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**The Action Learning and Action Research
Legacy for Transforming Social Change**



Presentation Abstracts



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Action Learning / Action Research Experiences of Individuals

Building Natural Connections

A workshop by
Johanna Cornelissen
(Hult International Business School, Canada)

Abstract

"We can only love what we know, and we can never know completely what we do not love. Love is a mode of knowledge..." (Aldous Huxley)

Great scholarly minds such as Gregory Bateson, Thomas Berry, Joanna Macy, and Peter Reason, suggest that many of the issues our world is facing is due to the disconnection, fragmentation and isolation many of us experience in and with our world. On most days we (in the Western World) are so busy 'doing' that we don't notice the sky, the birds, the trees, or the people we pass. If we do, it is often just fleeting. We rarely even notice ourselves. Most of us have heard the studies that show that stress, loneliness and depression are trending upwards in Western society and happiness, quality of life, and the health of our planet are trending downward. Many are asking what can we do to improve our life as well as the lives of others?

My research is an inquiry into how the 'more-than-human world' as a catalyst, can open us up to a participatory mindset and re-connect us to ourselves, to our human community and to the more-than-human world. Working with individuals and small groups, my research focuses on how everyday experiences in the more-than-human world, such as gardening, walking or tending to a houseplant, can develop a deeper understanding of ourselves; deepen connection and dialogue with others; and increase our knowledge of those with whom we share this Earth. The hope is that through our connection, we will come to know. And through this knowing, we will begin to think in a new way – a way that reduces our fragmentation and isolation, and sees us humans in participation with, our interconnected world.

Keywords

Connection, participatory, more-than-human world, action research, phenomenology

How the audience will participate

Purpose of workshop: The purpose of the workshop is to introduce participants to the inquiry around developing and/or strengthening a participatory mindset utilizing the more-than-human world as a catalyst for connection. Backed by great scholars such as Gregory Bateson, Joanna Macy, Thomas Berry and Peter Reason, who demonstrate the importance of a participatory mindset in these challenging times; and also conventional scientific studies that prove spending time in nature improves health, happiness, and intrinsic rewards, participants will be invited to become co-researchers into our inter-connection and the challenges and limitations this may bring. Through an extended epistemology, participants will be called to experiment with 'other ways of knowing' in order to come to a deeper and more authentic connection to self, to others and the more-than-human world.

This research provides a unique contribution in a number of ways. First, the research focuses on the everyday, accessible activities, such as gardening or walking, rather than specific natural



'settings' such as wilderness excursions or laboratory simulations. Second, the research focuses on the topic of connection using action research principles. This moves the research focus to being in connection versus about connection, and explores whether this has any effect on our epistemology and ontology. Finally, the research focuses on the phenomenon of connecting through nature. Thus, the focus is on the lived experience - the essence of the connection.

What you will do: As the research methodology is based on first and third person action research principles, using phenomenology methods, the exercises will include both solo and group activity. Depending on weather and natural surroundings available at the conference, the exercises could involve walking, mediation, light gardening, etc. Through extended epistemology, participants will be invited to reflect and share on their direct experience and to co-inquire into the quality of connections, and the potential impact and strategies on how to improve our connections with ourselves, others, and the more-than-human world.

How participants will be involved: This workshop is experiential and asks participants to look into the phenomenon of connection after experiencing natural spaces. Participants will be lead through various exercises where they will be invited to participate in first person inquiry by bringing mindfulness and attention to their emotional and mental state, their level of connection towards their fellow participants and also their natural surroundings. Participants will also be invited to co-inquire into how this practice can bring deeper knowledge and connection and inform our everyday lives and work in this interconnected world. We will also explore the potential limitations.

What participants will learn: Participants will inquire into the ways in which nature can act as a catalyst for building connections and how this can enhance a greater participatory mindset. As co-researchers, participants will be invited to explore different ways of coming to know and share the level of effect this has on their ability to connect and any limitations they experience. Finally, they will be asked to examine how these practices can be developed into their everyday lives in order to deepen their connections.

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Where Do We Go from Here in Contributing to ‘The Action Learning and Action Research Legacy for Transforming Social Change?’

A Workshop by
Dr Jacqueline Delong
(Canada)
Dr Jack Whitehead
(University of Cumbria, UK)
and
Dr Marie Huxtable
(University of Cumbria, UK)

Abstract

The workshop will bring together through social media the evolving living-posters and living-theories, of global citizens who are engaged in action learning/action research inquiries of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing with values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity?’ The participants will also include, through their ‘virtual presence’ contributors to the 2015 Town Hall meeting of the Action Research Network of the Americas Conference in Toronto, the 2016 participatory workshop and CARN study day for the 2017 1st World Congress for Knowledge Democracy: towards an ecology of knowledges in Cartagena and other new participants. This workshop will focus on the legacy for transforming social change of the living-theories of educational practitioner researchers including those engaging in AL/AR practitioners. The living-theories to be used in the workshop will include those accredited for doctoral degrees in different universities around the world. Taken together they take into account critical insights of reflexive change agent models in reflective learning, experiential learning, action learning, action research, appreciative inquiry, reflective practice inquiry, learning history inquiry and living theory inquiry.

The workshop will demonstrate the communicative power of multi-media narratives with digital visual data to clarify and communicate the meanings of embodied expressions of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. Ideas critically and creatively engaged with will include current social theories such as de Sousa Santos’ (2014) ideas on ‘epistemicide’. These ideas will be used to show how Western academic reasoning and epistemology, can be understood and transcended, in the generation of the living-educational-theories of individuals, grounded in their experiences and contexts.

Keywords

Social change, living theory research, values of global citizens

How the audience will participate

Purpose of workshop: To contribute to the evolution of global, AR/AL research communities of practitioner-researchers, who are creating and sharing, as living-theories, their evidence-based explanations of educational influences in learning.

What you will do: We will introduce the idea that individuals can generate their living-educational-theories as explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practice and understandings. We will access the web-based resources at <http://www.actionresearch.net> to demonstrate the academic legitimacy of living-theories in Universities around the world. We will focus on Living



Theory doctorates to show how a multi-media narrative can carry the meanings of embodied values.

How participants will be involved: Participants will begin by discussing in pairs their experiences and contexts in which they are seeking to live their relational and ontological values as fully as possible. These are the values they use to give their lives meaning and purpose. Participants will be taken through an action reflection cycle in which they describe what they would like to improve, produce an action plan, explain the data they will need to collect to make an evidence-based judgement on their effectiveness. Virtual participants will share their living-posters and living-theories in web-based resources and in the workshop. Virtual participants from European Countries, South Africa, New Zealand, India, Australia, Canada, Mongolia and the Republic of Ireland have confirmed their desire to participate.

What participants will learn:

- i) The meaning of a living-educational-theory and Living Theory research in AL/AR in learning where do we go from here in contributing to '*The Action Learning and Action Research Legacy for Transforming Social Change?*'
- ii) How to integrate digital visual data into an explanation of educational influence in learning.
- iii) How to strengthen the validity of an explanation grounded in personal experience through the use of a validation group that uses the mutual rational control of critical discussion.
- iv) How to integrate insights from social theories and other disciplines in the generation and sharing of a living-educational-theory.

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The Transformative Possibilities of Literary *Métissage* in Building a Learning Community for Social Change

A workshop by

Dr Judith McBride

(Research-in-Action, Canada)

Linda Giguère

(Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada)

and

Laurie MacLeod

(Riverside School Board, Québec, Canada; Colegio Santa Maria, Recife, Brazil)

Abstract

In this workshop, the authors will report on one action research cycle of The Narrative Inquiry Group, a community of educators engaged in voluntary, embedded, self-directed professional development. As a writing collective situated in Québec, Canada, we represent various education sectors, cultural contexts, and worldviews. Individually, we are facing the challenges offered by political, social, technological shifts. Our classrooms are mosaics of language, ethnicity, culture, ability, need, talent, gender, orientation.

Within our evolving community, there exists a strong sense of professional purpose, and we have chosen to skip quick-fixes, opting rather to invest in transformation that is long-term in nature. We believe that the inquiry cycle presented in our report – from problem to solution to problem – illustrates the merit of taking risks, of being publically self-critical, while offering evidence of our learning.

In our professional conversations, we focus on issues, problems and possible solutions through a variety of inquiry processes. Our inquiries are situated under the umbrella of action research (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001) and within the guidelines of professional conversation (Earl, & Timperley, 2009), narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), light-writing, life-writing, literary *métissage* (Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Leggo, & Sinner, 2012), and perspective transformation (Mezirow, 2000). A weaving of these perspectives is demonstrated in our results, which may provide a powerful methodology for achieving consensus within groups, thus contributing to the building of community.

After sharing the experience and outcomes of one inquiry cycle in which we researched the problem of how best to represent evidence of individual, collective, transformative learning, we will facilitate a hands-on opportunity; one through which participants will experience the potential of this method in facilitating groups working toward social change. Finally, participants will be invited into the evaluation and validation process of this cycle of our inquiry.

Keywords

Teacher-research, narrative inquiry, literary *métissage*, methodology, perspective transformation, learning in community

How the audience will participate

Purpose of the workshop: Our purpose in proposing this workshop is to explain, trace the evolution, and provide an example of our particular inquiry method, a process blending professional conversation and narrative inquiry in action research. We wish to offer an opportunity to explore the transformational possibilities evidenced in the inquiries of educators engaging in



intentional, voluntary inquiry and provide evidence that we are living our values as we learn. Finally, we wish to engage participants in the practice of the methodology and in the validation of our results.

What you will do: To begin, we will introduce ourselves, our contexts, our experience as inquirers, and the transformative learning resulting from our endeavors. We will invite discussion on the report presented, and on the potential of literary *métissage* as an inquiry method and means to build social traction. We will invite participants to collaborate in a light-writing and life-writing activity, and in the creation of *métissages*. Finally, there will be a sharing of products, and discussion of implications for inquirers, of strengths and shortcomings of the methodology, and of the validity of our inquiry.

How participants will be involved: Participants will have an opportunity to use the methods, create and share products, and discuss implications for diverse contexts. A workshop will lead participants through the *métissage* process in a manner that is personally and professionally relevant. As well, we will invite participants to consider the validity of our research.

What participants will learn: Participants in the workshop will learn:

1. Experientially and authentically
2. The progression of light-writing, life-writing and literary *métissage*
3. The value of drawing on the experience, reflections, and values of others as they work toward consensus and social transformation
4. The possibility for empowerment, and community building
5. The value of risk-taking in critical self-reflection and autobiographical work within the safety of community
6. The movement of self to other
7. The power of human connection in the braided voices of the literary *métissage*

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Liberating Relational Inquiry and Practice: Transforming Sensitive Power Relationships in our Action Researching

A workshop by
Prof Hilary Bradbury

Abstract

How do we bring our whole selves to our action researching scholarly-practice? How can we enrich our response to the challenges of sustainability that #MeToo, racial injustice and runaway climate change present? Expect a deeply experiential workshop that inquires into gender and other sensitive power relationships. This workshop is relevant to the contexts of faculty-student, researcher-client, and anyone who wishes to upgrade their capacity for transformative knowledge creation.

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Community-based Education and the Fight for Educational Justice: Uncovering Tensions and Possibilities through a Living Curriculum

A paper by

Assist Prof Kristen Goessling

(Penn State University, USA)

Shivaani Selvaraj

(Penn State University, USA)

Caitlin Fritz

(Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development, USA)

and

Kendra Books

(Parents United, USA)

Abstract

Philadelphia residents have long fought against neoliberal education policy and practices, including the privatization of education, school closures, and budget austerity. This paper examines one space of resistance, a citywide network of school/community/higher education stakeholders who implemented a community education program, called the Community Schools Ambassador Program (CSAP). The authors were part of the network and the curriculum team that designed and implemented the education program. Launched in 2015, the CASP includes a “living curriculum” that focuses on growing a network of school/community stakeholders who develop practices that foreground democracy and equality in support of public education as a public good. In 2016/17, the curriculum team shifted the method of delivery to a regional approach within the city and introduced a Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) component. This paper draws upon the CPAR practice to develop a new iteration of curriculum design. Further, we illustrate how CPAR enables us to revise our vision and strategy to maintain a critical edge in the changing local and national educational landscape. We present three intersecting themes from the CSAP data-set that demonstrate the evolving living curriculum that is situated within a particular sociopolitical context: 1) reimagining partnership coordination, 2) positionality, cross-dialogue, & pathways of participation, and 3) concentric circles of power in practice. Together, these themes illustrate how CPAR provides a framework for praxis (cycles of action -- reflection) that contributes to a living curriculum that can build and strengthen community-led educational justice movements within the current neoliberal era.

Keywords

Critical participatory action research, educational justice, neoliberalism, living curriculum

How the audience will participate

We will invite ALARA attendees to engage in a short activity from the curriculum, Concentric Circles of Power, that we will anchor with selections from our data toward the aim of troubling and clarifying the ways in which the CPAR practice informed the ongoing evolution of the “living curriculum.” Upon completion of this activity we will engage in a dialogue with attendees about strategies and practices of PAR that support community organizing.

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Exploring Multiple “Is”: Positionality, Reflexivity and Intersectionality in Fieldwork

A paper by
Prof Nathalis Wamba
(City University of New York, USA)

Abstract

I was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC), a former Belgian colony. Several years later I returned to Africa as a Fulbright scholar to teach and conduct research at a university. I carried with me my Western education which I thought at the time was an asset, but I quickly realized that it was also a liability. The very Western education I carried with me has been used for centuries to dehumanize fellow Africans and justify the colonization enterprise of the continent. Doing community-based participatory action research to improve the schools of an extremely poor community afforded me the opportunity to explore my positionality distinguishing between the “I” which looks and the “I” which is seen including the “I” that is “seen by me.” This examination turned into a self-study and auto-ethnography project.

Self-reflection and positionality face much criticism. For critics, it is reflexive self-obsession (Kobayashi, 2003; Peach, 2002). Kobayashi (2003) argues that reflexivity has little purpose unless it is connected to a wider purpose and agenda about how the world should be and how the world needs to change. However, it is essential for researchers to consider what they are doing, how and why they are doing it, in the context of thinking about who they are (Hopkins, 2007).

Keywords

Multipositionality, intersectionality, reflexivity, fieldwork, community-based participatory action research

How the audience will participate

One way to get the audience to participate is to invite participants to talk about fieldwork experiences and lessons learned. This can be done in small groups and have the participants share at the end.

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Action Learning / Action Research Experiences of Professionals

Can We Talk? Challenges with Procurement and Collaboration - Emerging Perspectives on Theory and Practice

A paper by
Robert Wright
(Capella University, USA)
and
Jacqueline Shiner
(Norwich University)

Abstract

For years there has been discussion on the issues and reforms related to the U.S. federal procurement process. One of the major issues is communications and collaboration. Goodrich (2015) provided in his Federal Times article “6 simple fixes for the federal procurement process.” Five of the six areas involve communications and collaboration: poorly conceived documentation; contracting offices and program offices working as a team rather than independent; lengthy procurement decisions; government understands what they bought; and talk with industry. We will discuss the current procurement process, current trends and recent approaches including Agile Procurement. We will discuss the use of Action Learning in procurement and the potential limitations. Specifically, we will discuss our Collaborative Government Model which takes a holistic and strategic approach to collaboration. Throughout the procurement process, collaboration is required and involves a diverse group of organizations including public and private entities. There is a need to approach this collaboration in a strategic manner as it includes facets such as hierarchy, networking, and inter-personal interactions that are not linear in nature. Using this new model and technology may improve the success of the current weakness in collaboration. While the focus is at the federal level, the state and local level encounters many of the same issues and can benefit from understanding our Collaborative Government Model.

Keywords

Collaboration, agile procurement, contracts by negotiations, full and open procurements, collaborative government model, collaborative technology, action learning

How the audience will participate

After presentation of our government collaboration model, we will have an open discussion on whether the issues we identified effects when using action learning and if yes how so. We will explore the potential to perform Action Research to determine what works right or what works wrong in procurement collaboration. Some of the questions to be addressed using Action Learning:

- In looking at our collaborative model, do you see any differences of its impact using Action Learning rather than using “normal” collaboration?
- In what ways could using Action Learning potentially minimize the collaboration issue?
- How should we explore this impact using Action Research?

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“The Transformative Potential of Action Research:” Examining the Perception Shifts of Doctoral Students through Action Research Coursework

A paper by
Dr Michelle Vaughan
(Florida Atlantic University, USA)

Abstract

Situated within a College of Education, our doctoral students study the systemic inequities that exist in today’s classrooms, curriculum, and reform initiatives. A careful examination of how their research works with those involved in their studies supports notions of sustainable change in education and empowerment for underserved populations that often serve as the subjects of their research. The purpose of this paper is to explore the perceptions and potential benefits of action research coursework within a doctoral program. This action research study occurred within a semester-long graduate level action research course. Participants were a cohort of doctoral students (n=7) that participated in a doctoral strand as part of a graduate level action research course. Coursework, reflection papers, discussion board posts and research projects were analyzed as part of the study. Students in this study experienced significant shifts in three distinct ways; a shift in their identities as researchers as they learned about connections to action research within their field of study and experienced the challenges that occur in an action research project; a shift in their knowledge about action research and its applications, both currently and historically, through various course readings and discussions, and a shift in their perceptions of the methodology and its value as a form of research.

Keywords

Action research, doctoral programs, doctoral coursework

How the audience will participate

The audience will participate at the beginning of the session as we get to know who is in the room and what knowledge they bring to the topic being discussed. Throughout the discussion, questions are welcome and also posed to encourage discussion. There will be planned time at the end to allow for audience feedback on the study, suggestions for both coursework and additional study, and general questions.

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Struggles and Triumphs of Creating an Action Research Community: A Canadian Example

A paper by
Dr Kurt Clausen
(Nipissing University, Canada)
and
Dr Glenda Black
(Nipissing University, Canada)

Abstract

An important facet of the action research cycle for many practitioners concerns the dissemination of findings. While results may be used solely to solve specific issues, many researchers make use of peer-reviewed journals and conferences as a means of making a larger audience aware of their conclusions and caveats. However, few who publish in journals or present at conferences have an understanding of the pressures and fragilities these organizations face, especially those related to action research.

This study examines a case study of one such organization, the Canadian Association of Action Research in Education, as it runs an annual conference, and through its journal, the Canadian Journal of Action Research, as it endeavours to publish volumes on a regular basis while balancing the many economic, social, and political pressures that threaten its existence. It traces the history of the journal from its inception in 1998 and the association's founding in 2014, examining the reasons for its creation, its originating aims, and personnel. It then relates an overview of the enterprise's evolving structure, mandate, support, membership, and reader base up to present-day.

Keywords

Dissemination of results, journals, associations, Canada, community

How the audience will participate

All members will be engaged in: (a) gaining insight in the birth and ongoing growth of the journal, association, and its community, (b) invited to participate in a discussion on their experiences and/or research as a member of a community? Were there differences? (c) discussion of how/when the association was formalized and how this process compared to their experience, (d) discussion on the factors that impacted the community, as it spread nationally and internationally, (e) and participants will be encouraged to share insight into next steps for future growth of the emergent community. The time allotted will be a balance of presentation and discussion to engage all participants.

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Indigenising PAR: Decolonisation, Austerity and the Politics of Research

A paper by
Dr Steven Jordan
(McGill University, Canada)
and
Dr Elizabeth Wood
(McGill University, Canada)

Abstract

Although the two terms are often conflated and used interchangeably in academic discourse, the history, politics and intellectual roots of participatory action research (PAR) and action research (AR) are quite different (Jordan 2003). While PAR primarily originated in the global South as an inherently political strategy to mobilise marginalised communities and groups around anti-colonial struggles, AR chiefly emerged from within the academies of the global North to improve professional practice (Kapoor and Jordan 2009). Recently, there has been a growing convergence between PAR and AR, with several implications for PAR. Perhaps the most telling has been the subordination of PAR's radical politics to that of AR's more narrowly defined and technical agenda focused on improvement of professional practice. In this light the paper will explore: i) how PAR's original radical political (and theoretical) impulses have been quelled and coopted within mainstream educational research within the global North; ii) drawing on recent innovations in research methodology, particularly those associated with Canadian indigenous and activist researchers, the paper will suggest that this process of cooption might be reversed and that a new, reconfigured version of PAR might be created that draws on its origins as a methodology of the margins.

Keywords

P/AR, de/colonisation, Indigenous, austerity

How the audience will participate

Participants will be encouraged to critically engage with the paper's key arguments throughout the presentation.

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Developing a Functional Framework to Teach and Learn Science at the Three Conceptual Levels of Understanding: An Action Research Approach

A paper by

Koh Bing Qin

(Pasir Ris Secondary School, Singapore)

and

Wong Yoke Ung

(Woodlands Secondary School, Singapore)

Abstract

Many educators advocate that the teaching and learning of science should be done at three conceptual levels – the macroscopic, sub-microscopic and symbolic levels. Although there are simple resources available to provide learning experience at these levels, the pedagogical guidance for educators to link and deliver concepts effectively at these three conceptual levels of understanding is inadequate. Using the action research cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting as a research methodology, we developed a lesson design framework to address this concern effectively. The framework was aptly applied to design lessons for abstract concepts that are perceived to be difficult to learn by secondary school students such as the precipitation of salts and the strength of acids. The efficacy of this framework is evident from the direct feedback garnered through interviews of participating students as well as the positive teaching outcome based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected. We leveraged on the data and feedback gathered after each implementation to refine our framework and plan for the next cycle of action. This paper not only seeks to illustrate an effective pedagogical model for all science educators, but also exemplifies how action research may be used as a methodological approach to address gaps in teaching practices.

Keywords

Lesson design framework, conceptual levels of understanding, action research

How the audience will participate

We would like to engage our audience by providing them with the opportunity to:

1. Appreciate how our framework may be used in promoting conceptual understanding

The audience will first be given opportunities to explain common phenomena (e.g. evaporation, combustion) without the help of the proposed framework. After which, the framework will be provided for them to delineate the principles or reasons behind these phenomena. We hope that the audience will be able to contrast the two approaches and recognise the benefits of our framework.

2. Have a first-hand experience of presenting ideas using our framework

A condensed version of the framework would be provided as a template for the audience, especially educators, to organise and present their thoughts and ideas of simple concepts in groups. This would be followed by a discussion session for the audience to exchange their ideas and share their experience of using the framework.

3. Experience the strategies and tools that were incorporated in our framework

This would include the time to play with manipulatives such as magnetic buttons - one of the tools used to help students visualise particles in action.



Through these interactions, we hope to receive critiques from the participants for us to further improve on our existing work.

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From Doing Action Research to Writing about Action Research

A workshop by

Prof Victor Friedman

(Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel)

Prof Paul Gray

(Boston College, USA)

Dr Alfredo Ortiz Aragón

(University of the Incarnate Word, USA)

and

Dr Mary Brydon-Miller

(University of Louisville, USA)

Abstract

As current or past Associate Editors of the Action Research Journal and the Educational Action Research Journal, we have become increasingly aware of a gap between the great action research that is being done in the field and the way action researchers write about their work. Our impression is that many really important insights and lessons from AR practice are often missed and that writers fail to convey the detail, richness, and voices inherent in action research. Therefore, we would like to engage action researchers in reflection on, and dialogue about, what is really important in their practice—i.e. what should we be sharing/communicating with others?—and how to put that into writing. The immediate challenge is to improve the quality of articles submitted for publication. However, our longer-term goal is to improve the practice of Action Research and, by implication, to make AR a more potent change-making strategy for the larger society.

Keywords

Action research, academic writing, writing quality, publishing

How the audience will participate

Purpose of workshop: The objective of this workshop is to help action researchers make the transition from doing action research to writing about it. The workshop is a step towards a larger goal of improving the quality and creativity of action research writing so that it not only conveys the richness and importance of action research, but also inspires and informs others about how they might improve and extend their practice.

What you will do:

1. *Introduction from the Presenters (5 minutes)*
2. *Prompt for Participants (5 minutes)*

"Think about an action research project you have just completed. You believe that the project was rich with learning, either in its successes, its significant challenges that impeded success, or both. Now you want to write a paper about that project. Where do you begin in making the transition from AR to writing about AR?"

A few questions to consider:



About what to write	About how to write it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are most significant aspects of the project that you would like to convey in your paper? What is actually worth sharing from my project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the questions you need to ask yourself, or ask your AR partners, in order to write a high quality article?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could others learn from your experience? Who are my audiences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, in your opinion, is the meaning of quality in an action research article?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you make your article relevant to both practitioners and academics? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you make your article something that someone would actually want to read?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyond communication, who and what am I trying to influence or affect with my work? 	

3. *Individual reflection and writing. (10 minutes)* Please take a few minutes to write down your responses to these questions. Afterwards, you will be asked to share your thinking with other workshop participants in a small group.
4. *Small group dialogue. (30 minutes)* with a facilitator from the workshop team. Each member of the small group will briefly describe her/his project and relate to the questions above. Other group members will be "critical friends", helping them dig more deeply into their experience and into the question of what would make a paper worth reading.
5. *Reporting and dialogue in the plenary (20 minutes)*. Each group will briefly report out and then we will open the floor for open dialogue.
6. *Sharing our own thoughts on these questions (10 minutes)*. The facilitation team will share our thoughts on the questions and share some emerging criteria we are developing on this topic, including reflections on where they are similar and different from what has been produced in this space.
7. *"Check-out." (10 minutes)*. We will end with a "check-out" in which each participant has opportunity to briefly share what they have learned or other reflections from the workshop. We will also invite participants to complete an online survey to generate additional insights on this topic if interested.

How participants will be involved: With the exception of the brief introduction, initial prompt, and a brief presentation towards the end, the participants will be actively involved either in writing or participating in a small group or plenary discussion. 70 of the total 90 minutes are devoted to participant discussion.

What participants will learn: The participants will learn about the kinds of questions they need to ask themselves in making the transition from doing action research to writing about it. They will have an opportunity to reflect on their action research experience and how it can contribute to high quality writing. We, the convenors, about the ways members of the action research community think about the meaning of quality in writing action research articles.

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Action Learning / Action Research for Communities' Developments

Post-Secondary Correctional Education Program Usefulness of Ex-Offenders' Participation: A Utilization-Focused Evaluative Case Study Used With Participatory Action Research Framework

A paper by
Pamela Carey
(Capella University, USA)

Abstract

The post-secondary correctional education program (PSCEP) offered within community setting across the United States has been perceived to be beneficial to ex-offenders, but stakeholder needs assessment findings show an increasing lack of ex-offenders' participation in the PSCEP. Therefore, this paper presents a report of participatory action research (PAR) project that evaluated the perceived PSCEP usefulness on ex-offenders' capacity building efforts and ways that stakeholders can contribute collaboratively to increase ex-offenders' participation in the PSCEP. The theoretical framework of the study includes the constructive-developmental theory, social cognitive learning, and collaborative action theory. The utilization-focused evaluative case study approach was used within the PAR framework, coupled with 20 stakeholders as participants in the study. To facilitate the data collection and analysis process with the stakeholders, the logic of the concurrent transformative approach was used as a framework that led to the emergence of five themes: (a) perception, (b) communication, (c) program cost-effectiveness, (d) stakeholder benefits, and (e) accessibility/availability. The quantitative data findings show 30% of the stakeholder participants understand the critical areas that could impact the ex-offenders' participation opportunities. A strategic curriculum model for the enhancement of the PSCEP degree and certification program was formulated toward the advancement of career capacity of ex-offenders. The overall recommendations produced from this study targeted goals such as making information relevant and straightforward; taking a hands-on approach to educating the offenders regarding PSCEP, including correctional staff, and establishing a curriculum continuum.

Keywords

Participatory action research, utilization-focused evaluation, case study, post-secondary correctional education, ex-offenders, collaborative action, curriculum strategies, ex-offender participation

How the audience will participate

Participation will include providing the audience an opportunity to actively participate in one of the participatory activities utilized within the reflective workshop in conducting the study. This method of participation is proposed to enable the audience be engaged in a collaborative action for knowledge production. Facilitation of this task will include sharing a handout with the audience that includes one of the activities conducted during the reflection workshop utilized for the study. The audience will be briefly facilitated through the steps of how the handout was utilized to engage the study participants. Participation will also occur in the form of group activities.

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Virtual Interactive Action Learning Circles' Model: A Usability Framework for Facilitating E-Focus Group Data Generation Process in Community-Based Participatory Research

A workshop by
Prof Emmanuel Tetteh
(Norwich University & Capella University, USA)

Abstract

This workshop is intended to introduce participants to the theoretical-based, pragmatic-focused, and usability-oriented frameworks of virtual interactive action learning (VIAL) circles' model for the facilitation of e-focus group data generation process in community-based participatory research (CBPR). Several of the data collection strategies developed over the years has proven to be beneficial for research investigation. However, given the proliferations of technology-rich innovation shaping academic studies through the open and distance learning platforms, does necessitate a suitable and robust online-based framework for the facilitation of data collection. While the VIAL circles' model is developed to be useful for the various approaches to action learning and action research, this workshop intends to explore its usability in the CBPR process. In recent years, an increasing interest has emerged across graduate-level institutional research in the use of the CBPR approach to redress the growing community-based issues in knowledge democracies, democratic governance, healthcare, welfare, public service, and social service enterprise systems. Research data constitute an unknown knowledge that needed to be generated and analyzed to shape the known knowledge of our empirical worldviews regarding social realities and actionable learning experiences. While such unknown knowledge reflects an uncharted terrain of our data worldviews, they are inherently responsive to the data epistemology of our known problems' resolution triggering an action-oriented human inquiry. In the quest for facilitating the action-oriented human inquiry, the framework for data generation is essential for collecting information-rich actionable learning experiences that can answer our data epistemology of known problems' resolution. Therefore, the VIAL circles framework is intended to mobilize participants to appreciate the dynamic power structure of collaborative action strategy structured by the cyclical role-defined process model, using telecomputer-mediated communications (TCMC) or web-based video conferencing collaboration solutions (WBVCCS) in facilitating online interviews and stakeholder discussions via the e-focus group data gathering process.

Keywords

Action learning, community-based participatory research, data generation, e-focus group, knowledge democracy, virtual interactive action learning (VIAL) circles

How the audience will participate

Purpose of workshop: As a practice-based collaborative action strategy for use in the CBPR process, the VIAL circles framework is thus intended to aid in conceptualizing measurable actions through an e-focus group data generation process. Through this practice-based collaborative action strategy, the use of the VIAL circles' model will help in examining ways that the facilitation of knowledge democracies, civic engagement, and democratic governance or association initiatives can or have been advanced by the action research approaches across higher education institutions and public policy projects.

What you will do: Introduce participants to the theoretical-based, pragmatic-focused, and usability-oriented frameworks of virtual interactive action learning (VIAL) circles' model for the



facilitation of e-focus group data generation process in community-based participatory research (CBPR). The VIAL circles' model will, therefore, provide a participant-centered action learning framework for the attendees of the workshop via a roundtable discussion to brainstorm problem-solving strategies on ways that knowledge democracies, civic engagement, and democratic governance or association can or have been promoted across the boundary of higher education institutions. The collaborative action strategy that is structured by the cyclical role-defined process model will comprise of cycles of two-dimensional processes: (a) three role responsibilities' model and (b) metaphor of "LEAP" model for the facilitation of the VIAL circles' processes.

How participants will be involved: AR/PAR/CBPR projects initiated across institutions of higher education will be collaboratively examined by the workshop participants to evaluate their contributions to knowledge democracies, civic engagement, and democratic governance or association using the abstracts of professional doctorate AR/PAR/CBPR projects published in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. The contributions will be collaboratively evaluated regarding ways that the ecology of knowledge production demonstrates the propensity for the facilitation of civic engagement and democratic governance or associations in the quest for building knowledge democracies across the boundary of higher education institutions. Excerpts and modification of four data epistemological inquiries raised in Tetteh's (2004) exploratory research project on Theories of Democratic Governance in the Institutions of Higher Education* will serve as a document review lens to aid in collaboratively examining the published AR projects' contributions in the construction of knowledge democracies. The data epistemology is the relationship between the action learning inquiry and our pressing known problems' resolution for which the unknown knowledge data are meant to be generated for data analysis and knowledge production of action deliverables.

What participants will learn: During the exploration of the unknown knowledge data, it is the suitability of data generation framework that can assist in the facilitation of knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, and knowledge transfer to aid the process of reaching information-rich data epistemology saturation. Often the limitation that threatens the data generation framework tends to implicate the prospects of generating information-rich data epistemology saturation. Some of these data generation framework limitations might include participants' inclination for struggling to be unobtrusive concerning data gathering, participants' verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Waltz, Strickland, & Lenz, 2010). It may also include lack of stakeholder interest for participation in the study, low responses from the participants, dispersed study participants' unwillingness to travel to a designated location for interview meetings, time and cost factor of the data collection, and inaccurate or bias responses. Several strategies are reported in the research literature to aid in minimizing such data collection limitations (Andrews, 2015; Czaja & Blair, 2005; Ice, 2004; Lefever, Dal, & Matthíasdóttir, 2007; Waltz et al., 2010). The VIAL circles' model is not intended to be a panacea for the minimization of data collection limitations because as Salthouse (2011) arguably posits "all data collection and analysis methods have limitations" (p. 796). However, the VIAL circles' model is deemed as one of the most suitable data generation usability frameworks, and will thus be introduced to contribute to shaping the knowledge base of the participants for the facilitation of e-focus group data collection process in CBPR process.

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Action Learning / Action Research for Organizational Advancements

Mobilising Health Professionals' Practical Knowing for Organisational Advancement in the Aftermath of Critical Incidents – Change through Action Research

A paper by

Dr Diana Austin

(Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand)

Assoc Prof Lesley Ferkins

(Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand)

Dr Jennie Swann

(Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand)

and

Dr Liz Smythe

(Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand)

Abstract

The need for improved organisational support to improve resilience and wellbeing of health professionals in the aftermath of critical incidents is well known, yet the evidence for effective strategies remains sparse (Seys et al., 2013). Health professionals, at National Women's Health, New Zealand, engaged in an action research study that developed, evaluated and implemented a tool that emulated the reality of their practice area. As the isolation of each individual's experience was exposed, shared and reflected upon, through the action cycles, a confidence developed among participants to collaboratively create solutions to their own problem.

The application of complexity theory, to make sense of the health professionals' experiences following a poor patient outcome, revealed that individuals displayed unsupportive behaviour as a result of following the prevailing organisational rules or assumptions; such as individuals are to blame for critical incidents, critical incidents are not talked about and showing emotion is a sign of weakness. As the multiple phases and cycles progressed, involving 50 participants, the rules began to change. Individuals were validated in their aim to provide the best care possible, they shared their personal stories of critical incidents and ultimately realised that showing emotion was normal following a critical incident. The rewriting of the organisation rules enabled local specialists to be mobilised, to come forward and contribute to a Critical Incident eBook that has now begun to change the way the community of health professionals in National Women's Health view critical incidents.

Keywords

Action research, critical incidents, change, complexity theory, health professional wellbeing

How the audience will participate

The participants will be asked to be part of three short group activities that align with the three phases of the study outlined above.

1. In pairs or small groups, one or two members will be asked to share an incident that was perceived as critical to them.
2. In the same groups members will share what they found helpful in such situations and identify common themes.



3. In a large group the presenter will facilitate a discussion on the impact of hearing another person's experience and how the shared experience altered their confidence to be more open about their own situation leading to shared problem solving. This will be aligned with the response of the health professionals in my study who had previously been isolated in their distress following critical incidents, now being willing to share their experiences in a public and supportive manner.

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In Search of Communicative Space: Exploring the Work of Specialist Organisational Development and Design Staff in the UK Civil Service

A paper by

Dr Gill Coleman

(Ashridge Executive Education at Hult International Business School, UK)

Marina Bolton

(UK Civil Service, UK)

Caroline Norgate

(UK Civil Service, UK)

and

Dr Kathleen King

(Ashridge Executive Education at Hult International Business School, UK)

Abstract

This paper reflects on the first 18 months of an ongoing action research project being conducted in a partnership between the UK Civil Service Organisational Development & Design Expert Service and action researchers at Ashridge Executive Education. The purpose of the project is to inquire into and articulate OD&D practice and value in relation to organisational culture change, under the overarching question: What is it that we can, and cannot, do in the service of enabling a more humane and high performing organisation?

OD&D staff have worked as co-researchers with the external AR team to explore this question, through cycles of action and reflection in small groups and conversations with colleagues. This was punctuated by large group meetings and the formation of a 'sense-making' sub-group, whose reflections form the basis of this paper.

We have been struck by how difficult it has been – even for skilled OD professionals - to establish a safe shared space in which serious reflection on practice can take place – what Kemmis (2001), following Habermas, calls a “communicative space”. It transpires, however, that this struggle in itself has been richly informative of the nature of the OD&D work in the current organisational environment, connecting what is ‘in here’ with what is ‘out there’.

Keywords

Action research, collaboration, communicative space, culture change, organisational development

How the audience will participate

We are very interested in the experience of others, concerning

- establishing the credibility of AR interventions inside organisations, and
- establishing the particular qualities of ‘communicative space’ when working with organisational co-researchers

We would like to invite our audience to reflect in pairs/threes on how they have worked with these aspects of AR, where research and organisational intervention meet, to hear their responses and to open discussion on these topics. We would be happy to facilitate this process.

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Participatory Action Research for Shared Services Support Program Improvement: Using Collaborative Management Process of Outcome-based Evaluative Case Study Framework

A workshop by
Christopher Sigle

(National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USA)

Abstract

This paper provides account of participatory action research (PAR) that helped public administrators at federal organization in Colorado find ways to improve its shared services support program (SSSP) while balancing its mission requirements with diminishing resources. The SSSP is intended to offer a mechanism for the restructuring of an organization such that can provide commonly needed amenities from within thereby obviating the duplication of services or outsourcing to external entities (Miskon, Fiel, Bandara & Gable, 2013). The SSSP is thus concerned with mission support that undergirds the work of numerous federal agencies with implications for funding and budgetary concerns (Lane, Evans & Matthews, 2016). However, working within existing resources, leaders have options for furthering public service excellence by leveraging social capital to enhance public value. The social capital refers to social networks include assets that may be used as an exchange in various forms of transactions (Lin, 2008). This proposal discusses the relationship between social capital and public value as it relates to public service excellence; however, there are implications for employee motivation, organizational design, and shared services efficacy. Using PAR case-study setting, the following areas were examined:

1. Extent to which the SSSP support primary scientific mission needs pertaining to research and development.
2. How the collaborative efforts of stakeholders' public values can be enhanced so as to contribute to the efficacy of mission support programs.
3. Ways that social capital plays a significant role in meeting or exceeding customer expectations leading to the patronage of SSSP.

Keywords

Participatory action research, action learning, collaborative leadership, public value, social capital, shared services, mission support

How the audience will participate

The audience interaction will be primarily through collaborative action learning framework using interactive discussion with the audience within a group setting. At the end of about 15 to 20-minute presentation, the audience will be asked to break off into small groups of 3-5 participants depending on the audience attendees. Each group will be presented with a set of critical action learning issues. After ten minutes of deliberating, each group will be asked to present, through one representative of their collective viewpoints that emerged from the group discussion. The anticipated response includes brief personal inputs and inclusive framing (audience experiential orientation) emphasizing how action learning and action research was evident throughout the study. Reflection and group discussion are key components to audience participation as follows:

- The significance of participatory action research will become clear to the audience following the presentation and subsequent discussion.



- The process for change management and sustainability by way of action research-driven process improvement will have been demonstrated.
- Audience members will be invited to participate in a short survey to allow them to reflect on the presentation and explore how their understanding of action research has been enhanced to include the potential for implementation in their professional settings.

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Social Inclusive Learning strategies: Towards Reciprocal Holistic Learning and Development through Engagement in Community-Higher Education Partnerships

A paper by

Dr Mots'elisi Malebese

(University of the Free State, South Africa)

and

Karen Venter

(University of the Free State, South Africa)

Abstract

This paper illustrates how a socially inclusive teaching strategy (SITS) and a Community-Based Participatory Action Research Service-Learning Approach, can change the quality of community livelihoods. The paper therefore, focusses on both the theoretical and practical applications of inclusive approaches, which essentially promotes transformational learning among all the involved stakeholders who are engaged, where even non-participants can greatly benefit from such practice. The major attributes of SITS, for the purpose of enhancing community livelihoods, are partnership, equity, social justice, reciprocity and mutual benefit. A constructivist and social constructionist, strength-based action research lens, with a transformative aim was used to guide the deliberations. The usefulness of this lens resides in the way it deals with issues of inclusivity, diversity, power, multiple realities and cultural differences inherent in engagements. These complex and multi-layered realities of engagements, requires a paradigm shift to improve the quality of community livelihoods which are fundamentally community-based participatory research service-learning oriented. This means that the success of inclusive research and learning strategies, will depend significantly on the diverse and multidimensional contributions of engaged participants. Data was thus generated through meetings, workshops, document analysis, interviews and focus group discussions; and analysed with inductive content analysis. It seems that the significance of social inclusive learning strategies includes holistic and transformative learning, as a result of collective, critical and creative thinking, leading to emancipation of all participants.

Keywords

Social inclusive learning; community-based participatory action research; service-learning; reciprocity; emancipation

How the audience will participate

The following question will be used as a discussion starter:

- Are you including hospitality as a humanitarian element in the practice of your engaged scholarship?

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Blockchain Technology Implications in Facilitating an End of Identity Theft for Organizational Advancement: Using Systems Thinking Approach in Action Research

A workshop by
Kim Einar Sassaman
(Norwich University, USA)

Abstract

Blockchain technology, which has been acknowledged as the underlying systemic immutability in the use of Cryptocurrencies, provides a whole new world of possibilities to safeguard organizational Intellectual property, individual privacy rights and remove “middlemen” organizations from common trust models. Through the use of systems thinking approach, this presentation will challenge individuals to think outside of the box, embrace an emerging technology that can revolutionize every single industry that is dependent on transactional systems such as Healthcare, Finance, Manufacturing and even the operationalization of military activities. The management of organizational vitality in the initiation of systemic changes for tackling the increasing challenges of identity thefts suggests that the application of soft systems methodology (SSM) in action research (AR) might be helpful. The logic of SSM approach is thus viewed as structured within the framework of systems thinking in AR for tackling the perceived ill-structured identity thefts problems in organizations. Therefore, by using the systems thinking approach, the implications of Blockchain technologies can be perceived as being incubated promise to help reduce the instances of identity theft, reduce harm to patients in healthcare, and allow an individual to truly own their “digital self.” As we continue to march forward in a hyper-connected world, we need to innovate security models of the past into a private and secure future.

Keywords

Blockchain technology, encryption, identity theft, information security systems, systems thinking approach, action research, action learning, soft systems methodology

How the audience will participate

Using an action learning technique at an interactive roundtable discussion in texting survey to build word diagrams. In the group setting, the participants will be given a scenario of the problem to solve via a handout of group exercise to innovate one application either real or theoretical. Thus, at the end of about 15 to 20-minute presentation, the participants will be broken into small groups of 5 participants depending on the audience attendees. Each group will be presented with an action learning blockchain problem scenario to collaborate in working together to formulate a solution. After about ten minutes of collaborative action learning approach to problem solving, each group will be asked to “report to the presenter” via technology word cloud of their collective viewpoints that emerged from the group discussion.

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The Flourishing of School Principals: An Action Research Study

A paper by

Dr John Molineux

(Deakin University, Australia)

Dr Adam Fraser

(The Energy Factory, Australia)

and

Bob Willetts

(Berry Public School, NSW Department of Education, Australia)

Abstract

An action research project involving 24 primary school principals is the subject of this paper. The principals participated in a nine month program focused on improving their wellbeing and performance at work. A small group of principals led by the third author initiated the program, which was facilitated by the second author, and the research component was conducted by the first author. The research consisted of a ten-day diary study and interview, and a baseline survey at the commencement of the program. Twelve months later and after the program was completed, a further five-day diary study and evaluation survey were conducted. Results indicated a significant improvement over the year in wellbeing, work-home boundary strength, with less interruptions, lower stress, higher productive time and improved recovery at work.

Keywords

Action research, wellbeing, performance, work-family balance, positive psychology, flow

How the audience will participate

Participation will arise from reflection on some key topics arising from the action research process described in the presentation. These would include:

- The importance of participants initiating an action research intervention.
- The sustainability of changes made following an action research intervention.
- Lessons for future programs from feedback given by the participants.
- The impact of key features of the program, such as: recovery and relaxation; positive psychology and mindfulness; work-life balance and work-home separation.

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Action Research for Reshaping the Space of Encounter between Jewish and Arab Students

A paper by

Prof Victor Friedman

(Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel)

Dr Javier Simonovich

(Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel)

Nizar Bitar

(Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel)

and

Israel Sykes

(Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel)

Abstract

This paper describes the use of action research to foster system-wide change in relations between Jewish and Palestinian Arabs students at a college in Israel. The college is a “natural space of encounter” in which students from two conflicting groups, which normally inhabit separate spheres, meet, often for the first time, for an extended period of time. Outright hostility is rare, but students tend to voluntarily segregate and interact only when necessary. In the fall of 2014, the Dean of Students, the Director of the Unit for the Advancement of Arab Students, the Action Research Center for Social Justice, and a group of faculty members began three initiatives to reshape this space of encounter: courses in which students from both groups study and influence their spaces of encounter using action research, fields trips which students plan and carry out together so as to learn about each other’s communities, and mixed teams for academic projects. These proved successful, so we encouraged other faculty, students, and administrators to start their own initiatives and today there are over 14 – and the number is growing. We used participatory goal-setting to connect these initiatives into a larger whole and created a “learning space” in which participants in the initiatives engage in on-going cooperative inquiry and “self-in-field” action research to address two questions: (1) What can we learn from each other about fostering a positive natural space of encounter? (2) How do we leverage the local initiatives into system-wide change?

Keywords

Action research, conflict transformation, social space, cooperative inquiry, field theory

How the audience will participate

At various points throughout the paper, we will pause and ask how, if at all, our experience and action research resonates with the participants. Participants will also be encouraged to ask question as well as give feedback and suggestions.

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The Ethical Implications of Community-based Research: Rethinking Current Review Board Requirements

A workshop by
Prof Lesley Wood
(North-West University, South Africa)

Abstract

Researchers need to provide evidence that they have met ethical requirements before entering the field – and rightly so, since the power and privilege embedded in academic researchers is considerable. However, given the calls for universities to decolonize and democratize research, we need to question if the ethical norms developed to cater for objective, researcher-driven enquiries are appropriate and sufficient to ensure ethical conduct for qualitative designs that are more subjective, participatory and community-based. In this workshop, I will argue for the need to rethink the standards against which ethics boards evaluate community-based research projects and suggest some ways this could be done. Participants will be actively involved in contributing their ideas and in designing an action plan to take them forward.

Keywords

Action research, ethics, participatory research, decolonization, knowledge democracy

How the audience will participate

Purpose of workshop: This workshop will provide space for participants to discuss ways to advocate for change in how higher education institutions conduct ethical reviews for community-based and participatory forms of research.

What you will do: I will present some ideas on why and how ethical processes could be rethought, and then ask participants to discuss and present their ideas and responses, using drawing as a participatory method

How participants will be involved: They will have to discuss and present their ideas and highlight some action steps they could take to attain their visions

What participants will learn: Participants will learn how to propose and advocate for changes to current ethical processes.

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Using Participatory Action Research to Engage and Retain Students in Higher Education: It's the People that Matter

A symposium by
Alex Nakonechnyi
(Mount Saint Joseph University, USA)
and
Rebecca Allen
(University of Cincinnati, USA)

Abstract

Student engagement and retention needs to be a high priority of higher education administration. Implicitly, students are promised a degree and better life, but in many contexts, only about half of students will finish their degree.

Most student engagement research and measurement is geared towards traditional students, even though today's students are overwhelmingly non-traditional students with complex needs. Thus, calls have been made for more holistic, contextualized understanding of engagement. This session features two participatory action research studies designed to understand specific student populations' reasons for non-completion and develop and employ interventions to address the understood needs. Two distinct studies will be presented:

1. Within graduate educational studies programs, the low completion rates of students are a reality that is little discussed. Using PAR with risk mapping and modified storytelling, this study sheds light on what our group of Educational Studies PhD students request administrators do to help them finish their degrees.
2. In the undergraduate context, loneliness is a prevalent problem on campuses. This lack of community also contributes to student dropout. This Participatory Action Research study shows a technological innovation developed by students for students that enables students to organically build their own communities and networks, and has ultimately impacted the campus retention climate.

Common to the findings in both studies is the need to provide students with the opportunity to develop robust relationships and support networks in ways compatible with their complex personal and academic demands.

Importantly, this symposium will solicit active audience participation in sharing ideas that could further efforts to retain students in the context of higher education.

Keywords

Participatory action research (PAR), student engagement, higher education, educational studies doctoral students, non-traditional students, student retention

How the audience will participate

Undergraduate Student Study. Elements of the photovoice project and the actual app will be interactively shown. Feedback on how the app may possibly work (or not work) in the audience's own context will be sought.



Educational Studies Doctoral Student Study: Interactive audience participation will be requested: written, live audience feedback will be obtained through smart phone driven participation tools. Feedback from the audience is vital in aiding the graduate students in translating their needs into actionable steps.

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Insider Action Research – Undertaking an Action Research Change Project in Your Own Organisation

A workshop by
Dr John Molineux
(Deakin University, Australia)

Abstract

The workshop will cover a range of issues associated with insider action research (IAR), which is undertaking an action research project within your own organisation. It will cover: the processes used in IAR; the use of pre-existing knowledge about the organisation and its advantages and disadvantages; operating with dual roles of employee and researcher; dealing with organisational politics and ethical issues; a focus on the change context; utilising different levels of participation and collaboration; delivering outcomes for both research and organisation change; and embedding systemic change. A case study will be used to illustrate many of these issues.

The workshop will cover theory from David Coghlan and others (e.g. Coghlan & Brannick (2015); Holian & Coghlan (2013); Coghlan & Shani (2014)), but use examples from my own experience and research (e.g. Molineux (2013) and Molineux (2014)).

Keywords

Insider action research, organisational change

How the audience will participate

Purpose of workshop: For participants to learn about the processes and issues involved in undertaking a change project within their organisation using action research.

What you will do: Present some ideas and facilitate a series of conversations about insider action research issues such as pre-existing knowledge, undertaking dual roles, managing politics, ethical considerations, and embedding change.

How participants will be involved: They will engage in conversations about the above topics, plus contribute ideas in how best to undertake insider AR in organisations.

What participants will learn: Processes to work with insider action research, understanding of important issues to take into account when undertaking insider AR, and ideas on making the most out of the experience.

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Supportive Systems Techniques Used in Process Management for Nontraditional Leadership Development of Nonprofit Aspiring Executives' Capacity Building: Exploratory-Interpretive Case Study

A workshop by
Kan Ottah
(Capella University, USA)

Abstract

This paper presents the supportive systems techniques used in the process management of nontraditional leadership development in the capacity building of aspiring executives or leadership development who are seeking higher management leadership roles. Organizational incoming leaders are positioning to replace long-time leaders or retiring nonprofit sector leaders have been perceived to lack the supportive systems techniques of nontraditional leadership development skills and training needed to lead employees and manage resources effectively. This symposium presentation is designed to create an understanding of the supportive systems techniques that characterize the process management for professional development of aspiring nonprofit executives used in capacity building of critical leadership skills and management of networking functions toward organizational sustainability. The qualitative exploratory-interpretive case study design was used to generate data through surveys, document review analysis, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The supportive systems techniques used for process management in the capacity building of incoming organizational leaders or aspiring executives include: (a) vision and leadership empowerment, (b) performance and feedback, (c) efficiency and conflict management, and (d) effective communication on leadership development roles that involved leadership development motivation or persuasion, collaboration, consultation, and encouragement or empowerment.

Keywords

Process management, supportive systems techniques, nontraditional leadership development, aspiring executives, capacity building, exploratory-interpretive case study

How the audience will participate

The audience interaction will be primarily through collaborative action learning framework using interactive discussion with the audience within a group setting. At the end of about 15 to 20-minute presentation, the audience will be asked to break off into small groups of 4-6 participants depending on the audience attendees. Each group will be presented with supportive techniques issues. After ten minutes of deliberating, each group will be asked to present, through one representative of their collective viewpoints that emerged from the group discussion. The anticipated response includes brief personal inputs and audience viewpoints emphasizing how the group agree or disagree with the expectations of the leadership development of process management supportive systems techniques. Reflection and group discussion are key components for audience participation.

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Action Learning / Action Research for Global Initiatives

PAR, Peacebuilding, and Cognitive Justice

A paper by

Dr Illana Lancaster

(United States Institute of Peace, USA)

and

Dr Felix Bivens

(Empyrean Research, USA)

Abstract

To elevate the role of youth in research and peace and security agenda-setting, United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has implemented a 12-month pilot to strengthen the capacity of Kenyan youth leaders to implement PAR processes within their communities. This paper explores how USIP facilitated a pilot project in Kenya in which PAR was employed as a mechanism to engage youth in community-led peacebuilding. The project's aim was to create engagement and strengthen the discourse around the United Nations' youth, peace, and security (YPS) agenda by providing mechanisms for knowledge democracy/cognitive justice and knowledge cogeneration in a way that simultaneously provided specific and practical mechanisms to engage citizens in marginalized communities at the grassroots level. Though PAR has not historically been used in the peacebuilding space, based on the experience and outcomes of this Kenyan pilot project, this paper argues that PAR is a viable and effective approach for peacebuilding and should be given consideration by other practitioners as way forward in operationalizing inclusive, community-led peacebuilding efforts.

Keywords

Peacebuilding, youth, PAR, cognitive justice/knowledge democracy

How the audience will participate

Learning circle on opportunities and challenges in working with youth-led research in marginalized contexts.

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Modernist and Post-Modernist System Thinking Implications: A Learning History Inquiry into Social System Movements, Education Philosophy, and Development Ethics

A paper by
Kal Demerew
(Norwich University, USA)

Abstract

Undergirding the premise of learning history inquiry is the system thinking stance that one of the unintended consequences of Marxist social engineering was the loss of thousands of years' worth of organic cultural capital, under the guise of modernism. The social system movements of the 60s and 70s were perceived to have had little respect for societal tradition, deeming as 'backward' any aspect of systemic culture that was not rooted in the material progress and secularism systems of society. Nowhere was this systemic culture more prevalent than in the Ancient African nation-state of Ethiopia, where Marxist materialist interpretations of progress chipped away at a 2,000 year-old Classical Education system based on local Judeo-Christian traditions. This collaborative system thinking persuasion is conceived as having allowed Ethiopia to exist as a cohesive independent state for thousands of years, as the only African country to do so. Through the investigative tool of learning history inquiry, the loss of these societal traditions and educational motifs meant that Ethiopia no longer had the competitive advantage to offer something different in today's global marketplace of ideas. Today, Ethiopia, for example, is steeped in Marxist revisionism of culture and ethno-national identity, and in real danger of descending into the systemic ethnic conflict. A transition of education and public discourse from modernism to post-modernism system thinking, the kind that has resulted in cultural decadence in the West, is hardly what Ethiopia needs at this time. Instead, Ethiopia should look to its own past, carving a new nation-state grounded in an education system that combines a humanities curriculum rooted in local cultural history with an intensive STEM curriculum imported from the West. Indeed, such a hybrid system may be more difficult to implement in African states which do not have a deep indigenous philosophical traditions. Still, inculcating development discourse with a perspective that considers Classical education would serve to move the focus away from modernist conceptions such as nominal economic growth and towards a more holistic ethical approach that encompasses human dignity and empowerment.

Keywords

Classical education, learning history inquiry, system thinking approach, culture and education, international development, cultural marxism

How the audience will participate

The method employed to engage the audience will be collaborative action. At the end of the 20-minute presentation, audience members will be asked to break off into small groups of 5-7 participants. Each group will be presented with a set of critical issues pertaining to development ethics, education planning, and social movements. After ten minutes of deliberating, each group will be asked to present, through one representative, their positions on which of the three philosophies is best-suited for guiding education development policy in the West, and in developing countries. (Additional features may be incorporated depending on audience and venue.)

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Learning History Inquiry into National Defense Policy: Using Soft Systems Thinking to Assess the Impact of Militarization upon Egalitarianism

A paper by
Joseph Williams
(Norwich University, USA)

Abstract

Using soft systems methodology (SSM), this learning history inquiry first analyzed the Guns versus Butter theory for implications of social policy change and then determined the effects of militarization upon egalitarianism at the national level. Learning history inquiry suggests that defense spending did not impact in a statistically significant manner upon social spending, and “Guns and Butter” seems more appropriate than the Guns Versus Butter theory. Militarization of national defense policies, even when considering state (external) fragility, significantly, profoundly and negatively impacted systems of egalitarianism especially when considering levels of arms imports. As a means to mitigate unintended moral and ethical consequences and to better understand the overwhelming complexities uncovered in this action research, “guns and butter” and egalitarianism should be two of many frameworks that guide, shape and impact upon the objectives, goals, and militarization of national defense policy systems.

Keywords

Defense policy, egalitarianism, defense spending, military industrial complex, iron triangle, guns versus butter, soft systems methodology, learning history inquiry

How the audience will participate

1. Verbal interaction: I will implore the audience to embrace the participatory and continuous principles of action research in order to enhance the collective understanding of national defense systems and to contribute collaboratively to this action research.
2. I intend to employ a technique of collaborative learning and problem solving. The audience will be divided into small groups, each with markers and large paper available for their use. My presentation will be broken into small sections, and the groups will respond to a leading question for several minutes (~5 minute). Group leaders will write the responses. After each section, the groups rotate while each group leader remains to in-brief their new groups (~1 minute). The next section of the presentation continues the cycle until completion, and each rotation starts a new sheet of paper with only the key points from the previous group. At the end, a short time is given to each group to present their collaboratively developed solutions (~3 minutes for as many groups as time allows). This method provides maximum exposure and dialogue while demanding active participation from the audience.

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“Methodological incursions in adverse territories”: Critical Action Research, Capacity Development and Other Attempts to Extend Epistemology in International Development

A workshop by
Dr Alfredo Ortiz Aragón
(University of the Incarnate Word, USA)
Raphael Hoetmer
(Amnesty International, Peru)
and
Juan Carlos Giles Macedo
(Independent consultant, Peru)

Abstract

Premise

I (Alfredo) first heard “incursiones metodológicas en territorios adversos” from my co-action researcher in Peru, Juan Carlos Giles, who was using the term to describe the capacity building work we were doing with a Belgian NGO’s Peruvian office (led by Rapha Hoetmer) that actively supports community development and resilience in areas adversely affected by large-scale mining in Peru. The term is a tongue-in-cheek way of describing attempts to bring complexity and critical participatory approaches to development work—even when these may not be what many development funders are expecting! “Adverse territories” refers both to conservative, often a-political understandings of methodology by those who fund international “development”, and to the complex and contested nature of social change processes in which practitioners and researchers intervene in international development. The Belgian NGO gave us important space to make methodological incursions, while still expecting we maintain some level of dialogue with donor mandated planning mechanisms.

Doubts

We have attempted different types of *incursions in adverse territories*, including Outcome Mapping and Theory of Change hybrids based in complexity theory, complexity “aware” capacity development, embodied reflection in planning processes, artistic expression and other methods that extend epistemology “beyond the matrix”. We know many others have too, including by utilizing many variants of AR, developmental evaluation, and other participatory methods. But we have serious doubts about our or anyone’s ability to maintain a critical/appreciative participatory worldview and practice, while recognizing the need to be pragmatic and “have impact” in the development industry. For example, do artistic, nonlinear, embodied, reflective, “power aware”, “creative” ways of knowing really pave new pathways to development practice, or do they simply release pressure and leave dominant practice unchallenged? How hard, really, are we trying to take an epistemological stand and what can we learn from each other’s experiences in doing so?

Keywords

Methodological incursions, ways of knowing, critical methodology

How the audience will participate

Purpose of workshop: Our desire as workshop organizers was simply to share some of our own attempts at methodological incursions with others who also see themselves as “incursionists”, so that we might learn from each other. The proposed event poses the following questions:



- How are action researchers making methodological incursions and what are the implicit and explicit theories of change in their approaches?
- What is our understanding of the adverse or enabling territories in which we as action researchers work and how are we shaped by or do we shape these territories?
- How do our action research approaches enable and constrain participation and “good change” and in what ways might we go further in our approaches?

What you will do:

- 1) We'll start with some senti-cuerpo-pensante (embodied) method that illustrates the concept of methodological incursions
- 2) We will share a presentation of what we mean by methodological incursions, and examples of how we have made these incursions and what we have learned from doing so
 - a. This will include sharing the results of a previous workshop we did on this same theme a couple of years back at IDS.
- 3) We'll break the participants into groups to share their own stories of incursions
- 4) We'll harvest ideas from the group work and create a typology of incursions (e.g. incursions that increase participation; that access ways of knowing differently; that problematize power relationships, etc.)
- 5) We'll have a plenary discussion on how we might do more to advance methodological risk taking in AR for social change

How participants will be involved: See steps 3-5.

What participants will learn:

- How action researchers are making methodological incursions, and the implicit and explicit theories of change that underlie their approaches.
- Increased understanding of the adverse or enabling territories in which we as action researchers work and how we are shaped by and shape these territories.
- How our action research approaches enable and constrain participation and “good change” and ways in which we might we go further in our approaches

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Poster Presentations

Action Learning / Action Research Experiences of Individuals

Reflective Participation and Co-Learning to Achieve a Partnership with Potential Users of Fall-Prevention Exergames in the e-Balance Project

Dr Ingrid From, Dalarna University, Sweden
and
Prof Anna Arbers, Dalarna University, Sweden

Action Learning / Action Research for Communities' Development

Post-Secondary Correctional Education Program Usefulness of Ex-Offenders' Participation: A Utilization-Focused Evaluative Case Study Used With Participatory Action Research Framework

Pamela Carey, Capella University, USA

Action Learning / Action Research for Organizational Advancements

Social Inclusive Learning strategies: Towards reciprocal holistic learning and development through engagement in Community-Higher Education Partnerships

Dr Mots'elisi Malebese, University of the Free State, South Africa
and
Karen Venter, University of the Free State, South Africa

Process Management of Nontraditional Leadership Development for Nonprofit Organizations Aspiring Executives: Exploratory –Interpretive Case Study

Kan Ottah, Capella University, USA

Participatory action research for shared services support program improvement: Using collaborative management process of outcome-based evaluative case study framework

Christopher Sigle, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USA

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