

Professional Learning and Development in Schools
and Higher Education 7

Nicole Mockler · Judyth Sachs *Editors*

Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Inquiry

Essays in Honour of Susan Groundwater-Smith

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Essays in Honour of Susan
Groundwater-Smith

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Foreword—An Example to Us All

Susan Groundwater-Smith would not see herself as a model, but to many, including myself, her professional life is an example of how apparent opposites can be brought into harmony and productively harnessed in the service of education. This book reflects not just the scope of her writing and teaching over 40 years and the influence she has had on teachers and researchers from many different backgrounds and countries, but also the ways in which she has acted out in her own life and work the qualities she seeks to encourage in others.

Most noticeably, she takes an inquiring approach to any problem, refusing to accept uncritically accepted views or easy answers. In this sense, she has sometimes seemed a maverick, willing to break educational ranks, ask awkward questions about educational theories, policies and structures and take daring initiatives. Yet she has shown great skill, in the course of varied projects, in working within these structures and using them to the advantage of students and teachers. Always ready to challenge the nature of professional knowledge and learning, and the theory and practice of practitioner inquiry, she has encouraged others to do the same. Yet, despite an innovative and in some ways unconventional approach to learning and teaching, she is also deeply conservative in demanding of herself and others a high level of intellectual integrity and conventional academic standards. The uncompromising nature of this stance is tempered for learners and fellow academics by the fact that she values the questioner as much as their questions. As a result, she has been able to marry the theoretical and the practical in both her writing and her teaching, and to command the respect of practitioners at all levels of the educational system. Many of the following chapters attest to her influence in reconciling perspectives which many still regard as mutually exclusive.

As the contributions to this book suggest, at every stage of her career, she has been open to different opinions, eclectic in her view of where teaching and learning take place and able to find professional friends and colleagues in many countries and cultures. She is prepared to take risks in seeking out interesting educational situations and problems but, having committed herself, is able to stand back and trust others to work with as much commitment as she does. Yet this ability to persuade or co-opt others is not an indication of indifference or a *laissez-faire* attitude to standards. Rather, her choice of co-participants in teaching, writing and research is

underpinned by iron principles—opinions and judgements must be evidence based; rigorous, critical reflection on this evidence must precede recommendations for action or change; different perspectives should be taken into account at all stages of the research; ends and means must be humane, ethically sound and, where possible, emancipatory. As academic, teacher and writer she exemplifies the distinction between a critical friend (a term to which she has given fresh meaning) and a friendly critic (which I think she would regard as a contradiction in terms).

Moreover, she has often been able to turn to good effect the apparent contradiction between her tolerant acceptance of others' viewpoints and interests and her unflinching adherence to her basic intellectual values, by negotiating different forms of collaborative action. Sometimes these have been in the shape of informal cooperation or more structured partnerships between herself and colleagues in schools, colleges, universities and institutions as diverse as museums and libraries. At others, she has acted as adviser and consultant to groups or coalitions of teachers or others seeking to investigate and improve their practice. In both roles, she reveals herself as a skilled and sensitive facilitator. Once again, the contents of this book reflect her talent not just for working with an unusually wide range of people, but also for persuading others successfully to take similar risks and to trust not only her, but also one another. Few *Festschriften* can contain so many contributions from both academics and teachers in schools and colleges as this one does.

Another paradox in Susan Groundwater-Smith's career is that much of her writing has underlined the importance to educationalists of eliciting, listening to and taking careful note of the voices of students. She is an impassioned advocate of the rights and the insights of learners, in whatever setting. She has herself worked hard and imaginatively to seek out, listen to and understand what students are saying, or want to say. Perhaps more important in the long run is the work she has done, and is still doing, with teachers and others, to encourage and enable them to do the same. Indeed, her work has most often been directed to teachers, administrators and policy makers rather than to students themselves. The answer to this apparent discrepancy is, I think, that she sees teachers and other professionals themselves as learners, capable of inquiring into and changing their attitudes and practice. Several chapters in this book testify to the fact that she has encouraged and supported teachers, especially in schools and colleges, in their attempts not just to listen to students but also to use them as informed observers and co-researchers.

This dual allegiance—to students' voices and to teachers' capacity to examine and change themselves—has led her in recent years into fierce but well-informed critiques of centralist education policies, especially in relation to students' ability to express their learning needs, teachers' ability to make judgements of quality and the desirable or actual nature of their professional knowledge. Much of her most powerful teaching and writing has been concerned with the damaging effects on students and teachers of a growing tendency within government at all levels to expect compliance to externally imposed standards. Never one herself to give unquestioned obedience to any authority—though unflinchingly loyal in her commitment, once satisfied of its legitimacy—she has shown others how to recognise and constructively question what they may perceive as unwarranted interference in

their professional lives. In addition, she is seeking, and encourages others to seek, for a new professionalism within centralist control and within different pedagogical traditions.

Underlying all these apparent inconsistencies is one consistent theme. During all the 30 years, I have known her, and for long before that, Susan Groundwater-Smith has been centrally concerned with the nature of teachers' professional knowledge, in particular how it is construed, constructed and employed. This has led her more and more deeply into encouraging inquiry by academics, teachers and others into the nature of professional learning and into how, when, where and under what conditions it takes place. But she has never been satisfied simply with definitions; for her, professional learning, if it is true learning, must lead either to the recognition and ratification of good practice or to changes in teacher behaviour and/or the management of schools. So, she is herself an 'inquiring teacher' and an academic who has done a great deal, nationally and internationally, to promote the idea and the practice of action research, and of related notions such as reflective practice and professional inquiry. It is significant that many of the contributions to this book reflect their authors' intention to question some contemporary understanding or practice of teaching or learning, wherever it takes place.

At this point, it becomes impossible to separate the personal from the professional. That she has been able to hold different and often conflicting aims and loyalties in constructive tension for most of her working life is due in large measure to her own personality and life style. These in their turn can appear contradictory. She has been able to achieve all she has in part by keeping to her lifelong habits of hard work, commitment to the task and dedication to the progress and wellbeing of her students. At the same time, she has rich and varied interests outside her professional life, travels widely and often and throws herself into enjoyment, wherever possible with her family, with as much energy as she does her work. She is single-minded in pursuit of particular projects, ideas or aspirations, but simultaneously generates a wealth of ideas and tasks which she might pursue at a later date, or which others are free to take up. She is trusting but exacting, unorthodox but respectful of tradition, sceptical but accepting, tolerant but demanding. These opposites are held together, I suggest, by her warmth, empathy and generosity—in short by her gift for friendship. It is ironic that one who would largely reject imitation as a means of learning should herself have taught others so much by modelling for them personal as well as professional modes of thought and behaviour. I, among other contributors to this book, count myself as fortunate to have enjoyed her as a friend and colleague for so many fruitful years.

Jennifer Nias

Acknowledgements

In many ways, this book has been a lifetime in the making, and our thanks go to Susan Groundwater-Smith, our colleague and friend, whose intellect and energy have long inspired us and continue to do so into her eighth decade.

Thanks also to the contributors, who responded to our initial overtures with enthusiasm despite the busyness of their professional lives, and have created a series of contributions that stand as a worthy testament to Susan's professional life and work.

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Nicole Mockler
Judyth Sachs

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Anne Campbell recently retired from the post of professor of professional learning at Leeds Metropolitan University. Her research interests focus upon professional learning through action research and inquiry. She has published widely in these areas and on partnership between schools and teacher education. Her edited book, with Susan Groundwater-Smith, *An Ethical Approach to Practitioner Research: Dealing with Issues and Dilemmas in Action Research*, established her interest in ethical issues across a range of contexts. She has directed and worked on various government research projects in professional practice. Before entering higher education in 1989, Anne worked as a primary school teacher, adviser and deputy head.

Phillippa Cordingley is a founder and chief executive of CUREE. As an adviser to the Department for Education (DfE) and various Government Agencies, she has instigated, designed and developed a range of national strategies and support programmes to promote research and evidence-informed practice. She also led CUREE colleagues in developing the evidence-based National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching. Other leading edge projects designed and developed by Philippa include the General Teaching Council (GTC) Research of the Month website and a five-year research project for building the evidence base for a curriculum for the twenty-first century. Philippa is a professional adviser to the National Teacher Research Panel and a member of a range of research steering groups.

Greg Elliott is the deputy principal of St Mary Star of the Sea College—comprehensive Catholic High School in Wollongong, Australia. Since 2004, the college has adopted a model of action research and practitioner enquiry as its primary vehicle

for professional learning and school improvement. Greg has led this change in professional development (PD) which has resulted in the college recasting its pastoral care, approach to ICT, learning and assessment policies among other initiatives. Greg is a member of the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools: an organisation that shares this research approach to school development. His work has been published in a range of peer-reviewed journals, and he presented this model at the Cooperative Action Research Network Conference in the United Kingdom in 2008.

Michael Fielding taught for 19 years in some of the United Kingdom's pioneer radical comprehensive schools and for a similar period and identical commitments at the universities of Cambridge, Sussex and London where he is currently an emeritus professor of education at the Institute of Education. Widely published in the fields of student voice, educational leadership and radical education, his latest book *Radical Education and the Common School—A democratic Alternative* (Routledge 2011), co-authored with Peter Moss, seeks to reclaim education as a democratic project and a community responsibility, and the school as a public space of encounter for all citizens.

Pauline Fitzgerald is an experienced, enthusiastic educator whose career has taken her from New Zealand to England and Australia. She has taught in a range of education settings including primary and secondary schools and cultural organisations. Pauline has also worked in audience research and is passionate about including young people in the design and development of exhibitions and learning programmes. Pauline is currently a senior education officer at the State Library of New South Wales where she is committed to connecting young people with the collections and resources of the library.

John Furlong is a professor of education in the Department of Education at the University of Oxford. From 2003 to 2009, he was the director of the department; before joining Oxford, John held chairs at Cardiff, Bristol and Swansea Universities. He is an elected academician of the Academy of Social Sciences and has served as the president of the British Educational Research Association; he was also a member of the United Kingdom's 2008 RAE education panel. John's areas of research specialism are the professional education of teachers, educational research policy and the impact of new technologies on young people's learning at home.

Jane Hunter is a member of academic staff in primary education, specialising in Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) and science and technology in the School of Education at the University of Western Sydney. Prior to this appointment she worked as a lead teacher in schools, in teacher education programmes at Sydney University and as a consultant to government and private education providers on various technology, professional teaching standards and curriculum projects. Jane is interested in technological, pedagogical and content knowledge (TPACK), social education and HSIE, especially civics and citizenship, new media and teacher professional learning. Since 2001, she has been a member of the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools.

Lynda Kelly is the Head of Audience Research at the Australian Museum, Sydney. She is particularly interested in developing and measuring visitor experiences and learning, as well as the strategic use of audience research and new technologies in organisational change. Lynda's PhD was in museum learning. She has published widely in museum evaluation, writes a number of blogs on audience research, learning, social media and cooking. Lynda is happily obsessed with all things Web 2.0 and curious to see how this will change the ways people learn. Lynda has just released *Hot Topics, Public Culture, Museums*, co-edited with Dr. Fiona Cameron, University of Western Sydney.

Stephen Kemmis is a professor in education at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga. His research interests include the study of professional practice, approaches to educational research and evaluation, participatory action research, curriculum, indigenous education, education for sustainability and university development. His major publications include *Becoming Critical* (with Wilfred Carr, Falmer 1986) and *Enabling Praxis* (with Tracey J. Smith, Sense 2008). He is currently engaged in a major research program with researchers from Europe on the nature of professional practice and the challenges faced by practitioners from a variety of professions in an era of increased specification, regulation and surveillance of their work.

Bob Lingard is a professor in the School of Education at The University of Queensland. His research interests are focused on educational policy, social justice and schooling, gender and schooling and school reform. His most recent books include *Globalizing Education Policy* (Routledge 2010) with Fazal Rizvi and *Educating Boys: Beyond Structural Reform* (Palgrave 2009) with Wayne Martino and Martin Mills.

Colleen McLaughlin is a senior lecturer and deputy head of faculty at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, where she teaches and researches. She has a particular interest in the fields of practitioner research, especially schools–university partnerships for educational research, and the personal, social and emotional aspects of education, including counselling. She is very interested in the social and emotional aspects of collaboration. Recent and current research is on adolescence, mental health and school experience, bullying and pupils with special needs and the use of student knowledge in constructing HIV/AIDS curriculum in East Africa, as well as communities of enquiry within partnerships between schools and universities.

Jane Mitchell was appointed to the Faculty of Education at Charles Sturt University in July 2007. She has previously held positions at Monash University and The University of Queensland. She completed her PhD at the University of British Columbia (Canada) in 2001. Jane's teaching and research interests are concerned with teacher education, professional learning, curriculum and pedagogy. Jane has a particular passion for partnership work with schools.

Nicole Mockler is a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle in Australia. She is a former teacher and school leader, and over the past

decade she has worked as an academic partner with a wide variety of schools and school systems. The current focus of her research and writing is on teacher professional identity, teacher professional learning and practitioner inquiry, and her most recent books are *Teacher Professional Learning in an Age of Compliance: Mind the Gap* (with Susan Groundwater-Smith, Springer 2009) and *Facilitating Practitioner Research: Developing Transformational Partnerships* (with Susan Groundwater-Smith, Jane Mitchell, Petra Ponte and Karin Ronnerman, Forthcoming).

Kris Needham is a senior educational consultant with a particular interest in practitioner research and the use of student voice to inform school improvement initiatives. Kris has been a secondary school principal and held several positions in regional and state offices of the NSW Department of Education. Kris' passion for quality teacher learning processes drives a range of consultancy contexts including executive coaching, interviewing educational researchers for podcasts and vodcasts, being academic adviser to school-based action research teams and designing online learning for aspiring, new and continuing school leaders. This variety of contexts provides opportunities for exploring the potential for theory to inform practice and for practitioners to be supported in accessing current and relevant research.

Jennifer Nias has taught students of all ages from 3 to 56, always seeking to encourage reflection and critical thinking. In her last two posts before retirement (at the Cambridge Institute of Education, and as a part-time research professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Plymouth), she worked on several occasions with Susan Groundwater-Smith, teaching and helping with research projects in Australia and the United Kingdom. Among her publications, many of them arising from her research into primary teachers' lives and careers are *Seeing Anew: Teachers' Theories of Action* (Deakin University) and *The Enquiring Teacher: Sustaining and Supporting Teacher Research* (co-edited with Susan Groundwater-Smith).

Petra Ponte, PhD, has been a professor at the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands) since 2008 and until recently worked as a researcher at the University of Leiden. She worked in various settings as a lecturer, project leader and researcher in the areas of extending special needs provision in ordinary schools, student support and action research as a strategy for professionalisation and education innovation. From 2003 until 2008, she was a professor at Fontys University of Applied Sciences. Currently, she is also an adjunct professor at RIPPLE, Charles Sturt University and an honorary professor at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, both in Australia.

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Bridget Somekh is an emeritus professor at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK and an adjunct professor at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Her

research interest is in the processes of innovation and change, particularly in relation to teaching and learning. She was an editor of *Educational Action Research* for 17 years and a coordinator of the Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN). Her books include *Action Research: A Methodology for Change and Development* (OpenUP 2006); *Pedagogy and Learning with ICT: Researching the Art of Innovation* (Routledge 2007); *The Handbook of Educational Action Research* (with Susan Noffke Ed., Sage 2009) and *Theory and Method in Social Research* (with Cathy Lewin Ed., Sage 2011).

Chapter 1

Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Inquiry: An Introduction

Nicole Mockler and Judyth Sachs

A *festschrift* recognises the contribution of a scholar's work at an important point in their life. When Susan Groundwater-Smith's 70th birthday was approaching and she was momentarily threatening to 'retire' (a threat that has since been revoked), we thought it timely to reflect on and celebrate her overall contribution to the field of education. We both have worked with Susan and acknowledge her commitment to understanding practice through theoretical, scholarly and practitioner interventions, as well as her contribution to our own lives and those of many others as scholars and educators. Given our respect for Susan and our delight in her, we wanted to find a way to publicly acknowledge Susan the Scholar and hence, the seed for an edited work in her honour was planted. After gaining agreement from prospective contributors and publisher, we divulged our collusion and shared our plans with Susan. She was both humbled and delighted and amazingly, for those of us who know her, temporarily lost for words.

Susan proudly defines herself as a 'close to practice researcher': for over more than 30 years, she has worked in academic institutions but maintained close links with classroom practitioners, supporting them as critical friend, academic partner, researcher-in-residence, mentor and trusted advisor. Over the course of her illustrious career, both as a schoolteacher and university academic, her mission has been a transformative one.

Formed in her early years as a teacher by her experiences working with disadvantaged and at-risk students, and in her time working in the educationally dynamic environment of Woollahra Demonstration School in the 1970s, Susan's belief in the progressive education agenda, her strong framework of professional ethics and commitment to equity and democracy has infused her teaching and research over the course of her career. Indeed, her work serves to remind us of the strong common thread that links practitioner inquiry and professional learning with pedagogies that draw on and promote student agency and assessment strategies that provide authentic and accurate feedback to students and parents.

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The contributors have all worked with Susan in various ways over the years: most as co-authors, some as practitioners whose work Susan has supported, others as colleagues with common research interests. Many of us have been mentored by Susan, our efforts sustained by her encouragement and sheer passion for good educational work. Reflecting Susan's own orientation, this book is a trans-national collaboration, with contributors from Australia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands; also in keeping with Susan's orientation, contributions have been made by school- and museum-based practitioners, university-based academics and education consultants. What the contributions share in common is a link to the key themes of Susan's work.

Susan's published work spans significant reports for school systems and professional organisations (Bigum et al. 1987; Crawford et al. 1989; Currie and Groundwater-Smith 1998; Groundwater-Smith 1996; Groundwater-Smith and Kemmis 2004), highly successful text books for pre-service teacher education courses (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2006, 2007, 2009), edited collections (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith 2007, 2010; Nias and Groundwater-Smith 1988), invited contributions (Groundwater-Smith 2005; Groundwater-Smith and Dadds 2004; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2006, 2007) and other scholarly writings (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 2002).

Since the 1980s, her work has focused on the following key areas, between which there is considerable overlap:

- Practitioner inquiry (Currie and Groundwater-Smith 1998; Groundwater-Smith 1988, 1998; Groundwater-Smith and Dadds 2004; Groundwater-Smith and Hunter 2000; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2003)
- Teacher education and professional development (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith 2010; Deer et al. 1995; Groundwater-Smith 1992, 1993a, b, 1997, 1999; Groundwater-Smith et al. 1994, 1997; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009; Mockler and Groundwater-Smith 2010; Retallick et al. 1999; Sachs and Groundwater-Smith 1999; Sharp et al. 1993)
- Teachers' work (Bacon et al. 2000; Groundwater-Smith 1998, 1999, 2001; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 1998; Retallick et al. 1999)

Integral to Susan's work is the link between these areas, the dimensions of teachers' work that provide rich opportunities for professional development and learning and the potential of practitioner inquiry to transform professional practice and professional learning. For this reason, the proposed book is structured into two parts, with strong links to be drawn between the parts, both within the chapters themselves and in the editors' framing of the chapters.

It is representative of the regard in which Susan is held that scholars and practitioners of the highest calibre have contributed chapters to this volume. We asked each of the contributors to link their contribution to Susan's work through one of the two themes of the book, which themselves emerged from our survey of her work over three decades.

Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Inquiry: Essays in Honour of Susan Groundwater-Smith explores the reflexive relationship between teachers'

work and learning and the role of knowledge creation in teacher professional practice and learning. In this, as well as the variety of perspectives and contexts it represents, from more theoretical accounts to case studies of inquiry and professional learning, the book comprises a unique volume authored by a range of educational researchers and practitioners regarded as outstanding in their field.

Part I, *Practitioner Inquiry*, includes chapters that relate to both the theoretical and practical dimensions of conducting practitioner inquiry in schools and other institutions, focusing particularly on the critical and transformative dimensions that link so clearly with Susan's work. A number of chapters in this section either embed or themselves represent case studies of practitioner inquiry or action research from the field.

Stephen Kemmis offers a new definition of critical participatory action research, expanding that which he and Robin McTaggart developed in *The Action Research Planner* (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988). Kemmis uses the six-part expanded definition as a framework for a broad-based discussion of Susan's single and co-authored work over the course of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, concluding that while Susan may not define herself as a critical participatory action researcher, her body of work exemplifies the principles of such work to the point where she might be regarded as an accidental practitioner of critical participatory action research.

In examining the commonalities and distinctions between various forms of action research and practitioner inquiry, Bridget Somekh explores the emerging variations in different parts of the world, some of which Susan has been instrumental in fostering, as an example of Appadurai's notion of 'globalisation from below' (Appadurai 2001). She concludes that variations in the action research/practitioner inquiry traditions adapted to local needs and nuances have amounted to the building of an 'extended family', where localisation and globalisation work symbiotically in support of 'collective agency'.

Petra Ponte and Jan Ax explore the links between inquiry-based professional learning and the European conception of educational praxis, using a model derived from combining the Habermasian lifeworld/system distinction (Habermas 1987) and Mannheim's distinction between substantial and functional rationality (Mannheim 1940). Using this frame for analysis of their own second-order action research study, they conclude that authentic inquiry-based professional learning successfully integrates all four dimensions, effectively supporting the researcher to straddle lifeworlds and systems in the construction of new knowledge and attending to both substantial and functional rationalities.

The interaction between adults and young people in educational settings, ranging from students as data source to intergenerational learning as participatory democracy, is elaborated by Michael Fielding in a typology he terms *Patterns of Partnership*. He suggests that Susan's work in relation to student voice and practitioner inquiry calls on us to interrupt the dominant and common forms of student participation in school inquiry, pushing towards the democratic possibilities and challenging the common sense wisdom of our time.

Demonstrating that Susan's influence has not been limited to schools and universities, Linda Kelly and Pauline Fitzgerald provide exacted examples of these

interactions in their chapter, which charts the seven-year relationship between the Australian Museum and the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools. This relationship has seen the museum draw both young people and teachers into conversation about learning in the museum and provided opportunities for them to influence the shape of exhibitions and the way the museum interacts with visiting young people. Kelly and Fitzgerald emphasise the reciprocal nature of the relationship and use qualitative data gathered to highlight the value placed upon the relationship by members of all groups concerned.

Greg Elliott, a school-based practitioner and leader, tells the story of his school community in creating 'space' for sustainable practitioner inquiry and as a consequence, built a generative professional learning community. He examines the role of strategic leadership on the part of the school's governance body, executive team and teaching staff in the creation of this 'third space' and highlights the evolution and impact of inquiry-based professional learning within his school context.

In the final chapter of Part I, John Furlong examines the proposed new *Master of Teaching and Learning* in England as possible 'fertile ground' for practitioner inquiry. He highlights the aims of the programme, on the surface similar to those aims expressed by Susan in terms of practitioner inquiry, and juxtaposes what is essentially an example of neo-liberal education policy with the transformative agenda embedded in Susan's work. Furlong concludes that it is unlikely that Susan's vision will be realised in the MTL, expecting rather that a level of 'managed commitment' to national policies will emerge through this national strategy for inquiry-based professional learning.

In Part II, *Teachers Work and Learning*, the chapters are slightly more broad in scope, attending variously to the policy frames within which teachers' work is constructed, the links between teachers professional learning and development and the factors that shape their practice. Of the many consequences of this broader project, the personal transformation of teachers through the development of a confident professional voice is evident in the chapters in this section.

Nicole Mockler examines the formation and mediation of teacher professional identity, reporting on a qualitative research study that used life history methodology to explore the 'anchors' that serve to fix teacher professional identity at differing points in their careers and life experiences. She concludes that good professional learning and development that incorporates opportunities for teachers to expand their practice and authentically reflect on their practice in context has the capacity to orientate teachers to new and different dimensions of their work, anchoring teacher professional identity anew.

Exploring the links between inquiry and professional learning in teachers' approaches towards curriculum change and educational innovation, Anne Campbell focuses upon issues of collaboration, collegiality and critical friendship in arguing for the importance of academic partnership. She draws upon work conducted with Susan and others over the past decade and locates current initiatives regarding inquiry-based teacher professional learning within the contemporary policy contexts.

Judyth Sachs explores a variety of metaphors for teacher professional learning within currently prevailing educational discourses, arguing that there are a variety

of approaches to continuing professional development that are oriented towards teacher learning. She emphasises the link between trust and professional judgement in identifying catalysts for professional learning and presents a strong preferred vision of a robust teaching profession supported by effective and transformative professional learning and development.

Arguing for the adoption of an ecological approach to understanding and re-searching teacher collaboration on research, Colleen McLaughlin explores the issue of teacher collaboration broadly, taking stock of both the challenges and potential rewards inherent in collaboration. She argues that an 'ecological approach' to teacher collaboration, which is both contextual and collective, and takes into account both the forces at work in teachers' lives and its own resultant tensions and dilemmas, can assist us in developing an understanding of the nuances of teacher collaboration.

Jane Hunter and Jane Mitchell explore the roles of 'insiders', 'outsiders' and purpose in the development of authentic teacher professional learning. Using case studies from their recent work, they argue that the best conditions for generating practical knowledge about teaching are created where partnerships between teachers and academic partners are met with a sense of educational purpose that is mutually compelling for both insiders and outsiders.

Drawing on her experience as a member of the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools, a network of schools in and around Sydney, Australia, which Susan Groundwater-Smith has convened for almost a decade, Kris Needham examines the supportive structures which have allowed this network to flourish. She suggests that the Coalition operates as a site for what Eraut has termed 'joint practice development' (Eraut 2005), wherein professional learning is empowered by both the 'head' and the 'heart'.

In her chapter, Phillippa Cordingley explores 13 years of evidence related to support for research and evidence-based practice for enhanced teacher and student learning, surveying a range of initiatives and activities that have been sponsored by the English Government over this period of time. She particularly focuses upon teachers' engagement in and use of research, concluding that a substantialist, specialist, multi-level approach, wherein teachers are supported to use research in ways consistent with principles of effective teacher professional learning, is best.

Bob Lingard completes Part I of the book with a chapter that offers a critique of recent education policy developments in Australia 2007–2010, exploring these with particular reference to the nature and scope of teachers' work. He connects with the broad project of school reform to which Susan has been a key contributor over the course of her career, and argues that the aims and goals of this project are increasingly difficult to work towards in the context of the neo-liberal education discourses that permeate western democracies at this time. He concludes that while all is not lost, a new social democratic imaginary is urgently required to underwrite a national school reform agenda that is about the promulgation of a richer, more transformative vision of education than that which currently prevails.

The book concludes with two postscripts. The first, written by Susan Groundwater-Smith herself, is a brief tribute to the late Professor Shirley Grundy, who was

to have been a contributor to this book but withdrew shortly prior to her untimely death in July 2010. Shirley and Susan were close friends and colleagues over many years, and it is a mark of Susan's generosity that she asked to make this contribution and dedication to Shirley within a book designed to honour her own work.

For once not content to allow Susan the final word, the book concludes with a final postscript from us, a call to continue and extend the project of which Susan's work has been an integral part, in support of educational ideas and orientations that swim against the tide of the current 'age of compliance'.

It is our belief that *Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Inquiry: Essays in Honour of Susan Groundwater-Smith* is not only a fitting acknowledgement of a career that has had (and continues to have) an important impact on education, but also constitutes a stand-alone extension of the education agenda about which Susan is so passionate.

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Part I

Practitioner Inquiry

Chapter 2

A Self-Reflective Practitioner and a New Definition of Critical Participatory Action Research

Stephen Kemmis

Susan Groundwater-Smith—the self-reflective practitioner in the title of this chapter—is not merely an advocate for practitioner inquiry, she is an exemplary model of the self-reflective practitioner. Ever since her days of primary teaching, when she discovered ideas and theories that could enliven and enlighten her educational work, she has continued to debate and critically interrogate not only her adversaries, her friends and the contemporary research literature, but also, and more doggedly, herself. She reveals something of this exemplary self-reflection in her *My Professional Self: Two Books, a Person and My Bedside Table* (Groundwater-Smith 2006). Only someone deeply respectful of ideas and their histories can deal with so many, with such dexterity, through so many years of confident scholarly writing, always leavening her educational scholarship with literary adornments drawn from the latest novel to impress her (as *My Professional Self...* shows), and always inviting readers into worlds made accessible by her lucid prose. She has always been a hard act to follow at a podium, and a hard co-author to work with as she so effortlessly (it seems) turns good sense into good sentences. As those who have written with her know, her writing flows from years of careful crafting. She is a practitioner par excellence of this special practice: the practice of inhaling rich observations of educational life (detailed in careful notes written up soon after), reflecting deeply on her own and others' educational experience, locating her ideas precisely in the current scholarship of teaching, and exhaling insightful writing about teaching that allows readers to see their worlds more clearly and understand them more deeply.

She has been, among many roles, a primary teacher, university teacher, professional developer, leader and mentor of research teams, professor, consultant, adviser and, at last, an eminent and distinguished scholar, also, of course, and not incidentally, a partner, a mother and a citizen of the world. And now, someone who, despite pretended retirement, continues to choreograph the living practice of the student-teachers who read her textbooks, the teachers and scholars who read her

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