which is being focussed on more and more in social
enquiry by critical theorists (Giroux 1992), feminist researchers (Meese
and Parker 1989), and postmodern analysts (Foster 1983).
The term itself means different things to different people and hence its
complexity. For instance, critical theorists view it as a fundamental
notion in the reconstruction of democracy; feminists link determination and
identity with difference; and postmodern theorists are concerned with
celebrating difference in place of totalising thought.
Difference is an important daily consideration for most of us. I live and
work in social and cultural contexts which are substantially different to
the ones in which I was initially socialised. I do not always understand
the differences that surround me, but it is this problematic that continues
to motivate my professional and social interests in Papua New Guinea.
My concern in this paper centres on disclosing difference which is
available in research settings. More specifically, I am interested in the
questions, 'What research approaches are conducive to people disclosing the
difference contained in their lived worlds?', 'How do people who
participate in research construct and deconstruct difference?', and 'How
can research accounts be constructed which disclose difference amongst
participants and readers of research?'.
Of course, some research approaches actively seek to eliminate difference
altogether from research even when it is evident in the data. I am thinking
of positivistic approaches to research which tend to 'exclude others' (Guy
1992a) and are intent on generating coherence and unity in research
outcomes consistent with some master narrative from a dominant culture. In
other ways, interpretive approaches to research seek a 'sameness' from the
data in the generation of categories, themes and generalisations.
The denial of difference and the desire for sameness exclude from society,
or at least the researcher's understanding of society, those individuals
and groups of people who do not participate in dominant modes of thought,
discourse and action.
What research approaches are conducive to people disclosing the difference
contained in their lived worlds?
I do not want to suggest that there is just one approach which enables the
disclosure of difference to take place in research settings, but I would
like to discuss in some detail the notion of participatory research, and
the potential it offers for a genuinely democratic approach to research,
and for recognising minority voices in research, and ultimately, a
discourse of difference.

Participatory research has been defined by Hall (1979:406) as 'a method of
social investigation involving the full participation of the community; it
is an educational process; and it is a means of taking action for

development'. Hall identifies a number of components of participatory
research which include 'the full and active participation of the community
in the entire research process', involving a 'whole range of powerless
groups' in order to 'mobilize them for for self-reliant development' and a
researcher who is a 'commited participant and learner .... which leads to
militancy rather than detachment'.
The ideology contained in participatory research suggests that there are no
'experts'; it values indigenous knowledge and 'local' ways of doing things:
it is interventionist and change-enhancing; and seeks to bring about that
change through a process of reflection and transformation in which people
build up knowledge, skills and the self-confidence necessary to re-shape
their environment and lifestyle (Maxwell 1984). There is, however, a
suggestion in these ideas that people operate in consensual ways and that
solutions to problems will be acceptable to all concerned. Hall's
conception of participatory research is limited by the absence of an
adequate understanding of a discourse of difference.

I would like to put forward some suggestions about how participatory
research practice might be reconstructed to be more inclusive by
highlighting difference and minority voices. In doing so, I would like to
draw on dialogues which are a part of a research in distance education
(RIDE) study with which I am involved in Papua New Guinea (Guy 1992b),
together with the discourse of other empowering researchers in education.
The RIDE study is consistent with Hall's (1975) participatory research
approach. The notion of difference was not embedded in the RIDE study in
the beginning, but it has increasingly gained my attention, and that of the
other participants in the research as well. The RIDE study methodology has
also been influenced in reconstructive ways by feminist research
methodology (Nielson 1990), and postmodern analyses of society (Lyotard
1984).

Feminist research methodology (Nielson 1990) brings to emerging conceptions
of research, the necessity of continuously and reflexively attending to the
significance of gender; the centrality of consciousness raising as a
general orientation or 'way of seeing'; the need to challenge the notion of
objectivity that assumes that the subject and object of research can be
separated; that personal experiences are unscientific; and the empowerment
of all participants in research activities.
Postmodern conceptions of social and cultural change which reject all forms
of totalising thought, and celebrate difference and minority voices
(Lyotard 1984), have also added a new dimension to conceptualising
participatory research. Postmodernists argue that because all signifiers
are mere constructions, it is not possible to give one signifier a priority
over any other. According to Bauman (1988-89:40), therefore, 'In the plural
and pluralistic world of postmodernity, every form of life is permitted on
principle; or, rather, no agreed principles are evident which may render
any form of life impermissable'. If we accept these postmodern concerns for
difference and the voice of others then we need to encourage the

multiplicity of as many voices and perspectives as possible in research without seeking to reconcile them, or to combine them into a single, consistent, unified account. By submerging people within the 'general' we effectively deny them a place in society.

These are powerful developments in recent conceptualisations of research practice, and they add significantly to participatory research methodology. Issues of participation and relevance, power and control, and ownership, can now be joined with issues concerning multi-sitedness, multi-voicedness, changing subject positions, and a more informed understanding of the relations that exist within research and society as a whole.

The RIDE study involves teachers, who are upgrading their qualifications, keeping professional journals of their experiences as distance students over a two year period. The teachers set the initial research agenda through their journals by writing about their experiences and what they decide are issues of consequence. The role for the person, who in conventional research is referred to as the researcher, is a transformative one, and involves the interrogation of the discourse contained in the professional journals and the problematisation of issues for individuals and the other participants in the research. Traditional approaches to inquiry, which privilege the position and the assumptions of the researcher, are abandoned in preference for the creation of a dialogically connected group of researchers. This group is located at a distance from each other but connected through a regular research journal known as 'Wailis' which is Tok Pisin for shared communication. 'Wailis' is a recent innovation in the research, and is a part of the on-going, re-formulation of the research methodology itself. It is generating considerable 'connectedness' between participants and is developing a shared language amongst the group. The research journal is an additional layer of discourse, reflectivity and reconstruction as it enables extracts from the journals of others to be shared; critical ideas about distance education and inservice opportunities for teachers in Papua New Guinea can be presented and debated; the 'otherness' in journals, which is common and fundamental to distance students, such as gender, orientation to others, views of knowledge and the culture of distance institutions can be

problematised; and theoretical issues can be introduced to enhance participant's understanding of the research approach itself.

The research journal has considerable possibilities for not only connecting participants in research and empowering them to write into the text of 'Wailis' by elaborating, extending and contradicting the discourse of others, but provides the opportunity for the construction of collective narratives as well as re-writing individual ones.

What then are the characteristics of a reconstructed participatory research practice?

Dialogue

The basis of participatory research remains in dialogue. As Freire (1982:30) reflects:

I must try ... to have the people dialogically involved as ... researchers with me. If I am interested in knowing the people's ways of thinking and

levels of perception, then the people have to think about their thinking
and not be only the objects of my thinking. This method of investigation
which involves study -- and criticism of the study - by people is at the
same time a learning process. Through this process of investigation, the
level of critical thinking is raised among all those involved.
The RIDE study is dialogical and is made up of three kinds of dialogue.
They are the dialogues between the researcher and the participants through
journals; direct interview dialogues between the researcher and
participants; and the dialogues amongst the participants, that is, the
'connected group' via 'Wailis' and research papers such as this one.

Reciprocity
Dialogue is a reciprocal process in which 'we consciously use our research
to help participants understand and change their situations' (Lather
1986:263). The realisation by research participants that dialogue is
reciprocal has an immediate effect on their understanding of the
relationships of power and control in research and can alter dramatically
the relationships which exist between participants in the research process.
Dialogues provide graphic examples of re-orientations in the thinking of
participants in research about the process of research itself in the RIDE
study:
(DK:April 1992) This term open dialogue is important between the researcher
and the people who are involved in the research. Wailis is a method of open
dialogue in practice. Suits Melanesian way i.e. traditional times an open
dialogue was maintained in doing things. The majority of people in PNG tend
to take research as a personal prestige and it becomes a matter of
suspicion. A mentality that most PNG's have developed due to many reasons
that researchers failed to think about before embarking on a research. Open
dialogue not practised is one of the reasons that I think has caused
negative mentality of participants in research work in PNG.
The research work we participated in has a great feedback and to see this
gives a great sense of appreciation and pride. This type of research
approach maintain good working relationship and feedback by the researcher
and research participants. It benefits both parties and cancels out
suspicion and doubts of the purpose of the research and who benefits from
it.
Reason and Rowan (1981) introduce the idea of catalytic validity in
participatory research which 'represents the degree to which the research
process reorients, focusses, and energises participants towards knowing
reality in order to transform it' (Lather 1986: 272). The dialogues which
are available in this kind of research provide evidence that such
transformations do take place.
Research is a human activity and the acknowledgement that participatory
research is reciprocal encourages the researcher to actively engage with
the issue being studied. Oakley (1981), for instance, in her study of the
transition of women to motherhood discovered quickly that textbook advice
about interviewing to maintain an 'objective distance' between the
researcher and the researched, not only did not work, but also limited her
ability to communicate with participants in a way that would generate
worthwhile and meaningful information. The researcher's journal in the RIDE

study provides many examples of the reciprocity between the research
participants:

(Researcher Journal: 23/2/92) The majority of the teachers involved in the
research are of the view that they are disadvantaged as distance students
compared to teachers who are awarded fulltime scholarships to upgrade their
qualifications to degree status. This disadvantage is not just in terms of
the scholarship maintaining their salary level, but also in terms of the
quality of tutoring, the quality of the teaching materials and the
isolation they experience from main campus. There is an extremely strong
and shared view that distance education is a second rate form of education.
Consequently I find myself writing letters of reference to the Staff
Development Unit of the Department of Education at this time for many of
the research group for scholarships for 1993. Each of the teachers has
gained credit points towards the degree as a result of their distance
studies and they become increasingly attractive to the sponsoring body as a
result. It remains to be seen what will be the consequences for the
research project should many of them be successful.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity enables research participants to focus on the changes that take
place in on-going research as the participant's knowledge and understanding
of the research data and the process of research itself changes. It is an
acknowledgement that human agency is a feature of social life and that time
and space influence research activity.

Our commitment to bringing our subjects into the research process as active
participants influenced our rethinking of our original categories,
strengthened our critique of research methods, and forced us to realise
that it is impossible to create a research process that completely erases
the contradictions in the relation between researcher and researched
(Acker, Barry and Esseveld 1983:434).

The inclusion of participants in research is difficult and requires
critical reflection about the research process itself, and the questioning
of taken-for-granted assumptions by all participants in the research. In
addition, the more difficult critical self-reflection about the motives of
the researcher are also required.

The early methodology of the RIDE study included the conventional
qualitative approach of allowing the data to generate themes which would
form the outcomes of the study. In this approach to the construction of the
text the discourse in the teachers' journals is privileged in the short
term:

(YR:19/3/91) I had a hard time to make a decision whether to do my
assignment on the course or to do the programme or to do the self-
assessment questions and go for a game with wantoks or to go to my uncle's
house where I was invited to have a birthday celebration. My mind was
confused and no way to go but after a few minutes I decided to go to my
uncle's house for the birthday celebration.

(UP:20/4/91) Went to visit my sister-in-law with my wife. My brother rang
up and told me that his wife was very sick. It is a custom and a 'must' to
visit the sick person in a family as soon as possible. We spent all day

with my sister-in-law. This also disturbed my study as a distance student due to weekend not spent well.

The voice of the researcher takes over very quickly. The interpretation by the researcher of the above dialogues is that they relate to a theme that was identified as a common one in journals and described as an 'Orientation to Others'.

I became increasingly concerned at the limitations of such an analytic approach and the availability of different interpretations of the discourses and the differential power relationships inherent in it. To what extent does the researcher violate the subjectivity of the researched in such a procedure? In addition, do the above dialogues suggest the same thing, or is one a response to a cultural imperative, and the other represents a simple choice from a range of options at a given point in time? As researchers, we need to continually remind ourselves about how we treat data and how conscious we are in terms of distorting the reality of the researched through our representations of their written representations of their experiences. How do we know what are valid claims concerning the outcomes of research and what might not be valid claims in a participatory approach?

Cronbach and Meehl (1955:464) introduced the notion of construct validity

which 'is an intellectual device by means of which one construes events. It is a means of organizing experience into categories'. The reflexiveness of participatory research enables researchers to challenge a priori theory and categories on the basis of the emerging logic of the data as it becomes available. Explanations of these changes need to be included in research accounts. A further means to establish validity claims are member checks (Guba and Lincoln 1981), or what is more often referred to as face validity. Face validity is 'operationalised by recycling description, emerging analysis, and conclusions back through at least a subsample of respondents' (Lather 1986:271).

The construction of the theme, 'Orientation to Others', was problematised by the researcher in 'Wailis'. The research participants reflected on it and refined it as 'Gutpela sindaun', which refers to 'goodness in life' and 'the maintenance of relationships between people' which is quite different to my original conceptualisation.

Social reality involves engaging with others collectively and reflexively, and it is vital to achieve this within a participatory research framework, in order to provide opportunities to re-territorialise and re-write assumptions, analysis and narratives at the individual and collective levels which are:

A participatory research methodology, which is dialogical, reciprocal and reflexive, provides the opportunity for minority voices and difference to be heard, and to be made available for critical examination of the way difference is constructed by people in social situations.

How do people who participate in research construct and deconstruct difference?

The construction of difference can be explored in journals through dialogue. For instance, how is it that for one teacher, knowledge is a

construction of others:
(MK:12/5/92) Aware of my own academic ability, and being a Papua New
Guinean whatever an expatriate has written must be right and are to be
followed by us whose second language is English. I've always had that
feeling in any reading that I find. (underlining in the original)
whereas another teacher understands knowledge in terms of a subjectivist
construction:
(NG: 30/6/92) I think I'm starting to see how we get knowledge now. It
doesn't come from the mind of a professor or the study materials in our
course but it is something that we make in our own minds, each of us do it,
the professor and me and you. We all make knowledge. Its how we see things
or understand things that happen around us. Thats what knowledge is. This
is why we say people from the village are bush kanakas because they do
things different but their knowledge is different. They have an
interpretation of something but its different to mine. Thats all its just
different. Its not that I'm right. We are all right I think.

What does this tell us about the history of these people, how can that
history be recovered, and how can those people deconstruct their
discourses?
Researchers as Transformative Agents
Sultana (1989) has suggested the term 'transformative researchers' who
engage with other participants in research to help them find a language to
critically examine their lives and everyday experiences, and to create the
conditions for people to locate themselves and others in histories that
mobilise rather than destroy. As Giroux (1990:45) suggests in another
context:
it is not enough for teachers merely to affirm uncritically their students'
histories, experiences and stories. To take voices at face value is to run
the risk of idealising and romanticising them.
The researcher is concerned about 'asking difficult questions, of making
trouble' (Tripp 1987:11), but it is the other participants who are at the
forefront of this reflection rather than the researcher. The researcher
interrogates and problematises the discourse contained in the journals. In
this way, the participants in research continue to engage with and
understand issues at successively deeper levels. This process is akin to an
action research strategy of reflection and understanding which leads to an
improvement in practice. Stenhouse (1975) introduced the notion of the
'teacher as researcher', and in the context of participatory research, it
is well to consider the educational role of the transformative researcher.
The dialogue from MK, included above, is interrogated by the researcher
through dialogue and reflection to reveal her early experiences which help
to explain her views about self, others and knowledge:
Our teacher [expatriate Australian] in grade 6 used to get us to copy a
whole lot of stuff from the board. We would be sitting for hours copying.
Half the time we didn't understand what we were copying. Most of the staff
were foreign to us. All I can remember are the states of Australia and the
names of rivers because we had to learn them by heart. ... Looking back I

can evaluate that as curriculum centred and NOT student centred. Is our present curriculum the same? Are we teaching or educating students today for their future well being or are we just teaching for the sake of completing the teachers guide?

And in her journal reflecting on her early years of teaching:

To add onto these already negative comments, my grade 8 English class was taken away from me. I've had trials before but this is the worst of them. This was the turning point in my teaching career. He (the expat. Inspector) even said something to me about not granting my registration. I shed tears non-stop. Should I keep going or give up? The question that often comes to mind. How I kept going I don't really know but I'm still here. I do not want to let these inspectors discourage me from my teaching. I love it and I will continue no matter how dull and stupid I may be.

And further reflecting on inservice opportunities by distance:

When I heard of the External B.Ed. program I had a lot of mixed feelings. Part of this is the inferiority complex that this particular inspector had put into me. I'm not good enough so why should I waste my time.

The methodology of participatory research contrasts significantly in terms of its ideology with conventional approaches to research. Participatory researchers are empowered to take responsibility for research decisions. The discourse which arises from a dialogically based research approach discloses difference as the researched begin to articulate their stories in a language of their own.

The privileging of difference makes visible how power is inscribed differentially in, and between zones of culture, and how differences are expressed in multiple and contradictory ways within individuals and between different groups.

(PP:25/2/91) I have 5 brothers and one sister only. I come from a strong patrilineal society where women are treated no better than slaves. Thus in my family my 5 brothers received the best treatment and got bigger share of love, care and material items such as money from my parents. Even at the time I was a small girl I could understand the difference in the treatments. That most probably was one of the major factors that contributed to my not so good performance at high school. I was always

miserable and didn't work at my best. I dreamed of getting somewhere and to make my people see that they were wrong by not treating me like my brothers. That I have done already.

Apart from being a teacher I am now a mother of 3 and a wife of a very demanding Tolai man. I say demanding because most times I struggle to live up to his convenience. I don't really understand him because he is as changeable as the weather. One moment he is soft, encouraging and behind me in my studies such as this distance course, and the next minute he is hard, discouraging and telling me that I am not helping in the keeping and running of the house.

(RT:19/7/91) From the start of second semester there has been poor attendance at tutorials. After losing some of our friends the few of us are hanging on yet but we don't know for how long. I personally am really affected because at first I thought if both me and my husband did the

course together we would help each other well but he gave up. His reason for giving up was that he wanted me to do the studies. That's typical of him, when he can't do anything he gives all kinds of reasons and I very much don't like to be used as a shield.

He is not a good planner and I wanted him to do the studies because we will plan together how to spend our time. He does nothing most of the time now and he decides to take the family out whenever he feels like it. He doesn't help at home to mind our three year old son. He leaves it to my older children but they don't look after him too because the little boy is very mischievous. There is generally a decrease in interest or enthusiasm which we had in the beginning.

There is a paradox in these dialogues. A sameness and yet a pervading difference. It would be easy to relegate these dialogues to one of sameness, thus rejecting a politics of difference and the notion of personal identity. I would argue that there is a need to focus on difference and sameness as they occur in constant interaction with one another rather than focusing on one at the expense of the other. Nonetheless, the elaboration of difference helps us to understand subjectivities and identities as fractured and multiple rather than as unified and static. In addition, subjectivities undergo continual transformation and change. The following dialogues suggest the emergence of independent learning strategies by the teacher towards his distance studies over a twelve month period:

(DK:20/7/91) Attended my second tutorial on Curriculum Development. Covered the topic briefly with Tom in first semester. However John presented the topic in detail by writing notes and going through them in detail explanations. The concept became more clearer in my mind.

(DK:5/8/91) John gave handouts on extra information on advantages and disadvantages of curriculum. This was due to most course participants found it hard. Anyway the handout came too late for me because I have already posted mine. Infact most of the information I wrote was similar to that of the handout. I felt more confident because I have gone my way to find the information. Infact thats the way I would like to operate. Doing my own thing and when extra information comes either add on or compare.

(DK:21/8/92) Tutors are put there to guide us, on several occassions I went down to tutorials the tutor was not there. I decided to handle the course myself but I kept on going to the [University] Centre hoping to talk to the tutor - it ended up that throughout the semester I had three contact hours but I have successfully completed the course. Now that I have experienced this its a normal thing to me tutor or no tutor. Thats the kind of environment distance education is. Individual effort and commitment makes the difference. Distance education gives us the privilege to gain knowledge the best it can. It is up to us that we make the most of it in any condition.

How can research accounts be constructed which disclose difference amongst participants and readers of research?

Modernist texts and experimental writing provide new directions for the effective inclusion of dialogue, and the construction of texts which create the possibilities for difference to emerge in research accounts.

Modernist Texts

Clifford and Marcus (1986) refer to the more recent general mood in ethnographic writing as 'reflexive and self-critical', which provides an

important forum for the discussion of a wide range of epistemological and political issues. A reflexive account demands that the discourses of all the participants in research, including the researcher, are made available. This may be done by reproducing dialogical accounts, or even staging dialogues. In this form, writing is no longer conceived of as simply a representational one, but rather a matter of explicating specific instances of discourse. Bakhtin (1981) draws attention to the proliferation of voices in any dialogical process which need to be heard, and rather than attempting some form of 'consistency and coherence' it is necessary to chart the 'contradictions and conflicts' that exist in the reality of the researched (Quantz and O'Connor 1988).

Modernist texts are constructed to highlight the discourse between the participants in research in which textual space is arranged so that participants have their own voice and to involve the reader in an active role in analysis. Writers of modernist texts are self-reflexive of the research process itself. The metaphors in this kind of writing have moved from textualisation and representation in realist writing, to dialogue and presentation in modernist accounts. There is thus an uncertainty about the coherency of culture and an emphasis on the immediacy, the human agency, and the multiplicity of dialogical experience.

Literal Dialogue

Dwyer's (1982) 'Moroccan Dialogues' is a literal record of extensive dialogues that were recorded between the writer, the Self, and the Faqir, the Other. Dwyer is conscious of his own cultural subjectivities injecting themselves into the research, and he rejected a conventional anthropological approach to one which is 'sensitive to the Other's 'voice' at the earliest stage possible ... and to respect its integrity' (Dwyer 1982:xvi). The Dialogues, which were predicated by 'events' which occured in the daily lives of Moroccans, display asymmetrical power relations of which the Self is conscious but also an interdependence as the Self and Other develop reciprocal and dialogical relationships. The Other was allowed a role in decisions about the inclusion of content in the final account of the study and vetoed certain comments which were thought to be dangerous in a political sense. The account presents stark dialogues and challenges the reader to judge what can be done with them.

How could this be done in the RIDE study? This could be done easily. Literal dialogue is available from teachers journals of their experiences as distance students, but the presentation of literal dialogue in research accounts is lengthy. It does provide, however, a deep insight into the process of this kind of research. Another method is to provide an analysis of dialogue.

Dialogic Analysis

Dialogue is often used in final accounts of research interspersed with the comanding authorial voice of the researcher. This is the approach that Willis (1977) adopted and has been used for so long as an exemplary piece of qualitative research, but readers are not informed in his research

account of any reflexive processes involved in that particular project. Dialogic text enables transformation and growth in time and space to be realised in the accounts of research. There is a great deal of difference within the RIDE journals which have been kept for periods of up to two years. Growth and contradiction, and power and human agency are important ideas which contribute to the disclosure of that difference. The following teacher changes her place of work, and at the same time changes occur in her outlook concerning teaching, professional obligations and the kinds of support available from colleagues:

(EL:20/3/91) Some women I've heard mentioned that they cannot cope I'm also in the same boat but certainly I'm struggling. There is really a conflict of interest - in my students work and my own. I cannot make up my mind whether to give first preference to either discipline.

(EL:30/4/91) I attended lectures today ... my friends encouraged me to continue ... I agreed but not wholeheartedly. Really my mind is not at rest. There are too many activities going on at the same time and I have to continue and participate actively as I'm part of the (school) community.

The teacher transferred to another province because of a change in her husband's employment. This school is isolated and has severe problems with it. Place becomes a problematic issue for this distance student which

results in vastly different views about students, teaching and professional development:

(EL:14/3/92) ... the school produces the largest number of drop-outs in the country every year. There are also many other administrative problems the school has. For example teachers houses are shocking. Most of the houses are run down and this contributes to the lack of interest in the teachers' profession. I'd admit I'm one one of the teachers who has no interest in teaching the students to the best of my ability because of the problems already mentioned. I do not know when the authorities will wake up from their long sleep and think about the many problems the school has. One of them is the shortage of teachers every year. This is a major issue and also has contributed to the academic performance each year.

(EL:18/5/92) Being far from the University Centre and without colleagues and foremost a lecturer, I have definitely lagged behind schedule. With the fourth change in school timetable in the year (so far) has an impact on my studies. I'm all over the place, scratching my head and consistently asking myself this question, Why do this course then? Deep within my heart I'm eager to pursue my studies but how with the contributing factors mentioned. Last year despite my workload, I had more support from colleagues and my lecturer who encouraged me along. I was grateful. However this year it is a different story.

The approach here is to produce the student's discourse, her subjectivity, without violating her reality. The role of the author here is a conventional, qualitative approach in which dialogue is interspersed with analysis, interpretation, commentary, comparing and contrasting the written dialogic record. Of course, there still remains the question of the responsibility for the selection of dialogues which remains with the author in the representation of the discourse.

The discourse of difference in the dialogues of DK and EL are important and valuable and are not likely to be disclosed in a conventional survey approach for instance.

Postmodern Writing
Postmodern writing, or what is sometimes termed experimental writing, in research accounts privileges discourse over textualisation; dialogue over monologue; collaboration over the transcendental observer; and a fragmentary view over a universal view of knowledge. Postmodern writing acknowledges human agency and changing subject positions over time and space, and it recognises the multiple realities which surround research participants. Lather (1989:8) points out that postmodern writing seeks to: 'interrupt' academic norms by writing inside of another logic, a logic that displaces expectations of linearity, clear authorial voice, and closure ... The deconstructive text is a point of interrogation where binary notions of 'clarity' are displaced as the speaking voice uses its authority to displace authority.
In such accounts of research, no one participant would have the final word in the dialogue, nor would there exist a discourse on the discourse. The text does not move toward abstraction, or an outer logic which disguises reality, but importantly it moves back to experience.
This kind of writing in research has emerged because of the recognition that experience is more important and complex than previously thought of in social and educational research, and because of the inadequacy of conventional techniques of description and analysis to represent the authentic differences of other cultural subjects. Efforts are now being made to write fuller and more richly evoked accounts of the process of research along with the outcomes of that research.
These efforts centre on negotiated and co-authored, and heteroglossic accounts of research.
Negotiation and Co-authoring
What form of writing best serves the view of participatory research? Acker, Barry and Esseveld (1983:429) outline the complexity of the matter:
The question becomes how to produce an analysis which goes beyond the experience of the researched while still granting them full subjectivity. How do we explain the lives of others without violating their reality?
Tripp (1983) explores co-authorship and negotiation as a means of overcoming the 'silences' of the less powerful in research. The actual

responsibility for writing rests with the researcher, but the selection of content and the interpretation of meaning is negotiated and the research process becomes a shared one. Tripp (1983:35) concludes that in co-authored and negotiated accounts of research, 'an accurate record of the actual words originally spoken is of less importance than the effective transmission by the researcher of what was actually said into what the participants want written about what they said'.
There are limits which Tripp imposes on negotiation and co-authoring. pFor instance, participants may want to eliminate controversial dialogue during negotiation. It is suggested that where this poses a difficulty for the

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researcher, the 'right to negotiate' may need to be replaced by the 'right to comment', and those comments placed in the final report. Tripp (1983:43) points out that:

the researcher interrogates (reads) the interview data ... checking with the participants the meanings and attached significances in the data ... the researcher encodes those interpretations in a text which may legitimately be interrogated by other readers ... it is not legitimate for the reader to bypass the author's interpretations in order to ascribe new meanings to the original data: reader interpretations must first be checked with the author.

Tripp begins with the view of a participatory and democratic approach to research, but ultimately invests power with the researcher.

Hunsaker and Johnston (1992) are also concerned about negotiation and co-authoring in their research methodology, but adopt a strategy which is genuinely democratic and participative in its approach. Initially this was not so, but a self-reflexive and empowering consciousness among the participants in the research enabled the study to be reconstructed.

The account of their research provides four sections, consisting of the Researcher's Interpretations about early classroom practice and later experimentation by a practising teacher; Written Responses from that teacher to the researcher's interpretations which elaborate and question those interpretations which are written into the text; Teacher's Reflections about teaching and her classroom which are 'written dialogues', and enable the inclusion of the teacher's voice in the text; and the final section termed Conversations and Conclusions, which are reconstructed conversations between the researcher and the teacher which 'digests many actual ones' ... 'to bring the project up to date and draw some more general conclusions'.

The aim of their study is to present points of view in ways that are not controlled, or 'not as controlled', by conventional researcher authority over the text:

For example, in the beginning of the research project, although Marilyn talked much about doing the research collaboratively, the level of mutuality was minimal. She thought giving her field notes and transcribed conversations back to the teachers was collaborative, but she chose what to observe and what to talk about. As teachers became more active in this process, they were more forthright about what Marilyn should observe and record and what should be talked about afterwards. As the teachers took more ownership and Marilyn gave up control, they worked closer toward a mutually constructed process. But this required time, the building of trust, and the development of their understandings of collaboration as well as its practical applications. (Hunsaker and Johnston 1992:in press)

The inclusion of the voices of the various participants in the final account of this study are substantial. In addition, the authors draw readers into the study by suggesting that they may prefer to read the sections in a different order to that which is in the text.

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Tyler (1986) adopts a more extreme position, and views a postmodern text as
a co-authored, negotiated, and evolving text which consists of fragments of
discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an
emergent fantasy of a possible world of commonsense reality, which
culminates in an aesthetic integration of the possible.

Bahktin's (1984) notions of heteroglossia and polyphonic writing provide
insights into the way this 'aesthetic integration' might come about.

Heteroglossia and Polyphony

Heteroglossia (Bahktin 1984) is a concept which recognises the multi-
sitedness and multi-voicedness of cultural life and opposes the view that
culture is uniform and static. The job of the researcher is to gather these
multi-dimensions into a dialogic text. Polyphonic writing involves the
weaving of autonomous, unmerged themes throughout a single composition. The
dialogues of legitimated and non-legitimated groups and individuals in
society form the composition.

Polyphonic accounts of heteroglossia are not an evasion of responsibility
on the part of the researcher, or an act of excessive democracy, but an
acknowledgement of the relations of power and ownership in conventional
research, a denial of a coherent whole, and the recognition and admittance
of difference. The author of a polyphonic account:

How does Bahktin (1984:72) conceive this process:

He would have forced his characters to see and know all those essential
things that he himself - the author - sees and knows. He would not have
retained for himself any essential authorial 'surplus'. ... he would have
forced them to come into dialogic contact (although not necessarily in
direct compositionally expressed dialogues, of course), and he would
himself have assumed, in relation to them, a dialogic position with equal
rights. The entire work would have been constructed by him as a great
dialogue, but one where the author acts as organizer and participant in the
dialogue without retaining for himself the final word; that is, he would
have reflected in his work the dialogic nature of human life and human
thought itself.

Crapanzano (1985) provides an exemplary heteroglossic and polyphonic
account of the Whites in South Africa in what resembles a novel and is in
essence plurivocal. Crapanzano (1985:ix) is concerned that 'plurivocality,
the cacophony, the baroque quality of social reality is often sacrificed in

ethnographic and sociological description to a theoretically inspired
classicism'.

Postmodern accounts of research may be limited in what they can achieve
given the continuing strength of modernist accounts in educational
research. Convention and pragmatic concerns dictate the desirable
textualisation of a doctoral dissertation for instance, but research papers
and books may offer opportunities for exploring alternative kinds of text
in order to include all participants in research and their lived
experiences.

Conclusion

There is a repetoire of possible voices available in a dialogical,
reciprocal, and reflexive participatory research methodology. Equally,

there are other research realities outside of participatory research. What
we need to recognise are the ideologies associated with various explanatory
mechanisms and understand how these influence lived experience.

A fundamental concern in this paper centres on 'Where and with whom should
the control and responsibility for research rest?'. It has been argued that
empowering research methodologies, such as participatory research, suggest
one answer to this question. It is further suggested that reflexive
accounts of research are important for what they reveal about that which is
normally absent from research accounts and that is the difference. Research
practices, which implicitly or explicitly exclude people who do not
participate in dominant modes of thought, discourse and action in society,
effectively deny those people not only a place in research but a place in
society as well.

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