



Making Waves

Action research as transformation: Doctoral candidates' perception shifts through action research coursework

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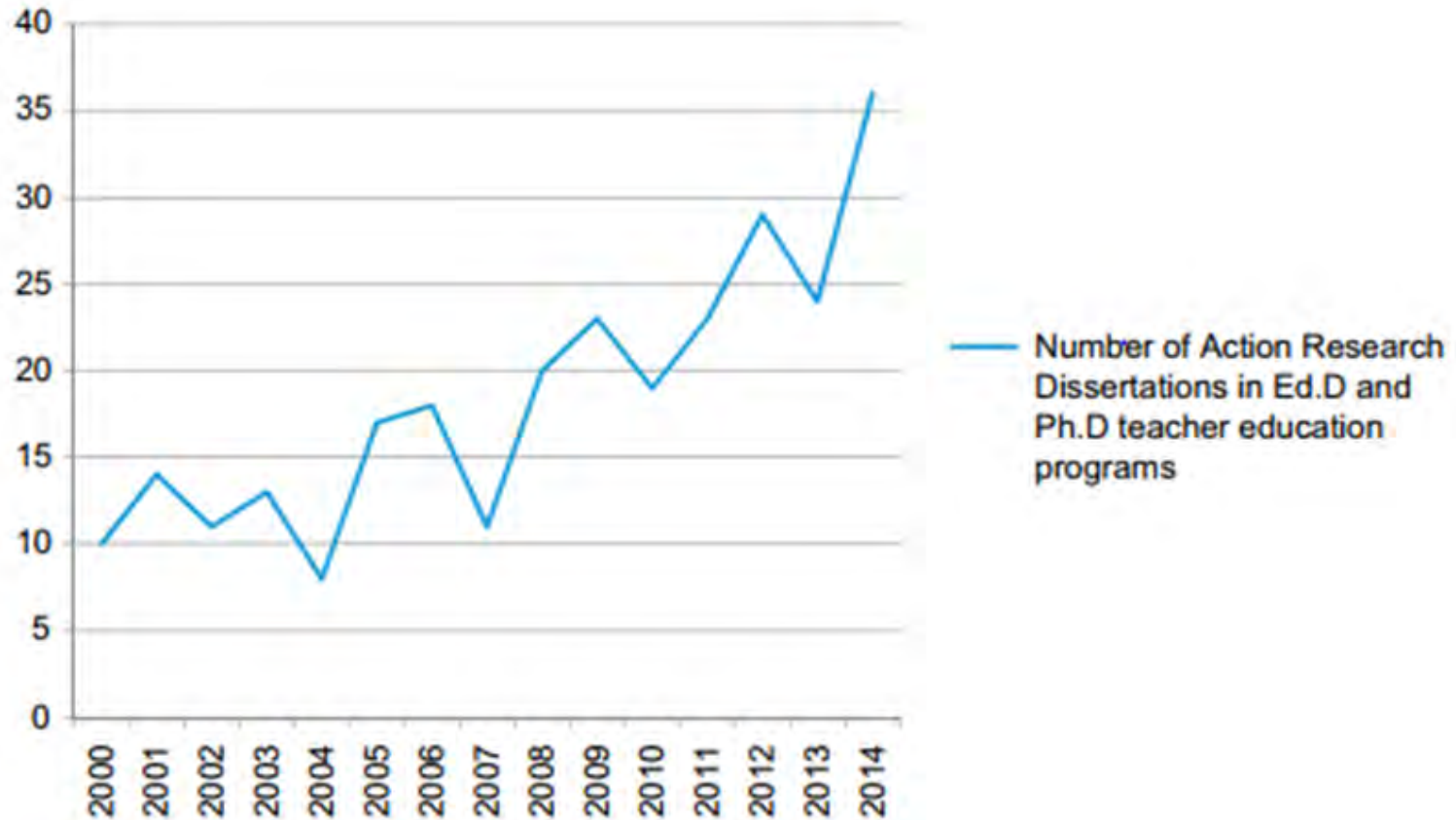
Action Research within doctoral programs

Question: How is action research being integrated in doctoral programs from your university?

- As a course
- As a capstone experience
- As multiple courses
- As a dissertation option
- As a foundational theory/guiding stance

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AR and dissertations



Growth in action research dissertations and theses from 2000-2014. Reprinted from "Action research in graduate teacher education: A review of the literature 2000-2015," by Vaughan, M. & Burnaford, G., 2015, *Educational Action Research*, 24, p. 293.

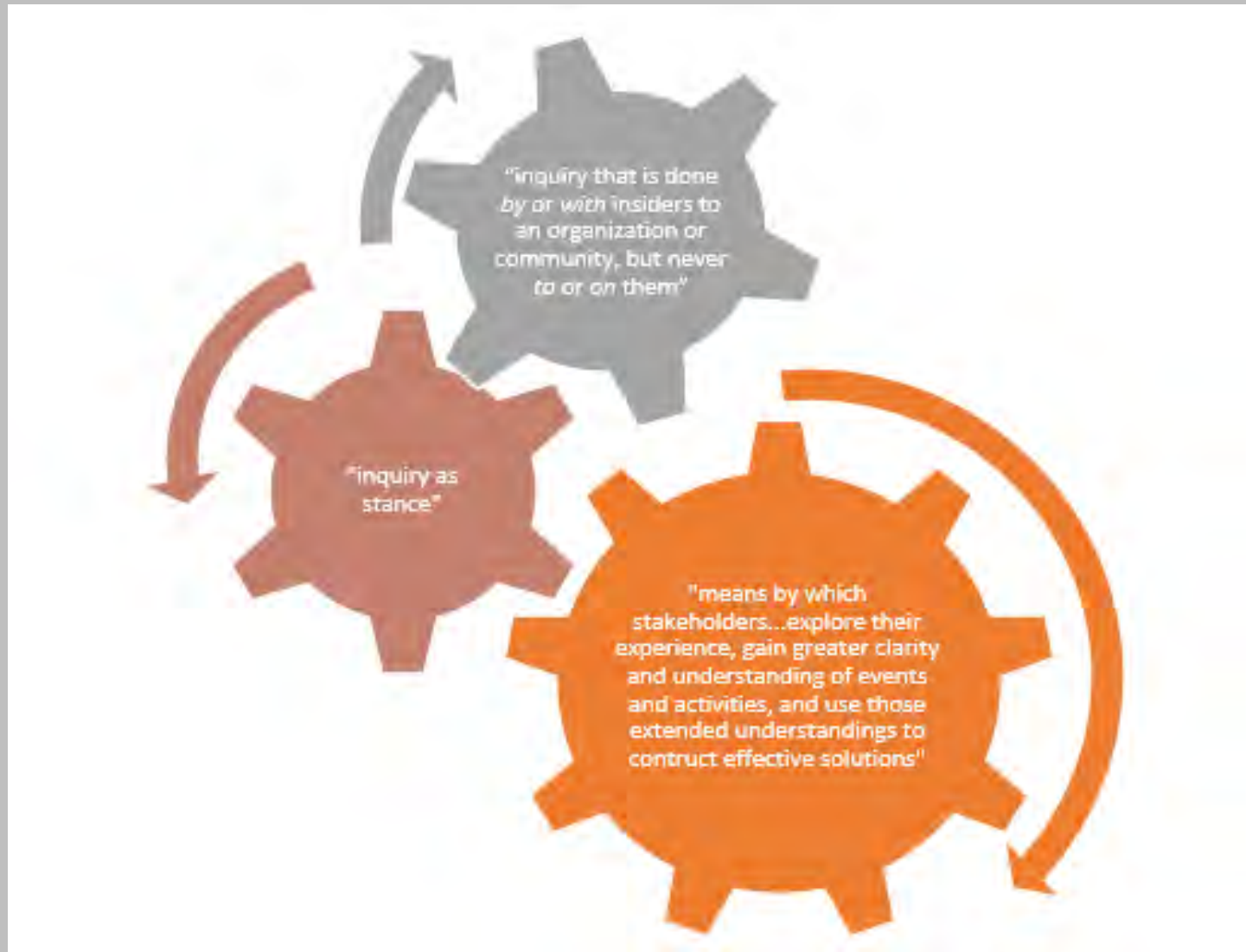
How the disconnect between teachers and research manifests in a doctoral program



- ❑ Contextual familiarity
- ❑ Research focus
- ❑ Language disconnect

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Conceptual Framework: AR as a vehicle for advocacy



EDF 6918: Action Research in the Schools and Communities



- Capstone graduate course in M.Ed
 - Offered twice a year in 15 weeks sessions
 - Fully online (doctoral strand with 4 face-to-face meetings)
 - Course requires full action research project broken up into four milestone assignments
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- Introduction and problem statement
 - Literature review
 - Methodology and findings
 - Discussion and reflection

Study details:

Research Question. How do the perceptions of doctoral candidates enrolled in an action research course shift related to the methods, purposes, and uses of action research as they prepare for their dissertations?

Participants. Seven doctoral students were invited to be part of a “doctoral strand” that included four face-to-face meetings in addition to online coursework. All doctoral students had varied areas of specializations within their program.

Research team. Research team consisted of instructor and two doctoral students also enrolled in the course.

Data collected. Course assignments were collected (final research papers) and written reflections from doctoral students and instructor following each doctoral strand meeting.

Data analysis. Analysis took place at the conclusion of the semester. All names were removed from assignments and reflections, and coding was completed and negotiated as a group throughout analysis.

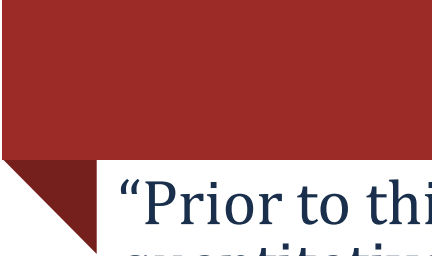


RESULTS

Shifts experiences by students


- A shift in their own identities as researchers through connections and challenges experienced
- A shift in their knowledge about action research and its applications in their own field and beyond
- A shift in their perception of the methodology and its value as a form of research

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“Prior to this course I have only been exposed to quantitative research...I now view action research as an extremely flexible tool that can be used in a variety of settings. It was in one of our first discussion boards that I started to see the wide range of applications or questions that action research can help answer.”

“the transformative potential of action research, equipping teachers with the power to change policy and solve those problems.”



“Action research absolutely has a place in a doctoral program. I am more confident in identifying my own practice to study and focus on improvements”

“Action research has helped me to think about my own dissertation on a smaller scale and break down the multiple aspects that are put into a dissertation topic.”



AR “offers the opportunity for reflective and critical practice amongst multicultural educators who have chosen to critique their own practice.”

“likewise, action research has the potential to challenge the dominant power structure, providing a voice to those who are impacted by top-down policies.”



Why is this transformational?

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For programs:

- What does it mean to educate educational researchers?
- Reflection on the role of the researcher
- Exposure to additional methodologies

For students:

- Safe places to do meaningful self-selected research
- Options for dissertation methodology

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THANK YOU!
