# Chapter 25
# Researching and Developing Teacher Expertise in the Global South: Local and Transferable Solutions

**Jason Anderson**

**Abstract** This chapter explores the theoretical and practical challenges and affordances involved in researching, developing and disseminating teacher expertise on a local scale in the Global South. It considers a key paradox that often undermines such efforts: how to develop quality without "importing" models, approaches and practices from northern educational systems that are often inappropriate for southern contexts. In addition to discussing a number of possible solutions for strengthening local expertise, the chapter provides a detailed description of one of these carried out by the author—a participatory case study of teacher expertise in Indian secondary education. As well as offering findings of importance to our understanding of teacher expertise in India, the approach adopted succeeded in making a comparative case study participatory, with the teachers both contributing to research questions and identifying other outputs of use to them and their colleagues. The chapter concludes by proposing a model for strengthening classroom practice and teacher education within national and regional contexts that draws upon both indigenous teacher expertise and teacher classroom research to offer a sustainable means for building context-specific prototypes of teacher expertise that may be of use in contexts across the Global South.

**Keywords** Teacher expertise · Local expertise · Teacher research · Exploratory case studies · Global South

## Introduction

Educational systems around the world are today focusing interest on issues of quality: quality in school leadership and effectiveness, quality in curricula and educational policy, and, most importantly for teacher education, quality in the classroom. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, many countries across the Global South have made impressive gains towards the second UN Millennium Development Goal of achieving

J. Anderson (✉)
University of Warwick, Coventry, England
e-mail: jason.anderson@warwick.ac.uk

universal primary education and are directing attention towards the fourth Sustainable Development Goal to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2019, p. 7). However, as a number of commentators have identified (e.g. Alexander, 2015; Muralidharan, 2017), policy documents of both national and international bodies rarely offer useful detail concerning what Alexander calls "the missing ingredient" (2015, p. 254) in accounts of educational quality—pedagogy. He notes that "…the striking feature of the GMRs [global monitoring reports] is that they do not so much engage with pedagogy as circle around it", leaving it "securely locked in its black box" (2015, p. 253).

This lack of description of appropriate effective pedagogic practice for lower-income contexts often leads to ministries and development partners (e.g. British Council, UNICEF) attempting to "import" conceptions of appropriate good practice in pedagogy from higher-income systems, which are often inappropriate or unimplementable in lower-income contexts (see, e.g. Amone, 2021). Equally common is the practice of policy documents reducing descriptors relating to pedagogy to *soundbites* of quality, as in the recent Indian National Education Policy: "Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable" (Government of India, 2020, p. 3). Alas, none of these terms are unpacked in sufficient detail in this document to enable relevant bodies to implement such policy, leaving more questions than answers: "What does effective learner-centred education in Indian classrooms look like?" (see Schweisfurth, 2013), and "Is discovery-oriented education likely to be more effective in challenging contexts than more direct modes of instruction?"; the evidence does not necessarily support this (see Hattie, 2009). If these questions cannot be answered in ways that are useful to those attempting to implement the policy, the reference to such constructs remains largely rhetorical, offering little practical guidance of use to teacher education, and moving us no closer to our goal of identifying effective practices for classrooms in low-income countries.

In English language teaching (ELT), this is a particular challenge, given that the subject focus (English) is inextricably linked to the processes of Westernization. Several authors (e.g. Anderson, 2021; Holliday, 1994; Phillipson, 1992) have cautioned against assuming that models of best practice from the western "Centre" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 52) of ELT can be imported into educational systems around the world. Holliday (1994) observes that such attempts often lead to "tissue rejection", when an intended innovation "does not become an effectively functioning part of the system" (p. 134). Yet, despite this, a discourse of assumed best practice continues to emerge, particularly from the more psycho-cognitive second language acquisition (SLA) literature, typically recommending variations of task-based language teaching (TBLT; e.g. Ellis, 2019; Long, 2015), despite sustained evidence of local, even systematic failure in attempts to implement TBLT approaches. In China, for example, evidence of low uptake and widespread misunderstandings of TBLT among Chinese teachers (e.g. Luo & Xing, 2015; Zhu-Xiu, 2017) has triggered a recent shift in emphasis away from TBLT in national curricula towards a "core competencies" approach, more closely integrated with other areas of the wider Chinese curriculum

(Wang & Luo, 2019). It is clear that, as both educational funding and student achievement increase, China's dependence on such exogenous models of best practice is diminishing, but what about other, lower-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia, where typical per student investments in state-sponsored education are a fraction of those in the Global North? Such countries may lack the funding to do likewise.

This chapter explores the question of how educational systems around the world can develop models of appropriate, good pedagogy based on indigenous teacher expertise. While the potential solutions described may be of use to any educational system, primary consideration is given to the often-overlooked contexts and challenges typically found in the Global South, where lower levels of educational funding can lead to challenges rarely experienced in more privileged contexts. While many of the examples cited come from English language teaching (ELT), the solutions offered are potentially appropriate for teaching, teacher education and policy making for all subjects.

The next section of the chapter explores a number of "bottom-up" solutions to developing expertise that have recently demonstrated both feasibility and impact across a wide range of contexts. This will be followed by an in-depth look at a more specific means to build the knowledge base on indigenous good practice through the use of comparative case studies of expert teachers working in low-income contexts, including an example study from India conducted by the author (Anderson, 2021). The chapter concludes by suggesting how several of these solutions could be combined to build an "expert teacher prototype" (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995) for the context in question.

In this chapter, I use the terms "Global South", "southern (e.g. contexts)" and "developing countries" to refer to countries, or states that fall into either low- or lower-middle-income GDP bands (World Bank, 2019), aware that such terms cast broad generalisations on global regional difference, and that other authors theorise these terms differently (e.g. Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). My choice is based primarily on the fact that funding continues to remain a primary influence on the possibilities and constraints influencing educational systems worldwide. In India, for example, annual government per student expenditure averages less than 2% (200 US dollars) of the 10,000 US dollars spent, on average, in OECD countries (OECD, 2020).

## Localising Research: Established Exploratory Approaches

Perhaps the most obvious starting point for building indigenous models of good pedagogy is research. However, this suggestion must immediately be followed by a caution because much research being conducted into pedagogic practices in developing countries involves either macro-level investigation of the type that Alexander (e.g. 2015) is critical of—treating teachers, learners, and other stakeholders as anonymous subjects in econometric evaluation studies (see, e.g. Masino & Nino-Zarazua, 2016)—or attempts to introduce exogenous models through intervention studies

(see Westbrook, Durrani, Brown, Orr, Pryor, Boddy, & Salvi, 2013); this latter choice being particularly common in English language teaching, as both researchers and research students frequently opt to investigate the introduction of western-developed approaches (especially communicative language teaching) into southern contexts—sometimes demonstrating impact, but not necessarily sustainability (see, e.g. contributions to Tribble, 2012).

However, rather than starting from such hypothesis-testing approaches that ask "What would happen if we introduced X here?", research can begin by exploring the "here" to understand it better: our classrooms, our lessons and our challenges. In this way, any potential changes are both informed by and responsive to local conditions and needs, helping us to strengthen, rather than replace, current practice. Three approaches to teacher-led research that have demonstrated sustainability and impact in language teaching aim to do precisely this: exploratory action research, exploratory practice and lesson study.

## *Exploratory Action Research*

Developed by Richard Smith and colleagues, exploratory action research (EAR) usually involves a modified version of the teacher action research "cycle" in which, rather than beginning with a change intervention, teacher-researchers are encouraged to conduct an initial research cycle in which they explore aspects of their context before seeking to make any change. If and when required (sometimes the understanding gained is sufficient to address a problem), this is followed by a change that seeks, in some way, to improve, support or extend learning within the same classroom or school context and then to evaluate the impact of this change (Smith & Rebolledo, 2018). As in most action research, teacher-researchers engaging in EAR are supported by mentors, who, as well as offering support during the processes of data collection and analysis, help to develop teacher-researchers' analytical, reflective and planning skills (Smith, 2020). These skills are obviously useful to all teachers in themselves, particularly when they are developed in-service and in-context, but also empower teachers with the ability to conduct further research in the future in their own contexts as and when required.

A large number of EAR projects have been carried out successfully in southern contexts, especially Latin America and South Asia (e.g. Rebolledo, Smith, & Bullock, 2016). There are a large number of tools and free publications available for teachers, organisations and educational departments interested in conducting EAR projects (e.g. Rebolledo et al., 2016; Smith, 2020; Smith & Rebolledo, 2018), as well as international initiatives potentially capable of supporting individual teachers interested in engaging in EAR independently of local support, if required (e.g. the IATEFL Research SIG).

## *Exploratory Practice*

Developed in the 1990s by Dick Allwright and colleagues, due primarily to a concern that standard models for teacher action research were often creating more problems (especially excessive workload) than they solved (Allwright, 2005), exploratory practice involves teachers working with their learners collaboratively to understand situations and puzzles rather than solving problems, what Hanks (2017) calls "starting with a 'why' question, rather than a 'how' or 'how to'" (p. 119). The ultimate goal of exploratory practice is to improve "quality of life" for the classroom community (teachers and learners together), rather than improving "output" (Allwright, 2005, p. 353). Allwright suggests six principles that should guide exploratory practice:

1. Put "quality of life" first.
2. Work primarily to understand language classroom life.
3. Involve everybody.
4. Work to bring people together.
5. Work also for mutual development.
6. Make the work a continuous enterprise (2005, p. 360)

Exploratory practice, like EAR, has proven useful to teachers working around the world, particularly in Brazil (e.g. Miller, Côrtes, Oliveira & Braga, 2015), but also in Turkey and the Far East (see Hanks, 2017).

## *Lesson Study*

Originating in Japan as long ago as the 1870s (Dudley, 2014), lesson study is an approach to teacher-led research that centralises the lesson as an object of focus for collaborative interaction among teachers of the same subject (Rappleye & Komatsu, 2017). While a number of variants exist, a typical lesson study cycle begins with the identification of a specific learning outcome or aim by a group of teachers. Together they plan a "research lesson" (Dudley, 2014) intended to achieve this outcome, and one member of the group teaches this lesson, ideally to their own students, while the others observe, either live or via video recording. Afterwards, the teachers meet to reflect on the research lesson, critique it (with sensitivity to the teacher) and suggest improvements before another member of the group teaches it to their learners. This cycle continues until the group feel the lesson achieves its aims in a range of classrooms and may include preparing a range of potential resources for delivering the lesson. A different aim then becomes the focus for the next lesson study cycle (Rappeleye & Komatsu, 2017). Dudley (e.g. 2014) also recommends the identification of several "case pupils" who can become a focus for both the peer-observation component and possible interviews after the research lesson to gain further insights into the lesson's impact.

While lesson study has primarily had an impact in more privileged contexts in the Global North, there is also evidence of success in southern contexts (e.g. Ansawi &

Pang, 2017), although challenges are also sometimes noted (e.g. Siddiquee & Kubota, 2018). Given the relatively low-resource nature of lesson study and increased availability of video recording technology, it is possible that it may play a useful role in supporting teacher development in school clusters as well as improving teaching materials and, ultimately, contributing to local teacher expertise.

## Expanding the Options for Exploratory Participatory Research

All of the above options for exploratory research are teacher-led and typically involve a change or innovation of some sort. While these two design features are likely to be key to the success of the approaches—enabling teachers to try out new ideas and explore possible options for change in their contexts—they also impose a number of potential limitations on the range of outcomes and insight that such research can provide, which are here explored critically.

Firstly, while the introduction of change into one's classroom can lead to useful insights, it can also cause us to overlook existing effective practices in a given context; changes introduced often involve exogenous activities, materials and approaches that at times can be less effective or appropriate than those they replace. A common example of this in ELT is the attempts to introduce communicative speaking practice in large classes, which can be time-consuming, culturally inappropriate, and may have less relevance to assessed curricula objectives when compared to, say, collaborative writing as an alternative means for learners to engage in productive skills practice. While the exploratory phase of EAR is designed, in part, to reduce this danger, such interventive approaches are not best tailored to documenting and disseminating existing effective practices.

Secondly, while many teachers are experts of their own context, few are also experts in conducting research, which necessarily has implications. The first of these is the extensive time and effort required for teachers to learn and then apply appropriate research skills (Burns, 2009). The second is the possibility that, because of this lack of research expertise and/or mentoring support, teachers may commit mistakes in the process, potentially leading to their making changes in their practice that do not necessarily lead to improvements in learning. A common example of this is the presence of bias in a teacher's interviewing practices—for instance by asking leading questions to learners—that may cause interviewees to provide answers that they think a teacher wants to hear, rather than revealing their true opinions.

A final issue involves the usually fairly limited dissemination of the findings of teacher research projects. While a small number of higher quality studies do find their way into journals or research reports, partly because of the small scale of such projects and the challenges that teachers face in conducting research (see above), findings are typically shared only in local teacher research communities. Even in some contexts where teacher research is widespread—such as Bangladesh, where it is integrated into

teacher education curricula—potential mechanisms for dissemination (e.g. teacher-accessible databases of abstracts and findings) or reviews of common findings may not exist. This is often exacerbated, unfortunately, by perceptions among academics and policymakers that teacher research is unreliable and should not be drawn upon to influence policy or pedagogic practice in teacher education.

Thus, if these arguments are accepted, in addition to the teacher-led research discussed above, a need can also be identified for exploratory research on classroom practice that primarily investigates existing conditions and practices (e.g. case study research) and engages the expertise of researchers to work alongside teachers to increase the likelihood that research findings are valid, reliable and insightful enough to justify wider dissemination and build models of good, local practice. This was the challenge I embraced when designing my PhD study.

## A Participatory Case Study of Teacher Expertise in a Southern Context

Case study research into teacher expertise dates back to work of David Berliner and colleagues in the 1980s (Berliner, 2004) and is based on the premise that, providing expert teachers can be identified reliably, documenting and disseminating their practice is of potential use in multiple ways, particularly in building what Sternberg and Horvath (1995) call an "expert teacher prototype" for a given teaching context. Such prototypes can inform pedagogic models for pre-service teacher education, in-service teacher development, curriculum and materials design, as well as policy documentation. As such, teacher expertise studies seem ideally placed to enable us to identify effective pedagogic practices in low-income countries.

Despite this observation, it is striking that of over 100 empirical studies conducted on teacher expertise to date, almost all involve teachers working in the Global North, predominantly North America, Western Europe and higher-income provinces of China (Anderson, 2021). It may be assumed by many researchers that teacher expertise is rare or non-existent in the Global South, due, perhaps, to the contextual challenges inhibiting its development—however, my personal experience as a teacher educator indicates otherwise. I have had the opportunity to work with numerous teachers across both sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, and they have varied greatly in their effectiveness. Among the more effective ones are many who meet selection criteria for teacher expertise studies (see Palmer, Burdenski, & Gonzales, 2005). It was likely this experience that prompted me to choose such a focus for my mid-career PhD, despite the almost complete lack of prior attempts to study teacher expertise in the Global South.

## The Challenges of Conducting a Teacher Expertise Study in the Global South

At the outset of the study, I identified three key challenges that I needed to solve as follows:

1. How to define expertise appropriately without imposing exogenous (Northern/Western) theories that might bias the study and its findings?
2. How to find participants whose expertise was consistent with the definition adopted?
3. How to make the study as inclusive, non-exploitative and mutually beneficial as possible, given my own background as a teacher educator from the Global North?

Each of these challenges is explored below.

## Theorising Expertise Appropriately

During my review of the literature on teacher expertise, it became apparent that expertise is often defined in one of several ways which broadly fit into two groups: criterion-referenced and norm-referenced definitions of expertise. The former of these (criterion-referenced definitions) tend towards the description of specific competencies, skills or even processes that characterise expertise. The latter (norm-referenced definitions) typically focus on one of two areas, either the teacher's impact on learner outcomes (e.g. exam achievement) or the teacher's recognition and status within a given community. I noticed that criterion-referencing was more susceptible to the influence of the researcher's background and implicit assumptions regarding the specific features and practices of expert teachers. As such, I deemed it inappropriate for a cross-cultural study, particularly in a country where very little is known about appropriate good pedagogic practice. In contrast, norm-referencing offered a potential means for experts to be identified through their local communities, social norms and value systems. This led to my formulating the following definition of teacher expertise, drawing in part on both Rampton's (1990) and Bucci's (2003) discussions of situated expertise: Teacher expertise is an enacted amalgam of learnt, context-specific competencies (i.e. embodied knowledge, skills and awareness) that is valued within an educational community as a source of appropriate practice for others to learn from.

## *Finding Participants for a Teacher Expertise Study*

Of a number of options available to me for finding potential participants, the stakeholders of an English language teacher association in India, AINET (https://www.theainet.net/), expressed interest in facilitating the study and provided access to its members. This constituted an important first step towards finding participant teachers for two reasons. Firstly, such an association constitutes a valid, if loose, community of practice within which to identify potential expert teachers as per the definition above. Secondly, active participation in teacher associations constitutes an initial, potential marker of teacher expertise, as identified in Palmer et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis; one that involves professional, rather than pedagogic practice, and therefore requires no value judgements relating to the latter.

While many prior teacher expertise studies have drawn upon the opinions of key stakeholders within education (e.g. school inspectors and headteachers) to recommend potential participants for an expertise study (Palmer et al., 2005), I rejected this approach as inappropriate for my study for three principal reasons. Firstly, such an approach is highly susceptible to the personal bias of such stakeholders (Palmer et al., 2005; Tsui, 2005). Secondly, in contexts such as India, where both school inspections and classroom observations are rare—even by headteachers (Bambawale, Hughes, & Lightfoot, 2018)—such stakeholders may lack the necessary information to make appropriate recommendations. Thirdly, I was concerned that such an approach may lead to recommended teachers feeling pressurised to take part, rather than participating because of their interest in the study, a key concern of my third challenge.

Instead, I elected to adopt an original, more equitable approach, inviting expressions of interest from teachers within the community of practice in question. Thus, an "expression of interest" form was distributed to members of the AINET community via appropriate social media channels. The form first provided a detailed description of the study (for transparency), after which it requested respondents to share relevant details concerning context (e.g. school type, curriculum) and basic inclusion criteria (e.g. sufficient experience and a full-time position). The most important item on the form presented a number of potential indicators of expertise, collated critically from Palmer et al.'s (2005) review with consideration of both context and the definition of expertise adopted and asked respondents (initially) to self-assess the applicability of the indicators to themselves. This approach enabled me to search for multiple criteria of expertise, considered more robust by Palmer et al. (2005), whose recommendation for a two-staged approach to participant selection was also adopted.

All respondents who met basic inclusion criteria and indicated at least one criterion of expertise were invited to an interview where these criteria could be further explored, confirmed if possible (and if not, confirmed in situ) and both parties could make informed decisions about participation in the study. Nine of eleven teachers interviewed were able to confirm inclusion criteria; these nine also indicated the presence of at least five potential (e.g. higher qualifications, high student achievement, receipt of awards or scholarships) or likely (e.g. experience working as a

teacher educator, experience presenting at national conferences) indicators of expertise each. All were invited, and agreed, to participate in the study (although one later dropped out due to promotion), indicating that this robust, multiple criteria approach had been successful.

As discussed above, for this selection process to be appropriate, it was important that it was not influenced by my own perceptions regarding good/appropriate pedagogic practice, and this was achieved; none of the chosen indicators of expertise involved me making value judgements on classroom practice, and I had avoided rejecting any applicants who met pre-defined inclusion criteria.

## *Making the Study Inclusive, Non-exploitative and Mutually Beneficial*

By offering the opportunity to participate in the study to all members of the community of practice in question and allowing participants to express interest in the study, rather than targeting nominated teachers, I had moved some way towards achieving one of my equity criteria—to make the study inclusive, at least to members of this community. The two-gated selection process further indicated that these participants were enthusiastic about participating—an important element in making a participatory research project successful.

However, a significant challenge remained: that of making the study non-exploitative. Within the field of education, it can be argued that almost all researcher-led studies are necessarily exploitative of participants to some extent. Insomuch as participants typically undergo time-consuming procedures such as interviews, or potentially stressful ones, such as lesson observations, such exploitation is so systematic within educational research that it is often either overlooked or deemed acceptable within the greater aims of the research project.

My initial attempts to find participatory research designs that might be appropriate for a case study approach drew a blank. Almost all the literature on participatory research in education tended also to involve participant action research, and almost all case studies of teachers were non-participatory. However, searching further afield, I found evidence of a different way of envisaging participation, particularly in the literature on community development and planning (e.g. Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Pretty, 1995). Such literature was particularly useful because it recognised one prerequisite of my study—as a PhD project—that I, as researcher, would be the primary collector of data. This literature frequently discusses different levels or degrees of participant involvement, dating back to Arnstein's (1969, p. 217) "ladder of citizen participation". These typologies, while typically recommending movement towards higher levels of participant control whenever possible, also acknowledge that lower levels of what Pretty (1995, p. 1252) calls "Functional" and "Interactive participation" are also useful; although the same sources also caution against what Pretty calls "Manipulative" or "Passive participation" (p. 1252). As well as recommending

a flexible, iterative and reflexive approach, several of these writers argue that both sides in the research endeavour must benefit from it, and all converge on the belief that, to ensure a study can be called participatory, there must be meaningful interaction at the early design stage, when attention must focus on "how and by whom is the research question formulated and by and for whom are research findings used" (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995, p. 1668).

With this in mind, I arranged a planning meeting with the participants to discuss key elements of the study, such as its focus, its research questions and logistics. Because I also wanted the study to include outcomes that would be genuinely useful for the participants and their colleagues and some means to offer them voice independently of my findings, I also planned to discuss how they might also produce something of their own; an opportunity for them to share aspects of their expertise/practice with their wider community.

## *Co-planning the Study*

Funding was obtained to enable us to meet together for a one-day workshop to plan aspects of the study together. Prior to this, an online meeting had established the agenda, as follows:

1. Exploration of roles of participants and researcher;
2. The focus of the PhD study;
3. A co-authored publication produced by the participants;
4. Participant group reflection without the researcher;
5. Timetabling of case study visits and practical issues.

Of particular importance to the participatory element of the study were items two and three. Of importance to making it as non-exploitative as possible was item four.

With regard to the focus of the study, we discussed two key issues: to what extent to involve other teachers from their schools in the study as potential points of comparison to them as expert teachers, and what would be the specific focus of the study as identified in the research questions. Participants quickly agreed that, rather than involving their colleagues directly (a number of ethical concerns were voiced with, for example, a "matched pairs" design), it would be better for me only to observe colleagues who felt comfortable and willing to allow me into their classrooms. With regard to the focus of the study, five options were discussed. These included a study of their cognition, a focus on their practice, a comparison of these two, a focus on their lessons only, and a more holistic, ethnographic focus including all of these elements. After lengthy discussion, the participants decided upon the last of these; an ethnographic focus linking their cognition to their practice, their backgrounds and their beliefs. This focus was duly adopted as the primary research question for the individual case studies, as follows (a second research question was more comparative):

> What are the features of the pedagogic and professional practice, related cognition and beliefs of expert teachers working in Indian state-sponsored secondary education?

With regard to the potential publication, during the online meeting the participants had expressed interest in contributing to a co-authored book; several options were discussed at length, and while only partial agreement was achieved at this point (the final publication was shaped by decisions made during later meetings as well as the writing process itself), there was clear agreement that they wanted to write about their own challenges and teaching practices as well as offering advice and recommendations, particularly for novice teachers facing similar challenges.

Finally, to reduce the danger of the study being exploitative of them, I provided an opportunity for them to discuss this issue along with any other concerns privately. I also suggested that they elect a group spokesperson and create their own closed social media group separate from our shared group. Upon my return, while a number of requests were made (e.g. all requested copies of data collected with them) and minor concerns expressed (e.g. several were concerned that I might be exploited by local authorities for workshops), there seemed to be a strong consensus that all were happy with how things were progressing.

Further benefits of this meeting included the opportunities to draw on their expertise in detail with regard to, for example, timetabling the study, dealing with practical issues and how we would combat the danger of "reactivity" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007), otherwise called "the Observer Effect". Also important was the opportunity for us to socialise together and bond as a team, reducing the power differential that, nonetheless, inevitably continued to exist to some extent during the subsequent data collection, analysis and completion of the study.

## *The Participants' Co-authored Publication*

Thanks in part to the participants' local knowledge, experience and expertise, and the collaborative planning that drew on these, the data collection phases of the study progressed largely without difficulty over the next 13 months. During data analysis, I provided two opportunities for participants to provide respondent validation (member checking), both of my individual case descriptions, and of two chapters comparing their practices in the thesis. After completing this process, participants unanimously agreed to be identified, rather than anonymous in the study, all satisfied—proud even—with how it represented them and their practice. However, perhaps the most rewarding output of the participatory element of the study was the successful collaboration on the co-authored book, which progressed successfully to publication by the teacher association (AINET) that facilitated the research project.

It took several online discussions and one further meeting for participants to agree on the final structure of their chapters. However, once this had been achieved, participants seemed to benefit both from the writing process itself and the opportunity to work collaboratively. First, they worked in "buddy" pairs to provide feedback on each

other's early drafts, and then they had an opportunity to read everyone's contributions before finalisation. Despite early concerns that their chapters may be rather similar, all were struck by how varied they were, due to significant differences in aspects of their pedagogy and beliefs (also documented in the PhD study). Both their chapters and the Preface to the book, written by a third party (Padwad, 2021), provided useful, original, critical triangulation of the findings of my research—none had read my case descriptions when they wrote their contributions. When combined with the largely holistic focus they had adopted, this independence enabled comparison of their accounts of their practice and mine. It was also notable that several of the key shared features identified by Padwad in the Preface were also prominent findings of my study. As such, this publication, aside from its potential practical use for other teachers in India and the opportunity it provided to the participants, also ensured that mine was not the only voice describing their practice, providing the reader with the opportunity to compare these accounts themselves (see Gode, Khomne, Lingala, Mukherjee, Naik Khwaja, Prathikantam, & Tayade, 2021).

## *The Findings of the PhD Study*

While the primary focus of this chapter is not to discuss the findings of the study itself—see Anderson (2021) for these—I feel that it succeeded in its aims to document the features of the expertise of the participant teachers in sufficient detail to be of potential use for teacher education in the context in question (Indian secondary education) and potentially in comparable contexts across South Asia and the Global South.

Among these findings was evidence of highly developed interpersonal practices among all eight participant teachers; the relationships that they built with their learners were fundamental to success in their classrooms. Also of note were the complex multilingual practices in participant teachers' classrooms, something absent from prior language teacher expertise studies (e.g. Li & Zou, 2017; Tsui, 2003). While significant diversity was found in their classroom practice, evidence of a number of strong similarities within this diversity was also illuminating. For example, these eight expert teachers were much more likely than non-participant teachers to provide their learners with independent activities to work on, both individually and collaboratively. Also, the active monitoring practices that they adopted to support learners during activities provided valuable insights into how, even in large classes, experienced teachers can engage in differentiated, individualised instruction and personalised support. Nonetheless, almost all participant teachers also conducted what might be viewed as more "traditional", teacher-led, whole class interactive teaching, typically preceding their use of independent activities in ways that mirrored Adams and Engelmann's (1996) "Direct Instruction", found by Hattie (2009, p. 204–207) to be among the most effective approaches discussed in his meta-analysis. However, perhaps the most important finding of the study was evidence that the practices of

participant teachers were generally consistent—albeit with some important exceptions—with the findings of prior research into teacher expertise around the world, evidence that, even in challenging contexts, expert teachers are able to engage in practices similar to those of their peers in much more highly funded, well-supported educational systems.

## A Model for Developing Context-Specific Expertise

This chapter began by arguing that different contexts around the world may require different models of appropriate good pedagogic practice, and highlighted, in particular, discrepancies between the challenges of low-income contexts across the Global South, and assumed "best practice" recommendations that typically originate in very different contexts in the Global North. It then argued for the need to develop expertise locally in southern contexts, suggesting a number of ways in which this may happen. While exploratory action research, exploratory practice and lesson study were discussed as established means for developing teacher expertise at grassroots level, I also suggested that there is a complementary need for larger-scale, non-interventive case studies of teacher expertise which yield findings that are likely to be of wider use to educational systems and I proposed a means whereby such case studies can offer a degree of equity, recognition and voice to participants.

The example study design detailed above is, I believe, replicable, opening the possibility for similar participatory case studies to be conducted in a range of contexts worldwide; these may be funded (or even conducted) by local educational bodies. In this sense, such studies could contribute to the building of what Sternberg and Horvath (1995) call an "expert teacher prototype", a description of "family resemblance" (p. 9) among expert teachers in a given context that can usefully inform pre-service teacher education models, curricula and policy documents as well as context-sensitive initiatives for in-service teacher education.

A key question that emerges from the above discussion concerns how the different elements for developing teacher expertise locally might interact with each other more systematically. To this end, Fig. 25.1 offers a potentially self-sustaining model for researching and developing context-specific teacher expertise. The first row shows how teacher research (TR) projects (e.g. EAR, lesson study, exploratory practice) can contribute to a local (e.g. national, district, etc.) database of findings, the more robust of which (i.e. those found most frequently) can provide the primary building block of the desired outcome: context-specific expertise.

Alongside these TR projects, teacher expertise case studies, as described above, can contribute to building an expertise "prototype" (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995), which would also feed into our understanding of context-specific expertise. This prototype, alongside the findings of TR projects and other practices of interest (e.g. approaches documented as effective elsewhere), can also supply ideas/inspiration for future interventions (e.g. in action research projects), the findings of which would feed back further into the TR database.
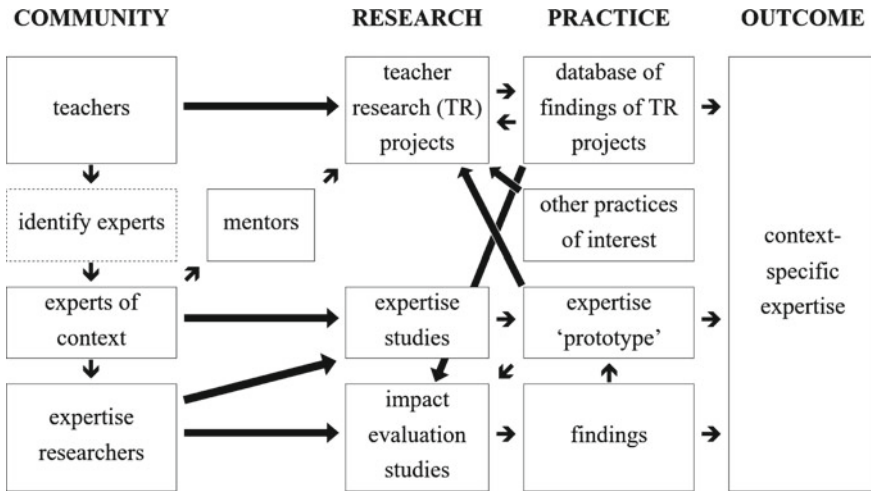
**Fig. 25.1**  A model for researching and developing context-specific expertise

Figure 25.1 also suggests a number of ways that experts of context, after themselves being identified for teacher expertise studies, may continue their own professional development while also strengthening the expertise-base within the model further. Firstly, those with prior experience of TR may become mentors for teachers who are new to TR, helping them to select appropriate research topics and methodology, conduct data analysis, and develop useful reflection skills (see Smith, 2020). By mentoring others, these experts would also develop their own understanding of research practice and effective teaching beyond their immediate contexts of practice. Where deemed appropriate, these experts of context could also go on to become formally qualified researchers of expertise (e.g. through PhD, EdD, MPhil and MA qualifications undertaken on sabbaticals from their normal duties). Such researchers would be well placed to examine the potential *impact* (defined appropriately for the context in question) of specific practices identified in either expertise studies or the TR database. This could take place through, for example, experimental studies on the learning impact of a specific teaching strategy, or meta-analyses and survey reviews of TR projects in a specific area (e.g. formative assessment, learner engagement). The findings of these could also feed back into the expertise prototype and, as such, would initiate a more empirical evidence base for the intended outcome of the model: context-specific teacher expertise.

This model, I should stress, is an *unimplemented vision*, a means to bring together systematically the different elements described above to offer a sustainable approach to building context-sensitive teacher expertise that is potentially implementable in low-income contexts in the Global South. In Bangladesh, for example, teacher action research is integrated into various teacher education programmes (see, e.g. Sarkar, Hedges, Griffiths, Mathew, & Biswas, 2017); this is the first building block of the model, upon which the proposed TR database could be built with comparatively

little additional funding. Teachers may even be asked to contribute their findings themselves through an online repository. Other elements could be added in sequential fashion, with ongoing monitoring, evaluation and adaptation of the model as it develops. If successful, it could be gradually increased in scale.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored the challenges involved in developing teacher expertise locally, focusing particularly on lower-income contexts in the Global South and suggesting that both teacher-led research and larger-scale studies of expertise can contribute to the knowledge base from which understandings of appropriate good practice can emerge. It has provided an in-depth account of the methodological challenges and solutions adopted in one study of teacher expertise conducted by the author in India (Anderson, 2021), which I have argued was sufficiently robust, participatory and insightful in its findings, while also being replicable (in design) for other contexts around the world. Finally, I have offered one possible vision for how these various elements can contribute to building context-sensitive understandings of teacher expertise while also allowing for impact evaluation studies to ensure a sound evidence base for disseminating specific practices as this knowledge base increases; I argued that such a model could evolve gradually and with comparatively low levels of expenditure, making it potentially suited to contexts in the Global South where action research is already an established part of teacher education programmes.

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**Jason Anderson** (PhD, University of Warwick) is a teacher educator, educational consultant, award-winning author, and researcher, who works in both language teaching and mainstream education. He has supported teachers in over 30 countries for organizations including UNICEF, the British Council, and the University of Warwick, and published widely on areas including multilingualism, teaching methodology, curriculum design, teacher expertise, teacher reflection, and lesson planning.