



Barbara Muszyńska
University of Lower Silesia, Poland
e-mail: barbara.muszynska@dsw.edu.pl
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0137-363X>

The Implementation of Reflexive Methodology and a Storyline in Dual-Language Field Research*

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Abstract

This article attempts to illustrate the process of incorporating a model of reflexivity into dual-language field research as an alternative method of scientific enquiry. It also contributes to the ongoing discussion regarding how to approach reflexivity in a methodologically consistent manner. The study is rooted in classical grounded theory and therefore it did not attempt to test or expand upon any existing or preconceived theory. However, it began with a research question on how mainstream curricula address the nature of minority cultural diversity. The research was conducted in primary schools in Texas in the United States, where dual-language curricula incorporate cultural aspects of students' backgrounds. An overt non-participant observation research technique was applied. The researcher was observing in an unobtrusive manner and making notes within the study environment. The codes and concepts emerging from the data were "put into dialogue" with the researcher's voice, existing concepts and knowledge. The dialogue took place before, during, and after data collection as part of a literature review, and later to discuss the concepts and categories that emerged from the data. A storyline is used here to present the findings and emerging theories. This study demonstrates that the

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use of the model of reflexivity in GT research strengthens the rigor of the research process and the development of the researcher.

Keywords: reflexive methodology, classical grounded theory, dual-language, field research, a storyline.

Introduction

We do not exist or educate in a vacuum. All of us are affected by our context and experience. This article presents an endeavor of conducting research in dual-language educational institutions incorporating cultural aspects of students' backgrounds into the curriculum. It also shows a personal journey of a researcher attempting to use an alternative methodological framework that would allow to include historical, political, and moral considerations in education, as well as a personal story and voice in the research process.

Being an ex-EFL-teacher, an academic teacher and researcher, I needed a research method that would allow me to question my own attitudes, thought processes, principles, beliefs, preconceptions and habitual actions. One that would allow me to disrupt the allegedly value-free objectivist discourse and privileged knowledge that go unmarked in academe, yet without going into the "first person" narration throughout the whole article, not to seem narcissistic or self-indulgent. With this purpose in mind, I decided to draw on a concept of reflexive methodology in a study rooted in classical grounded theory and apply the model of reflexivity as provided by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009). Taking the above into consideration, this paper will represent personal style and reflexivity as a position I take throughout the research process in how I participate in knowledge production taking into account historical and social phenomena. None of the above processes are ever neutral or passive.

This research revolves around dual-language education in Texas, in the United States for two reasons. The first one is linked to the way amendments are made to the curriculum. Namely, the four major practices and issues that are examined and considered in this process in the U.S.: integrating cultural diversity and pluralism, constructing a non-biased way of communication, designing the curriculum to support diversity and social justice, and ensur-

ing equality of educational opportunity. Additionally, Texas law states that “Performance on the achievement indicators must be based on information that is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status” (Texas Education Code, TEC, 2018). The second reason is related to critical pedagogy in second language and literacy teaching and learning. In this part of the world, Freire’s work was adopted in the context of English as a second language (ESL) (Reagan & Osborn, 1998; Kubota, 1999; Crookes, 2012). The publications of Elsa Auerbach (Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987; Auerbach, 1990; 1996), the best-known proponent of Freire’s ideas in ESL language education, continue to still be relevant for teachers. In Europe, bilingual and foreign language curriculum focuses on those languages considered prestigious, and within those chosen few, highlights linguistic aspects of language learning. This focus needs to shift so that adequate support can be given to those minoritized, considering that in Poland as well as in other European countries, the number of minority students has been raising in recent years. It needs to be recognised that they are influenced by complex social, economic, historical, and cultural factors, and by the relationship between their and the mainstream culture. The mainstream curriculum in Poland, at the present time, corresponds with the discourse advocating assimilation, and thereby provides for the assimilation of culturally diverse groups into the mainstream curriculum without addressing the nature of minority cultural diversity. Therefore, there is a necessity for a comprehensive, scientifically sound conceptual framework clarifying the educational thinking behind the curriculum planning addressing the nature of minority cultural diversity. This paper addresses this issue and opens a reflexive discussion, where one questions own taken for granted assumptions.

In order to achieve the above, the overt non-participant observations took place in two primary dual-language schools. Eighteen classrooms ranging from pre-K to grade 4 were visited over a three-month period. Although field research in second language learning and minority education is not new, the novelty of this research lies in the incorporating methodological reflexivity model into dual-language fieldwork as an alternative method of scientific enquiry rooted in classical grounded theory. Reflexivity has found its place in literature in the context of grounded theory only recently (Mruch & Mey, 2007). Although, one may also say that reflexivity is achieved in grounded

theory by means of theoretical sensitivity (Hall & Callery, 2001). It is the theoretical sensitivity and not having to test or expand upon any existing or preconceived theory before this research that appealed to me most. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) note, the risk with too much book-learning is to become over-dependent on earlier authorities and tangled up in all the old problems, so that it becomes difficult to see new possibilities. Research implementing methodological reflexivity in dual-language education is still scarce. Therefore, I believe this study will contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding how to approach reflexivity in a methodologically consistent manner also in the context of dual-language education.

Literature review on methodology

Reflexivity and grounded theory represent multiple disciplines and is applied across fields of study. In qualitative research paradigm, reflexivity has derived from methodological critiques regarding problems of objectivity and research power (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994; Koch & Harrington, 1998). This concept has been defined in multiple ways (Cutcliffe, 2003; Pillow, 2003; Neill, 2006; Mruck & Mey, 2007). For Rosanna Hertz (1997, p. viii) to be reflexive means to have an ongoing conversation about the experience while concurrently living in the moment. Some scholars like Hall and Callery (2001, p. 257) view reflexivity in GT only as attending to the effects of research participant interactions on the construction of data which is to serve filling a quality gap in grounded theory. Glaserian grounded theorists view reflexivity as an appropriate part of research process (Neil, 2006), which is why Classic GT is applied in this study. Bolton, on the other hand, defined reflexivity as an act of finding strategies to question one's own attitudes, theories-in-use, values, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions in order to understand one's complex roles in relation to others. According to him, reflexivity focuses on in-dept reflection upon one's perspective, assumptions, beliefs and values (Bolton, 2014). In this sense, using reflexivity in research allows researchers to specify their positions, understandings and approaches with the aim to increase transparency and trustworthiness of the research (Gentles, et al., 2014). Other scholars, such as Mruck and Mey (2007, p. 527) acknowledge reflexivity in all stages of the research process and discuss how researchers'

concerns for their potential audience can influence the research process. In this regard, questioning the assumptions that researchers bring to the research process is considered an important aspect of reflexivity. As Mauthner and Doucet (2003) state, we need to acknowledge that the choice of research design and the resulting findings are not objective, as they carry our own assumptions. However consistent and justifiable the above may seem, there has also been some criticism of reflexivity in research (Chesney, 2001; Finlay, 2002; Pillow, 2003). Nevertheless, my own position is that sharing attitudes, thought processes, values, assumptions, prejudices with one's audience is of value to the research process and outcomes.

As mentioned above, the chosen methodology for this research is classical grounded theory, since the purpose of this research is to generate findings that have practical relevance and wide applicability to a social problem and could underpin large-scale practical or policy responses to the aforementioned challenges (Timonen et al., 2018). The focus of GT research should rely on fieldwork to generate interviews or ethnographic data through which human action can be analyzed. Ethnographic data was used in this study. The main aim, which is the end goal of all types of GT research, is to identify relationships between categories and to use these to develop concepts and conceptual frameworks that will (ideally) amount to theory (Timonen et al., 2018). However, in order to do this productively, it needs to be remembered that in the process of building a theory the researcher should seek to understand how concepts, which are grounded in data, relate to existing knowledge and literature (Charmaz, 2014). One limitation of the classical GT method is that it prescribes no rigor or rules regarding data collection procedures. Consequently, for the purpose of this research, Alvesson and Sköldbberg's (2009) model of reflexivity was implemented. Engward and Davis (2015, p. 1536) who also used this model in their research, stated that it may be beneficial as a means for being reflexive in grounded theory research as it prompts the researcher to act carefully between being overly self-analytical and overly critical of the external forces that have an effect on a research project. As suggested by Engward and Davis (2015), the aim should not be to include every aspect of the research process, but to provide a glimpse of reflexivity in a research project to determine that reflexivity can build credibility in research. The authors of this framework, Alvesson and Sköldbberg

(2009), suggest four stages to be implemented during a qualitative study. The first stage is *Problematizing collected empirical material*. It primarily focuses on data collection. The second stage is *Engagement with the interpretive act*, where a researcher interprets reality through a “sense making” process. The third stage *Clarification of the political-ideological context* involves a critical interpretation of the research context. The final stage is *Consideration of questions of representation and authority* and is related to the way research is communicated. The way researchers present their material reflects their approach and the purpose of the report.

Studied context

The study was conducted in two dual-language public primary schools in Denton County, Texas, in the United States. Eighteen teachers participated in the three-month study. Schools in Texas are known for their cooperation with higher education institutions in the context of teacher development but also the process of improving and redesigning their curricula to move towards equity, inclusion, and social justice for all (Hightower, 2019; Babino & Stewart, 2020; Lozada et al., 2021).

According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, in 2018 the population of Texas was 73.5% White (41.4% Non-Hispanic White and 32.1% Hispanic White), 12.3% Black or African American, 5.0% Asian, 0.5% Native American and Alaskan Native, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 6.0% Some Other Race, and 2.7% from two or more races. Texas public school enrollment data are used at the regional and state levels for education policy planning, administration, and research. Texas law provides that “Performance on the achievement indicators adopted must be based on information that is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status” (Texas Education Code [TEC] §39.053, 2018).

Bilingual education in Texas became law in 1973 when Governor Dolph Briscoe signed the Bilingual Education and Training Act. Bilingual education in Texas is defined as a full-time dual-language instruction that provides for learning basic skills in the primary language of the students enrolled in the program and incorporates cultural aspects of students’ backgrounds. Hence the research question on how mainstream curricula address the nature of minority cultural diversity.

Dual language programs in the United States are divided into one-way and two-way programs. The first ones are set up for monolingual groups of students (e.g. only native Spanish speaking or English speaking students) who learn through two languages, and the latter ones integrate native English speakers and native speakers of other languages who learn through two languages together. The main goal is for both of the groups of students to become bilingual in two languages for communication and learning (Gómez et al., 2010). Dual language programs in Texas are based on an orientation of language as a resource and as a right (Ruíz, 1984). Dual language programs can vary in terms of the time allocated for each language. The two basic models are 90-10 and 50-50 (Gómez, 2006). Schools that were chosen for this study implemented the second model, which means that there was an even distribution of the use of both languages during school time. The chosen schools' mission is to ensure academic success for all emergent bilinguals by providing the most effective and innovative practices while instilling a positive identity with students' language and cultural heritage.

Data collection and participants

Based on the research question, I defined criteria for selecting suitable locations and situations for my non-participant observation. The observations were conducted over a period of three months. I was a non-participant observer, observing in an unobtrusive manner and making notes within the study environment at school. An overt non-participant observation research technique was applied. The research subjects knew that I was a researcher observing their lessons.

Participants in the study included eighteen primary school teachers from two schools, working with students from pre-K to grade 4. Being a teacher myself I could relate to some of the concerns the participants might have had in relation to a stranger entering their classroom and observing them at work. Therefore, I wanted to ensure that all participants knew what my role was and that my visits would not be interfering with their lessons in any way. All participants had learned I was a researcher conducting the study before the study began and signed the consent forms accepted in the IRB process. They were aware of potential risks in the study, like the risk of confidentiality,

coercion or embarrassment while being observed. I didn't use any identifiable information in the study data. The participants were not pressured to partake in the study. They were free to stop the observation if they felt embarrassed. I assumed that teachers might feel embarrassed if they perceived my observations as inflicting bias or as being judgmental. For this reason, I limited the note making process in the classroom to a minimum. I was conscious of the potential reactions of students in the classroom during my visits and for this reason I asked each teacher to introduce me to the class and say that I had come from Europe to see how children in America studied and that I could answer any questions they had after the lesson. There was only one question on one occasion. In general I felt that the introduction put the students at ease. I always sat in the least intrusive place in the classroom designated by the teacher.

Since my research question was general, it did not matter to me which grade level I would observe. I went to the classrooms I was invited to and had a chance to observe lessons conducted in the one- and two-way program. Among others:

- 1st grade science classes in a dual language program;
- 2nd grade Spanish classes in a one way program;
- merging halves of the classes studying together.
- pre-K classes literacy and Maths lesson;
- a 4th grade dual-language class on effective writing;
- a 4th grade working with a book club idea;
- a 3rd grade class conducting research;
- a 2nd grade class working on a writing project in two languages;
- K classes talking about home traditions.

During the observations I followed Liu and Maitlis's (2010) three-stage funnel process. The first stage of the observation process was to get an overview of the setting. Then I moved towards a focused observation, in which I started to pay attention to a narrower picture of interest, and finally I entered the selected observation stage where I was investigating relations among elements that I had selected as being of great interest.

Data analysis

Problematizing collected empirical material

As mentioned above, the codes and concepts emerging from the data were “put into dialogue” with the researcher’s voice, existing concepts and knowledge. The dialogue took place before, during, and after data collection as part of a literature review, and later to discuss the concepts and categories that had emerged from the data. The realization that in grounded theory the findings are not representative of the whole social context but a fragment of what is seen at a particular time of a study only, helps to put the data in the right perspective.

The procedure for this research involved data collection and analysis progressing simultaneously, as only by analyzing and sampling concurrently it is possible to develop concepts and theory in an inductive, grounded manner (Timonen et al., 2018). Charmaz (2006) emphasizes the need to code rapidly and keep the codes as similar as possible to the data. The field notes were (re) written and extended after each day at school. I stayed focused on making the field notes an evidence to produce meaning and be as detailed as possible. My field notes included two parts. The first one was descriptive, and more factual. Whereas the second included more reflective information with my thoughts, ideas, or questions. Thanks to the process of constant comparison of data, the coding was developed, categorized, and conceptualized. Data was analyzed as it emerged, whereas further data collection was based upon the conceptual and theoretical gaps identified within the data collected. However, there was a moment in this study when I would collect data without engaging in analyzing it, when the school visits were so close in time to one another. Therefore, I cannot say that it was a uniform process. Corbin and Holt (2011) state that sometimes it is necessary to proceed with fieldwork to gather data, regardless of whether this allows time to engage in analysis.

Engagement with the interpretive act

While interpreting data, as a reflexive researcher, I opened myself up to the phenomena that were being investigated and tried to interpret reality through a sense making process in an as objective manner as possible in order to interpret the reality, which for me was the studied context. I felt conscious

of the fact that the sensemaking process depended on the social context, my personal identity, salient cues (Weick et al., 2005) we might not be aware of and therefore I tried to adopt a neutral and unbiased stance during the interpretive act. However, we know that the act of interpreting qualitative data is never neutral or passive. Using reflexivity as a tool in my research has helped me to examine my own stance, values, and my role in the research process, so that any potential bias or prejudice could be stated explicitly. After all, research findings result not only from the data but also from the researchers and what they bring to the data analysis.

The research design framework included purposeful sampling in a form of non-participant observations, initial coding, selecting core category, and finally a storyline and theoretical coding. Atlas.ti programme was used to code data. It allows to discover complex phenomena hidden in the analysed text, to which, given the subject matter we know, we may not pay attention to otherwise. The use of this programme allowed me to better manage the data and maintain greater objectivity when dealing with it. The analysis also became more systematic. Throughout the process I also used memoing in order to store ideas generated through interacting with data. I also made decisions about the codes, which to include and which to exclude. The findings were then examined for possible examples of deviant data. Such cases were then contrasted with prior codes in data. The deviant codes were noted and compared with during the simultaneous data collection and analysis process. The process of theoretical coding commenced, however, more sampling is needed to build a new theoretical concept. This could be achieved by involving more schools in the research process and by adding more sampling, for instance, structured and/or semi-structured interviews with teachers, document analysis (school documents, students' artefacts). Due to COVID-19 restrictions the extended study was impossible.

Clarification of the political-ideological context

During this stage of research, a critical interpretation of the research context took place. As language teachers we know that both language teaching and learning are acts of political and cultural power with their social consequences. My personal motivation in this research was to observe how cultural diversity of students is addressed in dual-language curricula. As mentioned

in the Introduction part of this paper, the mainstream curriculum in Poland corresponds with the discourse advocating assimilation, and thereby provides for the assimilation of culturally diverse groups into the mainstream curriculum without addressing the nature of minority cultural diversity. This research is important for me as an educator and a researcher. This is because by promoting a vision of language education as a homogeneous, fixed practice, we prevent learners from critically understanding language and its social use and block creative and critical language practices (Fairclough, 1999). The monolingual lens through which we still perceive education becomes a monolingual bias putting languages separately in a specific hierarchy where those less prestigious are less attended to. Minority students in Europe mostly have to comply with the same educational standards of native speakers of the official languages, very often without being provided with adequate support (also in their first language), which leads to subtractive bilingualism and false deficit data results (Menken, 2013). The assessments are normed with monolingual speakers, which has its consequences, as the above may also lead to misrepresentation issues in special education, where minority students may be identified as those with academic impairment or disabilities.

The schools I visited based their current dual-language curricula on a Gómez and Gómez Dual Language Enrichment (DLE) model, which has a proven academic and linguistic model (1995). It is the most widely used model in the United States. This model incorporates 30 educational “Best Practices” that are also well grounded in educational research. It is a complete system that includes support trainings for each of its major model components, thus districts are provided with ongoing support to achieve the strongest possible academic and linguistic success. The said benefits of dual-language programs described in literature include among others (Gomez, 2006, p. 49)

- use of two languages for instruction;
- biliteracy;
- mutual multicultural respect;
- student-centered instruction.

Culturally responsive-sustaining curriculum is an asset stance in dual-language education, which builds upon the definition of bilingual education in Texas, and states that educational programs in this State incorporate cultural

aspects of students' backgrounds, by adding that students' cultural differences are to be treated as assets for teaching and learning. This stance influences instructional decisions of teachers, as it is based on adopting the understanding of students' home and school histories in order to make special education eligibility determinations (Montalvo et al., 2014).

Consideration of questions of representation and authority

In grounded theory, accounts in the data are used to illustrate emergent concepts. As researchers, we need to decide on the way our research is communicated, including the language and words we use (Engward & Davis, 2015, p. 1536). The accounts are not lengthy narratives, but fragments of data. My aim in this research was to explain patterns in data in a particular context the study took place. Therefore, my focus was on the conceptual explanation of what was happening in the data. In the end I wrote the grounded theory account in a form of a storyline to conceptually explain my findings in relation to the research purpose. Although storyline was not described in the classical grounded theory in Glasier and Strauss' (1967) work, considering that storytelling has always appealed to me as a person and a researcher, I decided to follow this concept as described by Corbin and Strauss (1990) as the conceptualization of the story. I believe that stories are one of the best ways to convey information, and that they have the potential to be more readable by teachers than other forms of organizing data and findings. I agree with Birks, et al. (2009, p. 407) that a storyline can be used as a tool for theoretical integration and it has the power to bring a theory to life that may otherwise be dull and unpleasant. A story connects the categories and produces a discursive set of theoretical propositions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A well written, grounded storyline is able to explain what the data are saying (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Storylines do not include all of the tiny details found in other research reports in order not to lose the point being made and the reader (Mitchell & Charmas, 1996; Sandelowski, 1998). Theoretical sensitivity is nevertheless important when writing a storyline to be able to identify the data that is important to theory. The storyline does not have to account for every individual case specifically (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Grounded storyline will be able to demonstrate what the data say (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is important to remember that each storyline reflects the

researcher's conceptual interpretation of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), it even reflects their intuition and creativity (Primeau, 2003). However, being creative does not mean we do not have to be accurate, honest or rigorous with the findings (Jones, 2002). The categories developed in this study were used as headings in the storyline to provide structure. Subcategories and concepts were embedded throughout the text. Theoretical frameworks used throughout a research study provided structure and guided interpretation of findings (Roberts & Taylor, 2002) and therefore the storyline as well. I did not decide to include diagrams, but it is a fine idea in general, as it is useful for theoretical integration (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Writing the storyline for school teachers was an immense learning point for me. Working with data in this way has allowed me to see the possible transferability of my findings to other settings. Throughout the research process, using the logic of argumentation rather than validation was compelling to me. For the purpose of this paper I wrote a storyline passage to exemplify the research process described above. The storyline presented here includes the main category developed, namely *Culturally relevant pedagogy*, and two of the subcategories that emerged during the study as subheadings of this main category.

The storyline

“Culturally relevant pedagogy

The data collected during the non-participant observations in this study allowed me to distinguish between two types of lessons. Lessons that displayed a rather superficial and non-superficial student cultural diversity traits and their possible consequences. For the purpose of this narrative, I will name the first type of lessons as SCD, and the second one as n-SCD lessons.

Culturally and linguistically diverse school environment

As you enter the schools, you're immediately aware you are in a culturally diverse place with students and teachers coming from different backgrounds. The school environment is welcoming and safe and the corridors are colorful with students' work displayed in both Spanish and English. All signs are displayed in both languages, it feels ok to ask a question to anyone in either language. You hear both languages spoken in the classrooms and corridors. The school curriculum is designed in such a way that it designates certain days of the week for Spanish and for English to reinforce bilingual communication skills and bi-literacy. As data shows, student cultural diversity and languages were valued.

Discussing topics relevant to students' lives

During the lessons observed, students' lessons in both younger and older grades often oscillated around issues that were said to be relevant to students' lives. However, in some of the classes (SCD) it was hard to tell whether these topics were important to students or at this given point in time relevant to their lives. This was for the reason that they were presented on PowerPoint slides by the teachers who asked students to listen to them and answer some questions. The main focus was the screen and the teacher. The same lessons were sometimes repeated twice for different groups of students with the same commentary. Students in those lessons did not have the opportunity to ask questions to the teacher or to one another as the pace was too fast. It felt as if it was the teacher making connections for the students and presenting them. In these classes students seemed disconnected, some of them were chatting to one another off the topic, sometimes yawning, often going to the toilet. The last aspect may seem irrelevant, but to contrast this, I will add that in the n-SCD observed lessons, no one went to use the toilet during a class. In the SCD lessons there was no time for the expression of reflection or individuality through which we can embrace diversity in the classroom. Whereas when students' voice is not used in the classroom as a pedagogical tool, then we may never be sure whether we unconsciously (not purposefully) silence or stereotype some of our students.

In the n-SCD lessons, on the other hand, the teachers would give time for the students to think about a topic which was important to them and work on it during the class (both in younger and older grades). If PowerPoint slides were used in these lessons, it was just at the start of the class. The topics students came up with seemed more culturally sensitive, often more brave (of course that depended on many factors, such as e.g. the age of the students or the relationship with the teacher). The students were allowed to use multimodal means to complete their tasks on their own or in groups. All of the classrooms were equipped with personal laptops. The tasks often included research on the topic online or in a paper book. In one of the 5th grade classrooms, students had blankets and pillows to lie down on for their reading, writing or group work. In each of the classes, students wanted to continue on working on the topics even after the lesson had come to an end. No disruptive behavior was displayed in these classes, everyone seemed engaged in what they were working on. Students did not have to answer any questions or present their work in front of other students in class. The whole learning process felt authentic. Nobody seemed to mind my presence in the room, in fact, for most part I had the impression of being invisible as everyone was so engaged with their work. It felt like these classes could be repeated over and over again and they would have a different outcome each time”.

Implications for dual-language education and research

All minority students face problems of social adjustment and academic performance at schools due to differences in culture and language, as well as their relation to the dominant culture (Ng-A-Fook & Rottman, 2012). Working in such school environments requires reflexivity. The way teachers treat culturally diverse students, how they organize the teaching and learning process, but also by what means they approach issues of discrimination, power relations and social justice may depend on how they approach reflexivity and agency in their practice and how their own diversity and identity is displayed in the classroom (Babino & Stewart, 2018). An internal dialogue may lead to action for transformative practices in the classroom (Archer, 2012), promote deep professional learning and bring sustainable change in education (Feucht et al., 2017). Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for teachers' work to be organized in such a way that they would have time to examine their own curricula and way of working with students by being reflexive. The above is a qualitatively different way of thinking about bringing transformative change to educational practice, expectations, and beliefs that provides us with the opportunity to increase its relevance for teacher education and development at the same time (Feucht et al., 2017). Professional teachers' experiences can enhance sensitivity to data and their analysis and enable them to identify connections between the findings and their educational context. And in doing so, teachers may recognize that they are active in shaping they surroundings, and begin to think critically to shape their reality rather than just to react to it. This process could also help to review and revise ethical ways of being and relating to one another (Cuncliffe, 2009).

Conclusions

Being reflexive in the research process provided me with the opportunity to think about how I was engaging in and influencing the research process, which was particularly helpful while working with the grounded method. I feel that the application of the steps in the reflexive model had a strong impact on my development as a researcher, especially the process of writing the storyline at the end of data analysis. It involved an increase in awareness of

the research design process and the interaction between me, as a researcher, and the context in which the research was conducted. The model of reflexivity, as presented in this research, assisted me in recognizing and addressing aspects that may have implicitly or explicitly influenced the research process. I felt a great sense of responsibility when writing the storyline. It was not an effortless endeavor and, in my view, it would have been much more painstaking without the steps from the model of reflexivity, which I followed prior to writing the storyline. Therefore, from my standpoint, the model of reflexivity appears auspicious as a means to assist a researcher in the process of coding, categorizing and storyline writing. I see the empirical material presented herein as an effort to make a case for a particular way of understanding both research methodology and social reality, in the context of a never-ending debate (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000, p. 276) and reflexivity as means to understand the significance of the knowledge, feelings, and values we bring into the field to the research process and the analytical lenses we chose to employ to our findings, and consequently, I agree with Attia and Egde (2017) who state that reflexivity can help researchers grow and develop. Furthermore, findings presented in a form of a storyline may have pragmatic relevance and applicability to a social phenomenon and could ground large-scale practical or policy responses to the foregoing challenges (Timonen et al., 2018).

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