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Research Article

Practitioner Researcher Intuition in Stimulated Recall Studies

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ABSTRACT

Practitioner researchers have much to gain from using stimulated recall, a powerful data collection method whereby structured observations are followed by introspectively focused interviews. The close insider positions that practitioner researchers maintain, however, mean that they are liable to very powerful intuitions. Working under the assumption that intuition can benefit inquiry if it is appropriately managed, this paper offers a theoretical exploration of intuition in practitioner-led stimulated recall studies. In the first section of the paper, a review of extant literature reveals that the expertise of practitioner researchers lends credence to the quality of their intuitions. In the second section of the paper, reflective examples from the authors' own projects illustrate the strengths that intuition can bring to stimulated recall inquiry. Finally, in the third section of the paper, discussions of the dangers of intuition highlight the very real issues that practitioner researchers face when negotiating intuitive thoughts. Two important solutions are presented in the paper: the employment of reflection to appropriately interrogate intuition, and the formulation of sound research principles upon which intuitions can positively emerge. We end the paper by offering our own contribution, the practitioner researcher intuition in stimulated recall model, a tool to support reflection upon emerging intuitions in stimulated recall research.

Keywords: stimulated recall, intuition, practitioner research, teacher emotions, researcher reflexivity

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INTRODUCTION

In this exploratory theoretical paper, we consider the role of intuition when using the stimulated recall method. Stimulated recall is an introspective form of data collection in which a researcher observes a participant doing a task, and then later interviews them about their in-moment thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Gass & Mackey, 2017). In line with the goals of this special issue, our interests lie specifically in the intuitions that might impact practitioner researchers. The stimulated recall method is particularly challenging for these researchers, who must maintain an objective position despite being heavily invested in the topics, people, and institutions that lie at the centre of their observations and interviews. Since practitioner researchers closely share a wide range of contextual experiences with their participants, they are likely to feel intuitions more acutely than researchers approaching from a more distant position.

The impetus for this paper stems from our own experiences as practitioner researchers using stimulated recall. We have all had great success with the method, finding it reveals powerful and insightful data. Simultaneously though, we have found a lack of advice and openness surrounding how intuition might influence our practice, and how it should be negotiated. We are inspired by Kump (2021) who ably highlighted the catch-22 at the heart of the issue: "researchers are facing a dilemma: either they report [intuition], thereby risking the impression of lacking scholarly rigor, or they camouflage it, thereby actually impairing rigor" (p. 636). Despite being an inevitable part of any research project, it often seems that intuitions are *non grata.* Yet, since it is possible for them to influence the kind of study that practitioner researchers plan, the things they look for in observations, the questions they ask in interviews, and the ways that they analyse their data, we feel it is important that they be managed appropriately and not left unacknowledged in reports of the research process.

To clarify our position at the outset: we strongly believe that practitioner researchers should not freely allow their intuitions to take over their work, and nor should they accept their intuitions as unfailingly the best way forward. Indeed, such actions are likely to be very damaging to the credibility of any piece of research and its conclusions. We agree with Kump (2021), however, that it is possible, with appropriate planning and reflection, to accept intuition as an inevitable part of the research process, and not only to minimise the impact it may have, but also to use it to greatly benefit the quality of the inquiry. Our goal within this paper, therefore, is to investigate intuition and the impact it might have on practitioner researchers when undertaking the stimulated recall method. We do this (1) by exploring theoretical literature on intuition and its relevance to practitioner-led stimulated recall research, (2) by presenting illustrative examples of how intuition has impacted our own studies, and (3) by considering the dangers of intuition and a model to support practitioner researchers to manage intuition in future stimulated recall studies.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Practitioner Researchers and Stimulated Recall

It is now common practice for educators to research their own craft, and we agree with Menter et al. (2011), who define practitioner research as "systematic enquiry in an educational setting carried out by someone working in that setting" (p. 3). For our purposes, then, practitioner researchers are those many language teachers who use formal research principles to help them understand and improve their professional practice. In pragmatic terms, this most often means those teachers conducting research on their own behaviours, or with their students, or with colleagues.

Stimulated recall is a retrospective form of introspection during which participants are prompted to recall feelings, thoughts, and behaviours related to past events (Gass & Mackey, 2017; Sanchez & Grimshaw, 2020). It is an established method in the psychological branch of applied linguistics, being used to explore, among other phenomena, interpretations of student silence (King, 2013), the factors influencing anxiety levels (Gregersen et al., 2014), and the impact of content familiarity on learner engagement (Qiu & Lo, 2016). Stimulated recall is performed over two stages. In the first stage, known as the *observation stage*, a participant will be examined undertaking some kind of task. This task may be naturalistic, such as when a student is observed participating in their regular classroom lesson, or it may be experimental, such as when a student is observed completing a structured language task. During the observational stage, researchers make audio or visual

recordings and take detailed notes. In the second stage, known as the *interview stage*, a participant will be questioned about the task they completed. A guiding principle in this interview is that the participants should be encouraged to cognitively return to the task itself; consequently, the recordings and notes made by the researcher become critical recall stimuli used to prompt participants' memories (Gass & Mackey, 2017).

As researchers who have all employed the stimulated recall methodology in our careers, we can attest to its power. The data obtained is unique when compared to traditional interviewing (Gass & Mackey, 2017), offering highly detailed descriptions and discussions of critical incidents. Moreover, stimulated recall can elicit data related to both cognitive and affective thought processes (Sanchez & Grimshaw, 2020), can compare events from multiple perspectives (Sanchez & Grimshaw, 2020), and can triangulate different findings through independent observation (Gass & Mackey, 2017). Stimulated recall also has the potential to access data which may well be hidden from the participants' themselves (e.g., Gkonou & Mercer, 2017), meaning that it can support participants to access deeper thought structures than with other methods. Of course, there are also weaknesses to the method, the most pervasive of which concerns validity and the question of whether individuals are able to fully access their cognitive processes (see e.g., Borg, 2006; Gass & Mackey, 2017). Recent literature, though, highlights that stimulated recall provides very tenable data so long as studies are well designed (Sanchez & Grimshaw, 2020). Practitioner researchers must also consider the ethics of their practice, taking seriously the fact that the method can be both time intensive and potentially emotionally draining for participants. We advocate the adoption of sound ethical behaviours, such as those *everyday ethics* suggested by Mockler (2014): that practitioner researchers ensure they receive informed consent, strive to do no harm, and recognise the invisible power structures influencing their relationships with their participants.

It is perfectly possible for educators to use the stimulated recall methodology to collect data from which to catalyse the reflections that make up much practitioner research. Indeed, Walsh and Mann (2015) actively recommend stimulated recall as a powerful data-led method, noting that it is both inconspicuous and easy to perform. There are numerous illustrative examples of how stimulated recall has been used in studies with educators to improve their practice. These include Wyatt and Arnold (2012) who revealed the beneficial use of stimulated recall in mentorship programs, Hiratsuka (2017), who reported on how stimulated recall could support growth in team teaching relationships in Japanese public schools, and Pinner (2019) who used stimulated recall to explore the meaning of authenticity and its relevance to his own classroom relationships and practice.

In sum, we believe that stimulated recall has much to offer practitioner researchers in their work. Providing the method is implemented with care, it offers unique data which can be combined with other sources to powerful effect. The method can be a useful point of reflection, and can support practitioner researchers to more deeply understand their classroom teaching. However, in performing stimulated recall, it is important that practitioner researchers consider how intuitions might influence their actions, as we discuss in the proceeding section.

Expert Intuition

Intuitions can be summarised as spontaneous emergent feelings that suggest a particular path forward will result in the most desirable outcome for an individual in any given situation (Brown et al., 2018; Eraut, 2000; Hodgkinson et al., 2008; Woiceshyn, 2020). They are extremely common in individuals' daily lives, and frequently support positive decision making (Brown et al., 2018; Kump, 2021). Given that intuitions often appear unconsciously, they may be hard to articulate (Hodgkinson et al., 2008) and in casual situations, they are often described metaphorically as 'gut feelings' or as some kind of 'sixth sense' (e.g., Brown et al., 2018). This casual language may be why professionals often question the trustworthiness of their intuitions (Brown et al., 2018), and why intuition is rarely discussed in educational research literature.

In order to counteract this negative view, it is important to define intuition in more technical terms. One way that we can do so is by considering what is referred to as a dual process view of information processing. According to this perspective, two distinct thought mechanisms support individuals when making decisions: intuition, known as system 1 processing; and rational thought, known as system 2 processing. Intuitions are acts of cognitive processing which are very fast and automatic, often holistic in nature,

and which are driven by responses to unfurling contextual concerns. Rational thought, on the other hand, refers to cognitive processing which is slower and more deliberate, involving analytical judgements as individuals work through information in a conscious manner (Hodgkinson et al., 2008).

Atkinson and Claxton (2000) observe that educators utilise both of these forms of processing in a complementary manner. Rational thought, they note, is used when teachers plan their educational activities, and intuition is employed when they respond to emerging classroom concerns. The authors add an important third feature to their understanding of educator information processing: reflective thought. Reflection, they argue, acts as an intermediary between classroom experiences and planning. Accordingly, as teachers reflect on any intuitive decisions they have made, they become able to apply rational thought more readily. Teachers move between rational thought, intuition, and reflection recurrently as they teach lessons most competently. Here we make a logical leap: cyclic processes of rational thought, intuition, and reflection are applicable to research too. Practitioner researchers use rational decision making and intuition as they plan and conduct projects, and reflection to help them make more effective future decisions.

Of most use to our discussion of practitioner research is what has been called "expert intuition" (Brown et al., 2018, p. 39). 'Expert' here, does not mean a person who has mastered the art of intuition, but it refers to intuitions that are intertwined with, and that emerge from, professional experience. Professionals with a long career have, by nature, seen and dealt with many things in the workplace, and they are able to draw upon information from their surroundings and make comparisons to their previous experiences to intuit ways forward (Brown et al., 2018; Claxton, 2000; Eraut, 2000; Kump, 2021). They are able to respond quickly and confidently because a large part of the analytical processing underlying their decisions has already been performed (Eraut, 2000). Expert intuition allows practitioner researchers to act quickly and responsively with a degree of confidence that their actions will have a positive outcome, and evidence suggests that when intuitions are built on experience, sufficient data, and extensive time in the field, they have a high degree of validity (Kump, 2021).

Experienced researchers are likely able to intuitively respond to emerging concerns more readily than novices because they have spent more time planning studies, observing, interviewing, and coding, and also because, presumably, they have spent more time reflecting on their past actions and outcomes. Experienced practitioner researchers will draw on even more experience: they have a whole range of expert experiences not only as researchers, but also as teachers and classroom learners. It is our strong belief that because practitioner researchers share many of these experiences with their research subjects, they will also feel very powerful expert intuitions. Intuitions can emerge at any point during the research process (Kump, 2021); thus, these expert intuitions may be felt when planning, observing, interviewing, and coding.

EXAMPLES OF INTUITIONS IN STIMULATED RECALL

Until now, this paper has only explored intuition from a theoretical perspective; therefore, we think it is appropriate to offer examples here of expert intuitions that have emerged in our own stimulated recall studies, and to comment on how these intuitions relate to the discussion thus far. The intuitions were experienced during two different studies, one involving teachers and one involving students. The explanations and reflections are expanded from notes recorded in our research journals as well as from interview transcripts from the studies themselves. In each case, a description of the intuition and its impact is offered, followed by a short reflective discussion. All of the names used are pseudonyms.

Sam's Example: Intuition in Stimulated Recall With Teachers

Our first example illustrates the use of intuition during a study with professional colleagues, and we believe it is a successful application. The intuition in question emerged during an investigation by two of the authors into language teacher emotion regulation (see Morris & King, 2018, 2020). The study took place at a medium-sized university in Japan, and its specific purpose was to explore the strategies that language teachers employ to regulate their classroom emotions and the underlying reasons for their actions. Because emotions are highly performative, stimulated recall

was chosen as a data collection method because it allowed the observer to see the participants' emotional displays when teaching, thus, contextualising their emotion regulation behaviours and offering third-party triangulation.

The intuition in question occurred during the observation stage of a stimulated recall with a participant named Jonathan. Jonathan was an experienced teacher from the United States who had been working for more than 5 years at his current university. He was observed teaching one of his regular classes, a required English language course with second-year students. The content of the class in question related to advertising, with the students being asked to explore a range of print advertisements from various foreign countries and to consider the linguistic choices that had been made. On the day of the class, I (the lead author) sat on the left side of the classroom, placing myself on a desk near a group of three students from where I was able to see the faces of the teacher and many of the students.

The intuition that overcame me was very sudden and powerful: After about 30 minutes into the observation, I came to the realisation that Jonathan had not looked towards my side of the room. He was, in my opinion, actively avoiding connecting with the area I was sitting in, and a realisation emerged that this was something I should focus on. I found Jonathan's behaviour surprising, because it was not a behaviour that I myself would have taken, and it was certainly an intuition, since I was not actively tracking eye contact at that point of the study. Any intuition will remain an intuition if it is not acted upon, so I wrote a simple note: "Jonathan rarely looks left" and made the decision to bring up my observations in the follow-up interview. It can be said that this was the point where my intuition began to morph into a tangible and falsifiable data point.

This intuition led to two benefits for the study. Firstly, it led to a very fruitful line of questioning: Jonathan explained that he had been actively avoiding the left side of the room because his relationship with some of the students had been very strained. He felt confused about how to approach the students, and had decided that ignoring the problem was psychologically safer for him. This testimony was lengthy and rich and would not have emerged had the intuition not occurred. The second benefit from the intuition was that I developed a new point of focus for future stimulated recall sessions. The success of this line of questioning encouraged me to observe and note the directions of eye contact in subsequent observations. The locations that a teacher paid attention to eventually became an important focus point for my research, which bore fruit with numerous participants in this study and proceeding ones.

As I reflect on the intuition now in relation to the source of expertise underpinning it, I am drawn strongly to the fact that it may have been my own teaching experiences that enabled this intuition. My notes on the incident testify to the fact that I was deeply surprised that Jonathan had not looked to my side of the room, and prior to the follow-up interview, I had attributed this to my own presence in the classroom. Indeed, when I asked him about why he was avoiding my area of the room, I began from this assumption. The source of the intuition, I believe, was the dissonance between my own teaching behaviours and what I was seeing. When teaching, I usually make an effort to look at all students around the room, sometimes even consciously reminding myself to do so, and when I have been observed teaching in the past, I have always made a conscious effort to connect with classroom observers. This dissonance formed the intuition which I was then able to successfully explore with Jonathan in his interview.

Kie's Example: Intuition in Stimulated Recall With Students

Our second example considers intuitions emerging in different stages of data collection, drawing upon the second author's expertise as a teacher and researcher. We also view this to be an example where intuition has benefited the research process.

The study was conducted at a women's university in Japan, and explored agency in teletandem learning between Japanese learners of English and those who were studying Japanese at a university in the United States over a four-month period (Yamamoto, 2023). Teletandem learning refers to language learning opportunities that emerge via video conferencing software when students of differing locations are able to interact. The purpose of the study was to qualitatively investigate the participants' perceptions of teletandem learning and their agency in relation to the multileveled environment where they were situated. Since agency entails not only individual self-regulatory capacity but also inter-individual capacity (Mairitsch et al., 2023), investigating socio-emotional dimensions of the

participants' learning experiences was inevitable. Thus, stimulated recalls were found as a useful way to unpack the students' thought processes and actions in their participation and interaction with their partners.

Due to the nature of video-mediated online collaborative learning, the main data in this study had to be video-recorded individually by each participant, and I (the second author) then watched these recordings back after the class. My absence from the actual teletandem conversations thus required a great degree of attention to the observation process, including to the participants' tones of voice, facial expressions, turn-taking, and choice of topics. While taking notes on the participants' noticeable behaviours was more or less systematic and descriptive work, I found myself getting emotional at some points. Particularly, the silence caused by the research participants (Japanese students) in their conversation brought discomfort, nervousness and even frustration within myself. At that time, I was honestly surprised by how the act of listening stirred my emotions because it was primarily for data collection, which should have been carried out using rational thought processes. In my notes, silent moments were marked with the number of seconds and the description of the participant's facial expressions, followed by comments such as "Was she confused??" or "LONG!" At the same time, I began to have an emerging intuition that signalled the danger of judging the participants' behaviours on my own beliefs about silence in communication. Being a Japanese female learner of English, I was conscious of the risk in misinterpreting data, simply relying on the shared sociocultural backgrounds with the research participants. Thus, prior to each interview, I spent ample time composing a set of questions, using my expert intuition as a check on my potential biased views against the participants' actions.

Intuition played an even more crucial role when I started interviewing the research participants after the observations. As I interviewed each participant five times, I was able to establish good rapport with them. One participant, Rei, had been taking my classes at that time, and we were able to talk about teletandem learning casually before and after the classes. Rei appeared as a positive learner, who would genuinely enjoy making new friends and socialising regardless of the languages she would use. However, it was surprising for me that after the second teletandem session, Rei appeared extremely discouraged, emotionally announcing "It was disastrous!" [*zen-zen dame!*].

While conducting the stimulated recall interview, after talking for approximately 5 minutes, my intuition stopped me from asking the prepared questions I had written down in my notebook. It was the time when Rei started explaining that she had tried to listen to the second session at home but could not continue as it was "terrible" [*saiaku*]. She added that she felt "guilty" [*moushiwake-nai*] of being a "boring" [*tsumaranai*] partner. My rational thought as a researcher, of course, was encouraging me to continue playing the audio and proceed with the interview; however, my intuition as her teacher redirected me to focus on her intense emerging feelings. Starting some off-the-topic conversation, I asked her how she envisioned herself as an English learner. She said she wanted to be herself even when speaking in English. She noted that she was a talkative and fun person but that "I wasn't that kind of person this time" [*jibun rashiku nai*]. Although this testimony emerged as a side point to the stimulated recall interview, her reflective thought highlighted the glitch between her ideal L2 self and her perceived actual self. This appeared to have a significant impact on her learner agency, and I can conclude by saying that my intuition to change tack led to highly valuable data.

Reflecting on my study using stimulated recall, expert intuition played a role as a kind of radar that enabled me to constantly be aware of my multiple positionality. The stimulated recall method, in its most stringent forms, illuminates rather objectifiable outcomes (Gass & Mackey, 2017); yet, personally, it was almost impossible for me to be a researcher-interviewer who sticks to a set of stimuli-based questions. By taking an intuitive approach to the SRIs, the obtained data became more in-depth and richer. Simultaneously, by recognizing the potential risk of relying solely on my intuition, I was able to delve into the participants' stories with an open-minded perspective.

THE DANGERS OF INTUITION IN STIMULATED RECALL AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

In the examples explored above, our intuitions had a strong and positive impact on our research practices. Yet intuitions, even expert ones, are not infallible, and the dangers that they pose to research are real if not managed and interrogated appropriately. In this final section of the paper, we wish to explore the dangers of intuition and offer solutions to these issues. We end by presenting a model of practitioner researcher intuition in stimulated recall studies.

The Dangers of Intuition

Perhaps the most obvious danger for any practitioner researcher taking part in a stimulated recall study is the potential that their intuitions might be "blatantly wrong" (Claxton, 2000, p. 42). Even if, as previously discussed, expert opinions are based on the accumulation of an individual's past experiences, there is of course every chance that the current situation a researcher is experiencing is misinterpreted because it does not match any of their historical experiences. This is what is known as an "availability error" (Brown et al., 2018, p. 42) – the researcher has no available memories on which to base their intuition upon. It is easy to imagine, for example, a situation where a practitioner researcher observes a student acting in a way that is surprising or unique, and in such cases, the quality of any intuition is liable to be affected.

A second danger that practitioner researchers should remain aware of is a logical consequence of the fact that expert intuition is built on experience. Namely, that any individual's previous experiences could be founded upon psychological fallacies such as innate biases and subjective memories (Brown et al., 2018). Participants and their behaviour may be typecast on such fallacies, and this is a particularly salient issue for practitioner researchers working within unfamiliar cultural settings. Given the nature of the profession, it is common for language teachers to work in a variety of locations across their career with learners of differing cultural backgrounds. Teachers may bring generalisations from previous teaching contexts and hold unchallenged views of new teaching contexts, all of which will affect the validity of their intuitions.

A final risk for practitioner researchers is that their intuitions might be based on *shared assumptions*. Shared assumptions refer to those situations where a researcher assumes that their own understanding of a topic is similar to their participant's understanding (Breen, 2007; Greene, 2014; McDermid et al., 2014). The risk of such assumptions is heightened because practitioner researchers are usually 'insiders' (Greene, 2014): they may belong to the same institution as participants, spend time in the same classroom, or identify with the same groups (for example, both teachers and students may refer to themselves as 'language learners'). Assumptions may exist in a variety of shared areas, such as on the nature of learning, the goals of instruction, the rules of an institution, or the desired outcomes of a course. One of the clearest examples of shared assumptions from our own studies emerged during the lead author's exploration of language teacher emotion regulation. In that study, the researcher met with a participant who, in an initial interview, described their emotional persona as being "a bit scary" to some students. The researcher formed a very clear image of the participant as having a serious demeanour which was not born out in the observations. In this case, the researcher falsely assumed that he and the participant shared understandings of the notion of 'scary,' 'fun,' and 'serious' teaching styles. Shared assumptions, therefore, can be highly problematic because they prevent researchers from maintaining an objective position from their participants' testimony, resulting in potentially dangerous intuitive decision making.

Solutions: Negotiating Expert Intuitions

Literature offers two important solutions for managing expert intuition, which we discuss in turn, before offering our own contribution: a framework to support practitioner researchers to reflect on their own intuitions.

The first important solution for negotiating expert intuition is for practitioner researchers to be reflexive and honest about how intuitions might influence their research. Intuitions are only valid in research if they are articulated, reflected upon, and most importantly, challenged (Kump, 2021). As Kump (2021) astutely notes, researcher intuitions are not valid at their point of emergence, but their validity is created through a process of principled interrogation. For example, an intuition on an unresolved issue can form the starting point of a study only if it is a catalyst for a researcher to seek out a formal research process from which to explore it. Similarly, as was visible in our own examples above, an intuition can be legitimately included in data collection only if it highlights some kind of discrepancy that the researcher more formally validates. Of course, it is also important for researchers to include an open and reflexive account of how they moved from an intuition to a formal data point in accordance with accepted practice on qualitative research (e.g., Dörnyei, 2007; Holliday, 2007; Mann, 2016) and we encourage practitioners to do so wherever possible.

A second solution for negotiating expert intuition relates to practitioner researchers' understanding of the principles

underlying their actions. Woiceshyn (2020), in a discussion of intuition in business decision making, compellingly argues that intuition can be more successfully relied upon when an individual has articulated a clear and strong set of working principles. This is because principles, which act as a foundation for any decision, are themselves the result of logical and rational thought processes. In simple terms, adopting Woiceshyn's position means that when a practitioner researcher has thoughtfully considered the principles underlying their data collection, they will have a formal, considered platform from which their intuitions can emerge.

There are numerous areas in which practitioner researchers employing stimulated recall might form principles, and these are usually related to 'preparing for every eventuality' within the research. Some well documented principles underlying qualitative research in general include the need to avoid leading participants, the need to remain open to emergent findings, and the need to be reflexive on the researcher's impact on the data (e.g., Dörnyei, 2007; Holliday, 2007; Mann, 2016). In addition to these, we believe that the following two principles specific to the stimulated recall method are crucial for practitioner researchers to grasp:

The Principle of Observer Positionality. Stimulated recall observations are not the same as traditional classroom observations. They are well-planned and often highly structured. Researchers should have a clear understanding of the goals of their observation, and remain aware of what they will and will not record. In turn, they should remember their positionality first as a researcher, and carefully consider how their past experiences as teachers and learners influence emergent intuitions about the behaviours they observe. As was seen in our first example above, previous classroom experience can be a solid platform for positive intuitions in observations; however, we remind that it is only in the interrogation of an intuition that it can become valid. It is therefore important that researchers reflect on the source of any intuition while observing, and also that they formulate interview questions carefully when intuition is involved, ensuring that they remain as neutral as possible.

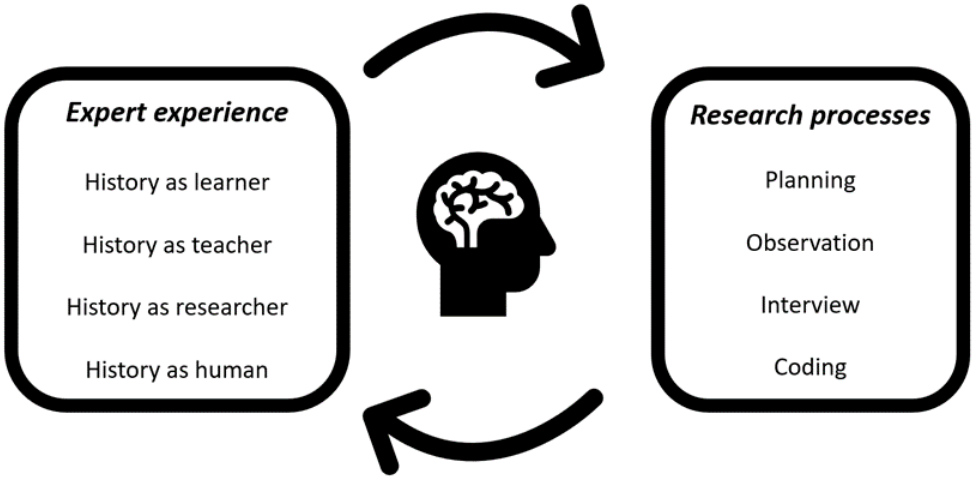
The Principle of Cognitive Accessibility. Historically, questions have been asked about whether participants in stimulated recall interviews are able to recall the past or whether they actually interpret the present (Borg, 2006; Gass & Mackey, 2017). In fact, both are possible and valid outcomes (Sanchez & Grimshaw, 2020). The important point here though, is that practitioner researchers must be clear about which kind of data they are collecting at any point. Is the researcher focusing on the participant's in-moment experience, or are they exploring the participant's considered reflection on what happened? As noted in our second example above, it is possible for practitioner researchers to move between positions as they respond to emerging contextual clues. Having an acute understanding of the kind of data being sought and provided will allow for more positive intuiting.

Towards a Model of Intuition in Practitioner-Led Stimulated Recall

In order to support practitioner researchers to be more reflexive about their intuitions in stimulated recall, we have prepared a model tentatively titled the practitioner researcher intuition for stimulated recall model (PRISM). This model is based on our understanding and discussion of the theoretical literature within this article, and aims to mitigate some of the dangers associated with intuition. The model is represented visually in Figure 1.

The model postulates that a practitioner researcher's intuitions emerge from their experiences in numerous historical domains. The four most salient domains are listed within the box on the left side of the diagram. The first three domains*, history as learner, history as teacher*, and *history as researcher*, are somewhat self-explanatory. Practitioner researchers have a wide range of classroom experiences, both through their own formal education in childhood as well as through their professional careers. Moreover, by definition, they have experiences conducting research. When a practitioner researcher intuits something while conducting a stimulated recall study, their intuitions are based on their expertise and past experiences within these areas. We have also included a fourth domain – *history as human* – in the diagram. While we feel it is somewhat anomalous to call a person an 'expert' at being human, our desire here is to acknowledge the range of life experiences that researchers bring to their projects which might provide them with intuitional expertise when researching people in their natural circumstances.

Figure 1. *The Practitioner Researcher Intuition for Stimulated Recall Model (PRISM)*



On the right side of the diagram, we see the potential targets of practitioner researcher intuitions. Practitioner researchers are liable to feel intuitions in four areas of their practice: planning, observation, interview, and coding. We believe it is important for practitioner researchers to reflect on whether, and to what degree, intuitions may have influenced them at each of these stages and to reflect on whether these intuitions have been suitably interrogated.

Finally, the two arrows on the model indicate the relationships between the expert experiences underlying intuitions and the research processes themselves. As was noted earlier in the paper, researcher intuitions emerge from expert experiences and inform research processes (Atkinson & Claxton, 2000). Simultaneously, however, their reflections on their actions feed back into their expert experience in a dynamic and reciprocating relationship that influences intuitions moving forward into the future. In other words, the circular arrows on the diagram represent the fact that practitioner researchers' uses of intuition are located within a cycle of reflection and growth.

We view the PRISM model as being a useful tool to support practitioner researchers when conducting stimulated recall studies because it gives them a framework to understand how their intuitions might influence their practice. Moreover, we believe the tool can support practitioner researchers to reflect upon the origins of their intuitions, and to interrogate the validity of such intuitions in a more principled manner.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have explored the role of intuition in practitioner-led stimulated recall investigations. Intuition, it has been seen, emerges from expert experience, and coexists with rational thought and reflection in teaching and research. Intuition may form a positive and integral part of the research process; yet, it is also true that intuition represents a potential danger to studies when managed inappropriately. Our central tenet accords with that of Kump (2021), namely that:

> research does not become more rigorous if researchers pretend that something that they deem as 'unscientific' – such as intuition – was not involved. It becomes more rigorous if researchers acknowledge that it was involved and demonstrate that they dealt with it in a rigorous way. (p. 641)

The PRISM model is based on robust theoretical research. That being said, we view it as a work in progress, and anticipate that the model can be refined through empirical studies of intuition. We would welcome, for example, studies that explore the frequency of intuitions in

stimulated recall research by practitioner researchers, their accuracy, and their overall impact on data analysis and findings. Given the lack of honest conversation over intuition in language education research to date, we are hopeful that our work here will be a fruitful starting point for such inquiry, and that the PRISM model can support practitioner researchers to reflect on how intuition influences their own research practices.

Authors' Contributions

Conceptualization: SM & KY, Original draft: SM & KY; Review & editing: JK.

Ethics Approval & Consent to Participate

Both of the studies described herein received ethical approval. For Morris & King's (2018, 2020) study, ethical approval was received from the University of Leicester (UK) and the participating institution. In the case of Yamamoto's (2023) study, ethical approval was received from the University of Bath (UK) and the participating institutions.

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