

JACET 50th Summer Seminar: Revisiting our teaching practices through reflection and action research,
August 26th at Meiji University

r **Evolving concepts of Reflection:
Reflective practice with versatile
perspectives on experience**

Ken Tamai PhD

Kochi Professional University of Rehabilitation

Kobe City University of Foreign Studies

(Professor Emeritus)

OUTLINE

1. L2 acquisition research and teacher research
2. What is research? : Quantitative/ Qualitative paradigm
3. Reflective Practice: Practice / Research
4. How do we capture 'experiences': Epistemological lenses
5. Approach to subjectivity: Reflective Practice with phenomenological perspective
6. Research examples
7. Conclusion

Target of L2 research

- Language learning: How we learn languages
- Language teaching: How we learn to teach

(Freeman, 1989)

Teacher research

Researches with a focus on developing teaching skills (能力開発論的研究)

Lesson study(Jyugyo Kenkyu)

- forms of collaborative teacher research developed in Japan. Participants explore ways to improve their teaching by sharing their practice, observing with each other, discussing to identify issues for improvement.

Researches for academic and practical purposes (問題解明論的研究)

Action Research, Reflective Practice

- Process of systematic and autonomous inquiry on the issues found in the classroom with a view for change, solution and new understanding.




What is research?

- Research is the **organized process** of investigating a specific **inquiry** involving **systematic gathering of information, analysis** or interpretation within a **conceptual framework** and communicating the findings in a format **accessible to the public**.



What makes research a research?

- 1) A research inquiry
 - 2) Systematic data gathering
 - 3) Analysis
 - 4) Conceptual framework to capture the phenomenon
 - 5) Accessibility to the public
- 

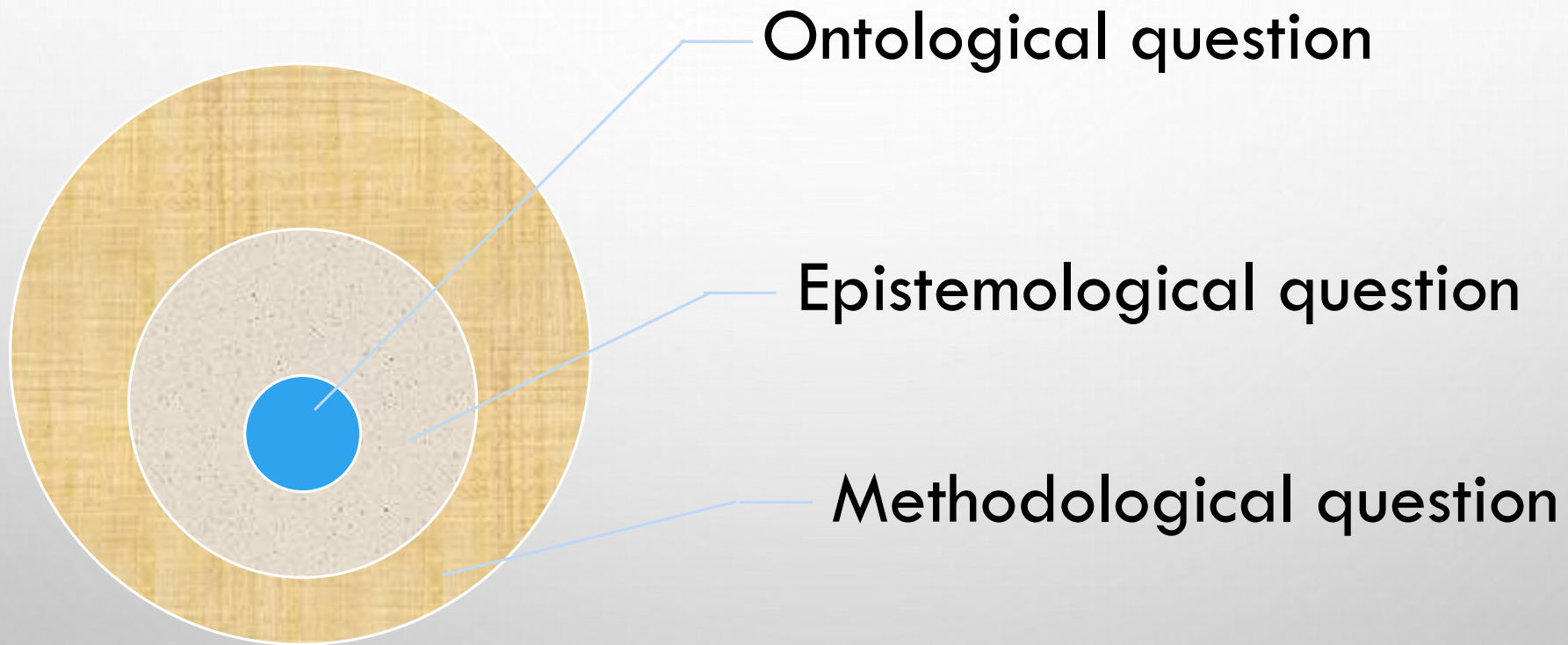
How do we approach the practice of teaching?



Two types of empirical research (Tamai, 2021, translated and edited by the author)

	Quantitative Research of Teaching	Qualitative research of Teaching
Goals	Analysis of experience in general, Generalization of the results	Understanding the essence of individual experiences
Method	Scientific method: Take data through experiments and observation. Causal explanation of results in the relation of elements.	Research methods are based on diverse epistemologies (epistemological awareness), analysis and interpretation of the meaning of phenomena, pursuit of structure through the interplay of parts and wholes, collaborative and dialogic analysis.
Data	Numbers	Descriptive data:
Characteristics	Objectivity (Repeatable experience) Experience in general Elimination of contextual difference	Focus on the first person narrative meanings of individual experiences Importance of contextual uniqueness
Positioning of the research	Independent of research objects	Researchers and research subjects are interrelated. Researchers are responsible for explaining their engagement with the research

Three types of questions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p108)



Conceptual image was made by Tamai (2021)

How do the reflective practitioner approach phenomenon? What is reflection after all?



Stigmatic ambiguity of reflection

- Conceptual confusion surrounding reflective practice”(Kinsella, 2009)
- “Vague slogan” (Mclaughlin, 1999)
- Subsequent unsureness of practitioners to know whether their practices are properly done, and amongst of all this, unsureness about what it is to ‘reflect’ (Rodgers, 2002).

What is the reason of this ambiguity and what is it that makes definition difficult?

Definitions of reflection (Tamai, 2021)

	Kemmis & McTaggart (1988, p.13)	Johns (2013, p.2)
Context (where)	Educational research, curriculum	Nursing
Sources (on what)	Recorded action in observation	Self and <i>experience</i> .
Purposes/ goals (Why)	To make sense of <i>processes</i> . To evaluate experiences to know the effects and ways of proceeding. To build more vivid picture of life and work in the situation, constraints on action and of what might be possible.	To realize one's vision and understanding why things are as they are. → To gain new <i>insight into self</i> . Develop practical <i>wisdom</i> and one's <i>vision</i> as praxis.
Methods (How)	Take account of a variety of perspectives in the social situations and comprehend the issues and circumstances in which they arise. Aided by group reflection. Descriptive .	Through conflict of contradiction, commitment to realize one's vision and understanding why things are as they are. Guidance is necessary for reflection .

Bolton (2014, p.7)	Dawson & Kelin (2014, p.28-29)	Rodgers (2002)
Nursing	Drama & theater arts	Education/ Language teaching
<i>Events: What happened, what they thought or felt, who, when.</i>	<i>Experience.</i>	<i>Experience.</i>
To know who and what we are, why we act as we do, and how we can be much more effective.	Development of awareness of the choices in situations and recognize <i>how to achieve the designed results.</i>	To move a <i>learner from one experience into the next</i> with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. To make <i>continuity</i> of learning possible, and ensure the <i>progress</i> of the individual and ultimately, society.
By bringing experiences into focus from as many angles as possible: Journal writing, critical support with a supervisor or group. Study theory and texts from wider space.	Collaborative work or the process: intentional dialogue with self or others. Unpack experience, examine from different perspectives, apply experience to action and apply past to present.	Systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking, with its roots in scientific inquiry. <i>Reflection needs to happen in community,</i> in interaction with others. Importance of attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and of others.

Dewey

- Active, persistent, and **careful consideration of any belief** or supposed form of **knowledge** in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends constitutes reflective thought. (1910, p.6)

(あらゆる考え方や知識の形態についてそれを支える基盤に照らして行う積極的、持続的かつ注意深い思考、それが内省的思考である。(玉井, 2021))

Reflection is

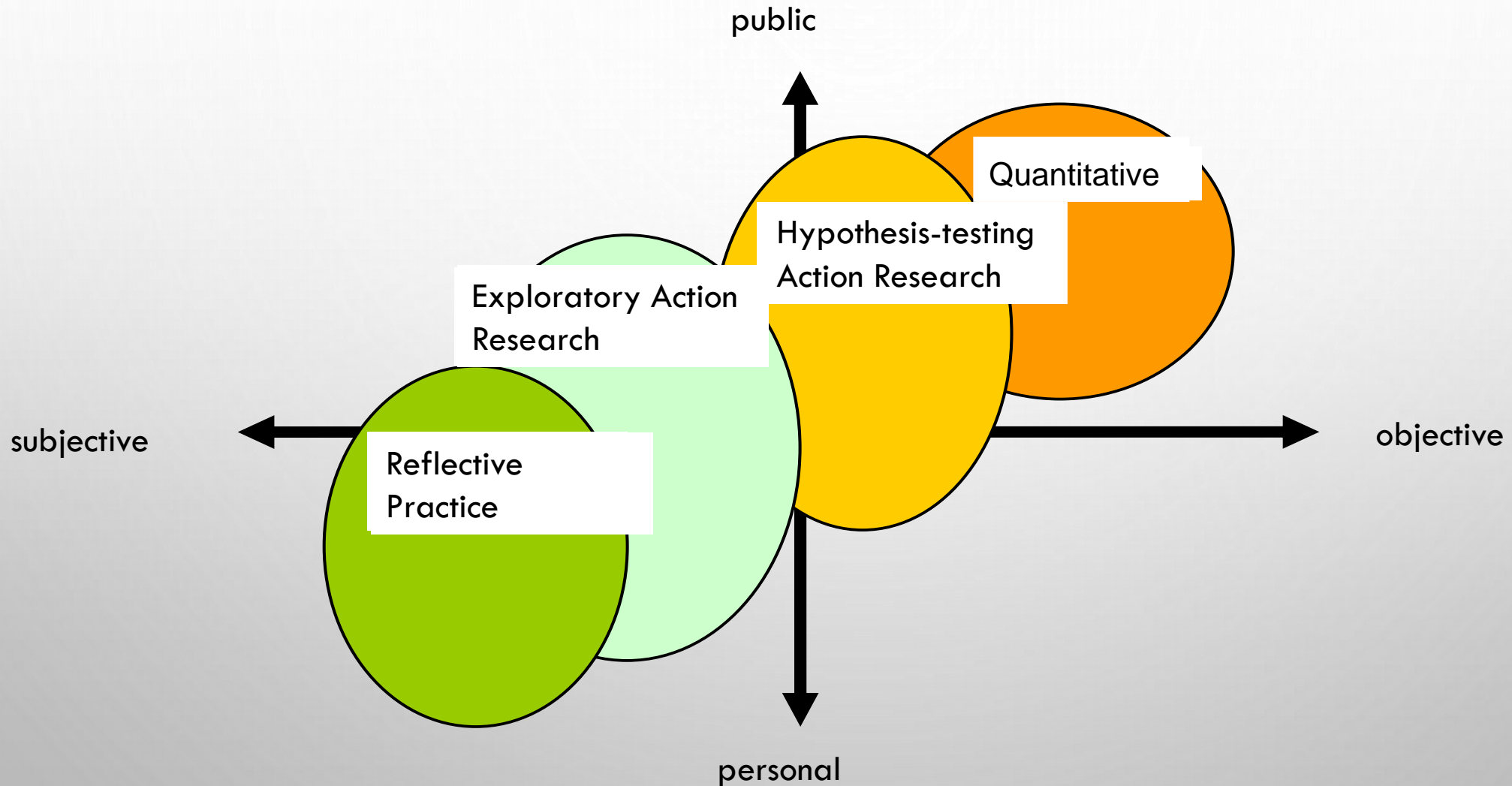
- 1) An attempt directed to the **experience** to connect self with further experience through **making meaning** of it.
- 2) Critical examination of own belief: **Basis of thought and beliefs**
- 3) A process which is open to further inquiry in the state of **uncertainty**
- 4) A process of **collaborative dialogic work**
- 5) A work open to **time, space and context**

Definition of reflection

Reflection is a dialogic process of self-knowing through probing the meaning of experience with a view to examining the basis of thoughts.

(リフレクションとは、自身の思考の基盤を調べるために、経験の持つ意味の検討を通して行う対話的自己理解の過程)

Different types of teacher research: Public-Personal and Objective-Subjective scale (2009, Tamai, P.141)



How do researchers approach experiences?



Theoretical frameworks to capture experiences

- Positivistic perspective
- Experiential perspective
- Phenomenological perspective
- Socio-cultural perspective
- Critical perspective
- Narrative perspective

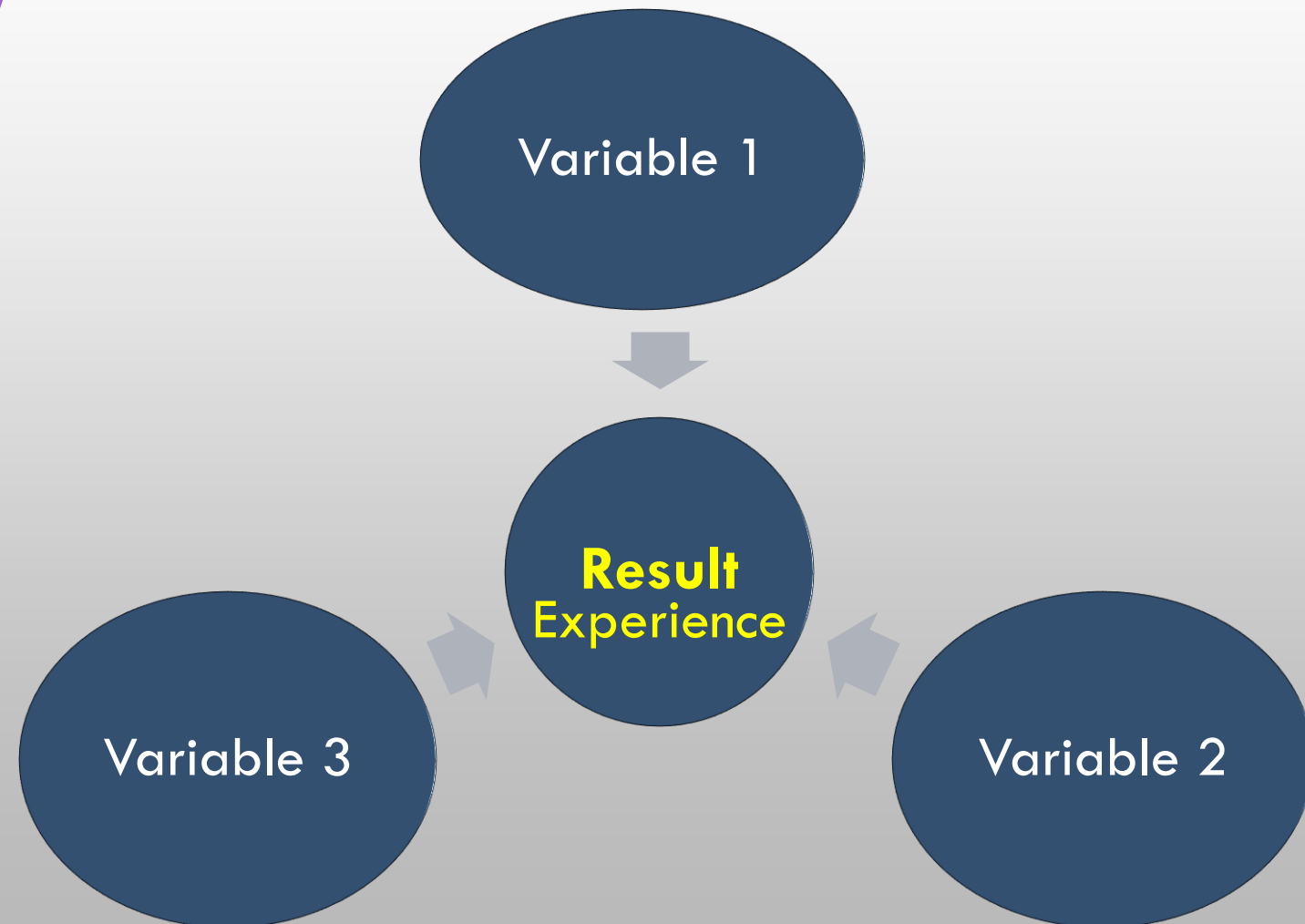
Epistemological awareness

- It is thus important to understand the philosophical foundations underlying different types of research so that you can make informed decisions as to the design choices available to you in designing and implementing a research study.

(Merriam, 2009, p.1)

My concern
is on
experience
in general.

Positivistic perspective

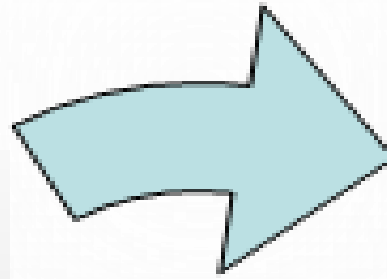


Experiential learning: Experiences as a source of learning

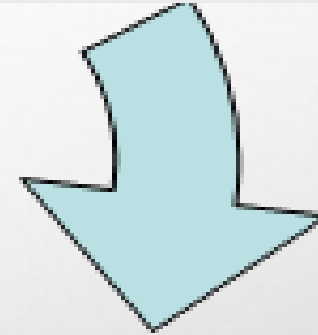
I assume that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience” (Dewey, 1938, p.25)

The Lewinian experiential learning model (Kolb, 1984, p.21))

Concrete experience

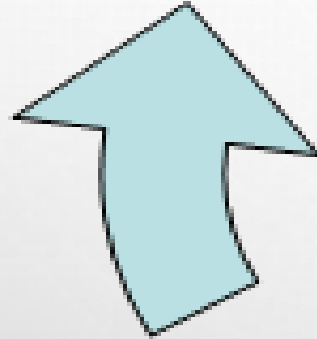
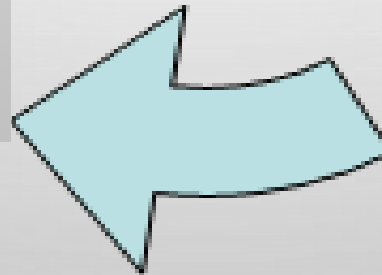


Observations and reflections



Formation of abstract concepts and generalizations

testing implications of concepts in new situations

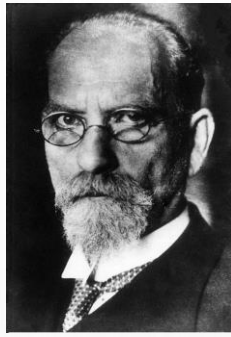


Action Research

- A form of collective **self-reflective enquiry** undertaken by participants in **social situations** in order to **improve the rationality** and **justice** of their own social or educational **practices**, as well as **their understanding** of these practices and **the situations** in which these practices are carried out.
(Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p.5)

(アクション・リサーチは) 社会的あるいは教育的実践において実践やそれが行われる状況を理解し、より正しく合理的な方途を 探るために、実践に関わる参加者たちが行う集団的自己省察による研究調査法

Phenomenological perspective



From the philosophy of phenomenology comes a focus on **experience** itself and how experiencing something is transformed into **consciousness**. Phenomenologists are not interested in modern science's efforts to categorize, simplify, and reduce phenomena to abstract laws. (Merriam, 2009, p. 24)

(現象学的哲学から来るものは**経験**そのものに焦点を当てることであり、何かを経験するということがどのようなものとして意識に映るかということである。現象学は現代科学のカテゴリー化，単純化，そして現象を抽象的な法則に還元してしてしまうことに関心は持たないのである。(著者訳))

Characteristics of phenomenological perspective

1. The purpose of the research is on the **understanding of the essence of lived experiences**
2. **Description** of the lived experiences as a means of research
3. **Phenomenological reduction** as a methodological attitude
4. **Life world**: Concept to situate experiences in our daily living
5. **Intersubjectivity**: Our understanding of the world as well as experience is influenced by the shared experience with others
6. **Existential** and **ontological perspective** to the experience

Cultural perspective

- Believing, with max weber, that man is an *animal suspended in webs of significance* he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of *meaning*. (Geertz ,1973, p.5)

Experience through power and awareness

- Technologies of **power**, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject (Foucault, 1988, p.18)
- “People could not comment on their experience unless they understood how that experience was shaped by their own situatedness. They could not be free **until they realized they were unfree.**” (McNiff, 2013, p.49)

Narrative as a means to tell experience as history

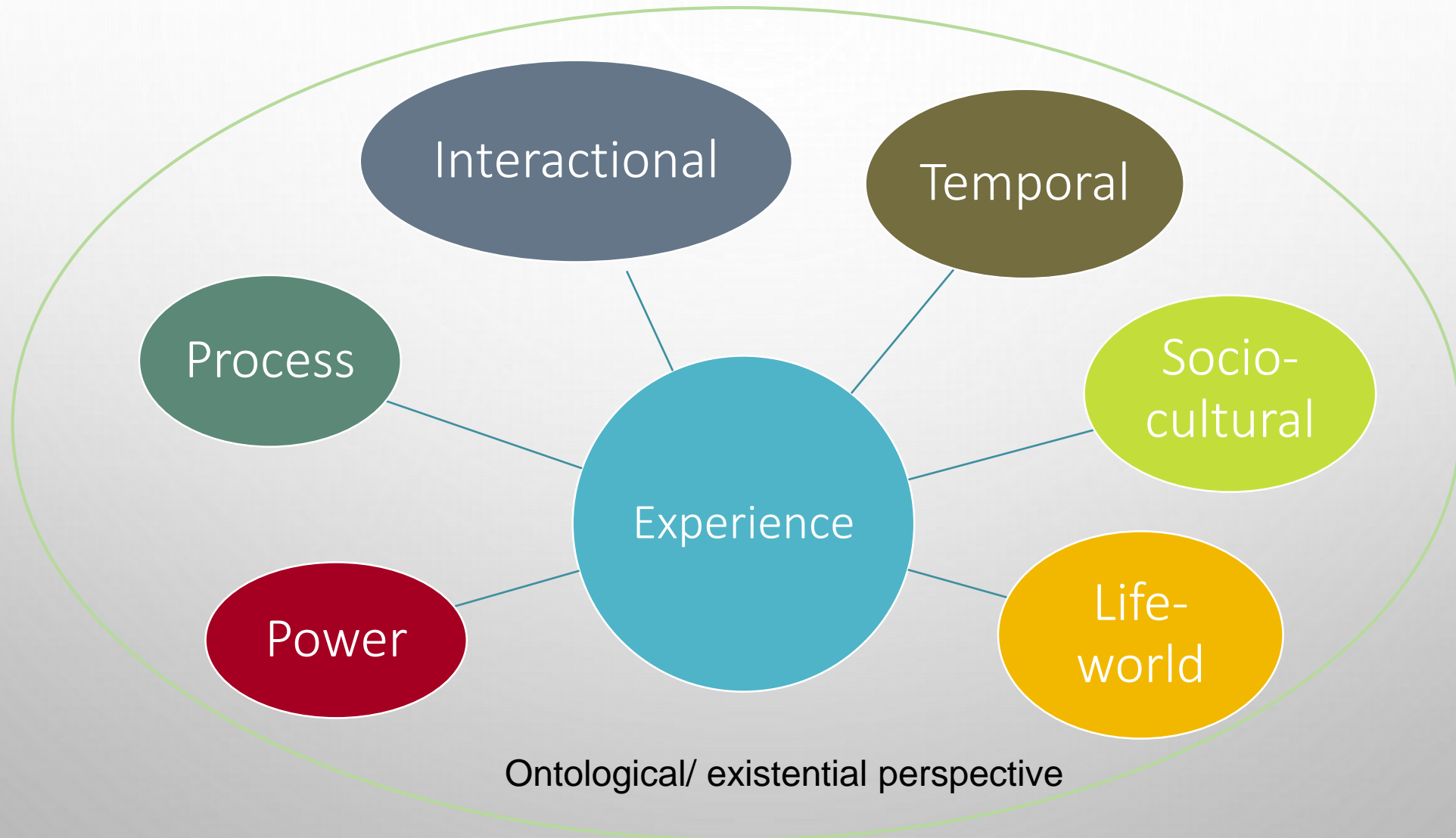
- “History exists in human memory but it exists **only in the story** we tell (p.9). “,,,Humans are story telling animals and we halt the merciless flow of time by telling stories and live life identifying selves in the thickness of memory and description (Noye, 2005, p.18, translated by tamai).
- “... through reflection we become responsible for **our own history**, but this responsibility also comes from a **decision to which we commit our lives**” (Merleau-Ponty, 2014, p. lxxxv²⁹).

Reflective Practice as qualitative research

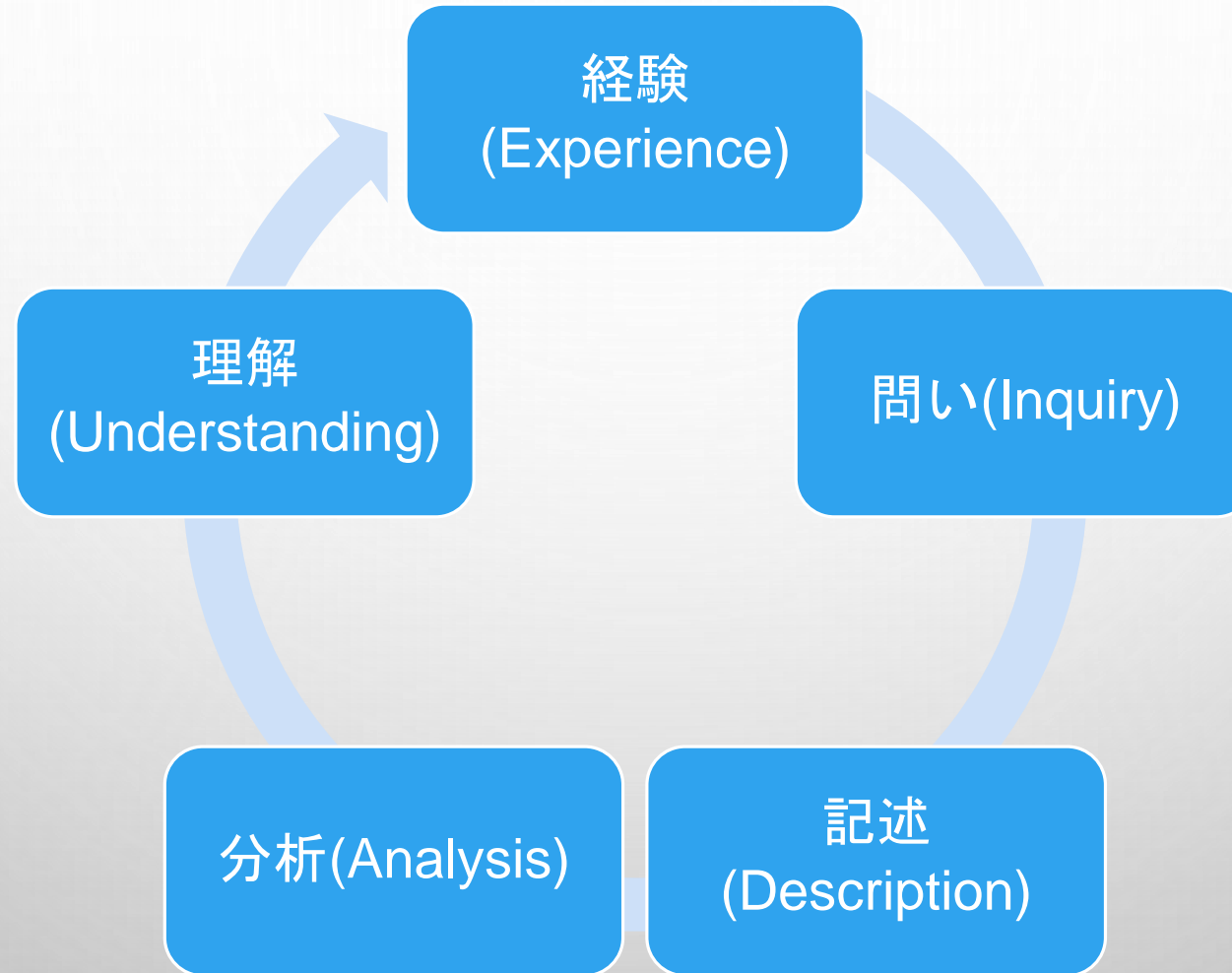
Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. (Merriam, 2009)

Six dimensions of viewing experience

(based on Tamai, 2019, p.54)



Understanding-oriented Reflective Practice



(Tamai, 2019, p.58)

Examples of description (Original texts are from Odagiri(2018))

Dimensions	Lived world (生活世界・権力)	Socio-cultural (社会文化)	Temporal (時間的)
<p>My historical background as an English teacher</p>	<p>I was frightened to know whether I really had the ability to pass the test or not. ...I felt <i>I was being rejected in my existence as a teacher by the board of education and then labeled myself as a failure.</i></p> <p>I had to <i>make myself look like a skilled teacher and could not show that I was incapable...</i></p>	<p><i>My job applications were always rejected.</i> (At the prefectural employment test) There were huge number of applicants and I saw some <i>old high school acquaintances who attended illustrious universities.</i> Sure enough I failed in the examination...</p> <p><i>This is how I began my year-to-year-contracted work as a temporary English teacher.</i></p>	<p><i>During those fifteen years,</i> I experienced many disconsolate feelings such as disappointment with repeated failures, fear of assessment from coworkers, and frustration with my position in school.</p> <p>The sense of inferiority lessened a little when I managed to pass the test ... <i>at my fifteenth attempt.</i></p>

Dimensions	Interactional (相互作用的)	Process (過程)	Power (權力)
My historical background as an English teacher	<p>I was sensitive about being compared with other teachers and also afraid of getting a bad reputation as unskilled.</p> <p>I wanted to think that not improving students' English ability was <i>not my fault, but the students' faults.</i></p>	<p>(採用試驗合格後)</p> <p>Nevertheless, soon I found a different kind of inferiority complex growing ...</p> <p>I didn't have any confidence to report my teaching practice to other teachers.</p> <p>I realized that I needed to change and to improve myself as an English teacher.</p>	<p>During those fifteen years, I experienced many disconsolate feelings such as... <i>fear of assessment from coworkers, and frustration with my position in school.</i></p> <p>I had a firm belief that <i>the way to get the next years job was not to receive a negative reputation</i> about my classes from students or their parents, by <i>following the demands of other regular permanent teachers.</i></p>

Copies of Tomoko's Momotaro (Peach Boy)



1) An old lady found a peach. When she cut it open, Momotaro (a peach boy) was born.

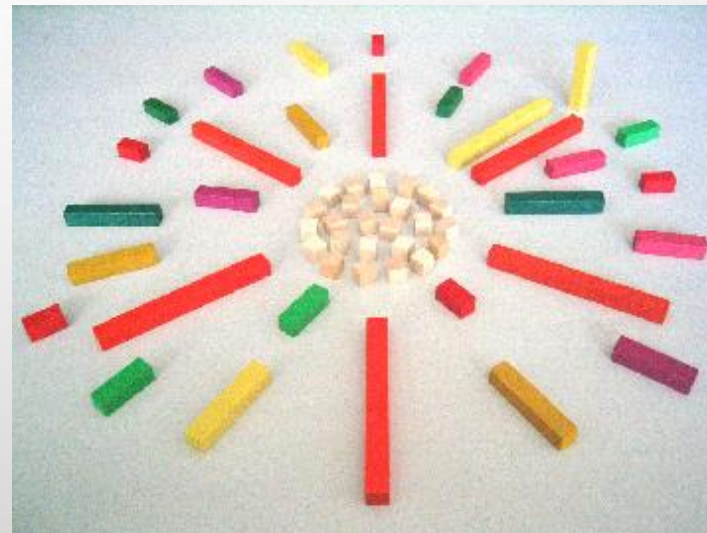
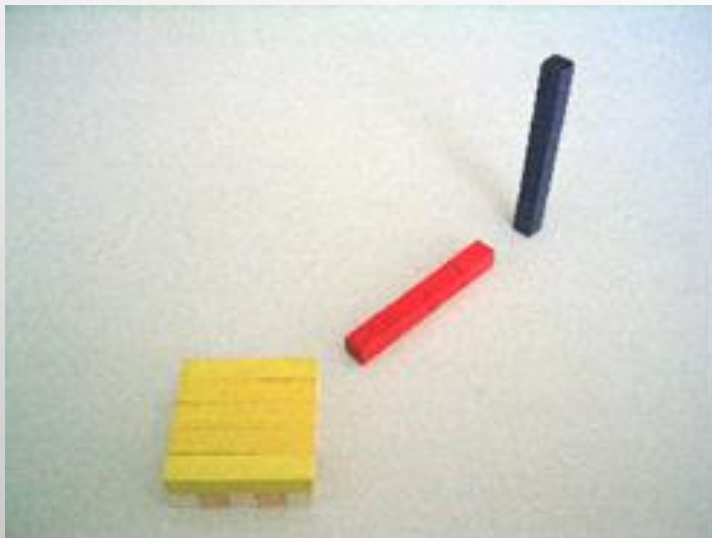


2) Momotaro decided to punish bad goblins with a dog, a bird, and a monkey.

A moment of T's belief revised (Yuge, 2015, pp.66-68)

- Acceptance of my own raw emotion: **“I didn't want to be a teacher of the autistic class. “**
- An ontological look at the world of autistic students. → Students who are **ignored and refused (by Ts)** turned out great learners.
- Discovery of a new role as a teacher: Any student is an autonomous learner by nature. What can I do to support that process?

M's moments of awareness 1: Silent Way Rods



(Matsuno, 2007)

Collaborative Web-journal

May 14, Thursday

Lesson Objectives:

1. Y will improve her reading comprehension by taking sentence structure into consideration . (Eiken pre2nd level)
2. Y will do better at putting the words in the correct order.(Eiken pre2nd level)

(Wataru, how about putting above objectives into “Ss will be able to ~” form. This form will help you articulate what you expect Ss to achieve by the end of the class hour.)

Teaching Objectives: (Here, I would like you to write what you would like to challenge yourself as a teacher.

Beginning with “ I would like to ~” might be one way.)

1. I would like to be more patient and not to give too many hints when Y struggles to answer questions.
2. I would like to pay more attention to her understanding and find out her weak points.

My private-lesson student Y is a 3rd year high school student. She barely passed the Eiken 3rd grade this February. Now she is studying for the Eiken pre2nd grade, which is going to take place this Jun. She’s been taking my lesson about half a year. When she started, she knew English grammar little. She knew some English phrases, but when she made sentences, she didn’t care about subjects and verbs. Gradually she’s getting used to basic English grammar, but still her understanding of grammar is not enough to pass the Eiken pre2nd grade. Especially when she reads, she tends to pick up some words and imagine what the sentence means without taking the sentence structure into consideration.

Also, she is not good at putting the words in the correct order.

She got seven correct answers out of ten questions at the reading exercise. I made her translate the sentences that have answers of the questions she couldn’t answer. She couldn’t translate them correctly, mostly because she didn’t know the words in the sentences. Also, she ignored pronouns and didn’t really understand what or who the subjects or objects were. I told her to always make sure to understand what pronouns stand for.

At the exercise of putting the words in the correct order, she got six correct answers out of ten questions. Even though there were some hints written on the handout, she did better than I thought. She could pay more attention to subjects and verbs more than before. I found that she doesn’t know much collocation which is really important for this kind of question. Also, she couldn’t make complicated subjects such as “No other student in this class”.

For her homework, I gave her a list of 50 collocational phrases like “get rid of, and participate in”. She’s taking the test on Jun 5th, so she has only 3 more weeks to study for it. Because there isn’t much time for the test, I will focus not on teaching grammar so much but improving her vocabulary.

Dear Wataru,

it seems that Y hasn’t been able to build her grammar knowledge in the level where she can use it for comprehension. We don’t know the reason, but we know it must be quite miserable if she cannot trust her own knowledge in guessing the meaning of sentences. As you wrote pointing out the subject and verb of the sentence might be the most crucial knowledge she might have to learn. Finding where she is stuck and designing a way with which she could clear the hurdle. I can see where your challenge is. Ken

>Thank you for your sincere comment, Tamaisensei. And, I’m sorry I didn’t quite follow the format. Wataru <- No proble al all. Getting used to the idea of writing T’s challenges takes time to anybody. This tells you are in the midst of teacher learning. Welcome. Ken

Hi, Togo-san

Now many students in my class are going to take eiken. I have divided students into some groups according to their levels, and I’m trying a method of cooperative learning, or “学び合い” in Japanese. When it comes to a private lesson for eiken, I don’t have any know-hows. I’m looking for effective ways because the exam is getting close. I hope Y is doing her best for eiken. (Haya)

>The “Manabiai” method sounds really interesting. Please tell me more about it this weekend! Wataru

Hello Wataru san,

I was teaching some classes for Eiken at the school I used to work at. Since it was a primary school, the English level was not so high but some were studying for the 3rd grade. I learned at the school that the Eiken test can be a strong motivation for some students. I usually taught in groups but you teach your student man-to-man so you seem to know her strength and weaknesses a lot. It must be a huge advantage for her to be able to depend on you whenever she wants to ask questions and need encouragement.

Junko Takagi

Hello Wataru,

Oh, my ! Eiken exams. I know those exams are important for students in Japan. My 2nd daughter is taking level 3 soon. Her choice, not mine. I had her take a free practice exam from the STEP Eiken website to see where her weaknesses are, which I did with my 1st daughter as well, but it seems you have already identified several areas of knowledge that you can work with. I wonder if she has learned any test-taking strategies? The word order section is particularly difficult I think, and sometimes students don’t know that they can write on their test booklet to help them keep their thoughts organized. I often try to combine test-taking strategies to help students learn how to be better guessers. Good luck to all the Eiken test takers! -Joan

Hello! Wataru-san,

These days, it seems that Ss didn’t learn grammatical terms in junior high school. When I ask my Ss about parts of speech, they sometimes answer like 『助詞』or『形容動詞』, which do not exist in English. Moreover they sometimes don’t concern the order of words. They often put the English words in the Japanese grammatical order when they write English sentences. So I often struggle to teach English word order. As you wrote, I try to make Ss focus on subjects and verbs first. (Mari)

Perspectives of phenomenological reflective practice

1. Reflection is a means to capture the essence of lived experience.
2. Experience is a complex, dynamic and multi-dimensional process which is open to new understanding.
3. The complex and multi-dimensional features of experience invite versatile definitions. It's researchers' responsibility to articulate their theoretical discipline.
4. PRP uses first-person narratives. The significance is that only the first-person narratives tell how an experience was lived by the person.

5. Description of experience gets deepened and refined through the dialogical sharing. When it is refined to the level sharable with credibility it is called **phenomenological description**.

6. It is difficult to know our teacher belief (basis of thoughts) . It is only possible to get a glimpse of that when we know **how our teaching has been lived by learners**. We never learn about our teaching without trying to see the lived **experience of learners**.

7. Ask **“How is my teaching lived by the learner?”**

“How is he/she experiencing my teaching?”

Practitioner's exploration is in the process of teaching with our whole body open to learners in front. Challenge is in what we do to understand the actuality of learner's experience in their life world.

Ken



引用文献

野家啓一(2005)『物語の哲学』岩波現代文庫。

玉井健(2009)「リフレクティブ・プラクティス—教師の教師による教師のための授業研究」吉田達弘・今井裕之・横溝紳一郎・柳瀬陽介・玉井健(編著)『リフレクティブな英語教育をめざして』(PP.119-190) ひつじ書房。

玉井健(2019)「リフレクションについて」玉井健・渡辺敦子・浅岡千利世(編著)『リフレクティブ・プラクティス入門』(PP. 33-65) ひつじ書房。

玉井健・渡辺敦子・浅岡千利世(編著)(2019)『リフレクティブ・プラクティス入門』ひつじ書房。

玉井健(2021)「リフレクティブ・プラクティス—授業実践研究のための理論的基盤と方法—」 *JACET Kansai Journal*, 23, 67-95.

Bolton, G. (2014). *Reflective Practice*. London: Sage.

Dawson, K., & Kelin, D. A. (2014). *The Reflective Teaching Artist*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Dewey, J. (1910/1997). *How We Think*. NY: Dover Publications.

Dewey, J. (1938/1997). *Experience & Education*. New York: Touchstone.

Foucault, M. (1988). Technology of the self. In L. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. Hatton (Eds.), *Technology of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16-49). Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press.

Freeman, D. (1989) Teacher training, development and decision making: A model of teaching and related strategies for language teacher education, *TESOL Quarterly* 23 (1), 27-45.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105-117). London: Sage.

Johns, C. (2013). *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner* (4th ed.). West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The Action Research Planner*. Victoria: Deakin University Press.

Kinsella, E. A. (2009). Professional knowledge and the epistemology of reflective practice. *Nursing Philosophy*, 11, 3–14. doi:10.1111/j.1466-769X.2009.00428.x

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. NJ: Prentice Hall.

Matsuno, T. (2007). Advancement of teaching methodology by better understanding of self through intensive reflective practice (Unpublished master's thesis). Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, Kobe, Japan.

McLaughlin, T. (1999). Beyond the reflective teacher. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 31, 9–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.1999.tb00371.x>

McNiff, J. (2013) *Action Research: Principles and practice*, NY: Routledge.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2014) *Phenomenology of Perception*. NY: Routledge.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A guide to design and implementation*. SF: Jossey-Bass.

Odagiri, M. (2018). Developing understanding of students' learning through reflective practice and phenomenological perspective: My understanding of students' experience of my teaching (Unpublished master's thesis). Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, Kobe, Japan.

Rodgers, C. (2002). Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *Teachers College Record*, 104, 842–866. doi:10.1111/1467-9620.00181

Yuge, C. (2015). Development of perspective on the student-teacher relationship: Revision of beliefs through reflective practice and phenomenological perspective (Unpublished master's thesis). Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, Kobe, Japan.