

Discovering the Future Together: Action Learning and Action Research at Work



Kings Bridge, Cataract Gorge Reserve courtesy Tourism Tasmania and Rob Burnett

Online via Zoom from Launceston, Tasmania
8 - 11 November 2020



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

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Watchtower Lookout, Ben Lomond National Park, Tasmania: image Simon Sturzaker

ABOUT ALARA

The Action Learning, Action Research Association (ALAR Association, also known as ALARA) is a global network of programs, institutions, professionals, and people interested in using action learning and action research to generate collaborative learning, training, research and action to transform workplaces, schools, colleges, universities, communities, voluntary organisations, governments and businesses.

ALAR Association's vision is to create a more equitable, just, joyful, productive, peaceful and sustainable society by promoting local and global change through the wide use of Action Learning and Action Research by individuals, groups and organisations.

www.alarassociation.org

ABOUT BALT

Business Action Learning Tasmania is an action learning cluster that emerged from an inaugurating action learning program delivered in 2010 and funded by the Tasmanian government to increase productivity in the Tasmanian manufacturing industry.

BALT's vision is self-reliant industry development, with diverse companies cooperating to improve their profitability, develop their people and grow the Tasmanian economy.

This vision is built on three pillars; collaborative action learning, achieving important business outcomes, and the awarding of nationally recognised qualifications.

www.businessactionlearningtas.com.au



Launceston CBD at Sunset: image courtesy Tourism Tasmania and Brian Dullaghan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our Organising Committee for their hard work over the past 12 months to deliver this extraordinary event under unprecedented circumstances.

Genevieve Cother	BALT Secretary, The Action Learning Institute
Bill Woodworth	BALT Director, Bell Bay Aluminium
Chivonne Algeo	ALARA Vice President, Monash University
Colin Bradley	ALARA President, Changes We Make Together
Linh Ngo	Volunteer
Jay Shah	Volunteer
Rahul Thukral	Volunteer

We acknowledge the palawa people of Tasmania and traditional owners of country throughout Australia. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



Launceston Cataract Gorge and suspension bridge: image by Rob Burnett courtesy Tourism Tasmania

SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2020

AFTERNOON SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
13:45 - 14:00		Registration
14:00 - 14:05	Dr Chivonne Algeo ALARA Vice President	Welcome and introduction
14:05 - 17:00		Doctoral Workshop
17:00 - 18:00		Dinner break

EVENING SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
17:45 - 18:00		Registration
18:00 - 18:40	Dr Chivonne Algeo Monash University Business School (Australia)	Paper presentation 1 Flying the plane while building it: Transitioning to online during COVID-19
18:40 - 18:45		Comfort break
18:45 - 20:15	Genevieve Cother & Bill Woodworth Business Action Learning Tasmania	Workshop 1 Experimenting with self-managed action learning: A massive online action learning event
20:15 - 20:45	ALARA & BALT	Plenary session Reflection on the day
20:45		Session Close

All times are shown in Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (UTC +11 hours)



Krakani Lumi camp, Wukalina: image by Rob Burnett

MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2020

MORNING SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
8:15 - 8:30		Registration
8:30 - 9:00	Clyde Mansell Chair, Aboriginal Elders Council of Tasmania	Acknowledgement of Country
	Colin Bradley President, Action Learning Action Research Association	Welcome and introduction
	Andrew Thompson Chair, Business Action Learning Tasmania	Opening remarks
	Hon Mr Peter Gutwein Premier of Tasmania and Minister for Climate Change	Official Opening
9:00 - 9:40	Clyde Mansell Chair, Aboriginal Elders Council of Tasmania	Keynote address 1 Walk with an Elder: Looking to the past to discover the future of learning
9:40 - 9:45		Comfort break
9:45 - 10:25	Melissa Hawkins Northumbria University (UK)	Paper presentation 2 Action-oriented research: A route to relevance for the social sciences?
10:25 - 10:45		Morning tea Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking
10:45 - 11:25	Bonnie Endicott Simply Strategic Talent Solutions (USA)	Paper presentation 3 Five action learning strategies that Southwest Airline's uses for leadership development that you can implement for your programs
11:25 - 11:30		Comfort break
11:30 - 12:10	Dr Barry Elsey & Amina Omarova University of Adelaide (Australia)	Paper presentation 4 The application of ALAR to facilitate the adult learning experiences of Indonesian international students in an Australian university
12:10 - 13:45	Learning Lounges	Lunch break Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking Rooms will close at 1.30 pm, registration for next session opens 1.45 pm

All times are shown in Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (UTC +11 hours)



Bridestowe Lavender Estate in full bloom: image Ockert Le Roux 2014

MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2020

AFTERNOON SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
13:45 - 14:00		Registration
14:00 - 14:40	Dr Yedida Bessemer (USA)	Paper presentation 5 Developing and improving data literacy among online faculty through professional learning communities: An action research study
14:40 - 14:45		Comfort break
14:45 - 15:25	Celeita Williams Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)	Paper presentation 6 Impact incontinence: Can the ambulance be at the top of the cliff?
15:25 - 15:45		Afternoon tea Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking
15:45 - 17:10	Prof Shankar Sankaran University of Technology Sydney (Australia)	Workshop 2 Action research as a meta-methodology: Facilitating actionable knowledge
17:10 - 18:00	Learning Lounges	Dinner break and reflection Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking Rooms will close at 6.00pm, registration for next session opens at 6.15pm

All times are shown in Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (UTC +11 hours)



Fiona Turner of Jinglers Creek Vineyard, participant in the BALT Business Resource Efficiency Program: image by Rob Burnett

MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2020

EVENING SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
18:15 - 18:30		Registration
18:30 - 19:10	Prof Bernhard Hauser University for Applied Management (Germany)	Paper presentation 7 Agile action learning – how criticality can enhance scrum and the agile movement
19:10 - 19:15		Comfort break
19:15 - 20:45	Genevieve Cother Business Action Learning Tasmania (Australia) Monika Koncz-Mackenzie Ellen Macarthur Foundation (UK)	Symposium 1 Developing the circular economy through action learning
20:45 - 21:15	ALARA & BALT	Plenary session Reflections on the day
21:15		Session close

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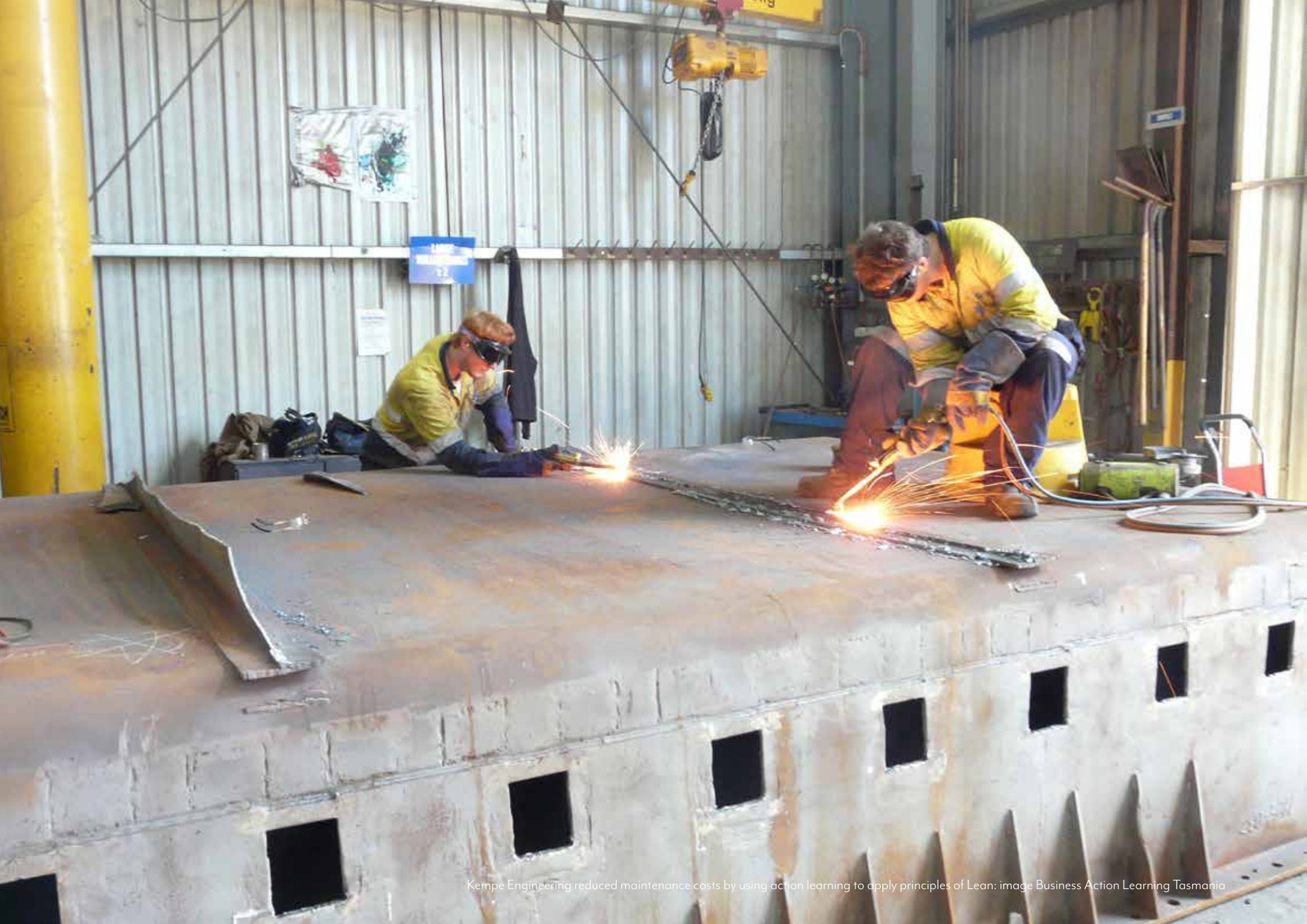


TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2020

MORNING SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
8:15 - 8:30		Registration
8:30 - 9:10	Christine Abbott Centre for action learning Facilitation (UK)	Keynote address 2 Intertwining: The role of action learning in collaboration
9:10 - 9:15		Comfort break
9:15 - 10:00	Rafael Capó Garcia University of British Columbia (Puerto Rico)	Paper presentation 8 Lifelong learning through participatory action research
10:00 - 10:15		Morning tea Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking
10:15 - 11:40	Dr Judith McBride Independent Education Psychologist (Canada) Afrouz Mobayen George Brown College (Canada)	Workshop 3 Online relational learning: Exploring the potential of literary métissage in building online life-long learning communities
11:40 - 11:45		Comfort break
11:45 - 12:30	Dr Silvia Olivares & Miriam Turrubiates Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico)	Paper presentation 8 Action learning: Challenges that impact on employability skills
12:30 - 13:30	Learning Lounges	Lunch break Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking Rooms will close at 13:30, registration for next session opens at 13:45

All times are shown in Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (UTC +11 hours)



Kempe Engineering reduced maintenance costs by using action learning to apply principles of Lean: image Business Action Learning Tasmania

TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2020

AFTERNOON SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
13:45 - 14:00		Registration
14:00 - 14:40	<p>Dr Diana Austin Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand)</p> <p>Prof Lesley Ferkins Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)</p> <p>Trish Morison Universal College of Learning (New Zealand)</p> <p>Celeita Williams Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand)</p> <p>Dr Elizabeth Orr (Australia)</p>	<p>Paper presentation 10 Looking for the 'ah ha' moments in action research understanding</p>
14:40 - 14:45		Comfort break
14:45 - 15:30	<p>Trish Morison Universal College of Learning (New Zealand)</p> <p>Dr Diana Austin Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand)</p>	<p>Paper presentation 11 How can engagement with the community enhance an existing undergraduate nursing programme to support the provision of quality care for people who identify as gender diverse?</p>
15:30 - 16:00		<p>Afternoon tea Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking</p>
16:00 - 16:40	<p>Bill Woodworth Bell Bay Aluminium (Australia)</p>	<p>Paper presentation 12 Delivering innovation through facilitated action learning in a heavy industrial environment – an account of practice</p>
16:40 - 16:45		Comfort break
16:45 - 17:30	<p>Mark Gerrard Bell Bay Aluminium (Australia)</p>	<p>Paper presentation 13 10 years of Business Action Learning Tasmania</p>
17:30 - 18:15	Learning Lounges	<p>Dinner break Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking Rooms will close at 18:15, registration for next session opens at 18:30</p>

All times are shown in Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (UTC +11 hours)



TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2020

EVENING SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
18:30 - 18:45		Registration
18:45 - 19:25	Bob Dick (Australia)	Paper presentation 14 The relevance of action learning to the world's current existential crises
19:25 - 19:30		Comfort break
19:30 - 21:00	Dr Marc P. Lammerink FMD Consultants (Portugal)	Workshop 4 Training of practitioners of participatory action research for a more sustainable world – approach, perspectives and praxis
21:00 - 21:30	ALARA & BALT	Reflections on the day
21:30		Session close

All times are shown in Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (UTC +11 hours)



Sunset at Griffiths Point, Narawntapu National Park: image S. Group

WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2020

MORNING SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
8:15 - 8:30		Registration
8:30 - 10:00	Brook Batch, Dr Alex Nakonechnyi, Dr Rebecca Allen & Jacqueline Roberts Mount St Joseph University Centre for Community IT Engagement (USA)	Symposium 2 Making college accessible for rural students: A participatory action research project
10:00 - 10:05		Comfort break
10:05 - 10:45	John Morrison Frontline Coach Pty Ltd (Australia) Stephen Hanman Mira Companions for Development (Australia)	Paper presentation 15 A new way forward to build our futures; developing innovative collaborative delivery models in construction to enhance project outcomes
10:45 - 11:00		Morning tea Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking
11:00 - 12:30	Emeritus Prof Ron Passfield Merit Solutions (Australia)	Workshop 5 Integrating action learning and mindfulness to develop productive and mentally healthy workplaces
12:30 - 13:30	Learning Lounges	Lunch break Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking Rooms will close at 13:30, registration for next session opens at 13:45

All times are shown in Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (UTC +11 hours)



WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2020

AFTERNOON SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
13:45 - 14:00		Registration
14:00 - 15:30	Dr John Molineux Deakin University (Australia)	Workshop 6 Soft systems methodology – a great technique for complex problem solving with groups
15:30 - 15:50		Comfort break
15:50 - 17:15	Bob Cother The Action Learning Institute (Australia)	Workshop 7 Developing 21st century skills through action learning
17:15 - 18:00	Learning Lounges	Dinner break Breakout rooms remain open for casual networking until 6.00pm Registration for next session commences 6.15 pm

EVENING SESSION

Time	Presenter	Presentation
18:15 - 18:30		Registration
18:30 - 20:45	ALARA & BALT	Closing Panel Action learning and action research in a post-covid-19 world
20:45		Reflection and Conference close

All times are shown in Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (UTC +11 hours)



Peppers Silo Hotel: image Rob Burnett

OPTIMISE YOUR CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

Your internet connection will have a direct impact on the quality of your experience at the Conference. If possible, connect to a high speed wifi connection or connect directly to your modem via an ethernet cable. Try to minimise other software traffic accessing your internet connection to avoid interruptions or excessive buffering.

We recommend:

- Downloading and installing the [Zoom desktop app](#) to access the Conference instead of using the web app version in your browser.
- Checking for updates to your Zoom software to ensure you are using the latest version.
 - Log into the Zoom desktop app, click on your name in top right corner, and click “Check for updates” in the drop down menu that appears.
- If you do use a browser for Zoom, check your browser software and update to the latest version.
- Opening your virus scanner and/or internet security software and check for updates.

Before joining a session:

- Turn off automatic updates and notifications, or change the timing, to avoid pop-up alerts or unscheduled updates to software during the session.
- Shut down any software that may be regularly connecting with remote servers to check for notifications, eg mail, news, social media, as this traffic will be competing with your livestream.

At the end of the day, don't forget to turn everything back on!



White Knights - Evercreech Forest Reserve, Tasmania: image Jason Charles Hill

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Chivonne Algeo

Monash University
Business School
Australia

Flying the plane while building it: Transitioning to online during COVID-19

Delivering a degree in any context is at times challenging, mostly rewarding, and sometimes, just sometimes, completely spontaneous. The rapid pace at which COVID-19 forced our academic team to adjust, while in ‘mid-flight’, our residential-style delivery of a Masters of Project Management degree at a leading Australian university, to a fully online medium took us all into unknown territory. The reliance on quickly developing a support network of peers was evident when we responded to the urgency of moving from on campus to online delivery: students who had studied together for more than one semester and had developed their peer networks adjusted to this “new-world order”. However, those who had just commenced their studies had no opportunity to build the levels of trust with their peers, and were the most challenged when responding to this change. While ensuring the students were able to engage with each other in this “blended” delivery mode, my attention also needed to be focused on supporting the academic team. How, the academics would ask, will we get the teams to work together when some students are on campus and some are participating remotely. In this unstable environment, where Government and university policies were being written as we were delivering content, the academic team used a participatory action research approach to put in place a more open and inclusive approach to working with our students. How did we survive, and even thrive, in this chaotic environment: we learnt to trust each other; we knew we were “all in this together”; we learnt what it was to be part of a community, albeit an online community; and we adapted, and continue to do so.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

The audience will be given a map to plot a future where the delivery of university programs and student engagement rely on a blended mode of in-class and synchronous technological platforms.

Stream: Breaking down Silos with Action Learning and Action Research
Keywords: Chaotic; trust; community; participatory action research; project management; peer networks; adaptation



Genevieve Cother

Business Action Learning Tasmania
Australia



Bill Woodworth

Experimenting with self-managed action learning: A massive online action learning event

Professor Reg Revans, who coined the term ‘action learning’ was ambivalent about the role of the action learning facilitator. Revans conceded that action learning requires a “supernumerary” to initiate action learning within an organisation. However, he was also clear in his belief that the facilitator should withdraw as soon as possible to allow the set to become self-managing.

In the mid-1990s, Tom Bourner developed a model for self-managed action learning, which identified a number of factors contributing to effective action learning. This included specific skills requirements, set management tools, and an agreed set of values and underpinning beliefs held by the action learning set. Bourner’s model was developed in response to the real and perceived notion that action learning is expensive and labour intensive in comparison to other types of professional learning. Self-management makes action learning highly accessible and promotes the development of complex skills that can be applied in other contexts.

In this session, we will present an inaugurating overview of self-managed action learning to the attending audience. Attendees will be allocated to groups of 4-6 people and directed to online break out rooms. Experienced action learning facilitators will be available for questioning as each group attempts to follow the self-managed action learning process. The sets will reflect on the outcomes of their attempts and identify areas for improvement in the next round. Between each attempt, the sets will regroup and share their learning with the wider cohort.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

- Participants will be active contributors to the discussion in break out rooms during this action learning activity.
- A survey will be conducted after the event and the outcomes of this experiment will be shared with delegates post-Conference.

Stream: Action Learning and Action Research in Community Development
Keywords: Action learning, action research, adult continuing education, international students, double-degree Master's programme, eLearning Diary



Clyde Mansell

Aboriginal Elders Council of Tasmania
Australia

Stream: Keynote presentation (Lifelong Learning)

Walk with an Elder: Looking to the past to rediscover the future of learning

A unique opportunity to learn from the wisdom of our Elders.

Key themes in both organisational and workforce development centre on *resilience*, *adaptability* to change and *knowledge management*.

First Nations people in Australia are the oldest continuing civilisation in the world. They have managed our complex ecological systems for the benefit of their families and communities, including their descendants, for millennia. They have prevailed through catastrophic climate change during the last ice age and the ongoing effects of forced colonisation in the modern age. Inherent in their success is the continuous creation of new knowledge, through experimentation and challenge-based learning, and the careful management of existing knowledge, passed down from the Elders through storytelling, songlines, ceremony, artefacts and visual art.

Modern day First Nations people carry profound intuitive knowledge of learning sciences. By comparison, mainstream approaches to learning are undeveloped and rigidly aligned to declining organisational systems.

Take a walk with Tasmanian Aboriginal Elder, Clyde Mansell, and immerse yourself in learning in the breathtaking wilderness of Wukalina (Mt William National Park). Listen to the collective wisdom and experience of the ancestors, shared across millennia. Hear about the approaches Elders use to engage learners and encourage the discovery of new knowledge (or the rediscovery of lost knowledge), through exploration and experimentation.

This session will be presented in 360-degree vision using interactive video technology. View in Virtual Reality mode for a truly immersive experience, or navigate to choose your point of view in 2D.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

A link to a Youtube video will be provided during the session and can be viewed on screen or using Virtual Reality goggles.

Following the video presentation, Clyde will be available for questions via Zoom.



Melissa Hawkins

Newcastle Business School
Northumbria University
United Kingdom



Max French

Action-oriented research: A route to relevance for the social sciences?

There is plenty of evidence to be found in both theoretical and empirical literature, in why and how stakeholders in the public sector should collaborate on complex social dilemmas. Addressing such 'grand challenges' (Benneworth and Cunha 2015) cannot be achieved through working in organizational and disciplinary silos. The concept of Mode 3 research and the Quadruple Helix (Carayannis and Campbell 2009) consider that forms of knowledge co-exist, are of equal value and are needed when planning change. This sentiment of the value of different perspectives is echoed in our research with practitioners, where the phrase 'we need everyone around the table' is often heard. Quite what everyone does together once around this table often remains uncertain, and how research can support practice is ambiguous.

We have been working to address these issues by taking what we are calling an 'Action-Oriented' Research (AOR) approach. We are exploring how AOR, which includes concepts and methods drawn from action research, action learning, developmental evaluation, and co-production, can provide a meaningful way of bringing stakeholders together to socially innovate.

Our research is currently throwing up more questions than answers, in part as we have found two particular issues we need to address. The first is of AOR quality and standards; we are using an eclectic blend of methods and as yet are uncertain how to rigorously ensure that what we are doing is worthwhile from both a scholarly and practitioner perspective. The second is of research impact; how can AOR support practitioners whilst pursuing a research agenda of knowledge creation?

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

- We will discuss our work as action-oriented researchers and ask for audience feedback and participation on our questions of defining AOR quality and impact. We would also like to consider how our questions, such as how to evaluate the quality of AOR, resonate with ALARA colleagues.

Stream: Breaking down Silos with Action Learning and Action Research
Keywords: Action-oriented research, action research, research impact



Bonnie Endicott

Simply Strategic Talent Solutions
USA

Five action learning strategies that Southwest Airline's uses for leadership development that you can implement for your programs

The action learning element of one of Southwest Airline's high-potential leadership development programs is a cornerstone of the six-week curricula. Not only do participants test out and apply newly acquired skills, they also deepen their relationships due to the time and teamwork required to work through a challenging assignment. They gain an understanding of how to introduce, socialize and present a fresh idea throughout the organization. Plus, the executive team loves it— it's an internal shark tank with four to five new ideas presented each year.

In this session, we'll quickly review the context of the program, then touch on five strategies you can use to engage a successful action learning project for employee development within your organization.

We'll have time to ideate on each strategy to make a plan for how you can apply it to an action learning project you're designing.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

The session will use at half of the session time in engaging participants in applying five action learning elements to enhance a development program they are designing or managing.

Stream: Breaking down Silos with Action Learning and Action Research

Keywords: Leadership development, action learning



Barry Elsey

Adelaide Business School
Entrepreneurship Commercialisation and Innovation Centre
University of Adelaide
Australia



Amina Omarova

The application of ALAR to facilitate the adult learning experiences of Indonesian international students in an Australian university

There is a clear challenge to ensure that the learning experiences of international students are significant as well as successful. Generally, they have to adapt to different ways of thinking and learning, with greater emphasis placed on self-direction and personal empowerment. This was the case with a cohort of early career Indonesian public servants employed by the Ministry of Industry. This paper reports the findings of an action research project that was undertaken to support Indonesian post-graduate students' learning in an Australian university. The paper concentrates on the application of Action Learning Action Research (ALAR) to structure students' new learning experience while doing the applied research assignment. During the process, their learning experiences were documented through an interpretive investigation. Their positive learning outcomes underlined the value of ALAR as a tool for facilitating both group and individual learning. ALAR emerged as an effective means of enabling international students to competently manage a new learning environment. In particular, two hallmarks of andragogy, self-direction and personal empowerment, were evidenced in students' reflections.

Stream: Action Learning and Action Research in Community Development
Keywords: Action learning, action research, adult continuing education, international students, double-degree Master's programme, eLearning Diary



Yedida Bessemer

USA

Developing and improving data literacy among online faculty through professional learning communities: An action research study

Online schools or “virtual academies” are a burgeoning field in both K-12 and higher education and provide an opportunity to study the transition from brick-and-mortar to “remote schooling” and its effects on public education. However, the research has not kept pace regarding providing appropriate professional development and learning for online administrators and educators. Also, educational organizations are being flooded with data along with the expectation that teachers--online teachers included--will know how to use these data. Unfortunately, teachers feel overwhelmed and often lack the knowledge and skills to interpret and utilize data appropriately to benefit their practice. This action research study examined the two topics of professional development and learning as well as data literacy among online school faculty members, both of which having been identified as needs by the research site. Data were collected through online questionnaires, individual interviews, observation protocol, field notes, and a researcher’s journal. Data analysis employed grounded theory by using thematic coding. The action research study’s finding revealed that the participants acknowledged the benefits of initiating a Professional Learning Community (PLC) process focused on data literacy knowledge and skills. The participants indicated that the PLC meetings provided a safe space to share their experiences, and the knowledge and skills acquired helped them to improve their practice by cultivating trust, developing effective communication, encouraging collaboration, and fostering positive relationships with their students and families as well as among the online educators themselves. The PLC meetings helped the participants to put human relationships in the center of their practice. In addition, the findings indicated that the intervention was successful and showed the benefits of initiating a PLC process to improve their professional development. This process can be continued and expanded to help educators and the organization itself grow and improve.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

The presenter will use the Zoom platform for her presentation. Within this platform, we will use the chat box, poll, and participants will be divided into breakout rooms for short small group discussions. Also, to engage the participants, the presenter will employ a variety of digital tools, for example, the collaborative tools, Padlet, AnswerGarden, and WordClouds. The presenter will also use Google tools, such as collaborative Jamboard.

Padlet will provide a virtual board for participants to collaborate and interact with each other by posting comments, recording, or images on the assigned topic. AnswerGarden will offer the participants an opportunity to give feedback and short answers. WordClouds can demonstrate a visual representation of a text that each small group will compose. Jamboard is another collaborative tool where participants can post a comment and or an image.

Stream: Breaking down Silos with Action Learning and Action Research



Celeita Williams

Auckland University of Technology
New Zealand

Stream: Breaking down Silos with Action Learning and Action Research
Keywords: Participatory action research, incontinence, falls, ambulance clinician, emergency medical service, paramedic, ambulance, education, patient assessment, falls prevention
Other Authors: Gael Mearns, Diana Austin and Graham Howie

Impact incontinence: Can the ambulance be at the top of the cliff?

Ambulance clinicians frequently assess people in the community after a fall or near fall. The author is undertaking a participatory action research (PAR) project to assess the impact of incontinence on falls, as seen by ambulance clinicians. The project aim is to improve ambulance clinician education and practice around incontinence and falls, in order to reduce harm from falls. It is hypothesised that early identification and referral of a person with urinary incontinence, can prevent the occurrence of further falls and fractures in the community.

At the first meeting of the PAR working group, it was recommended that the action should be to remove the 'Timed up and go test' and 'Romberg's' test from clinical practice by ambulance clinicians in New Zealand. The group considered that these tests did not add value to a falls assessment, and could be creating harm by invoking a fear of falling. Furthermore, as part of this research project it has been found that ambulance clinicians were not always referring people at risk of falls, or those who had fallen, to a falls prevention programme and that this was a barrier to best practice.

The PAR group members involved in this project are from many components of the health care system. These members include a neurologist, and specialist nurses from the following fields: falls and fracture management, women's health, general practice, gerontology and continence management. With this team working together, the breaking down of silos with action learning and action research has already begun, resulting in an improvement in patient assessment and falls referral throughout all areas of clinical practice. This shows potential for transformational change, meeting the purpose of PAR.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

To ensure active participation of the audience in any location present during my session, I would like to establish a public sphere. A public sphere is an essential part of participatory action research as highlighted by Kemmis et al. (2014), where everyone gets a chance to participate and reflect individually and as a group on a topic. For this presentation I would like to ask the group a question about the main things that come to their mind if a family member who is an older adult, had a fall. After they have had time to do this individually, the group will then split off into small groups to reflect, and then feedback into the main group. This can be done through the use of break out rooms in zoom or another electronic platform if I have participants who are participating in an electronic function. This will give people the experience of what it is like to use participatory action research to make transformational change through a deeper understanding of the problems associated to a particular problem.



Shankar Sankaran

University of Technology Sydney
School of the Built Environment
Australia

Stream: Breaking down Silos with Action Learning and Action Research
Keywords: Action research; meta-methodology; collaborative research;
actionable knowledge

Action research as a meta-methodology: Facilitating actionable knowledge

Action research (AR) takes place in many shapes and forms although it has some basic characteristics that define it. In this presentation I would like to discuss the use of Action Research as a Meta-methodology and invite audiences to participate in reflection on this particular use of AR

The first was in an Australian Research Council Funded linkage grant investigating leadership of non-profit organizations in aged and community care. While the research itself used a variety of conventional research methods the key action researchers in the team decided to use AR to guide the research as members of a steering committee governing the project. We used governance meetings as opportunities to reflect on the research and adjusting it so that it will achieve its aims and provide value to its stakeholders. (Dick et al. 2015)

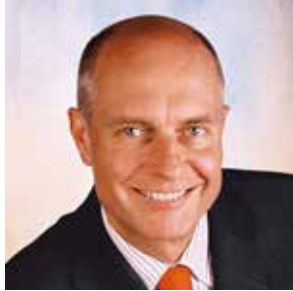
The second was in an international research project in project management investigating the balance between vertical leadership and horizontal leadership This was sponsored by the Project Management Institute. The research was carried out in nine countries and at the peak we had twenty-six researchers on the project. After the project was completed, we presented the collaboration that made it a very successful project as an AR reflection with the three principal investigators reflecting back on the research using AR as a meta methodology. (Sankaran et al. 2019)

I plan to present both these applications of AR to open up discussions with the following questions:

1. What is a meta-methodology ? How does action research fit into this definition?
2. Would a post reflection on action research qualify its use as a meta-methodology?
3. How can the use of action research as a meta-methodology help to create actionable knowledge?

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

Group discussions and consolidation of findings. Participants can offer to work with me on submitting a paper to ALARj.



Bernhard Hauser

University for Applied Management
Germany

Agile action learning – how criticality can enhance scrum and the Agile movement

Organizations, companies and society are in rapid and fundamental transformation. There is a need for deep learning, innovation – and speed. Critical Action Learning (CAL) is an approach to profound collective reflection and change, addressing power dynamics and micropolitics – but also time-consuming.

In the light of the conflicting requirements of deep learning and speed, the question arises how CAL can unfold its full potential and whether adaptations are needed to receive the attention of possible users (e.g. top management) often acting under enormous time pressure. As a multitude of approaches is on offer today all promising to tackle organizational problems, learning and action in one way or another, this contribution discusses the possible role of CAL. Is it offering dialogue for mutual learning or could it also supplement other approaches with its specific qualities?

The approaches and movements chosen for this analysis were Design Thinking, Lean Startup, Extreme Teaming, Scrum and Agile Movement. Scrum as one of these approaches is discussed in more detail to unfold what questions a dialogue on a possible combination of the two concepts would produce. This process unveiled that an adaptation between the two would create potentially productive tensions between CAL and Scrum as well as within CAL.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

The presentation will be online and highly interactive inviting the audience to collaborate and share their experience.

Stream: Action and Reflection as a Catalyst for Organisational Development
Keywords: Critical Action Learning, scrum, wicked problems, agility



Genevieve Cother

BALT
Australia



Monika Koncz-Mackenzie

Ellen Macarthur Foundation
United Kingdom

Building the Circular Economy through action learning

Action learning is promoted by recognised thought leaders in circular economy theory, as a method for developing the circular economy. Action and reflection are considered a “vital process” for developing the conditions needed to transition to a circular economy.

Monika will provide an overview of the EMF and their work developing a network of Strategic Partners, including Danone, Philips, IKEA and Unilever. Monika will share her views on why action learning supports the organisation’s ambition to help businesses transition to a circular economy and how EMF has introduced action learning through its development programs and the Action Learning Toolkit.

The Business Resource Efficiency Program is an action learning program designed and delivered for Business Action Learning Tasmania (BALT) in partnership with the Tasmanian government. It is a key action from Climate Action 21, the Tasmanian Government’s climate change action plan.

Genevieve will revisit three case studies from BREP to assess the ongoing effects of action learning. An account of practice, with short videos of the outcomes of implementation on-site at each location will be presented followed by a Q&A panel with the action learning set members from each case. Attendees are invited to submit questions prior or during the session for panel members.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

- The presentation will include a short video presentation from participants in the Business Resource Efficiency Program. The panel and participants in the program, featured in the case studies, will be available for questions from the delegation.

Stream: Breaking down Silos with Action Learning and Action Research
Keywords: Circular economy, action learning, resource efficiency, waste management



Christine Abbott

Centre for Action Learning
Facilitation
United Kingdom

Intertwining: The role of action learning in collaborating with others

Collaboration between organisations and within organisations isn't a new idea. Every organisation connects with its staff and customers, suppliers, partners, and the community. However, relationships are generally transactional; selling to customers or buying from suppliers, negotiating with partners, and supporting community projects. More than ever, we need spaces and ways that encourage us to interrelate at a deeper level. We need to go beyond transactional relationships, beyond striving just to do things well. We need to do things better - better together - for us, our organisations, our communities and our planet.

In modern evolutionary biology, survival rests on optimising the system as a whole, rather than maximising only some parameters of the system for a few people - often at the detriment of the many. In organisational terms, this requires more than the techniques of problem solving, but a need for active listening, equal, truthful, sincere exchanges with others, and ways of organising true collaboration.

Action learning is ambitious and ambiguous. For Revans, it was both a moral philosophy, based on a conviction of the human potential, and a very pragmatic approach for effecting change. Addressing challenges in our organising systems can be difficult and often easy to avoid. This keynote presentation from Christine Abbott will explore how action learning, by forging trust and collaboration with others, can create new futures and fulfill our collective potential in a world of increasing fragmentation and polarisation.

Lifelong learning through Participatory Action Research

Rafael Capó Garcia

University of British Columbia
Puerto Rico

Participatory Action Research (PAR) emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge by participants who conduct research on themselves rather than on others with the aim of correcting life's injustices. Through an exploration of participatory action researcher's autobiographical reflections, I reveal how our everyday lives and academic professions converge through PAR. This symbiosis shows how a life of PAR bridges the divide between the Global North and the Global South. Furthermore, I argue that PAR's cyclical processes go beyond each individual PAR project and extends into an endless phasing between action and reflection, that turns life into one big PAR project, composed of many smaller participatory ventures. The fissures that separate our public and private lives are blurred by the participatory paradigm, as it becomes increasingly difficult to live life without adhering to its principles. As participatory action researchers navigate through the world, many of them realize that PAR is a cosmological way of life as they cycle through its phases until they no longer physically can. This paper appeals to researchers interested in lifelong learning, participatory action research, autobiographical writing, the convergence between activism and academia, and the ambiguity of public and private identities.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

The topic of my paper is directly related to how PAR is more than just a research methodology and instead is a way of life. Participants will be encouraged to share how they have arrived at PAR or how they inject PAR's principles in their daily lives.

Stream: Reinvention and Lifelong Learning through Action and Reflection
Keywords: Participatory action research, lifelong learning, autobiography, activism, living inquiry



Afrouz Mobayen

George Brown College
Canada



Judith McBride

Canada

Stream: Reinvention and Lifelong Learning through Action and Reflection
Keywords: Action research; online teaching/learning; relational learning; literary
métissage

Online relational learning: Exploring the potential of literary *métissage* in building online life-long learning communities

In this workshop, the authors will share reflections on a relational learning experience as instructor/learner/teacher/participant in an online basic action research course piloted by McGill University's Language and Intercultural Communication Department. Within the framework of action research, online learning, and relational learning, we explore how the experience has influenced our ongoing, reciprocal teaching and learning. We ask: How might we create an online learning community that will foster relational learning? How might *métissage* be used in this context? *Métissage* (Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, & Leggo, 2009) involves participants in the writing and sharing of autobiographical pieces. Points of accord and variance are nominated by all members of the group, and, by consensus, braided into a single piece revealing a singular, emergent perspective. We will engage workshop participants in the creation of a *métissage*, allowing them to learn the process, experience the impact of co-created knowledge, and understand how it can be used within various institutional, organizational or social contexts to effectively transform perspectives. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss the implications for their particular contexts. Subsequently, we will invite participants to question the validity of our inquiry asking: Is there a ring-of-truth to the report? Is the report coherent? Have we achieved consensus with participants? Is the method of use to others? Artefacts generated in the session – video recordings, reflections, *métissages* and feedback – will constitute data for the authors' use as they continue their collaborative self-study/action research. Joining the workshop will constitute the participant's consent. Finally, we will distribute a draft paper of our progress to date and invite critical commentary from the participants.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

We will deliver an interactive workshop in which we bring participants into our action research experience in three ways:

1. The presenters will bring participants' voices into our narrative with professional conversation and an exchange of ideas.
2. We will engage participants in the method, literary *métissage* (Hasebe-Ludt et al, 2009), with which we are experimenting in our online action research courses. The method involves reflection, conversation and consensual interweaving of perspectives. The number and location of participants at the conference will determine the procedure for the activity. We will invite participants present at the conference to form small groups, and place the virtual participants into breakout rooms.
3. We will ask participants for feedback on data reliability by inviting them to respond to our validation criteria:
 - a. Is there a ring-of-truth to the report?
 - b. Is the report coherent?
 - c. Have we achieved consensus with participants?
 - d. Is the method of use to others? (Eisner, 1998).

Products of the session – reflections and feedback – will be retained as data for the authors' use as they continue their research. Joining the workshop will constitute participant's consent.



Dr Silvia Olivares

Tecnológico de Monterrey
Mexico



Miriam Turrubiates

Action learning: Challenges that impact on employability skills

Academic institutions have the responsibility to create effective strategies to promote the development of competences to guarantee a prosperous professional career. As a result, there is currently great interest in higher education institutions to offer educational strategies to create value for students and society. The purpose of this paper is to assess the perceived value of an action learning experience (i-Week) on the development of important soft employability skills applying expectation confirmation theory (ECT).

The ECT was applied to assess the disparity between what was expected from students and their actual learning experience in 1,295 activities offered in 36 cities of ten countries with organizational, community, research, cultural or international focus in 2018. Each activity had a faculty member and multidisciplinary teams to address an authentic situation during one full-time week. A total of 929 students answered a Perceived Value Questionnaire to measure 14 transversal competences categorized on five employability skills.

Achievements were statistically higher than expectations in 5 out of 14 transversal competences. The perceived value of the i-Week reflects the impact on soft skills: self-skills, personal, learning, social and systemic. The evidence of this study is useful as an input for improvement in both individual and institutional instructional strategies. The paper proposed an integrated model to learn these competences from action learning experiences.

How the presenter will engage the audience:

The presenters will participate in a facilitated Q&A session at the end of the presentation.

Stream: Reinvention and Lifelong Learning through Action and Reflection
Keywords: Participatory action research, lifelong learning, autobiography, activism, living inquiry



Diana Austin

Victoria University of Wellington
New Zealand



Lesley Ferkins

Auckland University of Technology
New Zealand



Dr Elizabeth Orr

Australia



Trish Morison

Universal College of Learning
New Zealand



Celeita Williams

Auckland University of Technology
New Zealand

Looking for the 'Ah Ha' moments in action research understanding

Action research is an emergent field in post graduate health research. Building the capacity to provide supervision and mentoring that leads to high quality, methodologically sound projects is needed, with doctoral study being a primary route to beginning an AR journey. The unique underpinning principle of becoming co-researchers with the participants requires a transformative shift from how traditional research is undertaken. Larrea (2019) refers to this as “threshold crossing from positivism to constructionism”. There is anecdotal evidence that this shift can be difficult for new researchers, keen on making change in their communities. Meyer and Land’s (2005, p. 373) work identifies threshold concepts as “conceptual gateways’ or ‘portals’ that lead to a previously inaccessible, and initially perhaps ‘troublesome’, way of thinking about something”. Establishing the threshold concepts that need to be understood by AR researchers and identifying pedagogical approaches to teaching these concepts has the potential to move new researchers to undertaking authentic AR and build a stronger AR presence in health research (Rowell et al., 2015). There are numerous studies using AR to improve educational practice, but there is a gap in educational research to improve AR. This session will provide a forum for both experienced and novice researchers to critically discuss this gap through exploring their own and other’s stories of learning experiences that enable researchers to make the shift to action researchers.

The presenters will share the background information for the study and share their personal stories of ‘ah ha’ moments in understanding AR. The attendees will be invited to share stories of their experiences that created a shift in understanding. This will either be in a big group or virtual break out rooms or small groups depending on the number of attendees. These stories will be unpacked by the facilitators to identify what formal data gathering methods will best capture these experiences to address the research question. The stories will not be used in the proposed research, however those who may be interested in taking part will be invited to contact the researchers.

A PowerPoint will be used that can be shared on the screen for both those within the audience and across sites. The collective discussion will be facilitated by the lead presenter with another person supporting and managing the chat discussion.

Stream: Reinvention and Lifelong Learning through Action and Reflection
Keywords: Novice, research



Trish Morison

Universal College of
Learning
New Zealand



Diana Austin

Victoria University of
Wellington
New Zealand

How can engagement with the community enhance an existing undergraduate nursing programme to support the provision of quality care for people who identify as gender diverse?

Background: International studies, such as (Winter et al., 2016) indicate that people who identify as gender diverse experience significant disparities in health and often face discrimination or insensitivity within health care settings. Discriminatory or insensitive health care may adversely impact on health outcomes and may create barriers for accessing health care (Grant et al., 2011). Nurses are well located to enhance the health care experiences of gender diverse patients (Middleton & Holden, 2017) however, there is inadequate attention within nursing literature and nurse education to support nurses in this role (Carabez et al., 2015).

Methods: My study, as part of a doctorate, used an action research approach that sought to enhance an existing undergraduate nurse education programme to better support the provision of quality care for people who identify as gender diverse. Specifically, it used the approach outlined by Coghlan (2019) for undertaking action research within one's own organisation.

Four nurse educators, two student support staff and six community members collaboratively, through four meetings and email discussions, diagnosed the issue, and planned, undertook and evaluated actions. Meeting transcripts and emails were analysed thematically.

Results: Preliminary analysis shows that the nurse educators gained a greater understanding of the lives of people who identify as gender diverse, this led to enthusiasm for change and a subsequent ripple out of actions from the programme to the wider organisation. With regards gender diverse patient care we, as a group, learnt that providers using the correct name and pronoun and wanting to be gender affirmative made a big difference.

The group's actions included: content being added to five nursing papers and to the organisation's international student induction; the organisation's enrolment form was reviewed and updated; a train the trainer workshop was delivered; and an online learning resource for all staff was developed.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

The activity aspect of my presentation will involve participants in breakout groups discussing a scenario (of a gender non-binary/transitioning person and the challenges they face within a workplace setting). Participants will be asked to discuss potential actions, should they have a similar scenario in their own workplace. A member from each group will present a summary of their discussion.

Each group will need to elect a note taker who will feedback a summary of their group's discussion.

Stream: Action and Reflection as a Catalyst for Organisational Development
Keywords: Action research; gender diversity, social construction
Other Authors: Katie Palmer du Preez



Bill Woodworth

Bell Bay Aluminium
Australia

Delivering innovation through facilitated action learning in a heavy industrial environment – an account of practice

The management team of a large industrial plant required a major engineering project to be successfully implemented. The implementation relied on the integration of new work practices into a process area that had been basically unchanged in several decades. This project was the first of a planned series of major equipment changes for the process area. Faced with limited change management experience within the plant's workforce, an action learning intervention was formed to address this shortfall of skills and knowledge. The action learning set was also challenged to find solutions for the considerable process issues associated with introducing the project's new equipment. The set membership was made up of people with a wide range of roles and varying experiences. The author was tasked with facilitating the set's activities. After an initial scoping meeting with the management team, the set met regularly over three months to explore the project issues, develop and test solutions. Although the various shift work patterns of several set members caused difficulties for them to attend all meetings, the set developed an innovative solution to overcome a major material handling issue. The set members successfully integrated the new equipment into the existing process area. Although not all set members had their learning expectations fully met during their participation, all set members would welcome the opportunity to be involved in future projects. Two set members were subsequently assigned to roles on new projects. This action learning intervention has shown that it is an effective tool for developing the change management skill set within an organisation. Action learning can also be successful in developing innovative solutions in a heavy industrial environment.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

Presentation will be mainly referring to PowerPoint presentation interspersed with short video clips of a large scale industrial operations including demonstrations of state of the art equipment.

Stream: Action and Reflection as a Catalyst for Organisational Development
Keywords: Action learning, aluminium smelting, innovation, change management, change implementation, action learning facilitation



Mark Gerrard

Bell Bay Aluminium
Australia

Stream: Action and Reflection as a Catalyst for Organisational Development
Keywords: Action learning, Tasmanian industry, industry collaboration, innovation, change management, change implementation, action learning, Lean Manufacturing
Other Authors: Bill Woodworth

10 years of Business Action Learning Tasmania

In 2010 the Tasmanian Government's Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts (now State Growth) invited a large Tasmanian industrial company (the Company) to be part of a pilot program that combined collaborative action learning with vocational lean manufacturing training to solve wicked business problems. In the 10 years since this initial program, the Company has been an active supporter of the program and has been pivotal in the formation of Business Action Learning Tasmania (BALT), a not for profit company whose purpose is to advance education by delivering action learning programs in workplaces, education institutions and the community. The Company has participated in six of the ten BALT Lean Action Learning programs conducted to date.

Each program consisted of a series of workshops with set members from various Tasmania companies focussed on solving wicked business problems from each company.

The workshops were facilitated by experienced action learning facilitators. The set members explored each problem and developed solutions. The set members then had 6 – 9 months to implement the agreed solutions. Set members were able to attain a nationally recognised accreditation at the successful completion of their completed projects.

Individual set members were later surveyed and interviewed to determine the impact of the programs on their work, careers and their problem-solving abilities.

The Company has seen positive business outcomes from each of the programs. These outcomes have included financial improvements, process stability improvements and team cultural improvements. The outcomes from the earlier programs have been sustained over several years. The set members report increased problem-solving skills and greater confidence in their ability to implement change in their workplace. Some set members reported that their participation in the programs has assisted them with new career opportunities.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

Presentation will be mainly be referring to PowerPoint presentation interspersed with short video clips of program participants relating their experiences with Action Learning in an industrial setting.



Bob Dick

Australia

The relevance of action learning to the world's current existential crises

It has been evident since the 1960s that bureaucratic hierarchies struggle to adapt as the pace of change increases. Why is it, then, that so few organisations succeed in escaping hierarchical structures? Some do escape, and enhance their performance when they do so. Why, then, are so few of them imitated? Why do some who change, successfully, later revert — even though their performance then suffers?

Part of the explanation, I propose, is that many of our attitudes and beliefs remain anchored to our hierarchical past. Those attitudes and beliefs inhibit our ability to change our organisations.

Many action learning teams do operate successfully in less-hierarchical or non-hierarchical ways. Within an action learning team, members have an opportunity to develop the appropriate attitudes and beliefs. The team becomes the seed bed for organisational change.

For many decades now I have been experimenting with approaches to action learning that are well suited to turbulence and uncertainty. In this presentation we will discuss some of the approaches that have been most successful. We will consider how best to achieve good task outcomes, enjoyable engagement of team members, shared leadership, and more effective collaboration.

There is increasing evidence that, as a species, we are more caring and compassionate and collaborative than we often seem to believe. These tendencies are elicited, or not, by context and situation. Action learning can provide the eliciting context. The resulting attitudes and actions will then also equip us to manage more effectively the volatilities and crises threatening our present and future world.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

The topic of the presentation will be topical and relevant. A small number of existential choices facing the world will be described. Small groups (in online breakout rooms) will discuss their position on the issue being discussed, and the relevance to their actual behaviour. I will aim for 50% of presentation time to involve direct participant engagement.

Stream: Action Learning and Action Research in Community Development

Keywords: Action learning, liminal period, tipping points, climate emergency



Marc P. Lammerink

FMD Consultants
Portugal

Stream: Action Learning and Action Research in Community Development
Keywords: Action/Discovery learning, participatory action research
development, sustainability, process approach

Training of practitioners of Participatory Action Research for a more sustainable world – approach, perspectives and praxis

Schooling in Action Research is often seen as a process by which “experts” pass on their skills to “non-experts”. However, useful training in the field of Action Research should enable people to build upon their own experiences and skills, and to participate actively in the learning process.

For implementing such training, author owes much to political commitment and social imagination of Latin American activists-intellectuals and their practice in popular education, participatory research and theatre of the oppressed. Presenter has adapted this learning in training and research also in Africa and Asia since early nineties.

For training in Action Research we adopted a ‘process approach to learning’. This aims at raising the professional capabilities of practitioners by refining their knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness. However, the ultimate aim is to empower people for action to change their environment for the better.

Underlying principles of this approach are those of discovery/action learning. Experiences are seen as an important source of learning. This means starting with the participants and their experiences gained in their home and work and not with theory brought up by the “experts”. It does this through workshops, study circles, and fieldwork, rather than through conventional teaching with chalk and board, or overhead sheets.

This paper presents some of these experiences to train practitioners in Participatory Action Research for a more sustainable world.

One is the training of researchers in the regional research program for development (ADESO) in North-Nicaragua, called “Participatory experiences to strengthen local initiative”. It consisted of three interrelated training cycles, with periods of praxis in between before PAR projects started.

Another is a 9 months’ Postgraduate course “Forestry for Rural Development”. Traditional foresters from countries world-wide got involved into social forestry in which local peoples’ experiences are building blocks for sustainable development.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

Group work in Zoom breakout rooms, (if possible) a game as example in same Zoom breakout rooms, Zoom Plenary.



John Morrison

Frontline Coach Pty Ltd
Australia



Stephen Hanman

Mira Companions for
Development
Australia

A new way forward to build our futures; developing innovative collaborative delivery models in construction to enhance project outcomes

Recent problems with poor quality in the construction industry in Australia are deeply concerning. Scenes of occupants having to vacate faulty apartment builds in Sydney and Melbourne and disastrous government projects such as Sydney Light Rail and Perth Hospital clearly show that the construction industry requires serious reform and new approaches to meet the demanding requirements of the future.

State Governments are currently responding to the recent Shergold Weir Report in different ways by implementing more robust regulations. Better regulation will help but the deep seated culture of win/lose procurement models which compromise sustainable supply chains and mindsets which erode psychology safety also need an upgrade.

Recent research by Love, Morrison et al. on several Australian construction companies also reported an alarming 70% link between rework and safety incidents. So not only are we building faulty assets but they are actually unsafe to work on.

The above scenario is even more alarming given that we are in the middle of a pandemic with so many more SMEs likely to go broke and then conversely governments using big infrastructure spends to help rebuild the Australian economy.

This presentation based on action research by John Morrison and Stephen Hanman aims to provide a new way forward for the construction industry on how to create higher trust delivery models to enable workers and companies (big and small) to prosper.

Stephen will discuss a 5 year Melbourne design and construct program that did not tender for 80% of the total spend but saved 7% on total construction costs and enabled contractors to lower prices by up to 20% while increasing profits. While John will share his recently published research with Barwon Water where high trust environments were created on a lump sum water infrastructure project with outstanding delivery outcomes.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

We will use breakout sessions during the session on Zoom platform. After short intro a presentation on action research and summary, we will have a breakout session randomly placing people into small groups to discuss key action research questions and then bring group back together for plenary at end.

*Stream: Action and Reflection as a Catalyst for Organisational Development
Keywords: Construction, collaborative cultures [Me to We], project delivery*



Ron Passfield

Merit Solutions
Australia

Stream: Action and Reflection as a Catalyst for Organisational Development
Keywords: Action learning, mindfulness, mental health, productivity, manager development, organisation development, employee engagement, organisational culture

Integrating action learning and mindfulness to develop productive and mentally healthy workplaces

Mindfulness is frequently embedded in individually focused Workplace Wellness Programs. What happens if you embed mindfulness in managerial practice? The Confident People Management Program (CPM) is designed to build the awareness of participant managers of the impact of their thoughts, emotions, words, actions, omissions and how they spend their time. The program uses a team culture framework and encourages proactive and conscious development of a culture that simultaneously builds a productive and mentally healthy workplace. The longitudinal program incorporates action learning; experiential learning; reflection; on-the-job practice between workshops; sharing experiences, learning and blockages; consciousness-raising activities; mindfulness resources; a workplace project designed to assist participants to implement their learning over the course of the program; and project presentation to senior managers. Independent evaluations and anecdotal reporting have demonstrated that CPM results in growth in managerial confidence and competence, innovative practices and transfer of learning to the workplace (particularly where that transfer is supported by the immediate boss). Oral and email communications from participants over the last 12 years indicate that the program is conducive to the development of a mentally healthy workplace. External research supports the contention that both action learning and mindfulness build self-awareness and a sense of agency – psychological states conducive to positive mental health. At the end of the program, participants present their project plans, actions, outcomes and reflections to the relevant hierarchy of their organisation and their fellow participants. This builds in accountability and makes their findings public. The virtual Conference workshop will provide insight into the underpinning cultural framework model and program design; and offer participants the opportunity to experience a range of exercises designed to build consciousness and self-awareness in their managerial practice.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

Participation in whole group discussions and small group discussions (via Zoom breakout rooms). Where possible (depending on numbers), small groups will report back to the larger group. Depending on numbers, people may participate in pairs in breakout rooms for more personal sharing. Where appropriate, text chat will be utilised as a form of participation.



Brook Batch



Rebecca Allen



Jacqueline Roberts

Alex Nakonechnyi

Mount St Joseph University
Centre for Community IT Engagement
USA

Stream: Action and Reflection as a Catalyst for Organisational Development
Keywords: Rural students, college access, college choice, resource navigation
Other Authors: Noah Douglas and MacKenzie Roth

Making college accessible for rural students: A participatory action research project

While much research has been done on college access, relatively little research has focused on rural students. Rural students may be underserved; often they face not only poverty, but, in comparison with their urban counterparts, sparse local supports and resources for college preparation.

In this symposium:

1. We will present our participatory action research (PAR) project. Our team of college administrators, faculty, and students worked together to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data on why rural students in our area chose (or did not choose) college. We found that family and community resources play an outsized role in decision making. Rural students may also be reluctant to leave their communities and be confused about financial aid. In response to our findings we have implemented and continue to refine digital communities, apps, and chatbots as well as build relationships in local communities.
2. Following our short presentation of the project, participants will have the option to breakout into one of the following sessions:
 - a. Creative and Participatory Digital Data Collection and Analysis. Based on our experience with our current PAR project, we will share ways creative ways that one can collect and analyse data in the face of social distancing. The participants can expect to engage in a mini data collection and analysis project as a learning exercise.
 - b. Resource Navigation and Digital Community Building Using Apps. Technology has the potential to transform our communities by dismantling barriers to knowledge and resources. In this session, we will collaboratively build a chatbot “on the fly” so as to cultivate understanding of technological possibilities and research collaborations.
3. Our session will conclude with a student co-researcher panel on rural student access and student participation in research.



John Molineux

Deakin University
Australia

Soft systems methodology – a great technique for complex problem solving with groups

The workshop will outline the process of using Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) by working through participants' own problem contexts. SSM was developed in the UK by Peter Checkland and colleagues using action research, and is a great tool for creating new solutions or rethinking complex problems with groups or teams. SSM uses systems thinking and other creative tools such as rich pictures, in developing understanding of complex problems or systems. The process enables designing possible new or alternative systems and solutions, and then determining feasible actions and outcomes. Active group participation and involvement is a key feature of the design of the process.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

The workshop will utilise participants' own problem situations to work on within the workshop.

Stream: Action and Reflection as a Catalyst for Organisational Development
Keywords: Soft systems methodology; action learning; group process



Bob Cother

The Action Learning Institute
Australia

Stream: Reinvention and Lifelong Learning through Action and Reflection
Keywords: Action learning, employability skills, human skills, enterprise skills, VET framework, competency-based assessment

Developing 21st Century Skills through Action Learning

In Australia, as in other OECD countries, employers report difficulties in finding young people with the required workplace skills. Employers seek young people not only with technical skills, but also '21st Century skills' (sometimes referred to as 'employability', 'enterprise', 'deep', 'future' or 'human' skills). Job seekers with these skills earn higher wages. Future jobs will require more of these skills. They are common across all occupations and industries.

Such skills are difficult to develop in a classroom with traditional instructor-led delivery. They are acquired through practice and experience, working with others in a work environment.

This session is presented by Bob Cother, Director of the Action Learning Institute (ALI). ALI is an edtech start-up and one of the most innovative registered training organisations in Australia. Their unique approach to formal qualification comes from over a decade of action research in education and training, and the development of supporting technology, to deliver nationally recognised qualifications entirely through action learning.

ALI contends that action learning lends itself admirably to the development of 21st Century skills. They believe the time is right for action learning to take centre stage in post-secondary education and training.

An overview of the action learning approach to developing 21st Century skills will be presented. Best practice experiential learning programs will be evaluated against the action learning approach. Criteria and methodologies for assessing 21st Century skills will be explored and compared and a concept for formal recognition of action learning skills will be shared for critical evaluation by the audience.

How the presenter will actively engage the audience:

The audience will be invited to ask questions and participate in discussions throughout the presentation. A series of questions will be posed for small group discussion followed by large group reflection.



Colin Bradley

ALARA
Australia



Genevieve Cother

BALT
Australia

How the presenters will actively engage the audience:

This workshop will use a ‘revolving panel’. Initially, some of the presenters will be invited to provide their views and answers to these questions relating to the future of action learning and action research, relating any insights gained during the conference. Audience members may wish to become panel members and provide their comments utilising insights gained from the Conference, as well their own experiences.

Stream: All Streams

Keywords: Action learning, action research, collaboration, virtual, face-to-face, societal change, communications

Action Learning and Action Research in a Post-COVID-19 World

Several major shocks have hit the world in 2019 and 2020:

- The coronavirus has devastated the world, with over 45 million people infected and nearly 1.2 million killed (to 30 October 2020), and it is in its second wave. By way of comparison, the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-1920 infected 500 million people – almost a third of the world’s population – and killed up to 50 million people during four waves of infection.

The impact to the health of people around the world is compounded by the varying degrees of economic shutdown imposed to limit the spread, with whole industries stopped almost overnight. Tourism, international trade, tertiary education, dining and restaurants, the Arts, and many areas of retail have experienced significant falls in income and employment. Adding to these impacts is the mental health consequence of physical isolation and loss of purpose and income that large proportions of countries’ populations are experiencing. The long-term effects on physical and mental health are still unknown.

- The United Kingdom reached agreement on Brexit, which would have had a large impact on world trade, were that impact not overtaken by the coronavirus. That “Brexit effect” is still to be realised.
- The United States of America has been concentrating its attention on internal affairs, withdrawing, or threatening to withdraw, from arrangements that many regions and countries have come to rely upon over years and decades, with no obvious replacement arrangements. The resulting vacuum has led or could lead to significant tensions between countries.
- Examples of these tensions are the worsening international relations between China and the USA, or China and Australia, or the apparent spying and thefts occurring within the virtual world. Of benefit, however, are the closer ties between some countries, such as Australia and India.

The implications of these and other world shocks is that “normal” will be something different from whatever normal was in 2018. In other words, there is no “returning to normal” – the world will need to create a “new normal.”

Action learning and action research require collaboration and communication between participants, and have an ethical stance of doing good. They are methodologies that aim to change what exists now to something better, of higher quality, more efficient, and more socially beneficial, by involving those affected by the change.

In the changing world, what will action learning and action research look like after COVID-19 (that is after 2021)? Will these methodologies need to change to remain relevant and useful and help people meet the changing dynamics and conditions in which we all live? Where should we, as action learning / action research practitioners focus our attention to have the greatest impact on the development of the “new normal?”

**One day, when things are different, come and visit
our beautiful island...**

**We wish you and your family good health and happiness
Thank you for joining us in Launceston, Tasmania**