

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 398 246

TM 025 172

AUTHOR Datnow, Amanda; Ray, Karen
 TITLE Responsibility and Sensitivity in Case Study Research: Exploring Our Role.
 PUB DATE Apr 94
 NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, April 8-12, 1994).
 PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Case Studies; Decision Making; Educational Change; *Ethics; Intermediate Grades; Intervention; Middle Schools; Political Influences; *Researchers; *Research Methodology; *Responsibility; Secondary Education; *Track System (Education)
 IDENTIFIERS *Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

Researchers involved in a case study of 10 racially mixed public high schools and middle schools that have undertaken the challenge of reducing tracking saw themselves as dispassionate observers. In the middle of the study, however, they began to question this view, discovering that their very presence affected the tenor of reform in each school studied. In some, their presence and the research project were used to garner political credit for the reformers, and in other, they were specifically asked to help. This paper explores the ethics needed to guide decisions about intervention. Can and should researchers stand by to observe as reformers plunge into controversial school reform efforts? If they choose to intervene, how should they deal with the responsibility? Their conclusions provide some guidance for qualitative researchers who face the dilemma of being outsiders with inside information. The two ground rules that they developed are: (1) make explicit and describe in detail all personal interventions and the participants' reactions to these interventions; and (2) raise for discussion and constant review among all members of the team all the professional versus personal dilemmas encountered. (Contains 21 references.) (SLD)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

ED 398 246

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

AMANDA DATNOW

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Responsibility and Sensitivity in Case Study Research:
Exploring Our Role

Amanda Datnow and Karen Ray
UCLA Graduate School of Education

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational
Research Association, April, 1994.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1025172

Responsibility and Sensitivity in Case Study Research:

Exploring Our Role

Abstract

Like many qualitative researchers entering the field to collect data, we saw ourselves as dispassionate observers. At midstream, however, we questioned this designation, discovering that our presence affected the tenor of reform in every school in our study; in some, our study was used to garner political credit for reformers; in others, we were asked explicitly for help. This paper explores answers to the following questions: What code of ethics do we use to guide decisions about intervention? Can and should researchers stand by as neutral observers while practitioners plunge into black holes of controversial school reform? If we do intervene, how do we deal with that responsibility? Our conclusions provide guidance to qualitative researchers who encounter the dilemma of being outsiders with inside information.

Responsibility and Sensitivity in Case Study Research:

Exploring Our Role

The role of the academic is no longer that of the dispassionate observer, but rather that of an insider and an outsider at the same time: one who dares to speak the unspeakable, because she must document what she sees, but also one who cares deeply and passionately, and empathizes with the problems of practice (Lieberman, 1992, p. 10).

Ann Lieberman's words ring true with us as she describes a transformation similar to that which we have undergone in the course of a qualitative research project. We originally and perhaps naively believed our role as researchers to be clear: we were the dispassionate observers of the words and actions of the administrators, teachers, parents, and students at our school sites -- they talk, we listen.

At our first site visits we realized that the schools did not consider us dispassionate observers, and we questioned that designation. We realized through our interactions with school members how difficult it is to dispassionately observe a reform about which we feel so passionate. It also seemed irresponsible and insensitive not to intervene in certain situations. At all of our sites, we faced questions such as: how do we respond to calls for help while maintaining the integrity of our research? How do we responsibly deal

with the effects of our presence or intervention? How do we protect our participants? What role should feedback play?

In this paper, we discuss some of the field experiences that caused us to reflect upon our role as researchers, and we discuss the literature on ethics and intervention in qualitative research we consulted for guidance.

In Search of Answers

We are involved in a case study of ten racially-mixed public high schools and middle schools that have undertaken the challenging task of reducing tracking.¹ Jeannie Oakes, the project co-director, has conducted considerable research detailing the negative effects of tracking, especially for low income and minority students who are disproportionately represented in the lower tracks (Oakes, 1985; 1990; Oakes, Gamoran, & Page, 1991). While there is an abundance of literature documenting the negative effects of tracking, research has yet to answer questions such as: How can detracking strategies serve to break the cycle of underachievement and school failure for low income and minority students? How can detracking reforms be employed to simultaneously increase the quality of the educational experience for all children, while maintaining racial diversity and increasing

¹ This is a nation-wide, 3 year study, which began in April, 1992. Schools were solicited through advertisements in practitioner journals, and were chosen on the basis of the schools' commitment to reform and the diversity they would provide us as far as geographic location, community context, school size, reform strategies, etc.

interracial understanding at the school? What reform strategies create "good" detracked schools? These questions represent much more to us than interesting subsets of a problematic school practice. They also encompass the passion that fuels our investigations and the sense of the human dimension of the problem that makes these studies worthwhile.

Initial Assumptions

Before our first venture into the field, we familiarized ourselves with the extensive literature on tracking, school change, and desegregation. Thus, we had a rich understanding of the issues the schools would be facing. However, we did not presume to know the solutions to the schools' problems, since we hypothesized that the solutions as well as the problems would be context-bound and therefore would need to be defined by the members of the school community. Clearly our task was to document not collaborate on the schools' reform processes. We presented ourselves to the practitioners at our sites as question-askers, and promised to protect their confidentiality by not repeating their responses to other people at the school and by using pseudonyms in our final report. We told this to our interviewees before each interview, hoping that they would feel comfortable enough to talk openly with us.

While our primary goal was to not to benefit the schools in our study, but rather schools that might attempt to detrack in the future, we

imagined that our sites might enjoy some side benefits to our research. For instance, we felt that in our questions we might push practitioners' thinking about detracking. Also, we agreed to liberally respond to requests for information (e.g., reprints of articles or reports), and to refer schools to supportive organizations (e.g., The Common Destiny Alliance, The National Council for Teachers of English, the National Education Association). Additionally, we told our informants that they would have a chance to review and comment on our report before we published it, and that we would provide the schools with copies of the final report.

Despite the fact that we promised no assistance beyond this, many individuals at our schools sought more direct support and immediate feedback on their reform efforts. This expectation was most pronounced at schools where practitioners were familiar with Jeannie Oakes' work. However, even at schools where we were known only as "UCLA researchers" we were seen as experts and, not surprisingly, many schools wanted to take advantage of the knowledge.

Dilemmas in the Field

The gap between how we viewed our role and how those in the field viewed us resulted in several instances in which our professional interests demanded that we act in ways that felt uncomfortably impersonal. While we wished to express empathy for the participants in our study, we did not want to influence their reform efforts or

confound our own data. At times our course of action when faced with this dilemma seemed clear; other times, we struggled to balance our personal and professional selves.

Collaboration

Many of the problems we faced were caused by the school members' various motivations for participating in our study. At many of our schools we found we were being sought as sources of information or advice. Administrators at several sites asked Jeannie to talk at seminars designed to persuade teachers or district personnel to buy into detracking. She declined, explaining that in spite of strong feelings about detracking, she did not want to unduly influence the course of the reform.

Some of our schools expected us to play an even more collaborative role. For instance, during our first visit to Greenfield High School, the principal commented:

This is why we are so happy to have you guys come back [on two more site visits], to be honest with you. Because before we knew anything about you guys or we got any kind of communication, we started questioning ourselves and saying, hey, what we did and how we started organizing ourselves was on information 5 years ago, 10 years ago, probably. Old, old research. ... What's the latest? So, we are hoping through this relationship that maybe you can see what works and what doesn't work. Maybe give us ideas on how to change.

We told him, as we told everyone, that our final report as well as any articles that we wrote along the way would be available to the schools, and that in the interim we would be happy to provide him with research articles and information about support organizations. This apparently did not satisfy him, since on our second visit he made a rather awkward attempt to get us to redefine our role:

Pr:² Will we ever get to--will you--I don't know exactly how--I know you explained it to me, but it's still fuzzy to me--I mean, would there be anything at the end of the study that we can read?

Int: Yeah.

Pr: I mean I know it's not going to say Greenfield High School--I wish it would. I'd like to get your own opinions about what we're doing.

Int: Well, we'll let you know!

Pr: Even if it's not written down. I mean, you guys have been here, you've been here, you have a pretty good feel. You know, are we moving in the right direction? Are we doing something? Whether we're going to screw up--we want to know those things.

The principal at another school in our study forced us to be even more specific about our role:

Pr: Part of our motivation in being part of this project is the hope that there would be some advice, help, that sort of thing, coming from your angle. We'd like to see this as a partnership that would help us through the process. Does that fit into the scheme of things or...?

Int: It does and it doesn't. Several of the schools we've gone to have felt that because this project was in their school that

² Abbreviations: Pr = Principal; Int = Interviewer; Tea = Teacher.

that helped give some positive momentum to what was going on, and so that's one thing. And it generates some enthusiasm about the project and it helped people think that its important enough for UCLA to be interested. That happens in some places. The other thing that happens is that as people to talk to us and work through the ideas and respond to the questions that we have and we've met in several places in small groups, in team meetings or restructuring committee meetings, that that process of talking to us about what is going on has helped to clarify issues and move people along in their thinking.

This exchange clearly illustrates the initial distance between how we defined our role and how many participants hoped our role would be defined. While we thought we might be incidental catalysts, the principal evidently had different expectations: advice, help, or some sort of collaborative partnership.

Political Leverage

Other individuals envisioned political benefits to involvement in our study. For instance, at Greenfield High School, which had detracked it's English department several years ago, an English teacher told us that participation in our study boosted the department's reputation school-wide and rejuvenated interest in heterogeneous grouping: "And when Anne came screaming forward with 'Look! We can apply to be a Jeannie Oakes' research thing,' suddenly we have got a high profile of heterogeneity again."

Greenfield also used their involvement to enhance the school's standing in the eyes of the community. Freshly-minted information sheets proudly proclaimed that "the Greenfield High School heterogeneous ...[English] program was selected in 1992 as one of 10 models nationwide to participate in a 3-year study headed by Professors Jeannie Oakes and Amy Wells."

The political strategizing that occurred at Greenfield did not cause us too much concern. However, we were uncomfortable when our main contact at another school, Grant High School, misled district personnel to think we had an intervention project in mind. When we talked to her before meeting with the district office administrators, she commented, "I think it's going to help just a little bit that you talk to Donald and Anna [so that I can] go back [to them] and say, 'Okay. All we need is funding for one week for 10 teachers.'" In our conversations with the district administrators, it became clear that they did view our project as an intervention, and offered different views on whether or not our intervention efforts as they saw them, were well-placed. One of them told us that Grant was "a good school for your program," while the other one advised, "if I were doing your work, I wouldn't start there." While we sympathized with the school's desire to gain political leverage through involvement in our research project, we felt compelled to clarify that we were in no way leading the school's reform, but merely observing it.

Responding to calls for help

Our most troubling dilemma arose at Central High School, when we were forced to choose between maintaining the confidence of our informants and revealing some of our perceptions in order to assist an individual in trouble. At the time we began our study, Central High School was just embarking on detracking as one element of a school-wide restructuring plan. We were eager to document the entire progression of events as the school grappled with detracking, and to observe the process by which the principal, Bob Foster, worked to bring the school and the community along. We quickly learned that this process was not going well. Central High was really in trouble, and Bob was at risk of both having to return a major grant and being fired. The faculty felt that they were being railroaded into restructuring now that the grant money had come through, and the plan was seen as Bob's "baby" despite many others having contributed much more to it than he did. The others involved were not willing to take the heat, however, and didn't defend Bob against the accusations of angry teachers. We first sensed Bob's tenuous position when we were talking with the assistant superintendent:

.... I know his heart is in the right place, the design is good, and some very good things can come out of this. I want it to succeed. I really do. I want him to succeed as a principal. He's only a year and a half principal. That's new. As you say he's done remarkable things and I don't want him to push...and then we won't have Bob anymore. That could happen. I don't want that to happen though.

We also heard about Bob being lambasted by the faculty:

Int: So when you say "hit the fan" what do you mean?

Tea: I mean people were furious. The agenda that had been set for the day blew up in their faces. ... After lunch, basically, everyone refused to go, if you just want to put it that way. And there was a full house assault on Bob as the figure head of that. It's very interesting. ... [I]t had to happen, it was good that it happened, even though some people thought it was, I am quoting one person, "the most horrible display of unprofessional, discourteous, rude behavior she has ever seen from a bunch of adults, much less teachers involved, in her 23 years of her teaching." I think I am accurate on that quotation. But most people felt that it was good. It had to get out.

Int: So what happened? Did you guys stay together after lunch?

Tea: Yeah, they stayed together after lunch, and basically, took pot shots at Bob. They wanted to have somebody to blame. And I felt he had to stand there and take it. It's his job.

By then end of our visit, it became impossible to remain strictly dispassionate observers. We were privy to inside information, including some of the faculty's perceptions of which Bob himself was perhaps unaware. When Bob pressed us for advice, we decided to intervene and let him know what we thought might be an appropriate course of action. In doing so, Jeannie tentatively moved from observer to collaborator:

BF: So...I simply tried to implement and facilitate...and let them make those decisions.

JO: You know...it seems to me that they're...I mean if you don't mind an opinion...

BF: That's what I'm after...

JO: That...they know that you're a person who cares a lot about what happens, and that you have some ideas and...about what you think is good and some ideas about what you think is not good, and you have certain authority...that you'll probably use to push people into a direction you think is good, rather than letting things go in a direction that is not good. And it might be useful for them to know just what things are deal-breakers for you. I mean that there may be some things for you that are non-negotiable. And it might be useful if they knew that...because they're going to suspect that, regardless of what you say. If they knew for you, this is a bottom line, this is non-negotiable, this is a deal-breaker...but that, how we do this or other things you are open about. I mean some way they get real clear about what...what you're willing to...where you'll draw the line in the sand. And then the other stuff. Because...it's just very hard for me, especially given the general suspicion and lack of trust and history...that they will...that they would believe that any administrator will say, "We're equal partners." And then because you have already made it clear that you've got some ideas and, and strong beliefs about what's good for kids...I mean they know that, particularly about you. And...I don't know, it might be helpful if they were...

BF: I think it's a good idea. It's an interesting tact.

Upon reflection, we realized that we made an ethical decision to intervene. We had developed a relationship with Bob and felt sympathetic to him as a decent person in the midst of a professional and personal crisis. Therefore, we felt that we had no ethical choice but to divulge the insider knowledge we had gathered and discuss possible courses of action, regardless of whether this advice would help him keep his job. In this situation, our personal interests outweighed our professional interests: we were aware that our intervention could

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

influence the reform and confound our data, but our concern for Bob's welfare took priority.

It was clear to us from facing this and other dilemmas at our sites that we needed to investigate our role as researchers since we found it was impossible to remain dispassionate observers and often didn't feel right to do so. Not only have we occasionally felt compelled to intervene but we have also come to the conclusion that we owe it to the schools to provide them with some specific observations at the end of our data collection, since by that point we are in a very privileged position. We are, as Lieberman states, both outsiders--academics possessing a background in relevant theory, and insiders--confidants privileged with the thoughts and feelings of practitioners valiantly attempting to implement the theory. For guidance on whether and how to redefine our role and the consequences of doing so, we reviewed literature that considers ethical dilemmas in qualitative research, including the critical issue of feedback, and highlights the experiences of other researchers attempted to bridge the worlds of the researcher and the researched.

Guidance from the Literature

Ethics and Intervention

We began by searching for a code of ethics that might help define our responsibility as qualitative researchers and guide our decisions regarding intervention. We discovered that articles on ethics in research focus mainly on the rights of participants in a study, issues of confidentiality, elimination of bias on the basis of race or gender, and the use and misuse of data (Lafleur, 1987). Although there are published codes of ethics, we agree with Punch (1994, p. 89) that "the generality of codes does not help us to make the fine distinctions that arise at the *interactional* level in participant observation studies, where the reality of the field setting may feel far removed from the refinements of scholarly debate and ethical issues."

On the other hand, the experiences of other researchers and general writings on ethical considerations provide some guidance, though in most cases researchers who raise similar issues to ours do not offer solutions. For example, Stake (1994) recognizes the need for researchers to be sensitive in their field interactions but does not suggest how to cope with these dilemmas. Stake posits: "Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict. With much qualitative work, case study research shares an intense interest in personal views

and circumstances. Those whose lives and expressions are portrayed risk exposure and embarrassment: loss of standing, employment, self-esteem....It is important...for the researcher to listen well for cries of concern" (p. 244).

Feminist researchers go a little deeper in their investigation of issues of sensitivity and responsibility. They discuss "the concern for and even involvement with the participating persons" and "the uncomfortable question of getting data from respondents as a means to an end and the difficult compromises that may be involved in promising respondents control over the report" (Olesen, 1994, p. 166). Feminist researchers expand the notion of ethics by including a genuine empathy for participants. However, implicit in feminist research methodology is involvement and/or intervention on the part of the researcher -- a stance that goes beyond the one we have taken.

We were interested in finding out more about the dilemmas faced by researchers whose goals and methodologies, like ours, limit the scope of their involvement in the lives of participants. Merriam (1988) details some of the situations that might occur when case study researchers step into the world of practitioners. She confirms our experience, arguing that "knowing when to intervene is perhaps the most perplexing ethical dilemma facing case study investigators" (p. 156). Merriam looked to other researchers for advice and found that literature on research ethics generally includes a blanket injunction advising the researcher never to intervene. This of course is not very

helpful and does not acknowledge the fact that *not* intervening is in itself an ethical and political choice (Taylor and Bogdan, 1982, in Merriam). Furthermore, in some instances "it seems immoral - and perhaps is - to stand back and let those who have helped you be menaced by danger, exploitation, and death" (Cassell, 1982, in Merriam, p. 156).

Merriam concludes that "the burden of producing a study that has been conducted and disseminated in an ethical manner lies with the individual investigator....No regulation can tell a researcher when questioning of a respondent becomes coercive, when to intervene in illegal or abusive situations, or how to ensure that the study's findings will not be used to the detriment of those involved" (p. 181). The only preparation that a researcher can do in terms of ethics is to be conscious of both the dilemmas that may arise in the research process and their philosophical orientation vis-a-vis these issues.

Researchers who take a more philosophical approach to ethics also provide some interesting food for thought. Smith (1990) believes that "caring, openness, fairness, and truth seem to be important values undergirding research activities" (p. 260). He advocates having a model of a liberal society to help guide decisionmaking. Soltis (1990) argues that we must conduct research under the assumption that education is a moral enterprise. Since education is a public trust, as researchers who have the power to direct and shape education, we have a responsibility for the way that lives turn out. What Soltis and Smith imply is that if

we are to be ethically guided in our research, we need to have the best interests of education and of our study participants at heart. Smith's advice, like Merriam's, advocates reliance on underlying values of the researcher, rather than a rigid code of ethics.

The advice that researchers should fall back on their own ethics suggests that we conducted ourselves in an appropriate manner during our interaction with the Bob Foster, the principal at Central Hig's School. Relying on our own ethics, it seemed we had no choice but to use the insider knowledge we had gained to help him avoid a personal crisis. In retrospect, we should have come to terms with our own orientation regarding such dilemmas as a group before going into the field since decisions made by any one of us would impact all of us. However, as we have mentioned, at the beginning of our study we viewed our role as researchers quite differently. We were unaware of the ambiguity of our position.

Being an outsider with insider information places researchers at the junction of two worlds: that of the researcher and that of the participants. Intervening can merge these two worlds and drastically change events. Concha Delgado-Gaitan (1993) describes her experience with such a dilemma while she was collecting data about family literacy practices in a Mexican American community. She acted as a dispassionate observer until the situation demanded that she become a facilitator within the group she was studying.

Delgado-Gaitan describes her feelings at the point of intervention:

At this point I remembered the voices of some of my teachers who had reminded me that the ethnographer's work entails only observing and describing. However, another voice resounded even more loudly and defended the role of the researcher as politically weighted. Such a position seemed to obligate the researcher, me, to intervene when it might lead to favorable results for the participants or even when it involves a question of the researcher's moral conscience (p. 397).

Delgado-Gaitan's feelings closely mirror ours at the time we made the decision to advise Bob Foster. Delgado-Gaitan discussed the fact that her actions would have to be interpreted along with their actions in the change process. This is something that we will also have to do when we tell the story of Central High School, even though the nature of our intervention was quite different.

Reflecting upon her intervention, Delgado-Gaitan concludes that "a researcher can only be an outsider; however, with insight, the researcher can encourage and foster the relational process between researcher and researched" (p. 407). Peshkin (1984) also addresses, in a slightly different manner, the tenuous position of the researcher, juggling identities in the field. He believes that "we bring two general categories of selves into the field. At times the interests of these two sets of selves are at cross purposes, as when, for example, some situation invites behavior from the *human* participant that would

endanger the purposes of the *research* participant" (p. 260). Peshkin grapples with this tension and concludes that there are indeed occasions to be human when doing research. By sharing our insider knowledge with the principal at Central High School in order to help him, we too brought our human selves into the field.

The Purposes of Feedback

The point at which the ambiguous position of being both an insider and an outsider is truly brought to bear is often at the culmination of the study when the findings are brought back to the participants. Some researchers feel that feedback is an integral part of the research process, if even only for the purpose of validating findings (Bogdan & Bilkin, 1992; Stake, 1994; Yin, 1989). Other researchers opt out of the feedback process altogether because efforts to solicit participants' responses are likely to be ambiguous, difficult, and uncertain; however they are an invaluable source for these very reasons. Indeed, the act of reporting back to participants and getting feedback is itself an interactionally and organizationally significant event, and the inclusion of this dialogue can be a powerful method for displaying understanding of the differences between the world of the researcher and that of the researched (Emerson and Pollner, 1988; 1992).

A group of researchers engaged in a collaborative study for the Coalition of Essential Schools has gone beyond the traditional purposes of feedback. Since their study was a collaborative effort between

researchers and practitioners, participants were given an advance draft of the findings while the study was still in process. This allowed early respondents to either write comments or call the researchers with their revisions, and "meanings (were) negotiated between the research team leader and individuals participating in the study when necessary" (King, Louth, Wasley, 1993, p. 7). Although meaning was negotiated while the study was in progress, all parties agreed in advance that what was written at the end of the study would represent the perspectives of the researchers. Mehan et al. (1993) also agrees that researchers have an obligation to engage in a dialogue with participants during the course of the study, partly because of the vulnerability of schools. However, our research group has decided that if we were to discuss our findings widely with the schools before the study is complete, we would be at serious risk of impacting the course of the reform.

The experiences of other researchers have helped us anticipate some of the problems that might arise in the process of feedback. King, Louth, and Wasley found that the teachers experienced hurt which "understandably, seemed to come from individual's discomfort with the picture of their own or others' classrooms. As the discussion grew, the hurt began to boil into anger, almost everything in the snapshot was questioned" (1993, p. 13). Punch (1994) echoed a similar concern: "The subjects of the research suddenly see themselves summarized and interpreted in ways that may not match up with their own partial perspectives of the natural setting" (p. 88). Given the political contexts

of some of our schools, it is likely that our findings will make some members of the school communities uncomfortable and that they will evoke controversy. We hope, though, that we can present our findings in ways that minimize disruption and inspire participants to use the review process as a motivation to inquire critically about their schools' reform efforts.

We realize how delicate a process feedback is, especially now that we are privy to insider information about schools with very sticky political situations. We are certain that we want to give feedback to the schools at the end of our study, because this makes partial payment for the gift of access. Also, since we have the privileged perspective of both an insider and an outsider, we feel we owe it to the participants of our study to engage them in a dialogue about the future course of their reform efforts. And finally, we are, in addition to being dispassionate observers, passionate humans who are deeply sympathetic to the schools' reform goals.

Emerson and Pollner (1992) nicely capture our reconceptualized vision of the purpose of feedback: "The dialogue is not merely a medium for resolving substantive differences - although it is that - but an occasion for revealing the suppositions, structures of relevances, and practices of two forms of life: that of participants and of researchers" (p. 94). We are not only seeking validation for our findings. We too plan to include the practitioners' perspectives on the feedback process in our final report.

Redefining our Role

The literature suggests many options as to how researchers can define their role: "We are in a new age where messy, uncertain multi-voiced texts, cultural criticism, and new experimental works will become more common, as will more reflexive forms of fieldwork, analysis and intertextual representation" (Lincoln and Denzin, 1994, p. 583). This flexibility allows researchers to decide how close or distant they will be, whose purposes they want to serve, and how much use they will make of participants' views of their own reality (Roman and Apple, 1990).

The study for the Coalition of Essential Schools that we discussed earlier illustrates a reflexive form of fieldwork (King, Louth, Wasley, 1993). The researchers' purpose was "to simultaneously build schools' capacity for change while contributing to our understanding about the nature of change, how it is encouraged and supported. The work is a new attempt to cross breed, to hybridize the purposes of research with the goals of school change to strengthen the work of both" (p. 2-3). "It isn't action research, but it is interactive, designed to affect the behavior of those being studied" (p. 5).

While we admire the creative and challenging approach that these researchers have taken, we have chosen a different tack. Our research group decided that to maintain the integrity of our findings, we must interfere as little as possible in the reform efforts at our

schools. This decision is based upon the goals for our study which include building theory and producing something that can be helpful to both educational researchers and practitioners. However, in order to maintain our *personal* integrity we feel an ethical responsibility to act with compassion towards the individuals in our study, even if in some cases that means divulging some of our perceptions during the course of our study.

While we still contend that no code of ethics is applicable to all researchers and cases, we have devised two ground rules for our own use:

1) Make explicit and detail (as part of the data base) all personal interventions and participants' responses to these interventions; and 2) Raise for discussion and constant review among all members of the team the professional versus personal dilemmas we encounter in the field. Work through differences of opinion among our research team.

Our experiences in the field and our review of the literature have led us to the conclusion that all researchers, regardless of their approach, must let ethics guide them when faced with dilemmas. Because we tend to fall back on our personal ethics in such situations, there can be no universal code. This points to the necessity for researchers to be very clear about their goals and purposes before interacting with participants -- if our purpose is just, our ethics will follow.

References

- Bogdan, B. C., & S. N. Bilken. (1992). Qualitative Research in Education. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1993). Researching Change and Changing the Researcher. Harvard Educational Review, 63(4), 387-411.
- Emerson, R., and M. Pollner. (1988). On the uses of members' responses to researchers' accounts. Human Organizations, 47(3), 189-198.
- Emerson, R., and M. Pollner. (1992). Differences and dialogue: Member's readings of ethnographic texts. Perspectives on Social Problems, 3, 79-98.
- King, S., Louth, C. & P. Wasley. (1993). Roses, Retrievers, and Research: Collaborative Inquiry to Foster Better Schools. Coalition of Essential Schools, Brown Univ. Paper presented at the AREA annual conference in Atlanta, GA, April 1993.
- Lafleur, C. (1987). Educational Research Ethics: A Discussion Paper. Paper presented at the Spring conference of the Association of Educational Research Officers of Ontario, June 5, 1987. (ERIC document reproduction service no. ED 301935)

- Lieberman, A. (1992). The meaning of scholarly activity and the building of community. Educational Researcher, 21(6), 5-10.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & N. K. Denzin. (1994). The Fifth Moment. In Y. S. Lincoln and N. K. Denzin, (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Mehan, H., et al. (1993). Tracking and Untracking: The Consequences of Placing Low Achieving Students in High Track Classes. Report for the Linguistic Minority Research Institute: Santa Cruz, CA.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). Case Study Research in Education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Oakes, J. (1985). Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Oakes, J. (1990). Multiplying inequalities: The effects of race, social class, and tracking on opportunities to learn math and science. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
- Oakes, J., Gamoran, A., & Page, R. (1991). Curriculum differentiation: Opportunities, consequences, and meanings. In Philip Jackson

(Ed.), Handbook of Research on Curriculum. New York: Macmillan.

Olesen, V. (1994). Feminism and Models of Qualitative Research. In Y. S. Lincoln and N. K. Denzin, (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Peshkin, A. (1984). Odd Man Out: The Participant Observer in the Absolutist Setting. Sociology of Education, 57, 254-264.

Punch, M. (1994). Politics and ethics in qualitative research. In Y. S. Lincoln and N. K. Denzin, (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Roman, L. G., & Apple, M. W. (1990). Is naturalism a move away from positivism? Materialist and feminist approaches to subjectivity in ethnographic research. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate (pp. 38-73). New York: Teachers College Press.

Smith, L. (1990). Ethics in qualitative field research: An individual perspective. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate (pp. 258-276). New York: Teachers College Press.

Soltis, J. (1990). The ethics of qualitative research. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate (pp. 247-257). New York: Teachers College Press.

Stake, R. E. (1994). Case Studies. In Y. S. Lincoln and N. K. Denzin, (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (1989). Case Study Research: Designs and Methods. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.