

Risky business: the ethical dilemmas of qualitative methodology in practice

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Abstract

This paper is about the challenges encountered when a novice researcher with insider status puts a qualitative methodological approach into practice. It analyses the ethical dilemmas that confronted the novice researcher when entering the data collection phase using a case study approach and semi-structured interviews and observations. Insider research opens a Pandora's box of ethical and emotional dilemmas for the novice researcher. Initial forays suggest that there is a dissonance between the theory and practice of this methodological approach and that when the researcher enters the data collection phase they encounter risks to self, risks to researcher–researched relationships, and risks to insider status. The ethical tensions that developed imposed a block to the progress of the research. The dilemmas were navigated using strategic risk-taking on the part of both the researcher and the researched. This paper problematized the moral conduct of research and provided a process for addressing it. The issue is significant for all researchers as insider dilemmas are never resolved, but they can be dealt with while remaining ever vigilant for their recurrence.

Introduction

Gaining ethical clearance from the university ethics committee is a significant hurdle in a novice researchers journey. The National Ethics Application Form (NEAF) demands that the researcher consider all aspects of the implications of the research activity on the target participants, the research site and associated community. However, the NEAF does not require the researcher to consider possible risks to self. Entering the research site to collect data opens a Pandora's box of ethical and emotional dilemmas for the novice researcher. When the researcher has 'insider' status (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002; Breen, 2007) the dilemmas are close and personal. While 'insider' status brings the advantages of easy access to the research site and participants, it becomes risky business for the researcher. The novice researcher has two choices, withdraw from the research game, or deal with it! Navigating the ethical dilemmas and risks to self become an imperative for the research to continue. The way that relationships are negotiated and brokered between the researcher and the researched is fraught with pitfalls. What at first appeared unproblematic now appeared riddled with dilemmas. This analyses the moral dilemmas a novice researcher encountered upon first entering the data collection phase. The ethical and emotional dilemmas encountered, and the way they were dealt with form the focus of the paper. The paper is organised around the following issue: *What are the challenges encountered when a novice researcher with insider status puts a qualitative methodological approach into practice?*

The importance placed on education and a more highly educated workforce has precipitated an increase in the number of people engaging in research degrees (Stephenson, Malloch & Cairns, 2006). Without the institutional or organisational access pathways available to experienced researchers, these novice researchers often look to their own domain for participants from which to collect data. Floyd and Arthur (2010) argue, "that undertaking interpretive insider research within your own institution or organisation makes these [ethical and moral dilemmas and there] implications even more acute" (p. 1). Of significance is that it is novice researchers who are most likely to engage in insider research and have to navigate the emotional and ethical challenges.

We begin by exploring the dilemmas associated with insider qualitative research (Breen, 2007). A brief background to the doctoral research that predicated the dilemmas is provided along with an overview of the research methodology to situate the reader within the data collection methods chosen. The next section deals with the methodological approach in practice and the dilemmas encountered on the research journey thus far. The final section discusses the problematizing of the moral conduct of insider research and ways to move on from the axiological dilemmas encountered in the initial interviews that hindered progress.

Dilemmas associated with insider qualitative research

It is common for researchers using qualitative methodologies to be in the position of 'insider' rather than 'outsider' to the research site. Insider status arises when the researcher engages in research into a group or institution to which they belong (Breen, 2007). Teachers researching teaching and learning in their work site are commonly referred to as insider researchers. The notion of outsider usually refers to researchers gaining access to research sites and participants via institutional or organisational pathways (Clonan, 2010). The researcher is not a part of the research setting. The fundamental difference between insider and outsider research is that at the completion of the research the outsider can remove themselves from the research setting and participants, whereas the insider remains within the setting and continues to have a relationship in some form with the participants (Clonan, 2010).

Insider research brings with it advantages of access to participants, the research setting and the knowledge both hold (Brown, 2004). The insider has a heightened understanding of the culture of the research site, the politics at play, and existing social networks. The insider also has the ability to interact with the research site community on a level of intimacy not normally available to an outsider (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002). For novice researchers doing insider research is often "more practical: cheaper and easier" (Trowler, 2011, p.2).

Insider status also brings disadvantages. Floyd and Arthur (2010) described insider research as a "potential minefield" (p. 5). Kanuha (2000) observed that insider research incurred "questions about objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity" (p. 444). Being in and of the research site breeds familiarity and the danger of making incorrect assumptions. Insiders face ethical issues of changing relationships from colleague and friend to researcher that are not applicable to outsiders (DeLyser, 2001). The balance between keeping the existing insider relationship and striving for distance in order to make meaning of the data raises tensions for researchers (Breen, 2007). Pre-conceptions about allegiances and views on the part of both researcher and participant can lead to interview bias (Trowler, 2011).

Breen (2007) noted that the ethical issues that develop with insider research often lack sufficient guidance in the literature about how exactly issues such as confidentiality and informed consent play out and can be resolved. As a result of his insider research Clonan (2010) experienced personal and professional harassment from his colleagues and his employer. Clonan argues that, "the academic literature on research methodology does not adequately deal with the dynamics of the research process" (2010, p. 3) pertaining to insider research.

Entering the research site as an insider requires navigation of "complex and multi-faceted insider-outsider issues" (DeLyser, 2001). As Brown (2004) commented, "[t]here are also more subtle, less clearly defined elements at play" (p.1). The power differential between researcher and participants is one such element. Some researchers attempt to minimise the power differential by

adopting the role of co-researcher or co-learner (DeLyser, 2001). The power differential ebbs and flows throughout the research process. When a researcher approaches a research site to request involvement, the power lies with the potential participants to veto or approve their involvement. Whether a person participates in a research study depends ultimately upon their willingness to share their experiences (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001). However, where an existing work or social relationship is involved there may be an unspoken sense of obligation, which is heightened when the researcher is friend, mentor or supervisor. When does persuading a colleague to be involved cross the line and become coercion? (Dench, Iphofen & Huws, 2004). Gregory (2000) argues that, “the question of how to engender participation is fundamentally important to ... methodologies that involve a subjectivist epistemology” (p. 188). The ethics code underpinning a NEAF demands the researcher have voluntary and informed consent, it does not address the moral perplexity of engendering participation. A participants’ willingness to proceed is protected, but how a researcher deals with their reluctance to ask participants to share their personal experiences and views is not considered.

Breen (2007) maintains that a position “in the middle” assisted with her research (p. 163). Mercer (2007) argues, “that the insider/outsider dichotomy is actually a continuum with multiple dimensions, and that all researchers constantly move back and forth along a number of axes, depending on time, location, participants and topic” (p.1). Breen also finds the insider/outsider dichotomy simplistic and believes “the role of researcher is better conceptualised on a continuum” (p. 163). Whether in the middle or sliding back and forth on a continuum, the ethical issues involved in using friends or colleagues as data sources are complex. Orb et al. (2001) warn that, “[e]thical codes and guidelines for research projects do not have answers to all of the ethical issues that may arise during research”. Ethical codes represent the consensus of the research community about how a researcher should behave, but a researcher’s moral code determines the way the code is put into practice and how the researcher deals with ethical dilemmas (Small, 2001).

Although research may benefit the wider community, a researcher is aware that the most direct benefit is to self (Brown, 2004), particularly novice researchers who rely on the research to attain their higher education award. Lankshear and Knobel (2004) suggest redressing the benefit imbalance by giving back to the research site. DeLyser (2001) described how she volunteered for unpopular jobs at the research site as a way of remaining an insider.

In summary, insider qualitative researchers have a unique opportunity to gather rich data in an authentic research domain, however, the ethical dilemmas associated with changes in relationships and power (Orb et al., 2001) can pose significant hurdles for novice researchers. Patton (2002) emphasises the importance of qualitative researchers clarifying their personal motivation and interest as a way of dealing with the ethical challenges. Similarly, Floyd and Arthur (2010) maintain the researcher “should be able to enter the setting with confidence, as long as the

appropriate ethical boundaries are established at the outset and constantly re-visited throughout the process” (p. 1).

Background to the research

This paper emerged from a dilemma encountered when entering the research site to begin initial data collection for the first author’s doctoral study on creativity in science education. Internationally science education is recognised as being in the midst of troubled waters and closer to home in Australia, it is held to be “in a state of crisis” (Tytler, 2007, p. 1). For several decades schools have experienced increasing difficulty staffing science with qualified science teachers. The decline is unlikely to be halted in the near future (Tytler, 2007). Science curriculum documents maintain that an outcome of doing science is that the student works creatively. Creativity is believed to consist of a mix of three key components – domain relevant skills, creative processes and intrinsic task motivation (Sternberg, 2007; Robinson, 2000; Simonton, 2000; McWilliam, 2007). Boosting creativity in science could boost intrinsic motivation in students undertaking school science. While the domain relevant skills in science are well documented, the creative processes are not as well known and formed the impetus for the research.

Overview of the research methodology

A methodological approach has been developed that is situated within a qualitative framework and utilises the common paradigmatic history of case study, phenomenology and grounded theory to create a new blended strategy, grounded phenomenological case study. Figure 1 illustrates the data collection, analysis and interpretation process. The approach included interviewing science teachers at a local high school as the first of two data collection activities. The dilemma analysed in this paper occurred when attempting to move from Phase 1 to Phase 2. That is moving from a literature review identifying markers for creativity to eliciting teacher perceptions via interviews. The novice researcher was a science teacher and member of the science department where data collection was to take place, and although on study leave from the school at the time, was still an insider. As an added twist the researcher also worked at the local university in the teacher education program.

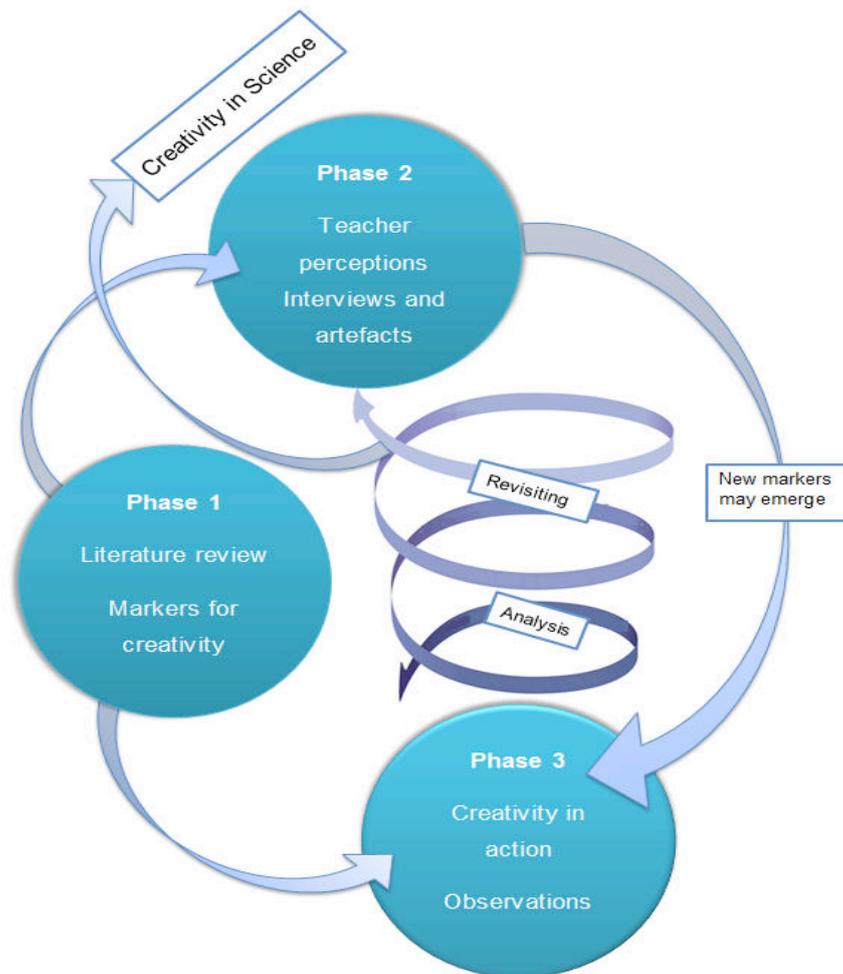


Figure 1 Representation of the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation

As ‘insider’ a naturalistic approach (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000) embracing immersion in the data collection was possible. Cohen et al.’s (2000, p.71) notion of “fitness for purpose” guided the design of the research strategy. The aim was to ensure the data gathered was the most appropriate for the research questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Case study is “strong on reality” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 256) and the focus on individuals, and their understanding and perceptions of creativity in classroom science enables the ‘reality’ to be portrayed. The focus on closeness and immersion in the data collection allows the researcher access to insider information, but insider status brings with it unwanted connotations of spying. The concept of ‘researcher as spy’ is not the only ethical issue associated with case study. The centrality of the researcher in the research means that it is close, subjective and descriptive (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). What case study does well is allow theories and concepts to constantly evolve and a more realistic representation of educational phenomenon to emerge (Robson, 2002), but it necessitates a personal input from the researcher.

While case study is the main component of the research design, the focus on seeing things as they really are (Cohen et al., 2007) and exploring the meaning of phenomena with participants is the special property that phenomenology adds. The analysis of science teachers' lessons involves the subjective experiences of the participants overlaid by the subjective experiences of the researcher. These sensory and emotional dimensions form part of the interpretation of the phenomenon, but they do not come value-free. Capturing the perceptions of participants is essential to analysing holistically from the participant's perspective. Yet again, a close relationship between researcher and researched is advantageous to furthering the research goal.

The choice of case study combined with phenomenology meant that this study was always going to be about relationships. Accordingly, it was anticipated that relationships would need to be negotiated among researcher and researched and this was reflected and accounted for in the successful ethical clearance application to the University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Approval Number Project: H11/03-018). However, in practice negotiating the ethical dilemmas in data collection proved more problematical than initially anticipated. The tension between maintaining pre-existing work relationships and establishing new researcher relationships proved a significant emotional hurdle for the novice researcher.

Having developed the methodological approach and with ethics clearance in hand, this novice researcher entered the data collection stage of the research journey. The interviewing could now begin. But "[r]esearch is a risky business" (Harreveld, 2004, p.39) and the risks had now become real. At this point I froze! Why could I not organise those interviews?

The next section discusses the dilemmas encountered when entering the field to conduct the interviews and the efficacy of the methodological approach from a practical perspective.

Methodological approach in practice

Initially, the critical question was thought to be whether the methodological approach allowed the researcher to address the research questions. Yet the full extent to which the methodology is inextricably interwoven with the researcher's axiology was only now being realised. The methodology cannot be separated from the axiology of the researcher or the researched. Putting methodological theory into practice raises conflicting goals and emotional dilemmas, and this is the focus of concern now explored. The dilemmas are presented in first person so that readers may travel with us on the novice researcher's journey so far.

Methodology and axiology: the great divide

The four elements that guide and define a research paradigm include epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This research is, by its very nature,

both subjective and value-laden. It involves human interrelationships (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and is coloured by the values and beliefs of the researcher and the participants. A clash between axiology and methodology in the researcher-researched relationship presented an unexpected self-imposed block to my doctoral research.

On commencing data collection I was confronted by the fact that my role was now different to that of teacher work-mate. I had conflicting emotions about intruding on my previous workmates staffroom 'down time'. On the one hand, being in and of the school staff made gaining permission to conduct research possible, on the other hand, knowing the culture of the science staffroom meant that I was aware of the unwritten axioms that govern staffroom activities. Furthermore, knowing the rhythm of the school meant that I was acutely sensitive to teacher workload and when to interview, even when to request an interview, became an issue of considerable angst and deliberation. I was torn between the dual roles of researcher and teaching colleague and found it difficult to invite colleagues to participate in interviews. An enormous divide between my methodology and my axiology had developed. I had not realised fully the extent to which using professional conversations with colleagues as data would become an ethical dilemma. However it had and to the extent that axiology now held dominance over methodological decisions.

Dissonance between theory and practice

Another dilemma that arose was the dissonance between the methodological approach in theory and the methodological approach in practice. When developing the theory of the methodology the researcher is removed from the research site and participants. A halo effect surrounds the data collection process and the researcher believes that all potential participants will be eager to engage in the study. When data collection time looms and the researcher must approach potential participants to gauge their enthusiasm, the researcher is no longer removed; participants turn back into people, and "research [becomes]... a risky business" (Harreveld, 2004, p. 39). The methodological approach in practice brings the researcher in close to the potential participants. The researcher can no longer afford to be removed. They must recruit participants. The research clock is ticking! How to approach teachers in a busy staffroom, and seek their involvement in your project? Is the procedure that was planned going to work? Self-doubt arises as you grapple with the dissonance between the theory and practice of the methodological approach because your research has just become very personal. The dilemma becomes negotiating the risk to self.

'Rejection'-negotiating the risk to self

The prospect of 'rejection' by potential participants is now a reality that has to be considered. I use the term 'rejection' intentionally as this is the personal effect I felt I would

experience if science teachers did not agree to be involved. The researcher does not have control over whether the participant provides consent. What the researcher can control is where and when they open themselves to possible 'rejection'. Do I want a 'rejection' occurring in a whole staffroom meeting or would it be easier to manage a 'rejection' in a one-on-one situation? I needed to plan how to approach potential participants and enter the research site so that my self-esteem remained intact if my work mates were unwilling to be involved in the project. In planning how to approach my colleagues I considered both the political and interpersonal undercurrents in the science staffroom. Some colleagues were best approached individually and privately; others would most likely participate if they knew more experienced teachers were willing to be involved. Harreveld (2004, p. 39) refers to this behaviour by the researcher as "strategic risk-taking" as it involves estimating risk, predicting short term and long-term consequences of actions and balancing the risk against the need to gain access to participants. Harreveld (2004) argues, that strategic risk-taking is a "proactive response to the inevitable uncertainties encountered in any research project" (p. 39). By engaging with the uncertainty of participant involvement, the angst that accompanies the possibility of participant 'rejection' was converted into a strategic risk. I was able to enter the research site aware of the risks and with a plan to deal with them if and when they arose. Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) note that insider researchers gravitate to participants they feel safe and comfortable with and this was certainly part of my plan for my first few interviews.

Me and my mates: insider-insider relationships

I chose to conduct data collection at the school I had worked at until I took leave to finish my doctorate. Using the science staff at the school for my research seemed a good idea; there were 15 trained science specialist teachers and I knew them all well. It was perfect! However, I was reluctant to broach the subject of involvement in my study with my former work mates. I realised my procrastination was due to how I felt positioned to view my work mates as data sources to be mined and I was not comfortable with that notion. The axiology of my methodological approach was presenting me with an ethical dilemma. Was I abusing the trust in our previous working relationship? Was I 'using' my work mates? At first asking a work mate to be involved in my study seemed unproblematic, but now it was a real problem.

I was an insider attempting to engage in what Kenny (2004) would describe as an insider-insider research relationship and my ethical anxiety made me feel an outsider. The dilemma was that I needed to remain as an insider however the role of researcher made me feel and, I felt, act as an outsider. But it was the insider who could gain access to the participants not the outsider. Breen (2007) talked about being neither insider nor outsider and how it maximised the advantages, such as access, and minimised the potential for disadvantages. Rather than a dichotomy, Breen conceptualised the insider/outsider researcher status as a continuum. Whilst a continuum

described Breen's research situation, it did not fit mine. I was not sliding back and forth on a continuum, I was flitting from insider to outsider and the constant flux in my role had an emotional toll.

Harreveld (2004, p. 39) talks about "brokering interpersonal relationships" in the research site. My pre-existing personal relationships needed to be re-negotiated to take into account my research agenda, and in doing this I had to come to terms with the ethical uneasiness I felt using my work mates as participants. I had realised that the researcher-researched relationship was fraught with ethical and political issues. The anticipation of the ethical issues inherent in re-negotiating relationships to accommodate my research goals had led to procrastination and reluctance. Motivation to proceed with my research was hindered by a values-driven dilemma concerning how my methodological approach changed my previous insider role and required me to broker new relationships with my workmates in order to respect previous friendships and perceive my work mates as more than data sources.

Negotiating the conditions - strategic risk-taking

Negotiating the conditions for interviews with participants posed the next dilemma. Harreveld (2004) discusses the strategic risk-taking the researcher engages in when conducting research. However, strategic risk-taking is not restricted to the researcher. The participants also engage in strategic risk-taking. The participants can renegotiate the conditions of the data collection process as my conversations with Kate and Peter showed. To illustrate this claim, I analyse the recruitment of Kate and Peter¹ on day 1 of data collection.

Kate had not as yet signed the consent form to participate, but she was interested in the study and asked what questions I would ask in the interview. I elaborated on the Information letter I had provided, and Kate then asked if she could have a copy of the interview questions, I gave her a copy. Kate then started talking about "...years ago, before it was trendy, we used to..." and went on to outline two examples of teaching incidents. At the conclusion, she said to me "*is that the sort of thing you're after*" (R. Zipf Research Diary, 2 June, 2011). I replied that it was perfect for my research. Kate then filled out the consent form and asked me when I wanted to interview her. Kate had engaged in strategic risk-taking by first checking that her notion of creativity in science matched mine. It was only when she felt her professional knowledge would be valued that she agreed to participate.

Peter negotiated the conditions of the data collection using a different strategy. Peter expressed concern that he may not be able to think of anything to say in the interview; he also asked to see the interview questions, read them, asked a few clarifying questions, then asked if he

¹ Pseudonyms have been assigned for all participants in the research.

could write a few things down rather than be interviewed so he could think about the questions. Peter asked whether he could email his responses to me. When I agreed, he filled out the consent form and asked when I wanted them by. Peter had successfully brokered the conditions for his participation and had negotiated a method that was low-risk to him. The interview posed too high a risk, but he had strategically found a way to lower the risk to what was for him an acceptable level, and still be involved. Peter had demonstrated, albeit unwittingly, that he had the “power to be a critical determinant of the level and effectiveness of [his] participation” (Gregory, 2000, p. 197). Kate and Peter had in different ways evaluated the risks associated with participating in my research and then brokered new conditions that made those risks safe for them.

Respecting confidentiality

Respecting the confidentiality of the research participants appeared at first to be a simple ethical principle to uphold. However, not long into data collection I encountered my first tension between maintaining relationships and breaching confidentiality. Kenny (2004) discusses the “depth and subtlety involved in observing seemingly simple ethical rules such as respecting confidentiality” (p. 199). Evading a breach of confidentiality takes on a complexity that is hidden to the researcher before s/he enters the research site. My casual staffroom conversation with Kate is an example of how respecting confidentiality can become a risk, and how a strategic response can further the research agenda.

Kate had heard that I had interviewed the Principal, and asked me directly what he thought were the barriers to teaching for creativity. I hesitated before answering and Kate continued with a question as to whether the Principal mentioned time as a barrier. The easy way out of this situation was to remind Kate of the consent form that she had signed. However, there was also an opportunity to engage in a professional discussion on creativity and thereby raise awareness of my project. I decided to take a strategic risk and share with Kate a common concern about the plight of first year teachers in remote areas attempting to teach for creativity in science, and thereby deflect the conversation and not answer her direct question.

Ethics for invader, invaded and invasion

Lankshear and Knobel (2004) state that, “ethics is concerned with ensuring that the interests and well-being of people are not harmed as a result of the research being done” (p. 101). They provided a valuable guide to avoiding harm to individuals, groups, and communities and I had taken on board their advice when considering the ethical dimensions of my methodological approach and the subsequent completion of my National Ethics Application Form (NEAF). Indeed, the letter of approval to conduct my research from the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) stated that, “Members asked that you be commended for the comprehensive

manner in which you have addressed the issue of risk” (Chair HREC, personal communication, 1 April, 2011).

I have found though, that there are other risks associated with conducting research that a full NEAF does not require consideration of. In developing the methodological approach I was acutely cognisant of the intrusiveness of data collection and how participants might feel under pressure and invaded (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). I was not cognisant at the time though that the data collection process would make me feel an intruder in my previous staffroom and had not considered how I would deal with the unwanted feeling of being the invader. A NEAF requires extensive consideration of the issues of possible harm to the ‘invaded’ and so it should. The emotional toll that ensues for the invader as a result of their part in the ‘invasion’ is not accounted for.

Problematizing the moral conduct of insider research

The political and social dimensions of a workplace confront the researcher upon entry to the research site. The chosen research methodology called for a close relationship to the workplace and hence the political and social dimensions could not be ignored and posed dilemmas that needed to be navigated. The dilemmas encountered required careful brokering and in some cases renegotiation of previous relationships in order to harmoniously accommodate the research goal. The dilemmas were dynamic, not static, and each entry into the research site required reestablishment and/or renegotiation of the researcher-researched relationship. Constant flitting between the dual roles of insider work colleague and insider/outsider researcher take an emotional toll on the researcher. Clarke’s (2004) advice “that it is fundamentally important to deal with these ‘dilemmas’ in ways the [sic] continue growth in learning” (p.1) resonated with my approach. Clarke identified that “‘dilemmas’ are in constant flux and are always changing” (2004, p. 1) and this was true for the research site chosen.

If I hadn’t mentioned to my associate supervisor the uneasiness I felt each time I attempted to commence data collection at my school the conservation that enabled me to overcome my inertia would never have been had and the issue of moral conduct would not have been problematized. The process by which we jointly dealt with the issue is shown in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2 Representation of the process used to deal with the ethical issues

We addressed the issue by imagining we were not researchers and asking what we would do in our other role as teacher educator. By going into our other role we thought differently about the data collection process because we were operating within an ethical framework where the anonymity of participant and confidentiality were judged differently. In our other role we did not feel guilt at asking teachers for their knowledge as it would be used to help teacher education students. In this ethical framework we could acknowledge who they were and what they said to the data and in that context as teacher educators we had no moral dilemma as we were publicly acknowledging their contribution, valorizing their knowledge and the benefit was for others, not just ourselves, and that was a significant difference.

Where to from here? Whilst the NEAF commits the researcher to confidentiality, it may be that I go back to the participants and ask them if their knowledge can be used in the teacher education program. This would be a practical benefit and acknowledge their participation through dissemination of their knowledge.

Conclusion

This paper has analysed the dilemmas and challenges that confront novice researchers entering data collection as an insider. The conflicting roles of emerging researcher and existing teacher pose ethical and emotional dilemmas due to changing agenda, and intentions, with inevitable but unwanted changes to existing relationships. The paper was concerned with the ethical dilemmas emerging in the transition from the methodological approach in theory to the methodological approach in practice. Despite a full NEAF application that was perused twice by the

university Human Research Ethics Committee and final full approval for the research that commended the thoroughness of the ethics application, there remained significant ethical issues for the author as the researcher in situ. HREC are set up to minimize risk to the organization and the participants but the risks to the researcher are not addressed, nor does there appear to be a point in the construction of the methodology where the researcher is required to theorize the risk to self.

There appears to be a silence about the ethical and emotional issues surrounding entering the data collection phase as an insider. The bureaucratic authority of the NEAF does not address the ethical challenges for the researcher that occur before data collection begins. The ethical dilemmas do not finish when ethical clearance is gained. The insider researcher's changing agenda and intentions led to inevitable changes to existing relationships that raised moral concerns. Problematising that moral concern through an explicit process (figure 2) enabled it to be dealt with (until the next time).

There are constant 'dissonances' in research, some are cognitive, some political, and some are social dissonances that arise from ethical values and beliefs that don't surface until the event is upon us. The author was sensitive to the ethical twinges she felt about using her work mates in her project, and likewise, teachers were sensitive to being interviewed. The novice researcher found that as the data collection proceeded, the focus became more on the ethical dilemma. The methodological approach in practice raised issues of trust, respect, and self-value. The professional standing of the researcher and the researched were both at risk. Axiologically, these are high stakes issues. Strategic risk-taking on the part of both the researcher and the researched provided a way forward that allowed the research to continue.

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