

# Welcome

## to RSEC18 Conference

**Complexity in Research:  
Researcher–Participant Dynamic Interactions**

3 July 2025

9:00 - 16:30

University House,  
LS2 9JR



# Morning Session Presenters

- **Reflections on insider/outsider positions in participatory educational research.**

Carolyn Bradley, PGR, School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds

- **Navigating Insider-Outsider Positionality: Reflections on Researching Mature Students' Access to Higher Education.**

Janith Jayatilake Kankanamalage, PGR, School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds

- **A Messy Interrelated Ecology: Situating Researcher in the Rhizome of Research.**

Samuel Lee, PGR, School of Education, University of Leeds

- **Developing best practice guidelines for research with the bereaved: Practitioner perspectives.**

Elizabeth Fair, PGR, School of Music, University of Leeds

- **Lived Experience and Its Influence on the Researcher-Participant Connection.**

Clare Copley, PGR, School of Education, University of Leeds

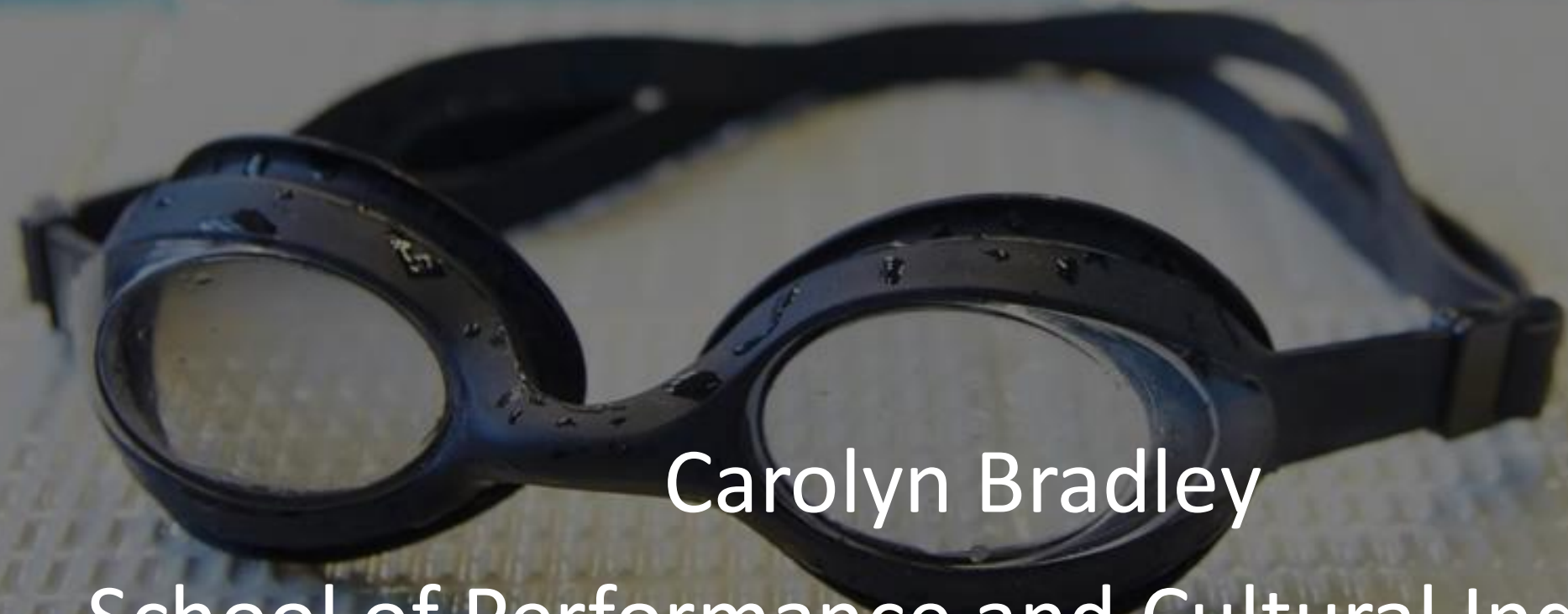
# Carolyn Bradley

PGR, School of  
Performance and  
Cultural Industries,  
University of Leeds

**Reflections on  
insider/outsider  
positions in participatory  
educational research**

# RSEC18

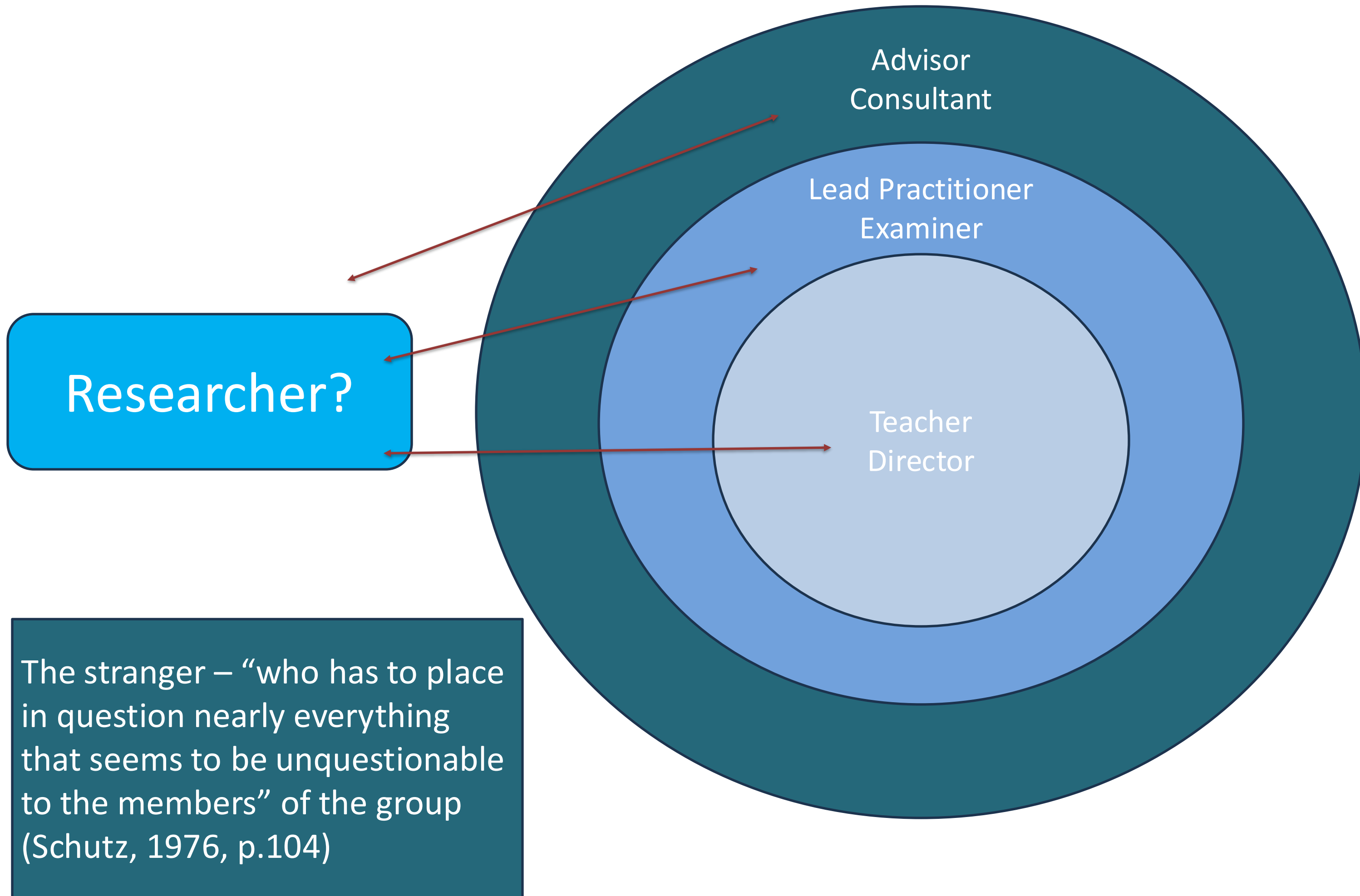
## Reflections on insider/outsider positions in participatory educational research



Carolyn Bradley  
School of Performance and Cultural Industries

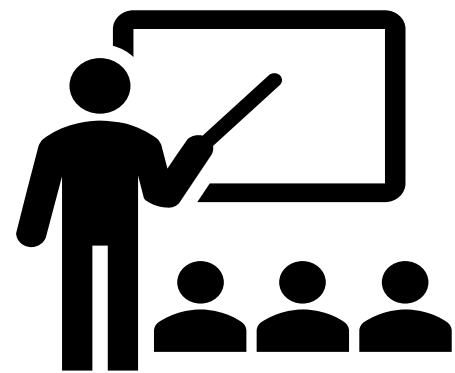
3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025





# Understanding the impact of place and space on teaching and learning in arts partnership projects: participation, policy and sustainability

RQ1:  
Conceptualising  
arts partnership  
projects



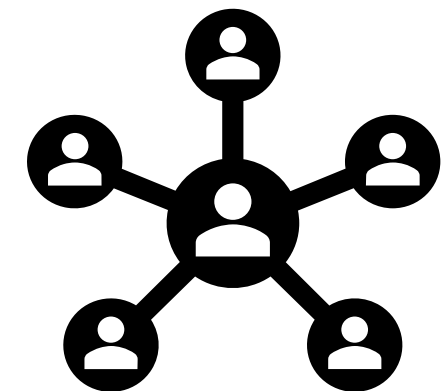
RQ2: Forms  
of learning



RQ3: Place  
and space as  
factors



RQ4: roles and  
identities



# Autobiography as a reflexive strategy



(Koopman et al., 2020)

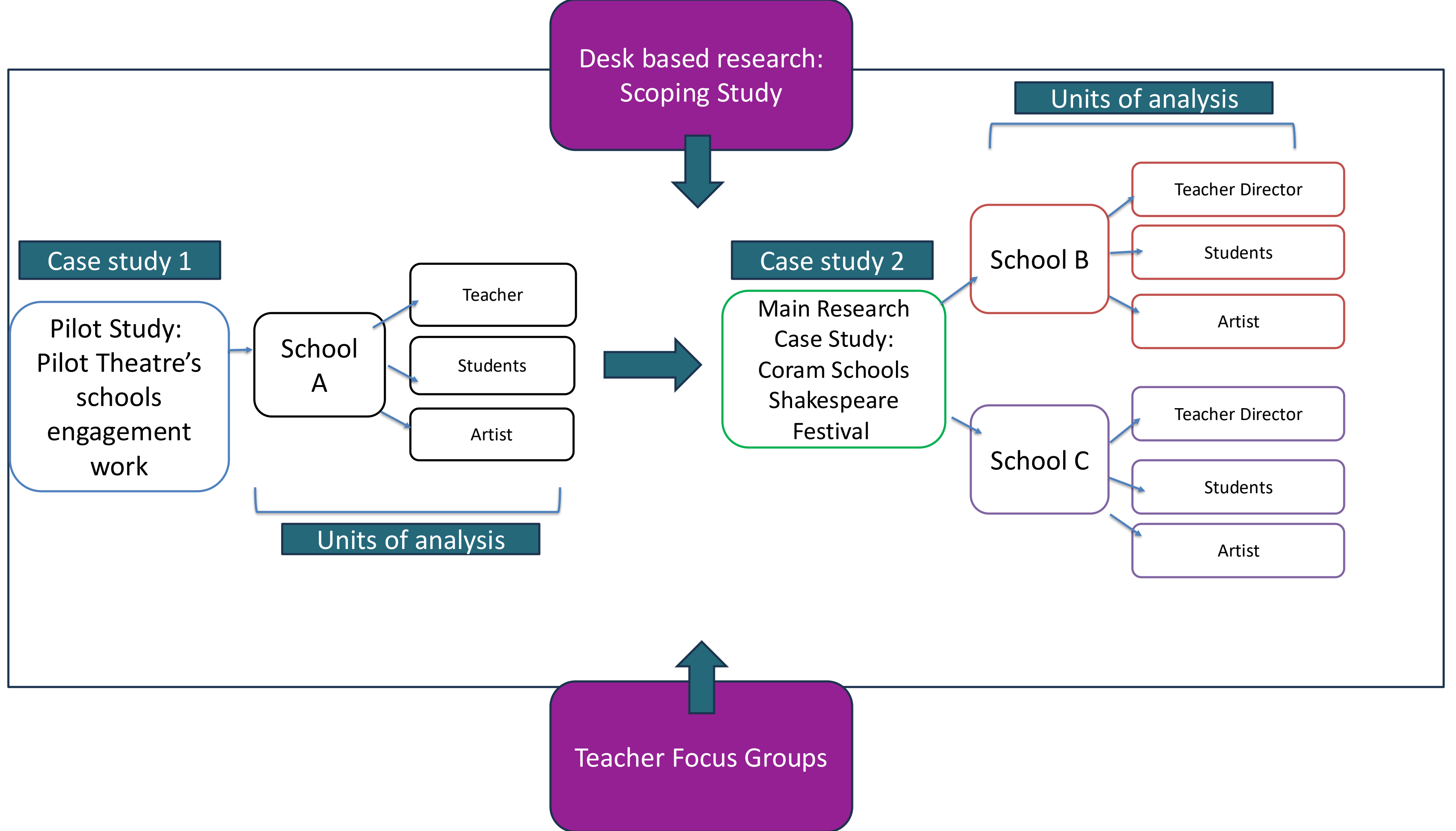
(Le Gallais, 2008)

## **Walsh's 4 types of reflexivity (2003)**

- Personal
- Interpersonal
- Contextual
- Methodological

# Contextual reflexivity

*“I trained in two secondary schools during my PGCE year but then have only taught in one school over a decade and have not been a classroom teacher since 2022. This limits my experience to just one school and therefore it's important that I acknowledge the limitations in my contextual knowledge and listen open mindedly to the accounts from students and teachers who will have had varying professional experiences in contexts different to my own.” (Bradley, 2024)*



# Insider/ Outsider Continuum

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Table 1: Positions along the researcher continuum, adapted from Le Gallais (2008, p151)

| Position on the continuum                                                | Example from fieldwork                                                            | Opportunities/challenges                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Detached observer – unknown to the participants                          | Observing the Year 8 inspiration day                                              | Able to see bigger picture, “appreciate educational issues” but “some presumptions may be made”<br>Risk of “general knowledge”                            |
| Interviewer – known to the participants                                  | Interviewing the students after the Year 8 Inspiration day                        | Participants more open and relaxed, knowledge of the context, “enhanced rapport” but still some assumptions can be made                                   |
| Interviewer – known to and knowing the participants                      | Interviewing the students after the York Theatre Royal day                        | Can ask deeper, more nuanced questions, “chance to assess veracity of data”, understand participants’ individual context more                             |
| Participant observer – experiencing something alongside the participants | Attending the York Theatre Royal tour and workshop day alongside the participants | Can experience the learning alongside the participants in real time, observe their engagement, follow up with deeper questions                            |
| Participant – complete embeddedness                                      | Directing the Drama Club play for 10 weeks                                        | Thick, rich data, “in-depth empathetic access to and interpretation of data” but also a danger of over-familiarity, researcher bias and acquiescence bias |

How do you see your role and your identity in this space?

You can either write some words, a sentence or draw a picture of how you see yourself

How is this the same or different to how you see yourself and your identity in your drama classroom?

You can either write some words, a sentence or draw a picture of how you see yourself

**"I see myself as an actor but I don't get much attention due to so many people. I feel like it's a club but we get to make suggestions on how it goes still "**

**"I see myself as a student but I get more attention and recognition, we also get more freedom when making our performances"**

Student 9, Female, Year 10

## “The messiness of the whole endeavour”

| As an insider                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | As an outsider                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>A shared history</p> <p>A shorthand – ‘way in’</p> <p>Less “noise”</p> <p>“rich and complex knowledge which the insider possesses with regard to the systems of the institutions”</p> <p>(Le Gaillais, 2008, p146)</p> <p>Personal involvement and closeness might limit the validity</p> | <p>The bigger picture</p> <p>Questioning more</p> <p>Seeing more?</p> <p>The stranger – “who has to place in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members” of the group (Schutz, 1976, p.104)</p> |

# References

- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2013. *Successful qualitative research : a practical guide for beginners*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Hellowell, D. (2006) Inside–out: analysis of the insider–outsider concept as a heuristic device to develop reflexivity in students doing qualitative research, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11:4, 483-494, DOI: 10.1080/13562510600874292
- Koopman, W.J., Watling, C.J. and LaDonna, K.A. 2020. Autoethnography as a Strategy for Engaging in Reflexivity. *Global qualitative nursing research*. **7**, DOI: 233339362097050-2333393620970508.
- Le Gallais, T. 2008. Wherever I go there I am: reflections on reflexivity and the research stance. *Reflective practice*. **9**(2), pp.145-155.
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- Walsh R. 2003. The methods of reflexivity. *Humanist Psychol*. 31(4):51–66.

We hope you found the sessions  
insightful and the discussions enriching.  
To help us improve future events, we'd  
really appreciate your feedback.

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Participation  
in This  
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