

Supporting Teachers Personally and Professionally in Challenging Environments

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Abstract

In this paper I would like to outline some of the work I do around the world, developing and contributing to professional education programmes for practitioners across a range of professions, using an action research methodology. Here I especially focus on my work with teachers; and I highlight the point that some of the most problematic yet rewarding work is conducted within contexts of economic, historical and social change and challenge. I also explain how I conduct my own action research, which is about finding ways to encourage teachers to think critically and reflectively about what they are doing, and specifically to engage with questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?' (Whitehead,1989). Through engaging with these kinds of questions, teachers can position themselves as having the authority to take control of and make discerning judgements about their practices, as they seek to exercise educational influence in their own learning and in the learning of others.

Keywords: *Action research; critically and reflectively thinking; personal enquiry.*