Chapter 10

Participatory action research

An integrated approach towards practice development

Katherine Wimpenny

> Those who wish to take the path of collaborative research be warned: this is no easy way forward. There will be doubt and mistrust, there will be disagreement and conflict, and there will be failures as well as success. For the birth of an integrated consciousness means the death of the old. It means learning to trust the wisdom of the unknown other.
>
> (Reason, 1994: 56)

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an overview of participatory action research (PAR) and its uses for practice development. It begins by discussing the basic ideas that underpin PAR to illustrate why this method is a complex, challenging yet essentially illuminating approach to adopt in conducting human inquiry. It presents how one might navigate a path through a PAR process (including what obstacles may be encountered along the way). The aim of this chapter is to provide a perspective on PAR methods currently advocated within the literature, and to relate theoretical and experiential observations on the application of PAR within a recent professional practice development project, to highlight what is currently either missing or not well articulated in the literature. In particular, focus is directed to researcher relationships and what can be meant by authentic participation.

Throughout the chapter I draw upon my experience as a primary researcher recently involved in PAR within a practice development initiative. As an occupational therapy educator in the UK, interested in practice epistemology and in establishing closer links with practice, I was approached to work with an occupational therapy service based in a mental health National Health Service trust. The project aimed to improve the therapists' profile in light of multidisciplinary team working and their specific contribution to client care. It included focus on reviewing the evidence base and theoretical knowledge underpinning their practice. The importance of collaboration and participation in social practices led to the selection of a participatory action research strategy.

What is participatory action research?

As the name suggests, PAR involves participation and action. As an evolving approach to human inquiry, a fundamental premise of PAR is that it embraces the concerns experienced by a group, community or organization (McTaggart, 1997; Stringer, 1999, 2007; Taylor *et al.*, 2004). Put simply, this method of research is about a group of people who are affected by some problem or issue and decide to get together to work out how they want to tackle

the problem. As a collaborative research methodology it offers significant benefits in that it can contribute to the discovery and development of the conditions and actions for change that are sustainable, and thereafter the PAR element disappears.

PAR has an explicit set of social values: it should be democratic, equitable and liberating for those involved. As Cockburn and Trentham (2002: 29) claim, PAR provides a framework 'for new ways of conceptualising relationships with our clients and others with whom we work'. This recognizes that the primary researcher and those involved come together in a more 'communitarian way' (Lincoln, 2001: 127), breaking down the old borders between knowledge-producing and knowledge-consuming elites. Yet negotiating ways forward that embrace a range of opinions is challenging. While there is room for creativity, uncertainty and messiness prevail. Nonetheless, the aims of PAR remain consistent: increasing participant awareness of external forces affecting decisions in their lives, including the self-confidence and capacity to develop decisions that enable a new level of awareness and competence.

Situating participatory action research

PAR could be situated within a social constructivist paradigm (Guba, 1990; Lincoln, 2001) in its focus on how participants come together to co-create their understandings of the issues under investigation (Crotty, 1998; Heron and Reason, 1997). Within this relativist ontology, social constructivism offers an extended epistemology, embracing the contribution of propositional knowledge, practical knowing and experiential knowing or knowing by encounter (Heron, 1981; Reason, 1988). Yet while constructivism and PAR are both concerned with socially constructed meaning amongst participants, the influence of culture and tradition requires acknowledgement, and such issues bring into focus the structures of the wider political context. As such, meaning making is not solely a product of the individual mind influenced by social process (Crotty, 1998: 58), but encompasses interaction with other objects, spaces and political structures (Gergen, 1999). Thus PAR could also be situated within social constructionism (Crotty, 1998; Gergen, 1999, 2003). From this theoretical perspective, while individuals are seen as engaging in their world and making sense of it, this is viewed in the context of social perspective, ritual and history.

Furthermore, in its focus upon the social, economic and political needs and opinions of ordinary people (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005), PAR principles link with Habermas's (1996) work concerned with 'communicative action', in which people find a communicative space where they may find solidarity as understandings of their situation are jointly considered. In conceptualizing the generation of knowledge as that which enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through processes of self-reflection and action, a critical theory paradigm (Fals-Borda, 1991; Habermas, 1996) might also present an appropriate theoretical perspective to adopt. Through communicative action individuals are enabled, in the context of mutual participation, to consider such issues as what is comprehensible to them, what is acceptable in the light of knowledge, what joint commitment to understanding may offer, and what can be judged prudent and appropriate to do considering the circumstances in which people find themselves (Habermas, 1996). Here a key role of the primary researcher is to heighten the participants' awareness of how external forces affect their decision making. The PAR process then focuses upon how work with the participants can consider action built upon new levels of awareness.

In summary, my experience has led me to the perspective that PAR does not sit neatly within one paradigm, but may be appropriately situated at the boundary of a number of

theories. Whatever the decision, those theories that apply need to adequately account for and embrace the reframing and reconstructing of individual practices within a social and political meaning-making process.

The underlying intention of participatory action research

Historically PAR has been associated with social transformation in the third world and human rights activism (Fals-Borda, 2001) (as distinct from purely political activism), yet in recent years its uses have broadened (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). PAR processes can be used to improve local situations across business, education, health, social care and community settings. The underlying intention is to value discourses from a range of intellectual origins (Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, 2007).

PAR methodology challenges the notion that legitimate knowledge lies only with the privileged experts, and supports the premise that knowledge should be developed in collaboration with local experts; the voices of the 'knowers'. PAR offers practical problem-posing and problem-solving approaches at grassroots level, the intention being that such action can lead to meaningful social change for those directly involved, to the system of which they are a part, and to wider cultural practices. Indeed Stringer (1999) argues that if a [participatory] action research project does not make a difference in a specific way for the participants, it has failed to achieve its objectives. Honouring such aims places considerable pressure on the primary researcher, but can be an important driver for seeing a PAR process through. Moreover, I believe it provides a powerful message about who can learn from research.

As PAR methodology is premised on research conducted *with* people as opposed to *on* people (Heron and Reason, 2001), the participants within PAR are encouraged to consider themselves as co-researchers, driving the study forwards as a group of individuals with shared objectives and decision-making powers. However, the development of the individual's sense of empowerment within research relationships requires significant consideration, and this key theme will be discussed as the chapter progresses.

The practice of participatory action research

PAR can be undertaken using a diverse range of methods, and it is important to adopt an approach that is appropriate to the research context. Although quantitative research is not ruled out within a PAR inquiry, a qualitative perspective is more usual, in particular where the intention is to travel along with participants in their natural social settings.

Getting going

Fals-Borda (1991), Reason (1994) and Kidd and Kral (2005) all suggest that PAR is usually adopted because the participants request the chance to engage in a PAR project in the first instance. In reality a community of participants are normally aware of problems to be addressed, and then are more likely to be advised that PAR is an appropriate way forward. A PAR project may therefore arise through a coincidental meeting between a researcher and a group of individuals, or a group may approach a researcher known to possess some experience and support to offer them in addressing their problem. Whatever the reason, from the onset a PAR process should strive to be collaborative in nature, as it is vital that participants have some level of investment in the study. Lewin (1946) argued that people are more likely to test out new practices when they participate actively in developing agreed strategies. It follows that 'getting going' with PAR requires an important amount of groundwork, and

early sessions should focus on exploring the PAR method, encouraging the development of collective decision making, and a commitment to improvement, and with that, consideration of researcher roles.

Researcher/participant roles

Kidd and Kral (2005) identify the importance of creating opportunities between participants to initiate dialogue and share understandings of the issues at hand. This includes the discussion of roles within the inquiry and the sharing of power in terms of joint responsibility for the research process. Yet, as Rahman (1991) and McTaggart (1997) highlight, most groups who engage in PAR are accustomed to traditional research hierarchies and may resist the sharing of power that is offered. PAR processes are indeed complex. They make visible individual values, characteristics, limitations and abilities. Moreover, while a primary researcher does not assume expertise, they are nonetheless required to be skilled, supportive and resourceful. Considering issues of power amongst individuals in light of their different visions of the inquiry, its aims, methods and actions, and making this process amenable to all, is a task not to be underestimated. Equally, it is important to appreciate that participants will not hold static positions. I suggest the development of 'co-researcher' roles needs to be nurtured within a culture of participation which recognizes power imbalance. Nonetheless, from the outset all participants need to feel that they have a valued role in being a co-inquirer/co-researcher and member of the community, and in this role they may legitimately be more or less engaged (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

The use of self-reflective cycles

Strategies employed within a PAR process to achieve meaningful social change involve engaging with a group or groups of participants in a series of self-reflective cycles, which include planning a change with the 'community'; acting and observing the process and consequences of change; reflecting on these processes and consequences; and then further cycles of planning, acting and reflecting (Heron and Reason, 2001; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005) (See Figure 10.1). In reality, the process is not a straightforward set of neat self-contained spirals of planning, acting and observing. Stages overlap; initial plans require review in the light of experience and learning. Yet PAR is not about following a set of prescribed steps, rather, the reflection and action cycles provide a space within which critical dialectic discourse can be developed and meaningful change considered (a form of consciousness raising) (Friere, 1970).

My involvement with PAR provided an appreciation of how the cycles of reflection and action become 'operationalized' within a range of learning spaces which move from a predominant anchor point outwards. For example, our predominant learning space and anchor point was a monthly community meeting, in which the occupational therapists examined their current practice repertoires to explore what was working well and what was not. The monthly meeting remained a key space throughout the inquiry process, but over time and as participants chose to act, this reflection and action space also moved outwards into the therapists' work-based settings, where alternatives for action were considered. In addition, individuals were seen to use their own personal space for reading and or reflection. Back in monthly group meetings, amongst other peers, dialectic discourse was encouraged and meaningful change considered in terms of creative ways to move the research agenda forward (Wimpenny *et al.*, 2006). The point here is that a combined use of learning spaces provides

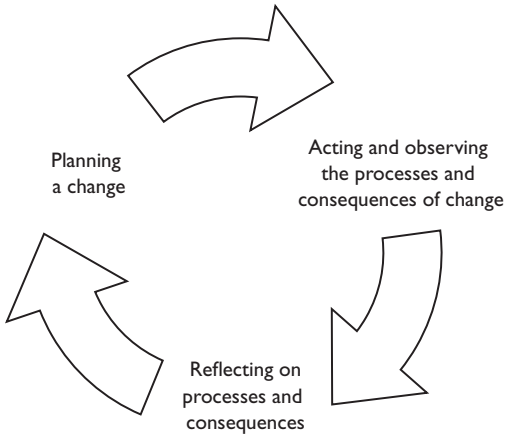

Figure 10.1 Representation of the action and reflection cycle

the means by which consciousness raising can be achieved, enabling participants to gain a sense of how their actions and the understanding of their actions can develop. Yet disjunction is visible within these 'learning spaces', not least through the requirement that the participants be open to others' views while potentially feeling vulnerable and challenged regarding their own perspectives.

Negotiating authentic participation

Fundamentally, a PAR methodology needs to get on with the job in hand. PAR is after all situated within the everyday working practices of those involved. A distinctive feature of PAR is the commitment that participants engage in research for themselves, yet the idea of participation within this is problematic and requires some teasing out. I suggest a number of key elements require attention during PAR processes to continually question the level of participation achieved:

- relocation of power: primary researcher responsibilities
- development of a sound dialectic
- generation of knowledge and understanding
- development of shared quality criteria to ensure validity.

Relocating power: primary researcher responsibilities

Authentic participation in research requires sharing the way in which research is conceptualized, practised and brought to bear in light of the person's situation (McTaggart, 1997). It involves focusing on the production and generation of knowledge as a shared task. The primary researcher, in taking responsibility for seeing a PAR process through and seeking to effect meaningful change with those involved, can inadvertently 'silence voices and undermine the entire process' (Kidd and Kral, 2005: 190). Ownership of the agenda amongst participants requires that the PAR facilitator engage in an ongoing examination of their own voices and actions, and the effects of these on the research process. Expressed as 'inner and outer arcs of attention' (Wadsworth, 2001; Marshall, 2001), this self-reflexive process provides an opportunity for PAR facilitators to embrace critical subjectivity (Reason, 1994).

Critical subjectivity involves a self-reflexive attention to the ground on which one is standing. In simple terms this means developing awareness that we do not come into an inquiry with a 'clean slate', and that the issues of power and privilege prevailing need to be reduced initially, then levelled amongst participants as far as possible. PAR requires significant reflexive capacity in order for the primary researcher to continually question their response toward situations as they arise, and to acknowledge that people think differently from one another, and importantly that they themselves do not always know what is best.

Development of a sound dialectic

PAR is a social process; it requires a deliberate method of discovering, investigating and attaining mutual understanding. It requires a degree of willingness of participants to engage in dialogue in order to uncover social practices. PAR is concerned with a collaborative sense of agency (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005), and the facilitator needs to consider how to encourage development of such social practices. McNiff *et al.* (2003) identify that when people engage in action research for the first time it may appear that the techniques are nothing new. Yet PAR is more than reflection upon practice and problem solving. It involves problem posing, examining values and questioning motives. It involves committed action in which a range of views and feelings are taken into account. However, while PAR processes aim to open up space for participants to communicate and share their understandings of the situation, such spaces can only be used when people want to and feel able to share their views. A significant challenge to the process is therefore participants' readiness to engage, including the required investment of time and energy. As experienced within our inquiry process, despite commitment at the outset, participants may well meet personal and environmental barriers which impact upon their intentions to act (Armitage and Conner, 2001).

Heron (1992) identifies how learning is best achieved by self-generated interest, but attempts by teachers to impose or instil particular conditions often negate or distort such opportunities. Yet learning in itself creates disjunction as individuals oscillate between old and emergent forms of understanding (Savin-Baden, 2008). The disruption that PAR can create for participants' working lives is not to be underestimated. Participants can express feelings of confusion, which can surface as anger and resentment. Such challenges highlight how learning is never just a cognitive task; rather, learning is linked to individual biography and involves participation in social practices. Feelings and dynamics aroused in group settings are complex where there are multiple layers of relationships. PAR requires participants to make new choices and take risks, and raising emotion is part of this process. Yet equally the disruption created can set the agenda for change. Nonetheless the impact of change needs to be taken into account, and strategies are required throughout to enable participants to feel supported and respected (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Such strategies should include:

- consideration of the participants' sense of pride
- recognition of the importance of validating individuals' social identities and efforts
- affirmation of the participants' feelings of autonomy and competence and with that, their ability to be accountable for their actions.

Developing a sound dialectic within PAR involves using strategies whereby the rethinking of individual knowledge construction is enabled in light of complex group dynamics. PAR facilitators can find themselves swaying between didactic and participatory approaches in attempts to support new learning as it emerges in the context of group practices. They can

feel the need to step in, to advise and coach. Attaining the right balance between incorporating rather than imposing knowledge is a significant challenge (Wimpenny *et al.*, 2006). Participants may not always pull in the same direction. Yet being with participants and navigating a path through periods of disharmony links with Lave and Wenger's (1991) assertion that learning, thinking and knowing result in enhanced relationships between people in, with and arising from the socially and culturally constructed world. Periods of 'storming' can also lead on to greater 'performing', since the bonding between participants grows stronger through adversity. However, even within a more mature group of people, the experience of being within a PAR inquiry process can remain exciting yet upsetting. Participants may express the emotional distress of trying out new actions which do not go as planned, coupled with the joy and sense of breakthrough experienced as new methods are realized (Reason, 1988).

Generation of knowledge and understanding

In terms of how knowledge is created and/or understood, knowing is expressed via the participants' 'thought-worlds' or unique interpretative repertoires (Dougherty, 1992). In social settings this can be evidenced via the participants' practical knowledge, their individual skills, competencies and their ability to solve problems they face. Through the continued application of skills, competencies and capabilities, experiential knowledge is gained by the participants (Heron, 1981; Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2003). However, knowledge development of this kind is often 'underground' or tacit and so seldom surfaces. Guba (1990) highlights the importance, within the inquiry process, of democratic dialogue and the use of time and sustained effort to identify and share experiential knowledge. Such dialectic discourse can then unearth assumptions leading to intellectual discovery and new presentational knowledge, that emerges through the sharing of individual experiences.

Meaning-making involves the ongoing process of sharing knowledge, discussion, reflection, action and the consequences of action; for participants to revisit shared experiences which challenge previous ways of thinking and participating. As openness amongst participants develops, group members may become more able to express their feelings, review their work, hear alternative views and try out newly reviewed practices (Howie *et al.*, 1995).

Importantly, while participants may join forces to enhance understandings and generate alternate practices, the focus of knowledge production remains linked to whatever is useful for the individual within their own work context. Thus the common project which may change the culture or systems of a group or community must also provide knowledge that is useful at a personal level.

Developing shared quality criteria to ensure validity

Under a relativist ontology, where multiple realities are co-constructed, establishing what benefits emerge from a PAR inquiry needs to be considered from each individual's perspective. Through sustained contact, participants have more opportunity to develop ownership of the study and reveal what is important to share through open discussion. Thus the development of shared criteria requires that participatory action research:

- Pledges a high degree of personal involvement from the primary researcher to support the process of learning. This can expose the researcher to potential risks as well as

positive experiences that are often not evident within more traditional paradigms. As such, the researcher needs to maintain a critical awareness during the inquiry process.
- Provides genuine opportunity for the shared interpretation of themes amongst all participants, in order to revisit shared experiences and to adequately contextualize the outcomes generated.
- Acknowledges that all participants have been involved as reflexive individuals, with the ability to disseminate their own experience of the inquiry process with others as it occurs relative to context.

McTaggart (1997) appropriately identifies that validity procedures should be considered carefully, not purely to satisfy academic processes, but importantly to highlight the challenge of implementing PAR successfully. As Lewin (1946) recognized, given the complexity of social situations, it is not possible to anticipate everything that needs to be done. In questioning if PAR processes are sufficiently valid I argue attention should be focused at the participatory level, and whether those involved have taken an active part, including their perception of whether their situation has improved or not. At a more fundamental level questions need to focus on whether the inquiry has achieved as much as it might.

The primary researcher needs to recognize how they might be operating from a position of power and privilege, which can become a dominant discourse and has potential to undermine participants' stated views. This tension can be evident during decision-making procedures, for while PAR encourages democratic and inclusive forms of knowledge creation, the approach of using PAR for altering boundaries of knowledge is complex. McTaggart's (1997) perspective regarding the roles groups of people who engage in PAR may hold, offers a means of exploring validity issues in collaborative inquiry. McTaggart makes a distinction between the worker and researcher roles to illustrate that as well as distinctive tasks each group or individual takes in relation to their own institutional and cultural contexts, all parties are joined in a commitment to inform and improve a particular practice. McTaggart's perspective links to my experience of PAR, in that as participants we were involved in different ways. The achievement of joint ownership is often a complex process, certainly in terms of achieving this from start to finish. Participants may not readily assume co-researcher roles, at least initially; indeed certain participants may well wish to remain at the periphery of the inquiry, which is an equally valid place to be. Nonetheless, progress is seen in negotiating a way through difference of opinion, in engaging in 'authentic negotiation and confrontation' (Reason, 1988: 20). As this quote suggests, while it is not necessarily a comfortable process, the journey remains worth the effort.

On a final note, while authentic participation encourages collective agency, I believe an important element of PAR inquiry requires 'recognition of the person-in-the-world as a valid member of the socio-cultural community' (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 52). Developing a shared repertoire with participants during PAR requires an ability to connect with the individual therein. PAR involves individuals in a process of confronting self-understandings, and regular checks are required to ensure those who do not appear to have a voice remain an important focus of the group's work. A key strategy, which kept our venture alive at critical periods of the inquiry, was the use of individual meetings. These provided a different platform from which relationships with team members could be nurtured, and dynamics regarding the 'ongoing business' of the group could be addressed. Fals-Borda (2001: 31) states how PAR can 'convert those who engage in its processes to become thinking feeling persons'. Certainly in my experience, the value of human connectedness between participants and

myself proved to have potency in terms of setting a more caring tone within sessions, from which commitment to the venture grew.

Conclusion

Participatory action research importantly provides a framework which allows room for individual response to a research agenda, and a genuine sharing of interests which appropriately recognizes community need and community interest (Lincoln, 2001). Yet PAR is not solely about interaction with other people, it involves examination of the processes by which people come to describe, explain or otherwise account for their situation in the world (Gergen, 2003). Through PAR the interrelationship between personal agency and the influence of the participants' wider social world is appreciated.

This chapter has outlined some of the approaches and strategies that may be used when engaging in PAR. The importance of action that needs to be flexible and responsive given the complexity of social situations has been considered. The nurturing of research relationships has been argued for and the practice of authentic participation has been explored, in terms of recognizing the need for participants to be involved in different ways yet still with the control for setting the agenda for change.

Importantly, the writing-up and dissemination of the findings of PAR should not detract from what is also relevant, and often more difficult to account for, and this relates to the ongoing impact of the inquiry on the individuals' lives and practices. A key aim embraced within PAR is the commitment to inform and improve a particular practice. However, the practical and dialectical processes necessary for achieving such aims are not to be underestimated, and the primary researcher's role can be considerable in holding the inquiry process together. Nonetheless PAR is a powerful and evolving learning process which changes the researcher, the participants and the situations in which the research takes place. Reason's (1994) foreboding at the start of this chapter sets a tone for the research methodology which requires careful examination by those considering its use, yet equally, it should not detract from the satisfying opportunities PAR can provide to change practice through collective wisdom.

References

Armitage, C. J. and Conner, M. (2001) 'Efficacy of the theory of planned behaviour: a meta-analytic review', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 40, 471–99.

Cockburn, L. and Trentham, B. (2002) 'Participatory action research: integrating community occupational therapy practice and research', *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, **69**(1), 20–30.

Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and perspective in the research process,* London: Sage.

Dougherty, D. (1992) 'Interpretive barriers to successful product innovation in large firms', *Organization Science,* 3, 179–202.

Fals-Borda, O. (1991) 'Some basic ingredients', in O. Fals-Borda and A. Rahman (eds), *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the monopoly with participatory action research*, New York: Apex Press.

Fals-Borda, O. (2001) 'Participatory (action) research in social theory: origins and challenges', in P. Reason and H. Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Friere, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum.

Gergen, K. J. (1999) *An Invitation to Social Construction*, London: Sage.

Gergen, K. J. (2003) 'Knowledge as socially constructed', in M. Gergen and K. J. Gergen (eds), *Social Construction: A reader*, London: Sage.
Guba, E. (1990) *The Paradigm Dialogue*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1989) *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, London: Sage.
Habermas, J. (1996) *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Heron, J. (1981) 'Philosophical basis for a new paradigm', in P. Reason and J. Rowan (eds), *Human Inquiry: A source book of new paradigm research*, Chichester: Wiley.
Heron, J. (1992) 'The politics of facilitation: balancing facilitator authority and learner autonomy', in J. Mulligan and C. Griffin (eds), *Empowerment through Experiential Learning Explorations of Good Practice*, London: Kogan Page.
Heron, J. and Reason, P. (1997) 'A participatory inquiry paradigm', *Qualitative Inquiry*, **3**(3), 274–94.
Heron, J. and Reason, P. (2001) 'The practice of co-operative inquiry: research "with" rather than "on" people', in P. Reason and H. Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research: Participative inquiry and practice*, London: Sage.
Howie, L. M., Kennedy-Jones, M., Lentin, P., MacDonald, E. M. and Giffin, J. (1995) 'Supervision in a group training curriculum: reflections on experiential learning', *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, **42**(4), 167–71.
Kakabadse, N. K. and Kakabadse, A. (2003) 'Developing reflexive practitioners through collaborative inquiry: a case study of the UK civil service', *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 69: 365–83.
Kemmis, S. and McTaggart, R. (2005) 'Participatory action research: communicative action and the public sphere', pp. 559–604 in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 3rd edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Kidd, S. A. and Kral, M. J. (2005) 'Practicing participatory action research special issue: participatory action research', *American Psychological Association*, **52**(2), 187–95.
Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Lewin, K. (1946) *Action Research and Minority Groups: Resolving social conflicts*, New York: Harper & Row.
Lincoln, Y. (2001) 'Engaging sympathies: relationships between action research and social constructivism', in P. Reason and H. Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research: Participative inquiry and practice*, London: Sage.
Marshall, J. (2001) 'Self reflective inquiry practices', in P. Reason and H. Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research: Participative inquiry and practice*, London: Sage.
McNiff, J., Lomax, P. and Whitehead, J. (2003) *You and Your Action Research Project*, 2nd edn, London: RoutledgeFalmer.
McTaggart, R. (1997) 'Guiding principles for participatory action research', in R. McTaggart (ed.), *Participatory Action Research: International contexts and consequences*, New York: State University of New York.
Rahman, A. (1991) 'The theoretical standpoint of PAR', in O. Fals-Borda and A. Rahman (eds), *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the monopoly with participatory action research*, New York: Apex Press.
Reason, P. (1988) 'The co-operative inquiry group', in P. Reason (ed.), *Human Inquiry in Action: Developments in new paradigm research*, London: Sage.
Reason, P. (1994) 'Human inquiry as discipline and practice', in P. Reason (ed.), *Participation in Human Inquiry*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Savin-Baden, M. (2008) *Learning Spaces: Creating opportunities for knowledge creation in academic life*, London: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Savin-Baden, M. and Wimpenny, K. (2007) 'Exploring and implementing Participatory Action Research', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, **31**(2), 331–43.

Stringer, E. T. (1999) *Action Research: A handbook for practitioners*, 2nd edn, London: Sage.

Stringer, E. T. (2007) *Action Research: A handbook for practitioners*, 3rd edn, London: Sage.

Taylor, R. T., Braveman, B. and Hammel, J. (2004) 'Developing and evaluating community based services through participatory action research: two case examples', *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, **58**(1), 73–82.

Wadsworth, Y. (2001) 'The mirror, the magnifying glass, the compass and the map: facilitating participatory action research', in P. Reason and H. Bradbury (eds), *Handbook of Action Research: Participative inquiry and practice*, London: Sage.

Wimpenny, K., Forsyth, K., Jones, C., Evans, E. and Colley, J. (2006) 'Thinking with theory to develop practice', *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, **69**(6), 423–8.