

The SAGE Encyclopedia of

ACTION RESEARCH

David Coghlan and Mary Brydon-Miller
Editors



THE SAGE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
ACTION RESEARCH

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VOLUME 1

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ACTION RESEARCH

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Reader's Guide

The Reader's Guide categorizes each entry in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research* into themes and is provided to assist readers in locating and quickly perusing multiple entries on related topics.

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About the General Editors

David Coghlan is an action research scholar and an adjunct professor at the School of Business, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, and a Fellow Emeritus of the college. He specializes in organization development and action research and is active in both communities internationally. He has published over 80 articles and book chapters. Recent co-authored books include *Organizational Change and Strategy* (2006) and *Collaborative Strategic Improvement Through Network Action Learning* (2011). He is the co-editor of the four-volume set *Fundamentals of Organization Development* (SAGE, 2010) and the proposed four-volume set *Action Research in Business and Management* (SAGE, 2015). He has recently published the fourth edition of his internationally popular *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* (SAGE, 2014). He is currently on the editorial boards of the following journals: *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *Action Research*, *Action Learning: Research and Practice*, *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, *Journal of Management Education*, *Irish Journal of Management* and *The OD Practitioner*, among others.

Mary Brydon-Miller directs the University of Cincinnati's Action Research Center and is Professor of Educational and Community-Based Action Research in the Educational Studies programme in the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services. She is a participatory action researcher who conducts work in both school and community settings. Her recent publications focus on the development of new frameworks for understanding research ethics in community settings, including chapters in the *Handbook of Social Research Ethics* and *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research*. She is a member of the editorial board of *Action Research* and has co-edited special issues of the journal on Ethics and Action Research and Arts-Based Action Research. She is also a member of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics and a former member of the faculty of the Poynter Center's Teaching Research Ethics workshop. She recently completed a Fulbright Research Fellowship at Keele University in the UK, where her work focused on developing new strategies to inform the ethical conduct of community-based research. She earned her Ph.D. in environmental psychology from the University of Massachusetts in 1984.

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Davydd J. Greenwood is the Goldwin Smith Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University, where he has served as a faculty member since 1970. A corresponding member of the Spanish Royal Academy of Moral and Political Sciences since 1996, he served as the John S. Knight Professor and director of the Mario Einaudi Center from 1983 to 1995 and as director of the Cornell Institute for European Studies from 2000 to 2008. His work centres on action research, political economy, ethnic conflict, community and regional development and neo-liberal reforms

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About the Editorial Board

Bob Dick is an independent scholar and an occasional academic and consultant. He has been a practitioner and an academic for most of the past 40 years and continues to work in both fields. In both, he uses concepts and processes from action research, action learning and community and organization development to help people improve their work, learning and life. As he does so, he uses action research to improve his own practice. He resides in Brisbane's leafy western suburbs with the love of his life, Camilla.

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Patricia Gaya is a senior lecturer in the Department of Management at the University of Bristol. Her work brings together philosophies of action and inquiry with the fields of management, organization and sustainability. She is especially interested in the ways we nurture, embody and enact our own sense of agency and activism—whether in organizations or communities—and in the creative, spiritual and holistic means by which we might develop our consciousness of our participation within a sacred planetary system. She is an associate editor of the journal *Action Research* and

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Rajesh Tandon is an internationally acclaimed leader and practitioner of participatory research and development. He is the founder-president of Participatory Research in Asia and co-chair of UNESCO Chair on Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education. He has contributed to the emergence of several local, national and international groups and initiatives to promote participatory development of societies. He has also authored more than

100 articles, a dozen books and numerous training manuals on democratic governance, civic engagement, civil society, governance and management of NGOs, participatory research and people-centered development. He received his Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, USA.

Juanjuan Zhao is a doctoral candidate in educational studies at the University of Cincinnati, USA. Her research interests include educational action research, international and comparative education and second language studies. As a language instructor, she has been using and studying action research in teaching second languages (i.e. English and Chinese). She is currently working on her dissertation, looking at the experiences of international language teachers teaching in US classrooms, in which Confucianism is used as a theoretical perspective to explain the cultural and educational differences that teachers have experienced.

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Introduction

Welcome to *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research*. This encyclopedia was designed primarily for readers new to the theory and practice of action research. But we have been reminded in doing this work that we are all new readers to some part of the vast geographical and disciplinary territory of action research, so we are confident that these volumes will bring new knowledge, questions and surprises to everyone reading them.

Putting this encyclopedia together has been an action research project in itself. While clearly, editing any encyclopedia is a large project, we think that this one is particularly complex in terms of the diversity and scope of subjects that could be included. We ourselves are rooted in different areas within action research. David works in the area that typically explores subjects like organizational change, while Mary comes out of a more community-based Participatory Action Research background and now works in the area of education. The two of us coming together to collaborate in co-editing this encyclopedia was itself an adventure and a learning experience for both of us as we began to plot the length, breadth, height and depth of this exciting approach to action research. So we trawled through our contacts, colleagues and friends to build a team and attempt the impossible—that is, to try to capture the whole and the heart of this diverse field.

What we hoped to accomplish in putting together this encyclopedia was to contribute to the ongoing effort to bring together the myriad histories, contributors, theoretical frameworks, methods and practices that make up the world—and we mean this literally—of action research. SAGE Publications has from the start been a key partner in this effort—first by publishing the *Handbook of Action Research* and since then through their ongoing support of the journal *Action Research* and through their extensive range of books on action research in particular settings. We see this encyclopedia as the next important contribution to that

effort to create and sustain a vibrant action research community.

Defining Action Research

One challenge in writing this introduction is in developing a suitably inclusive definition of the term *action research*. Multiple traditions have created their own versions of action research, and as a result, there are a variety of labels used to identify specific aspects of what we now collectively refer to as action research. We think that across the various expressions and disciplinary homes, however, all the definitions would, at their core, agree that *action research* is a term that is used to describe a global family of related approaches that integrate theory and action with the goal of addressing important organizational, community and social issues together with those who experience them. It focuses on the creation of areas for collaborative learning and the design, enactment and evaluation of liberating actions through combining action and reflection, in an ongoing cycle of co-generative knowledge. Another way to think about this is that it is really a shared-values stance founded on a commitment to generating knowledge through democratic practice in the pursuit of positive social change.

Looking Forward, Looking Back

This encyclopedia is, in part, an attempt to capture the often unrecognized history of action research—going back as far as Aristotle and Confucius, among many others. One aspect of this is in tracing the early history of relationships that continue to inform and animate our practice—like the relationship between the Danish folk high school movement and the founding of the then Highlander Folk School in 1932, or the connections between the work of Kurt Lewin, the Tavistock Institute and today's work on organization development and change.

Looking to the future, we have attempted to include entries on emerging trends, both theoretical and methodological. There has been a dramatic increase in research output and adoption related to action research in universities as well as non-academic settings over the past few decades. This is now an area of high popularity among researchers and practitioners from various fields—especially business and organization studies, education, health care, nursing, development studies, and social and community work. This encyclopedia brings together the many strands of action research and addresses the interplay between these disciplines by presenting a state-of-the-art overview and a comprehensive breakdown of the key tenets and methods of action research, as well as detailing the work of the major theorists and significant contributors to action research.

How to Use *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research*

There are probably two primary ways of using this encyclopedia. The obvious way is to follow your own questions, that is, to look up topics that are of interest to you or subjects about which you need information for particular purposes. Here, you can find a topic alphabetically, read the entry and learn where to go for further, more detailed information. Each entry has a ‘See also’ section, under which are listed other entries in the encyclopedia that relate to or in some way connect to the entry you’ve just read. Each entry also includes a list of further readings supplied by the author with the idea of providing you with opportunities to connect to the primary sources and key discussions of the topic. If there is a particular question or area of action research you wish to investigate, you might also want to consult the Reader’s Guide. This is a general list of the entries grouped under common headings; for example, under ‘Ethics’ you can find all the entries that explore that topic. Other headings in the Reader’s Guide will direct you to biographies of important past contributors to the theory and practice of action research, settings which describe the specific contexts within which action research takes place as well as categories such as major theoretical foundations, methods and methodologies and tools.

The second way of using this encyclopedia is to simply browse. Open it, and read about something you

never heard of. Make connections. Use it as a springboard towards learning more, to bring you into the world of action research traditions and practices that are unfamiliar to you. Share it with your students and community partners. Enjoy it.

Acknowledgements

Like all good action research, the process of creating this encyclopedia has been important in its own right as a way of building relationships and bringing together our community, and we want to thank all of our editors, contributors and others who have worked with us to bring this project to completion. There are three groups of people whose contribution we specifically want to acknowledge. First, there are the authors of the entries. These are the scholars and practitioners of action research, who embody action research in their work in universities, colleges, schools, organizations and community settings and who have taken a great deal of time and effort to write the 314 entries that you find in these two volumes. Second, there are the associate editors and members of the editorial board: Bob Dick, Sarah Flicker, Victor Friedman, Patricia Gaya, Davydd Greenwood, Meghna Guhathakurta, Budd Hall, Namrata Jaitli, Shankar Sankaran and Rajesh Tandon. These are our colleagues and friends, who selflessly took on the burden of brainstorming possible entry topics initially, then agreed to oversee a group of entries and find authors for them and, finally, worked with the authors to produce and revise the entries that you find in these volumes. Finally, and certainly not least, are the group of editorial and technical experts who kept the whole project on track: Juanjuan Zhao and the SAGE team of Delia Martinez Alfonso, Judi Burger, Tracy Buyan and Colette Wilson. It is Judi who is the real star of the project. She kept us focused and without complaint steered the whole project through editorially and technologically. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Shamila Swamy and her copyediting team from QuADS Prepress Pvt Ltd (Rajasree Ghosh, Krishna Pradeep Joghee, Nandini Menon, C. R. Ramya and Sudha), who have been working so diligently and have done such an amazing job of getting the encyclopedia tidied up. Our warm thanks to you all.

*David Coghlan
Mary Brydon-Miller*

A

ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Academic discourse is a term used to describe the language and rhetorical conventions employed in an academic or scholarly field. These language practices are quite far-reaching, touching upon numerous foundations within an academic community, including writing conventions, disciplinary imperatives and political and cultural structures. Academic discourse demonstrates the ways in which language and rhetoric, as social practices, create and reproduce conceptions of knowledge and relations of power. In one sense, academic discourse is the primary communicative tool that conveys an academic community's epistemology, objectives and identity. At the same time, it is important to understand that writing about action research can potentially disrupt the political and social relationships privileged by mainstream academic discourse by including marginalized voices, making personal and identity positions explicit and drawing on genre conventions from other forms of writing.

Dynamics of Discourse

In order to properly grasp academic discourse, a discussion of discourse theory is necessary. Discourse is a set of language and rhetorical practices that individuals employ in order to navigate various communicative environments. One of discourse's more crucial elements is that every person possesses a number of discourses that inform that person's day-to-day communication. For instance, the discourse one shares with one's family and friends differs from the discourse one utilizes in educational settings. Despite these different discourses, there is a dynamic fluidity that enables a person to both change and combine her or his language practices based upon experiences and situations. This characteristic of discourse can create a number of positive outcomes as individuals learn how to communicate with greater numbers of people; however,

such developments can also marginalize or supplant non-mainstream discourses in favour of the dominant discourse. Indeed, discourse serves as a crucial environment within which power struggles take place. Language and rhetoric are shaped and reproduced by dominant relations of power and ideology, like those of capitalism, and have a tendency to prohibit critical or marginal discourses from entering important conversations. Therefore, the dynamics of discourse often revolve around issues of power, our very language reflecting boundaries and restrictions existing in the social world.

Academic Discourse and the Compositional Process

Academic discourse is both a concept and a process rooted in a number of academic communities. Most visibly, scholars engage in the discursive process when composing research articles and other academic texts. In participating in this process, authors draw upon genre conventions within their disciplines in order to maximize the communicative potential of their work. Some of these rhetorical conventions could be discipline-specific vocabulary or jargon, rhetorical devices, organizational procedures, tone, style and genre. Knowledge of vocabulary is perhaps one fundamental aspect of academic discourse. Every discipline has its own array of words and concepts that scholars must know to properly interact within that subject. Additionally, disciplines have differing meanings and usages for particular words (e.g. *space*, *production* and *discourse*), which further complicates academic discourse from discipline to discipline.

If academic vocabulary serves as one obvious feature of discourse, then genre serves as the larger contextual background in which discourse is situated. Genres are defined by the communicative conventions that have been normalized within a particular cultural setting. For example, the absence of first person pronouns in much lab-based writing is a common genre

convention in the sciences. Genres are fluid and evolve as social groups change. The genres common to academic discourse vary significantly, and each genre possesses subgenres that are employed in specific situations, such as conference presentations. Different forms of research, embedded in different fields, tend to draw upon the genre conventions most common in that field, for example, classroom-based research in education.

Additionally, embedded within each genre are a set of conventions or a set of formal and informal rules that govern discourse. While some conventions, like incorporating a literature review or theoretical framework, are typically deemed necessary in action research, other conventions of research writing, such as insisting on an overly academic tone or avoiding the first person, are often cast aside in action research in favour of preserving other elements. Abiding by or going against certain discourse conventions is an authorial choice, one that holds a series of ramifications depending on the aims that the author (and in the case of action research, the participants) has for the text. These choices are informed by traditions and assumptions within academic discourse, and a researcher must decide in what manner he or she will interact with these features, thus determining the extent to which a text is integrated into a discourse community.

Academic Discourse and Community

Academic discourse can either facilitate or hinder communication among individuals. Audience and discourse are inextricably linked, and through the employment of certain discourse tropes and conventions, a researcher can either broaden the audience of a text or narrow that audience to a specific academic or general population. In doing so, the researcher is participating in what is often referred to as a *discourse community*. A discourse community is a group of individuals who share a common discourse. Most scholars have varying stakes in any number of discourse communities. In an age of academic specialization, it is not uncommon for a researcher to have one or two primary discourse communities in which he or she regularly participates and contributes to the discourse. However, many researchers, in seeking partnerships outside their specialty, will cross lines of discourse and enter into other discourse communities. The flexibility within discourse enables this collaboration. Granted, a researcher who does not regularly participate in a particular discourse community may not be able to fully engage with the entire range of knowledge within that field, but that does not preclude that researcher from contributing to the discourse. Indeed, an outsider's perspective in a discourse community is often quite valuable. Nevertheless, what

remains paramount in working with discourse communities is recognizing both the commonalities and the differences apparent in discourse and how these features relate to the audience for the text.

Discourse and Culture

Academic discourse is not purely a set of rules and conventions but, like much of language, is rooted in culture, and since action research is a methodology that is informed by cultural processes, an even greater number of discourses are present. Academic discourse, in particular, rests within the culture of the academy, which holds a unique place in the larger culture of a society. Based upon one's viewpoint, higher education can be seen to function as an environment that disinterestedly seeks and creates knowledge, while others argue that the academy is governed by a number of special interests. Either viewpoint holds consequences relatable to discourse since a researcher's use of language is, in some sense, influenced by the culture of that researcher's institution. Moreover, the culture of expertise and the discourse embedded in that culture are often linked to the academy, which can create rifts between researchers and participants. Academics are often criticized for 'speaking another language', relevant only to themselves, and this product of discourse can alienate the general population.

This criticism often leads to the accusation that the academy enforces a hegemonic discourse that marginalizes other language practices and ways of knowing in order to establish its own superiority. Language is particularly susceptible to gestures towards hegemony as dominant groups dictate the direction of discourse. Critical discourse analysis is a methodology that examines these oppressive tendencies within language, academic and otherwise, in the hope that all cultures and people have a place in the conversations pertaining to their everyday life. Scholars practicing critical discourse analysis can work with populations who are outside the realm of dominant discourse and analyze how not having access to the social power afforded by language affects their role in society. In these analyses, the linkage between culture and discourse becomes strikingly clear as the hegemonic capacities within language are unveiled as a prevalent means of oppression.

Action Research and Academic Discourse

The action researcher often finds himself or herself striking a delicate balance when considering the challenges of academic discourse. First, there is the recognition of the academy's demands on how an action researcher employs discourse strategies. In engaging with a continually developing research methodology,

action researchers must be familiar with and utilize academic discourse in order to establish credibility within their respective disciplines. Knowledge of the language and conventions is important in securing the publication and dissemination of research, and while many action research practitioners are working on the periphery of traditional research, those researchers still have to employ academic discourse for their research to be viable in the academy. Further complicating this issue is that the action researcher must be familiar with a variety of discourse types in order to communicate with a variety of populations. Action research is a remarkably inclusive methodology, one that not only possesses its own discourse and incorporates the discourse of qualitative and quantitative methodologies but also interacts with the academic discourses of education, health-care fields and other disciplines and professional environments. In order to speak to and work with so many people, the action researcher has to be aware of differences in discourse and find common discursive ground.

This incredible wealth of discourses and knowledge only represents one side of the spectrum that the action researcher must consider. The other side of the discourse challenge is that of the participants. Although action researchers have to employ academic discourse in order to communicate with other scholars and obtain credibility for their research, these researchers must also make certain that the academic discourse does not smother the voice of their participants. Action research is a participant-centred methodology where researchers work *with* participants in the research process. In doing so, the action researcher should be aware of two consequences of this approach. The first consequence is that the majority of participants have their own discourse that exists outside the academy. This reality necessitates that researchers modify their discourse in order to be more receptive to the discourse of the participants who have a stronger connection to the problem. The second consequence arises in the compositional process when the researcher shares the results of the project. Specifically, when the researcher is looking to share findings with an academic audience, there is the legitimate possibility that academic discourse may gloss over the participants' voices. An example of this tendency would be labelling interviews gathered in the study as mere 'data', a perfectly acceptable term in academic realms but one that has the potential to belittle the contributions that the participants made in the study.

Therefore, it becomes vital to respect and appropriately represent the discourse of research participants in action research. Academic discourse should be considered as a framing device through which researchers can communicate the importance of the research to other

scholars in the field, but at the same time, academic discourse should not function as a veil that conceals the other voices, for it is their inclusion that makes action research such a powerful methodology. With careful choices regarding discourse, action researchers can work with their participants to produce texts meant for greater public consumption, thus stimulating wider social change and contributing to the increased democratization of knowledge.

Another pivotal implication of this challenge is the growing relevance of critical discourse analysis within action research. Action researchers employ critical theory as a lens through which to analyze the inequalities and oppression within society. This same critical lens can be applied to discourse. In working with marginalized populations, who often lack a voice in conversations integral to their lives, action researchers can utilize critical discourse analysis as a means through which to examine this problem and work with participants to overcome it. Critical discourse analysis represents the fusion between academic and participant discourse in that the discourse tools of the academy (theoretical frameworks, methodologies and epistemologies) are combined with the discourse of participants in order to establish greater equality within discursive realms.

The final connection between academic discourse and action research is that both are active processes of creation and actualization. In much the same way that action research is an active methodology of ongoing development, academic discourse is similarly a dynamic process that is undergoing continual evaluation and reconceptualization. More than a simple tool or a skill set, academic discourse is, above all, a set of practices ingrained in the communication among scholars everywhere, including action researchers. Scholars who are keenly aware of the power of dialogue and culture in the research process can work towards revising academic discourse, enabling it to be more inclusive and dissolving barriers of language between researchers of different disciplines and between researchers and participants.

Joseph Cunningham

See also Bakhtinian dialogism; dialogue; dissertation writing; narrative

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- We recognize that our source of funding can present conflicts of interest and confront this problem by insisting on professional independence.
- We share what we have learned with the community, our professional colleagues and others, as appropriate, to improve the human condition.

ACTION ANTHROPOLOGY

Action anthropology is an approach used by anthropologists and other applied social scientists to help indigenous and underrepresented communities solve problems. Action anthropologists are generally motivated by concerns for social justice, though this is more important for some than for others. A basic tenet of action anthropology is that decisions affecting a community are best made by that community. Action anthropologists, therefore, will typically work with a community to define the problems to be addressed, develop solutions and implement the chosen course of action. The following discussion focuses on the tenets of action anthropology, its development, a short biography of the man who pioneered the approach and its contemporary application.

The Tenets of Action Anthropology

Action anthropologists recognize general tenets for conducting applied work in an intercultural setting. While each situation is unique and demands unique responses, the following principles help the action anthropologist stay focused and true to core professional standards:

- We serve at the community's discretion and direction.
- We recognize that we can never fully know a community and its needs, but to the extent we can, it takes time. We therefore temper our bias for action by avoiding premature choices and responses.
- We work collaboratively with the community to develop alternatives for improving conditions.
- We respect the right and ability of a community to make choices affecting its future and the freedom to make its own mistakes.
- We are open and truthful.
- We promote community sustainability and capacity building and strive to work ourselves out of a job.
- As professionals, we learn from our experiences and use them to improve our method and theory.

Action anthropology emerged from the Anthropology Department at the University of Chicago in the 1950s. Its roots are traced to a University of Chicago field school involving the Meskwaki Indian community at Tama, Iowa, which ran from 1948 to 1959 and was documented by Judith Daubenmier. The goals of the field school, known as the Fox Project, were to understand the processes of acculturation taking place in the late 1940s and to intervene in those processes to help the community improve the quality of everyday life. Before long, the anthropologists realized that assimilation to American society was not going to be the end point for these American Indians, and their attention turned to issues of self-determination and cultural persistence. Rather than study the community, these anthropologists began taking action.

This action spirit spread during the 1960s and 1970s. Examples of work conducted include the 1961 American Indian Chicago Conference, documented by Nancy Lurie; the 1960s Colorado workshops for Indian college students and projects designed to assist various Cherokee and Sioux communities during the 1960s and 1970s. Others took action anthropology to Central America and elsewhere. Action anthropology contributed to programmes involved in community education, health services, economic development, resource protection, American Indian studies and native languages. Workshops, meetings and gatherings of all sorts became a hallmark of the action anthropology process.

Chief Architect of Action Anthropology

Action anthropology's chief architect, Sol Tax (1907–85), trained and influenced several generations of applied social scientists. Tax worked hard to mobilize anthropologists from around the world to create a global applied social science. His career and accomplishments serve as an inspiration to many. In addition to his work in the United States, Tax also worked among the indigenous peoples of Mexico and Central America and was influential in setting the theoretical tone for research there for almost 50 years.

Tax and the action anthropology that he tirelessly pursued played an important role in developing a social science more responsive to communities and disadvantaged groups than had previously existed. Tax

believed that a primary goal of action anthropology was to provide genuine alternatives from which the people involved could freely choose. He believed that the anthropologist should be as non-restrictive as possible and should not impose his or her own values on the people. He further believed that the anthropologist should try to remove restrictions imposed by others on the alternatives available to a group and on their freedom to choose an alternative, even if that choice seemed wrong to the anthropologist.

Using anthropological and other applied social science skills to assist the affected communities, rather than assisting the dominant society in its control of the affected community, was a fundamental shift in the application of anthropology at the time. To work under the direction and discretion of the affected community was an even more radical departure from the anthropology of the day.

In addition to providing service, Tax and the early action anthropologists were adamant about learning from their experiences and contributing to the understanding of culture and intercultural relations. Much of this was accomplished by publishing in professional venues. Considerable literature on the history of action anthropology has been produced, much of which is summarized in a recent book about action anthropology and the Meskwaki Indians of Iowa by Daubenmier (2008). Descriptions of action anthropology as an approach or method and how it differs from other approaches include those of Robert Rubinstein and John Bennett. Much of the early work in action anthropology and its theoretical foundations are discussed by the early action anthropologists in volumes prepared for Tax by Robert Hinshaw (1979) and for his student/colleague Robert K. Thomas by Steve Pavlik (1998).

Contemporary Action Anthropology

Action anthropology as a distinct approach continues today, primarily practised by academics and non-academics who have direct intellectual ties to Sol Tax or who discovered the approach through the professional literature. Those who identify themselves as action anthropologists are passionate about the approach; for some, action anthropology has become a way of life. The influences of action anthropology are also seen in the various applied approaches popular today, such as community studies, collaborative anthropology and Participatory Action Research. This is not surprising given its early adoption of collaboration as a research philosophy.

In 2011, three generations of action anthropologists, in addition to Tax's two daughters, participated in an action anthropology symposium held at the Society for Applied Anthropology's annual meeting. The 4-hour symposium is available on podcast from the Society for Applied Anthropology and is described in Stapp's

(2012) new book on action anthropology. The consensus of the group was that action anthropology continues to be an effective approach for assisting indigenous and disaffected communities and any professional working in such settings would benefit from an awareness of this rich anthropological tradition.

Darby C. Stapp

See also collaborative action research; Community-Based Participatory Research; indigenous research ethics and practice; Participatory Action Research

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ACTION EVALUATION

Action Evaluation (AE) is an innovative action research method that uses social and computer technology to define, promote and assess success in complex social interventions. It is also a team-building process in which envisioning success helps create a

sense of shared identity and commitment among different stakeholders through reflective practice. AE grew out of work in identity-based conflicts and was a direct response to recurrent questions asked by conflict resolution practitioners, participants and funders: ‘Does conflict resolution really work?’; ‘How can we know?’; ‘What does “work” mean, who defines it and how?’ and, most important, ‘How can our search for answers about success increase our chances of achieving it?’ This entry describes how the defining characteristics and process of AE address these questions.

Defining Characteristics of Action Evaluation

AE facilitates project or programme development by helping participants define and then formatively re-define success, to forge effective action and make success, ideally, akin to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Since the early 1990s, it has been applied by thousands of participants, funders and facilitators in over 200 conflict resolution, community development, organizational-change and other kinds of initiatives in a wide variety of fields. AE gathers and organizes input and ownership by those involved, by assisting them in creating their own criteria for success. Thus, by defining and seeking success in a continuous, integrative way, AE is simultaneously a programme development and an evaluation tool. It has much in common with other evaluation approaches such as utilization-focused evaluation, empowerment evaluation, theory-driven evaluation and evaluative inquiry. However, what makes it unique is its focus on goal inquiry as well as the integration of concepts from identity conflict engagement and Action Science.

AE frames the problem of goal setting involving multiple stakeholders as a process of constructing a shared identity. It builds theoretical frameworks which view conflict as rooted in people’s deepest needs, values, purposes and definitions of self. Effective goal setting should be a participative process of double-loop learning that inquires critically into *why* stakeholders have chosen certain goals and why they feel *passionately* about them. According to this framing, worthy programme goals should express and put into practice that which *all* stakeholders truly value and care about.

By deeply inquiring into goals at the outset of a project, AE helps facilitate project development in several ways:

1. The sharing of core values often creates common ground between various and sometimes opposing stakeholders.
2. Potential goal conflict is surfaced and dealt with before the project gets under way.
3. The process is more likely to be based on deep values rather than on fluctuating interests.

4. Commitment to the process deepens, ensuring that the process is meaningful and increasing its chances of success.

The Action Evaluation Process

The three stages of AE are (1) baseline establishment, (2) formative monitoring and (3) summative evaluation (Table 1).

Stage 1: Baseline Establishment

This first stage of AE involves the following steps:

1. *Define individual goals:* Through the use of an online questionnaire, individual participants define what they perceive to be the project’s major goals (or their definitions of success). While one major defining feature of AE is its use of online tools to gather, analyze and organize data to make it both highly scalable and user-friendly, variations of data-gathering processes may use e-mail, hard-copy surveys or structured, face-to-face interviews. The basic AE questionnaire asks participants to articulate *what* these goals are, *why* they care about these goals (or why they are important generally) and *how* they could best be accomplished.

2. *Define intra-group goals:* After individual goals have been articulated by each stakeholder, the action evaluator analyzes the data to determine whether each respondent’s goal is unique, shared (between two or more respondents) or contrasting with those of other group members. Stakeholder groups are then convened to engage in a highly structured process of collaborative goal negotiation to refine and agree to their own platform of goals.

Stage	Action
Baseline establishment	Articulate individual definitions of success; Build consensus on definitions within stakeholder groups; Build inter-group consensus; Create inter-group action plans
Formative monitoring	Implement action plans; Adjust and monitor definitions and actions
Summative evaluation	Ask questions and measure how well an intervention has met its own internally derived goals; Define criteria for success for next steps or future initiatives

Table 1 *The Three Stages of Action Evaluation*

3. *Define inter-group goals:* After determining the shared definitions within each stakeholder group, representatives from all groups are convened to reach agreement on shared goals or definitions of success for an unfolding project or programme.

4. *Create an action plan:* The baseline stage ends with a set of shared inter-group goals and an action plan specifying what needs to be done (as well as by whom and when) in order to achieve these goals.

Example of Establishing the Baseline: Interracial Conflict in Cincinnati

After many years of tense relations and the outbreak of riots in 2001, a class action lawsuit was filed against the city of Cincinnati alleging years of disparate treatment of African American citizens by the Cincinnati Police Department. Using AE, over a 9-month-long US Federal Court-sponsored process, citizens from all races, faiths and socioeconomic groups set a new agenda, co-operatively and in dialogue with the police. More than 3,500 citizens across eight different stakeholder groups (African American citizens, White citizens, business/education/foundation leaders, youth, police and their families, religious and social service leaders and other minority groups) participated in a survey through a website, hard copies or interviews. They answered the following questions:

1. *What* are your goals for future police-community relations in Cincinnati?
2. *Why* are those goals important to you? (What experiences, values, beliefs and feelings influence your goals?)
3. *How* do you think your goals can best be achieved?

All survey respondents were then invited to feedback sessions in which some 800 participants met with members of their own groups and reached a consensus on their goals. Some 70 representatives of the different stakeholder groups then met and formulated the following inter-group goals:

1. Police officers and community members will become proactive partners in community problem-solving.
2. Police officers and community members will build relationships of respect, co-operation and trust within and between the police and the communities.
3. The Cincinnati Police Department will improve education, oversight, monitoring, hiring practices and accountability.

4. Police officers and community members will ensure fair, equitable and courteous treatment for all.
5. Police officers and community members will create methods to explain police policies and procedures and recognize exceptional service in an effort to foster support for the police.

The baseline agreement between the groups led to a legally binding collaborative settlement, implemented by the US Federal Court. The presiding judge called it the most significant police-community relations reform in US history. More than a decade afterwards, the police department and relations between it and the community have been transformed, and the process has indeed been studied as a model.

Stage 2: Formative Monitoring

One of the underlying assumptions of AE is that goal setting is a process that continues throughout the life of a project. During the formative stage, participants refine their goals and develop strategies for overcoming obstacles. No matter how well project participants articulate and agree upon their goals at the baseline, they may revise or discover new goals and opportunities as they go along. In addition, participants frequently need to reconsider goals as they encounter resistance or other obstacles to implementation. Finally, project participants may discover that there is a gap between their espoused goals (what they said they wanted) and the goals implicit in what they are actually doing in their practice.

The formative stage actually overlaps with the baseline stage because the action plan, which is the output of the baseline stage, becomes important data in the formative stage. It provides project participants with an explicit basis for comparing intentions with what is actually happening in the project. The formative stage, however, is not just a control mechanism for keeping the project on track. Rather, it uses the awareness of discoveries, gaps and contradictions as opportunities for reshaping and fine-tuning a project design. Project stakeholders are asked to function as 'reflective practitioners' by standing outside the situation, becoming more aware of their actual goals and strategies for action and experimenting with new ones.

Example of Formative Monitoring: Youth Interfaith Programme

In 2010, a youth interfaith dialogue programme, Face-to-Face/Faith-to-Faith, brought together Catholics and Protestants from Northern Ireland, Israelis and Palestinians from Jerusalem, Blacks and Whites from South Africa and Americans from different faiths.

Meeting first in their own countries separately and then across each group in the United States, they used AE and reached an overarching baseline definition of success for their experience in the programme. They then returned to their homes to implement their shared goals.

Several months afterwards, they were asked to answer the following questions on a formative questionnaire:

1. What action steps are you taking to fulfil your specific goals?
2. How is it going? Have you made progress towards your goal?
3. Looking forward, what next steps are you planning for pursuing your goal?

These questions were not meant to be evaluative in the sense of judgement about success and failure. Rather, they were intended to draw a reflexive response that would help students take stock of the progress they had made towards reaching their goals and how best to achieve definitions of success—whether by staying the course, updating or changing their action plans.

Though the answers to the questionnaire showed substantive progress, it was acknowledged that much more had to be done. As a result, the Northern Irish group, for example, simplified its four goals into four overarching themes and then developed specific actions to work towards meeting each of these goals.

Stage 3: Summative Evaluation

Finally, there is a summative evaluation stage, or a more traditional ‘evaluation-as-judgement’, in which defined criteria of success are used to see how well an intervention has met its own internally derived and consciously evolved goals. As a project reaches an intermediate point, or its conclusion, participants use their evolved goals to establish criteria for retrospective assessment. Stakeholders will, for example, examine whether they have reached specified goals and ask themselves ‘why?’ or ‘why not?’. They will ask themselves how and what they could have done differently or better.

Although participants are encouraged throughout the process to engage in reflexive practice, in the summative stage they are asked to look with a critical eye on how well they have done in reaching their individual and shared goals. They are asked to reflect on their values, intentions, successes and failures.

In the case of the interfaith dialogue group, an online summative questionnaire posed the following five questions:

1. What are your overall reflections on your experience with Face-to-Face (e.g. what worked

well for you and what could be improved for future participants)?

2. In reflecting on either your individual goals (before the summer intensive) or your group goals (reached during the intensive), in what ways do you feel you made progress in meeting those goals?
3. What has been the most valuable part of the programme for you (e.g. what has helped you the most towards meeting your goals)?
4. What goals do you feel that you have not fully accomplished?
5. Any regrets? Would you do anything differently?

The Power of Why

One of the innovative and distinguishing features of AE is its elicitation of and focus on individual and collective core values. This process is referred to as the ‘why discussion’ and generally takes place during the baseline stage. After completing the questionnaire, but *before* discussing the goals themselves, participants are brought together to talk about *why* the goals they have stipulated are important to them and why they feel *passionate* about these goals.

The ‘why discussion’ focuses on the personal sphere of memory and emotion. By shifting the focus away from the potentially divisive question of the goals themselves (the ‘what’) or the practical search for solutions (the ‘how’) to the ‘why’, it fosters a sense of commonality in which stakeholders resonate with one another’s deeper motivations and commitments. The ‘why discussion’ can be an extremely powerful experience for participants, whether they are colleagues or adversaries, because they rarely hear each other express themselves in this way. Coming at the very beginning of the process, the ‘why discussion’ helps participants work towards a common agenda when they get to the ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions.

In an AE held to address conflicts and foster new vision among New England fishermen, environmentalists and policymakers, individuals were asked in an online survey *what, why and how* regarding the future of the groundfish fleet. They were then invited to participate in feedback sessions with other members of their stakeholder groups, to listen to others’ responses and to be heard. Before crafting a platform of goals, participants also had the opportunity within the feedback sessions to engage in dialogue with others and to share their ‘whys’ in a small group setting (see Table 2). The stories told by various stakeholders were candid, emotional and compelling. No matter what their background or expertise, each participant had a unique connection

‘I started 50 or 60 years ago, and you can’t catch any fish in the harbour anymore. I hauled gear because we didn’t have any mechanical haulers then. Just remembering going out at night looking for fish. I was a city boy, and [the fishermen] would go out and listen for them, and it was all magic to me. You watch the gulls all day, and you go out where they were. You go and feel them a little, and you would see the whole bottom of the ocean light up, and that was awesome, and it just blew me away’.

‘I grew up on an island, where I still live. We used to smell fish, knowing what was in season from the distinct smells. In 1970 . . . the fish were gone. It was greed. . . . This is one of the most productive fisheries systems in the world, and we’ve lost tuna, swordfish, herring and in-shore groundfish. A fisherman died last year, and he was the last one from whom you could go get the fresh fish. Fishermen are a dying breed’.

‘I was raised by my grandfather, and from this I walked away with a good sense of right versus wrong. When I got my first boat, I participated in the largest stock decline in history. I really don’t feel good about this. If the fishery is healthy, sound and vibrant, the family nature will be preserved in New England. We have to individually look at how we have gone wrong and address these issues’.

Table 2 Examples From a ‘Why Discussion’ on the Future of the Groundfish Fleet

to the ocean, and therein lay the potential for resolution and co-operation.

In these and other efforts, by asking those most directly involved in a conflict resolution initiative to collaboratively define their goals, articulate core values and brainstorm action strategies, the group becomes more coherent and focused. Participants who might otherwise be at odds with one another about the purposes of their joint effort can effectively walk in step with one another and reflect together on their practice and shared goals. The collaborative nature of the goal setting, with its high level of participation and engagement, builds commitment to the goals and their achievement among all stakeholders. The open discussion of differences leads to dynamism, creativity and growth. Participants emerge with a sense that the evaluation process has enhanced and improved programme and organizational capacity as they achieve success.

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See also Action Science; conflict management; double-loop learning; evaluation; evaluative inquiry

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ACTION LEARNING

Action Learning is a rich philosophy of learning and practice that offers a significant contribution to the fields of professional and management education and development, organization change, problem-solving and performance improvement, as well as to action research.

This entry provides an outline of Action Learning’s origins, traditions and key ideas. Contemporary ideas and applications are illustrated before considering the particular relevance of Action Learning to action research.

Origins, Traditions and Key Ideas

Action Learning, as a coherent and named body of practice, was created and developed by the Englishman Reg Revans (1907–2003) in the mid twentieth century, where he evolved his notion of Action Learning through his work in the coalmines and in the health services of Britain and Belgium. Influenced by his early training as

a physicist at Cambridge University in the late 1920s—where he encountered Nobel Prize-winning scientists meeting weekly, not to display their achievements but to learn from one another through voicing the challenges and unknowns they were tackling—Revans encouraged coal pit managers, when they had problems, to meet together on-site in small groups and, rather than draw on external experts to solve their problems for them, to ask one another questions about what they saw in order to find their own solutions. Later, in Belgium, he introduced a process whereby senior managers learned through spending time investigating problems in areas unfamiliar to them.

Revans eschewed a definition of Action Learning, saying that to define it was too simplistic. However, he also argued that as Action Learning can be characterized by specific assumptions, objectives and an educational method, it was neither merely common sense nor simply action that may or may not result in learning.

Assumptions, Objectives and Educational Method

Core assumptions that underpin Action Learning are that learning derives from taking action and asking insightful questions about pressing problems or enticing opportunities. Formal instruction and theory are not sufficient. External training, instruction or expertise is not relied upon because the existing codified knowledge, whilst it may be drawn from, may not suit the specific context of a particular problem. Processes

such as action and feedback, asking fresh questions, learning from and with peers and creating a multiplier effect between individual and organizational learning are central to Action Learning.

Revans saw the objectives of Action Learning as follows:

- To make meaningful progress on the treatment of some real opportunities, challenges or problems
- To enable participants sufficient scope to learn for themselves with others
- To encourage those engaged in providing management development to assist participants to learn with and from one another

Based on a philosophy of action (praxeology), Action Learning is a challenging educational method that is much more than simply learning by doing, in that it engages participants in risk-taking experimentation and a degree of self-challenge, on the basis that individuals cannot expect to change others or an organization if they cannot change themselves.

Revans’ Classical Principles

Though Revans resisted a simplistic definition of Action Learning, there were consistent principles in the practice he wrote about, which have become widely known as Revans’ Classical Principles (RCPs) (see Figure 1):



Figure 1 Core Elements of Action Learning (Revans’ Classical Principles)

- *Task*—a problem, concern or opportunity that needs action to be taken and is owned by group members: Central to Action Learning is a differentiation between puzzles and problems. Puzzles are those difficulties for which a correct solution exists and which are amenable to expert specialist advice, for example, how to stop a roof leaking or what medicines might cure a particular disease. Such puzzles neither need nor benefit from Action Learning. Problems, by contrast, are difficulties where no single solution exists, where the context may or may not be familiar and where neither agreement amongst stakeholders nor certainty is strong—for example, how to reduce hospital waiting lists or how to speed up product development cycles. Problems are amenable to Action Learning because of its exploratory, collaborative approach that can incorporate diverse inputs, values and objectives from different participants.
- *Action*—the basis for learning: No real learning takes place unless and until action is taken. Problems or challenges are opportunities on which learners can take action, not merely offer diagnosis or recommendations to others.
- *Peers*—a ‘set’ of action learners: They are a group of people (typically four to eight, though this may be more or less)—who are concerned with the issue, have power to do something about it and work together voluntarily as peers. Such a group take responsibility for organizing themselves and develop their own capability to resolve problems. These peers are typically others with comparable issues and occupying similar positions in the organizational hierarchy.
- *Questioning insight*: Learning is understood to result primarily from inquiry, investigation, experimentation and reflection, rather than through formal teaching, instruction or access to expert knowledge. The search for fresh questions and questioning insight is seen as helping group members clarify the nature of their task or problem, reflect on their assumptions about how they frame the issue and illuminate what is unknown as well as what is known.
- *Profound personal development*—resulting from reflection on action: Within the Action Learning set, action learners are supported, questioned and challenged by peers as they review their experimental attempts to address the task, reflect on their actions and recognize and reframe their assumptions. Acting, and

reflecting on that action, helps managers develop meta-skills such as self-insight, understanding of the politics in the organization and influencing abilities. As such, Action Learning can go beyond mere solution of immediate problems, with the ultimate outcome of increasing the knowledge and capability of participants and their organization to better adapt to change and to continuously learn.

- *Problems are sponsored* and aimed at wider organizational change as well as personal development. Sponsorship by a senior manager is essential to enable more junior staff to influence and enact change. Where action learners are drawn from across an organization, Action Learning can benefit both individuals and the wider organization.
- *Facilitators* have become a norm in much Action Learning practice, though they were not strongly advocated by Revans and are not employed in all variations of the approach (see below).

What Action Learning Is Not

Action Learning is a term that is used with a wide range of meanings. Some simply equate it with experiential learning, such that any process that includes experiential activity is considered to be Action Learning. However, in formulating Action Learning originally, Revans was clear that it was not the same as many other task-focused, group-based work activities, such as project work, case studies, business simulations or other games, operations research, job rotation, work study or consultancy.

The Action Learning Formula

Revans formulated Action Learning around the formula $L = P + Q$, where L stands for learning, P for programmed knowledge (i.e. existing theory) and Q for questioning insight.

Programmed Knowledge

The concept of programmed knowledge (P) relates to technical expertise, functional specialism, formal instruction, published theory and the syllabi of teaching institutions. Action Learning’s reservations over reliance on P derive from contextual characteristics: time, setting, school of thought and conscious selection by those who generate or disseminate programmed knowledge. As time and context change, so also does the usefulness and usability of P for the specific situation of new action learners. Yet managers faced with change may incline towards a favoured tool, technique

or well-remembered article or book to help start their process of change. Whilst Action Learning incorporates a diagnostic phase (system alpha—see below), in which P may help frame the issue, to follow the guidance of such a source of P in an unquestioning way may prematurely narrow conceptualization, may lead to a misdiagnosis or partial diagnosis and would be unlikely to result in the amelioration of the problem.

Questioning Insight

Faced with a complex challenge to explore or a problem to ameliorate, for Revans learning always begins with Q—questioning insight.

Insight is a moment of comprehending connections between things that previously have appeared disjointed. As we attempt to make sense of new experience we do not yet understand, we ask the question ‘What does this mean?’. Answers to such questions come in the form of insights—which are creative acts of understanding, of making relationships and seeing new patterns or unities that provide explanations—or shed new light on the current situation. In order to assess and verify the evidence, insight must be followed by evaluation and judgement. If we ask fresh questions, unfreeze underlying assumptions and create new connections and conceptual models, this is questioning insight. Q acknowledges the ignorance of participants, does not assume that P (programmed knowledge) will deliver a solution for the specific context and also broadens the scope of the search for solutions.

Philosophical Basis—Systems Alpha, Beta and Gamma: A Science of Praxeology

Revans’ central idea was a synergy between learning and action. In other words, praxis is fundamental to Action Learning in the sense that activity or work is essential to learning. Action Learning grew from a mid twentieth century disenchantment with positivism and the prevailing cultural belief in the dominance of expertise, which fostered Revans’ conviction that, unless problems are open to a purely technical solution, there is more learning to be had through action being taken by those involved with an issue.

He articulated a theory of action in terms of a science of praxeology, comprising what he called systems alpha, beta and gamma (Figure 2). System alpha centres on the investigation of the issue, challenge or problem, examining the external context, managerial values and available internal resources. System beta centres on problem resolution, through decision cycles of negotiation and experimentation. System gamma concerns the participants’ cognitive framework, their assumptions and prior understanding, and is concerned with learning as experienced individually by each

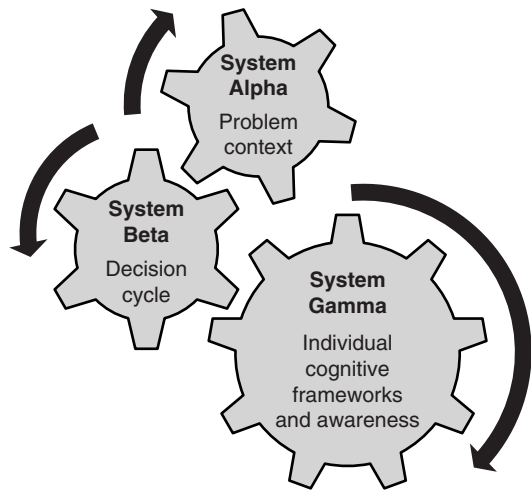


Figure 2 Praxeology in Action Learning: Revans’ Systems Alpha, Beta and Gamma

participant through his or her questioning and emerging self-insight.

The scientific method associated with system beta comprises the enactment of a five-step cycle (continuously repeated):

1. *Observation/survey*: Collecting data for diagnosis of what seems to go on
2. *Theory/hypothesis generation*: Suggesting causal relationships between those happenings and formulating courses of feasible action to trial
3. *Test/experiment*: Taking action on a trial-and-error basis
4. *Audit/review*: Observing the outcomes of that action and comparing them with expectations
5. *Review/control*: Making comparisons between expectation and experience, confirming or rejecting the emergent causal relationships and drawing conclusions, reframing if necessary and planning another cycle.

The three systems, alpha, beta and gamma, are not linear or sequential, nor are they entirely discrete (as illustrated in Figure 2). The three systems are perhaps best understood as a whole, with interlocking yet overlapping parts. Systems alpha and beta focus on the investigation of the problem, while system gamma focuses on the learning. They overlap on important issues of learning, power and politics, as action learners engage with real issues rather than with fabricated case studies. The engagement is both scientifically rigorous in confronting the issues and critically subjective through managers learning in action.

More recent evolutions of Action Learning cycles include explicit attention to the process of decision-selection of solutions, involvement of other organization stakeholders and questioning what assumptions underpin how the issue/problem is framed.

Examples

In relation to organizational change and development, Action Learning has a long tradition of application to management and leadership development, both as the sole method and in combination with other interventions including one-to-one coaching and large-group instruction. For example, a leadership development programme might incorporate individual Action Learning inquiries into the question ‘How do I improve my leadership capability?’. Other applications have focused on whole-organization change or even, at a higher level of complexity, enhanced systemic practice, across a supply chain or involving multiple organizations, disciplines and clients within a geographical space. Examples of such problems sponsored by senior management include the following:

- Reduce wastage
- Improve the quality of problem-solving
- Learning to work collaboratively across professional and geographical boundaries
- Improve rates of innovation
- Promote collaborative learning across the value chain

Contemporary Developments

Facilitation

Though classical Action Learning is ambivalent about the use of facilitators, also termed *learning coach* or *set advisor*, in practice, their use has become widespread. The facilitator can play a variety of roles for the group: co-ordinator, catalyst, observer, climate setter, communication enabler or learning coach, among many. The role of facilitators is to model the peer challenge or critical-friend behaviours, to help the group establish ground rules and develop questioning, reflective and inclusive team practices. Good facilitation attends to the process of the group rather than becoming drawn into the content of discussions or being the expert problem solver. Facilitators have to be able to tolerate and interpret silence, ambiguity and conflict, as well as being active listeners who can summarize back to set members. However, Action Learning facilitation is not the same as group facilitation or team building because of the primary focus on learning. The Action Learning ideal is that a group grows to be self-directing and the role of the facilitator comes to be deemed unnecessary.

Extending Ideas on Insight: Organizing Insight and Inter-Organizing Insight

Advances in thinking about the role of insight, questioning and inquiry within Action Learning have led to the concepts of ‘organizing insight’ and inter-organizing insight. Organizing insight derives from the relationship between Action Learning and organizational learning and inquiry into the power and emotion within the organization dynamics in which Action Learning takes place. The Action Learning formula has been further extended to include the network or system-wide setting of multi-partner Action Learning, as found in supplier networks or public service inter-agency collaborative arrangements. This leads to a Network Action Learning (NAL) formula of $NAL = P + Q + O + IO$, where Network Action Learning includes both organizing insight (O) (within partner organizations) and inter-organizing insights (IO).

Action Learning as an Organizational Learning Mechanism

Action Learning was originally formulated by Revans in order to enhance learning in organizations. As an approach designed to realize the commitments to action and learning in relation to a specific problem, it also holds the potential to act as a learning mechanism in the sense of being an organizational configuration, formal or informal, intended to develop, improve and assimilate learning. Correspondingly, the formal structures and processes associated with Action Learning include the systematic execution of the RCP elements noted above, in particular the features of group, questioning and reflective process, and the facilitator. Informal processes and structures associated with Action Learning may include the spontaneous coalescence of individuals into a group centred on a common problem and their commitment to both action and learning through engagement with the problem.

Action Learning also meets the characteristics of ‘dialogic organization development’ in that it works to enable dialogue between people as to what organizational problems might mean and how they might be addressed.

Varieties of Action Learning

A variety of interpretations of Action Learning have now developed internationally (see Table 1).

Different varieties share most of the RCPs outlined above, but key aspects differ. First, the balance of priority between business objectives and profound personal learning varies; for example, for Business-Driven Action Learning, as implied by its name, business

<i>Types of Action Learning</i>	<i>Key Ideas</i>
Self-Managed Action Learning	Groups facilitate themselves
Business-Driven Action Learning	Priority given to business opportunities and results
Virtual Action Learning	Group members engage in reflective questioning online, through methods such as Skype, teleconferencing, e-mail and virtual learning sites
Action mentoring or coaching	Cycles of action and reflection are pursued within one-to-one relationships, such as mentor-mentee or peer-to-peer learning
Auto-Action Learning	Working alone, an individual uses a repeated set of questions to systematically structure his or her review through cycles of action, reflection and learning
Critical Action Learning	Participants draw from critical perspectives to make connections between the power and emotional dynamics of their learning and their work experiences

Table 1 *Varieties of Action Learning*

results are preeminent, in contrast with Critical Action Learning, in which learning, perspective transformation and changed practice are completely interwoven. Second is the use of facilitators or coaches, who in Auto- and Self-Managed Action Learning have the least weight and are advocated only temporarily or not at all. In contrast, in Critical Action Learning, significant weight is placed on strong facilitation to help surface and challenge assumptions. A third disparity is the weight given to group process as an experiential source of learning for participants, for example, about team dynamics and skills such as chairing, collaboration and decision-making. In Critical Action Learning, group process is central as a potential source of learning for participants about themselves, others and the organization, because of the way the dynamics within the specific Action Learning set can mirror the power relations of the wider organization.

Application to Action Research

As a method that integrates individual and organizational learning, change and development, Action Learning has many parallels with action research in its concern with praxis and praxeology and its philosophical grounding in theories of learning from experience, as practiced collaboratively with others through some form of action-oriented inquiry. These theories are influenced both by the assumption that we can shape our environment and by a belief in the value of scientific method in the pursuit of improvement. Participants take responsibility for and control of their own learning, and so there is minimal use of experts. The overriding value that guides the Action Learning approach is a pragmatic focus on learning for the sake

of more effective problem-solving and organizational improvement.

Action Learning Research

A recent development of Action Learning presents Action Learning research as a new member of the family of action-oriented approaches to inquiry, including Mode 2 research, praxeological inquiry, action research and Collaborative Management Research. In contrast to traditional research paradigms, these new approaches are providing alternative paradigms of knowledge production within which Action Learning research offers a contribution to practical, actionable knowledge.

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See also Critical Action Learning; Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production; praxeology

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ACTION LEARNING AND ACTION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (ALARA)

See World Congresses of Action Research

ACTION SCIENCE

Action Science is a form of action research aimed at creating knowledge people can use to improve the practice of individuals, groups, organizations, communities and other forms of social organization. The theory of action approach, developed by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, is the framework for much theory, research and practice under the name of Action Science, and the terms are often used synonymously. This entry will briefly define Action Science and the theory of action approach. It will then discuss Action Science as a critical theory and describe Action Science tools, methods and practices. Finally, it will point to some of the challenges facing Action Science.

What Is Action Science?

Action Science is based on an understanding of people as practical inquirers who attempt to achieve their goals by building and testing tacit theories of action. It engages people in inquiry into their own behaviour so that they can become aware of the implicit theories that drive their behaviour and the consequences of these theories. This process of critical reflection expands the range of choices people can make about their behaviour, the relationships they form and the behavioural world they create. Action Science proceeds in conjunction with educating practitioners and intervening in systems to change the prevailing norms of interaction that routinely limit inquiry and learning in organizations.

The term *Action Science* was first used by William Torbert, who envisioned a science useful to actors at the moment of action. Argyris provided a rationale for Action Science by critiquing normal behavioural science as beset by inner contradictions that limit its ability to create knowledge that people can use as they interact. For example, the researcher typically conceals

the real purpose of an experiment in order to avoid biasing how subjects respond. This produces knowledge that can be applied effectively only when the user similarly conceals the purpose of the action. But in the context of ongoing relationships, such deception can produce mistrust and protective countermeasures. Argyris outlined the beginnings of an Action Science that could be used to create what he called liberating alternatives to the world as it exists.

Schön contributed an epistemology of practice that upends the traditional model of professional knowledge. Rather than seeing knowledge as something discovered by basic researchers, made practical by applied researchers and then taught to practitioners, who put it to use, Schön argued that knowledge for action, especially for messy, divergent situations that defy ‘by-the-book’ technical solutions, is to be found in the skilful performances of expert practitioners. He suggested that an Action Science would engage practitioners in reflecting on their knowing-in-action and develop themes they could use in on-the-spot experimentation. Building on these ideas, a framework for Action Science was set forth by Argyris, Robert Putnam and Diana McLain Smith, placing it in the context of the philosophy of science, comparing it with normal social science and offering research on how people learn to improve their practice as interventionists.

The name *Action Science* announces an intention to be assessed by the features of rational deliberation in science. These include explicit reasoning, acknowledgement that one could be wrong and a commitment to testing knowledge claims in a community of inquiry, which is constituted by two or more people who systematically reflect on practice for the purpose of generating new knowledge. The radical claim is that these features can be realized among human agents in the action context. Doing so requires particular methods and skill at intervening in human systems.

The Theory of Action Approach

‘Theories of action’ are the basic conceptual tools of Action Science inquiry. These theories, which are in people’s minds, guide behaviour and enable them to make sense of the behaviour of others. Theories of action are causal propositions consisting of three simple components: (1) in situation X, (2) do Y (3) in order to achieve goal Z. They may also include the assumptions underlying this causal connection and the values underlying goals. Theories of action are like mental programmes that enable people to manage overwhelming amounts of information, interpret their environment and respond almost automatically to most situations. The theory of action approach distinguishes espoused theories of action, those that people believe

they follow and theories-in-use, the theories of action that can be inferred from actual observed behaviour.

When people enact their implicit theories through interaction with others, they jointly construct social reality or the behavioural world. Thus, the behaviour of groups, organizations and communities can also be seen as guided by collective theories of action that take shape through the interaction among individuals over time. These collective theories, or mental models, take on a life of their own, shaping the way people in those systems perceive reality and act to achieve their goals. A key feature of the behavioural world is the quality of discourse: what can be said, what remains unspoken, the norms for accepting or rejecting arguments, deference and face-saving routines. Action Science focuses both on individuals and on the behavioural worlds they construct and that also constrain them. Indeed, one of the most important and unique contributions of Action Science inquiry is that it constitutes a method for tracing the reflexive links between individual reasoning, behaviour and social context.

Action Science takes a particular interest in the more intractable dilemmas and conflicts faced by individuals, organizations and society. It focuses on learning and change involving shifts in perspective, assumptions and values, as well as in behaviour. ‘Single-loop learning’ occurs when action strategies are changed, but the rest of the theory-in-use remains constant. ‘Double-loop’ learning involves changes in goals, frames, assumptions, values and/or standards for performance. This focus differentiates Action Science from approaches to ‘usable knowledge’ that address techniques people can apply within their current values and assumptions. Double-loop learning requires reflecting critically on the often tacit reasoning embedded in one’s action.

Action Science as a Critical Theory

Action Science is a critical theory. It makes empirical claims about the prevalence of certain patterns of behaviour in organizations and their impact on the quality of reasoning, learning and action. Action Science also makes normative claims, criticizing what exists from the perspective of what might be and offering the possibility of bringing about alternative realities as freely defined by the actors involved. Early Action Science research discovered striking similarities in the reasoning and action people employ in the face of uncertainty, conflict and psychological threat. This discovery led Argyris and Schön to posit the existence of a deeper, universal theory-in-use driven by values of unilateral control, protection of self and others and rationality. This theory-in-use, which they called ‘Model I’, accounts for much individual and organizational ineffectiveness and lack of learning. In order to facilitate learning, they proposed an alternative theory

of action based on the ‘Model II’ values: valid information, free and informed choice and internal commitment to choice and monitoring its implementation. Model II provides the normative basis for Action Science. It is intended to help people produce productive reasoning and conversation under conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity, conflict and threat. It enables people to view these conditions as opportunities for generating new knowledge through inquiry, experimentation and deliberation that leads to intersubjective agreement.

A critical theory justifies its normative stance through the method of internal criticism. In the case of Action Science, even though most people act according to the Model I theory-in-use under conditions of uncertainty, conflict and threat, they also value competence, justice and sound reasoning. If they discover or if it can be shown that their own behaviour violates their values of competence, justice and sound reasoning, they will want to change. The normative stance of Model II is not imposed from the outside. It is embedded in people’s own beliefs. The method of internal criticism is to bring into awareness the inconsistencies between people’s actual behaviour (Model I theory-in-use) and their equally genuine, if espoused, commitments to the values underlying Model II.

Action Science Methods and Tools

Action Science has developed a number of tools for engaging practitioners in identifying patterns that inhibit organizational inquiry and in improving the quality of inquiry. People are usually unaware of the gaps between their espoused theories and their theories-in-use. To interrupt this unawareness, people must reflect on what they actually do and say. This leads to a fundamental methodological principle of Action Science: using actual behaviour, such as conversation, as data. This principle applies both in the action context and to research texts, which often include transcripts of tape-recorded conversations. Participants in an Action Science learning process are often asked to write a brief personal, ‘two-column case’ that illustrates their attempts to deal with a difficult situation involving other people. The case must include a dialogue between the case writer and the other actors, which may be taken from a tape recording or reconstructed from memory. The page on which the dialogue is written is divided into two columns. In the right-hand column are the words that were said. In the left-hand column are the case writer’s unspoken thoughts and feelings. The two-column case provides rich directly observable data about reasoning and action that enables people to reflect on and infer their theories-in-use.

Another common Action Science tool is the ‘ladder of inference’—a model of people’s reasoning steps as

they size up a situation and decide what action to take. At the bottom of the ladder are all directly observable data available to people in a given situation; the first rung represents the data people select while ignoring the rest, the second rung represents the interpretations that determine what that data means to them and the third rung represents the conclusions people make to evaluate, explain, make predictions and decide what to do. People generally ‘go up the ladder’ from data to conclusions to action almost automatically and with little conscious awareness. The ladder of inference enables people to become aware of this process and ‘come down the ladder’ in order to reflect on their own reasoning and emotional reactions, to facilitate discussion of substantive issues and to give people feedback on their behaviour and its impact.

Action Science uses the concepts of ‘framing’ and ‘reframing’ to help people discover and change the sources of ineffectiveness in their reasoning and action. Frames are powerful mechanisms for making sense of situations, including the behaviour of self and others. They name the problem at hand, determine what solutions make sense and shape the actions to be taken. For example, a person receiving negative feedback might frame it as an ‘attack’, which attributes to the other a desire to harm and calls for a defensive reaction in order to protect oneself. The feedback, however, could be reframed as ‘Help me become effective’, which avoids the negative attribution and calls for careful consideration of the information. People often frame situations in ways that are self-defeating or lead to dead ends. Becoming aware of their frames provides people with opportunities for reframing situations in ways that open avenues for more effective actions.

Skilled reflection means knowing how to impose a frame on a situation while also being sensitive to where it does not fit, especially when we are at an impasse. ‘Reframing’ involves changing the internal logic of a frame by either bringing new information to bear or reinterpreting the facts of a situation, giving them a different meaning. It enables people to discover opportunities for problem-solving and productive action that were previously missed.

An Action Science tool for facilitating productive conversation on difficult and controversial issues involves balancing two key behaviours: (1) advocacy (making statements) and (2) inquiry (asking questions). By attending to both the amount and the quality of advocacy and inquiry, one can make predictions about the impact a conversation is likely to have on the ability of participants to make effective decisions, as well as on the quality of their relationships. Combining high-quality advocacy and inquiry, people can create relationships and behavioural worlds characterized by mutual learning. It enables people to express strong views that

are helpful and persuasive, while also being open to influence and discovering where they might be wrong.

The ‘learning-pathways’ framework is a tool used to structure inquiry into and change theories-in-use that produce ineffective behaviour. It begins by asking people to reflect on the results of their behaviour and the extent to which these results were satisfactory or intended—and then works backwards, focusing on the specific actions, verbal or nonverbal, that account for these results. It then focuses on the underlying frames that contain the reasoning behind these actions. The model then looks outward to the features of the context that triggered this particular framing. Change then focuses on those components that contributed to the ineffectiveness.

The ‘action map’ is a methodological device for analyzing the behavioural world and its implications for effectiveness, as well as identifying leverage points for generating change. Data for the map can be gathered from members of any system (e.g. group, organization, community) through interviews, observation, documentary evidence, recordings and two-column cases. This data is mapped onto a template that typically includes initial conditions, frames, action strategies and consequences, but there is no fixed format, since each map needs to reflect the unique contours of the specific reality. Action maps constitute theories about particular realms of practice, and they are tested for validity with the organizational members themselves. They provide organizational members with opportunities to literally see the behavioural world they produce together and to determine what needs to be done in order to change it.

Action Science in Practice

Action Science has been applied to educating practitioners while also building knowledge for practice in a wide variety of professions and fields: management development, human resource development, integrating behavioural and technical change in organizations, organizational learning, improving strategy formulation, improving strategic conversations, team building, work-based learning, executive coaching, programme evaluation (‘Action Evaluation’), conflict transformation, enhancing intercultural competence, increasing the effectiveness of debriefing participants in medical simulations, helping negotiators learn from experience by testing negotiating theories in their own practice and helping schools reverse cycles of social exclusion and become more inclusive.

Challenges to Action Science

The claims for the universality of Model I as a descriptive theory and for the efficacy of Model II as a

theory-in-use have been criticized as being ethnocentric and insensitive to cultural differences. Many critics of Action Science claim that Model II is inappropriate for cultures which favour dealing with conflict in indirect ways. Advocates of Action Science have countered that the evidence shows wide variations in espoused theories but a high degree of uniformity in theories-in-use. They also argue that the underlying principles of Model II are valid across cultures even where the surface features may require modification to be used effectively. From an Action Science perspective, the test of this assertion would be whether members of a particular system themselves affirm the principles of Model II and confirm the usability of specific ways of acting on those principles.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to broader use of an Action Science approach is educating researchers and interventionists who can do the work. Most graduate programmes educate scholars to conduct descriptive research. Professional schools educate practitioners to intervene with individuals and social systems. There are still relatively few opportunities to learn how to do both and to combine them as Intervention Research.

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See also Action Evaluation; advocacy and inquiry; double-loop learning; intersubjectivity; ladder of inference; learning pathways grid; Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production; theories of action

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ACTION TURN, THE

Representing half of the phrase ‘action research’, the concept of action is central to how this approach to research is understood and how it fundamentally differs from others. While action research encompasses a diverse array of perspectives and practices within it, action researchers have in common a commitment to some conception of action as a core dimension of social science research. This entry describes the action turn as an epistemological break, that is, a break in the way we think about how we know the world and do research about it. This break challenges the basic ways traditional research—whether quantitative or qualitative—conceives of the role of action and participation in the process of knowledge generation. This entry first explains the impetus for an action turn in the social sciences, before moving on to describe the relationship between action, praxis and participation, and the ways in which the action turn is implicated within this relationship. It then focuses on some of the key ways in which an action turn may be manifested in the social sciences in general and in action research in particular.

The Call for an Action Turn

Significant changes in the course of direction in a field can be characterized as ‘turns’, or moments when old problems and paradigms are challenged by new ones. The social sciences have recently been challenged by the postmodern turn, the linguistic turn, the narrative turn, the reflective turn and the performative turn, among others. Of particular significance for the action research community is a call to social scientists for an ‘action turn’ towards studying themselves in action and in relation to others. Taking the action turn means taking seriously the connections between experience, human participation and the generation of knowledge, despite the claim of traditional science for the need to distance ourselves from action in the name of objectivity.

Bringing action to the centre of the research process, the action turn represents a broad invitation to social science researchers to accept the legitimacy of action research as social science research. An important development in that direction has taken place as current

classifications of paradigms of qualitative research have started to include the action and participatory paradigm as a legitimate and distinct approach to interpretive inquiry. In calling for an action turn in social science, Peter Reason and William Torbert explicitly argued that the purpose of inquiry is to develop a connection between knowledge and the personal and social experience of action, so that it is responsive to human persons, their communities and their social and cultural ecologies. Once social science takes the action turn, research cannot be merely about describing reality but, instead, is about human participants inquiring to transform reality, supported by their inquiry.

In doing action research, action researchers have already taken the action turn, independent of their diverse approaches. Their practice is grounded in the shared epistemological assumption that action is key to knowledge generation and thus essential to the process of research as well as its primary goal. In this view, knowledge emerges from engaging in the world and becomes a means to guiding subsequent actions, more than an end in itself.

At the macrolevel of social science, then, the action turn refers to an epistemological break with traditional ways of doing systematic social inquiry by introducing ‘action’ in the research agenda. At the microlevel of social scientists’ and practitioners’ experience, it refers to the shift that happens when, in addressing the demands generated from practical problems, they break with the belief that research is a neutral activity separate from action as they attempt to develop actionable knowledge.

Action, Praxis and Participation

In the approach to knowledge production associated with the action turn, theory is not applied to action, but rather theory and action inform each other in ongoing spirals of action and reflection called praxis. Action researchers, influenced by thinkers like Paulo Freire, argue that action and reflection cannot be divided into two separate entities without each of them suffering. In the context of transforming and humanizing the world, mere reflection results in verbalism, which cannot produce transformation. Mere action results in unreflective activism, which cannot produce transformation either. As Freire claims, this praxis of reflection and action must also happen in dialogue with others, which is why action research requires a participatory dimension.

Proposing action research as a distinct participatory paradigm of qualitative research, John Heron and Reason identify two basic epistemic principles of research that gives primacy to action: (1) epistemic and (2) political participation. Epistemic participation

implies that any propositional knowledge emerging from research (i.e. abstract and conceptual knowing) is always grounded in the researcher’s experiential knowing (through direct encounter). Political participation implies that it is a basic human right of any ‘research subject’ to fully participate in the design of any research intending to gather knowledge about him or her. Because in this approach people do research with each other rather than researchers doing research on others or about them, taking the action turn itself brings participation centre stage to the research process.

Action research perspectives range from those promoting individual reflection to enhance professional practice and produce change in a system—like the Action Science and action inquiry traditions—to others promoting collective participation and reflection in the name of broader transformation in society—such as the emancipatory and critical traditions. In the first approach, participation happens in the context of an individual practice; in the second, it is part of a collective practice.

Yet both approaches involve a form of ‘participation’. In the first, the individual participates in the research setting while researching it, leading to a form of experiential knowing that emerges through direct encounter and inner resonance. Only through this process does knowledge that is conceptual or propositional develop always associated with a problem of practice or action, and in relation to others in that setting. In the second, the same process unfolds, but this time in the context of collaboration with the participants of the situation requiring change, who are simultaneously part of the research process and activists engaged in transforming their world.

Taking the Action Turn in Social and Applied Research

To the extent that the social sciences have inherited from the physical and natural sciences key ontological and epistemological assumptions (i.e. assumptions about what the world is and how we know it), social scientists view social ‘reality’ as largely independent of the observer. This means that reality is ‘out there’ and can be understood with the right safeguards against the subjectivity of the researcher. Researchers who believe this—quantitative positivist and neo-positivist researchers—set up elaborate statistical ‘controls’ or create near-laboratory conditions through which to observe social reality objectively and from a distance. Variables are isolated to study their effects. Qualitative or naturalistic researchers set up fewer safeguards, preferring to observe social interaction in its natural setting rather than decontextualizing it. While there are alternative interpretive views, the gold standard within

a qualitative ethnographic approach tends to be a ‘fly on the wall’ approach to observation—the inconspicuous researcher, notebook in hand, taking field notes, consulting or interviewing key informants often erroneously labelled ‘participants’. In contrast, by taking the action turn, researchers move from being distanced, independent observers of social reality to acknowledging participation within it, and in relation to other participants of that reality (and thus of the research process that attempts to ‘capture’ or approximate it).

Research that takes the action turn happens in two possible ways. Either the actor within the social setting under study becomes a co-researcher or a traditional researcher collaborates with actors within their social setting so that they can understand and transform it. In both cases, the aim is to create a spiralling design of cycles in which the ‘researcher’ acts in the world, and inquires about the process and the outcomes of that action. Each cycle of action and reflection contributes to new understanding and emerges as actionable knowledge to transform reality. Participation is a way to generate good-quality knowledge *from* action and *for* action. This is quite different from theory-based, ‘scientifically’ deduced formal knowledge produced within the confines of an academic institution and stemming from an explicit research posture of distance and detachment from reality.

Enacting the Action Turn: Two Points of Entry to Knowledge Generation

Since the need for an action turn in the social sciences was articulated, action research has gained currency in academic and practitioner circles, with two distinct communities of researchers converging in their commitment to link knowledge and action. On the one hand are scholars from the world of academia interested in *creating better knowledge to theorize and inform practice*. This is research-oriented action research. On the other are practitioners and activists interested in *creating and using better knowledge to change something in the world*. This is action-oriented action research.

Research-oriented action research aims to improve the quality of the research process and its findings, thus creating more grounded and, in this sense, ‘valid’ knowledge, which in turn improves the quality of practice or of an undesirable condition in the world. These researchers are also concerned with issues such as the theory/practice and the academic/practitioner divides, the role of the university in the communities where it is embedded and, of course, the legitimacy, validity and quality of the knowledge produced, as well as its actionability.

Action-oriented action research, in contrast, aims to create the knowledge required to enhance its producers’ capacity to transform something in the world, be it

their practice or undesirable conditions associated with injustice and oppression. These researchers are also concerned with issues such as practical engagement as a way to learn, participation and emancipation as conditions for social transformation, knowledge, power and the conflicting norms of hierarchical structures and the horizontal and dialogical norms of participatory research. These different points of entry have much to do with researcher positionality, that is, whether the researcher is an insider or an outsider to the setting. In a sense, for action-oriented action researchers, research represents more of a ‘knowledge turn’ than an ‘action turn.’ They view knowledge as a resource that drives their action forward and provides a more systematically reflective form of praxis.

Despite the differences between research- and action-oriented approaches to action research, the call for an action turn in both represents a challenge to the production of formal knowledge that too often lacks relevance to social problem-solving. Kurt Lewin, sometimes viewed as the father of action research, believed that by beginning with actions aimed at solving social problems, researchers could produce knowledge more grounded in a community’s needs and thus more relevant and actionable. In a similar spirit, today scholars in many applied fields—like education, management, public administration, social work and public health—have begun to use action research to counter their field’s continued tendency of disconnection. The goal is to produce knowledge that is more connected to the reality of those experiencing the problems and, thus, more relevant and actionable to solve those problems.

In education for example, knowledge has traditionally been generated in universities or in R & D (research and development) centres to provide guidance for teachers. Researchers identify and disseminate ‘best practices’ to teachers through practitioner journals, conferences, workshops and highly scripted instructional programmes and, when those fail, through district mandates. This approach to knowledge generation, dissemination and utilization makes teachers resistant or reluctant implementers of knowledge in their teaching practices that have been created with little input from them. When teachers themselves create knowledge, or when researchers doing research *with* instead of *on* teachers create it, there is a greater likelihood that those who are acting within the classroom will find this knowledge useful. Likewise, teachers can adopt action research as an ongoing way to better frame and solve problems in their classrooms.

The purpose of action research in this example, and its notion of action, resonates with John Dewey’s emphasis on the importance of experiential learning. It illustrates an action research application aimed at improving professional practice or increasing organizational

effectiveness. In this tradition, action researchers see as the focus of their inquiry either a specific action taken or their individual experience—personal or professional. Another manifestation is the use of personal narrative or reflective practice, whereby reflection and inquiry on experience lead to greater understanding and actions that are more congruent with one's espoused theories.

Critical action research traditions aim at a different purpose and notion of action: addressing systemic injustices to overcome the negative consequences of social exclusion based on class, racial, gender or other forms of oppression. For example, for Freire, literacy among the poor involved using dialogue, action and reflection to read the word and the world. Armed with what he called *conscientizacão*, members of oppressed groups could engage in social action that leads to transformation. In this tradition, praxis connects action to the broader goal of social change, which requires the challenge of 'official' knowledge stating exclusive claims to 'truth', thus questioning its role in maintaining taken-for-granted understandings and beliefs that reproduce unjust relations in society.

Conclusion

The call to an action turn represents an invitation to take an epistemological break with traditional, positivist and neo-positivist forms of knowledge production in the social sciences. All action researchers, independent of the approaches they choose to take, turn to action when framing and engaging their research practice. For all of them, and for other social scientists who decide to follow this invitation, the epistemological break demands redefining the meaning of the 'validity' or 'trustworthiness' of the knowledge they seek to produce. Taking the action turn implies two commitments associated to the research process: first, ensuring that the produced new knowledge is grounded in a systematic process that draws from the experience or practice of participants (who are part of the 'researched reality') and, second, ensuring that the emergent knowledge can help its producers (participants) become more capable of acting in and transforming their world. Taking the action turn radically shifts our understanding of both the nature and the goals of social science research.

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See also Action Science; cycles of action and reflection; experiential learning; praxis; reflective practice

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ACTIVITY THEORY

Activity theory was initiated by a group of Russian psychologists in the 1920s and 1930s, and the theory is specifically credited to Lev Vygotsky, Alexy Leont'ev and Alexander Luria. The underpinning philosophy of this theory aimed to explain human consciousness and behaviour.

Activity theory is the study of what humans 'do' and their belief that what they do (an individual's activity) defines their consciousness, which in turn mediates the way they approach other, unrelated activity.

For example, Bonnie Nardi noted that if a person spends his days digging ditches, his consciousness will be thusly shaped. If that person finds himself writing computer programmes as his life's work, that is quite another consciousness.

Human activity is categorized as external—what an individual does in the world—and internal—what is stored in the mind and generated by the individual. The process of internalization involves individuals learning from their experience and being trained by others. The internalization allows humans to envisage possible future actions and their outcomes.

While activity theory and action research have different origins, a special issue in *Mind, Culture, and Activity* in 2011 explored the relationship between Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and action research. It was pointed out in this issue that both CHAT and action research consider that practice or praxis is important in the creation of knowledge, both believe that research in social science should result in societal practice and both are socio-critical approaches. The issue also points out that both Vygotsky, who is considered one of the prominent scholars in CHAT, and Kurt Lewin, who is considered the father of action research, were in close contact with each other when action research came into being.

Subject, Object and Activity

A ‘subject’ is an individual or group of individuals involved in a common activity which is the focus of observation by the analyst. The subject undertakes some activity to achieve an ‘object’ (see Figure 1). The arrow in Figure 1 represents the activity—in other words, the element symbolizing work. The activity is the point of interest as it is the ‘black box’ detailing how work is done.

In activity theory, reference to the object alludes to the desire (theoretical result) that the subject is trying to fulfil, or the underlying motive for the activity. The object is what drives an activity (motivation).

The unit of analysis for the investigation of an activity was initially viewed from an individual perspective. A contemporary model of activity theory offered by Yrjo Engeström considered the analysis of an activity from the view of a collective group level (see Figure 3).

The object is dynamic and can change or develop over the lifetime of an activity. It is possible that the object and motive may change or evolve during the process of an activity. Therefore, in undertaking the activity, the anticipated object and the actual outcome may differ. An example used by Victor Kaptelinin and Nardi describes how a house (object) being built by a family (subject) may change over time and, when complete, may be substantially different from that initially envisaged.

One other consideration with relation to the object is that at any one time an individual may have more than one motive. The decision about which motive to act on is, according to Kaptelinin and Nardi, a function of the



Figure 1 Subject, Object and Activity

SOURCE: Kaptelinin, V., & Nardi, B. (2006). *Acting with technology: Activity theory and interaction design* (p. 30). Cambridge: MIT Press.

social context and the conditions and means available to the individual.

Tools and Mediation

One of the main constructs of activity theory is that the way subjects approach or carry out their work (the focus activity) is mediated by their tools. According to activity theory, the development and use of existing tools must be viewed from a cultural-historical point of view, as such tools and associated processes were developed by earlier participating workers. The intimate knowledge that these workers possessed served to influence and shape existing tools and their use. The tools therefore have embodied knowledge which mediates work.

Kari Kuutti contends that all activity contains or involves interaction with tools. Tools, often referred to as artefacts, are created by humans and offer signs to subjects which assist in directing them towards a particular action.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the way in which the subject approaches the activity in order to achieve the object is mediated through tools (also described as artefacts). That is, the tools humans use influence the way they approach an activity and assist with their decision-making or prompt the subject to take a course of action. Vygotsky wrote that when a human being ties a knot in her handkerchief as a reminder, she is, in essence, constructing the process of memorizing by forcing an external object to remind her of something; she transforms remembering into an external activity.

Tools can take various forms depending on the context of the study; they may range from instruments, signs, procedures or machines to language, methods, laws and forms of work organization.

Irrespective of whether a tool is physical or mental in nature, the key feature of a tool is that it provides signs (prompts or clues) that mediate the way an activity is undertaken by the subject. These tools are

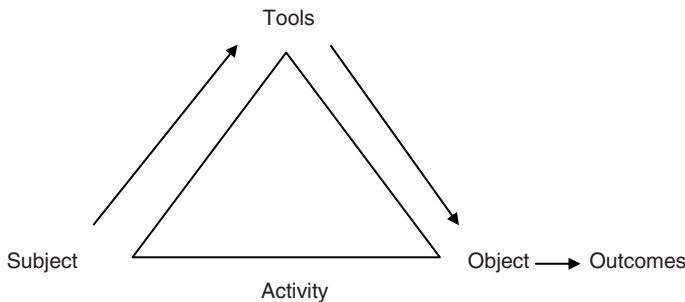


Figure 2 Basic Model of Activity

historic in nature, having been developed by earlier participants.

Community of Practice and Divisions of Labour

Tools have been developed in the context in which they are to be used by actors who have an intimate knowledge of the work (activity). These tools carry cultural-historical significance, providing some assistance to the subject in so doing. It is therefore vital to acknowledge and account for the viewpoint of experts in the related field of work. Another mediating factor which is cultural-historical in nature is the rules which mediate an activity and the interaction between subjects within the group.

Activity theory centres on mediation and the concept that the way humans undertake an activity is influenced by the environment around them and their ability to develop an understanding based upon previous experiences in order to make logical actions. This mediation is man-made in that the tools which influence a subject have been developed by the subject or other people who have previously worked in the same context.

Martin Ryder notes that in most human contexts our activities are mediated by using culturally established standards, such as language, artefacts and established procedures. A second influence which mediates an activity is the community.

Activity theorists believe that the human mind, our consciousness, is one which is social in nature. The influence that the community of practice has upon an activity is applied through rules to which the subject adheres. These rules are implicit and explicit governance which direct the subject. Explicit rules are easily identified as documented codes of practice or standards which govern the requirements of workers. Implicit

rules are the norms which the subject accepts as requirements (informal procedures as well as the social relationship between the subject and the community), often derived from other, more experienced workers.

A model proposed by Engeström incorporates the concept of the community and its influence. The model has the three main elements in an activity as the subject, object and community, with a relationship which is mediated between each of these elements. The relationship between a subject and an object is mediated by tools; the subject and community are mediated by rules; and the community and object are mediated by divisions of labour.

The community has previously been described by activity theorists as the organization in which the subject operates, with the divisions of labour representing the collaboration with other stakeholders (both within the organization and as external workers) who collaborate in an outcome. Engeström's model of activity is pictured in Figure 3.

The line of division between the subject, the community of practice and the division of labour is determined by the analyst or researcher. Engeström and Reijo Miettinen point out that the analyst constructs a holistic view of an activity by initially selecting a subject and then interpreting the system from that subject's point of view.

Contradictions and Innovations Development

When an innovation is introduced to support work, the innovation could be applied as a new tool that mediates the activity of a subject and results in a change in the way work is done. The introduced innovation could, however, have negative effects upon the activity and cause an undesirable outcome, and this situation is described as a breakdown in an activity.

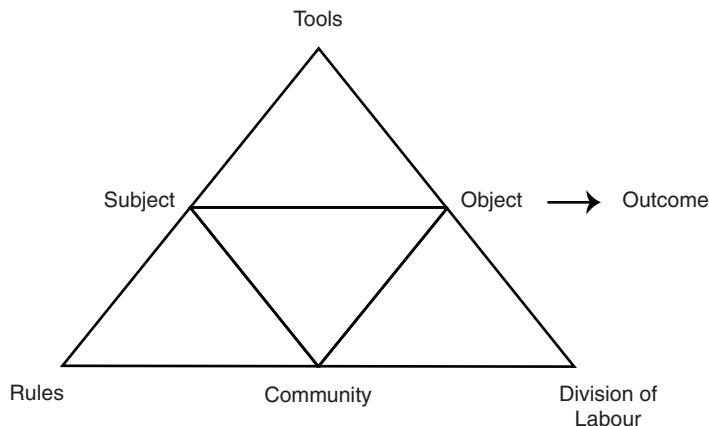


Figure 3 Engeström's Model of Activity

Breakdowns or disturbances are a result of what activity theorists identify as contradictions. Contradictions occur when there is tension between different elements in an activity. Engeström says that contradictions emerge when one component changes or develops beyond the operational logic of the other components.

It is important to note the existing system components and how they interact in order to anticipate and avoid contradictions and disruptions. Engeström and Nardi note the existence of 'invisible work' (work which is not formally recognized or easily identifiable), which is often overlooked in innovation development. This oversight is a source of contradictions, and taking this into account in the development of new tools could potentially minimize breakdowns and result in a more effective innovation.

Action research has been enriched by the incorporation of activity theory in Finland to transform a Finnish public sector hospital.

Michael Er

See also Marxism

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ADULT EDUCATION

This entry makes the links between the discourses of adult education and action research. Action research, also including participatory research (PR), has long been intertwined with the theory and practice of adult education. And like action research, adult education is a broad term, encompassing several purposes, methods, sites and features. Adult education includes labels and approaches such as training, continuing education, vocational education, social movement learning, popular education, Action Learning, critical pedagogy, lifelong learning/education, trade union education, organizational learning, community education, transformative learning and workplace learning, to name but a few. Adult education sometimes refers to adults returning to secondary school or post-secondary education in the evenings to obtain or complete a degree. It often describes the work of agencies and institutions and the courses they deliver, whether for leisure or pleasure, for personal, professional or economic need, such as adult art education, adult literacy classes, computer skills upgrading or English as a Second or Foreign Language. The study of adult education, teaching and learning is also a field of academic scholarship. Further, adult education is used to explain short-term collective learning activities aimed at social, political, cultural and environmental change. Examples of this include workshops on racism in trade-unionized workplaces, training sessions for social movement activists on media relations or non-violent resistance tactics and community-based workshops where adults are brought together to explore issues ranging from violence against women to social exclusion and marginalization. Adult education is therefore categorized into formal (degree courses), non-formal (workshops, etc.) and informal (individual self-directed activities).

Definitions

From this complicated, expansive platform, governments and scholars have attempted to develop definitions. In 1919, the British Ministry of Reconstruction defined adult education as all the deliberate efforts by which men and women attempt to satisfy their thirst for knowledge, to equip themselves for their responsibilities as citizens and members of society or to find opportunities for self-expression. Others see adult education as a set of activities (methods), an intellectual

project (learning) and/or a social system (a movement). Adult education is also understood as a struggle for the redistribution of knowledge and power in society, a means towards active and engaged citizenship practice and to strengthen democracy.

There are two predominant orientations in the field of adult education. The first is the individual focus, where learning and being learner centred are emphasized and are the means to enhance knowledge, vocational skills and organizational management or change abilities, instilling greater self-esteem, awareness and confidence to direct one's own educational and working lives. The second is the notion of social or collective learning, which posits that we learn in relationship to others. Social learning is the framework that is most often used by critical adult educators who call for a vision of adult education based on the values of co-operation, social justice, equity and sustainability. Within this orientation, both teaching and learning are emphasized, aiming to collectively unearth and explore the root causes of inequities and power imbalances and to develop collective understandings and the means to bring about substantive changes in the lives of those who are the most marginalized. This orientation is more closely linked to PR.

Adult Education and Research

In the early 1970s, the Institute of Adult Education in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, was a principal location of the development of the concept of PR. Researchers in the institute challenged the limitations of traditional research practices and developed a methodology that aimed to put the less powerful at the centre of the knowledge creation process, to move people and their daily lived struggles from the margins to the epistemological centre. For two decades, the International Council for Adult Education provided a home for the International Participatory Research Network. Alongside the Tanzanian efforts, Paulo Freire, an adult educator in Brazil, was elaborating a concept of 'thematic investigation' within the context of his adult literacy work. Thematic investigation, like PR, combined collective investigation, action and adult education to enable people to collectively identify problems and to produce and use knowledge to bring about social change. The focus of this collaboration between PR and adult education is on marginalized and oppressed groups in society (e.g. women, workers, etc.), the goals being to empower them to exercise greater determination and to fundamentally transform social realities that are imbalanced.

Democratizing Knowledge

As with action research and PR, at the core of adult education is the notion of democratizing knowledge, of

recognizing, respecting and drawing on the many standpoints and ways of knowing of the men and women with whom one works. Indeed, a fundamental principle of adult education is colloquially known as 'beginning where people are at'. The educational process revolves around adults' daily lived realities and experiences, knowledge and needs. Adults are asked to take an active role in the design of the learning or educational research process because they are the experts on their own contexts and experiences of the world. Adults also have the skills and abilities to name their own problems and concerns and to solve these problems. Similar to PR and action research, the epistemological assumption is that knowledge is constructed not only individually but, more important, also collectively and socially, and therefore the educational process must allow for social, group or collective discussion and debate and analysis of life experiences, whether the focus is on an issue such as poverty or computer skills upgrading. In this more learner-centred approach to adult education, the authority or expertise of the adult educator, like that of the researcher, is challenged and repositioned as 'facilitator' of the learning process, rather than expert 'teacher'. In spirited debate, scholars challenge what they see as some of the limitations to this approach. While all would agree that adults have a wealth of lived experience, knowledge and abilities, some say that when you start with people's experience, you get the point that you start and stop with that experience; but there are times when people's experience runs out. Others highlight what they see as a problematic, 'value-neutral' stance. In groups or communities, there exist problematic exclusionary and silencing assumptions based on the hegemony of normalcy and power imbalances of class, race, ability, sexuality or gender. Moreover, there is no neutrality; nothing and no one is value free, causing other adult educators to dismiss the notion that educators are mere facilitators.

Methods

The literature on participatory and other community-based practices of research has sometimes been vague on the question of methods because the most important factors have been issues, roles, contexts, mobilization of knowledge and learning and other aspects. Being too prescriptive or orthodox in method would be counter to the goals, diversity of issues, settings and so forth. In 1986, Marlene Brant Castellano pointed out that adult education and participatory practices of research are not a panacea for the multiple problems of poverty, marginalization and political exclusion that communities, and in her case Aboriginal peoples, face. Today globalization, the advent of neocolonialism, the increasing violence against women and environmental degradation

can be added to this list, to name but a few of the new millennium's ills and challenges. But in both action research and adult education, identifying access points of community change and learning, setting priorities, democratizing knowledge, critically and creatively engaging adults where they stand and from what they know and want have an important contribution to make to transforming lives, workplaces and the world.

Darlene Clover

See also critical pedagogy; Freire, Paulo; International Council for Adult Education; knowledge democracy; Participatory Action Research

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ADVOCACY AND INQUIRY

Advocacy and inquiry are two key communication behaviours with critical implications for interpersonal, group and organizational effectiveness. Advocacy refers to stating one's views; inquiry refers to asking questions. This entry discusses the features of both productive and unproductive advocacy and inquiry, how the quality and balance of these two behaviours affects learning, and the relevance of these two behaviours for facilitating conversation, managing emotions and providing feedback, all of which are critical skills for organization members as well as action researchers. Learning to use both advocacy and inquiry appropriately are important skills for action researchers as they facilitate both inquiry and purposeful action in their collaborative settings.

In conversations on complex and controversial issues, when there is a high degree of advocacy and little inquiry, people are unable to learn about the nature of their differences. People may feel that the speaker is imposing a view on them without taking into account their perspective, which can lead to either escalating conflict or withdrawal. When there is a high degree of inquiry, but no one is willing to advocate a position, it is difficult for participants to know where the other stands, and the lack of progress can lead people to feel frustrated and impatient. As a participant in a conversation, being aware of the balance of advocacy and inquiry can help you determine how best to contribute at a given time. If you hear that people are advocating but not asking questions, inquire into their views before adding your own. If you hear people asking questions for information but not stating an opinion, advocating your view may help the group move forward.

While the balance of advocacy and inquiry is important for a productive conversation, so is the quality. High-quality advocacy involves stating your view while being open to influence. Others can only influence your reasoning if you make your reasoning steps explicit. To advocate effectively, you need to provide the data you see as salient, and state how you go from the data to your conclusions. It is also useful to make your points one at a time. Asking others for their reactions after you have layered several points can leave them unsure where to start.

Even when the quality of advocacy is high, it needs to be balanced with inquiry, or people are likely to feel that they are being pushed. However, not all inquiry is equal. Closed questions, which evoke a 'yes' or 'no' answer, are useful for establishing facts but do not elicit rich information. A rhetorical or leading question, designed to get the other person to comply, is a

form of disguised advocacy and tends to elicit defensiveness. Other types of low-quality inquiry include forced-choice questions, which limit the response to predetermined options, and questions that imply that others are at fault.

High-quality inquiry, in contrast, includes questions that are open-ended, test your understanding of others' meanings, probe how they arrive at their views, solicit the views of everyone at the table and encourage challenge of your own view. High-quality inquiry expands rather than limits the range of responses and promotes action rather than eliciting excuses. It requires a willingness to reflect on how your own actions contributed to a problem rather than focusing blame on others.

High-quality inquiry serves several purposes. It encourages the expression of diverse opinions, doubts and concerns. It generates information for more informed choice and increased commitment, and it facilitates insight and adoption of new perspectives (see Table 1).

Conversations that involve a high degree of advocacy often move quickly from point to point. While inquiry can slow the pace of the conversation, it increases the rate of learning. In conversations characterized by advocacy, people may state what they think but not what they think about one another's thinking. At the end of such a meeting, participants may feel that the conversation lacked focus and depth and that little progress was made on any one issue. You can counteract this risk by coupling advocacy and inquiry. For example, you might say, 'Here is what I think about XYZ . . . What are your reactions to my reasoning? Do you see any gaps? Is there data that I am unaware of or additional data we should collect?'

Encouraging others to question your views and checking to ensure that you have understood others' meanings accurately are the types of inquiry that help keep a conversation focused, produce deeper understanding, demonstrate your openness to learning and reduce defensiveness. They help people make progress on the substantive issue, and they build relationships.

People are often reluctant to ask questions because they worry that they will be perceived as uninformed, lacking initiative or challenging the other's credibility and authority. Leaders can minimize these concerns of subordinates by emphasizing the importance of learning from mistakes, acknowledging their own errors and rewarding others for doing the same. People can minimize the risk of being perceived as challenging others' credibility or authority by explaining that the purpose of their question is to learn. For this to be credible, your mindset has to be that others might be right and that you have something to learn by understanding their logic.

Productive advocacy and inquiry are both informed by using the ladder of inference—a model of the reasoning steps people take as they size up situations and decide what action to take. Below are examples of using the ladder of inference as a guide for productive advocacy and inquiry in different situations: (a) facilitating a substantive conversation, (b) managing your own and others' emotional reactions and (c) providing feedback.

Facilitating Conversation

When you facilitate a conversation, you can determine what inquiry is useful by paying attention to the quality of people's reasoning. Ask yourself whether you are hearing data, interpretations or conclusions. The purpose of your inquiry should be to help all parties involved make their reasoning explicit so that they can learn from their different perspectives. Before you begin asking questions, it is helpful to explain your purpose. For example, you might say, 'That's an important point for us to discuss. I'd like to understand your thinking before we either agree or disagree.'

Typically, when people advocate, they only state their conclusions, not the steps in their reasoning. If that is the case, ask them to go down their ladder of inference to provide the data on which their conclusions are based. You might say, 'What information do you have on that?', 'Give an example of what you are saying', or 'What have you seen or heard that leads you to think so?'

Too often people assume that words or terms have the same meaning for everyone. Testing your own understanding and encouraging others to test theirs

<i>Low-Quality Inquiry</i>	<i>High-Quality Inquiry</i>
Do you understand what I am saying?	What is your reaction to what I am saying?
Don't you agree? Don't you think it would be better if . . . ?	In what ways is your view different? My view is X, how do you see it?
Did you do that because of X or Y?	What was your thinking on that? What led you to do what you did?
Why can't you do X?	What would it take to do X?
Why didn't you just tell me?	What led you to not tell me? Did I contribute to your not speaking up, and if so, how?

Table 1 *Low- and High-Quality Inquiry*

can reduce miscommunication and improve the efficiency of the conversation. For example, you might say, ‘Here’s my understanding of what we mean by X . . . How do others understand it?’ Once people agree on the data and meanings, you can inquire about their different evaluations, explanations and thoughts about what to do.

When people have opposing views, ask them to reflect on each other’s data and reasoning, not just the data that supports their own conclusions—for example, ‘How would you interpret or explain the data he [she] has presented?’ or ‘What information, if we could collect it, would lead you to change your view?’

Sometimes, when people have difficulty making progress on controversial issues, it is not because they disagree about the data. They are stuck because they have different interests, concerns or values that have not been addressed. If so, ask, ‘What is at stake for us? What concerns do we need to address? How can we meet our different interests?’

Managing Emotions

High-quality advocacy and inquiry are useful when we have strong emotional reactions. Our emotions do not just happen to us; they are a function of the assumptions we hold, the inferences we make—the story that we tell ourselves—about what has happened. For example, in your performance review, your boss says to you, ‘You’ve been doing well this quarter, but there are things you need to improve’. If you feel confident and like your boss, you may focus on ‘You’ve been doing well’, hear it as a compliment and feel good. If you see your boss as overly critical and not open to disagreement, you may focus on ‘there are things you need to do to improve’, hear it as an unfair criticism that you can’t contest and feel upset. In either case, if your emotional experience leads you to focus on only one part of the message, you may end up with a distorted view of your performance.

Use your emotions as a window on your reasoning in interacting with others. Ask yourself the following:

- What did I hear the others say or see them do?
- Did they say or do something that I missed?
- How am I interpreting them?
- What assumptions am I making about their motives? What alternative explanations might I consider?
- How might I be contributing to the problem?

By coupling advocacy and inquiry, you can talk about your own and others’ emotions without assuming or casting blame. When upset, you might say, ‘I’m feeling upset/angry/frustrated at the moment. I’d like

to talk about why, and get your reaction’. When others are upset, you can acknowledge their emotions, inquire into what upset them, empathize with their concerns and ask how you may be contributing to the problem.

The need to inquire into our reasoning when we are upset may be obvious. Less obvious is the need to reflect when we feel positively, particularly when dealing with difficult issues. If you find yourself feeling relieved when a group reaches quick agreement on a difficult topic, be concerned. Take the time to inquire into how people have reached their apparent agreement. You may discover important differences that have been overlooked.

Providing Feedback

Combining high-quality advocacy and inquiry is important when giving others feedback. You need to be willing to disclose your assessment, explain the consequences of the person’s behaviour without attributing bad motives and be ready to change or expand your interpretation based on what you hear. For example, when giving feedback to someone you perceive as indirect and asking leading questions, you can do the following:

- Give an example of the behaviour that concerns you (‘When you said to John, “Don’t you think it would be better if you had done X?” . . .’).
- Check that you have understood the person (‘I understood you to be saying that, in your view, he should have done X. Is that right?’).
- If so, advocate what you think are the consequences or implications of the behaviour (‘When you ask a rhetorical question, the other person is likely to hear it as a disguised criticism and see you as indirect. You could be right that the person should have done X, but he [she] she doesn’t yet understand your reasoning. If you are indirect, the person may wonder why, feel defensive or respond indirectly’).
- Inquire into the person’s reactions, alternative interpretations or reasoning for acting that way (‘What is your reaction? Do you see it differently? What is your concern about being direct with your criticism?’).

People are often concerned that if they advocate their views they will be seen as controlling. Yet if they only inquire, they won’t be able to influence their desired outcomes. By combining high-quality advocacy and inquiry, people can create organizational cultures of mutual learning and action. They can express strong views that are helpful and persuasive,

while also being open to influence and discovering where they might be wrong.

Philip W. McArthur

See also Action Science; double-loop learning; ladder of inference; learning pathways grid; theories of action

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AESTHETICS

Aesthetic in action research is considered here in two principal ways. Firstly, at the phenomenological level, it is seen to describe the range of sensory perceptions that flow between participants within a practice environment. As these perceptions form the basis of thoughts and feelings that lead to action, they offer in themselves an important focus for inquiry, both in the moment and through subsequent reflection. Secondly, the aesthetic in action research may describe the use of arts-based activities to help generate different and deeper insights into an issue; in action research practice, there is an expanding range of such activities.

Both of these areas, the *intrinsic aesthetic of inquiry* and the *created aesthetic of arts-based interventions*, are considered in this entry. The main focus, however, is on the first, as it is argued that action research practitioners need to develop sensibility to the aesthetic of their own practice. They may then better decide whether or not arts-based activities add to the quality of the inquiry and, if so, in what ways.

A Brief Theoretical Context

David Abram (1996) in his book *The Spell of the Sensuous* argues that objective thought is always embedded in and influenced by the subjective, which he sees as ‘the vital dark ground’ from which the former springs. Following the influence of the Romantic Movement and the twentieth century focus on the subconscious, the ‘subjective, emotional and intuitive’ are seen as valid areas for philosophical inquiry, alongside rational knowing.

The French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty explores the relationship between direct experience and rational knowing, from a phenomenological perspective. He argues that knowledge is an ‘abstract and derivative sign-language’ which is preceded by the experience of ‘the things themselves’. He is asserting that our understanding of the abstract concept of ‘wood’, for example, is always preceded by and based in experiential knowing of physical trees. Subjective, emotional and intuitive responses associated with aesthetic awareness profoundly influence the other ways in which we make meaning. As action research springs from aesthetic perceptions of the ‘things themselves’, it is argued that the aesthetic deserves closer attention.

The Intrinsic Aesthetic in Action Research

The intrinsic aesthetic in action research is now considered from a number of perspectives. These include *play* and *poetics*, both of which spring from subjective, emotional and intuitive experience. Further dimensions of *place*, *pattern* and *narrative* will then be touched on.

Play is a phenomenon that can be found in many, if not all, group behaviours. Johan Huizinga defined play as a phenomenon that, in contrast to work, is voluntarily engaged in. Play, he argued, also operates within rules and time boundaries. Most action research activities are understood by their volunteer participants to be taking place more or less voluntarily in a space that is different from normal work. To manage transactions, groups also need some shared procedures and explicit or implicit relational rules.

Another play theorist, Roger Caillois, identifies within the act of playing four different potentialities. These are Agon/competition, Alea/chance, Ilinx/revelry and Mimesis/role. Agon/competition is always in the room; for example, a participant might be thinking that his or her last contribution was more insightful than the others. The group’s potential to resort to Ilinx/revelry can suddenly change energy levels. Alea/chance may intervene when an unexpected event or revelation pushes discussions into a new direction. As relationships develop and change, Mimesis/role will preoccupy all participants in varying degrees of self-awareness.

Observing these play enactments requires delicacy and practice. The facilitator may draw attention to the way the group’s play is unfolding. Such an intervention would be a transitional step towards a fuller participative awareness by everyone. The modelling role of the practitioner is in contrast to that of the external critic, which problematizes the ever present authority and control issues. Rather, it involves a thoughtful sharing of insights into the group’s self-generated scenario. In this way, the group may be encouraged to generate its

own aesthetic of play as it addresses the questions that have brought it together.

Closely linked to the aesthetic concept of *play* is that of *poetics*. Speech acquires a poetic dimension when new meaning is created through imagery and metaphor. As Stephen Linstead has pointed out, there is a 'silent implicative double' in all communication. This significant negativity can be recognized in the conscious or unconscious choices people make as they speak. Improvisatory processes in the cut and thrust of live speech reveal meaning in ways that can be described as poetic. We hear and respond as the dialogue invents itself around us. For example, an individual may struggle to unpack assumptions within a cliché, or the group may adopt a new formulation of an issue. An alertness to the poetics in these encounters identifies both the valuation and the devaluation of meaning in dialogue. Beneath and around syntax and vocabulary, there is also the *voiced* poetics of tone and rhythm in the way participants talk.

There are other aesthetic dimensions which are closely related to *play* and *poetics*; these include the visual and aural qualities of *place*, the *pattern* of the group's interactions and the accumulating and changing history of its *narrative*. Brief reference will now be made to each.

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard argues that the aesthetic of social and architectural *place* of our lives is a deeply embedded part of our experience. The resonance of *place* becomes inseparable from the memory of events in which we have participated. A chosen venue's facilities and ethos will influence the outcomes of an event. Scope for change is often limited, but people may be encouraged to personalize the space, if only by reorganizing the furniture. New settings, whether indoors or outdoors, may prompt new approaches.

The creation and recognition of *pattern* is integral to all sense making. The pattern of action research inquiries may reveal itself at many levels in iterative cycles of dialogue or in the unfolding of a scenario. The links here with play are strong; pattern can be understood as the forming and changing expression of the players' intentions.

The history of the group's *narrative* is also being formed and extended as the group works together. This history is a construct that resides in the language, records, drawings photos or other media the group uses.

Developing Awareness of the Intrinsic Aesthetic in Action Research

How might a practitioner develop greater aesthetic awareness? The process may be seen to begin with

'first person' inquiry, or the reflective practice of the individual. It is unlikely that aesthetic awareness can be heightened in groups unless individual members are prepared to do so themselves. First person inquiry requires a commitment to think reflectively about unfolding experiences in action research. Judi Marshall describes this discipline as a way of attending simultaneously to the 'inner and outer arcs of inquiry'. This involves developing greater questioning of what practitioners perceive to be happening in themselves and in others during the improvised play of encounters. It calls for a form of 'online' receptivity, as well as the more tranquil reflection that is possible after the event.

Facilitators might, for example, notice reactions within themselves to a comment that unexpectedly revives pleasant or unpleasant associations for them. They might consciously try to place the comment and their reaction to it in a way that allows them still to be present with the live dialogue. In fact, in action research, it is purposeful and benign attention to this interaction between the individual and the group that helps develop some of the most important lines of inquiry.

This reflective process can acquire greater depth if it is followed through in some form of presentational recording. This may be through journaling, free writing, poetry or other creative genres, including drawing and painting. By a process of imaginative shaping, personal reflections become artefacts that have an independent existence. They can be returned to and reconsidered in further cycles of reflection. The purpose of record making is primarily to increase the quality of reflection for the individual, although the resulting records also offer a means of sharing insights with others.

This may sound too taxing a discipline to be sustained over a period of time, but reflective journaling from time to time in whatever medium seems appropriate may improve individual practice.

Arts-Based Interventions and the Aesthetics of Action Research

Many of the intrinsic aesthetic processes described above may be seen to relate to art forms. Receptivity to group process may have, for example, affinities with receptivity to literature or theatre. These affinities may be seen as the meeting point between intrinsic action research aesthetics and the second topic, *arts-based interventions*, referred to at the opening of this entry.

Arts-based interventions in action research have been comprehensively described by Steven Taylor and Hans Hansen. Current practice in using arts-based media in action research includes activities ranging from role play through improvised drama to live performance of texts. In the visual domain, it may

range from making individual sketches and models to group-generated conceptual art, collages or murals. Writing activities may include journaling, poetry and life writing, as well as reading excerpts from novels, scripts and anthologies of poetry. Music making may range from improvisation to engagement with professional musicians as they rehearse and perform. In fact, most genres and variants of art form can now find a place within the practice of groups. It is vital that their relevance to action inquiry is appreciated by participants.

Groups may be energized or moved by this different way of working. However, the intrinsic aesthetic of action research is always the framework within which arts-based approaches operate. Not all participants may be persuaded of their relevance. Bouncing people into something that leaves them self-conscious and exposed does not constitute good group practice. Also too much interpretative comment from a facilitator can trivialize the aesthetic knowing generated in the process of making and responding directly to the artwork. Time needs to be allowed for the ‘thing itself’ to speak; its worst fate could be that it becomes the subject of quasi-psychological decoding. The ‘maker’ should be allowed to choose how to share reflections on her or his own creative experience. He or she may then invite feedback from others on how the artwork affects them. If handled sensitively, arts-based activities may deepen the group’s intrinsic aesthetic and further the beneficial purposes of the action research. Sometimes an image may speak a thousand words, but it is mainly in the image’s making and in subsequent reflective dialogue that the value of arts-based activities lies.

Alan George

See also arts-based action research; first person action research; reflective practice

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AGENCY

Agency is a term with multiple and contested meanings and colorations that has been used to mean choice, action, autonomy, freedom and empowerment, among other things. For all of the themes and variations, it is fair to say that across a number of different fields—including sociology, psychology, anthropology, economic development and philosophy—scholars have used the term *agency* to account for what leads people to act in the face of larger shaping forces such as nature (neurobiology and DNA), nurture (socialization and upbringing), one’s social location and the constraints of social structure, whether proximal or distal. This entry will sketch out how agency has been viewed in sociology and psychology.

Generally, sociologists consider individual ‘agency’ in relation to social ‘structure’ insofar as a person’s ability to act is affected by his or her location in the social context, with its attendant rules, norms, expectations, roles or framing. Theorists have taken different stances on how they see the interplay of agency and structure. Apart from the extremes of complete determinism, on the one hand, and overstated free will (as in rational actor approaches where individual action is unencumbered by any positioning or social relationships), on the other, there are two more possibilities. First is a more macro-sociological tradition of viewing structure as predominant, constraining behaviour and then defining agency as people acting despite or independently of these constraints. A second perspective views agency and structure as highly intertwined, so that agency is the ability of the individual to act and even to transform the context rather than only reacting to it.

In a seminal article, the sociologists Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische have described individual agency as a dynamic, unfolding, socially situated process informed by three elements: (1) past-oriented habit or routine, (2) present-oriented reflection and judgement and (3) future-oriented purpose or imagination. To exercise agency, one needs to be sufficiently immersed in the context to become habituated to or operate fluently in it. In addition, one needs to be able

to take stock of the conditions one encounters, and then to think imaginatively about possibilities in order to plan going forward.

Psychologists have looked at agency in terms of people's self-perceptions and self-understandings of their own self-efficacy, feeling themselves as able to make choices rather than being carried along by circumstances. In this regard, psychological agency is needed when habitual or automatic behaviour is disrupted or no longer suffices. Albert Bandura specifies four components of agency: (1) intentionality, (2) exercise of forethought, (3) self-reactiveness (as in self-regulation) and (4) self-reflectiveness (about one's sense of efficacy).

Some scholars treat agency as a characteristic of the individual. An alternative is to consider agency as emerging or achieved under particular circumstances. In this regard, the qualities of the context or the social ecology that enables agency take on central importance.

Some unresolved questions surrounding agency: Does agency exist even if the act results in no changes in the world? Does agency exist if there are discrepancies between the intended and actual results?

All in all, discerning agency is analogous to looking at sailors in boats on the water. To understand where people end up, we want to know the sailor's hoped for destination. But to make sense of the sailor's moves, we also need to know something about the water's currents and flows, the way the wind blows, the boat's features and the sailor's prior experience and ability to act in changing and unforeseen circumstances. This may eventually give us insight if the sailor ends up changing tack or shifting destinations altogether. Here, agency is seen in the actor's deliberate action—her motive and intention as well as her ability to handle the boat effectively. Her actions are intelligible within the context that can both enable and constrain her efforts. Agency then is the ability to function effectively in the environment at hand, to exercise judgement and to make choices in the face of alternatives.

Empirical Investigations of Agency

Agency is a central concept in life course studies where people face alternatives and make choices in planning and navigating their lives over time. Similarly, agency figures in studies of youth in transition, insofar as the lock-step of schooling (here a form of structure) comes to an end and individuals find themselves facing subsequent opportunities that aren't mandated or scripted to the same degree, and often with much less social support.

Likewise, agency has figured centrally in studies that attend to the narratives that people construct

about their lives, as in the work of Elliot Mishler, Carol Gilligan and others, sometimes framed as 'voice' or empowerment, sometimes as navigation. One example of a life history study where exploring agency is a central concern is Ronald Berger's study of a person who becomes disabled, and how he subsequently adapts.

Given that action research generally involves research on practice in various kinds of settings (e.g. education, organizations, community or more broadly in society) undertaken by people in the midst of practice, the issue of agency is central. It is an important topic for investigation, and the process of engaging in the research can itself promote a sense of agency amongst the researchers and their partners in the field.

Bethamie Horowitz

See also adult education; cycles of action and reflection; identity; practitioner inquiry; voice

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AGRICULTURE AND ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

Agriculture and action research are closely related. There are many different styles of agriculture; however, in this context, civic agriculture will be discussed. A civic agricultural system, as defined by Thomas Lyson and Amy Guptill in 2004, is locally oriented in production, distribution and consumption; it does not use pesticides or synthetic fertilizers and aims to work with nature in producing food. This agricultural paradigm speaks directly to action research's tenet of pursuing practical knowledge to solve everyday problems. Access to nutritious and healthy food is a major issue for a billion people around the globe. Also, given the environmental impacts that humans are having on the earth, it important for action researchers to understand

the ecological implications of our food production systems. Civic agriculture and action research can be seen as two sides of the same coin, informing one another in their cyclical methods, relational foundations and social justice goals. This entry explains these similarities, explores these connections and offers examples.

First, it is necessary to bear in mind that agriculture is one of humanity’s earliest sciences and has permitted our species to diversify our division of labour and build complex civilizations. While action research as a philosophy is a more recent development, it draws on the very same processes and methods that humans used to invent soil cultivation: trial and error with repeated iterations.

Agriculture requires intimate knowledge of local climates and seasons, along with an encyclopedic understanding of numerous plants and animals, and important details of their uses for humans. Also, information about seeds, germination, planting depth, planting time, water, sunlight, soil requirements, harvest and storage is crucial to ensure successful successions of crops. This knowledge about how the natural world works and how it can be used for human purposes took hundreds of thousands of years to acquire and be passed down between generations before our ancestors began applying it in new ways. These methods of cultivation demanded cyclical processes that were informed by their previous iterations.

Two examples of these cyclical applications include seed selection and the use of organic material as fertilizer. In selecting the next set of seeds to be planted, humans typically choose those that are the most hardy

(that have lasted the longest), biggest and tastiest. Also, the organic ‘waste’ from plants and animals is used to create nutrient-rich soil for the next generation of crops. There is a symbiotic relationship between the livestock eating the stubble from our harvest and their waste fertilizing the soil.

In considering action research, these cyclic methods are at the heart of a praxis approach to projects and working with others. It is through repeated iterations that action researchers strive for continuous improvement in their methods and products. The outputs from previous rounds are evaluated and used to inform our next action steps. Similar to the process of civic agriculture, action research tends to be locally oriented in its endeavours. Action research is also flexible and responsive to the idiosyncrasies of communities and specific projects. Furthermore, action research is open to diverse epistemologies and ways of knowing. This adaptability and openness are mirrored in civic agriculture’s emphasis on best bioregional practices. The cyclical methods of civic agriculture and action research can be understood as one and the same (see Figure 1).

The second aspect of agriculture’s connection to action research and ecological sustainability is centred on its relational foundations. Civic agriculture is committed to creating fertile, healthy and chemically free soil to grow crops. Importantly, civic agriculture also focuses on biological diversity and is similar to Bill Mollison and David Holmgren’s concept of permaculture, or permanent agriculture, a term they coined in the mid-1970s. Relationally speaking, civic

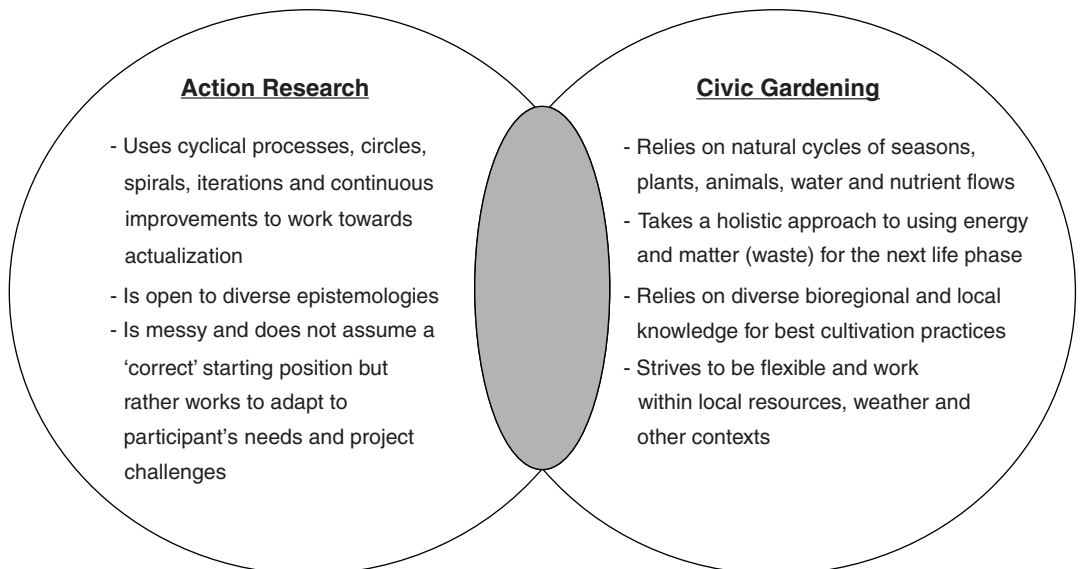


Figure 1 Cyclical Processes and Methods

agriculture is interested in providing food for humans, while enhancing the integrity of local ecosystems. This model is about creating healthy relationships between humans and the rest of the (non-human) natural world. Clean water, clean air, clean soil and clean food are at the heart of this relationship.

For action researchers, relationships are also a fundamental piece of our philosophy. Action researchers are committed to building trusting, dialogical connections between participants, with an emphasis on equal-power dynamics throughout the process. When working with others, we recognize that we must meet them where they are. Action researchers understand that relationships take time, energy, patience and love. They are dedicated to working with people and building communities by focusing on the one-on-one relationships that compose the greater whole. Creating successful relational foundations for projects can take multiple cycles of praxis. These kinds of relationship are evident in civic agriculture and action research, especially when considering the dimension of time. For example, an ecologically sustainable food production system which can support a diverse population of species takes years to create. Unlike monocultures, perennial polycultures do not grow in a single season. Similarly, fruitful action research projects do not occur overnight but require many conversations, meetings and co-operation with project partners to achieve mutual goals. In both civic agriculture and action research, there can be setbacks, disappointments and obstacles to overcome. Plants die, erosion takes place and unpredictable and extreme

weather can prevent bountiful harvests. Likewise, project partners can change their minds, co-ordinators must balance conflicting demands and institutional policies take time to change. Establishing quality relationships with all parts of the larger system serves to help ensure success in the face of adversity (see Figure 2).

The last connection to be considered here between civic agriculture and action research are their social justice goals. As stated, both paradigms seek to better our quality of life by providing healthy, nutritious food and creating applicable, everyday knowledge, respectively. Digging deeper into the goals of civic agriculture, we find an emphasis on equitable and sustainable relationships with the wider ecology of the planet. This form of agronomics begins with ecology but extends to include economics and communal and personal well-being. In connecting people with farmers and their food, local economies are strengthened by keeping money within the community. Healthy local economics also go hand in hand with strong participatory democracies by strengthening individual, organizational and municipal capacities. Furthermore, eating quality nutritious food affects our personal health. Thus, positive social change and equal relationships stem from a diverse local ecology, strong communal economics, vibrant democracies and healthy individuals and families. These goals are the ‘civic’ aspect of this agricultural system.

As a philosophy and approach to the world, action research strives to achieve very similar goals. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury outlined several environmental aims of action research, including creating

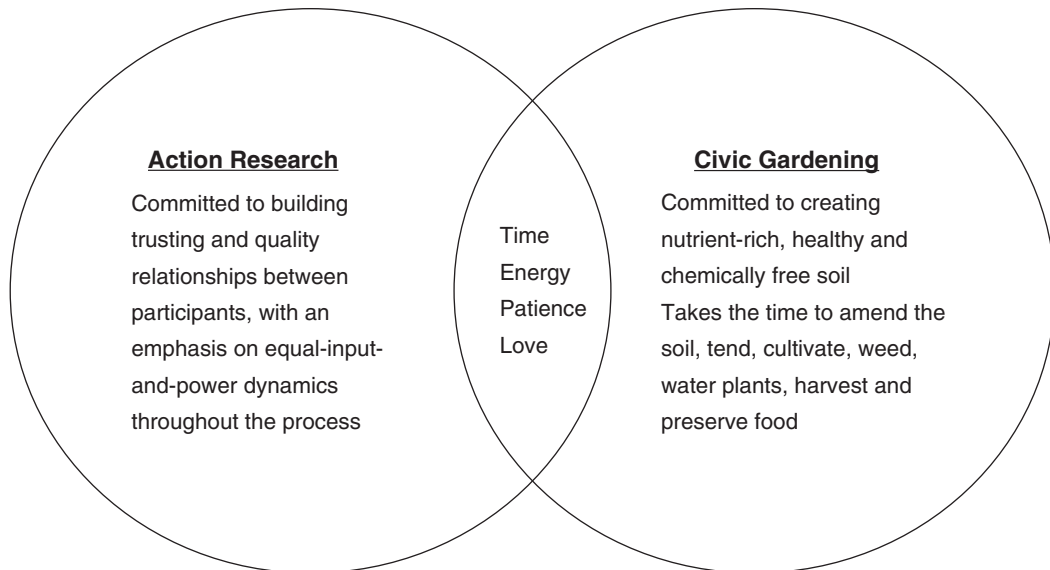


Figure 2 Relational Foundations

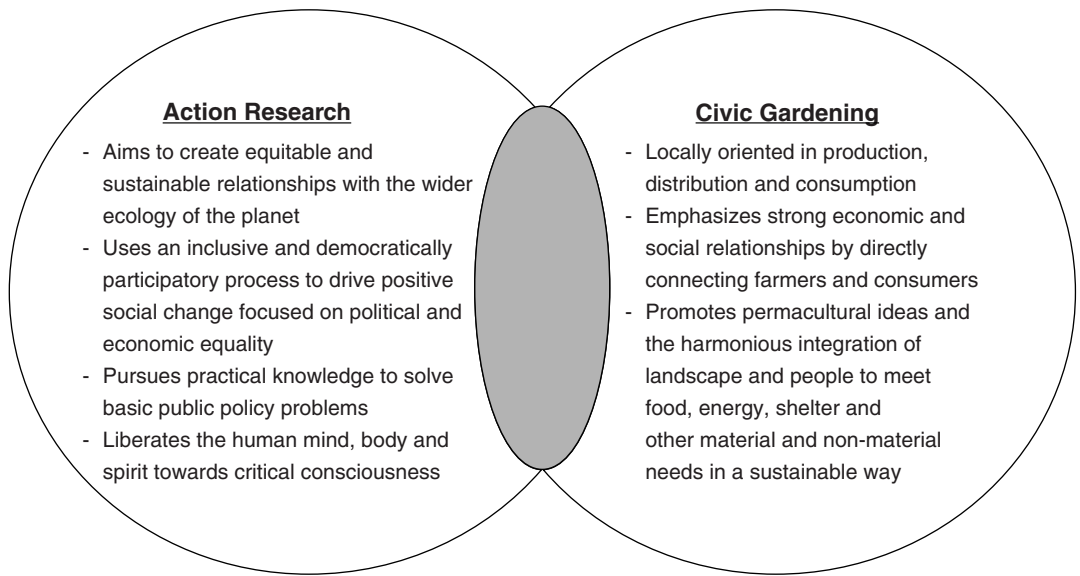


Figure 3 Social and Ecological Justice Goals

a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet. Action research strives to achieve this by remedying power imbalances, not just between human actors but also between our species and the rest of the biosphere. As a paradigm, action research is clear about its political message of positive social change and practical knowledge creation. This focus on equality and democracy requires inclusion, and collaboration and participative decision-making amongst actors. Also, action research strives to liberate the human mind, body and spirit towards a critical consciousness (see Figure 3).

The social and ecologically just goals of both civic agriculture and action research are interwoven with their cyclical methods and relational foundations. These characteristics and processes are inseparable from their desired products. Although distinct in many ways, with civic agriculture focused on food production and action research on generating functional knowledge, these two approaches to the world inform one another and can be used together to create a healthier human-earth relationship.

R. Alan Wight

See also environmental justice; social justice; sustainability

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ALINSKY, SAUL

The name Saul Alinsky (1909–72) is synonymous with the craft of community organizing. Alinsky certainly wasn't the only practitioner of methods that brought together local people to build power and take back control over their own lives. Important players in the Civil Rights Movement, especially Ella Baker, were every bit as good as Alinsky at the craft of organizing local people to reclaim power. But Alinsky was the person who built community organizing into a conscious form that was easily named and methodized. He wrote *Reveille for Radicals* (1969) and *Rules for Radicals* (1971) on community organizing.

Alinsky's Biography and Legacy

Alinsky grew up in Chicago's rough-and-tumble neighbourhoods of the early 1900s, earning a bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago. He started graduate school as the Great Depression took hold across the country, but then decided to take a paying job. He eventually ended up working in the Back of the

Yards neighbourhood of Chicago, so named because it was located next to the infamous Chicago Stockyards. He had gotten connected with union organizers, who were organizing the stockyard workers living in the neighbourhood, and became enthused about the possibilities of adapting union organizing to a neighbourhood setting. The combination of union organizing and community organizing proved powerful, winning a union for the stockyard workers and significant influence in city politics for the Back of the Yards Neighbourhood Council.

That started Alinsky off on a long history of community organizing from coast to coast. From the famous organizing campaign against Kodak Company in Rochester, New York, to the creation of multiple neighbourhood organizations in Chicago, to many lesser known efforts across the country, Alinsky became larger than life. He built community organizing into an institution, founding the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) to train and support a nationwide network of community organizers. His organizing strategy was equally effective in extreme and varied times, such as the Great Depression or the 1960s.

Organizers whom Alinsky trained or otherwise influenced went on to found other community-organizing networks and training centres, such as the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO, now People Improving Communities Through Organizing), the Direct Action Research and Training (DART) Center, the Gamaliel Foundation, National People's Action, the Midwest Academy and even the United Farm Workers.

The Alinsky Model of Community Organizing

Even though Alinsky's most famous book implied that there were 'rules' for community organizing, most of those rules actually reinforced his adamant philosophical pragmatism. In the Alinsky model, the community organizer's job was to organize the 'have-nots'—people who were not getting their fair share of the fruits of American society—to refine their resentment at their plight into organized action. The organizer then built a community organization around those resentments, using whatever existing organizational networks were available—churches, civic clubs, unions and so on. The goal was to build an enduring organization that would not just win on a few issues but could wield power and influence just like the 'haves' were already able to.

For Alinsky, the community-organizing process started with an organizer entering a community to find out what people were angry about. As Alinsky refined the model, he required some network of local resource providers to invite the organizer in and provide

financial support. These networks were often composed of clergy and other community leaders and came to be called sponsoring committees. Their job was to raise the money to support the organizer, legitimize the organizer in the community and connect the organizer to grass-roots people. The sponsoring committee, then, was to sponsor the effort, not lead it. The organizer's job was to build a people's organization using the sponsoring committee's resources.

Once invited, the community organizer then began talking to people in the neighbourhood, finding out what issues they could be motivated to act on and helping build their motivation. Sometimes this involved the practice of door knocking, whereby the organizer would literally go door to door and strike up conversations with whoever answered and then attempt to get them to meetings to talk about issues with their neighbours. In other cases, the organizer would get a resident to recruit his or her neighbours for a house meeting to discuss issues. It was at one of these house meetings that Cesar Chavez—who would go on to help found the United Farm Workers—got turned on to community organizing.

From these smaller meetings, the organizer would build larger networks, culminating in a community congress bringing hundreds or even thousands of people across the entire neighbourhood together. The organization built from this process would then choose what issues it wanted to work on over the coming year.

Important to the Alinsky model, if not necessarily its actual practice, was a culture of confrontation. Alinsky's rhetoric of 'haves and have-nots' and his strategy of picking 'targets' to organize against provided an aura of conflict and confrontation around his method. But it is not clear that the Alinsky-style community organizing groups were all that confrontational. Such groups were composed not of the dispossessed but of the aggrieved. In fact, many Alinsky groups were probably composed more of the 'have a little want mores' (to use Alinsky's phrase) than the 'have-nots'. That means they had something to lose, and unconstructive confrontation often felt too risky to such groups. So behind the rhetoric of confrontation and conflict was a much milder, and smarter, set of strategies to win victories through the threat of confrontation.

Adaptations of the Model

The Alinsky model has influenced three main branches of community organizing. The most prominent version of the model is called faith-based or congregation-based organizing. In fact, perhaps Alinsky's most profound legacy has been the number of community-organizing groups built on Christian faiths. This is striking given Alinsky's Jewish background and agnostic approach to community organizing. After Alinsky's death in

1972, Ed Chambers took over the IAF and wrote a now famous paper called ‘Organizing for Family and Congregation’, which put Chambers’ stamp on the IAF and shifted it from a model that used congregations to organize neighbourhoods to a model that organized congregations. And that model has now expanded throughout four of the major community-organizing networks in the USA today: IAF, the Gamaliel Foundation, DART and the PICO National Network. The other model is that of National People’s Action, which remains more focused on neighbourhoods or other kinds of networked communities existing outside the faith networks.

The final model arising from Alinsky’s broad influence is the unaffiliated group. Thousands of small community-organizing groups across the country owe their existence, in an extended-family way, to Alinsky’s work. The organizers behind these groups are often two or even three generations removed from Alinsky, yet they illustrate adaptations of his model from the time the organizers step foot in the community to the time the group they organize finally wins on an issue. Some of these groups are connected through the National Organizers Alliance, but many of them simply exist as small neighbourhood or rural community-organizing efforts across the country.

The Alinsky Model and Action Research

One of the misplaced characterizations of the Alinsky model is how much it relied on confrontational action to win victories for its members. Myles Horton helped found the Highlander Folk School (now called the Highlander Research and Education Center) and its method of popular education in the USA at roughly the same time when Alinsky was coining the term *community organizing*. Horton used to compare his method with Alinsky’s by saying that popular education helped people educate themselves about issues so that they could then go on to organize around them. The implication was that Alinsky did not engage his people in such participatory education strategies. Whether the charge can be levelled against Alinsky himself is uncertain. But certainly since Alinsky’s time, the role of popular education and its associated action research strategies in Alinsky-influenced organizing has continued to grow. Action research makes its mark in Alinsky organizing from the beginning to the end of the process now.

At the very beginning of the process, the organizer tries to understand the community. Whether it is hanging out at the bar or the beauty salon, the organizer’s first days in a community are spent trying to understand that community—who wields power and influence, who is angry with whom, who is in which community faction, what skeletons lurk in what closets and who knows everybody’s business. This is basic

action ethnography, and every organizer would do well to know something about ethnographic methods.

Once the organizer has the lay of the land, she or he then does a bit more sophisticated issue analysis. Often that involves door knocking, and a good door-knocking strategy is also a good survey of what people like, dislike, fear and hope about their neighbourhood. That data becomes the basis for organizing block meetings and, then, the larger community meetings that follow. Another method that is particularly popular among the Alinsky-influenced faith-based community-organizing networks is the ‘one-to-one’. In a one-to-one (sometimes also called a ‘one-on-one’), the organizer meets with a prospective community organization member and interviews him or her to better understand the person’s motivations as a community member, and the things that may motivate that person to become involved in the organizing effort. As an organization evolves, the organizer may train the organization leadership to do one-to-ones themselves as a way of building the organization. This method is not simply a way to get information about people, but in the best circumstances, it also builds relationships, which is why it is called relational organizing.

Once organizers have a group working on issues, they have to do a lot of research on the issue itself. If they want to get rid of a problem bar in the neighbourhood, they need to do research on liquor licenses, crime reports, zoning and perhaps even parking regulations. They also have to do research on who makes decisions about these things and find out how those decision-makers make such decisions. Some of the post-Alinsky groups, such as those affiliated with the PICO Network, have evolved a method called a research action. In a research action, a group requests a meeting with a decision-maker and then interviews that person to find out more about what he or she thinks about the issue. They then take that information back with them to develop a more sophisticated strategy to try and get that decision-maker on their side. Many Alinsky-influenced community-organizing groups also engage in power structure research. They study who the main target is for their issue and then look at who is allied either with or against that target to understand how to build coalitions or perhaps break down a coalition supporting the target.

Ultimately, then, good community organizing is not just about organizing individuals but also about mobilizing knowledge.

Randy Stoecker

See also Asset-Based Community Development; capacity building; community development; ethnography; Highlander Research and Education Center; Horton, Myles

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ANTIGONISH MOVEMENT

The Antigonish Movement began in the early decades of the twentieth century to respond to the widespread poverty and oppressive working conditions faced by people in northeastern Nova Scotia, Canada. St Francis Xavier University's (StFX) Extension Department supported a community development process mobilized through hundreds of study clubs formed around concerns relevant to their lives. The legacy of the movement's philosophy and methods continues today through the work of the university's Extension Department and Adult Education Department and the Coady International Institute. This social movement has been widely studied for its lessons in adult education methods and community-controlled economic development practices. The movement also embodies the philosophy and methods we now recognize as action research. Nearly two decades before the social psychologist Kurt Lewin articulated his action research paradigm in 1946, the Antigonish Movement experimented with and refined methods of group learning and community action that enabled people to examine their conditions and develop locally appropriate strategies to improve them. Two key elements that would also later be promoted by Lewin stand out: (1) group process and (2) democracy.

Historical Context

StFX originated as a small rural college in 1853 and was largely staffed by Roman Catholic clergy in its early years. Parish priests regularly witnessed and documented the effects of poverty, unfair labour practices and rural out-migration that were widespread in Nova Scotia's farming and fishing communities at the time. A number of leaders at the college and in the parishes emerged to advocate for greater efforts to address the desperate conditions faced by the communities. These conditions, often described as feudal, led to calls for

improved education and opportunities for people to control their own lives. Fr Michael Gillis, a parish priest in Cape Breton, actively promoted education in rural areas and agricultural modernization to improve farm sustainability. He championed the idea of creating a university Extension Department to support rural development. He was also a strong advocate of the Church's role in active participation for social justice, a belief promoted elsewhere at the time through the social gospel influence of adult education programmes such as Chautauqua in New York and Grundtvig's folk school model, which also inspired the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee.

Dr James T. 'Father Jimmy' Tompkins, a professor at StFX, believed that democratic renewal through education was paramount as societies emerged from the carnage of the First World War and as women were gaining the right to direct democratic participation. He was greatly inspired by the methods of people's education by the Workers Education Associations in England and the Danish folk schools and by the success of the University of Wisconsin's Extension programme. Tompkins' treatise, *Knowledge for the People* (1921), highlighted these models and called upon StFX to promote the university as an institution for all people, not just the privileged classes. The ideas of co-operative economic development from Rochdale, England, and the *caisse populaires* ('credit unions') led by Alphonse Desjardins in Quebec were also gaining attention, particularly the central role education played in these movements for economic democracy. In 1928, StFX responded by creating the Extension Department and naming Rev. Dr Moses Coady as its first director. Coady put these ideas of adult education and economic co-operation into action.

The work was enacted by a core staff of Extension Department workers and countless community organizers and activists. In response to a call to increase women's roles in community revitalization, Sr Marie Michael MacKinnon joined the staff, creating over 300 women's study clubs in her first year as well as co-ordinating library services. While the women's study clubs were initially formed to address aspects of domestic life including nutrition and handicrafts, the goal was broader roles of leadership in the community. Sr Irene Doyle was soon recruited to develop more women's programmes. While much of the initial work of the department was taken on by religious leaders, many lay people played key roles, including A. B. MacDonald, Kay Desjardins, Zita O'Hearn Cameron and Mary Arnold, to name a few. Dr Coady emphasized that the work was not to be seen as denominational, famously noting that there is no Catholic or Protestant way to catch fish. By the 1940s, with the social changes resulting from the Second World War,

the small-group study club model declined in use and was largely replaced by more formalized training—a process that led to some criticism that this weakened ties to the grass roots.

The Antigonish Way

Extension fieldworkers fanned out across the region to help communities initiate a process that began with awareness raising of the conditions and causes of regional disparity. This was followed by a programme enabling participants to determine the causes and alternatives, try out new models and reflect on and share the results. In the fields of both adult education and action research, this praxis cycle of learning, action and reflection is now well recognized. In 1944, Harry Johnson articulated the philosophy and practice of the Antigonish Movement in the following six principles that guided this adult education programme:

1. The primacy of the individual should be emphasized.
2. Social reform must come through education.
3. Education must begin with the economic.
4. Education must be through group action.
5. Effective social reform involves fundamental changes in social and economic institutions.
6. The ultimate goal is a full and abundant life for everyone.

Two key principles here are described in more detail: (1) education through group action and (2) the achievement of social reform through democracy and group action.

Education Through Group Action

The heart of the Antigonish Movement was the study club, a gathering of six to eight people working to understand a shared issue and implement a plan for mobilization. Coady would initiate mass meetings to bring to light the situations faced by each community as topics for the study clubs. Coady was well known for his straightforward way of shaking people from the perceived malaise gripping the downtrodden. Lewin would later describe the psychological underpinnings of how people were habituated in ways of thinking that had to be broken to engage in democratic renewal—conditioning that was most effectively overcome through group processes. Extension Department fieldworkers Srs MacKinnon and Doyle later reflected that it is hard to overestimate the importance of small-group study, as any manner of unresolved issues or disputes could be hashed out in those clubs.

A key strength of the movement lay in the organizing and leadership nurtured at the study club level, which would then expand through the networking of communities at regional group meetings, provincial conferences and beyond. The Extension Department would act as facilitator to support local research, knowledge development and group action.

Information: Access, Adaptation and New Knowledge Creation

The study clubs would identify what they needed to learn about to develop new initiatives and seek the information they needed to support their learning. Providing information to these energetic groups was a daunting task. Extension Department staff scoured the continent for free materials produced by agricultural extension offices and other agencies, readily adapting material for local purposes. Srs MacKinnon and Doyle later noted that if they didn't have it, they wrote it, referring to the countless booklets produced by the Extension Department, as well as the periodical *The Extension Bulletin*, later called *The Maritime Co-operator*. This newsletter highlighted the strategies and lessons of group activities throughout the Maritimes. Hundreds of books circulated among the study clubs—this was a library system in microcosm supporting a research institute in every kitchen.

Coady asserted that groups needed to fail twice before he was confident of their long-term sustainability—reflecting the action research process of developing and testing ideas, learning from the results and redesigning. The knowledge generated at the study club level was then brought to the regional monthly meetings and annually to the Rural and Industrial Conferences. These conferences had evolved from the earlier Antigonish diocesan conferences begun in 1918 to address the conditions of poverty and rural decline that had gripped the region. These conferences dovetailed with the education and research activities of the Antigonish Movement, providing an annual gathering space to explore emerging issues and ideas from far and wide. Notable leaders from other social and economic movements of the day were invited to these conferences, including Dorothy Day, a founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, the adult educator Ned Corbett and the leader of the credit union movement Roy Bergengren.

At that time, Fr Tompkins promoted libraries in the region as the people's universities. Sr MacKinnon believed that exposure to library services through her programme would whet the appetite for public libraries. Many programmes initiated by the Extension Department were intended to be taken over by the organizations created by the people themselves. She hoped that

this too would happen with library service. She shared Coady's belief that community ownership was key. People had to come together, decide what was best for their community and work to achieve their goals.

Democracy and Group Action

Throughout the work of the movement, great emphasis was placed on democratic principles that valued grass-roots participation and leadership in all spheres. Co-operative organizing principles were seen to work hand in hand with the overall goals of a democratic society. As Coady challenged, economic control leads to political control; as the economy is controlled by the privileged few, so too will they control government. The conditions facing the masses could only be overcome when power shifted from those privileged few to all citizens, and people themselves would have to lead that shift. The alternative co-operative model that places control in the hands of many people, whose participation is defined by membership not by numbers of shares, provides people with not only improved economic status but also a model for more democratic political engagement. The community mobilization and leadership skills nurtured in the study clubs provided the necessary grounding for such broader engagement. A continued process of adult education would be essential for sustaining such a movement.

Envisioning a People's Research Institute

Lewin observed that democracy must be 'learned anew' in each generation. Coady, in outlining his goals for economic democracy, turned his attention to more formalized processes of research and democratic knowledge creation for long-term growth. By 1939, Coady was advocating for a people's research institute that would provide a centre for research and knowledge created by and for the people themselves. Such an institute would provide an ongoing forum for the study of economic and social issues that would be necessary for ensuring future peace and prosperity.

Coady's vision was ultimately realized in 1959 with the creation of the Coady International Institute in response to international demand for the Antigonish programme to be adapted to the countries of what was then called the Third World. From the outset, the programmes of the Coady Institute have been informed through collaborative training and research with organizations and communities throughout South Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Much like the rural and industrial conferences decades before, regional consultations and workshops have brought practitioners together to share experiences and innovations to address issues and challenges of

mutual concern. Recent multi-year projects with community partners have utilized action research methods in development initiatives. While the methods and forms of community engagement have evolved over the decades, the core philosophy of the centrality of people's own experiences and knowledge in social development remains through the work of the StFX Extension Department and the Coady International Institute today.

Catherine Irving

See also adult education; Highlander Research and Education Center

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ANTI-OPPRESSION RESEARCH

The foundation of anti-oppression research is the concern with and focus on recognizing and mitigating oppression in society. Rather than being prescriptive, as a theoretical construct anti-oppression research is a perspective that guides research from the formation of the research idea to the design and execution of the project, to the dissemination activities.

While the definition of anti-oppression is relatively simple—recognizing and mitigating oppression—the operation of anti-oppression research can be much more challenging. It is important to note that anti-oppression research is often discussed within and/or alongside other approaches to research such as critical, critical race, feminist, decolonizing, indigenous, participatory action and community-based research. Many of the principles of anti-oppression research overlap and intersect with these other approaches; however,

all these paradigms warrant their own specific focus. Anti-oppression research could very well operate with and within other approaches (i.e. the anti-oppression feminist lens). For instance, a research project may be focused on recognizing and mitigating the oppressive structures for women in the academy. In this sense, the theoretical framework for this research would be both anti-oppressive and feminist.

Definitions

Oppression can be defined as dominance over a subordinate group. This dominance can be social, economic, political and/or cultural. When using the term *oppression*, there is an implication of negative consequences or impacts as a result of this dominance.

Anti-oppression is concerned with recognizing, acknowledging and taking action against oppression. The term *anti-oppression* originated in the 1970s and is rooted in the field of social work. Anti-oppression is a stance that guides practice, particularly when working with oppressed individuals and communities. Anti-oppression is concerned with all forms of oppression and recognizes the intersectionality and interlocking nature of multiple systems of oppression—such as gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, age, ability, madness and colonization. Intersectionality recognizes that one form of oppression does not exist in isolation. For instance, a Black female living in poverty experiences multiple kinds of oppression that cannot be examined in isolation. Interlocking oppression recognizes the *systems of oppression* and how various forms of oppressions are locked together, unable to be viewed in isolation.

Social work as a profession is concerned with promoting positive change and social justice—as such anti-oppression social work practice is concerned with social justice. Anti-oppression social work recognizes and sheds light on power and privilege, is social and political, ensures reflection and reflexivity and is resistive at the micro- and macrolevels. From a social work perspective, microlevel resistance would occur at the individual level with participants of research. This might mean trying to effect change within the individual, such as empowering participants through a participatory action method. For instance, an indigenous participatory method, Anishnaabe Symbol-Based Reflection, allows research participants to create symbols. The process of creating a symbol is a spiritual experience that opens the door to expression and healing (see www.ryerson.ca/asbr/index.html). Macrolevel resistance occurs at a broader societal level. Through research, this might mean trying to affect change within policy and programmes or contributing towards societal education and community development. Anti-oppression social workers bring in a critical discourse

on neo-liberalism because of the detrimental impact of this ideology on the ability to resist or mitigate oppression and promote social justice. Neo-liberalism is a political and economic approach that privileges competitive markets and creates insecurity for working and poor people. Authors such as Lena Dominelli, Ben Carniol, Donna Baines, Bob Mullaly, Jan Fook and Peter Leonard have written about anti-oppression practice in social work, albeit from various perspectives (e.g. new structural, critical, systems).

Anti-oppression research incorporates the principles noted within anti-oppression social work practice—being reflective and reflexive; recognizing power, privilege and the neo-liberal state and being political, resistive and effecting change at the micro- and macrolevels. These concepts will be discussed within a research framework.

Reflective and Reflexive Research

Reflectivity and reflexivity are two notions discussed within anti-oppression practice that are important constructs to carry over into anti-oppression research. Fook frames reflectivity as a process and reflexivity as a position. Reflectivity is the process of recognizing how your own assumptions and actions contribute to a situation. Within social work, this is something to be considered for both the practitioner and the client; however, for the purpose of discussing anti-oppression research, this entry will focus on the reflectivity of the researcher. Reflexivity is described as one's positioning complemented by the act of being reflective. This positioning and process of critical self-gazing are critical for the anti-oppressive researcher to undertake.

Being reflective and reflexive is much more than simply locating oneself. In this critical reflection, researchers must be honest about their own assumptions about the research they are undertaking. Some questions to aid in being reflective are as follows:

- What brought me to be interested in this research topic?
- What assumptions do I have about the topic and/or the people involved (participants) in this research?
- How can I challenge my assumptions? Will I allow my assumptions to be challenged?
- What privileges do I hold as a researcher? What oppressions do I carry? How do these privileges and oppressions intersect and affect the research and participants?

Often when people attempt to answer the last question, they tend to focus on how they are oppressed and sometimes become subsumed with the wrongs that have

been done to them in society. Emphasizing that privilege and oppression are not binary notions is critical. Oppression is interlocking; one oppression does not occur in isolation from another. Rather, oppressions (e.g. racism, colonization, imperialism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, sanism, classism) occur as a system(s) of oppression. The term *oppression Olympics* has emerged to describe the notion of people competing to prove who is more oppressed, but in fact, within the systems of oppression, there is no hierarchy or competition.

Privilege and oppression are experienced in ebbs and flows; they are dynamic and intersect within ourselves, with others and in society. As a researcher, one needs to be cognizant of the power one holds. If the researcher becomes myopic, focusing on his or her oppressions, the research then becomes more about the researcher and less about the participants. In this exercise of reflection, the reflexive positioning of the researcher must be supportive of the overall research focus, with the anti-oppression spirit working to mitigate the oppression experienced by the research participants.

An example of a reflective exercise is one that comes from someone who is an insider to a particular group. A researcher, whether a student, academic or even a community member helping out with research, comes with a certain amount of privilege. While researchers may be able to relate to a particular group because of their insider status, being reflexive about their power is critical. They may come to a project with a particular bias because it was their experience, and as an insider, it may be difficult to hear that their perspective is not how everyone else feels.

Being reflexive within research is not static. It is an exercise that continues throughout the research process. Building in this reflective exercise throughout the research process is critical to becoming a reflexive researcher.

Power, Privilege and Politics

Anti-oppression research recognizes and sheds light on power and privilege. The exercise of reflection and reflexivity assists in shedding this light, but it is not merely an exercise. In anti-oppression research, there must be action within the realm of power and privilege. Some authors refer to this as resistance in research, and within an indigenous or decolonizing approach, this might be seen as reciprocity. Anti-oppression research involves critical forms of inquiry, entering into research that may be controversial and political.

Action, resistance, reciprocity and critical inquiry set the stage for the work to be done by an anti-oppression researcher rather than catering the programme of research towards what is attractive in the eyes of funders or what will help researchers make name for

themselves. Responding solely to the funding bodies' calls for specific research can reproduce neo-liberal ideologies. For instance, there is a growing focus on social entrepreneurship research and the partnership of social research with business. Partnership research is extremely challenging and more so when partners come with competing interests. It may be challenging for an anti-oppression researcher to shed light on power and privilege and ensure critical inquiry when partnered with business while working from a business model.

As noted by the social work scholar Carniol, anti-oppression practice is political. Anti-oppression research is also political. Stemming from feminist scholarship in the early 1970s, the phrase *the personal is political* referred to the politicization of power. Power is tied to politics, and if an anti-oppression researcher is shedding light on power and privilege, it stands to reason that anti-oppression research must also be political.

How does this notion of being political translate into the research process? This is the opportunity to resist at the micro- and macrolevels. Being political in research may be deciding not to do research. Rather, being an anti-oppression researcher might mean taking action against the systems of research. On a macrolevel, this might include becoming involved in the funding decision process—from attempting to contribute to how funders decide on topics of research in calls for proposals to being involved in the peer review process so that an anti-oppression perspective is included in research that is funded.

Being political in research might be ensuring that the dissemination of the research findings is far-reaching and the products have a real impact. For instance, publishing solely in academic journals, which only privilege academics and students, might have little political impact. If the findings of the research provide critical insight to certain oppressions, then translating this for public consumption is critical. Making the research attractive to the media can help achieve this goal. Developing a political plan is critical in anti-oppression research.

Another stance an anti-oppression researcher might take is to change the systems within the academy that are contentious with an anti-oppression approach to research. An example of this is the earlier mention of publications. 'Publish or perish' is an old but continuing adage in the academy. This translates into publication in high-ranking journals, which typically are only available for consumption by other academics and not the communities in which many of the social researchers work. Resisting publishing as an untenured academic can spell the end to a career. Anti-oppression researchers can attempt to make real change related to tenure and promotion policies so that alternative forms of dissemination are given the credit they deserve. Much work has been conducted in this area of tenure and promotion guidelines by organizations such as Community-Campus

Partnerships for Health (see <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/index.html>). While this organization focuses on community-based research, many of the principles of anti-oppression research and the challenges for researchers committed to this approach overlap.

In order to be political within research, you need to understand intimately the community in which you intend to work. An example of this is a researcher who has approached an indigenous community without fully understanding the needs of the community or the community's identity. In Canada, the Indian Act (originally written in 1876) still defines legal indigenous identity. Only those who are recognized by the federal government are 'status' Indians. Métis, Inuit and non-status Indians are not acknowledged under this act; however, Inuit became a federal responsibility in the 1930s. Identity for indigenous peoples is complex, and in many countries, this identity is politically defined. Anti-oppression researchers need to understand this colonial identity to achieve any action associated with the research. Researchers wanting to do research within a specific indigenous group must understand both its political and its social identity and the many challenges facing that group to form meaningful relationships and make sense of complex research contexts.

What Anti-Oppression Research Is Not

Being anti-oppressive is not simply resisting process and authority, or what may be viewed as 'authority'. The process of research can be seen as quite linear; after all, by definition research is a systematic process. Sometimes, students new to research have a hard time operating in what may seem to be rigid structures. For instance, in most instances, students are asked to conduct a literature review (to familiarize themselves with what has been written on a given topic) and submit their research proposals to an ethics review committee prior to engaging in research with people. While some students may feel that these 'rules' are oppressive, they should be reminded that they have been put in place to ensure that research is conducted in a safe and respectful way (precisely, to minimize the likelihood of oppressive research taking place).

Research Ethics Boards (REBs), while holding power, first and foremost are concerned with the welfare of the research participant. In Canada, REBs are not able to have representatives of high-level university administration on their boards to ensure that the university is not in the 'business' of approving or disapproving research. The boards are composed of members of the university and the community. Anti-oppression researchers might consider sitting on their REBs as a way of effecting change if they feel that their REBs do not understand anti-oppression approaches to research.

Building Capacity Within Oppressed Communities

Borrowing from an indigenous or decolonizing approach to research, anti-oppression researchers are concerned with building capacity within the community they are researching. In Canada, the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2, Chapter 9—'Conducting Research With First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples'—provides an excellent principle related to building capacity within the community. Anti-oppression researchers can apply this principle to research with any oppressed community, ensuring that training opportunities are available for students, giving priority to those students who represent the specific community involved in the research. However, there may be a point of contention within this principle of building capacity. One could also argue that we need to build capacity in the dominant group about specific subordinate groups.

Disrespectful research has been conducted by dominant groups on oppressed groups for far too long. In order to change the paradigm, there are some steps that anti-oppressive researchers can take to reverse these trends. First, whenever possible, it is a good idea to include students and other researchers at the university who might represent a particular group in projects related to their communities. Second, it is important to take the time to build capacity within the community itself, employing community researchers and providing the tools for research. Successful anti-oppression research recognizes the community as the expert. Community is involved (and employed) at all levels—in the research design to ensure that we are asking the right questions in an appropriate way, in the recruitment to ensure that we are speaking to the right people and in the data collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination to ensure that we do not do research for the sake of just doing research but to have a real impact within a community. And we need to be prepared to walk away as an ally when the community has sufficiently developed its own skill set to conduct research.

Statements to Guide an Anti-Oppression Researcher

Finally, here are some questions that might guide an anti-oppression researcher:

- What systems and structures might compromise an anti-oppression approach to research?
- How are my good intentions perceived by the community?
- Am I willing to do research with the community (even though I may be unable to publish in high-ranking journals)?

- Am I willing to do research where the funding is routed through the community agency, not my university?
- Do I know the community in which I plan to work? Do I understand the politicized power and politicized identity of the individual and the community?
- In what ways may my research contribute to the oppression of the community?
- Are there resistance strategies that I can employ or committees that I can join to challenge policies, procedures and systems that seem oppressive?

In conclusion, anti-oppression researchers are reflective and reflexive and recognize and shed light on power and privilege. Their research ensures action, resistance and/or reciprocity. Anti-oppression researchers walk away from research that might contribute to the further oppression of a community. Anti-oppression researchers do not just focus on research; they focus on making systemic change within the institution so that research can be done in a truly anti-oppressive way.

Lynn F. Lavallée

See also Community-Campus Partnerships for Health; critical race theory; critical reflection; feminism; indigenous research ethics and practice; indigenous research methods; LGBT

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Through its deliberately positive assumptions about people, organizations and relationships, AI is distinctive in that it leaves behind more modernist, deficit-oriented approaches to management and vitally transforms ways to approach questions of organizational innovation, improvement or effectiveness.

Practically, AI is a form of organizational study that selectively seeks to locate, understand and illuminate what are referred to as the life-giving forces of any human system's existence, its positive core. This realization of shared strengths then becomes a new platform for imagining possibilities for the preferred future. The new possibilities with the most attraction to the stakeholders engaged in the AI process then become opportunities for co-constructing future scenarios and launching self-managed change initiatives.

AI turns the practice of change management inside out. It bluntly proposes that organizations are not problems to be solved. Rather, AI assumes that organizations are centres of vital connections and life-giving potentials: relationships, partnerships, alliances and ever-expanding webs of ideas, knowledge and action that are capable of harnessing the power of combinations of strengths. Founded upon this life-centric view of organizations, AI offers a positive, strengths-based approach to OD and change management.

Historical and Theoretical Roots of AI

Originating in the Department of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University in the early 1980s, AI was first conceived as a radical departure from mainstream OD theory and practice. At that time, OD thought and techniques were dominated by the Lewinian paradigm of unfreezing-change-refreezing and the action research process which focused on diagnosing the 'felt need' of the client or client system. In questioning if 'diagnosis' was a necessary or even useful step in organizational change and if unfreezing people through guilt induction, threat or disconfirmation was effective, Suresh Srivastva, David Cooperrider and their colleagues incorporated social constructionist perspectives in framing an alternative idea—AI. Srivastva and Cooperrider argued that organizations were best viewed as socially constructed realities and that forms of organization were constrained only by human imagination and the shared beliefs of organizational members. As socially constructed realities, forms of inquiry were potent in constructing the systems they inquired into, and thus, problem-solving approaches were just as likely to create more of the very problems they were intended to solve. Finally, they asserted that the most important drivers for change were new ideas. They decried the lack of new ideas generated by conventional action research and proposed AI as a method

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an organization development (OD) process and approach to change management that grows out of social constructionist thought.

that was more likely to create new ideas, images and theories that would lead to social innovations.

The Case Western Reserve University faculty and student group focused early on the philosophy behind AI. In acknowledging the limitations of their own research and practice in OD, they observed the inherent diagnostic, problem-focused language and tools being applied in OD work. This, combined with the emerging meta-analyses of the effectiveness of planned change methods estimated at only 25–30 per cent, shaped a call for rethinking how and why human systems change.

They viewed *inquiry* as the central driver of change. Following social constructionist thinking, organizing is the consequence of shared meaning about future possibilities in the minds of a critical mass of actors. This implies that the questions we ask are fateful, that social systems move in the direction of what they most talk and ask questions about. Since we discover about what we study, our questions need to be directed towards where we wish to be. For instance, if one chooses to ask about low morale, one will definitely learn more about how to prevent it. However, if one actually desired to have more high engagement, then the questions need to be about that, as opposed to assuming that by lessening low morale, the result will be high engagement. Management research and practice are heavily informed by this notion that if you study bad, you will get good. In fact, when we study bad, at best we get ‘not bad’. This reasoning encompasses three of the key principles informing AI: (1) words create worlds—human systems move in the direction of what they most converse about, (2) questions are fateful—change begins with the first question we ask and (3) you can ask any question in any setting—no matter how troubled, challenged, or depressed an organization setting might appear, there is something giving life, keeping it going, and you can inquire into that if you wish.

Expanding on the Heideggerian notion of anticipatory reality, human systems are forever projecting ahead of themselves a horizon of expectation (in their everyday talk) that brings the future powerfully into the present as a mobilizing agent. To inquire in ways that serve to refashion anticipatory reality—especially the artful creation of positive imagery on a collective basis—may be the most prolific thing any inquiry can do. The idea of anticipatory reality as a change lever can be found in a variety of change processes that endorse a ‘possibility-centric versus a problem-centric’ approach to organizational change. It was further argued that elevation of positive emotions is a first and vital step in the change process. Studies increasingly show that positive feelings lead people to be more flexible, creative, integrative, open to information and efficient in their thinking. People experiencing positive affect are more resilient and able to cope with occasional

adversity, have an increased preference for variety and accept a broader array of behavioural options. This reasoning led to two more foundational principles in AI: (4) fundamental change results from changing anticipatory images of the future and (5) positive images will compel or attract positive actions.

The AI Method

AI involves the co-operative search for the best in people, their organizations and the world around them. The key steps include the following: (1) *discovery* of the best of what is, (2) *dream* to imagine what could be, (3) *design* of what will be and (4) *destiny*—to enact change and improvisational learning to become what is most hoped for. This is most often depicted as the ‘AI4-D’ cycle. These steps are all premised on the definition (sometimes referred to as the ‘5th D’) of an affirmative topic, the strategically relevant issue or opportunity that will be the focus of the inquiry. This topic bounds the inquiry questions, determines who should be involved in the inquiry and signals the importance and aspirational intent behind the AI effort.

Discovery

The purpose of the *discovery* phase is to uncover, articulate and illuminate those factors that give life to when the human system is at its best in relation to the topic. Organization learning is fostered by sharing ‘best past’ stories related to the topic and initial dreams about how the topic could be better, enhanced or improved in the future. Stakeholders involved in the inquiry pair off for initial story and future image sharing and then typically combine into subgroups of three or four pairs to collectively make sense of the underlying success factors in the stories that were shared. This is the most fundamental departure from typical change methods and what most distinguished AI in practice. Participants are not asked what they think about the topic or what change ideas they have or what they would like to do next. The emphasis is on stories first—before any of the typical diagnostic or expertise-based questions that provoke a predetermined list of opinions or facts. The outcome of the discovery phase is an articulation of those strengths or success factors that connect across the most stakeholder stories. This is often referred to as the presentation of the positive core related to the specific topic under inquiry.

Dream

The *dream* phase is about generating new possibilities for the future that capture the heightened aspirations and positive affect generated during the discovery. Because these future images have been

cued by asking positive questions (the best past stories related to the topic), they paint a compelling picture of what the human system could or should become. By positioning this dreaming after the discovery of shared strengths, participants gain a greater sense of collective efficacy, and so their future images of possibility expand. They imagine bolder possibilities because of an enhanced sense of the capabilities of the total collective of participants, based upon the common strengths and success factors in the initial stories that were shared. Once the inquiry space is full of future images or possibilities, the stakeholders engage to brainstorm lists of actionable ideas to achieve those future images that they find the most attractive.

Design

The *design* phase translates future images into intentional action. By using tools such as mind mapping, the ideas for change from the dreaming can be depicted and voted upon to determine a subset that most energizes the participants and around which new change teams can form. The same group of stakeholders that did the *discovery* now vote with their feet and go to the particular change idea that they most want to make happen. Each new multi-stakeholder change team now engages in design work, including crafting an aspiration statement, brainstorming, prototyping, action planning, process mapping, role and decision charting and other techniques, to agree on a specific action path forward. The *design* phase is the most open to creativity and innovation in terms of other tools and processes, the use of which is not limited to AI. Recent lessons from actual designers have suggested that the emphasis in the design phase be even more on ‘doing and making something together’ versus just planning through good dialogue—design doing rather than design thinking.

Destiny

Destiny is a call to co-create the preferred future through action and innovation. The term *destiny* is meant to imply more of an open-ended quest or journey of continual learning. It is expected that the initial change team that was formed in the *design* phase will take on new members, drop others, alter its direction and continue to improvise as it enacts its change journey. In some organization settings this will still look like a set of new projects that are monitored and tracked for progress and contribution, while in other contexts this phase will look like several autonomous and creative new ventures being nurtured and supported in less visible ways.

In sum, this ‘4-D’ process juxtaposes grounded examples of the extraordinary (discovery stories related to the topic) with visionary images of positive possibilities

(*dream* and *design* phases) to mobilize generative connections among stakeholders such that they want to work together to transform their shared future.

Distinguishing Features

AI was intended as an alternative approach to managing change processes. As such, it is distinctly different from most other approaches. Key differences include the following.

Strengths Focus

Beginning with the assumption that every human system already has features of health and well-being, AI is a deliberate, systematic search for the antecedents, catalysts and supporting factors that embolden and promote the enduring spirit and central competencies that contribute to vitality of the system in its best moments.

Discovery Before Dream

AI asserts that if one can first reconnect one’s stakeholders with their individual and shared strengths, they will naturally be able to conceive of more bold and innovative possibilities for the future. The discovery of the system’s positive core can result in expanded images of the future that transcend current problems, breakdowns or gaps.

Use Stories to Connect

AI begins with choreographed, one-on-one conversations where parties are asked to share stories of best past experiences related to the topic of the AI. Only after sharing their stories are they invited to become more analytic in uncovering the underlying success factors in their stories. This narrative approach invites an analogic dialogue where parties are listening for, and building upon, connections between perspectives, thoughts and ideas.

Simultaneous Attention to Future Search and Continuity Search

The outcome of AI is new change initiatives to co-create a preferred future. At the same time, the beginning emphasis on surfacing the already existing positive core establishes continuity—that which we can rely upon not to change. AI is thus unique in that it attends to stability-in-change, which has been established in the change literature as a key success factor.

Self-Managed Change Initiatives

When the AI is experienced in full, there is no point where co-created recommendations are submitted to

a smaller decision group. On the contrary, if the right people (stakeholders) are in the room doing the AI and the expected connections build through the discovery, dream and design phases, the generative results are that the stakeholders will feel compelled to volunteer their time and energy to make the change image that they coauthored become a reality.

Change by Changing the Conversation

AI changes the way something is being discussed or viewed in an organization. Inviting these inputs and then seeking new ideas for improvement or development can create behaviour change in and of itself. A published case has documented that engaging an entire workforce in AI conversations (in pairs) about safety led to record-breaking drops in incident reports, without formalizing any new projects, training, policy changes or any other group-level actions.

Applications

Currently, AI is a proven, researched and widely applied process for managing complex change at the individual, group, organizational, community and societal levels. A community of practice exists throughout the world, and practitioners attending the most recent global AI conference came from nearly 50 countries. Numerous articles and case studies exist to document the positive impact of the AI process on OD, innovation and success.

Early adopters included GTE/Verizon (union-management relations, share price increase and quality improvement), US Navy (retention), Avon Mexico (mixed-gender working relationships), Roadway Express (share price, union-management relations), British Airways (exceptional arrivals), Hunter Douglas (production yields), American Red Cross (high engagement), United Nations Global Compact (organizing charter), Fairmount Minerals (sustainable value creation, EBITDA growth) and the City of Denver (efficiency and cost savings). These cases demonstrated AI's relevance to improving team, business unit and organization-wide effectiveness. Subsequent cases documenting AI application to individual coaching and networked systems like Walmart's supply chain for clothing or a learning network of 60 companies in Belgium for talent development suggest AI as a viable change tool for all levels of human organizing.

While it is used at multiple levels of human systems, the most common application is known as the AI Summit. This is a multi-stakeholder gathering representing the entire system related to the chosen topic. Participants gather for 1–4 days to complete the AI cycle and launch self-managed change initiatives. The

summit process is easily scalable and has been applied with tens to hundreds to thousands of participants (World Vision International, American Dairy Association, BBC, etc.) in face-to-face and virtual formats.

Research studies have demonstrated that AI is effective in fostering greater transformative changes in teams (vs. incremental changes from task-oriented OD interventions) and creating less negative emotional arousal in coworker dialogues than problem-solving approaches. Participation in AI has been shown empirically to create deeper forgiveness in union-management relations and to relate to seven times more cost savings in sites that use AI (for other topics) versus those that do not.

Critiques of AI

The early wave of critiques on AI came from OD scholars who questioned the exclusive focus on the 'positive', generally asserting that a balanced focus on what's working and what's dysfunctional was more likely to generate a valid diagnosis than just one or the other. Originators of AI responded that taken in a larger context of an already dominant focus on what is dysfunctional, AI interventions were attempts to move towards the overall balance that the critics sought.

The most useful critiques have come from scholar practitioners who seem to be sympathetic to AI but are more aware of its limitations. A common concern is with the possibility that a focus on positive stories and experiences during the discovery phase will invalidate the negative organizational experiences of participants and repress potentially important and meaningful conversations that need to take place, or that if AI is used to stifle valid expressions of hurt, injustice and ill treatment, the opposite of what AI purports to do will in fact occur: distrust, disengagement and devaluation. There is little doubt that some managers and consultants have used the veneer of AI to enforce a conversation that only allows discussion of 'the positive' to avoid surfacing anxiety, incompetence or unethical issues, but this would also be true of many OD approaches that have been (mis)used to promote short-term positive emotions and motivation to increase effort under the guise of employee involvement or participatory management.

A strong and useful critique is that some AI advocates paint a picture of appreciation as manifested by managers expressing positive feedback and praise, focusing solely on moments of excellence, success stories and the like. Showing appreciation is thus construed as either expressing or eliciting positive moments in one's organizational life. These critiques argue for a different image of appreciation in which managers make judgements about what will be life

generating and position themselves in the conversation in ways that respect the complexity of the situation and keep conversations generative. This implies exploring vulnerabilities, fears, distress and criticism, as well as moments of excellence. This suggests a possible need for redirection in AI training such that the original focus on 'inquiry' from a valuing stance is reinforced. The end or goal of an AI is not to feel positive emotions or to only celebrate what is going well. Rather, the objective is to experience the power of strengths-based inquiry to heighten the imagination and to do so in a way that fosters generative connections among stakeholders such that they desire to act together to achieve some future state. This collaborative, self-directed action to co-create a future reality is the essence of the co-operative capacity that exists, often untapped, in every human system.

Future Trajectory for AI

The worldwide application and adaptation of AI, the growing body of empirical research and thoughtful critiques of AI and the emergence of the fields of positive psychology, strengths-based leadership and positive organization studies all suggest that AI is positioned well to become a widely applied method for change and innovation management. The field of positive psychology has developed the theory and tools to help discover and apply individual strengths to attain higher engagement at work and more balanced wellness in life. AI has demonstrated how to magnify and amplify these strengths at a collective level for greater organizational success and resilience. AI is now positioned to achieve a synergy of strengths at an even larger level through fostering 'affirming institutions' that do good for society and the environment in order to do well for owners and shareholders. AI is now being applied to address community, regional and industry-wide issues that no single institutional or government entity can address alone. AI is demonstrating the potential to help create enduring human systems and societies wherein everyone can flourish—truly change at the scale of the 'whole' system.

Ronald Fry

See also Appreciative Inquiry and research methodology; Appreciative Inquiry and sustainable value creation; appreciative intelligence; organization development; social constructionism

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APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In 1987, David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva introduced Appreciative Inquiry as a form of action research with the generative capacity to create a sense of possibility and to develop energizing ideas for novel action. They saw Appreciative Inquiry as a process of discovery and theorizing that truly brings out the life-generating essentials and potentials of organizational and social existence. They argued that the collective study of what gives life to a human system, rather than the more common diagnosis of its problems, will result in shared knowledge that enables social innovation. The appreciative approach to action research starts with an appreciation of current reality, is collaborative in nature and aspires to create knowledge that is provocative yet applicable. It embraces the social constructionist premise that words create worlds, and thus the belief that theory can be a catalyst for transformative action. This makes Appreciative Inquiry activist in its orientation. It encourages those who participate in research to work in the service of their vision of world betterment. Such visions may be inspired by the root metaphor that underlies the appreciative way of knowing, namely, that of social and organizational life as a miracle and mystery with endless possibility for discovery and change.

Appreciative Inquiry is commonly known as a strengths-based approach to organizational change, in which participants engage in conversations to explore the positive, life-giving core of their organization, to create images of future aspirations and to design new alternatives for action. Because of its focus on shared meaning making, Appreciative Inquiry as a change methodology is a form of dialogic organization development. Though positive change may seem more

important than research in this practice-driven application, it remains clearly grounded in inquiry.

This entry discusses Appreciative Inquiry from a research perspective. It describes how researchers can take an appreciative stance, how collaborative inquiry enables organizational change and how Appreciative Inquiry becomes research for generative theory building.

The Spirit of Inquiry

To take an appreciative stance in inquiry means to see, illuminate and create what is extraordinary in ordinary life and practice. When this spirit of inquiry—a sense of wonder, curiosity and surprise—is awakened, fresh perceptions of reality may result in knowledge that interrupts and transforms the status quo.

The researcher in Appreciative Inquiry is not an objective outsider but someone who actively participates in the organizational setting that is being studied. When such relational engagement is undertaken with what Albert Schweitzer called a reverence for life, it may enable the open-minded sensitivity to appreciate also the more subtle richness in organizational dynamics. Inquiry itself can create a sense of wonder and surprise when the questions asked open new terrains for study and a different way of seeing leads to unexpected insights. When research is conducted with an appreciative eye, it connects an intricate understanding of the best there is with a bold imagination of what might become. The power of the imaginative mind is needed to create the generative knowledge that Appreciative Inquiry promotes. Imagination brings vigour to the study of organizational reality, and together with appreciation, it gives permission to be daring and truly alive in inquiry.

Appreciative Inquiry asks for both reflexivity and finesse. The researcher needs to be upfront about the life-centric bias of the approach, to be aware of personal assumptions and images of the good and to be a skilled facilitator of this collaborative change methodology.

In sum, Appreciative Inquiry is a way of knowing and being that illuminates the possible in human systems. Its spirit of inquiry invites both action researchers and organizational members to study and shape the life-giving potential of the wondrous organizational settings in which they participate.

Inquiry as Intervention

Appreciative Inquiry is based on the constructionist notion that social reality is maintained and transformed through processes of shared meaning making. Simply put, what one talks about and pays attention to will grow. From this perspective, inquiry is an intervention

rather than a diagnostic step to prepare plans for change implementation. When inquiry itself is seen to induce the wanted change, it really matters what topics are studied and how, who is included and listened to and how insights are developed and shared.

An appreciative change initiative will commonly start with an interview process in which participants inquire into topics that are of high interest to them. Such topics are framed in language that affirms what one wants to see more of. Affirmative topics inform the questions that participants ask each other to bring out life-giving qualities and future potentials. Inclusive engagement—of ideally the whole system—in this process is important to illuminate the full spectrum of experiences and viewpoints and to create the sense of relatedness that will nurture change. Questions are carefully crafted to invite storytelling and conversation that explores, connects and energizes. Stories give rich insights into lived experience, and their sharing builds the relationship between teller and listener. Rather than establishing factual truth, the aim of appreciative interviewing is to join the other in creating shared understandings of the possibility for novel action.

What does the organization say? After the interviews are conducted, participants share and study the stories, remarks, wishes and future images that they have taken note of. This sharing is part of the discovery phase, the purpose of which is to illuminate the organization's positive core, the factors that are considered to be special qualities and strengths. New insights, exemplar stories and quotes are assembled and communicated in ways that resonate and evoke a sense of possibility. During the dream phase, participants use discoveries and their imagination to picture bold future aspirations. Will it work? In the design phase, inquiry is focused on shaping actionable ideas from articulated dreams into concrete designs for action. Appreciative Inquiry as a strengths-based approach to change ideal results in workable knowledge that guides experiments with innovative ideas in daily practice. In the destiny phase, cycles of experimentation and reflection may lead to transformative action, collective learning and new topics for inquiry.

Appreciative Inquiry as intervention enhances the collective capacity for change by using and strengthening the existing cognitive and relational capabilities of a group or organization. Through appreciation, imagination and exploration, participants can develop fresh knowledge about their practice that enables them to co-create something clearly different and better.

Generative Theorizing

With their introduction of Appreciative Inquiry, Cooperrider and Srivastva answered Kenneth Gergen's call for

generative theorizing. The focus of such theory development is knowledge that can help transform social reality. Rather than establishing and verifying conventional truths about what currently exists in human systems, the researcher wants to interrupt common assumptions by exploring and inspiring what is emergent and possible. How does Appreciative Inquiry lead to theoretical knowledge with such a generative capacity?

From an engagement with Appreciative Inquiry as change methodology, questions and topics may emerge that can lead to the development of transferable knowledge. Over time and across situations, certain themes may catch the attention and curiosity of the researcher. How is it, for instance, that moments of crisis are appreciated as high-point experiences in some organizations? Such questions may lead to a secondary analysis of the material that was collected during the appreciative interviews. They may also result in a conceptual framing that allows the researcher to join timely theoretical conversations. Next to knowledge development around substantive themes, Appreciative Inquiry facilitation may spark theorizing around process questions of organizational change. The sharing of stories about an organization's positive core, for instance, can be studied to understand the dynamics of organizational identity work.

Both content and process questions that arise from Appreciative Inquiry initiatives can guide studies in which the researcher uses a more or less traditional methodology. Indeed, more conventional studies can explore positive topics such as organizational flourishing or use an appreciative perspective during interviews or for purposes of evaluation. In such research, however, a concern for diagnostic rigour and predictable patterns may clash with the relational, constructionist and provocative nature of Appreciative Inquiry as generative theorizing.

Appreciative Inquiry is based on the premise that knowledge creation is a relational endeavour. The researcher needs to engage with others and otherness to develop novel insights. Such relational engagement can take a variety of forms. Where topics emerge from the facilitation of a change initiative, one can continue to work with a group of co-researchers that represents the whole system. But to understand the intricate qualities and dynamics of organizational settings, it may be more conducive to engage a small group of professionals who have an immediate interest in the research topic and can explore it with practice-based finesse. Once the researcher starts to zoom in on such micro practices, relationality can also be translated in how one personally engages with the research material. A choice to participate directly in what one studies may then guide a phenomenological exploration of the experience of generativity in organizational and social life.

Its underlying constructionist principle not only makes Appreciative Inquiry a dialogic approach to change, it also invites research that uses discourse analysis as its methodology. The focus of such analysis is on language and on meaning-making processes that influence the scope of possible actions. A researcher who studies organizational settings through an appreciative discursive lens may look at the qualities of life-giving conversations, the stories that can change perspectives on what is currently feasible, the occurrence and expansion of positive communication in a specific organization or the role of the media in articulating the nascent narratives that inspire repertoires for innovative practice. To be generative, such studies ideally also stay true to Appreciative Inquiry's relational quality. The researcher will, for instance, safeguard the holistic nature of stories and the interactive character of the production and use of organizational texts.

Appreciative Inquiry invites a scholarship of dislodgement and transformation and encourages research that leads to provocative outcomes. What can the researcher do to create knowledge that provokes novel action? One approach may be to look for positive deviance in both practice and research data. In practice, it means studying exemplar cases of unusual yet wanted innovation. In data analysis, it asks for an openness to value the outliers that may inform surprising insights. To translate such deviant observations into plausible conceptualizations, the researcher needs theoretical imagination to propose what might be possible and replicable in other situations. Theories that evoke action are not only plausible but do also have emotional appeal. A researcher who wants to have a generative impact will, therefore, strive to write about inquiry outcomes in artful ways that resonate and inspire. Such writing may awaken a spirit of inquiry and a sense of possibility in those who read them.

To summarize, Appreciative Inquiry was introduced as a life-centric approach to action research. When it lives up to its full generative potential, it connects inquiry at the three interrelated levels of a personal appreciative stance, a collaborative search for constructive change and the creation of theoretical knowledge that transfers to other situations because it provokes and enables organizational and social transformation.

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See also Appreciative Inquiry; organization development; social constructionism; strengths-based theory and practice; transferability

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APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AND SUSTAINABLE VALUE CREATION

Asking the question ‘Strategy for what purpose?’ suggests that managers need more than clear objectives and good execution to accomplish organizational goals and identify those whom they benefit. In a similar fashion, this entry asks, ‘Appreciative Inquiry (AI) for what purpose?’ It argues that having well-crafted objectives and great execution are no longer enough for AI practitioners concerned with global systems dynamics. Typical AI objectives such as increased employee engagement and organizational effectiveness benefit from having an overarching purpose that ranges beyond a company’s strategic vision and mission. Purpose is particularly important in a world that has become simultaneously more crisis-prone and dependent on business to resolve rising challenges, from climate stability to energy and food security, to peace and social justice.

Sustainable value, defined here as a measure of those strategies and practices that enable business to act as a force for good, represents such a governing purpose for AI practitioners. AI is a uniquely well-adapted change methodology for creating sustainable value by virtue of the abductive (or design) logic it applies to goal setting, its grounding in positive action

theory and emphasis on whole systems and its use of processes that engage key stakeholders in the effort to realize the desired change. A unique relationship exists therefore between sustainable value and AI: The former provides AI with a governing purpose, while the latter provides sustainable value with a powerful methodology for planning and execution.

While it is not necessary for every organization to become an agent of world benefit, this entry assumes fundamentally that any change practitioner who is intent on creating a thriving organization must address global issues such as dwindling natural resources, radical transparency and rising societal expectations. Recent evidence suggests that sustainability is now entering the business mainstream and that creating sustainable value (or ‘shared value’, as Michael Porter and Mark Kramer recently termed the concept) is becoming a factor for organizational success in every sector of the economy.

Sustainable Value and Sustainability

The word *sustainability* refers to both sustainable resource use and flourishing at the systems level. Sustainable resource use connotes permanence in the sense of minimizing the permanent depletion of natural resources. Flourishing suggests more than mere system survival. A flourishing system is dynamically healthy and able to grow vigorously and prosper.

In one sense, sustainability is simply the ability to endure, given its root, *sustain*, which can mean prolonging or lengthening in time, extent, scope or range. Thus, sustainability traditionally centres on creating a sense of permanence or continuity. The composite term *environmental and social sustainability* has taken on a similar meaning that aligns closely with the concept of *sustainable development*, which, according to the World Commission on Economic Development, denotes development that meets present needs without compromising the ability to meet future needs. A more recent meaning of sustainability is that of *flourishing*, such as in John Ehrenfeld’s reframing of sustainability as ‘the possibility that human and other forms of life will flourish on the Earth forever’. Adam Werbach similarly characterized flourishing as ‘thriving in perpetuity’. Thus, flourishing infuses sustainability with human values. When human and natural systems flourish and are resilient, they can be said to be sustainable.

This backdrop of meanings has confused many business managers, some of whom continue to reject sustainability as a strategic goal. Executives who do not understand what it could mean for their companies fail to see it as a source of strategic advantage; they do not understand why eliminating societal constraints or creating a healthier planet belongs on a CEO’s agenda.

Many scholars have therefore attempted to reframe sustainability in terms of value creation for shareholders and stakeholders.

Sustainable value is about *creating* value for shareholders and stakeholders rather than merely transferring it from one to the other. By ‘doing good’ for the society and for the environment, a company that creates sustainable value does even better for its customers and shareholders than it otherwise would. Stuart Hart and Mark Milstein suggest that pursuing a strategy that puts a premium on sustainable value creates opportunities to overcome global challenges that pose environmental threats. That is, firms can create sustainable value by putting organizational practices into place that contribute to sustainability while also generating shareholder value.

Furthermore, trends in both management practice and academic research suggest that the concept of sustainable value is shifting from mitigating harm or reducing the footprint of business on society to providing solutions to global challenges. In the past, corporate sustainability initiatives such as reducing greenhouse gases focused implicitly on being ‘less unsustainable’. Few initiatives were designed with ‘more sustainability’ in mind, and fewer still aspired to fulfil the systemic conditions needed for a healthy world over the long term. This distinction is evident in the idea of a contrast between an organization’s (negative) footprint and its (positive) handprint. To the extent that sustainable value is aimed at business as a force for good, it requires an approach to managing change that can support flourishing at every scale. AI is uniquely adapted to such a task.

AI and Sustainable Value

AI is an organization analysis and change methodology that focuses on the positive dimensions of an organization’s life, providing a process for accessing the strengths of the larger system of which it is a part and broadening its members’ capacity to engage in system change. By emphasizing whole systems and strengths-based thinking, AI encourages the inclusion of every stakeholder in transforming the current reality of a system into the desired future state. When sharing positive stories, people reconnect to the strengths, competencies and positive emotions that characterized their past successes, guiding the collective vision.

Scholars in positive psychology consistently emphasize that positive emotion is a fundamental human strength and is central to the study of human flourishing. They argue that positive emotions build intellectual, personal and social resources. Participants in the AI 4-D cycle, that is, discovery, dream, design and destiny/deliver, feel ready to act in the world because ‘positive emotions broaden an individual’s momentary

thought–action repertoire, which in turn can build that individual’s enduring personal resources’.

As an approach to change and a method for guiding conversations, AI allows people within organizations and systems to connect to such positive emotions and share positive experiences that bring out their best. Its optimistic assumptions about people, organizations and relationships distinguish it from traditional organization development methodologies.

As our understanding of sustainability and sustainable value shifts from *continuity* and *doing less harm* to *flourishing* and *business as a force for good*, AI’s emphasis on bringing out the best in individuals, organizations and whole systems becomes increasingly relevant to the purpose of change. AI provides a blueprint for promoting the necessary shift in how business people think about sustainability, even as it creates an ideal space for creativity and inspired innovation.

Productive dialogues among colleagues from distinct areas within an organization or system generate useful insights into an organization’s or system’s optimal functioning in the past and facilitate the formation of an image of the future that encompasses everyone’s hopes. Frank Barrett suggests that in order to understand the complexity of a large organization, we should cultivate an appreciative way of knowing, an aesthetic that values surrender and wonderment over certainty, affirmative sense making over problem-solving, and listening and attunement over individual isolation.

Barrett mentioned jazz improvisation as an example of a self-organizing system built on appreciative knowing, exemplifying characteristics of being, thought and action that generate novel solutions to complex global issues and disruptive innovations that embody positive visions of the future. For example, energy and food security are likely to require entirely new technologies based on renewables and entirely new business models based on local production and distribution, and organizations that know how to improvise will be better prepared to bring about such changes.

W-Holistic AI: Flourishing at Every Scale

AI has already made significant contributions to organizational success because it enables change in a way that effectively compresses time and resources. This entry introduces the concept of W-Holistic AI, which purposefully adds to the AI experience of connection and wholeness. The ‘W’ represents wholeness, directing our attention to the eminent need stakeholders feel to experience a sense of connection at work, and it is holistic because it perceives the individual as an autopoietic system, one that depends on its interaction with the larger system of which it is a part. Through reflective practices such as mindfulness, art and

aesthetics and nature immersion, W-Holistic AI creates additional opportunities for people to experience such wholeness and to feel a deep sense of connection to others and to the world around them, helping to generate system alignment that encourages individual and collective purpose to become more unified.

The reflective practices used in the W-Holistic AI process open the mind and heart to new ways to approach work, collaboration and life. The process described in the following section increases the probability that action outcomes are based on what is important for the individual, the organization and the larger systems of which they are a part.

The W-Holistic AI Process

The W-Holistic AI process begins with *connection* that prepares participants to experience a greater sense of wholeness. Thus, before the discovery phase, when participants interview each other, they conduct a meditation (e.g. a compassion meditation), read a poem or conduct centring exercises as a way to connect to the emotions that are present for them. The purpose at this first stage of the process is to increase individuals' capacity to let go of judgement and tap into deeper levels of listening.

The next phase is *discovery*. The process adds reflection on *calling*, during which individuals get in touch with the meaning of their life's work. One of the questions posed at this phase might be 'What do I live for?' This leads to the dream phase, during which the collective vision for the organization is generated.

Following the *dream* phase, individuals are encouraged to get in touch with their source of deep creativity. This prepares them for the design phase, during which they create the unified architecture organizing the key elements of their collective vision.

Immediately following the design phase, participants are asked to reflect on their values in action, to consider these thoughtful behaviours that reflect their inner states of connection, calling and creativity. The question at this phase is 'Who do I need to be, and what do I need to let go of to realize this dream?' or 'Who am I when I do what I do?'

W-Holistic AI cultivates such a deeper awareness, fostering greater wisdom and creativity. It provides space for deep reflection within the flow of the AI movement. Ultimately, W-Holistic AI promotes a sense of wholeness in today's fragmented world, helping people to demonstrate empathy towards one another and fostering a sense of connection with a larger whole. As such, it supports the goal of creating sustainable value in service of flourishing at every scale.

Chris Laszlo and Ilma Barros-Pose

See also Appreciative Inquiry; environment and climate change; organization development; sustainability

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APPRECIATIVE INTELLIGENCE

As David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva have pointed out, there are two kinds of action research. The first is based on a problem-solving paradigm, and the second focuses on what works or gives life to organizations and is known as Appreciative Inquiry. To engage in affirmatively oriented action research, an individual ability called Appreciative Intelligence® is needed. The construct of Appreciative Intelligence® is embedded in the theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Howard Gardner. He demonstrated that intelligence was not a single ability but a number of capacities. Based on findings from the fields of anthropology, psychology, brain research and cognitive science and the biographies of exceptional individuals, Gardner concluded that there were at least seven types of intelligences: (1) linguistic, (2) bodily kinesthetic, (3) spatial,

(4) musical, (5) logical-mathematical, (6) intra-personal and (7) interpersonal. Appreciative intelligence may be seen as another type of intelligence within the multiple-intelligence framework. It is the ability to perceive the positive potential in a given situation and to act purposefully to transform the potential to outcomes. Put in a simple way, Appreciative Intelligence® is the ability to see the mighty oak in the acorn.

The organizational science researcher Tojo Thatchenkery coined the term *appreciative intelligence* in 1996 after studying the phenomenal growth of entrepreneurship in the Silicon Valley in the USA. Talents of all sorts congregated around a small region in northern California beginning in the mid-1980s. Venture capitalists and immigrant entrepreneurs (primarily from Asia) took significant risks that led to the rise of the Internet, social media and the networked world. Thatchenkery hypothesized that Appreciative Intelligence® is the individual ability that partly contributed to the success of the Silicon Valley. His research about Indian American entrepreneurs in the early 1990s suggested that the various ethnic groups felt valued and experienced the freedom to experiment in the Silicon Valley. An environment of opportunity recognition, persistence, resilience and anticipation of positive outcomes existed in the region that defined the area as a fertile ground for entrepreneurship.

Appreciative Intelligence® has three components: (1) *reframing*, (2) *appreciating the positive* and (3) *seeing how the future unfolds from the present*. Reframing is seeing problems in a new light and creating alternatives that have not occurred within the old frame. It involves shifting a frame so that new relationships and dependencies become apparent. For example, Muhammad Yunus, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for 2006, felt the need to reframe the concept of collateral in providing credit to the poor in Bangladesh and founded the Grameen Bank. His use of ‘microcredit’, or small loans to entrepreneurs too poor to qualify for traditional bank loans, was an instance of reframing.

Appreciating the positive, the second component of Appreciative Intelligence®, is based on social constructionist philosophy and leverages the stance that language creates reality. As participants in organizations, we are embedded in an all-pervasive deficit discourse with a vocabulary consisting of thousands of negative words. Appreciating the positive is about intentionally seeking the generative vocabulary that looks at what works in a system as opposed to what does not. Appreciating the positives must become a habit if it is to have a lasting impact. Due to the learned helplessness generated by past experiences, individuals may not notice the positive possibilities already embedded in scenarios similar to the ones that Yunus had faced. They have to observe with an open mind and truly believe that

positive possibilities can be brought to the surface with intentional reframing.

The third component of Appreciative Intelligence®, seeing how the future unfolds from the present, is the critical last step for generating successful outcomes. It is not enough to reframe or recognize positive possibilities. We must know what to do in the present moment, akin to a stage of being mindful.

In addition to the three components mentioned above, Appreciative Intelligence® leads to four qualities in individuals: (1) persistence, (2) conviction that one’s actions matter, (3) tolerance for uncertainty and (4) irrepressible resilience—the ability to bounce back from a difficult situation. Persistence is the ability to stick with a project or problem to its fruitful completion. There are two types of persistence. The first one, behavioural persistence, is the external manifestation of visible actions that are sustained over a period of time to accomplish a goal. The second one is cognitive persistence, where an individual continues to think about a goal that may continue long after the behaviour to accomplish it has stopped.

Conviction that one’s actions matter creates the confidence in our abilities to mobilize the mental resources and plan of action needed to accomplish a task. Overall, people with high self-esteem have a greater tendency to persist in the face of failures and challenges. They are also more likely to reframe and see the presence of alternatives for reaching a goal. The creative ideas and actions that individuals pursue may generate uncertainty or ambiguity. People with high Appreciative Intelligence® showed evidence of high tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity and cognitive dissonance. Beyond tolerating their own uncertainty, they helped other people deal with uncertainty, often by reframing situations to help them see what was positive. Individuals possessing high appreciative intelligence exhibit an irrepressible resilience and bounce back from challenges with renewed energy.

Appreciative Intelligence® is also related to entrepreneurial cognition and opportunity recognition. Researchers have examined entrepreneurship from the macrolevel using the knowledge spillover theory and the regional advantage strategy. Appreciative intelligence provides the micro-, individual-level foundation for understanding entrepreneurship. Thatchenkery has shown that the Silicon Valley entrepreneurs thought differently (with respect to the content of their thoughts and the processes that they employed) by intentionally reframing market signs and opportunities. Successful entrepreneurs possess a cognitive schema called *entrepreneurial alertness* which helps them to stay in a mental state of being alert to opportunities. Entrepreneurs possessing such a schema are predisposed to searching for and noticing market

disequilibria and possibly reframing to see new positive possibilities. Entrepreneurially alert individuals will thus be more able to ‘think outside the box’ than persons lower in alertness. This line of thinking is consistent with the characteristics of people with high appreciative intelligence, who have narrated stories regarding how they reframed problem situations, recognized opportunities and overcame challenges, all by recognizing the generative potential in them and engaging in actions in the present moment to help unfold the future.

Appreciative Intelligence® is linked to leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation. It is needed to engage in action research embedded in affirmative ideals. Because of their ability to bring out the best in others, their capacity for innovation and their resilience against stressful situations, people with high appreciative intelligence become valued members of organizations. They are often at the forefront of engaging in productive action research, creating innovation and new products and services.

Tojo Thatchenkery

See also Appreciative Inquiry; capacity building; ladder of inference; strengths-based approach

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ARGYRIS, CHRIS

Chris Argyris was one of the founders of the fields of organization development, organizational learning and Action Science. He was a radical, creative thinker and acclaimed academic who used organizational consulting as a means of conducting research that produced over 30 books and 150 articles. His legacy is embodied in concepts such as espoused theories, defensive routines, the ladder of inference, reframing, advocacy and inquiry, double-loop learning, and actionable knowledge—all of which have had an impact on the field of action research. This entry begins with a brief sketch of Argyris’ career, then surveys his work, and finally addresses his relationship to action research.

His Career

Argyris was born in Newark, New Jersey, on July 16, 1923, to Greek immigrant parents. He grew up in Irvington, New Jersey, and served in the Signal Corps of the US Army during the Second World War, rising to the rank of Second Lieutenant. He received his B.A. in psychology (1947) at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. As an undergraduate, he met Kurt Lewin, whose work would have a strong influence on Argyris throughout his life. He went on to receive an M.A. in psychology and economics from Kansas University (1949), and a Ph.D. in organizational behaviour from Cornell University (1951), where he studied with William Foote Whyte.

Argyris served as the Beach Professor of Administrative Science and chairperson of the Department of Organization Behavior at Yale University from 1951 to 1971. He then moved to Harvard University, where he held a joint appointment at the Graduate School of Education and the Business School as the James Bryant Conant Professor of Education and Organizational Behavior. He also served on the board of directors of two strategic consulting firms, the Monitor Group and Greenwich Research Associates. He was a devoted husband and father. He and his wife, Renee, were married 63 years and had two children. He died on 16 November 2013.

His Work

Argyris was one of the members of the post–World War II generation of management scholars who did pioneering research on the human side of organization. Both Lewin and Whyte had impressed upon him the importance of observation as the basis for research, which meant, first and foremost, understanding the world through the eyes of other people. He was also

deeply impressed by the way in which both men linked theory building and research with action for generating change. Thus, from the very beginning, Argyris believed that the best test of theory was whether it could produce a desired change in the real world.

Argyris' first major work, *Personality and Organization* (1957), was pioneering empirical research that illustrated the inherent conflict between the demands of the formal organization and the normal development of human beings towards greater independence and self-control. The unintended consequences of this conflict are that most organization members revert to an infantile state in order to conform to the organization's demands. Argyris was well aware of the detrimental effect of organizations on people, but he admitted, at that time, that he could envision no solution to the problem. It was the search for a solution, however, that guided Argyris throughout his career.

Argyris was deeply committed to research-based knowledge, but there was not enough empirically based evidence to support clear alternatives to the formal organization. In *Integrating the Individual and the Organization* (1964), he set forth ideas for a 'New System' of organization but frankly admitted that such ideas were speculative and would require years of research to be confirmed. A major turning point was his association with the National Training Laboratories, where he became a leader of the 'T-Group' approach to organization development, as described in *Management and Organizational Development* (1971). During this same period, Argyris began to develop his unique approach of using intervention as a method for conducting rigorous research, which he formalized in *Intervention Theory and Method: A Behavioral Science View* (1970).

Just about the time these books were being published, Argyris experienced serious doubts about the long-term effectiveness of T-groups for changing organizations. He observed that executives who underwent significant behavioural change during a workshop would revert to their previous patterns once back on the job, while covering up their gameplaying with T-group language. What puzzled him most was why these negative patterns seemed to push out the healthier ones.

In 1971, Argyris met Donald Schön, who was a philosopher by training as well as a consultant and faculty member of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT. Schön, who studied technological and social change, was also puzzling over what made it so difficult for individuals and institutions to 'learn'. The two men began a collaboration that led to the development of the 'theory of action' approach. Their fundamental claim was that human behaviour is guided by mental theories of action that consist of three simple

components: In Situation X, do Y, in order to achieve Goal Z. Because theories of action function almost automatically, people are able react quickly and without conscious thought in most situations, while being unaware of the theories that drive them. They also made a distinction between 'espoused theories' (what people say they do) and 'theories-in-use' (the theories inferred from actual behaviour).

Argyris and Schön studied theories of action and discovered a remarkable similarity among the theories people used when dealing with others under conditions of uncertainty, conflict and psychological threat. This discovery led them to hypothesize that people are driven by a deeper, universal theory rooted in the 'governing values' of unilateral control, protection of self and others and rationality (Model I). Model I theories-in-use explain what drives people to produce behaviours that create defensiveness, entrenchment, polarization and escalation precisely when learning is critical. Argyris and Schön hypothesized that sustainable change would require learning an entirely new theory-in-use including both governing values and behavioural change. Therefore, they formulated an alternative theory-in-use (Model II) based on the governing values of valid information, free and informed choice and internal commitment, all of which had been evident in Argyris' previous work. Argyris and Schön acknowledged that Model II theories-in-use were not natural but demonstrated that they could be learned and put into practice, with the desired effect.

The collaboration between Argyris and Schön led to two highly influential books. The first, *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness* (1974), applied the theory to the reasoning and action of professionals in management, education and social services. The second book, *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective* (1978), argued that an organization, like individuals, is driven by theories of action and that it 'learns' when organizational members engage in inquiry that alters its theory-in-use. As a result of these works, Argyris became recognized as the founder of the field of organizational learning.

Argyris' research on theories of action led him to question the epistemological foundations of social science research, including his own. In *Inner Contradictions of Rigorous Research* (1980), he critiqued what he called 'normal science', illustrating that the rigorous methods developed to ensure valid knowledge detract not only from its applicability to real-life conditions but even from its internal validity. Furthermore, Argyris argued that a social science that simply describes the world as it exists is likely to reinforce the status quo rather than produce alternatives. In this book, he first advocated the development of 'Action Science', an alternative to normal science that would

unite the context of knowledge production (theory building) with the context of knowledge use (theory testing). The idea of an Action Science, which was first suggested by William Torbert, took Argyris back to Lewin, whose field theory and action research challenged the very foundations of social science. For the next 15 years, Argyris formulated the philosophical foundations and methodological framework which would lead to the publication of *Action Science: Concepts, Methods, and Skills for Research and Intervention* (1985) together with Robert W. Putnam and Diana McClain Smith. This book also showed how to create a community of inquiry in which the skills needed to conduct Action Science could be taught to and learned by others.

Argyris now had a fully formulated method that enabled him to systematically and rigorously combine intervention with research, and knowledge production with knowledge use. Action Science and organizational learning would be the focus of his work until the end of his life. During this period, he took a particular interest in the field of strategy and consulting practice. He not only consulted to strategic consulting firms but also became a director of two firms, with which he worked after retiring from academia. Argyris was a gifted teacher who used the case studies produced by his students to confront them with their Model I theories-in-use and challenge them to change, though some people found his style aggressive. A fascinating account of Argyris' legendary classroom performances can be found in Art Kleiner's *The Age of Heretics: A History of the Radical Thinkers Who Reinvented Corporate Management* (2008). Each intervention or classroom became an opportunity to test and develop the theory as well as to develop new concepts, which were regularly published in numerous papers and books.

Argyris and Action Research

Argyris' work had an important influence on the reawakening of action research in the 1990s after a long period of relative stagnation. His deep and systematic critique of normal science research provided one of the first and most powerful challenges to the positivist hegemony in the social sciences. He provided the action research field with a systematic alternative approach to conducting scientific inquiry. The ideas of Action Science began to disseminate, and many of its concepts have become central to action research discourse and practice.

If Argyris was critical of normal science for its emphasis on theory and methodological rigour at the expense of practice, he was critical of much of action research for its lack of attention to theory and to methodological rigour. Although Action Science was based

on the idea of research 'with' rather than research 'on', Argyris did not lionize popular knowledge or practice wisdom. His approach was also a far cry from the participative action research based on the work of Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda that emerged at roughly the same time as Action Science. Argyris did not believe in participation for the sake of participation. Rather, he held a clear standard for knowledge production and advocated a particular kind of expertise in producing actionable knowledge. From an Action Science perspective, meaningful participation begins with a process of learning how to move from Model I to Model II theories-in-use.

As a consultant, Argyris worked with the top executives of large corporations and with other consultants, people for whom he had enormous respect. In his work with these people, he was a revolutionary, but a revolutionary of reason who challenged their theories-in-use on the basis of data and logic—never ideology. Furthermore, based on the 'data' he collected over years of working with people, Argyris held to the claim that Model I is universal regardless of race, culture or gender—a position for which he was heavily criticized.

As an action researcher, it was this determination to question assumptions while remaining deeply committed to both methodological rigour and the real world that most distinguished Argyris. As a teacher and consultant, he had, in the words of Diana McClain Smith, 'a unique ability to empathize with people's experiences and circumstances while still holding them accountable for changing them'. As a person, he was best described by his family, shortly after his death, as someone who 'lived a very simple life, free from pretence. He valued the same qualities in anyone whether they were a cabinet member of the US government, a first grade teacher or a janitor. If you could look honestly at yourself and others, if you were engaged with life, if you were ready for a good debate, he was on your side'.

Victor J. Friedman

See also Action Science; advocacy and inquiry; double-loop learning; ladder of inference; learning pathways grid; Lewin, Kurt; organization development; theories of action; two-column technique; Whyte, William Foote

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ARTS-BASED ACTION RESEARCH

Arts-based action research is a blanket term that refers to the use of the arts, in various forms, as the basis for inquiry, intervention, knowledge production and/or information sharing. As a research method, arts-based approaches consist of the merging of the conventions of ‘traditional’ qualitative methodologies with those of the arts to allow for deeper research insight, interpretation, meaning making and creative expression, and alternative knowledges and ways of knowing. The use of the arts in research has been taken up in several disciplines including visual anthropology, visual studies in the social sciences, education, community development, medicine and health studies. These methods are becoming increasingly popular as innovative, accessible and exciting approaches for inquiry into the social world. In addition, they are being widely recognized for their ability to engage communities in action research processes that transcend age, education, language and cultural barriers.

Arts-based methods can be used at various stages of the research process. Often merged with more traditional qualitative approaches to data collection such as interviews and focus groups, arts-based methods can be an approach for data collection as they capture the reflexive, insightful and creative capacities of participants. The art produced from arts-based approaches can be visually and interpretively analyzed by itself or in congruence with other textual data to add layers of meaning. Arts-based methods can also be employed in the dissemination of research findings as these approaches produce excellent media with which to share information in an accessible

way that evokes an emotional response, connection and conversation. Art can sometimes convey multiple messages and provide a deeper level of connection than other forms of representation. Art can help people interrogate questions and further abstract or concretize complex ideas. Arts-based methods can be employed on a continuum as a tool to engage people in highly participatory and community-oriented, solitary or professional settings, making these approaches dynamic research tools.

Importantly, arts-based methods are not exclusive to research and have been more widely used in organizational and advocacy settings to represent and express opinions on pressing social and political issues, communicate information and inform more direct forms of intervention. For example, using the streets, sidewalks and virtually any public space as their setting or stage, actors and/or advocates utilize costumes, props and creative posters and imagery to engage the larger public in performance or popular theatre. In other initiatives, murals, paintings and photographs are used to engage the public in acts of resistance against police violence and the commemoration of loved ones lost to atrocious crimes of the state. Such creative, expressive and arts-based engagement has been employed around the world to disseminate information about and bring attention to political causes and mobilize communities.

This entry further describes specific examples of arts-based methods as approaches to action research. It then explores some of the benefits, challenges and ethical considerations associated with arts-based methods and concludes with the future outlook of work with these approaches.

Examples of Arts-Based Methods

Popular arts-based strategies include painting and drawing, mural making, drama and performance, collage, poetry or other creative writing, fashion design and music creation. Each arts-based method has different strengths and challenges. Below are some brief examples of arts-based methods (many of which have their own encyclopedia entries in this volume). This list is not meant to be exhaustive but, rather, is illustrative of the range of ways in which the arts are being used in action research for further engagement and deeper understanding of social issues.

Hip Hop Songwriting

Through songwriting, participants can pair lyrics, sound and music to create rich and complex forms of expression. Songwriting incorporates language, oral history, identity formation, culture, geography and

narrative. With its popularized origins in low-income Black and Hispanic communities in post-industrial America, hip hop has garnered widespread appeal as a result of fusing musical genres from around the world, such as reggae, jazz and mambo. Hip hop was initially utilized as an avenue for creativity and entertainment and as an outlet to vent frustrations with state violence and poverty. This genre has since been adopted, renegotiated and re-created by groups around the world. Hip hop has been coupled with spoken word poetry and theatre and incorporated in activism, education and health research. One example of the ways it has been used in research settings can be illustrated by the *Taking Action! Building Aboriginal Youth Leadership in HIV* project (www.Takingaction4youth.org). Aboriginal youth worked with local hip hop artists to explore the issues of colonialism, institutional racism, violence, drug abuse, intergenerational trauma, Aboriginal identity and resistance. The tracks recorded were then used as both 'data' to understand youth perspectives and dissemination products.

Photography (Photovoice, Photo Elicitation)

This method was pioneered by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris' research with village women in rural China. Photovoice is an approach that gives participants the opportunity to produce knowledge and represent their perspectives on the strengths and concerns of their community through photographs and accompanying reflective writing. Photographs are then used to 'speak' to policymakers as a strategy for making change. Due to the ready availability and familiarity of cameras (whether on mobile phones or disposable, digital or more professionally used devices), this approach has been taken up in various education, community development and health promotion projects focused on topics as varied as youth sexual health, homelessness and community well-being.

Collage

Collage is a methodological tool where participants are provided an opportunity to intuitively select, sort, connect, relocate and arrange found materials, images and text in representation of their opinions, experiences and/or concerns. The end product or collage is a creation with seemingly fragmented, non-linear, unfinished and/or metaphorical meaning, making this an excellent medium for textual and visual inquiry and analysis of the unexplained, contradictory and incoherent aspects of identity. Collage has been used in women and gender studies, queer studies, health and education as an approach for curriculum development. For example, Lynn Butler-Kisber writes about how collage making

can be helpful in memoing/reflecting, conceptualizing, eliciting and articulating challenges.

Digital Storytelling or Participatory Movie Making

These short first person visual narratives combine recorded voice, images, videos, music, sound and text to create accounts of experience and/or discuss larger social and political issues. This approach has been employed in many projects dealing with issues such as violence against women, male role modelling, disability and queer identity. Claudia Mitchell writes about how both the process and products of these endeavours become powerful sites of empowerment for South African youth engaged as HIV film-makers.

Benefits of Arts-Based Methods

Arts-based methods offer many potential benefits. First and foremost, many participants find the process to be extremely engaging. Using the arts to mobilize and involve communities in documenting and representing their world can be a lot of fun. By definition, most arts-based methods are participatory. Using arts-based methods can challenge community deficit models and show respect for local expertise and talent. They can also be empowering. Moreover, the storytelling and narrative components of various multi-modal arts-based approaches resonate with many communities, cultures and traditions. Storytelling, singing, theatre and painting can be integral to the sharing of the values, traditions and lived experiences of many cultures. These powerful tools for self and social inquiry can link the personal and private to the public, political, historical, environmental and socially transformative.

Second, arts-based methods often yield different kinds of data that can complement and enrich more 'conventional' research strategies (e.g. interviews and focus groups). For instance, the evocative, personal and expressive elements of storytelling and narrative inquiry are coupled with the visual appeal of photography and image in Photovoice and collage. These layers of auditory, sensory and visual texture create new possibilities for researchers to see, hear and feel. As a result, new researchers are able to ask different kinds of questions of their data, including ones that engage with the consonance and dissonance between these representations.

Third, arts-based methods can reach and touch different audiences. The potential blending of new media (e.g. Internet audiences) with ancient art forms (e.g. painting) creates new possibilities for unprecedented reach, scope and influence. Furthermore, the products created are often more compelling to general audiences than academic reports. Arts-based products have been

credited with being able to elicit strong emotion and enhance recall of content.

Integral to many arts-based research approaches is the utilization of the arts-based media produced from such studies for the purpose of intervention, information sharing and civic engagement. For instance, arts-based methods such as performance, theatre and song have proven to be powerful tools for education on topics ranging from colonialism and identity formation to spirituality and environmentalism. Sharing the products has also been used to create connections and community. Participants can engage in larger advocacy efforts by contributing their work to public installations, showcases, screenings, photo exhibits and websites as a means to spark critical discussion. In this way, they are encouraged to explore the relationship between their art and broader social issues such as inequality, structural violence and discrimination. This public engagement serves to mobilize a wider audience of community members, researchers and policymakers.

Through information sharing and civic engagement, arts-based methods are consistent with the goals of action research, which stress participatory engagement and collaborative partnerships in the research process, empowerment, co-learning, capacity building, and community-based action towards social transformation. As such, resistance is inherent in arts-based processes as they often encourage alternative ways of knowing and doing, critical thinking and discourse. These attributes also make arts-based approaches ideal for explorative work in various disciplines.

Challenges Associated With Arts-Based Methods

While arts-based methods offer many advantages for action researchers, there remain many challenges specific to arts-based methods, some of which are related to the particular technological modalities they employ. The paragraphs below outline some of these challenges.

Arts-based methods are often thought to be the flagship approach for work with marginalized communities because of their accessibility and ties to historical traditions. However, these assertions may be seen as homogenizing and disempowering, as they insinuate blanket assumptions about the competence (cultural, artistic or otherwise) of communities. For instance, there are problematic insinuations about the cultures and educational level of marginalized communities, which are assumed to gravitate more readily to song, dance and image rather than to written or numerical methods, such as surveys. These assumptions can be understood as congruent with the infantilizing and pathologizing representations of specific communities as 'culturally backward' or otherwise incompetent.

Rather than transform power inequities and challenge dominant discourse, the process and products of arts-based approaches can sometimes reinforce them. For instance, participants may create work that perpetuates dominant racist or sexist stereotypes. They may resist efforts to challenge their main messages and may want their work promoted alongside others in a project.

In addition, multi-modal arts-based approaches create specific challenges for research analysis. For instance, researchers employing approaches such as Photovoice or Digital Storytelling may feel the need to become versed in how to analyze different kinds of information (e.g. visual, auditory, textual, etc.) or risk losing valuable content and research insight. Alternatively, some researchers argue for the value of insight provided by a novice.

Depending on the artistic modality, arts-based approaches to research can be quite costly, require advanced technical expertise and be demanding of time and human resources. This requires special consideration and strategizing on the part of those interested in employing these approaches. Related to the nature of funding systems and the costs associated with arts-based approaches, in many cases these projects are short-lived interventions and are unable to influence policy in any measurable way. This is in part due to the fact that policy change strategies are often tagged on at the end of a project proposal rather than being a strategically planned component of the research process. Furthermore, the policy change cycle is a long process that often extends beyond the life of these projects. This raises questions on the purpose of arts-based action research approaches. Is the ability to reach a broad audience and ignite discussion 'action' enough? Or do these projects need to go further in their mandate to commit to policy intervention and other kinds of action interventions?

Other debates in the field centre on the role and purpose of 'art' in these research projects. Some argue that art is about making aesthetically beautiful, powerful and interesting pieces. Proponents of this elite approach argue that art should remain the exclusive domain of professional artists because they have the appropriate skills and training to execute a vision. Professionals are more likely to produce polished, slick pieces that may resonate with wider audiences. Some action researchers employ performers, musicians, technicians and other specialists to assist with the dissemination of their research findings. Others argue that arts-based processes are intended to harness the creative ability of everyone, a natural capacity that is not exclusive to trained professionals. These action researchers believe that engaging community members in art making is integral to their method. For

these researchers, the process is more important than the product. Furthermore, the artistic creations made have intrinsic value as rich research data (whether or not it is aesthetically interesting).

Others raise the concern that many arts-based approaches (e.g. Digital Storytelling) often involve an editing stage. Editing can be done by the participants themselves, a professional artist, a facilitator and/or the researcher (or someone who wears many of these hats simultaneously). During the editing stage, it is important to think through the purpose of these alterations (is it about coherence? aesthetics? cataloguing?) because the editing process can often affect content, meaning and, thus, data. Care should be taken to think through whether the primary goal is to understand (i.e. generate data) or create compelling pieces that share information, educate and inform civic engagement, critical discourse and policy. It can sometimes be challenging to achieve both ends in one project.

Lastly, although broadly used in health promotion and education interventions, very little research exists on the rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of arts-based interventions. This is problematic given the popularity of these approaches.

Arts-Based Methods and Ethics

There are specific ethical concerns associated with arts-based methods. Such approaches challenge conventional research norms around participant anonymity and confidentiality. Many participant artists will eschew anonymity and want to be credited by name when their work is shared or displayed. In other cases, it may be hard to mask identity. For instance, the personal account of experience contained in a digital story can provide the audience a revealing glimpse into the identity, thoughts and life of the participant.

Problems arise around the ownership of the art produced in these processes as participants, research teams and/or partnering institutions and organizations all have a stake in the negotiation of the ownership agreement. This is especially relevant in the unlikely event that the research and/or arts-based products become profitable, as the owners are entitled to the profit. Further, where participants have full ownership of their art, they may consent to sharing their art from the project through one medium but not another (e.g. permission may be given to include their art in a journal article but not in a public display or online). Participants may decide at a later date to revoke their consent to sharing their work. Care needs to be taken to think through whether this is even possible (e.g. if dissemination has been widespread in print or online media).

A 'gold standard' in arts-based research is to think of consent in multiple steps. First there is consent to

participate in the research, then there is consent around whether and how to disseminate products. Finally, appropriate attribution (e.g. whether or not to be anonymous) needs to be negotiated. Furthermore, if participants use images of their community members in their representations (or other copyrighted material), consent is also required on the part of these individuals to include their likeness/work in the art.

Research teams need to be attuned to the nuances of the ethical concerns that exist and prepared for those that may arise when employing arts-based methods. Additionally, participants in these studies must be appropriately informed and prepared for the demands of the process.

Future Outlook

As demonstrated by the growing body of literature, there has been widespread acceptance and popularity of arts-based methods as viable approaches for critical scholarship, action research and community intervention. With the availability of communication tools such as the Internet, video and production software, researchers and advocates are finding innovative ways to incorporate different art forms into their work to promote insightful discussion, knowledge production, civic engagement, community development and social change.

Ciann Wilson and Sarah Flicker

See also Digital Storytelling; ethnography; Photovoice

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ASSET MAPPING

Asset mapping is most closely associated with John Kretzmann and John McKnight, and it was first delineated in their 1993 volume *Building Communities From the Inside Out*. After conducting more than a decade of research into community-building efforts around the USA, they coined the term *Asset-Based Community Development* to describe a specific and unusual approach they observed. These efforts were unique along several dimensions, but their most distinctive feature was their focus on what Kretzmann and McKnight called community *assets*. Rather than a more traditional approach to community development which begins with a needs assessment to identify the most pressing problems, or an organizing effort focused on addressing a defined issue, they encountered communities that started at an entirely different place: by looking around to see what good things they had going for them and trying to come up with a plan to build on those. Probing what these communities were doing, they discovered that most of them had already experienced what happened when they focused solely on what was missing in their community, and had realized that approach had not produced the results they were looking for. In thinking about their assets as a first step, these communities were engaged in a form of action research, though they certainly would not have called it that. They just knew that they were trying to first understand, then do something positive with, the good things they found in their community. These efforts had in common the fact that they were launched at the grass roots, possibly with support from organizations or institutions but typically driven by ordinary people.

When Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) shared this approach in their book, it resonated with many communities, whose subsequent experiments and experiences in its deliberate application helped further define the approach, its uses and abuses and the lessons that other communities could apply in their own attempts at community improvement. These attempts often included scholars and activists, who helped refine the approach and incorporated it into the growing field of action research. Since the early 1990s, while asset mapping rapidly expanded as both a term and a process used in the community-building domain, it also generated questions such as ‘Who governs the use of

this approach?’ and ‘Who provides training in this approach?’ From the perspective of the scholars who coined the term, asset mapping was always an early form of non-digital freeware. Anyone could use it; anyone could interpret it for their own setting and purposes; anyone could build upon it. And people did just that, sometimes in ways that advanced the method as a true bottom-up community-building approach and also sometimes in frustrating ways that rendered it merely a reinterpretation of top-down community development practices. Asset mapping as a method has survived some rough periods, for example, in the late 1990s, when it became popularized as a regular component of many grant-making programmes. By requiring asset mapping in isolation, these opportunities set up many communities for confusion and disappointment. Mapping assets was inadvertently presented as a sort of community panacea, and innumerable groups carefully mapped their assets and then wondered why nothing had changed. Others understood the necessary connection with the mobilization of the assets identified, and contributed to the advancement of the work.

Asset Mapping as a Process

In order to make mapping assets useful beyond pure description, it is necessary to consider the use intended for the resulting information. In the late 1990s, Deborah Puntenney, an Asset-Based Community Development practitioner and scholar, identified two approaches used by communities. *Visionary asset mapping* describes a situation in which assets are mapped with no specific purpose in mind other than to generate the raw materials for community creativity and activity. This type of mapping presents community members with rich information they may not otherwise have considered and tends to provoke more out-of-the-box, creative thinking about possibilities. *Targeted asset mapping* is more common and occurs when assets are mapped with a specific purpose in mind; that is, the community has an idea and wants to identify the assets it can deploy toward implementing the idea. The common characteristic in both of these types is the intent for action; that is, both move definitively beyond description and into the realm of purpose.

Community Assets

Asset mapping describes a kind of systematic examination of positive elements in a community or other context. Engaging in this endeavour produces a list of things that tend to fall into certain categories, including people, organizations, physical elements and social elements. While there is an enormous array of types of assets that can be discovered in a given context, and

many ways to categorize them, communities generally identify five or six types: (1) individuals, (2) local groups or associations, (3) organizations and institutions, (4) physical space and infrastructure, (5) economic characteristics and (6) culture. Breaking down these types further and giving a more in-depth interpretation of each will make it clearer what people look for when they undertake asset mapping.

At the centre of most asset-mapping efforts is *individual people*. The very act of mapping assets suggests the expectation of finding something positive; in fact, what all mappers discover in the process is that every person possesses an extensive array of positive qualities and characteristics. This is just as true in low-income or disadvantaged communities as it is in wealthier communities. The difference is that most of us have been subtly trained to look at poorer contexts through the lens of deficiencies, and just as subtly trained to automatically assume that wealthier communities are filled with positive things. Asset mapping brings out individual capacities, such as skills, abilities and talents; characteristics like honesty, kindness and generosity; and core qualities such as experience, interests and dreams. The tool associated with mapping individual assets is sometimes called a capacity inventory, particularly if it is designed to focus on those assets that can be applied to some kind of activity related to employment or voluntary action in the community. Examples of viewing individuals through an assets lens would be seeing a disabled person not as someone needing special services but as someone who has a skill or capacity to contribute, or recognizing the value in the years of experience brought to the table by older residents of a community.

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) also identified local citizens' *associations* as a potential community asset—perhaps the most important one. An association is a group of people who come together on a mostly informal basis for the purpose of pursuing a common interest or goal. Associations come in hundreds of types and range from block clubs, to sports groups, to sororities and fraternities, to adopt-a-highway groups, to fitness clubs, and beyond. These groups are seen as powerful in that they represent the energies of people who have already gathered together for a common purpose, and almost always for a positive reason (e.g. fun, fitness, service). An example of viewing associations through an assets lens would be seeing a motorcycle riding club not as a potential threat but as a group that could participate in an adopt-a-highway programme or other service activity.

A third type of community asset is local *institutions* such as libraries, hospitals, businesses, non-profits or government agencies. These assets represent all sorts of things beyond what we normally associate with

them—for example, professional expertise, authority and helping capacity—including space, resources and potential volunteers. As a community asset, institutions have been interpreted in ways that sometimes seem contradictory. Because of their characteristics (i.e. hierarchical, justified by professionalism and credentials), institutions can be part of the reason why other community assets have tended to be ignored. Indeed, the USA has developed systems that so strongly rely on distinguishing themselves from one another and the rest of the community that they have contributed to the sense that ordinary people have no natural function other than to receive the advice and expertise institutions have to offer. However, institutions do in fact represent potentially important community assets, provided they do not overshadow the broader array of positive attributes in a place and provided they support the engagement of those attributes as resources for the community. An example of viewing organizations and institutions through an assets lens would be seeing a hospital as a place to go to not only for medical care but also for sponsorship and support for a community health and wellness activity.

The fourth type of asset comprises the *physical space and infrastructure*. For many communities, especially those where disinvestment has occurred, the space that surrounds them can be viewed as problematic. Abandoned buildings, vacant lots, and other unsightly conditions are a visual cue to everyone that something is wrong. On the other hand, through an assets lens, these same conditions represent the possibility of something better. And when the community itself sees these possibilities, it is more likely that the community members can assume an integral role in defining new purposes for their community infrastructure, rather than being further victimized by outside developers interested only in profit. An example of viewing troubled physical space and infrastructure through an assets lens: A vacant lot can become a garden; an abandoned building can be developed into a new business or housing.

A fifth type of asset is the *economy*, and the potential for a vibrant local economy that exists in a community. Again, for some communities it is the apparent lack of economic assets that people use to characterize the place, but an assets-based approach always uncovers more than expected. There are at least three variations of local economic activity: formal, informal and illicit. Communities may be legitimately concerned about illicit economic activity (e.g. drug markets), but existing formal and informal economic activity can represent important assets to build on. An example of viewing imperfect economic conditions through an assets lens would be that the skills associated with informal economic activities such as caregiving for

the elderly can be translated into formal employment opportunities for local people.

The sixth type of asset is local *culture*. Every community has people of different backgrounds, places of birth, traditions and, sometimes, races or ethnic origins. When these types of diversity are viewed as assets, rather than as a threat to uniformity, a whole array of possibilities opens up in terms of sharing ways of being, knowing, doing and understanding the world. An example of viewing culture through an assets lens would be sharing the traditional foods eaten by different local cultures, which can be used as a social activity that supports learning, breaking down barriers and finding commonalities in the traditions of different groups.

Asset-Mapping Tools

The original asset mapping tool described in *Building Communities From the Inside Out* (1993) was a *capacity inventory*, a type of asset-mapping tool focused on individual assets. Because individuals are at the centre of a community, and because individuals have sometimes been treated as benefiting from community development but not contributing to it, this form of asset is the probably the most important. Using the capacity inventory exposes the weaknesses in the assumptions that drive deficit-oriented development by revealing the rich array of individual capacities available in every community. Since 1993, communities have used the original tool and designed their own tools to identify the assets within their own boundaries. These have ranged from very simple, face-to-face conversation guides (e.g. ‘Tell me about your gifts: of the head, hands, and heart’), which are used to break down relationship barriers and encourage people to get to know one another better, to lengthy and complex lists of skills, abilities and aspirations for use in economic development endeavours. Similarly, tools for mapping the other five types of assets have been developed for purposes from the simple to the complex and in forms that range from conversation guides to formal data-gathering instruments. Because each community is different, and because each community’s purpose is somewhat different, the tools used to explore assets in a given context need to be flexible and tailored to the specific place. Within the Asset-Based Community Development world, much sharing of ideas, stories and tools has taken place, so communities will often borrow some aspect of the tools or methods used by another community. But there is no one way to do this work, a fact that makes it more difficult but also more potentially effective.

Asset Mapping in Other Contexts

Asset mapping can be used in contexts other than communities, for example, in an organization, and the

process works the same way. Though the categories of assets may be somewhat different, the logic of looking first at core assets and then working outward to related groups, surrounding institutions and context remains the same. An organization will first map the assets of its individual staff members, looking beyond the curriculum vitae items for which the employee was hired. Assets can also be mapped among the connections an employee may have, in a sort of *six degrees of separation* review and with the assumption that people in the employee’s life may have an interest in the organization where the employee works. Organizations work in ways that bring them into contact with other organizations and institutions doing the same or related work and with organizations and institutions in the same geography. Like communities, organizations are surrounded by physical space and infrastructure, and they encounter cultural assets both in the place they are located and among the people with whom they work. In some cases, organizations are able to consider the people they serve as assets, though there are often rules of confidentiality or other considerations governing the extent to which they can ask people questions about themselves. When organizations do asset mapping, they are often trying to broaden their view of who they are, how they function and how they might recognize and deploy their hidden assets toward increased sustainability.

Asset Mapping for Specific Purposes

Over time, asset mapping has been applied to communities and contexts around a specific purpose, for example, health improvement, aging, youth or economic development. In this sort of targeted approach, asset-mapping efforts tend to focus on specific kinds of assets, casting a narrower net rather than a broad one. In the case of youth, for example, asset mappers will look specifically for assets that will benefit youth and that can be deployed by youth or for youth and the enhancement of their well-being along some dimension. In any targeted effort, a tension emerges that reflects the very root of the asset-based approach. For example, in an effort to refine the search for assets to those that seem most relevant for youth, mappers will inevitably leave out unknown assets that may be perfectly suited for youth development. In other words, the very act of refining becomes a way of limiting the possibilities, through advance knowledge of what works for youth. But the very purpose of asset mapping is to discover unlikely or unknown assets and deploy them for creative purposes. Pointing out the tension is not intended as a directive to always map every possible asset; rather, it is intended as a cautionary note to help asset mappers avoid turning their

asset mapping into a search for what they already know exists.

Results Achieved Through Asset Mapping

It is worth reiterating that no results are produced through asset mapping alone, except possibly some descriptive knowledge about the community in question. Asset mapping is only productive when paired with some kind of action. When it is, the findings from the mapping effort become the data that drives, supports or undergirds the action. When asset mapping is used as a central component in action research, both tangible and intangible results are generated. Tangible results often take the form of specific community-building or economic development activities that emerge out of the increased awareness of residents and organizations about their own capacity to act effectively. These results may include things such as organizing residents for campaigns on local issues, making employers aware of the skills of residents as potential employees, registering voters and helping people participate in the voting process, establishing a resident group to envision the renovation of a primary business corridor, establishing new public transportation routes to facilitate safe and accessible transit through the neighbourhood or organizing a neighbourhood skills centre where residents decide what will be taught. Intangible results are more difficult to quantify, and they occur in the process of engaging people and creating connections and linkages among them. As people engage with their neighbours in productive activities, trust and social capital are expanded, and some of the barriers to participation are removed. In addition, as different attitudes about the community emerge and are acted upon, an entirely new foundation is developed for the support of more tangible results. Examples of intangible results include the expansion of community spirit and pride, residents' empowerment in terms of their confidence and ability to initiate and carry out the changes they desire, the elimination of distinguishing labels (too old, too young, too poor) in favour of a common label (contributor) and increased optimism and hope.

Asset mapping, then, has many purposes, applications, and permutations in design and implementation; it is the underlying assumptions associated with it that make it unique. Communities attempting to create a context that supports health and well-being for residents must often struggle against a development perspective that assumes that the right approach is to focus only on their needs, deficiencies and problems. Asset mapping as a component of action research turns this assumption on its head and provides evidence that development can indeed be grounded in the positive elements existing in every community. It also defines

the raw materials from which action can be generated and helps ensure that the core components of the community remain at the centre of the community-building activities that emerge.

Deborah Puntenney

See also Appreciative Inquiry; Asset-Based Community Development; citizen participation; community development; Community-Based Participatory Research

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ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The failure of the Urban Renewal, Community Action, Model Cities and Planned Variations Programs to revitalize economically distressed communities in post-World War II America prompted many grassroots activists, institutional leaders and municipal officials to question the efficacy of centrally planned and administered anti-poverty programmes. Inspired by the subsequent success of the Bed-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation in New York City and Hough Avenue Development Corporation in Cleveland in the mid-1960s, residents living in communities struggling with the effects of deindustrialization, outmigration and disinvestment undertook a variety of 'bottom-up' planning and development initiatives.

By 2010, neighbourhood leaders seeking to revitalize ailing urban communities, often with the support of local faith-based organizations, philanthropic foundations, municipal agencies and national intermediaries, such as the LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), Enterprise Community Partners, National Reinvestment Corporation (NeighborWorks), and SeedCo, had succeeded in establishing nearly 4,000 community-based development organizations, commonly referred

to as CDCs. In many severely distressed neighbourhoods, these community-based development organizations eclipsed private developers and municipal governments as the primary agents for neighbourhood stabilization and community renewal.

These organizations played a central role in establishing neighbourhood crime watches and community policing programmes; constructing hundreds of thousands of affordable housing units; creating millions of square feet of new retail and commercial space; providing job readiness, training and placement for long-time unemployed and underemployed workers and offering entrepreneurial individuals committed to establishing local businesses financial planning assistance. In the early days of the community development movement, the executive directors and board chairs of these organizations used detailed needs assessments, highlighting their communities' many individual, organizational and institutional shortcomings to make a compelling case for outside funding and technical assistance.

Over time, this deficit-based approach to community development came to be viewed as having a number of rather serious drawbacks. First, this externally oriented approach to neighbourhood revitalization tended to minimize the many extraordinary assets local residents, their informal associations and their institutional networks possessed in terms of knowledge, skills and social capital that could be mobilized to address critical community needs. Second, the bleak picture of the community that needs-based plans and proposals tended to project often reinforced the negative stereotypes held by outsiders, reducing the likelihood that they would invest in the community. Third, the emphasis that need-based plans and proposals placed on the self-defeating attitudes and behaviours of poor and working-class individuals tended to obscure the role that structural factors such as local and state economic and community development policies play in generating and maintaining income, wealth and power disparities. Fourth, the privileged position outside leadership, funding and technical assistance are afforded within the typical needs-based plan reinforces the psychological, organizational and financial dependency residents of low-income communities have on external organizations. Finally, the effort needs-based planners devote to securing outside investment and technical assistance often leaves little time to enhance the organizing, planning, development and management capacity of community-based development organizations, thereby undermining their long-term sustainability. This entry will discuss the history of Asset-Based Community Development, review some of the key characteristics of this approach and the key steps in the process and finally consider some of the lessons learned from using this approach.

The Emergence of Asset-Based Community Development

These shortcomings of the needs-based approach to community development, in combination with the deep cuts in domestic social spending carried out by the Carter, Reagan and Bush administrations between 1978 and 1992, prompted leaders of the nation's community development movement to refocus their efforts on mobilizing the assets of local residents, neighbourhood associations and community institutions to address their own problems. In demonstrating the transformative power of local self-reliance efforts, a growing number of the nation's ever-expanding number of community development organizations came to believe that an asset-based approach to community development would, over time, enhance the organizational capacity of these organizations while simultaneously strengthening their ability to use these efforts to leverage the needed outside resources in an increasingly competitive funding environment.

The asset-based approach to community development received a considerable boost with the publication of John Kretzmann and John McKnight's classic, *Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, in 1993. The establishment of Northwestern University's Asset-Based Community Development Institute, dedicated to the training of local leaders in the art and science of this alternative approach to community development, in 1996 made a significant contribution to its further institutionalization. Over the past 25 years, the asset-based approach to community development has come to dominate the field of local and economic development.

According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), the primary goal of Asset-Based Community Development is to identify and assemble local assets to address the immediate community needs and to attract external public and private investment in order to successfully undertake more challenging economic and community development projects. Among the assets available for mobilization within local communities, according to Green and Haines, are those that are physical, human, social, financial, environmental, cultural and political in nature.

The Key Characteristics of Asset-Based Community Development

While local practitioners differ in the way in which they pursue Asset-Based Community Development, the following have been identified by Kretzmann, McKnight, Rhonda Philips and others as the defining characteristics of this model of community change:

- A *place-based* approach to community problem-solving, planning and development, in which a specific geographic area, usually a small town or residential neighbourhood, is the focus of attention
- Long-term efforts to enhance the overall *quality of community life* by mobilizing local knowledge, skills, resources, organizations and networks to address critical community challenges
- A *multi-scalar* approach to community transformation that seeks to engage local residents, neighbourhood associations and community institutions in co-operative problem-solving and community building
- A process that builds upon a local community's *existing assets and history of co-operative problem-solving* to develop and implement 'social inventions' designed to promote a more vibrant, sustainable and just community
- A social change approach that uses a local community's success in mobilizing local assets to address critical environmental, economic and social problems in order to *leverage increasing levels of outside funding* from public and private sources
- A community development theory that views the ongoing development of the *organizing, planning and development capacity of local residents and their organizations* to be as important as the successful completion of specific neighbourhood improvement projects

The Asset-Based Community Development Process

Asset-Based Community Development has been described by Anna Haines and others as a four-step process that includes community organizing, visioning, neighbourhood planning and implementation and evaluation. A brief description of these four phases of the process follows.

Community Organizing

Once community development professionals have determined the geographic area in which they are going to work, they must identify and map the various stakeholders that have an interest in the community and its future. Through one-on-one meetings, highly regarded leaders of each of these stakeholder groups are identified and interviewed to determine their interest in participating in a new community-based planning and development effort. Those who appear most interested in seeing such an undertaking launched are typically

invited to participate in a steering committee for the project. This interim policymaking body works with those staffing the effort to design the project's planning or research process, establish its initial set of planning and development goals, recruit other local leaders to the effort and serve as spokespersons and advocates for the project and as defenders of the initiative from the occasional and expected external challenge.

Visioning

Following a serious effort to determine the community's history, especially its past record of overcoming important internal divisions to successfully resolve critical community challenges, a systematic effort is made to inventory the current assets that residents, neighbourhood associations and community institutions (including local non-profits, small businesses and faith-based organizations) possess that could be mobilized to resolve existing and emerging community problems. Once the community's social history and current asset base have been established, residents and leaders are invited to reimagine their community 15–20 years into the future following a period of inspired community organizing, planning and development. Using a highly participatory process in which all local stakeholders are encouraged to focus upon their vision for a new and improved 'Downtown' or 'West End', residents are asked to review these statements, which are often illustrated with photos, drawings and maps, to isolate commonly held concepts for an improved neighbourhood that could be integrated into a collective mission statement. This 70- to 100-word statement that residents create through a collaborative, iterative process describes the qualities of the kind of community they are committed to working together to build.

Community Planning

Community planning is the process residents and leaders follow to produce a 5- to 10-year action plan containing specific development objectives, policies, programmes and projects to enable the neighbourhood to make measurable progress towards achieving their overall mission statement. Among the issues commonly featured in such plans are crime prevention, educational quality, public health, municipal service delivery, job generation, affordable housing, transportation alternatives, arts and culture, parks and recreation and urban design. Building upon the momentum generated by local programmes that work and 'best practices' research at home and abroad, local stakeholders identify immediate, short-term and long-range projects that build upon each other to significantly improve local residents' experience in each of the aforementioned areas of community life.

Implementation and Evaluation

This stage focuses on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the specific improvement projects contained in each of the plan's major programmatic areas. This phase requires local professionals to identify public and private funding sources to cover the costs of the plan's major elements. Once these sources have been identified, detailed proposals must be crafted to meet each donor's funding criteria. Upon notice of funding, the lead agency responsible for implementing the programme needs to evaluate its existing staff to determine if the programme's success requires additional staff and/or technical assistance. With the funding and staff in place, a comprehensive outreach and media campaign, using traditional outlets as well as emerging social media networks, is carried out to inform local residents of the new services and resources available through the programme. As local residents and stakeholders begin to participate in the programme, steps are taken to document and evaluate these new initiatives so that the needed modifications can be made to continually improve these initiatives. Finally, a research design needs to be created to measure the programme's overall impact in the light of its original community development objectives.

Lessons Learned

Asset-Based Community Development has prompted many to place a new value on the knowledge, skills, resources and networks that local residents and their organizations bring to the neighbourhood revitalization process. The documentation of these contributions has caused many to question their unconscious acceptance of various top-down anti-poverty strategies that attribute neighbourhood decline to the self-defeating values, attitudes and behaviours of the poor. This shift has, in turn, prompted many community development, city planning, urban education and social work professionals to adopt a more collaborative approach to community change in which residents cease being the 'objects' of their studies in order to become co-investigators, along with university-trained professionals, of the causes and consequences of persistent urban problems. As a result of this shift in thinking and practice, Participatory Action Research, as described by William Foote Whyte, Davydd Greenwood and Kurt Lewin, has emerged as one of the most often used approaches of those committed to Asset-Based Community Development.

While few would dispute the impact asset-based thinking has had on mainstream community development practice, there are few examples of this approach transforming existing conditions within severely distressed communities. There has also been some criticism of this approach based upon the responsibility it places

on local residents and stakeholders for improving conditions within severely distressed communities while not sufficiently challenging powerful public and private institutions inside and outside these areas whose decisions have such a powerful impact on such communities to do more to restore them to health.

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See also asset mapping; capacity building; Community-Based Participatory Research; Participatory Action Research; strengths-based approach; Whyte, William Foote

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ASSOCIATION OF MAYA IXIL WOMEN

See Maya Women of Chajul

AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is typically used as a term that connotes qualities like being genuine and true to values. It is presented in different ways in different approaches to research. This entry describes it in Fourth Generation Evaluation research and focuses primarily on its role in first person inquiry.

Fourth Generation Evaluation Research

In the approach, known as Fourth Generation Evaluation, five authenticity criteria are listed. The first one

is fairness, which refers to how different constructions are presented, checked and clarified in a balanced way so that the multiple perspectives that exist in any research project are achieved. The second criterion is ontological authenticity, by which is meant that individual participants' own experiences are enhanced in that they now have more information and can use it in a more sophisticated manner. The third criterion is educative authenticity, whereby participants' understanding and appreciation of others' constructions are enhanced. The fourth criterion is catalytic authenticity, whereby action is stimulated and facilitated by the evaluation process. Finally, tactical authenticity refers to the extent to which participants are empowered to take action. These criteria are grounded in constructivism and mark ways of assessing the quality of Fourth Generation Evaluation research.

Authenticity as First Person Practice

An alternative approach is to understand authenticity as first person practice within action research. Here the invariant processes of human knowing and acting—experience, understanding, judging, deciding and taking action—form a method that is grounded in

- being attentive to data of sense and of consciousness (experience);
- exploring intelligently to envisage possible explanations of that data (understanding);
- judging soundly, preferring as probable or certain the explanations which provide the best account for the data (judgement); and
- taking responsibility for one's actions.

From this method four imperatives emerge that frame the notion of authenticity and provide a process of how action researchers can seek to be authentic. The four imperatives are (1) be attentive to the data, (2) be intelligent in inquiry, (3) be reasonable in making judgements and (4) be responsible in making decisions and in taking action.

As is true of anyone, action researchers may fail in their efforts to be to be authentic. While they ask themselves what they are to do and want to make it intelligible and reasonable, they may be selective in their attentiveness. They may avoid difficult evidence and limit their questioning. They may fail to be responsible. There is no guarantee that they always attend to experience and the search for understanding. They can be inattentive and miss or ignore data. They can distort data. They can turn a blind eye by refusing to ask certain questions, by ignoring awkward or disconfirming questions and by not facing unresolved feelings. While the desire to know manifests itself in attentive

questioning, so also there are fears which block and divert this questioning: censoring, repressing, controlling symbols of feeling and imagining, selecting what they choose to question. They can make unreasonable judgements, settling for what is comfortable rather than for what the questions evoke. They can resist the evidence and try to escape responsibility.

Authenticity is not something that can be taken for granted, and therefore, framing authenticity in terms of four imperatives makes sense. The imperative *be attentive* is based on openness to data. Human authenticity is diminished by avoiding issues, turning a blind eye, refusing to inquire into some matter and so on. The imperative *be intelligent* is grounded in asking questions and seeking answers. Censoring questions, being uncritical and suppressing curiosity and so on destroy authenticity. The imperative *be reasonable* is grounded in judging if ideas are correct or if they fit the evidence. Suppressing discussion or dissent, lying about facts, obscuring evidence and so on destroy authenticity. The imperative *be responsible* focuses on deciding how to act and being sensitive to value. Cheating, destroying resources, being unjust and so on destroy authenticity.

The four imperatives of the notion of authenticity provide another way of engaging with the knowing and inquiry processes of Action Science and Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry. Both of these approaches challenge action researchers to engage in self-reflection and to attend to the inquiry process on which they base their actions. They place considerable emphasis on the process of inquiry which involves testing inferences and attributions that guide theory-in-use.

Philosophically, first person practice means that, rather than observing themselves as objects from the outside, action researchers attend to how their own beliefs, values, assumptions, and ways of thinking shape how they experience, understand, judge, make decisions and take action. Understanding authenticity in terms of the imperative or pulls to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible provides a framework for such first person practice.

David Coghlan

See also Action Science; Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry; constructivism; first person action research; living life as inquiry

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Autobiography is the practice of an individual writing her or his own life story. By nature, it is subjective, offering an individual's unique and felt experience as written by that person. This entry outlines the historical trajectory of autobiographical writing, including present trends and future outlook. It identifies various subgenres of autobiographical work and points to ethical and validity issues raised by the same. It points to the ways in which autobiographical writing and narrating are relevant to action research practice, at the first, second and third person levels.

While many autobiographies are written by public figures—statesmen, politicians, writers, artists and, latterly, celebrities—this is not exclusively so. The genre has developed into a writing approach that encompasses memoir, *testimonio* and historical and eye witness accounts and is more valued for the specificity of the account than the public importance of its subject or writer. Many autobiographies are now written by those present at particular historical and political events of note, such as the Tiananmen Square protests and the 9/11 attacks on New York City, or during natural disasters, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. Others write their life stories from a position of notoriety, such as the criminal and maverick lifestyles of Ronnie Biggs, convicted felon, prison escapee and fugitive, and Howard Marks, international drug smuggler.

The genre has developed from being one of self-written accounts by those in positions of power and control to include those neglected or subjugated by social structures. The latter include Jung Chan, a Red Guard youth in Maoist China; Primo Levi's account of living through the Holocaust and Rigoberta Menchú, the populist Guatemalan civil rights activist.

The key requirements for an autobiography as established by Philippe Lejeune, a leading autobiographical critic, are that an autobiography should have an author, subject and narrator who are one and the same person and that an autobiography should be self-written and narrated. Lejeune introduced the concept of the 'autobiographical pact' as a contract that contains a self-written story by a verifiable person: one who has 'a proper name' that appears on the book cover. The triple identification of the autobiographer in this way, states Lejeune, establishes an intention of sincerity and truthfulness in the narrative.

The relevance of autobiography to the field of action research lies in the valuing of the individual experiences. It lends itself to the practice of self-reflection, marking how an individual has developed and changed through various life influences. The validity of action research processes is strengthened through acknowledging the multiple identities and experiences of its players, along with their potential effect on the construction and participation of the research act and its outcomes. At the same time, sharing autobiographical accounts allows for the identification of similarities and differences in experiences, which can provide the understanding and synergy for taking forward action research processes.

History and Development of Autobiography

Autobiography as a form is considered to have originated in 397 AD with St Augustine of Hippo's *Confessions*, in which he holds a dialogue with God. In this way, Augustine reveals his innermost thoughts, recalling actions that he regards as sinful and requiring confession, together with reflections upon his own Christian beliefs. The work's development from confession to autobiography lies in its secularity of approach and in its reflexivity.

According to Lejeune, it was the French philosopher Rousseau's autobiography, *Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, published in 1782, that established the current genre of autobiography known as memoir. Although Rousseau included details of contemporary historic events, the importance of his work lies in the writing of his personal development, through memories, from childhood to adult life. It is this recall and emotional reflection that took life writing to the deeper, personal level which Lejeune considers to be an anticipation of psychoanalysis.

Autobiographical Subgenres

As autobiography has developed, historical events have provided a contextual background for more intimate and personal accounts that are generally termed 'memoir'. This can be viewed as an opportunity for writers to promote themselves as representative subjects within such a situation, as a means of demonstrating their personhood or to make sense of a chaotic life through organizing random experiences. Memoir offers episodic accounts rather than the grand narrative covering a life span that is associated with autobiography.

Memoir is one of the most popular genres of literature; it can be linked to the confessional nature of literature that, coinciding with the growth of therapy and social and civil rights movements, has given rise to 'coming out' stories. Its value is that individual

accounts can provide alternatives to dominant-culture values and assumptions, as well as providing the connection between the self and experience of the lived life for the writer. The French psychologist Jerome Bruner describes the process involved here both as narrative, through the telling of the story, and as transformative, as the self becomes the story.

Testimonio is a first person narrative of an eye witness or a protagonist of a significant event, usually by the disenfranchised, giving witness to oppression and as such offering an alternative to the dominant-power discourse. Paul John Eakin, a leading autobiography scholar, suggests the writing of testimonio to be a political act, seeking to elicit solidarity, and as such, it should be read differently than an autobiography. Eakin uses Marie Louise Pratt's categorization of testimonio as the telling of an individual experience that is representative of a wider experience or struggle.

Autoethnography is a form of reflective writing whereby the subjective self is situated against cultural, political and social events. It is unique in research practices in that it foregrounds the experience and feelings of the individual as a means of further exploring the focus of study. Deborah Reed-Danahay defines autoethnography as autobiographical writing situated in an ethnographic context or within the ethnography of the group to which one belongs. The reflexive nature of autoethnography acknowledges and emphasizes the dual effect of the researcher upon the research and vice versa rather than attempting scientific objectivity.

Issues of Truth and Reliability

The nature of autobiography—and specifically its subgenre memoir—is to write a life story that may be of value for others, and it therefore provides insights into unusual situations, such as traumatizing experiences. Central to Lejeune's autobiographical pact is the assumption that the autobiography is a truthful and reliable account of the individual's life. However, the changing nature of the self as demonstrated in Rousseau's work, and described by Bruner as the self-in-process, highlights a problem in autobiography regarding both validity and temporality. There emerges a clear contradiction between establishing a set identity of the self, fixed on the written page at a specific point in history, and the eternally developing self.

The concept of false memory syndrome (FMS) was introduced by Peter Freyd as an idea which a person strongly believes but that is objectively untrue. It includes an understanding that traumatic experiences can result in individuals changing their behaviour and personality in response to the falsely remembered event as a means of distraction. FMS is accepted by a number of eminent sociologists and

psychologists but not as a clinical disorder and as such remains controversial.

In 1995, Benjamin Wilkomirski's memoir *Fragments*—detailing the horrors of his Latvian Jewish childhood, his separation from his parents during the Holocaust and his survival of the horrors of the Mđjanek and Auschwitz concentration camps—won a number of prestigious and religious prizes, including the US National Jewish Book Award, the French Prix M moire de la Shoah and the Jewish Quarterly Literary Prize, Britain. In 1998, a Swiss journalist claimed that Wilkomirski's account was false and that he was Jean Grosjean, the adopted son of wealthy Swiss parents. Following investigations by a prominent German historian, Stefan M chler, it was concluded that the account was indeed false; a DNA test confirmed Wilkomirski and Grosjean to be the same person. It has not been determined whether Wilkomirski, who maintains his story, actually believes it or has deliberately lied. The effect of the Wilkomirski affair was not only that his literary prizes were rescinded but that issues of truth and ethics in autobiography became the subject of debate and scrutiny.

A similar furore broke out over James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* (2003), published as a memoir of drug and alcohol abuse and rehabilitation. The book was at the top of the New York Times Best Seller list for 15 weeks and was the top-selling Amazon non-fiction paperback after receiving huge publicity following its selection in Oprah Winfrey's Book Club. It became a worldwide bestseller and was widely translated.

As in Wilkomirski's case, the credibility of Frey's story was questioned by the talk show host Winfrey, who was unable to verify much of Frey's account. Originally, Winfrey stated that the importance of the book lay in its therapeutic value for those in addiction and those close to them, but concerned that this implied that the truth was not important, she later claimed to have been misled and stated that Frey had betrayed his readers. Frey defended his action of fictionalizing events as a means of dealing with emotionally painful issues and, at a pragmatic level, to pursue publication, since the manuscript had received no interest as a work of fiction. Frey's publishers have since reclassified the book as fiction.

It is the representative aspect of autobiography that brought controversy to Rigoberta Mench 's version of events in Guatemala as a political activist when *I, Rigoberta Mench * was published as a testimonio in autobiographical form, detailing political and military activity against activists in the country. Details of Mench 's story were disputed but her defence and support came from the fact that the story, though autobiographical in nature, was representative of the nature of military activity against Guatemalan activists. The

testimonio was intended as a literature of the times rather than a truthful account of actual events.

This debate over truthful telling in memoirs continues as one where the possibility of absolutely faithful recollection can be weighed against the risk of silencing the writer of difficult circumstances that could be usefully exposed. While memory is considered unreliable and subjective, the philosopher P. Ricœur insists that the importance of maintaining the distinction between fact and fiction is precisely due to a debt to all those who have suffered, suggesting that the past must be presented as it actually happened.

Alongside debates of truthfulness and reliability, a hybrid literature genre of creative non-fiction has developed that juxtaposes autobiographical truths against the literary license to include aspects of that which might have been possible. W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* is written in the first person, including self-references and photographs in the manner of a family album or documentary production, but is not the story of his own personal experience. It is, however, marketed as fiction, suggesting that some issues of unreliability in self memory and storying are matters both of classification and of ethics.

Future Outlook

The nature of autobiographical writing has changed dramatically with the advent of electronic media. Online personal spaces are available through blogs (online diaries), in which individuals can enter information around themes of personal interest at periodic intervals. Blogs allow for inclusion of photographic material and are interactive, offering other interested parties the opportunity to 'follow' the individual's developments, comment upon them and receive notifications when the blog is updated.

Twitter is a microblogging site, offering a similar space but a limited number of characters per entry, so

that its nature is commentary rather than an unfolding life story.

Social networking services such as Facebook enable individuals and groups to create profiles with timelines, whereby the individuals' activities and personal developments can be tracked alongside messages and comments posted by others on their profile.

In addition to the huge audiences it commands, the 'real-time' communication of electronic media allows for an immediate awareness of the individual experiences of those involved in history as it is made, such as the 2011 Arab Spring, while simultaneously creating a collective autobiographical archive of rich and diverse testimony.

Jane Reece

See also first person action research; journaling; narrative; narrative inquiry

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B

BAKHTINIAN DIALOGISM

Bakhtinian dialogism refers to a philosophy of language and a social theory that was developed by Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975). Life is dialogic and a shared event; living is participating in dialogue. Meaning comes about through dialogue at whatever level that dialogue takes place. Nothing can exist without meaning; everything has meaning.

Dialogue comes from the relation between self and other, where ‘other’ implies person, plant, animal, object or idea. Dialogism’s a priori is that all existence is a web of interconnections from which meanings are being continually generated. These are linked and in constant dialogue through different means, language being just one.

The relation between self and other is shaped by position. Our respective positions include that which cannot be accessed by others since our minds cannot be read. The term *surplus/excess of seeing* refers to that which we see and shape from our respective positions but which cannot be accessed by others. From otherness and this surplus/excess of seeing in relation to the other comes consciousness.

Since life is shared as an event and we participate through dialogue, it follows that life demands a response from us. This response is always relational since it comes from the uniqueness of the position or space and time occupied by each of us. All that is said is in response to something and demands a response. Dialogue, thus, requires an utterance, a response and a relation from which flow the moral implications of the judging ‘I’ in response to the other.

Our speech and thoughts always incorporate the words of others; our words carry traces and hues from a host of influences, including sociolect, profession, gender, generation, education, context, year, date, time and so forth. Our words anticipate previous usage and the response of another. The words we choose in any

given moment have a specific spatial, temporal and social context.

This entry addresses key elements of dialogism in relation to a Bakhtinian view of dialogue as a social process of meaning, language and dialogism and the idea of the public square with implications for action research.

Mikhail Bakhtin

Bakhtin was a Russian philosopher whose ideas on dialogism are presented in four essays on literary theory and specifically on language and the novel. Public and social discourses of the day are found in the novel and are framed in a narrative and context. In examining language and the novel, Bakhtin shifted the focus on the study of language away from its structure to how it is used in everyday life. His fundamental premise is that all language is saturated with the discourse of the other. His ideas of dialogism have been taken up by different fields, including cultural studies, psychology, medicine and organization studies.

Dialogue as a Social Process of Meaning

The self is dialogic and always in relation to the other. We can only perceive things from the perspective of something else, through contrast that is always set against a time and space. Meanings are always generated through interaction between self and other, whether or not the other is real or imaginary. Since meanings are shaped by the anticipated audience (real or imaginary), they are imbued with meanings of the other. Meanings are generated from the relation between self and other rather than by self alone. Life is thus expressed as a continuum of networks of statements and responses. Statements are always informed by earlier statements and anticipate future responses in an unfinalizable flow.

Utterance

An utterance or unit of speech, as in word, phrase or sentence, is directed towards another, and this shapes the intended meaning. Meanings stem from the past and are acquired from different contexts. Thus, the past, the present moment and the addressee's potential response all shape an utterance. It is future oriented in being directed towards the addressee. An utterance is a link in a communication chain of utterances, all connected by preceding and follow-on links. Utterances carry assumptions and meanings that extend well beyond a string of words, each with its 'acontextual' or abstract definition.

These assumptions may be political and social, and reflect cultural norms and values. Utterances have moral and propositional undertones while also being coloured by contextual ambience, such as the weather. A statement made in a room that is darkened by low cloud and heavy rain may appear different from one using the same words but in a room brightened by sunshine and clear skies outside. The point here is that utterances don't repeat the past; they are multi-voiced and imbued with power, colour and mood.

From this, we understand that words are themselves shaped by history, culture and context, with their meanings shifting in the moment. Utterances and their meanings are unique to the moment they are made in and the tapestry of interactions and potential meanings of that moment. Dictionaries ensure that words have common features that are understood by all. However, the use of these words in living speech always carries additional nuanced and contextual meanings. Bakhtin coined the word *chronotope* to reflect the temporal and spatial aspects of utterances. These aspects are wholly interdependent and play a key role in the production of meaning. An utterance cannot be fully grasped outside the narrative chain, its chronotope, in which it is constituted.

Since we hear and select words in this way, our speech is always a continual interaction with the utterances of others. One's utterances are those evaluated, affirmed and reworked in a responsive light from those of others. One's speech is the speech of others; it is double-voiced. One's utterances are always constructed in ways that acknowledge the reactions one anticipates in this chain of interaction directed towards an addressee. It is this chain of communication that forms a genre, and a string of utterances forms a discourse. Since utterances are directed towards another's conceptual horizon, our horizons interact. For Bakhtin, it is in this way that various points of view, conceptual horizons, expressive accents and social languages come to interact with one another. Utterances and responses are always made from the unique positions

of the respective speakers; their worlds are never one but always relational and with a surplus of seeing.

Language and Dialogism

Language therefore is never neutral; it is filled with the intentions of others and is always half someone else's. Bakhtin conceptualizes language as a battle between centrifugal forces pulling things apart and centripetal forces gravitating towards the centre. This battle is not an either/or a winner-takes-all one but rather a constant ebb and flow in which meanings form and reform. Language is stratified along a host of lines from dialect to socio-ideological. *Socio-ideological* in this sense refers to a socially determined system of ideas, such as those of a particular cohort, generation and so on. Each stratification represents a particular position and set of values. These stratifications do not exist in isolation since dialogism demands that they interact. Authentic dialogue requires an exchange of views and positions or conceptual horizons.

These stratifications and the centrifugal/centripetal battle are closely intertwined. Rippling through these stratifications or heteroglossia is authoritative discourse. Authoritative discourse demands assimilation and is linked to power and institution, reflecting monologism—when words require no answer; words are simply statements of dogma. Monologism may reflect a specific historical point in which, for example, an authoritative discourse of the state infiltrates everyday speech.

Monologism may also reflect a decontextualized analysis of an event or situation. The Bakhtinian scholar Ken Hirschkop makes the point that the problem with authority is not that it imposes its own truth upon others but rather that it presents meaning without voices. This might be a 'big-picture' view of an organization's work that sanitizes a web of different internal groups, professions or strata positions.

Stratifications and the idea of authoritative discourse give import to how languages intersect the tensions between official and 'unofficial' languages and the place of official language in our everyday speech. This is captured in the idea of the public square.

Public Square and Action Research

Hirschkop draws attention to the importance of the public square in Bakhtin's work. Utterances that are developed and organized around mutually agreed ideas form discourses. Bakhtin used the idea of the public square to illustrate the everyday world of discourses interacting with one another, and intersubjectivity. In the public square, people's utterances are characterized by traces of different but interacting discourses. The weighting given to these utterances in a given moment

is contingent on a host of contextual markers, including the nature of the speaker and audience, the language used and the capacity of the audience to participate. There is an unevenness to and inequity between utterances in the public square. In contrast, in written forms, policy reports, news programmes and bureaucracy, an official language dominates and marginalizes the languages of the public square.

Since the official language holds power through political and cultural domains, this sets boundaries around other languages and contains and sets attitudes towards them. These other languages must engage with and participate in the official language. Though there is always a tension with such engagement, the bubbling discourses of the public square can never escape from the power of the official language. The languages of the public square pressurize one another in a state of continual becoming representing socio-ideological struggles. However, since these languages and their struggles cannot escape from the official language, it follows that utterances made in the public square are also laced with official speak and its underlying values and assumptions.

Bakhtin's dialogism challenges action research to examine the degree to which an inquiry is bound to the official discourse and gives voice to language stratifications imbued with historical and cultural meanings. How disparate and unequal voices are represented in the action research process and reporting while also speaking to officialdom has particular relevance to the idea of the public square. Dialogism brings a focus on the nature of voice. It is not sufficient to judge participation on the basis of people exercising their voice. Rather, voice must be considered in the context of how it is influenced by a host of factors that are contextual, spatial and temporal. Participation implies a tapestry of interactions, and inquiry can be positioned within the concept of the public square. In this way, participation, knowledge generation and the emergent nature of action research are rendered more complex and multi-dimensional.

Special Considerations

Bakhtin lived through the twentieth-century upheavals in Russia and was himself exiled. Some of his writings disappeared forever, others are written with an eye to the censors of the day. As a result, there is much debate about and reinterpretation of his work. Hirschkop makes the point that post-glasnost, much of the previous beliefs about Bakhtin were found to be unfounded to the point that less is known now.

Bakhtin's dialogism moves in a different direction from the language of compromise or give and take or

seeking to understand different points of view. Dialogism is more about the intersubjective quality of meaning but not necessarily between two people. Since utterances of the inner and articulated are imbued with socio-historical and ideological meanings in a given time and spatial context, this invites 'standing back' from a narrative event even while speaking to it. Dialogism is epistemologically placing attention firmly on the context-bound co-generation of meaning. Questions arise as to how this is captured through research and discourse analysis.

Geralyn Hynes

See also dialogue; heteroglossia; narrative; positionality

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BANKING EDUCATION

See Conscientization

BATESON, GREGORY

Gregory Bateson (1904–80) was (and remains) one of the most important of the cyberneticists and systems theory thinkers who have made the development of action research possible. This entry presents a brief review of Bateson's early history and educational background, followed by a discussion of his work in the area of cybernetics and the connections between his work and action research.

Bateson's Early History

Bateson was born into an academic family who were already prominent in the Cambridge University setting. His father, William Bateson, was a famous biologist

who is still widely seen as a key founder of the discipline of genetics. Gregory was named after Gregor Mendel, the Austrian monk who initiated the study of evolution. When Mendel's theory of dominant and recessive genetic factors was rediscovered and became of real academic and scientific interest, William Bateson was the first to translate his papers into English.

Gregory Bateson (following the family tradition) became a student of St. John's College, studying the natural sciences for his first degree and then (stepping away from William Bateson's own scientific emphases and encouraged by a family friend) moving towards anthropology. He went to New Guinea and studied native tribal communities and their interactions. His master's degree thesis based on these studies later became his first book, *Naven*, published in 1936.

Bateson was also influenced by Samuel Butler's theories of evolution as being a process of learning (and transmission of knowledge) through generations. Butler claimed that the process of evolution is like that of a mind, offering 'a modest pantheism' suggesting that we could see God as being immanent in all beings, that the designer is the design. This provided the core thoughts for Bateson's later understanding of 'the sacred'.

It is relevant to his later anthropological and cybernetic studies and writing to note that when the second edition of *Naven* was published in 1958, his preface emphasized many new angles to his own thought. He observes that cybernetics and communications theory are now offering partial solutions to questions that were left unanswered in his earlier text. There are new ways of thinking about organization and disorganization and about data on the New Guinea tribes. Western psychology can now be approached by a single body of questions, offering the beginnings of a general theory of process and change, adaptation and pathology which calls for a revision of our understanding of organisms, relationships and the larger systems of which they are a part.

The above work gave Bateson a first class master's degree, a fellowship at St. John's College and the possibility of more fieldwork in New Guinea, where he studied conflict (and the limitations of conflict) between tribes. During these years, he also met the anthropologist Margaret Mead, and their collaboration on some tribal process research led eventually to their marriage in 1935. They went on to share joint research in Bali, particularly concerned with artistic and aesthetic practices. They then returned to New Guinea, and after further studies of tribal processes, the increasing imminence of World War II and the fact that Margaret was pregnant with the baby who was to become Mary Catherine Bateson sent them homeward to Britain and the USA.

Having tried unsuccessfully to find a useful place in the war effort in Britain, Gregory followed Margaret to the USA. Mary Catherine was born in 1939, and both Gregory and Margaret found ways of working for the US war effort in areas including biology, psychiatric work and practice. Double-bind theory emerged from Gregory's psychological work. He also helped with training troops and became secretary of the Committee for National Morale and a member of the Institute for Intercultural Studies. Towards the end of the war, he was stationed in several Pacific countries working on propaganda for the organization that would later become the Central Intelligence Agency.

The ending of World War II (and particularly the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) left Gregory with a strong anti-nuclear stance and also with the beginnings of his concern for ecological survival. Cybernetics was an integral and very important development in these areas.

Bateson's Work in Cybernetics

Cybernetics, particularly the study of self-regulating systems in airborne missiles, had suggested purposiveness in machines and the significance of the communication of error between desired patterns and whatever else might be happening. From this emerged a whole group of cyberneticists, including Bateson. Their first gathering was the Macy Conference in 1944. The second conference in 1946 focused on feedback effects and circular causal systems and extended their fields of interest to biological and social systems. Starting from feedback processes in nervous systems, their interests widened to biological and ecological systems, engineering, information theory and learning processes.

Bateson's thought was deeply influenced by all this. Cybernetics widened to embrace ideas about information flow and about control within systems—not least in those systems that can be understood as circular or recursive. In these systems, causes and effects circle back around and provide control within the systems, which can be seen as feedback or self-correction by the system itself. This revolutionized Bateson's thinking, enabling the emergence of his theory of minds as existing in organisms and living systems throughout the biological world.

Links to Action Research

One of the key links between action research and Bateson's developed thought is that his emphases have always been psychological. In both cases, the focus is on reaching widely acceptable or workable conclusions while considering the wishes, needs and hopes of a variety of potential members or users of the system.

Bateson's anthropological experience had given him perspectives enabling him to question (in the context of the mid-1930s fear of war between Britain and Germany) the innate savagery of humans. He urged then that we should take his anthropological experience of working with native societies that are almost entirely non-aggressive (and with other societies that have successfully incorporated any aggressive tendencies into ritual) as evidence for the possibility of finding creative agreement rather than conflict.

A further aspect of Bateson's own life experience (and of his rich but very varied transition through American academia) was that it produced a thinker and writer who had incorporated in his creative self many of the varied characteristics that are valued in any group or team of individuals who engage in an action research exercise.

Bateson's youthful experience of early contact with the work of Samuel Butler, William Blake, the male line of the Bateson family and (filtered through the sieve of controversy) Lamarck and Darwin; his subsequent studies and practical experience in biology and anthropology; his participation in the birth of cybernetics, social and clinical human psychology and then animal communication; and his view of the wider implications for environmental survival of the network of life on earth made him become a one-man version of the working process of action research.

The central concept, originated through Bateson's own life process, is the understanding he achieved that all the systems of the living world are 'mind-like'. Of whatever size the system may be—from the submicroscopic to the vast total process of the ecology of earth—they are all nested within larger minds, and the totality of these living minds is the interconnected whole which is 'the sacred'.

These minds, in Bateson's thought, are not required to have consciousness or self-consciousness. For him, consciousness was only a small part of mental activity—even in humans. For systems to respond to information, consciousness or knowledge is not necessarily required. Most of the mental (in Bateson's terms) transactions in the world ('world' meaning existence at every scale from the subatomic to the universal) take place without the need for consciousness or awareness.

This is the core link between systems theory (and hence action research) and the survival of the ecosystems of the living world. Bateson's work suggests that there is ultimately no real division to be made between mental processes at any scale within the world or within the universe. Perhaps some of the successes of action research initiatives are due to the fact that the interchange of ideas between the group members (and the respect with which each member of the research project can expect to be listened to by the others) is enabled

and creatively advanced by the receptive ambience which the research methods provide. In a seminar at the Esalen Institute during the last months of his life, Bateson raised the notion of interfaces, or boundaries, which connect rather than divide. For example, our skin is part of our connection with the outside world. It absorbs and exudes material and thermal energy. Bateson suggests that there are many other places where we can see and understand change. One of these would be at the edge of an ecosystem—perhaps a forest or a swamp where one finds many interacting species. This is the sort of environment that action research can provide for its practitioners. Bringing together researchers who have varying backgrounds and interests but share mutual respect and the wish to learn from others opens up new ways of co-operating and finding creative solutions to difficulties.

Bateson knowingly spent the last months of his life working on his final book, *Angels Fear*. We humans have lost, says Bateson, even that 'grace' which the other animals still have: the more than conscious sense of total dependence on the ecological systems within which we have, so far, been sustained. One of Bateson's most penetrating insights is that when we are actively engaged with any element of beauty we are able to re-access much of the systemic wisdom that we need for survival. Grace requires active, engaged participation in 'the aesthetic'—the beautiful—in nature and in human art. We all need to rediscover a real reverence for all the beings and systems which form the living world.

Bateson's work has provided a real and effective foundation for the further development of action research.

Noel G. Charlton

See also action anthropology; information systems; systems thinking

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BILDUNG

Bildung refers to self-cultivation and is a way of being in the world. It is self-education that is reflected in an openness to the world, to the unexpected and all the difficulties and risks that this might entail. The idea of *Bildung* reaches back into Ancient Greece but is viewed today as a predominantly German concept for which there is no English translation. However, it is sometimes loosely associated with liberal arts education. Though *Bildung* is linked with education, the concept goes well beyond that to the unending process of education as a human being and always looking beyond the self.

In the past, this self-education was strongly linked with culture, expressed in terms of education in the classics and arts in the nineteenth century in particular. It reflected an ideological coming together of culture and education. This has, in part at least, led to debates about its relevance today. However, contemporary *Bildung* is understood to be relevant to praxis and providing a counter to the commodification of education and professional development. Though a German concept, it is also familiar across different Scandinavian countries, each with their own respective variation of understanding.

Bildung extends well beyond the notion of cultivating talents and reflects a historical spirit holding that all that we receive is absorbed and preserved. The individual's understanding of the world is built on that which went before. Rendering conscious the assumptions on which the individual understands the world is integral to the self-formation or self-cultivation that is *Bildung*. Through the process of *Bildung*, the individual learns to move out from and to bring back to the self differing views of the world through conversations with other professional groups, discourses, cultures and perspectives. Thus, one's sense of citizenship in the world develops in the context of relationship with the other.

This entry discusses the historical understanding of *Bildung*, how it is characterized today and special considerations with particular reference to its resurgence and link to action research.

Historical Understanding

Bildung is linked with the Greek word *paideia* and the idea of education as both a product and a process or

formation. In his historical overview of *Bildung*, Sven Erik Nordenbo traces the concept from ancient Greece through to Wilhelm von Humboldt and the German Enlightenment and onto educational utilitarianism. In the Greek sense, *Bildung* is about the individual in society; specifically, it is the following:

- a. *Bildung* stands for the cultivation of human beings according to their own definition.
- b. Society shapes men and women in line with its needs.
- c. *Bildung* emerges from upbringing, but traditional upbringing is also shaped by social considerations.

This idea of the cultivation of humankind is positioned within a bigger structure where the individual and the flow of society or general interest work in harmony. In the Middle Ages, *Bildung* became more associated with the notion of humans carrying in their souls the image of God and seeking to cultivate that image. From that, there evolved a humanistic concept of a sense of human beings seeking to move beyond their naturalness towards an ideal. *Bildung* in eighteenth century Germany was linked with education in the Enlightenment and neo-Humanism periods by figures including von Humboldt, Johann Gottfried von Herder and Friedrich Schiller. Hans-Georg Gadamer devotes some time to this theme in his work *Truth and Method*. *Bildung* as it became embedded in the Enlightenment tradition came to reflect the idea of movement from childhood to maturity into a cultural tradition in the sense of becoming properly human or rational. However, *Bildung* was also the project of the bourgeois Germany that delineated the middle class from the working class and aristocracy. In Scandinavia, by contrast, *Bildung* was linked with the development of democracy and citizenship. Here, the classics were still esteemed but in the context of education for all citizens.

In his work *Truth and Method*, Gadamer's study of *Bildung* stresses openness or receptivity and alienation. Through *Bildung*, learning takes place through cultivating the inner life that forms through conversations with others, drawing on past history, re-creating the self and seeing the world differently. Seeking out and engaging with the other or bringing other back to self is a process of continually developing self. Alienation is inevitable when in the presence of receptivity to other. For individuals to learn about the world into which they are born, they must begin to make sense of the pre-given body of knowledge that is around them. The returning to self is that which reflects the exteriorization of self within the world, and this constant movement of alienation and returning to self is the spirit of *Bildung*.

Rendering conscious the assumptions upon which the individual understands the world is integral to self-formation or self-cultivation that is *Bildung*. Through the process of *Bildung*, the individual learns to move out from and to bring back to the self differing views of the world through conversations with, for example, other professional groups, patients, discourses and cultures. Thus, one's sense of citizenship in the world develops in the context of relationship with the other.

Characterizing Bildung Today

The essence of *Bildung* is recognizing different ways of viewing the world and bringing these back to one's own self, with the self always developing as a consequence. Ultimately, *Bildung* is associated with subjectivity, self-determination and self-consciousness. The philosophers Lars Løvlie and Paul Standish give a modern meaning to *Bildung* as a process of self-cultivation linking the self to the world in an animated interplay. Though contemporary *Bildung* may be understood differently, it continues to be about engagement and self-criticism. It is a dialectic between the possible and what appears as the limits of the possible in a given professional or social culture. In growing out of an inner process of formation and cultivation, *Bildung* is not about gaining competencies, though these may stem as a consequence. As such, *Bildung* constantly remains in a state of *Bildung*; there is no endpoint but rather a constant process of self-formation and cultivation. *Bildung* is the goal of *Bildung*. Thus, it reflects a historical spirit; all that we receive is absorbed and preserved in an ongoing interaction with the other or difference.

Notwithstanding the difficulties with reconciling the views of culture and self in eighteenth and nineteenth century Germany with those of today, *Bildung* still promises a dialogical way of life of seeking out and engaging with difference in a constant process of formation. The very fact that culture and self today may be understood differently and in many diverse ways is simply part of *Bildung*'s historical consciousness. Contemporary *Bildung* centres on the self's engagement with education, culture and society and reflects a *téchné*-cultural shift from previously.

Critical Theory

Critical theorists raise the idea of counter-education as one of many different themes that seek out a self-cultivation that is in a constant dialogical relation with others. This means not seeking power in order to bring about a worthy alternative, be it multicultural education or education in the feminist critical tradition, among other critical education traditions. In other words, there is a counter to any possible dominance or

alternative dominance in education. So in this sense, where *Bildung* seeks the alien or other, it is with the promise of a dialogical way of life and expansion of perceptual horizons.

For critical theorists, *Bildung* implied something more inward and reflecting the autonomy of the individual. *Bildung* implied a process of engagement that moved away from dominant normalization processes and hegemony. The process of self-cultivation as an animated interplay between the self and the world offers a counterpoint to the skills- and competency-focused nature of education today. With self-education or cultivation as its central idea, there is autonomy of learning and one's own experiences. *Bildung*'s demands for a continual conversation into our world ensure an interrogation of it.

Edification

Richard Rorty replaces the word *Bildung* with the notion of edification to describe finding new and more fruitful ways of speaking. The process of edification consists in the hermeneutic activity of making connections between self and other, whether that other be a different culture, discipline or historical period or simply different ways of describing ourselves. Through this, we develop new ways of thinking and what Rorty describes as the inverse of hermeneutics—that is to say, *re*-interpreting familiar surroundings with new and unfamiliar terms. In essence, edification is working towards communicative clarity and keeping the conversation going. Edifying philosophers are those on the edge of their field countering accepted ways of thinking and argument. Edifying discourse is meant to seem abnormal, to use Rorty's term, in that it is meant to take us out of the comfort zone of our old selves.

Practitioner, Autonomy and Accountability

The distinctions between *Bildung*, on the one hand, and education and professional development, on the other, include the interplay between the practitioner and professional discourse or institutional reason. How the self responds to different calls from normative cultural values, institutional and professional demands and moral and ethical principles is integral to this interplay between the self and the world. The idea of *Bildung* calls for both seeking out and engaging with multiple and often competing discourses and world views. *Bildung* is, in this sense, an expression of not only individual autonomy but also moral accountability. This characterizes *Bildung* as an ongoing conversation on the tension between the forces of self-formation that stem from norms and values and the exteriorization of self from these.

Bildung and Action Research

First Person Inquiry

Bildung provides a lens for practitioners engaged in action research with particular reference to first person inquiry. This draws attention to and seeks engagement with the everyday tensions between the practitioner and the world of practice, including the often competing voices from one's profession, other disciplines, policy and institutions. Such an engagement is characterized by openness and receptivity or an animated interplay. Since Bildung is the goal of Bildung, its relationship with action research is that of developing a conscious inquiry into practice that becomes a *modus operandi*.

Positionality

The term *positionality* is used to describe and delineate one's position in relation to others, including research participants. In action research, positionality offers a way of gauging the strength of participation and reciprocity within a project. This is not fixed, and nor does it move in linear fashion in the sense of incremental increases in the level of participation. Instead, positionality can reveal multiple perspectives and experiences, new collaborations and alliances and juxtaposing of different viewpoints. Through a Bildung lens, positionality might be examined on the means by which one moves towards reciprocal collaboration while also seeking out differences in perspectives. In this sense, the aim towards collaboration is not one of homeostasis or some kind of merging of views but rather of continually seeking out difference or the other.

Special Considerations for Bildung

Bildung

The promise of an animated interplay or dialogical way of life places Bildung at the core of debates about the conversation between the university and the labour market. An education that seeks a reflective attitude in both student and teacher—a capacity to self-distance—is resonant with the idea of 'being cultured' and counters a purely competency-focused preparation for the labour market. The development of an expert culture supported by a skills- and competency-based education has challenged the relevance of Bildung and is a focus for debate among philosophers of education. However, Bildung may have particular relevance where a skills- and competency-based education, professional development and one's developing practice intersect.

Geralyn Hynes

See also first person action research; Frankfurt School; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; positionality; praxis

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BOAL, AUGUSTO

Augusto Boal's work links directly to creative approaches to action research through the underlying value that the very people who are experiencing challenges have the capacity not only to name them but also to creatively address them through the theatre. A visionary Brazilian playwright and director, Augusto Boal lived between 1931 and 2009. He touched the hearts and minds of people around the globe. Best known for his work in *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal operated from two basic principles: (1) that professionals should not be the sole owners of theatre and (2) that the verb 'to act' implies both taking action in the world and performing on stage. Following these principles, throughout his career in the theatre, he maintained that it is possible for anyone to act, in either sense of the word. Furthermore, he believed that the theatre was a venue for rehearsing the revolution in that people could practise new responses to oppressive situations. Boal's approach to theatre has been taken up all over the world as one way to do action research. Knowing more about his life, values and principles provides an important element for all those who might use theatre as a research method.

As was the influential German playwright Bertold Brecht before him, Boal was concerned with the divide between the passive audience and active actors. In his attempts to merge the two, he invented the concept of 'spect-actor', whereby audience members become actors through interventions in the performance. While interactive theatre methods are not unique to Augusto Boal, his particular approach to interventionist theatre has inspired many popular theatre practitioners around the globe.

Early Career as an Artist

Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1931 to poor Portuguese immigrants (his father operated a bakery), Boal started

out studying chemical engineering, then travelled to the United States in 1953. Though originally intending to continue his studies in engineering, he began observing classes at the Actors' Studio in New York and ended up studying theatre with John Gassner. Soon after he returned to Brazil in 1955, he joined the Arena Theatre of São Paulo, where he became co-director with José Renato from 1956 to 1962 and then director until 1971.

Boal is credited with reviving Rio's Arena Theatre by promoting national playwrights and creating a venue for national appreciation of classic works. Following the 1964 military coup in Brazil, he directed *Opinião* (Opinion), a successful musical that drew attention to the possibility of political resistance through the arts. Its success set into motion a series of musical plays, including *Zumbi* in 1965, which was Boal's first attempt to facilitate interaction using a character called the joker. His performances were popular in both Brazil and the USA, and his success continued until his unexpected arrest in São Paulo on 10 February 1971 as he was walking home from a rehearsal.

Boal 'disappeared' for 10 days, during which time he was tortured, while his wife, Cecilia Thumim, and colleagues did not know his whereabouts. He was then placed in solitary confinement for a month, before being transferred to a state prison, where he shared a cell with about 25 other political prisoners. It is said that when the prisoners in the cellblock next to his learned that he was there, they would sing to him—at night, after lights out—popular songs from his musicals.

Eventually, through his wife and with help from a guard, Boal got word of his situation out to contacts in the USA—people in the theatre, people in Congress, academics, the World Council of Churches and Amnesty International—who began organizing on his behalf. Several individuals wrote letters directly to the Arena Theatre, which distributed them to the appropriate authorities. On 24 April 1971, *The New York Times* published a letter written by the American playwright Arthur Miller, which was endorsed by several well-known people in the theatre world. An abridged version of the letter was subsequently published in Rio's newspaper *O Jornal do Brasil* on the day before Boal's hearing. He was conditionally released, eventually acquitted and ultimately went into exile due to the dangerous political climate in Brazil.

Life in Exile

During his 15 years of exile, Boal lived in various parts of Latin America, including Peru and Argentina. In 1973, he began working on a Peruvian literacy campaign, where he applied his theatre methods to generate active engagement with learning. Inspired by Paulo

Freire's work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, during this time, he helped found ALFIN (Operación Alfabetización Integral, or Integral Literacy Operation), which had the goals of teaching both language literacy and artistic literacy, especially in theatre methods and photography. He simultaneously promoted literacy in Spanish and in people's native tongues. These experiments in literacy education led to a pivotal moment in the history of Forum Theatre when an angry woman broke the audience/actor divide and came on stage to demonstrate how the actors had it all wrong and what they should do. His critical book *O Teatro do Oprimido* was published in 1974 and was translated into English as *Theatre of the Oppressed* in 1979.

Still in exile, he later moved to Portugal and then France, where he established the first Theatre of the Oppressed Centre in Paris in 1978 and organized the first international festival of the Theatre of the Oppressed in 1981. Throughout the 1980s, his methodology spread around the world through training workshops and Boal-authorized Centres for Theatre of the Oppressed.

While working in Europe, Boal discovered forms of oppression he had not previously encountered—for example, loneliness, isolation or fear of emptiness—which could not be so easily expressed using Forum Theatre. In realizing that people had internalized the voices of their oppressors, he devised a series of exercises to bring awareness to, and dislodge, what he called 'cops in the head'. This work resulted in the publication of his book *Rainbow of Desire*.

When the political climate changed, Boal finally returned to Rio in 1986. He was invited by the vice governor of Rio, Darci Ribeiro, to establish the Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed at Rio. The centre proved to be another success until Ribeiro lost an election and support for the project waned.

Legislative Theatre

In an attempt to exit the stage with style, Boal and colleagues lent their support to the Workers' Party in the 1992 civic election. His desire was to promote democracy, and citizens responded to his claim that he did not care so much for whom people voted so long as they voted. Without any thought of winning, Boal allowed his name to stand for the election and, surprisingly, won a seat as one of Rio's 42 *vereadores* ('city councillors'). In this position of relative power, Boal began using a process called legislative theatre in poor neighbourhoods in Rio. Since he was a theatre practitioner first and foremost, he attempted to use interactive theatre methods as an action-oriented process to explore people's concerns and to transform the outcomes of these processes into law. He managed to

pass 13 municipal laws over 3 years. Even after leaving politics, he continued encouraging experimentation using theatre to make law in Munich and Paris, an experiment that spread to Vancouver, Canada, through the work of Boal's colleague David Diamond of Headlines Theatre. In addition to generating legislation and promoting democratic dialogue, Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed has been used as a research method in multiple settings, as well as in family therapy, indigenous community health and community-based environmental science, among others.

Later Years

Boal received a lifetime of accolades for his work, reportedly including a nomination for a Nobel Prize in 2008. After a long battle against leukemia, Boal died of respiratory failure on 2 May 2009 in Rio de Janeiro at the age of 78. His work lives on through theatre practitioners, activists, educators and researchers around the globe, as well as through his son Julian Boal, founding member of Groupe du Theatre de l'Opprime, Paris, and the author of *Imagens de um Teatro Popular*, published in 2000.

Artist, political activist, politician, baker's son, Boal worked throughout his lifetime to eradicate oppression and to transform misery into hope through the theatre. In so doing, he left an inspiring mark on the global stage and generated new possibilities for creative approaches to action research.

Catherine Etmanski

See also arts-based action research; Freire, Paulo; participatory theatre; Theatre of the Oppressed

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BRICOLAGE PROCESS

Bricolage is derived from the French verb *bricoleur* and was originally used to describe extraneous movements in sport. These movements might involve the sudden swerving of a horse, a ball bouncing in an odd direction or a sudden gust of wind. All these movements are unexpected and require the sportsperson to make an unplanned change to circumstances using his or her experience and skill. Thus, bricolage takes into account uncertainty and complexity, experience and, perhaps, a certain intuitive sense.

The idea was quickly extended to the arts and general projects in which, instead of prescribed tools and methods, the person uses whatever materials are at hand in a creative and resourceful way. Bricolage is also seen as involving trial and error, learning as you learn more about the situation at hand. Adaptable and able to use existing resources together in new ways, the bricoleur is ultimately a pragmatist, unbound by specific dogma or ideology and adept across a range of domains. The bricoleur is no well-meaning amateur but an expert, often in many areas, from which he or she can draw on his or her experience and use it in novel ways.

Some have suggested that there is an implication of mystery, deviousness and even trickery in bricolage. Normally, expert practitioners usually stick to accepted ways of doing things that deliver predictable outcomes.

The approach of the bricoleur can be questioned since the process is less clear, non-formulaic and, to a certain extent, unknowable. The bricoleur in France is associated with do-it-yourself stores and with the nuance that bricolage involves ‘fiddling about’ and even the idea of ‘muddling through’—a somewhat negative image.

The use of the term in the social sciences has been attributed to Claude Levi-Strauss. He used the term to explain mythical thought and legend, which come from the person’s imagination. Hence, they are derived spontaneously from an amalgam of personal experience and pre-existing images in the mind. Levi-Strauss was making a case that understanding myth and legend is a legitimate scientific approach to understanding the world—just different from traditional scientific method. He was arguing that understanding reality involves more than observation, which an engineer might use, for example. Instead, the observer is interacting with the world and is affected by cultural factors and experience in complex ways.

This intellectual, as opposed to practical, conception of bricolage has been used widely by social scientists concerned with the more complex nature of the interrelationship between knowledge and reality. Thus, the way in which self and perception are intimately bound up in the way we understand and interpret reality has been a common theme in bricolage. Jacques Derrida, the French philosopher, noted that all discourse is bricolage, an infinite process of deconstruction. The bricoleur is more concerned with our relationship to nature, rather than simply understanding it. In short, we are not passive observers of the world but actively involved in its interpretation, bringing our experience and intuition to it. The bricoleur recognizes that the world and the experience of the observer are ever changing, fluid and open to new interpretations with the passage of time.

Bricolage and Research

The complex relationship between knowledge and reality, and that they do not remain static but are subject to continuous change, has become a common theme in social science research. Because of the complexity of the world, a single ontological view came to be seen, particularly by postmodernists, as limiting. The researcher, then, needs to use whatever methodology best addresses the research problem rather than try to manipulate the problem to fit a predetermined epistemology.

Hence, the bricoleur is prepared to use, and is comfortable in using, the full range of social research methodologies in an empirical eclecticism. For the bricoleur, there is no ‘one way’; rather, his or her world is multidisciplinary and multi-methodological. Consistent

with the roots of bricolage, the bricoleur ‘tinkers’ with research methods and brings his or her previous experience to bear in deciding how best to understand whatever phenomenon is being investigated. Recent descriptions of bricolage in relation to research, however, eschew modernist methods and, in effect, use bricolage as an argument against reductionism.

Action Research and Bricolage

Action research as the essential pragmatic research approach is well suited to the bricoleur. In the same way as bricolage has sometimes been seen as something to be distrusted, action research has for many years been looked at sceptically by the more modernist inclined. Like bricoleurs, action researchers use their immediate observations, whatever data they have at hand, to determine their next step. To some extent, action research involves trial and error. Not only is theory emergent in action research, but so too is the methodology to be used at each turn.

An action research project may involve a number of techniques or methodologies drawn from different disciplines. While most action research involves qualitative methods, there are situations when the data calls for a quantitative approach. The action researcher is a bricoleur in having to be adept at using a variety of methods in response to circumstances—playing, mixing and matching, tinkering.

Like bricolage, action research recognizes the complexity of social phenomena. Similarly, the role of the action researcher and how she or he interacts with stakeholders and the data are seen as critical concerns. The participatory nature of action research sees stakeholders as co-researchers who bring their varied experiences to data collection, reflection, planning and action. In acknowledgement of the complexity and emergent nature of the research approach itself, it is not unusual for action researchers to reflect and report on the research process itself, as well as the object of the study. The bricoleur and the action researcher are constantly seeking to learn from their experience so that they can add new techniques and understanding to their quiver of arrows.

Stewart Hase

See also Action Learning; Kincheloe, Joe; practical knowing; praxis; tacit knowledge

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CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building refers to an approach to make development interventions more effective. The term *capacity* refers to the ability of an entity—an individual or a collective—to pursue and achieve its development objectives. The term *building* refers to enhancing or strengthening such abilities. The new capacities are added to the existing capacities of the entity.

Types of Capacity

Rajesh Tandon (founder of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia) suggested three kinds of capacities that are critical for an entity to effectively pursue its objectives: (1) intellectual, (2) institutional and (3) material capacities. *Intellectual* capacity refers to perspectives through which the entity views, analyzes and reflects on its identity and existing social realities to determine the course of action. *Institutional* capacity refers to the ability of an entity, particularly an organization, to develop and manage its systems, procedures, structures, human resources, decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It involves the ability of an entity to relate to the external environment, including other actors that may influence or get influenced by the entity. A crucial aspect is how effectively the entity responds to the changes in the external environment by renewing its purpose or by influencing the external changes in its favour. *Material* capacity primarily refers to the ability of an entity to mobilize and utilize resources to optimize its performance. A sound material resource base of an entity significantly enhances its autonomy, its self-determination and its ability to respond to the demands from the external environment. A synergy between intellectual, institutional and material capacities is crucial. An entity needs to develop all three kinds of capacities; however, an appropriate balance must be established for optimizing the effectiveness.

Levels of Capacity

Tandon and Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay (current director of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia) further suggested that capacity building needs to be pursued simultaneously at three levels: (1) individual, (2) organizational and (3) societal. This view was supported by many others like Carlos Lopes and Thomas Theisohn. Capacity building at the *individual* level refers to the development of human resources with ethical values. It includes developing technical, managerial and administrative skills along with perspectives on broader societal issues. Capacity building at the *organizational* level refers to building capacities of collectives to act coherently. Such collectives could be a group of concerned citizens, an organization or a large enterprise. Capacity building at the *societal* level refers to a systemic view of capacity building to be inclusive of all actors and stakeholders. Given the complexity and inter-related nature of the development problems faced by a society, capacity building of all the actors is crucial. In all societies, particularly the developing societies, different forms of inequalities and injustices are pervasive. The marginalized group, therefore, will require priority attention in capacity building; however, other actors, particularly the power holders, need to be sensitized as well, to mitigate resistance to changes and to remove institutional constraints.

How Action Research Has Contributed to Transforming the Discourse and Practice of Capacity Building

A range of practitioners have transformed the methods, approach and discourse of capacity building over the decades using action research approaches. The practitioners have learnt that certain earlier predispositions were not helpful to obtain the desired results. Consequently, the discourses and practices of capacity building have undergone five critical transitions, as follows.

Individual to Institutional Orientation

Throughout the seventies to the nineties, the focus of capacity building was on individuals. It was assumed that if the capacities of individuals were developed, it would automatically translate into improved organizational effectiveness. However, it became evident that unless the institutional norms, culture, beliefs and systems are made conducive, even individuals with improved capacity cannot bring about effective change in organizations. This realization led to a shift in focus to organization-wide interventions including its strategy, structure, system and procedures.

Techno-Managerial to Political Orientation

Another approach which dominated the practice of capacity building was its techno-managerial orientation. However, it was realized that in the majority of the contexts there have been historical differences in the distribution of power between the poor and the non-poor and between the marginalized and the power holders. It made the practitioners revisit the purpose and approach of capacity building from technical interventions to an 'empowering' experience. The end result of capacity building, therefore, is to be assessed in its contribution towards changing the power relationships in a society.

Single-Actor to Multiple-Actor Orientation

In the post-World War II era, it was thought that the government is the main actor in development. As development became more complex and unpredictable, the need for engaging multiple actors also became evident. As a result, capacity-building practices also needed to embrace this understanding and involve multiple actors like civil society, citizens, business, the media, academia and so on.

Exogenous to Endogenous Orientation

At the height of capacity-building practice, the dominant belief was that poor people needed to be developed. Such belief led to practices built upon the notion of the external expert developing the capacities of poor and marginalized people. In the nineties, this belief was challenged by numerous successful practices of people's participation, where the poor and marginalized people owned the responsibility of developing their own capacities with external facilitation. Such positive experiences have changed the belief and practice of capacity building as an endogenous process.

Training-Dominated Learning Method to Use of Multiple Learning Methods

For a considerable time, capacity building was synonymous with classroom-based training as the target

was primarily an individual. As the concept of experiential learning gained momentum and the scope of capacity building was enhanced to include the organization and society, a variety of learning and intervention methods, including organization development, exposure, apprenticeship, mentoring, coaching, process consultation, campaigns and so on, were also used to develop capacities for a variety of actors.

Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay

See also experiential learning; organization development

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CASE STUDY

As usually defined, a case study is an in-depth examination of a single social unit (individual, group or beyond) or phenomenon, although in some instances this could include a small number of exemplars. The unit or phenomenon is studied within its normal context. All or most action research fits this definition. Action researchers can therefore use the case study literature to complement the less extensive action research literature.

This entry begins with a comparison of action research and case study. A brief history of case study then follows. The most common varieties of case study are then addressed, drawing particularly on the writing of Robert Yin and Robert Stake. The place of theory in case study is briefly considered. A final section, drawing most heavily on the work of Bent Flyvbjerg, presents some of the common criticisms of case study and responds to those criticisms.

Case Study and Action Research

As mentioned, a case study may be an in-depth study of an individual, a group or team or a larger unit such as a community or organization. Medical case studies, for example, are often studies of a person with a condition that is theoretically or practically interesting. Several of the early anthropological case studies were of whole communities. Case studies may also be studies

of a small number of such units. Other case studies research phenomena, for example, entrepreneurship in a particular market or poverty. The studied phenomenon is researched in its normal setting and (in most definitions) is in some way bounded or limited.

Such definitions fit all or almost all action research studies. Action research might therefore be regarded as a subset of case study. Both case study and action research favour (or at least espouse) the integration of theory and practice. Both take place in the field rather than in the laboratory. Both can be qualitative, quantitative or mixed, though qualitative approaches predominate. With a few exceptions, both are responsive to the researched situation rather than being an exploration of a precise research question derived from theory, though examples of theory testing can be found in each. Both are likely to be holistic rather than reductionist, seeking to understand the whole unit or phenomenon as it is.

As Stake has pointed out, there are many studies that fit the definition of case study without being labelled as such. With wide variation in methods, case study is not so much a methodology as a research genre. On these grounds, some authors have proposed abandoning ‘case study’ as a research description, recommending instead a label more explanatory of the actual methodology used.

The case study researcher or action researcher can choose from any methodology that allows in-depth study of the social unit or phenomenon. Research situations also show some similarity: Both action research and case study are increasingly common in fields that retain an interest in practical applications, like nursing or information technology.

While remaining consistent with definitions of case study, typical action research approaches exhibit features that case studies may lack. Action research is almost always interventionist—it seeks to engage with the studied situation and to change it. Most other case studies prefer to leave the studied situation untouched as far as possible. Action research is almost always (most would say always) participatory, involving those in the research situation as partners and not just as informants. Conventional case study research seldom does so, though this may be slowly changing. In some action research studies, the participants become full partners in the research. Action research reports may be co-authored by the researcher and the participants, while fewer case studies are.

Such differences are not trivial. However, provided they are kept in mind, action researchers can with benefit supplement the action research literature by accessing the more substantial case study literature. Because of the similarities, the two research traditions have often been confronted with the same, often unwarranted criticisms—discussed later.

Brief History of Case Study

Many authors identify the origins of current case study in the anthropological field studies of the early 1900s. The University of Chicago was central in this work, and it remained influential into the 1930s and beyond. However, even before this, in the mid nineteenth century in France, the part-time sociologist Frédéric Le Play wrote case studies of families with whom he lived during a study.

There have been earlier studies like this—note the parallels between case studies and the thoroughly documented medical case histories of classical Greece. Even earlier, we can surmise that case studies have existed in the form of story for a very long time. Hunter-gatherer societies made much use of narratives and still do. Often grounded in observation, such narratives achieved the dual purpose of preserving knowledge and educating the young.

By the mid-1930s, the rise of logical positivism had relegated case study to the sidelines. Despite some continued use, case study (and qualitative research generally) remained marginalized for some decades. The research world came to favour approaches regarded as more scientific—in particular, quantitative and reductionist, even though such approaches dealt relatively poorly with complex natural situations. The marginalization of case study (and qualitative research and action research) still continues, though with more vigorous defences now offered.

Varieties and Traditions

The author most cited on case study methodology is Yin. Reflecting his background in experimental psychology, Yin argues that each case should be preceded by an extensive literature review. A careful, theory-based design then follows, though Yin acknowledges that the design may change as the study unfolds. He also recommends working within a particular theoretical literature. His is a narrower definition than many writers would support.

Within this narrow conception, Yin proposes a five-fold categorization of case studies, especially those that are of a single case. A critical case study may confirm, disconfirm or extend existing understandings of a phenomenon by drawing upon critical theoretical frameworks. A representative case study is one chosen because it is typical of a particular situation and therefore represents a general view of the phenomenon under examination. Conversely, an extreme or unique case is one that occurs rarely and may therefore provide new insights. A revelatory case is one not usually accessible to study, and therefore worth studying when available. A longitudinal case is conducted over time at

two or more different times. Yin does not claim that the list is exhaustive or the categories completely distinct. Other authors proffer similar categories.

Acting across this taxonomy, a study may consist of a single case, or several cases may be researched within a single study. In either instance, cases may be studied holistically or as several subunits. Cases may be further categorized by their purpose. An exploratory case study explores a research area not previously researched. A descriptive case seeks to describe a unit or phenomenon without explanation.

For action researchers, Yin's emphasis on rigour, and attention to methodology as a way of achieving it, may be useful. They may also appreciate his work on the development or testing of theory. However, he believes that the best research follows a scientific model, drawing on prior theory and with predetermined research questions. His work may be less relevant when research questions, if any, emerge gradually. For such action research, Stake's writing may be more relevant.

Though Stake shares Yin's background in psychology, his writing on case study contrasts with Yin's work in some significant ways. He encourages systemic thinking and the iterative and emergent nature of questions and interpretations. He focuses more strongly on the interpretive aspects of case studies. His twofold categorization of cases distinguishes instrumental and intrinsic studies. Instrumental cases are a vehicle for addressing wider issues, in particular a contribution to theory. In intrinsic cases, the researcher is interested in the study situation itself.

Theory in Case Study

Among other purposes, case studies can be used to test or to develop theory. Those two purposes can be regarded as end points on a continuum. Near the centre of the continuum are designs, where theory guides the case study while being refined by the data collected.

Kathleen Eisenhardt's influential 1989 article on theory building lists a detailed procedure. The first step of getting started is followed in turn by selecting cases, crafting instruments and protocols, entering the field, analyzing data, shaping hypotheses, unfolding literature and, finally, reaching closure. She elaborates on each of these steps. For theory development, she favours multiple cases or single cases with multiple subunits.

Challenges and Responses

Case study research carries the undeserved burden of a poor reputation in some quarters. So does qualitative research generally, and action research too. Positivist and neopositivist approaches are often accorded higher

status. In evidence-based medicine, for example, meta-analyses and randomized control trials are regarded as providing higher quality evidence, while case studies may be regarded as unscientific. In such critiques, too little account is often taken of the actual research questions or research situation. Further, although the complexity of social phenomena is often poorly captured by reductionist methods, qualitative researchers may be at a disadvantage in funding and publishing their work.

Some authors, such as Norman Denzin, challenge the conventional views directly. Some, such as Janice Morse, adopt mixed methods as a response. Flyvbjerg's approach is to attribute much of the problem to five misunderstandings, to which he offers five reasoned rebuttals. The misunderstandings, and the responses based on Flyvbjerg's well-documented arguments, are summarized below.

The first misunderstanding depends on the assumption that concrete and practical knowledge deserves a lower status than knowledge that is general and theoretical. In response, Flyvbjerg points out that it is the concrete and practical knowledge as produced by case studies that is more easily learned and applied. In fact, it comprises the context-dependent (and sometimes tacit) knowledge that true experts acquire only after extensive experience. Further, each complex social situation is unique and varies depending on the context. It is poorly described by context-free theory.

Second, it is often held that case studies do not permit generalization and cannot generate scientific understanding. While multiple cases may allow easier generalization, important breakthroughs in physical science by scientists such as Albert Einstein have often been achieved from single cases. In social research, a case study that at first appears not to favour a hypothesis may instead provide support for the hypothesis. In any event, a research finding generalizes only to situations containing the same, and only the same, variables. Other than in simple physical situations, this is seldom so.

Third, case study is often seen as useful only for pilot studies, for example, to generate hypotheses to be tested by other methods. In practice, carefully chosen case studies allow an in-depth exploration of matters such as the effect of context, the applicability of historical explanations and the operation of theorized causal mechanisms.

Fourth, it is often argued that case studies are more likely than positivist studies to confirm the preconceived notions of the researcher. In actuality, such a bias is common to most human endeavours—humans notice and give credence to information that supports their preconceptions. Psychologists call it 'confirmation bias'. All researchers can beneficially be open to

evidence that challenges their beliefs. A case study, itself complex and embedded in a complex context, provides more opportunity for surprising results to emerge and to challenge expectations.

Fifth, case studies are said to be difficult to summarize. To capture some of the complexity of live situations, case studies are often presented in narrative form. Some see this as a problem. If the aim of a study is to develop a simple and broadly true principle, a case study may not be the best choice of approach. More often, however, the verisimilitude of the case study can be seen as complementing, usefully, the approaches that can be more easily abbreviated.

Bob Dick

See also complexity theory; ethnography; generalizability; narrative; rigour; systems thinking

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Its activities included the following:

- A learning community-based postgraduate programme in action research, based on radical notions of adult learning, through which people worked to a diploma, M.Phil. or Ph.D. (1994 onwards)—including a pre-CARPP phase, there were 55 Ph.D., 9 M.Phil. and 25 diploma graduates.
- The master's degree in responsibility and business practice (M.Sc. in RBP), with its action research-based educational approach, which addressed environmental, social and ethical issues in business (1997 onwards)—it was developed in an educational partnership with the New Academy of Business (established by Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop International). There were 254 graduates from 12 year groups.
- Action research projects—for example, a sequence of projects with the Welsh Assembly Government and Lowcarbonworks, an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council/Economic and Social Research Council-funded inquiry into the human dimensions of low-carbon technology, called 'Insider Voices'
- Biennial research conferences titled *Emerging Approaches to Inquiry* (initiated in 1984)—working conferences of 50–60 people, incorporating practicum groups, activities, inquiries and distinguished guests
- An annual seminar series working with ideas and practices—including international speakers and writing workshops
- Publications and conference attendances—scholarly and practice oriented

CARPP was part of an international network of people and institutions developing and legitimizing action research in its many forms. Members saw this as political work about which knowledges count, especially countering the privileging of intellectual knowledge.

The CARPP community shared interests: talking about *inquiry* as a more inclusive term than research; making a commitment to values-aware researching; indicating a liking for the work of Gregory Bateson; working with multiple ways of knowing, including affective, embodied, practical, experiential, spiritual and representational knowing; developing rigorous, diverse practices of quality in inquiry; experimenting in action; developing subtle crafts of facilitation in action research and experimenting with writing and form, including for master's and Ph.D. theses (which,

CENTRE FOR ACTION RESEARCH IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice, known as CARPP, was located in the School of Management at the University of Bath. It was created to develop the theory and practice of action research, and it explicitly sought to reform the academy by enabling postgraduate research that would meet the established quality criteria and go beyond these into radical developments of ideas and practice. A core purpose was to bring an attitude of inquiry and learning to key issues of our time—justice and sustainability.

at the time of writing this entry, are still available to download through the World Wide Web).

The community was also diverse. While people were committed to the core principles of action research, each had different approaches, priorities and constituencies.

CARPP members especially made contributions to the following themes in action research:

- The interaction of first, second and third person forms of inquiry
- Developments of Co-Operative Inquiry, a disciplined form of second person action research in which people co-research issues of mutual concern (Peter Reason and others)
- Reflective inquiry practices; developing rigour in first person action research, including *living life as inquiry* (Judi Marshall), recognizing ourselves as *living contradictions* (Jack Whitehead) and a commitment to *living educational values in living theories* (Whitehead)
- Concepts of a participatory paradigm (Reason)
- Conducting research as a political process
- Developments of innovative and rigorous practices of action research through CARPP's own experimentation
- Education as a practice of participative inquiry
- Development of experimental, creative and innovative forms of writing and representation

Also contributing to shaping the field, Reason and Hilary Bradbury (Oregon Health and Science University) co-edited two publications (in 2001 and 2008) of *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, and in 2003, they launched the journal *Action Research*, an international, interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal which has established itself as a forum for the development of the theory and practice of action research.

Experimentation in CARPP's own practice accompanied intellectual exploration. In any activity, people aspired to develop communities of inquiry and practice—emancipatory spaces—in which taking authority, participating and exercising autonomy were integrated for all concerned. Programmes and projects thus modelled in practice the participative action espoused by the research principles, with significant attention to process, reflexivity and mutual decision-making.

Studying at CARPP—doing the M.Sc. in RBP or the postgraduate programme in action research—was stimulating, affirming and developmental for many people, at least some of the time. And it could be troubling, unsettling, challenging, frustrating and scary, as it could also be for tutors. Given CARPP's bold aspirations, paradoxes of power and collaboration were, for example, encountered as well as discussed.

Many people developed a strong sense of affiliation to CARPP and identified with its aspirations, ideas and practices. People mixed across different 'generations' and activities, aligned through a shared sense of culture and practices of personal and collective inquiry. And some people who encountered this critiqued CARPP as potentially a 'cult'. Perhaps a notion of tribe would be more appropriate. A sense of collegiality, of being amongst supportive and critical friends engaged in similar questioning, was, and still is, key to the CARPP ethos.

Steve Taylor (now at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, USA), reflecting on the CARPP he had known, noted, 'I hear myself speaking of CARPP more as a centre of a spiritual life practice than as an academic centre, and that seems somehow right, and I suspect that that is central to the CARPP magic'.

Any story of CARPP is thus also that of the people who brought themselves to it, with their interests and energies. All contributed to CARPP's unfolding identity and heritage. This effect was especially strong as most of the participants on the two programmes were in midlife, pursuing their inquiries part-time and wanting to develop their learning, practice and impact in the world, working with issues of social change, for example, those of race, gender, social justice and environmental sustainability. People applied action research across a wide range of organizational sectors—public, private and voluntary—and territories of inquiry, and this diversity enriched the community of learning.

It is impossible here to do justice to all the people of CARPP and their multiple traces of connection. A brief review of 'staff' only would be as follows:

- CARPP was created in 1993 by Judi Marshall, Reason (as director), David Sims (who left in 1995) from the School of Management and Whitehead from the School of Education, to bring together work they were already doing through action research and to initiate the joint postgraduate research programme.
- Other faculty of the School of Management involved at different times were Patricia Gayá, Kate McArdle and Steve Taylor.
- Visiting fellows associated with the M.Sc. in RBP, the postgraduate research programme, action research projects and group facilitation training are Gill Coleman (co-creator of the M.Sc. in RBP with Marshall and Reason), David Ballard, Margaret Gearty, Donna Ladkin, Jenny MacKewn, Tim Malnick, Geoff Mead, David Murphy, Sue Porter, Chris Seeley and Michelle Williams.

CARPP was not a neatly bounded entity. Many key members were visiting fellows with other lives too.

Whitehead was not only a core member, as a tutor on the postgraduate research programme, but also had another vibrant action research identity, through his work in education and his ActionResearch.net.

CARPP no longer exists at the University of Bath. Through a mix of factors, the space for CARPP's work became more difficult to hold and resource. Perhaps the politics of knowledge played some part. Despite external recognition, action research sits uncomfortably in UK academia, with its research assessment exercises and their privileging of certain kinds of knowledge. Activities declined in phases from 2008 onwards; staff left. But traces of CARPP have spread far and wide. These include several activities at Ashridge Business School, which now runs a successor to the M.Sc. in RBP (the master's degree in sustainability and responsibility) and hosts the very active RBP e-mail list, and developments at Lancaster University Management School and at the University of Bristol. And many people have developed inquiry-based approaches to their work and lives in a host of different areas and also established congruent initiatives. There is a virtual CARPP network, and there are occasional 'watering-hole' gatherings at Hawkwood College near Stroud, where the research conferences used to be held.

Judi Marshall

See also Bateson, Gregory; Co-Operative Inquiry; first person action research; second person action research, sustainability; third person action research

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CHATAWAY, CYNTHIA JOY

Cynthia Joy Chataway (1963–2006) was a Canadian social psychologist who made many enduring contributions to the field of action research in her short lifetime. Chataway earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Queen's University, in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, in 1987. She then left Ontario to pursue doctoral work at Harvard University, working with the eminent conflict resolution and social research ethics psychologist Dr Herbert C. Kelman. Chataway's dissertation, from which most of her completed academic writing stems, utilized Participatory Action Research to investigate the decision-making process and perceptions of justice among members of the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk community. Chataway later returned to Canada, attaining the rank of Associate Professor of Psychology at York University in Toronto.

Of the many conceptual gifts Chataway imparted to action researchers, arguably her most significant were her frank writings about the challenges of conducting participatory research with deep commitments to social justice, uprooting knowledge hierarchies and the conduct of ethical collaborative research.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is commonly construed as an orientation to collaborative inquiry rather than being pigeonholed as a specific methodology. PAR embodies a continuum of research activities that employ varying modes of participation and control between community-based entities and academic researchers. Ideally, however, PAR aspires to initiate transparent, democratic inquiry that is collaboratively designed, conducted, analyzed and disseminated in the context of equal partnership *between* scientists and people who are more often the subjects of research than they are perceived as knowledge bearers.

In early academic writings about PAR, there existed a gap between the ideals and epistemology of participatory research discussed in theory and the practical realities of attempting to co-create and sustain unconventional relationships between researchers and communities. In her seminal work, *On the Constraints of Mutual Inquiry*, published in 1997, Chataway filled this gap by providing a much needed example of the micro-dynamics of participatory research years before discourse on the particulars of PAR became more widely discussed. In detailing the many challenges of her collaborative journey with the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk people that she encountered, and where her intentions as a non-indigenous, English-speaking, White Canadian woman were repeatedly questioned, Chataway improved our understanding of several notions that are central to action research: the political nature of PAR, what constitutes knowledge in research,

reflexivity and mutual vulnerability as an ethical obligation in collaborative inquiry.

Chataway's early writings on PAR occurred at a time when most participatory research scholarship was abstract, directive and lacking in rich description. In *Negotiating the Observer-Observed Relationship: Participatory Action Research*, published in 2001, Chataway's findings were not solely an explanation of how her original research questions and hypotheses were answered using particular methods, utilizing text and/or statistics as evidence. Her examination of the degree to which, through collaboration, she was successful at interrupting unequal relationships between the observer and the observed if read as a traditional results section would read as a failure. Another way to read Chataway's self-critical reflections on the highly political nature of the participatory process with the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk community while struggling with idealized prescriptions of action research is as an instance of writing that broke with the tendency many social scientists have to detach the process of discovery from the finished products of research. Chataway's highly self-reflexive writing style also influenced future PAR practitioners to think critically about negotiating trust, attending to power asymmetries, self-protection and silence among co-researchers, the many forms participation can take and what inclusivity means in their respective projects.

Chataway also offered an invaluable ethical tenet in her writing on mutual vulnerability and PAR. Implicitly, participatory research distinguishes itself from positivistic research by requiring researchers to be more reflective and more transparent regarding their respective standpoints, their vulnerabilities, the limits of their theories and their analytical strategies. Chataway taught future action researchers that PAR is an orientation and methodology in which vulnerability must be shared. Communities are made vulnerable in research when researchers are disingenuous, when the expertise, dignity and self-determination of the people themselves are not acknowledged and respected. Emerging researchers can be vulnerable in research when they are reliant on the products of research collaborations to forge reputations, to earn degrees and to procure job security in the academy. Without reflecting on mutual vulnerability and how implicated researchers' partners can become in each other's lives, PAR cannot hope to successfully redress the power imbalances between academic scientists and people who have been researched ad nauseam. Chataway's writing on mutual vulnerability predates current discussions and perceptions of ethics in participatory research. Nevertheless, in a relatively short career, she taught action researchers much about being intentional and self-conscious about the consequences of their actions

and about the legacy of scientific research products not just to institutional review boards, grantors and academic peers but also to human relationships and to social justice.

Monique A. Guishard

See also Critical Participatory Action Research; Feminist Participatory Action Research; Participatory Action Research; reflective practice

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CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY OF ACTION

Christian spirituality is understood to refer to a lifelong journey in which one discovers one's self in relation to God and to God's creation. In its essence, the Christian approach to spirituality views God as one who is active in the world and who invites individuals and communities to seek and find God in the experience of their own lives and of the world and to respond in action. The fundamental assumption is that the twin commandments to love God and to love one's neighbour as oneself are commandments to engage in actions that foster love, justice and peace in the world as Jesus Christ taught. This mode of action in the Christian tradition is congruent with action research. This entry describes how the processes of action research inform and support the Christian spirituality of action through

the extended epistemology and the framework of first, second and third person inquiry or practice.

The term *spirituality* is used in many different ways. It typically refers to (a) a fundamental dimension of the human being, (b) the lived experience which actualizes that dimension and (c) the academic discipline which studies that experience. This entry is grounded in those usages that define spirituality as a fundamental dimension of the human person that is oriented towards transcendence, as lived experience and as an academic discipline. People cannot understand spirituality without some personal experience of it, and as such, experience is self-implicating.

Extended Epistemology of the Christian Spirituality of Action

Extended epistemology describes four kinds of knowing or reflecting the different ways in which we deal with and act within the world. This scheme of four kinds of knowing—(1) experience, (2) expression, (3) understanding and (4) practice—can be applied to Christian spirituality. What for the Christian is knowledge born of faith and prayer (*experiential knowing*) is expressed in *presentational* form through images of God; through the language of prayers; through religious art, poetry and music and so on. That experiential and presentational knowing is articulated in *propositional* form in the statements of faith, in the Creed and in how beliefs are formulated and understood through theology. All this is expressed in *practical* knowing as Christians apply themselves to trying to live the Christian faith. In terms of Christian spirituality, these forms of knowing involve attending to the experience of a personal God, who sent Jesus Christ to redeem the world and who invites people to love the way God loves and to serve God in the world. It means attending to how that love shapes experience, to how that love is expressed and understood and to how it guides living and acting in the world.

Christian First, Second and Third Person Inquiry and Practice

Christians engage in first person practice when they seek to find God in their own lives through personal prayer, meditative practices, reading and reflection on experience. They engage in second person inquiry and practice by virtue of participating in a community of faith, whether it be formally in a church group, by following a religious life or through an informal network of friends which meets to share faith and support its members. They also engage in second person inquiry practice through participating in faith-based social action groups that work on issues of justice and peace,

poverty and social exclusion and through participation in faith-based schools. In the Christian life, more generally, third person inquiry practice becomes visible in the corporate life of the Church and in the progress of the planet as a whole. Christians try to build up communities of faith, to pass on their faith to the next generation and to promote God's action in the world at the institutional and structural levels.

For Christians, the work towards social justice for marginalized and excluded persons, for social, political and economic structures that contribute to the development of people rather than their enslavement in hunger, poverty or unemployment, is a process that may begin from the first person inquiry of the practising Christian, who engages with others in second person inquiry and contributes to a broader development of a struggle for justice in other groups and communities. In this manner, spirituality is not an inward-focused experience for the development of the individual only but one that challenges individuals to live a just life themselves and to have a personal spirituality that is both individual and social by having a concern-in-action for others and for the transformation of the world.

Ignatian Spirituality

A focused expression of the spirituality of action is found in Ignatian spirituality, a spirituality developed from the life and work of Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556). This tradition of spirituality within Roman Catholicism views God as a busy God, who is to be found not, or not only, in some ecstatic bliss but rather in acting in the world. It focuses explicitly on experience and action in a faith context and develops cycles of prayer, action and reflection in the service of God as its central process.

Christian spirituality is a spirituality of action and is congruent with action research's values of worthwhile purposes and reflection-in-action. What Christian spirituality brings to the processes of action research is the perspective of religious faith and love, which is both an intentionality and a way of interpreting reality and experience to love God and to love one's neighbour as oneself in imitation of Jesus Christ.

David Coghlan

See also extended epistemology; first person action research; karma theory; liberation theology; second person action research; theological action research; third person action research

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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The concept of citizen participation is multidimensional; it refers to the active engagement of citizens, especially those marginalized and oppressed, and their collectives in having access and control over resources and influencing critical decisions related to their lives.

The concept traces its historical roots to the participatory research and Participatory Action Research approaches, thus sharing a significant link with the concept of action research. The practice of citizen participation within a development and governance context follows the action-reflection cycle integral to action research interventions.

This entry traces the history of the term in development and governance discourse during the post–Second World War period. It then unravels the conceptual tenets of the term and explores its relevance in building a just and equitable society.

Historical Roots of the Concept

Within the international development discourse and practice, the concept of participation has undergone changes since its initial articulation more than six decades ago. It is thus useful to undertake a brief overview of the historical roots of the concept of citizen participation before attempting to unpack its different dimensions.

After the Second World War, a number of developing countries, like India, witnessed the dominance of the growth school of development, which emphasized industrialization and economic development and endorsed gross national product as a significant indicator of development. Development programmes were designed and managed by the government and agency staff, with the underlying assumption of professionals being the experts and the marginalized and oppressed citizens, the passive recipients of development aid.

The late 1960s and 1970s witnessed growing pressure by a section of social scientists, grass-roots groups and non-governmental organizations to bring the marginalized citizens and the community into the centre

of development initiatives. In the year 1968, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was published in Portuguese, with the English version published in 1970. This seminal document introduced Freire's dialogic approach to adult education, wherein the oppressed engaged in critical analysis and organized action to improve their situation. The concepts of conscientization and praxis introduced by Freire's work in the area of pedagogy of literacy were powerful ideas for empowerment of the oppressed.

It was also during the 1970s that the work of educators and practitioners like Budd Hall and Rajesh Tandon positioned the concept of participatory research as a powerful idea against the monopoly of knowledge being propagated by mainstream knowledge institutions. The facilitators of participatory research strengthened the belief that the popular knowledge and collective action of marginalized citizens were important vehicles for empowerment of the poor and marginalized.

Orlando Fals Borda's work with grass-roots groups in Columbia, with a focus on legitimizing popular knowledge, also led to the emergence of Participatory Action Research. The issue of citizens' and community rights was further highlighted by a number of social movements in the 1970s which made strong claims for livelihood, social justice and women's rights for the poor and marginalized. This significant development led to the recognition of the political function of citizen participation.

The decade-long search for alternative models of development wherein the recipients of development become drivers of the process was central to a number of important events and conferences in the international development scenario. The focus on community participation in the agriculture, health and education programmes of the government began gaining strength. In the developing countries, participatory methodologies like Participatory Rural Appraisal and participatory monitoring gained significance in the 1980s, assisting the incorporation of community and citizen participation in the development project cycles of the government and non-governmental organizations.

The structural adjustment programme of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, initiated in the 1980s to facilitate debt repayment by developing countries, led to pressure on the states to reduce unproductive social expenditure in a number of developing countries. This increased poverty and marginalization, resulting in increased demand for a rights-based approach to development from international non-governmental organizations. In 1986, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed development as a human right in its 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development, thus bringing the claim of the citizen to the forefront of the development discourse.

The 1990s witnessed a growing recognition by international aid agencies and national governments of the role of community participation in facilitating effective, efficient, inclusive and sustainable human development. Multilateral agencies like the World Bank and the United Nations were significant players in mainstreaming community and citizen participation into development initiatives, and by 1990, most bilateral agencies also had policies on participation.

Since 2000, the idea of participation has moved beyond the narrow realms of beneficiary participation in development projects and programmes to address the broader issues of citizen participation in governance initiatives. The emphasis was on creating more inclusive and accountable democratic institutions from which the poor can benefit. A rights-based approach to participation and institutional accountability was proposed to strengthen the status of people from mere bearers of rights to rightful and legitimate claimants. There has also been an increase in the literature on linking participation to the concept of citizen's rights and citizenship.

Nature of Citizen Participation

The meaning and nature of the concept of citizen participation, thus, has undergone changes through the decades.

The early conceptualizations provide very important insights on the different dimensions of participation. In 1991, on the basis of an extensive literature review, Peter Oakley had categorized the definitions of participation by different researchers as follows: (a) participation as contribution, which includes voluntary or other forms of contribution to predetermined projects, (b) participation as organization, which includes organizational forms which are externally conceived or emerging as a process of participation, and (c) participation as empowerment, wherein participation is equated with gaining access to and control of the resources necessary to protect livelihood and working towards structural changes.

Participatory research and Participatory Action Research proponents recognized the importance of marginalized citizens' active participation in knowledge creation and subsequent collective actions and saw this process of learning and organizing as important vehicles for their empowerment. Empowerment thus included a process by which marginalized citizens gained greater access to and control over material, financial and intellectual resources, by creating pressure to transform ideologies, institutions and structures which perpetuate unequal access to and control over resources.

Participation when taken as a means to an end was seen as a way of harnessing the existing physical,

economic and social resources of rural people to achieve the previously established objectives of development programmes more efficiently and effectively. As an end in itself, participation was seen as a process which unfolds over time, and its purpose was to develop and strengthen the capabilities of rural people to intervene more directly in development initiatives and to control their own development.

The international aid agencies further added the instrumental dimension to the concept of participation, emphasizing the decision-making space of the community in different phases of development projects and interventions. The World Bank in the 1990s specified six participatory mechanisms used in their work around the world, wherein the concept of participation is taken as a continuum: (1) information sharing, (2) consultative, (3) joint assessment, (4) shared decision-making, (5) collaborative mechanisms and (6) empowering mechanisms.

Citizen participation in the 2000s was increasingly described in terms of the relationship between citizens and the institutions which affect their lives, especially the state. Growing discontent globally resulted in citizens demanding their right to be treated as active participants rather than as mere voters or beneficiaries.

Highlighting the fact that citizenship is a learnt concept, Tandon has differentiated between the political meaning of participation, wherein the citizen derives his or her citizenship in relation to the state, and the cultural meaning of participation, wherein citizenship is defined in relation to the sense of belongingness to the community or kinship rather than the state. He further differentiated between the individual notion of citizenship, which deals with issues of entitlements and contracts vis-à-vis the state, and the collective notion of citizenship building from the collective identities of kinship, caste and community.

Through the process of critical reflection, learning and collective action, citizens were thus transcending the space of the individual notion of citizenship to a more nuanced, collective notion of citizenship and were also exploring the political as well as cultural meanings of participation.

With the work of educators like John Gaventa and Andrea Cornwall, the issue of spaces for citizen participation also gained eminence. According to them, the different spaces for citizen participation include closed spaces, invited spaces and claimed or created spaces. Calls for accountability and transparency of state institutions and direct participation of citizens to hold state institutions accountable have also increasingly become a reality in many parts of the world. The work on social accountability also effectively encompassed the notion of active citizen participation and active citizenship.

Citizen Participation in Relation to Action Research

The practice of citizen participation in the development and governance sphere has also been facilitated by the use of participatory and action research approaches like participatory research, Participatory Learning and Action, participatory planning and citizen monitoring and social accountability approaches like Citizen Report Cards.

In all these approaches and methodologies, there is emphasis on the knowledge of the citizens and the recognition of individual and collective action to address issues of unequal powers which influence access to and control over development processes. The most effective use of these participatory methodologies and approaches is evident when they are used as important means for change and not as ends in themselves.

There have been evidences to support the contribution of citizen participation in development and governance initiatives in terms of more effective delivery of development services, sustainable outcomes, deepening of democracy and empowerment of citizens and their collectives. The past decade, however, has also witnessed growing criticism of the instrumental misuse of the concept of participation. There is a school of thought which highlights that citizen participation in development has failed to engage with the issues of power and politics and has become a technical approach to development. Concerns about the collective nature of participation have been raised, with studies claiming that participatory development projects focus only on visible and formal local organizations but overlook many other communal activities.

There is also a body of work which addresses the critiques of participation in development programmes. Supporters of the transformative dimension of participation critically explore the spaces provided for participation and its potential for empowerment. Further, they position the concept of participatory citizenship as a link between the social, community and political dimensions of participation.

Namrata Jaitli

See also microplanning; Participatory Action Research; participatory budgeting; participatory governance; participatory monitoring; participatory urban planning; social accountability; social audit

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CITIZEN REPORT CARD

Evolved from the pioneering experience of Bangalore (now Bengaluru) in India and implemented in many countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Ethiopia and Tanzania, the Citizen Report Card (CRC) is an international best practice tool for improving service delivery. The CRC was developed in Bangalore, India. Frustrated with the poor condition of public services, a group of private citizens undertook a one-time effort to collect feedback from the users of services. The success of the initial effort in Bangalore led to the creation of the Public Affairs Centre, a non-governmental organization committed to improving the quality of governance in India. Since 1995, the Public Affairs Centre has independently and in partnerships carried out numerous CRCs in Bangalore and in various locations within India and around the world.

CRCs collect feedback through sample surveys on aspects of service quality that users know best and enable public agencies to rate services and to identify strengths and weaknesses in their work. CRCs facilitate prioritization of reforms and corrective actions by drawing attention to the problems highlighted. By means of collecting citizen feedback on the quality and adequacy of public services from actual users, CRC provides a rigorous basis and a proactive agenda for communities and local governments to engage in a dialogue to improve the delivery of public services.

The CRC methodology envisages the following objectives:

- To generate citizen feedback on the degree of satisfaction with the services provided by various public service agencies and to provide reliable estimates of corruption and other hidden costs
- To catalyze citizens and civil society organizations to demand more accountability, accessibility and responsiveness from the service providers
- To serve as a diagnostic tool for service providers, external consultants and analysts or researchers to facilitate effective prognosis and solutions
- To encourage public agencies to adopt and promote citizen-friendly practices, design performance standards and facilitate transparency in operations

In more practical terms, CRCs give the following strategic inputs.

Benchmarks on Access, Adequacy and Quality of Public Services as Experienced by Citizens

CRCs go beyond the specific problems that individual citizens face and place each issue in the perspective of other elements of service design and delivery, as well as a comparison with other services, so that a strategic set of actions can be initiated.

Measures of Citizen Satisfaction to Prioritize Corrective Actions

CRCs capture citizens' feedback in a clear, simple and unambiguous fashion by indicating their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. When this measure of citizen satisfaction or dissatisfaction is viewed from a comparative perspective, it gives valuable information to prioritize corrective actions. For example, the most basic feedback a citizen may give about power supply is total dissatisfaction. To appreciate this feedback, it must be related to the ratings given to other services by the same person. For example, water supply may be rated worse than power supply. When these two pieces of information are compared, one can conclude that power supply may be a cause of dissatisfaction but the priority for corrective action may be on water supply.

Indicators of Problem Areas in the Delivery of Public Services

CRCs inquire into specific aspects of interaction between the service agency and the citizens and seek to identify issues experienced by citizens in interfacing

with the services. In simple terms, CRCs suggest that dissatisfaction has causes which may be related to the quality of services enjoyed by citizens (e.g. reliability of power supply or availability of medicines in a public hospital) or the difficulties encountered while dealing with the agency to solve service-related issues like excess billing or complaints of power supply breakdown.

Reliable Estimates on Corruption and Other Hidden Costs

Corruption, though widespread and rampant, often exists in the realm of anecdotes, without any quantitative base. This 'subjectivity' of corruption has severely undermined both corrective and collective responses. CRCs give very objective information on the nature and spread of corruption and other hidden costs.

Mechanism to Explore Citizens' Alternatives for Improving Public Services

CRCs go beyond collecting feedback on existing situations from citizens. They are also a means of testing out the different options that citizens wish to exercise, individually or collectively, to tackle various problems. For example, CRCs can provide information on whether citizens are willing to pay more for better quality of services or be part of citizens' bodies made responsible for managing garbage clearance in the locality.

Why Use a Citizen Report Card?

As a Diagnostic Tool

The CRC can provide citizens and governments with qualitative and quantitative information about the prevailing standards and gaps in service delivery. It also measures the level of public awareness about citizens' rights and responsibilities. Thus, the CRC provides a comparative picture about the quality of services and compares feedback across locations or demographic groups to identify segments where service provision is significantly weak.

As an Accountability Tool

CRCs reveal areas where the institutions responsible for service provision have not achieved the expected service standards. Findings can be used to identify and demand specific improvements in services. Officials can be stimulated to work towards addressing specific issues.

As a Benchmarking Tool

CRCs, if conducted periodically, can track changes in service quality over time. Similarly, conducting CRCs before and after introducing a new programme or policy to measure its impact is extremely effective.

To Reveal Hidden Costs

Citizen feedback can expose extra costs beyond the mandated fees while using public services. CRCs thus convey information regarding the proportion of the population who pay bribes (either demanded or freely given) and the size of these payments and estimate the amount of private resources spent to compensate for poor service provision.

Who Can Use CRCs?

Various types of organizations have acted as lead institutions to carry out CRCs. The lead institution manages and drives the CRC process.

There are three common types of lead institutions:

1. Civil society organization
2. Government body, whether it is an elected body, independent committee or government department
3. Independent consortium (group) consisting of government officials, civil society representatives, academicians and the media

In each case, the organization should consider whether it has the skills, resources, independence and motivation/commitment to carry out a CRC.

What Qualities Should a Lead Institution Have?

To conduct a CRC, the lead institution should be

- a credible part of the city or sector where the effort is started,
- politically neutral,
- committed to improvements in public services over the long term,
- able to oversee survey-related fieldwork (though not necessarily able to carry it out) and interpret the feedback collected,
- willing to disseminate both positive and negative findings, and
- experienced enough, or at least agreeable, to work with multiple stakeholders (the media, civil society organizations, government, etc.).

Many of the other skills involved in carrying out a CRC can be brought together externally if not available within the lead institution. Through informal networks or formal partnerships, organizations or individuals can be brought into the group to fill in gaps where skills are lacking.

CRCs and Knowledge Production

Carrying out CRCs leads to production of knowledge on areas of improvement in service delivery for service

providers from a user perspective. Civil society organizations gain the expertise and power to hold governments accountable even if they have a monopoly on service delivery or programme implementation. In citizens, the CRC creates the capacity to demand improved services through sustained, focused advocacy.

Sita Sekhar

See also capacity building; citizen participation; Citizens' Juries

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CITIZEN SCIENCE

Citizen science is the co-ordinated engagement of volunteer citizens, usually amateur scientists or natural history enthusiasts, as observers, data collectors or analysts in large-scale observational or experimental research. Usually distributed throughout the community, they work as collaborators with researchers.

Citizen science engages the public as co-researchers in collecting and disseminating data and results. It accepts the skills of non-specialist contributors to research and thus empowers and educates citizens by acknowledging their contributions and developing their scientific skills. It democratizes the processes of knowledge production, dissemination and use. It addresses significant environmental, scientific and social issues by creating new knowledge and expanding community expertise. It exemplifies the principles of action research, developing, validating and authenticating the citizen's role in scientific data collection and providing opportunities to increase the citizen's knowledge base and expert skills.

This entry describes citizen science, focusing on its primary activity of public data collection, analysis and reporting. It summarizes the primary functions of citizen science and describes its social benefits.

Background

Citizen science is one of many techniques adopted by researchers to encourage public participation in public

affairs. All aim to improve dialogue between experts and citizens. In social contexts, citizen juries or panels play parallel roles to that of citizen science. It differs from amateur science (e.g. home chemistry experimentation) in being deliberately designed to engage many people to a common purpose. It overlaps with volunteer programmes (e.g. those of Earthwatch), which may include citizen science data collection and analysis.

Citizen science uses the time, abilities, skills and equipment of citizens interested in research. Citizens are co-ordinated and supported through local, regional or global networked organizations to contribute to the work of museums, universities, government agencies and specialist associations. Acceptance by the scientific community that amateur observations are reliable is growing, especially as co-ordinating bodies develop protocols—organization, guidance, training and support and project quality control—to ensure data validity and reliability. This, therefore, contributes to public education. The Australian Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Organisation experts recently claimed that citizen science has improved community scientific and environmental literacy.

History and Recent Developments

Citizen science has a long history. The nineteenth century compilation of the Oxford English Dictionary was a prototype citizen science: People across England contributed word definitions to the compilers. The annual record, since the 1910s, of the first cuckoo heard in spring, in the letters to the editor of the (London) *Times* newspaper, is an example of spontaneous citizen science. More seriously, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count has engaged citizens in bird watching and recording continuously since 1900.

The number of citizen science projects and participants has grown significantly over the past two decades. WaterWatch (Australia) grew in 20 years to 3,000 groups monitoring 7,000 sites in 200 catchments. The growth was due to increasing public environmental awareness, public education and the accessibility of digital technology.

Desktop and laptop computing, Internet and mobile communication and digital camera, phone, GIS (geographic information system) and GPS (global positioning system) technology now support citizen science engagement with many more people. Technology allows data to be rapidly collected, collated and disseminated, with geo-reference technology (especially GPS) ensuring accuracy. Many projects rely on Internet surveys and reporting, while iPhone apps are being used widely to monitor wildlife. High-power laptop computing and distributed computing allow people to contribute to large-scale computational studies.

Scientific Uses

Citizen science most commonly provides core survey data for agencies such as museums and natural resource departments, especially where data can be measured or counted and needs to be geo-located. It builds large data sets over dispersed areas and cost-effectively, which would be difficult for small expert groups. This is foundational to good science, significantly contributing to large-scale censuses and to mapping of natural resources.

Observational citizen science has been around for many decades. The Atlas of Australian Birds is based almost entirely on 5.5 million amateur birdwatcher observations, and the (Australian) Bureau of Meteorology has collected volunteer rainfall data for over a century. The Birds Australia/Australian Museum ‘Birds in the Backyard’ project collects distributional and behavioural data on urban birds recorded in people’s gardens. The Atlas of Living Australia uses citizen science to collate a national database of Australia’s organisms, the web-based Biological Data Recording System.

Citizen science contributes to long-term environmental monitoring, recording cyclical events or changing events. It also records unusual, infrequent or dispersed organisms, situations or events that may otherwise go unrecorded.

Citizen science is also used in individual research projects and by environmental management agencies to address specific management issues. Over 1,000 citizens contributed to a University of Stirling (Scotland) project which now confidently reports a decline in one bumblebee species in Britain and the arrival of a French species. The New South Wales Heritage Office supports recreational divers to record and monitor historic shipwreck conditions, providing almost all the research on this resource. Other diving projects monitor pollution or threatened species.

Citizen science is harnessed for large-scale data management. Examples include the digitization of historical handwritten weather records and review of whale song recordings.

Finally, it contributes to large analytical or computational research, where the data set is larger than can be managed by a small expert team or the scale of calculations too large for single-mainframe computing. Low-cost computing, global Internet communication and cloud computing allow citizens to run parts of large-scale calculations or scan parts of large secondary databases. Examples include the SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) project, where citizens search for key indicators in telescope data. This is often done by passive use of software on their home computers, which some claim is not strictly citizen science.

Social Outcomes

Citizen science provides important support for amateur scientists and natural historians and creates organizational and social networks and support structures for such amateurs. It mirrors the practices of action research by (a) educating, both formally and informally, citizens through the action of, and engagement with, scientific data collection; (b) empowering non-expert citizens in scientific knowledge making by creating community-based advocacy and interest groups and (c) fostering and providing a vehicle for behavioural change amongst contributing citizens.

Bill Boyd

See also capacity building; citizen participation; Citizens' Juries; Community-Based Participatory Research; data analysis; experiential learning; participatory monitoring; validity

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CITIZENS' JURIES

The term *citizens' jury* is typically used to describe a process of multi-stakeholder dialogue that involves a small group of people—the 'jury'—deliberating on a particular set of issues in the light of evidence from invited speakers. Most juries aim at a process of participatory learning and advocacy that empowers both the jurors and, if their perspectives are the discussion, the wider community. As the culmination of their deliberations, juries usually develop a set of recommendations for policymakers and an advocacy strategy. The jury, or associated organizations, may then build political coalitions in an attempt to have the recommendations adopted.

Though diverse in their subject matter and style of delivery, juries have the stated aim of undertaking a fair and competent process of emancipatory action research. Competent juries generally include the following three core elements:

1. Members of the jury are chosen via a selection process that is rigorous and can be easily explained.
2. A facilitator provides support to the jurors in their cross-questioning of speakers who attend jury meetings. These 'witnesses' are invited in order to provide different perspectives on the topic. The facilitator provides neutral guidance to enable the jurors to collectively produce a summary of their conclusions, typically through a short report.
3. The fairness and democratic rigour of the process is safeguarded by an oversight body made up of a range of people who have relevant knowledge about the subject, an interest in the outcome or both. They take no direct part in facilitating the jury, but they can intervene at any point, potentially requiring elements of the process to be altered.

Early Citizens' Juries

The term *citizens' jury* was coined in the late 1980s by the Jefferson Center, based in Minnesota in the USA. The centre takes its name from Thomas Jefferson, the principal author of the American Declaration of Independence and the country's third president. A supporter of trial by jury, Jefferson famously stated in 1820,

I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people. And if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion.

Although not widely known at the time, a very similar process, the *Planungszelle* ('planning cell') had been developed in Germany in the late 1960s. Both the *Planungszelle* and the jury contributed to a long-term trend towards supplementing conventional methods of public debate with organized deliberation among what Archon Fung calls 'mini-publics'.

Juries offer a potentially more empowering approach to the two principal methodologies that are claimed to enhance democratic debate—opinion polls and focus groups. Yet, far from enhancing dialogue, these two dominant approaches allow private corporations and governments to acquire quantitative and qualitative insights into the psychology and behaviours of their

target populations. Although they are core features of many present-day democratic societies, neither of the two approaches permits citizens the opportunity to hear or discuss the diverse perspectives that are often pertinent to a particular issue or to enter into an informed dialogue with those who have the power to bring about change. Juries have been designed to provide a more legitimate form of expression of public opinion. In some countries, they have been widely deployed as part of Participatory Action Research initiatives by organizations from civil society in order to empower those whose perspectives are usually ignored by opinion formers and policymakers.

Having registered them as a trademark in the USA, the Jefferson Center has been able to closely control the nature of the Citizens' Juries conducted there. Elsewhere, the process has developed without any restrictions.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), a think tank with links to the UK Labour Party, began to research Citizens' Juries in 1993. By the time Tony Blair's Labour government had been elected 4 years later, the IPPR had conducted five pilot juries and published a practical guide. Juries were rapidly adopted with the expressed aim of enhancing citizenship.

Although jury-type processes have been occasionally undertaken in at least seven countries outside the UK and USA—Australia, Brazil, Canada, Mali, India, New Zealand and Zimbabwe—by far the greatest number of juries have taken place in the UK. During the period 1997–2008, for instance, some 300 British juries were convened. This boom has been accompanied by frequent deviations from the three core elements of the jury methodology outlined in the Jefferson Center and IPPR's original guidelines. Some of these modifications have enhanced the inclusivity and legitimacy of the process, but others have seriously undermined it.

Approaches to Inclusion

The nature of any particular jury greatly depends on the strategy employed to attract and select the jurors. Under the market research model, a funder typically commissions a commercial specialist to conduct a jury process. Commercial recruitment teams typically invite people to be jurors via face-to-face recruitment or an advertisement in a local paper. As an incentive, there is often an offer of substantial payment. By contrast, when organizations from civil society lead the organization of a jury, they often invite people from local neighbourhoods or a community of interest to be jurors, without an incentive but with the members' needs directly supported—through the meeting of carer costs or provision of a crèche, for instance.

When asked, jurors generally say that they attend jury-type processes because they are interested in

bringing about greater social justice. To ensure the deliberative rigour of a jury, its facilitation must heed critiques of deliberative processes by feminists, such as Iris Marion Young, and ensure that the interests of the more articulate jurors and their definition of the common good do not supplant the perspectives of those whose voices are quieter and more reflective. This process of domination can be extremely subtle and requires constant sensitivity to ensure that disagreements are handled in ways that ensure that everyone's experiences and views can be drawn upon in developing the jury's recommendations.

The seminal work of the team led by Elizabeth Barnett suggests that a jury must contain diverse interests, positions and life experiences that reflect those of the wider population. They conclude that facilitators seeking to support the deliberations of a particular social identity—for instance, the old, the young or the disabled—might need to implement safeguards to ensure that between one third and two thirds of the jury come from that group. Simply recruiting jurors at random or in proportion to their statistical representation in the population as a whole will not ensure that the interests of minority groups are adequately represented. Her classic analysis of a jury-type process undertaken for an advisory body to the UK's National Health Service demonstrates how a process that is meant to support minority perspectives can result in the tyranny of the majority if not carefully balanced and facilitated.

Safeguards and Commercialization

To date, only a handful of the several hundred attempts at jury-type processes commissioned by UK government bodies have abided by the most important democratic safeguard against their capture by particular interest groups—that they should be monitored by a body representing widely varying viewpoints and interests (see the third core element above). This key oversight role has been further threatened in the UK in recent years by the commercialization of juries with the emergence of what Celia Davies calls 'dialogic intermediary organizations'. In many cases, these specialist companies have effectively sidelined organizations from civil society, including most action researchers, as facilitators of juries. Moreover, confidentiality between commercial and government collaborators has led to a marked reduction in the transparency of the jury process. For instance, the criteria by which people were included in or excluded from the jury are usually kept confidential. With a few exceptions, most jury-type processes commissioned by such official bodies occur behind closed doors. Their refusal to use appropriate oversight has further undermined trust in

these companies, fuelling suspicions that they facilitate largely the interests of the organization that commissioned them rather than the interests of jury members.

The explosion of methods, of which juries became one, was backed up by a plethora of handbooks purporting to enable government and organizations from civil society to make an informed choice of consultative tools. However, such toolkits cannot ensure fairness and competence in the use of the tools they contain. When conducting juries or similar processes, commercial companies have often disregarded key democratic safeguards—sparking, on occasion, censure from non-governmental organizations, academic analysts and even their own trade associations.

The impact of a jury is increased if those organizations that fund it or take part in its oversight also assist in the implementation of its recommendations. As in any multi-stakeholder process, some stakeholders may, as the jury proceeds, decide that it is not an efficient use of their resources, or perhaps not even in their interests, to associate themselves with the process. If such groups predict that the recommendations of a jury process are likely to be uncomfortable for them, they are faced with a dilemma: whether to remain an 'insider', potentially enabling them to be able to make more informed criticisms of the process, or an 'outsider', either ignoring or discrediting the process without being tainted by association with it.

The inclusion of community-based organizations is typically neglected in most commercially run juries—even though these groups may have the contacts and skills needed to continue work with the jurors and others after the process has finished. Such alliances between citizens, community groups and facilitators are at the core of do-it-yourself jury approaches, which draw on Community-Based Participatory Research approaches.

Do-It-Yourself Juries

Several groups of UK-based jury facilitators use a 'community-based' or do-it-yourself approach to a jury, allowing greater grass-roots control of what becomes a deliberative and Co-Operative Inquiry process. Here, groups whose knowledge and perspectives are generally marginalized by the policymaking process, often drawn from the geographical communities in which the jury takes place, co-design some or all of the key elements of the jury process. People who are normally outside policymaking processes are often able to gain understanding, voice and influence over the decisions that affect their lives. Involving groups from civil society at the start of planning a jury process will make it more likely that their policy recommendations will lead to policy change. People are far

more likely to be engaged in discussing an issue if they can see that it could affect them or their community. Choosing the issue that will be the focus of their deliberations is therefore an important first step in a jury becoming a process of empowerment.

Creativity in a De-Colonizing World

De-colonizing research exposes the technologies of colonization, including the choice of the language (English) that is to be used as the means of research representation and the deployment of what Norman Denzin labels as Western epistemologies. As is the case with many action research techniques, those using Citizens' Juries in non-Western contexts are being accused of methodological imperialism, with the determination of the questions to be put before these juries often originating in the Western world. However, Citizens' Juries have been embraced by indigenous scholars in countries from India to Peru, from Mali to Manchester. There is a sense in which they could be seen as routes to de-colonizing existing political and research practices rather than further entrenching them. In less industrialized countries, juries have frequently taken place in relation to a high-profile public policy decision affecting indigenous peoples and other groups excluded from power. Here, the use of epistemological traditions from the West can be vital in defending the competence and appropriateness of a jury against those who wish to discredit the process.

A jury process is, looked at from the perspective of performance, a piece of theatre, which is why legal juries often play a part in fictional dramas on television and in film. Legal juries only investigate what happened in the past, whereas Citizens' Juries focus on what should happen in the future, based on participatory learning about the present and the past. Whereas legal juries oblige citizens to follow formal procedures, Citizens' Juries have no such restriction. Creative and arts-based approaches to action research allow witnesses and jurors to envisage how they would like the world to be in the future. Juries undertaken by organizations from civil society in India, Brazil, southern Africa and the UK have attempted to bring imaginative techniques, such as storytelling, scenario building and Theatre of the Oppressed, into the process.

Like many action research techniques, juries have—outside the USA at least—evolved into something more of a process of bricolage than a rigid set of procedures. An effective jury facilitator is, to use Claude Levi-Strauss' term, a *bricoleur*—a jack of all trades, a kind of professional do-it-yourselfer. Rather than follow a set procedure, a good facilitator will adapt the core principles of emancipatory action

research to suit the situation, developing new tools and techniques with the need for transparency and rigour in mind.

Unlike legal juries, which are by definition private and difficult to research, Citizens' Juries are, in principle, open to cycles of action-reflection, and thus continual improvement. Evidence from social psychology suggests that if decision-making processes such as juries are viewed by people as being fair, then they will be regarded as legitimate. People value fair treatment because, as Tom Tyler's research has shown, it communicates to them that the group to which they belong is a valuable, high-status group. If they are conducted in a way that embodies fairness, jury-type techniques have the potential to be an important part of processes that allow global-scale Participatory Learning and Action towards dealing with some of the greatest challenges of our age.

Tom Wakeford

See also bricolage process; citizen participation; democratic dialogue; empowerment; facilitation; multi-stakeholder dialogue; Participatory Learning and Action

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CLASSROOM-BASED ACTION RESEARCH

Classroom-based action research (CBAR) typically involves teachers conducting collaborative, evidence-based investigations into their own classroom routines and relationships with a view to understanding and improving the quality and justice of their practices in the classroom.

In the context of educational action research, CBAR usually refers to teacher-designed and managed small-scale investigations; however, those leading CBAR may include others in teaching, learning, support and leadership roles who make practical contributions to the educative empowerment of those engaged with classroom relationships and associated curriculum change. CBAR thus has links to participatory and practitioner action research. CBAR may be initiated through external projects, and it is also increasingly prescribed within teacher education programmes for providing teachers with professional development through informed insights into the consequences of their everyday classroom practices.

Enduring debates regarding CBAR centre on the sponsorship of teacher action research (*whose* issues are being addressed?), the value of teacher inquiry as 'research' and the aims and outcomes of teachers' classroom action research. A central debate in CBAR focuses on the extent to which individual teachers' improved practices can actually lead to more widespread pedagogical and curriculum change.

CBAR: An Illustration

The management team of an education improvement area (EIA) encouraged local school teachers to conduct action research into their practices to discover effective approaches for improving classroom experiences that might benefit all learners in this disadvantaged neighbourhood. The EIA provided funding and specialist input into a university-designed action research master's programme for teachers that was delivered in the evenings in a local school.

Following discussions with her tutor and the EIA learning director, one participating teacher investigated her numeracy lessons with 9- to 10-year-old pupils. From the work which pupils submitted for marking, she could find little evidence that her feedback practices were actually improving the children's subsequent approaches to problem-solving. Close examination of the term's numeracy workbooks revealed very few examples of where the learners had acted upon the guidance given in her written comments. Having attended a short introductory EIA course 'Formative Assessment',

she decided to experiment with a peer-tutoring and feedback activity. She organized pairs of learners to check each other's solutions to problems and negotiate an agreed solution when there was a difference between their suggested answers. The teacher discovered that following this intervention, the children were better able to articulate their mathematical thinking in discussion, and their workbooks revealed greater evidence of their attempting improved approaches to numeracy problem-solving in later lessons. However, she discovered that two learners had such little confidence in their knowledge of numeracy strategies that the exercise was proving confusing and unhelpful for them. Consequently, whenever she later repeated the paired activity with the class, she remained working closely with these two learners to provide a managed structure that would help them make confident progress with fundamental strategies.

The teacher shared her experiment with her head teacher, and she was asked to informally present her findings at the next after-school staff meeting, to discuss with her colleagues whether the peer feedback activities might be transferable to other classrooms. The director of the EIA also visited to observe the paired activities in progress, and the teacher's experiment was later presented at an EIA development day. The teacher wrote up this classroom action research study towards her master's award, and the supervising tutor drew on the teacher's findings about formative assessment strategies to inform her own teacher education curriculum.

As can be seen above, the data upon which classroom-based action researchers draw is typically found in the products and processes of everyday classroom experience (e.g. lesson plans, students' work, students' feedback, support assistants' observations, attendance registers, etc.), and these help clarify and inform the teacher's initial hunches about opportunities for improvement. In some cases, the existing evidence may be supplemented by more dedicated research techniques, such as recording of activities, interviewing or surveying learners using a range of written and pictorial feedback strategies or asking a colleague to observe and constructively analyze the focus of the inquiry. The rationale for teachers conducting their own action research to investigate their classrooms is that self-study enables teachers to appreciate why their 'curriculum intentions' (i.e. the learning experiences which they had planned) are not always fully realized in practice. Teacher-researchers are then ideally placed to make those necessary changes to their teaching which their investigation has indicated are desirable. It has been observed that teachers often display an occupational defensiveness and resist outside interference in their classrooms; however, teachers' own

investigations provide a necessary condition for subsequent improvements to their classroom practice. Whereas CBAR does draw on elements of the 'reflective practitioner' approach to encouraging deliberative reflection as a basis for improved professional decision-making, a distinctive feature of CBAR is that it also requires practitioners to plan the systematic identification of evidence from the classroom as a concrete focus for reflection. Teachers conducting action research will also typically engage with those likely to be affected by the planned change (e.g. learners, colleagues, school leaders or parents). The classroom investigation assumes 'research' status when the findings of the inquiry and change process are shared with a wider audience within and beyond the school. This serves the dual purposes of both disseminating learning from the research and enabling informed feedback on, and validation of, the changes to practice.

Whilst CBAR may be initiated and supported by external facilitators who hope to generate collective insights into teachers' practices, the primary aim of CBAR remains the improvement of educational practices in the immediate classroom situation. However, CBAR does not assert that practice is an alternative to theory, but rather it foregrounds that practice as an evidence base contributing to the generation of more informed pedagogical and curriculum knowledge. And whilst CBAR often begins with a teacher's focus on an individual's practice and concerns, teacher-researchers are encouraged to acknowledge the collaborative nature of the social situation under study and invite feedback from those outside of the classroom who can make an informed contribution to supporting and disseminating the change—so that CBAR becomes more widely educative rather than remaining as an individual practitioner's private reflections.

Developments in CBAR

Stephen Corey's school-based research from the early 1950s in the USA is cited as an important early attempt to encourage teachers to study their own practice. Corey identified teachers' resistance to using theories generated by external academic researchers in their teaching. He proposed that teachers researching in their own schools would become empowered to overcome their occupational individualism, which insulated their established practice from developmental insight; he suggested that teachers who had become enlightened through their own research would then be well placed to implement changes based on their new understandings about their classroom practices. The movement to inspire teachers to research their classrooms was revived in the UK through the 1967–73 Humanities Curriculum Project (HCP), directed by Lawrence

Stenhouse at the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE). In this project, educational researchers encouraged teachers to experiment within their classrooms in order to develop an appropriate curriculum which would prepare school leavers for active and responsible participation in a democratic society. Following this programme, the approach of 'teacher as researcher' began to be developed, encouraged by Stenhouse's seminal text *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development* (1975), which promoted the principle that learners' curriculum experience needed to be designed and developed by informed teachers. Stenhouse suggested that such classroom inquiry constituted research if it represented 'systematic inquiry made public', and he encouraged reports of the research to be made available to other teachers so that the ideas could be tested in the classroom 'laboratory'. Whilst Stenhouse maintained that individual classroom studies could not be crudely generalized to apply to other teachers' unique classroom contexts, he optimistically suggested that an archive of individual teachers' case studies would represent a case record to be analyzed by professional researchers, and that might lead to generalizable propositional theory which would inform educational policymaking. Michael Bassey acknowledged the limitations of individual teacher case study research that cannot easily be transferred to other settings, but he suggested that singular studies could be validated through their 'relatability'—the extent to which practitioners can relate elements of the study to their own classroom contexts.

Following the HCP, the Ford Teaching Project, led by John Elliott and Clem Adelman, attempted to determine how teachers could best be supported in researching their classrooms. They derived hypotheses about the developmental process experienced by teachers conducting action research. They observed that teachers evaluated their practice more constructively once they began to view themselves as researchers. It was noted that the teachers' revised status as researchers helped them overcome their reluctance to investigate and articulate problematic aspects of their teaching experiences. The HCP and the Ford Teaching Project were designed to enable teachers to create practical, learner-centred responses to the constraints of rigid institutional and political structures and a centrally imposed, 'teacher-proof curriculum'. These projects laid the foundations for the establishment of the Classroom Action Research Network (CARN) in 1976, which held research conferences catering primarily to teachers and produced research bulletins (rather than research journals) in which teachers could report and share issues deriving from their action research. The 'teacher-as-researcher' movement spread internationally through those associated with the CARE projects.

In Australia, there was significant interest in school-based curriculum development, and Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart's 1982 Action Research Planner—'a procedural guide for teachers and administrators'—became a fundamental international text encouraging the growth in the number of academically initiated projects.

Although by the 1980s in the UK there had been a reduction in project-based funding for CBAR as a means of stimulating wider curriculum change, the influence of Stenhouse helped establish new 'Curriculum Studies' departments in higher education institutions which could claim to be independent of the 'borrowed' disciplines of philosophy, sociology or psychology of education. Such departments continued to encourage CBAR by promoting teacher research projects through a wide range of pre- and in-service programmes at both under-graduate and postgraduate levels.

Increasingly, attention focused on the limitations of teachers' classroom research in driving more enduring curriculum change, and some facilitators of CBAR began to argue for a 'classroom-exceeding' approach, which might progress beyond the private reflections of the individual teacher to encourage the educative involvement of school leaders, governors and local government departments. Internationally, classroom action research supporters acknowledged the importance of wider social and political influences on classroom experiences and attempted to engage with a variety of agencies (from social work to health, to police, to community) in a more participative action research which proposed that principles of CBAR be used as a methodology for wider social change. Experienced teacher-researchers such as Bridget Somekh were instrumental in extending the networking of educational action research across other disciplines and communities; she broadened her focus from teacher action research to embrace all those working in 'social endeavours' and attempted to engage policymakers in the inclusive 'supportive evaluation' of educational practices.

Collaboration with a range of associated social disciplines engaged in situated action research resulted in the CARN being renamed as the Collaborative Action Research Network in 1996. A research journal, *Educational Action Research*, had already been established through CARN in 1993, aiming to represent the wider notion of 'educational' action research as an essentially educative activity across a range of contexts.

Although the initial external sponsorship of curriculum-focused CBAR had not been widely sustained, the popularity of CBAR continued to develop, mainly through university departments accepting (and later promoting) teacher action research as a

research approach underpinning pre- and in-service award-bearing programmes. Classroom-based teacher action research had become recognized as a valuable research opportunity that enabled personal professional development.

Recent international developments in CBAR include the growth of 'learner voice' projects and initiatives which draw on the emancipatory ethos of engaging all the participants in the learning situation. Teachers design projects to enable pupils to adopt a fully participative role in researching classroom learning experiences and to take greater responsibility for an improved learning environment. Such attempts to emancipate learners as full contributors towards more informed classroom decision-making are cited as a logical development of the participatory, democratic and collaborative principles of CBAR.

Tensions Within CBAR

The CBAR movement has been an expanding area of practitioner-led and teacher-centred educational development since the 1970s, with CBAR acting as an emancipatory vehicle for increasing teachers' autonomy in creating a responsive and worthwhile curriculum. The increasing engagement in CBAR of teachers' colleagues, principals, parents and a range of para-professionals has been welcomed, as has the greater involvement of learners in a range of active research and co-researcher roles. However, debates continue over issues of the 'ownership' and purpose of CBAR, the positioning of academics in their relationship with teachers, the balancing of individual teacher emancipation with the collective generation of curriculum theory and the provenance of the 'teacher knowledge' that is generated.

There have always been warnings against inappropriate instrumental use of CBAR, amidst concerns that teacher research could be exploited as a form of technicist problem-solving. There is a long-standing suspicion that teacher research could be misappropriated to serve functional managerial interests in a performance culture. Even in 'learner voice' projects, there is discussion about how to maximize the educational empowerment of pupils as co-researchers, amidst cautions about their voices being misappropriated for political decoration.

There remain differences of emphasis about the appropriate role of academics in facilitating teachers' action research. For example, Jack Whitehead describes how teachers can use their investigations to understand themselves as 'living contradictions', as they come to recognize how their actual practices are frustrating their espoused values as teachers; the process of self-realization stimulated through CBAR

enables teachers to better manage their lives and independently generate their own working theories from their practice. He suggests that externally initiated CBAR may take an 'interpretive' research approach which can relegate practitioners to the role of gathering data for 'spectator researchers', who will then generate educational theory. However, Elliott maintains that any teacher inquiry in which the end result is 'improved self-understanding' might offer the teacher an immediate solution to a problematic situation but does not effectively contribute towards improving the wider experience of teachers faced with similar curriculum challenges. He asserts that the generation of valuable curriculum knowledge arising from teachers' CBAR requires structured critique and publication, maintaining that teachers can adopt a more critical evaluation of their practice when they value themselves as researchers, and this identification can become strengthened by a democratic collaborative relationship with members of an established research community. He acknowledges the dangers of academic imperialism, insisting that external researchers who facilitate teacher research should engage in 'second order action research', both to ensure that the collaborative process embodies the academic researcher's own educational values and for the critical sharing of knowledge about the CBAR facilitation process.

Those promoting CBAR have been keen to use all opportunities to encourage teachers to engage in classroom inquiry as a vehicle for lasting change. They have worked with sympathetic policymakers and commissioners who sponsor initiatives which hope to draw upon classroom teachers' action research to determine 'best practice' models for informing teacher effectiveness. Educational agencies, commercial interests and national policymakers have occasionally provided funding to gather insider intelligence on teacher experience that will contribute to pedagogical change. Whilst facilitators have usually been positive towards opportunities in which practitioner research is recognized as stimulating reflective practice and inviting a 'bottom-up' approach to the generation of curriculum knowledge, there remains the concern that CBAR projects which are designed to provide privileged, insider perspectives on specific educational initiatives might prioritize the generation of transferable knowledge at the expense of individual teacher development. The emancipatory potential of the teacher's research could become restricted, subordinated towards delivering a technical research objective—that is, intelligence of 'what works' in the classroom. In practice, evaluators of such projects have reported that whilst individual teachers have celebrated the heightened sense of professional identity created by being invited to contribute, their resultant classroom reports are too often endorsements

of their current practice, with little evidence of further exploratory inquiry. The failure of instrumental attempts from above to deploy classroom-based action researchers to distil decontextualized ‘best practice’ suggests that for CBAR projects to be productive and emancipatory, they require a research design and infrastructure that is teacher initiated.

A continuing concern for CBAR is the need for individual teachers’ classroom research to realize the aspiration of effecting wider change across the whole school. In attempting to connect teachers’ classroom research with wider institutional development, it has been suggested that individual teachers’ CBAR should be guided from inception towards ensuring whole-school change. For example, David Frost advises that externally facilitated CBAR programmes be carefully designed to ensure that individuals’ research does not simply terminate in abstract recommendations for institutional improvement. He maintains that proposals for CBAR should always be initiated by the teacher to ensure that the issue has significance for the practitioner; however, once the focus has been decided, programme design should require the teachers to communicate their research intentions and actively collaborate in the research process with the school leadership, who will thus have an interest in both facilitating the investigation process and enabling the consequent implementation of the emerging CBAR findings across the institution by engaged and informed school leaders.

Andy Convery

See also collaborative action research; collaborative action research network; educational action research; insider action research; Participatory Action Research; practitioner inquiry; reflective practice

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CLINICAL INQUIRY

Clinical Inquiry is a form of action research that is located within organization development and emanates from the process consultation work of Edgar Schein. Schein argues that the knowledge obtained by traditional research models frequently does not reflect what ‘things are really like’ in organizations and so is inadequate for studying organizational processes. Accordingly, he describes Clinical Inquiry as synonymous with process consultation, whereby the consultant creates a helping relationship with a client which enables the client to understand and act on the process events that are occurring in the client’s internal and external environment in order to improve the situation as defined by the client. This entry introduces the notion of Clinical Inquiry as a form of action research, describes its basic principles and practices and discusses how clinical researchers can work with clients in addressing organizational problems and generating actionable knowledge.

Assumptions Underpinning Clinical Inquiry

There are three basic assumptions underlying the notion of Clinical Inquiry. These assumptions flow from the notion of a clinician as a professional who can work with a client to diagnose and address a problem in terms of a deviation from ‘health’.

1. *Clinical researchers are hired to help.* The research agenda comes not from the interests of the researchers but from the needs of the client system. In this regard, Clinical Inquiry may be distinguished from forms of action research that begin from the researcher’s initiative and where the organization accommodates the researcher’s

needs. In Clinical Inquiry, that the researcher is hired to and is being paid to help means that the researcher may be afforded access to perceptions and information that might not be shared readily with outsiders.

2. *Clinical researchers work from models of health* and therefore are trained to recognize pathological deviations from health. Clinical researchers, therefore, need to be trained in organizational dynamics and have models of organizational health so that that they know what to notice.
3. Clinical researchers are not only concerned with diagnosis but *are also primarily focused on treatment*. Accordingly, they need to be skilled in providing help in the manner of process consultation.

These three assumptions provide an important contrast between Clinical Inquiry and ethnography. Ethnography is built on unobtrusive non-interfering observation, while Clinical Inquiry is built on deliberate interference, where clinical researchers are hired to help change the system.

Through being present in a helping role, the clinical researcher notices how data is continuously being generated as the change process proceeds. While it may not be clear what this data might mean, the researcher's mode of inquiry enables the client to explore, diagnose and act upon the events as they emerge. In this way, the clinical researcher's data is in 'real time', generated in the act of managing change, and not data created especially for the research project.

Principles of Clinical Inquiry

There are several working principles underpinning the practice of Clinical Inquiry. The issues that clinical researchers work on are important. This is because they have been hired to help. They accept the assumption that unless they attempt to change the system they cannot really understand it. The primary sources of organizational data are not what is 'out there' but are in the effects of and responses to intervention. The organization development process, whereby the clinical researcher is contacted, enters the system and begins to learn to be helpful, is central. The clinical approach, therefore, focuses on diagnosing and treating organizational dysfunctions and pathologies.

Six clinical activities may be identified: (1) in-depth observation of crucial cases of learning and change, (2) studying the effects of interventions, (3) focusing on pathologies and post-mortems as a way of building a theory of health, (4) focusing on puzzles and anomalies that are difficult to explain, (5) building theory

and empirical knowledge through developing concepts which capture the real dynamics of the organization and (6) focusing on the characteristics of systems and systemic dynamics.

Being Helpful

Working to be helpful is the central theme of Clinical Inquiry. It is the key starting point and a constant focus of attention. It is the client who owns the problem and the solution, and clinical researchers must constantly be aware that the interactions in the here and now continually provide diagnostic information about what is going on, how the client is responding and the relationship between the clinical researcher and the client. As diagnosis and intervention are parallel and simultaneous, rather than sequential, clinical researchers are always intervening. Everything is data. Accordingly, clinical researchers need to think out the consequences of their actions. Their interventions must seem normal and not be mysterious, so that clients themselves may learn the skills of attending to their experience, testing their insights and taking actions based on their understanding. The here-and-now confirmation or disconfirmation of working hypotheses of what is going on may be validated (a) by the participants' own experience and (b) by triangulation, especially what others have observed and understood. The measures of quality lie in how the participants have engaged in real-life issues, in how they have engaged in cycles of action and reflection, in the quality of collaboration and in the extent to which the outcomes are workable and generate actionable knowledge.

Skills

The activities of Clinical Inquiry make demands on clinical researchers to be skilled in their understanding of organizational dynamics and, thus, know what to look for as organizations malfunction. They also need to be self-aware and self-reflective, questioning their own assumptions, biases and filters in working with clients. They also need to be skilled in knowing how to be helpful and serve the needs of the client rather than their own.

Generating Practical Knowing

The realm of knowledge in which Clinical Inquiry operates is the realm of practical knowing, where knowledge is contextually embedded and there is a primary concern for the practical and the particular. Clinical Inquiry seeks to generate knowledge that is practical and useful for practitioners in particular settings,

and as that knowledge is contextually embedded, it is generated through collaboration with the members of the organization in order to improve the situation as they define it. As described above, the collaborative process between the clinical researcher and the organizational members engages the latter in perceiving and understanding their own setting in order to use that knowledge to take action. The operations of perceiving, understanding and taking action are directed towards practical outcomes and actionable knowledge rather than universal principles.

David Coghlan

See also organization development; process consultation

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facilitating researchers (either outsiders or specialists within the organization) join forces to solve pertinent local problems. Central to this is the creation of learning arenas where insiders and outsiders meet and learn together. A learning and developmental arena is composed of the participants, a physical structure and the actual learning processes that take place. The grounding factor in running a co-generative learning process is for the facilitator to construct learning arenas that enable the local stakeholders to generate the necessary knowledge and action designs to solve their pressing problems.

The co-generative model builds fundamentally on democratic beliefs and values, such as the ability and the right of everyone to exercise control over their own life situation. Methodologically, the model is anchored in a pragmatic philosophical position that new knowledge is developed through concrete experimentation aimed at solving practical problems.

The co-generative learning model has the potential to democratize knowledge generation processes in society at large. Participative involvement by all relevant stakeholders in shaping practical solutions to shared problems creates the basis for knowledge construction based on their own experiences and interests. While participation in general political and economic activity at the societal level is very important, a democratic society is one in which democratic processes of creating new knowledge and designing collaborative actions are broadly diffused through work, community and political structures.

The Action Research Process

All action research projects start by clarifying the objectives of the developmental work. In a co-generative process, it is argued that employees who live with the problems on a daily basis should engage in the initial analysis and develop the preliminary problem definitions because these are grounded in their everyday realities. This ensures that their everyday work and life situations are included in or addressed by the process and not looked upon as problems defined only from above in the organization or even outside it.

Thus, from the first phase of problem clarification, co-generative learning engages all the relevant categories of actors. Once completed, the next phase is initiating the actual change process by analyzing this shared knowledge and creating practical action designs. Here, it is vital to build a foundation for a long-term learning process that eschews quick fixes. This itself is a challenge because few people have the personal experience of involvement in participatory change processes.

The third phase involves gradually building a sustainable and continuous learning process where the

CO-GENERATIVE LEARNING

The co-generative learning model emerged as a way of conceptualizing roles, processes and learning dynamics in action research projects as centred on joint employee and management engagement in seeking solutions to concrete problems in both manufacturing and service organizations. Its pragmatic foundations view all participants in the change process as capable of and actively involved in creating new solutions to particular problems. This participatory dimension is anchored in a general belief in participatory democracy as a way of solving social and organizational problems. In business, it affirms that employees should have opportunities to manage their own working conditions, and it is the work-life equivalent of a commitment to democracy in general. Thus, co-generative practices in work life are seen as a necessary part of the political/electoral in society.

The model relies on the mutual learning that takes place when local problem owners (insiders) and

long-term goal is for the problem owners to take control over the learning process and make it a part of everyday life. This is key because these learning processes are cyclical, and ongoing reflections on one’s own practice contribute to direct improvements of current practice and may also contribute to the design of new activities, new frameworks of understanding and processes.

Co-Generative Learning as Action Research

The foundation for co-generative learning is to integrate communicative processes in various types of organizational arenas into one learning process. Second, the co-generative learning model situates the action researcher as an actor whose integrity requires deep involvement in the development process and not just a facilitator or consultant stance. Third, co-generative learning emphasizes support for learning and enables the creation of common knowledge through solving concrete problems. It is essential to design arenas where participants can meet and learn

together and recognize that their collaboration is creating new and better solutions for them and for the organization.

Figure 1 outlines the co-generative learning model. The left side relates to the people involved and their activity in solving the selected problems. This reflective practice process provides the basis for sustained learning. The right-side loop constitutes an important learning loop for the action researcher. These two learning loops are both similar and different. Based on the experiences gained together, the local participants participate in sense-making processes within their own social and material context, while the action researcher guides the process and contributes comparative knowledge from experiences in other organizations and context. These processes in turn provide a basis for their new input to the change process.

Phases, Actors and Learning Loops

The change process has three distinct phases, and they are integrated in the model. The first phase centres

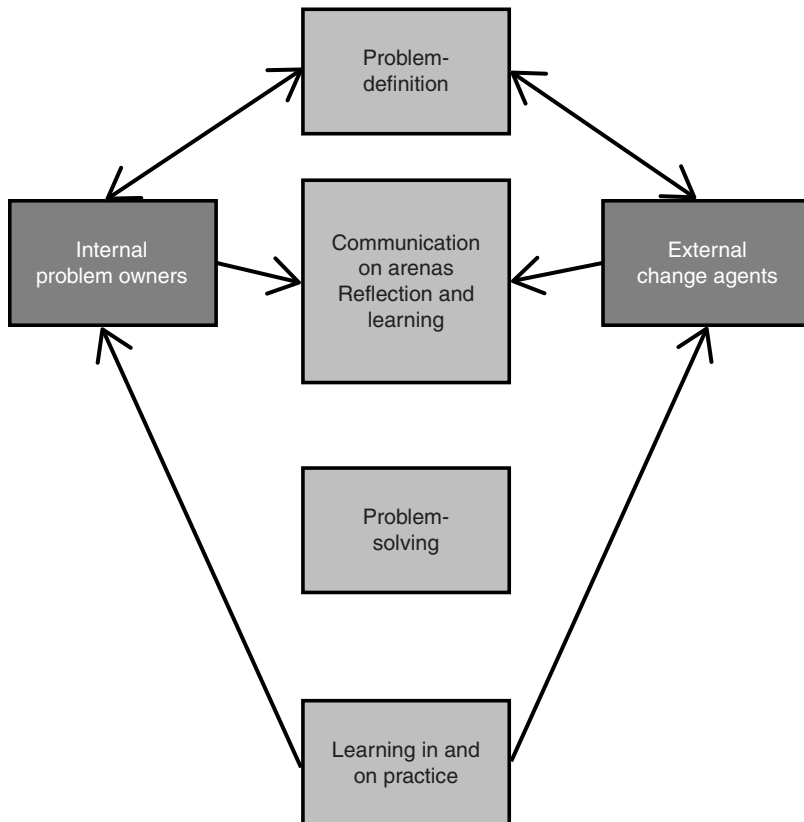


Figure 1 The Co-Generative Action Research Model

on problem clarification, while the second and third phases follow the logic specified by the learning loops in the model.

Problem Clarification

The question to be researched must be of major importance to the participants, or the process will go nowhere. The first problem clarification is in many ways a miniature change process. Actors learn about each other's positions and experiences, develop an initial basis for trust and sketch out the first concrete actions based on their shared learning. The action researcher helps them subject this learning to close reflection and critique.

The challenge is to create a communication arena that surfaces and helps mediate the initially different perspectives held by organizational leaders and the groups of participants in the learning arena. This involves explaining to others the local insights participants bring with them. Fruitful problem clarification is established through a dialogue that allows these different perspectives to be raised and challenged. It lays the foundation for shared understanding and collaborative action.

In participative change, it is an absolute condition that the goals of all involved be accepted and treated as legitimate. Accordingly, it is necessary to develop a shared understanding among the involved parties that is transformed into mutually accepted objectives and strategies for the change process.

It is imperative to involve representatives of all groups that are the most affected in order to develop local understanding of a problem. The action researcher must facilitate communication and problem-solving, and at the same time, the action researcher will have to develop an independent understanding of the initial situation. The aim is to bring forward and legitimate diverse and even divergent experiences of these processes and help formulate explicit arguments to facilitate dialogue among the different parties involved. The action researcher initiates learning arenas that fit the actual context. The quality of the process depends on how well the participants are able to see alternative approaches before choosing the path for their future work. It is often fruitful to choose an initial starting point where it is fair to assume that it will be easy to get some first positive results before taking on more complex problems.

Planning and Designing Arenas for Joint Reflection and Learning

Central to co-generative learning is creating room for learning processes resulting in interpretations and action designs that participants trust. The arena for

communication between the groups of actors must be properly configured. Shaping and facilitating learning processes in arenas represents the most important challenge for the action researcher.

Arenas can take many forms. Every meeting is potentially a learning arena. Even a large meeting dominated by one-way communication can be used afterwards to develop joint reflection. At the other end of the spectrum are group-based activities where it is quite easy to get people actively engaged as learners.

Arena design will be based on context-sensitive judgement, including on what problems seem to be central, who should participate and what the relevant organizational environment is. The discourse that takes place in these arenas is inherently unbalanced. The insiders have a grounded understanding of local conditions far beyond what any outsider ever can gain, unless he or she settles into that specific local community or organization to live and work on a sustained basis. Likewise, the outside researcher brings with him or her skills and perspectives often not present in the local context, including knowledge about how to design and run learning and reflection processes. The asymmetry in skills and local knowledge is an important force in co-generating new understandings as the parties engage each other to make sense out of the situation. The democratic ideals of action research also mandate a process in which the outsider gradually lets go of control so that the insiders can learn how to control and guide their own developmental processes on a sustained basis. These ideals also promote the development of the insiders' capacities to sustain more complex internal dialogues with a more diverse set of participants than would have been the case without these learning experiences.

The asymmetrical situation between outsiders and insiders lies at the centre of complex social exchanges. The outsider designs training sessions that make development and transfer of knowledge possible and uses his or her influence to direct the developmental process. The professional researcher necessarily exercises power in this process. Dealing honestly and openly with the power these requirements grant to the researcher is a central challenge in action research change processes. This has a significant effect on the development of local learning processes, and this power is easily abused.

Problem-Solving and Reflection

The results of the change in work processes materialize through the improved ability to identify and be able to handle specific challenges in more efficient and satisfying ways. The value of these changes is in the improved ability to master problematic issues and create good results. This capacity is reflected not

only in concrete problem-solving but also in how the organization is better able to manage its own learning processes. Results will and must always be measured in both the short and the long term. This is particularly important because learning and knowledge development involve a long-term process.

Initially, learning processes will result in concrete solutions that are implemented. These experiments reflect the initial learning and give rise to important experiences for further processes. A key step in this learning process is systematically to identify data that can show if the actions taken have produced the desired outcomes when it comes to measuring the intermediate results. In a participatory approach, feedback is necessary to understand the terrain because, to be sustained, such change processes must create a consensus that it is through the systematic ‘experiments’ that one can develop the organization.

The continuous learning process in the organizational work is simply a sequence of the following:

- a. Collective reflection in order to develop alternatives for action
- b. Experimentation to achieve the desired goals
- c. Collective reflection on the results achieved
- d. Separate learning loops, related to participants and leaders of the change process
- e. Feedback and new learning on the shared learning arenas

This results in a continual learning spiral.

Reflection Processes for Participants and Action Researchers

Feedback loops are similar for both insiders and outsiders, but the interests they have in and the effects they experience from the communication can be quite different. For insiders, it may be central to improve their action-knowledge capabilities, whereas outsiders may, through the reflection process, produce meaning (publications or insights) for the research community. Both of these reflective processes are then fed back into the communicative process shaping the arenas for new dialogues aimed at either redefining the initial problem statement or improving local problem-solving capacity. Cycles like this continue throughout the life of a project.

For leaders of the change process, time for reflection on roles and experience is important to ensure the continued learning that provides the basis for their own improved practice as leaders of co-generative learning. The experience gained from the change process must be transformed into learning in such a way that the process leaders act as reflective practitioners.

Morten Levin

See also double-loop learning; Pragmatic Action Research; pragmatism

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COGNITIVE MAPPING

A ‘cognitive map’ is an internal representation of how individuals have made sense of the world around them. Humans use them to help them navigate the physical structure of places and to find their way—literally—in the world. They also use them to assist them in handling information and recognizing patterns, situations, places and symbols while navigating, understanding and responding to the social world around them. They draw on their cognitive maps to support their decision-making and understanding of all that they know of the world.

Action researchers use cognitive mapping to facilitate interventions within organizations. By diagnosing problems or misunderstandings, cognitive mapping can help people understand their own and others’ subjective beliefs about a topic, idea or task, or the context of an action research intervention.

Edward C. Tolman introduced the term as his contribution to the development of the understanding of how humans behave in the environment. It was not until the early 1970s that the term *cognitive map* became popular and began to be used by experimental and developmental psychologists. The phrase also took hold among geographers, to whom the term had particular appeal. The variety of forms and techniques for cognitive mapping has arisen in part due to the interdisciplinary nature of cognitive science, which studies the mind and intelligence. However, the universal appeal of the technique to researchers from a wide variety of disciplines has given the subject area a broad base of knowledge and viewpoints. These include geographers, planners and architects, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, cognitive scientists, computer scientists, biologists and neurologists.

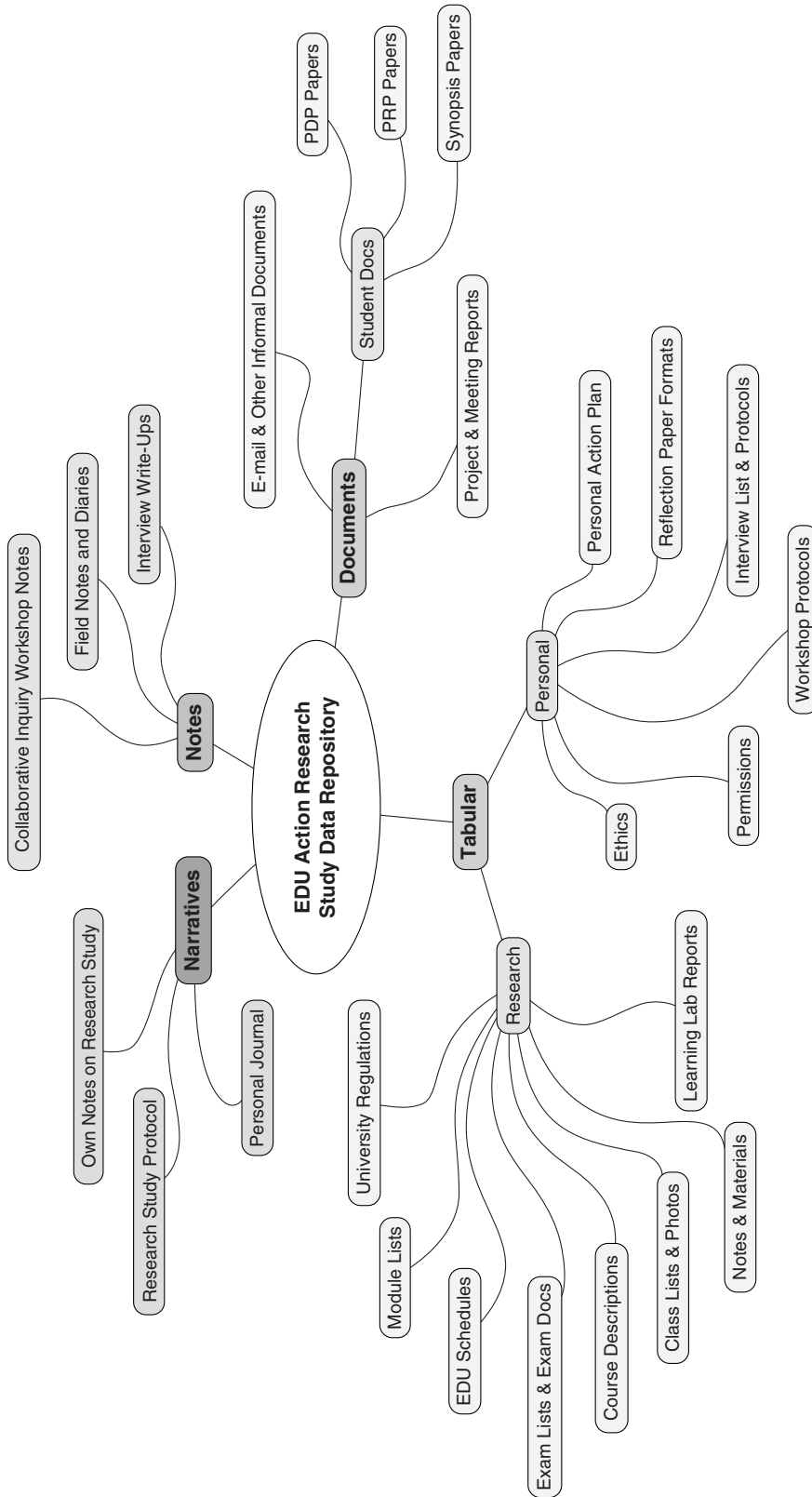


Figure 1 Example of Mind Mapping
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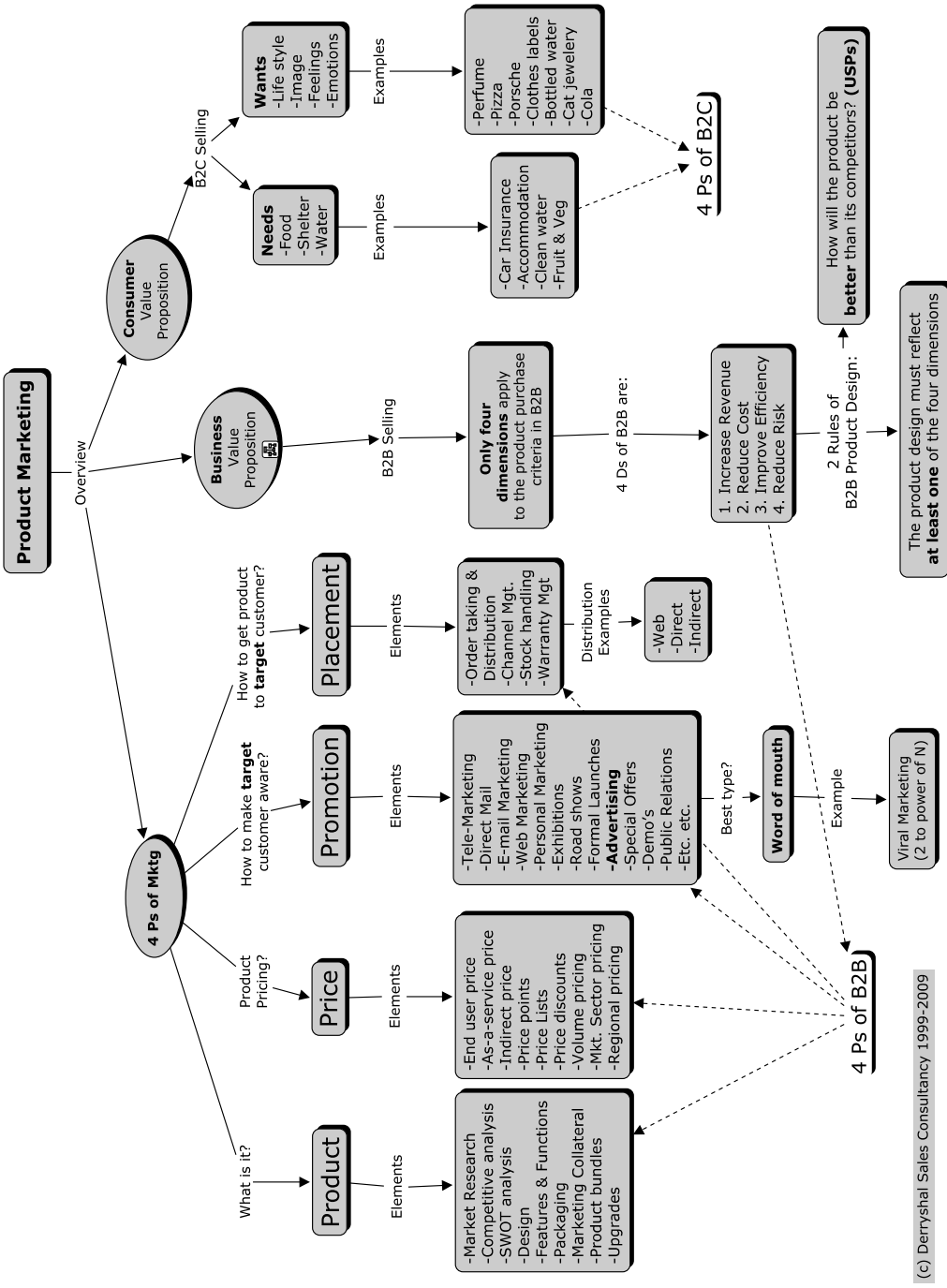


Figure 2 An Example of Cognitive Mapping in Product Marketing

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The following sections outline the key aspects of causal, semantic and conceptual mapping.

Causal Mapping

George Kelly's personal construct theory is identified as the foundation and originating source for the development of causal mapping techniques. Individuals' perspectives on a situation or context is actually an intricate system of how they understand and interpret their world. Differences in behaviour can be explained largely by the differences in how people 'construe the world' around them. Causal statements are identified through the use of a wide range of single and complex phrases. This is how belief systems are revealed: friendly/unfriendly, tall/short, good/bad, masculine/feminine. By capturing the cause-effect relationships that people construct and use, new insights into a person's reasoning can be gained.

Semantic (Idea) Mapping

Semantic mapping techniques build on prior knowledge or schema and previous experience through recognizing their important components and showing the relationships among them. It is a way of revealing and identifying what is currently known and understood, together with one's subjective beliefs about a particular topic, idea, task or place, or whatever occupies the mind.

It enables one to focus on the idea or topic and visually represent it in the format of a diagram or illustration. In this way, thinking can be clarified on a particular topic or idea, leading to an identification of what could be added to the topic. Also, it provides opportunities to share the map with others in order to discuss how we collectively make sense of, understand or know about the idea or question under discussion.

Tony Buzan coined the term *mind mapping* and identified the technique of semantic mapping as the best way of exploring an idea without the constraints of an underlying structure or format. Drawing a semantic map involves creating an evolving or growing diagram. It represents a variety of ways of ordering an idea, words and tasks that are all linked and arranged around a central idea or key word. Working outwards in all directions, the map grows or emerges into an organized structure made up of key words and images (see Figure 1).

Sometimes called a spidergram or spider graph, it should not be confused with the spider diagrams used in mathematics and logic.

Conceptual Mapping

Building on John Dewey's seminal work on the place of prior knowledge and previous experience in

learning, David Ausubel emphasized the importance of prior knowledge in the learning of new concepts. Joe Novak developed the use of concept mapping in the 1960s to visually represent the structure of information. By using concept mapping techniques in the context of analytic thinking and meaningful learning, the critical importance of existing cognitive structures for learning new concepts has been identified.

They are created in a hierarchical way, with the most general and inclusive concepts at the top of the map and the more specific and less general concepts arranged in a lower order of preference. The best way to construct a concept map is with reference to a particular answer we are seeking; this is called a focus question in the literature. When considering a particular domain of knowledge, the context or situation or event to which that knowledge is being applied will determine the 'top-down' structure. Cross-links identify relationships between concepts in different parts or segments of the map that are connected in some way (see Figure 2).

When we are thinking creatively, the underlying hierarchical structure of a concept map can assist us in searching and finding new cross links, thus creating new knowledge.

Cognitive Mapping and Action Research

Causal mapping can reveal individuals' perspectives and assist action researchers in gaining new insights into their own and others' reasoning and behaviour. It can help everyone understand their own and others' subjective beliefs about a topic, idea or task, or the context of an action research intervention.

Semantic mapping provides a way of identifying and clarifying what is known and currently understood about a topic, idea or question under discussion. It provides opportunities to share the map with others, to discuss and agree on collaborative actions. It is particularly useful in tracking idea generation within a team and in facilitating interventions within organizations.

Conceptual mapping can be used for idea generation, communicating complex ideas and diagnosing problems or misunderstandings. It can also help in the integration of old and new knowledge and in evaluating or assessing understanding.

Annie Graham-Cagney

See also asset mapping; community mapping; concept mapping; Dewey, John; geographic information systems; map-making

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COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

The idea of collaboration in action research is one which emerges as a feature of the work of the early pioneers of action research, whose aspirations were for groups of people to achieve social and professional change through working in partnership with each other, sometimes including external researchers or facilitators as a part of the partnership. Since the inception of action research, the development of the field has also seen the evolution of a particular group of approaches which emphasize the collaborative aspects of the knowledge-generating change process of action research and which, in presenting particular means by which this can be achieved, can be regarded as being a distinctive approach to action research. Whilst collaboration is, therefore, a recurring theme in all interpretations of action research, collaborative action research, in this sense, is a particular form of action research.

The arguments underpinning the ideals of collaborative action research are in part pragmatic and in part principled. The pragmatic justifications for collaborative action research are based on a strategic desire to achieve change. In this, collaboration is perceived as an efficient way to get the desired results. From a principled, idealistic view, the adoption of collaborative approaches is related to a particular set of beliefs about the ways in which change in social settings should be achieved and the power that people gain over their own destinies from working with each other. In this, the term *collaboration* denotes a more active role for people in social and professional change processes than might be implied by some more passive notions of participation, such as consultative forms of political change.

In comparing with other modalities of action research, the ‘collaborative’ aspect of the phrase *collaborative action research* places an emphasis on the social, relational and interactive aspects of the conduct of action research. The iterative aspects of the process of action research, which are emphasized in some process models of action research, can still be evident in collaborative action research, but the distinctive features of this approach are in the mutual benefit of

people, with differing but complementary knowledge, skills, responsibilities and sometimes social status, working together in trying to achieve change in a shared aspect of their work and life.

Collaboration and Action Research

As the inception of action research was based around interventions where groups of people worked together to make changes to their social, professional and, in some cases, physical settings, the ways in which people shared in the process of development—that is, collaborated—have been a common consideration of all action research. The idea of collaboration is, therefore, a recurring generic theme in action research and is one which was highlighted in the pioneering early work of people like Kurt Lewin and Stephen Corey. Whilst for Lewin, the aspiration was to challenge conventional research approaches through action research to achieve social and organizational change, Corey’s interests, and use of action research, were focused specifically on educational settings. In both cases, the members of organizations or communities which were subject to change worked collaboratively with each other and with the researchers, in the role of facilitators, to examine and develop their work and their contexts. This establishes an idea of collective activity, of which collaboration can be one form, at the core of the aspirations of action research.

The term *collaborative action research* builds upon the general theme of collaboration and refers to specific applications of action research in which there is a particular emphasis on what in other approaches would be less specific, more general, collaborative components. This is a model of action research in which the main characteristic of the approach is providing a means for people with differing responsibilities and roles to work together to achieve a shared common purpose. The concept of collaborative action research as a distinctive method was based upon these general ideals of collaboration and has been outlined by, amongst others, Sharon Oja and Richard Sagor. These authors extended the generic collaborative ideals of action research to argue that the establishment of formalized collaborative arrangements enables, and requires, a consideration of the development of teams. The suggestion is that relationships are changed and developed through the sustained act of working together in collaborative action research which results in the establishment of new, or evolution of existing, teams with new working arrangements.

This has been further extended to suggest that the development of relationships in collaborative action research can ultimately result in the growth of communities of action researchers whose shared

commitment is to the ideals and collaborative process of action research but whose particular interests in the changes resulting from action research may vary. An example of this can be seen in the Collaborative Action Research Network. The network has its roots in the UK educational action research movement, but since its inception (as the Classroom Action Research Network, reflecting its educational origins), it has grown to encompass members from all over the world and from a wide variety of different disciplines. Whilst seemingly working in such different kinds of organizations and with divergent interests, they come together through their shared interest in action research as a means for achieving change.

The ideals of a collaborative approach to action research suggest that communities of action research are especially beneficial where they include people with differing perspectives on the issues being addressed and of the contexts in which the action research is based. These differing perspectives are intended to enrich the understanding of each partner and of any actions resulting through action research. Whilst these differing perspectives may be problematic in the day-to-day operation of an organization or in the interactions between people in particular settings, an aspiration of collaborative action research is to overcome this by providing a medium for sharing these points of view in order to allow the development of mutual understanding and shared actions. The differing perspectives of the partners therefore have the potential to become enriching features of collaborative action research. Some of the issues in achieving this, including some of the suggested approaches to bringing together people from differing backgrounds with varied perspectives, are explored in the following section.

Forms and Features of Collaboration

Because the focus of collaborative action research is on the joint actions of collaborators with differing experiences and expertise, a lot of the attention on this model of action research is concerned with how these differing protagonists, with their diverse interests and experience, work together. In this respect, the representation of action research is of a negotiated social activity which retains the core aspirations of other approaches to action research, the merging of research and action, for example, but which is also concerned with what action researchers can learn from and with each other. Whilst the focus remains on identifying a means by which the social contexts of protagonists can be understood and changed through the implementation of new actions, this is intended to be achieved through an exchange of complementary knowledge

and skills between people with, perhaps, very different roles in the context in question.

This is typified by a common model of collaborative action research in which people with an expertise in the process of research—in other words, professional researchers or academics—collaborate with people, often practitioners, who have an expertise in and knowledge of a particular form of practice or of a particular practical setting. The pioneering work of Lewin and Corey could be seen as early examples of the establishment of this form of collaborative relationship. As a result of establishing collaborative relationships between people from within communities and between people with particular practical interests and external researchers, the conduct of collaborative action research can put an emphasis on the differing roles of insiders and outsiders in the process of action research. Whilst this can create problems, as explored in the following section, the intention is that through working together both partners contribute their distinctive skills and knowledge to a shared process from which both partners also learn and act differently as a result.

There is an emphasis in collaborative action research, therefore, on people with different roles and responsibilities being able to see things from each other's perspectives and being able to communicate effectively and productively with each other. As a consequence of this, collaborative action research places an emphasis on the ways in which perspectives are 'constructed' in reference to the personal attitudes and beliefs associated with particular roles. How, for example, can a researcher interested in practice perceive the object of his or her research, in other words, the practice, as the practitioner does and vice versa? And what can each learn from doing so? Knowledge, therefore, is seen as being socially constructed—in other words, the partners make sense of what they observe through their own interpretive framework of pre-existing knowledge and beliefs derived from their previous experience. Collaborative action research intends to overcome these differences and to establish a process by which knowledge creation and application is a shared activity which acknowledges and benefits from the differing perspectives of collaborators. The nature and extent of interaction between collaborators in this has led some to suggest that dialogue can itself be considered a form of research.

This aspiration for the production of new understanding through mutual learning is termed the *co-creation of knowledge*, which is presented as an alternative to more centralized models of knowledge generation and use. In centralized approaches, researchers generate knowledge which has implications for others. The consequences of this 'knowledge' can then be forced upon them

without negotiation, for example, in mandated policy initiatives. In contrast, the application of collaborative action research, which emphasizes the co-creation of knowledge, is, at least in part, intended to respect the independence, expertise and knowledge of collaborators in action research and, where concerned with professional practices, also their professionalism. It is also intended to challenge the idea of research as an objective activity which is unrelated to the cultural and social contexts for research and independent of particular actions and of the personal views of participants. Instead, the suggestion is that research should be a process which is both explicitly concerned with change and located, or based, within the contexts of interest.

As a result, collaborative action research can be seen, idealistically, to be reaction against, and rejection of, individualist modes of change and inquiry which serve only to promote self-interest and do not account for the relational components of social practices. This, by extension, can suggest that collaborative action research can be a means by which equitable and democratic social change can be achieved. This broader aspiration for social change associates the concept of collaborative action research with notions of critical theory and with subsequent critical interpretations of action research. In this, the potential for challenging social inequality is enhanced through the shared process and resulting collective actions associated with collaborative action research. It should be noted, however, that whilst collaboration is one component of critical, emancipatory approaches to action research, it is not the only one, and it would be possible to establish a collaborative approach to action research which, through a concern with instrumental, practical or technical change, would not fulfil the criteria for achieving truly critical change through action research.

Collaborative action research is therefore concerned with the development of mutually beneficial relationships, and this is achieved not only as a component of research but also as a way of presenting an alternative formulation of what counts as knowledge and how it can be developed. Within this, questions are raised about the ways in which dialogue is established between people with differing roles, ideals and responsibilities. These questions about the development of individual partnerships are further extended to embrace notions of collaborative communities of research and inquiry. Whilst the core of these communities is specific collaborative partnerships, the very nature of this work being based around dialogue can result in a spreading of interest and involvement which can start to include a wider group of people than those involved in the initial collaborative relationships. This can lead in turn to differing levels of involvement of people in

a collaborative research community, from which some benefits and tensions can emerge.

Problems of Collaboration

The application of collaborative action research is associated with a number of challenges which stem from two related sources. The first is the problems arising from the emphasis collaborative action research places on the relationships between people as the means to yield knowledge and achieve change. These are problems which are inherent in any collaborative activity in that they arise from the relationships themselves. The second relates to the challenges derived from the differing roles of these collaborators in the social contexts for action research. These are problems which, whilst deriving from collaborative relationships, relate specifically to the particular positions of collaborators.

Bringing together people who have differing, but associated, roles means that the action research can be influenced by pre-existing relationships. For example, there is likely to be some power differential between collaborators who work for the same organization or who are from the same social context but have differing positions in those settings. For example, where action research is conducted within organizations, the relationship between collaborators who, in that setting, have the role of manager and subordinate is likely to influence how they work together in collaborative action research. This can lead to action research becoming a process which rather than overturning inequitable power relations becomes itself prone to those relations and even potentially reinforces them.

Where collaborative action research involves bringing together people with differing roles in the same context, a further challenge involves mediating the different agendas that each has and the expectations they have regarding the shared action research. An example of this is in the differing agendas of researchers and community collaborators. Whilst one of the agendas of researchers is likely to relate to their research careers, including an interest in publication, this is an agenda which may not be shared by their collaborators, whose own interests may themselves be very different from those of the researcher.

There is also a danger that the aspiration for collaborative action research to be extended beyond the group of original collaborators can result in further inequitable relationships. There are examples where collaborators have been unwilling to allow as much direct involvement of extended groups in action research as they themselves have had. Sometimes, this is a result of the pre-existing inequitable power relations noted earlier; at other times, it is related to the

enhanced social position that collaborators can acquire as a consequence of their collaboration in 'research'. In all of these cases, the challenge is to establish and maintain equitable relationships between collaborators and to mitigate the effects of any disparity of power on the conduct of action research and on the development of mutually beneficial shared change.

Related Concepts

The concept of collaborative action research is closely related to other perspectives on the benefits of people working together. This includes forms of Participatory Action Research in which researchers, or others, work with communities to facilitate change. The differing roles of collaborators in action research in which one collaborator is identified as being a facilitator led to the identification of two 'orders' of action research. *First order action research* was the term used to describe the application of action research to achieve change by people within the setting for that change—in other words, the insider aspect of action research. *Second order action research* referred to the role of a facilitator, often an outsider and sometimes an academic or researcher. The term was first suggested by John Elliott and used to characterize the role of a facilitator of others' action research as being a form of action research in its own right, indeed to suggest to facilitators that they should see themselves as being action researchers and should ask the same questions of their facilitation as they do of the work of the action researchers they support. However, in part because of the problems of competing agendas noted above and in part because of the implied hierarchy which the terms *first* and *second order action research* implied, with *second order* believed to suggest a higher level of action research, these terms tend no longer to be used to distinguish between these differing roles. This idea of facilitating the participation of others is also related to the notion of participant 'voice', a form of which includes the attention paid to pupil, or student, voice in education. In this, the concern is for people taking a facilitatory role to provide a medium through which others can have their views heard and can have some degree of influence over the ways in which their contexts are changed and developed.

Finally, whilst a concept not directly derived from action research itself, the benefits of bringing together the different but complementary knowledge and skills of collaborators with differing roles can be related to the notion of relational agency. In this, the collective actions of groups are enhanced through their differing perspectives of an area of common interest. Sharing these views means that the partners understand their own areas of interest more fully and in working

together are able to achieve change which they may not have been able manage working alone.

Andrew Townsend

See also collaborative action research network; dialogue; facilitation; insider action research; Lewin, Kurt; Participatory Action Research; voice

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COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH NETWORK

As an inclusive network rather than a formally constituted organization, Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN) potentially supports action research in as many ways as action researchers care to imagine. Mostly its activities cover an annual international conference, study days, an annual bulletin and special initiatives. Its base is in the UK, with an institutional secretariat at Manchester Metropolitan University, but the network's reach is global, with representatives from six continents regularly taking part in its annual conference. Whilst supporting a membership and a journal (*Educational Action Research [EAR]*), CARN's aspiration to inclusivity and its commitment to being a network are reflected in its practice of welcoming non-members with an interest in action research into all its processes and activities, including its decision-making.

CARN's origins lie in the research and practice of teaching and learning in schools through inquiry and discovery, but this approach has been sustained in the network's extension to encompass practice settings beyond the school classroom. Initially envisaged as a network of teacher-researchers, it was based on the view that knowledge is provisional, that self-scrutiny and dialogue about practice provide the means to create new knowledge and that authority relationships

in relation to academic knowledge are legitimate and important subjects of study.

It is perhaps the emphasis on inquiry and learning and the focus on practice and development, particularly among professionals, that is most distinctive about CARN within the wider family of action research. CARN's stated values derive from its inclusive position and its non-hierarchical approach. Doing research *with* people rather than *on* people and the attempt to make a difference in people's lives bring ethical and social issues to the fore and make it necessary to challenge ourselves as well as others. Much of the effort required for such endeavours to succeed turns on our ability to create contexts that are both supportive and critical. The sharing in public of reflexive accounts of what happens in such contexts is regarded as the basis for making substantive contributions to methodological and theoretical understandings of research.

However, it is also recognized that critical processes are social as well as methodological, that the quality of actions counts as evidence and that the reporting of action research benefits from using different forms. This position poses considerable challenges for the assessment of action research submitted for academic awards, and the network has supported significant achievements in moving the boundaries within post-graduate studies towards better recognition of evidence and reporting that departs from conventional academic practice. Marion Dadds, Richard Winter and colleagues are among those who have explored how to innovate in judging the quality of action research in higher education award-bearing programmes.

History

CARN was set up by John Elliott in 1976 in the UK as the Classroom Action Research Network to take forward internationally the 'findings' of the Ford Foundation-sponsored Teaching Project, a set of action research projects about the problems of implementing inquiry or discovery methods in classrooms. Deliberately setting out to move away from the 'power-coercive' role of academic research in education, the network aimed to provide a forum for the testing of ideas about teaching among peers. It was initially based at the Centre for Applied Research in Education at the University of East Anglia and later at the Cambridge University Institute of Education (1972–75). This project's precursor, the Humanities Curriculum Project (1967–72), led by Lawrence Stenhouse and sponsored by the UK Schools Council, was a defining influence.

During the late 1980s, professionals, educators and practitioners from a wider range of disciplines (particularly in health and social services) became involved with the network, and after a vigorous debate, CARN

changed its title from 'Classroom' to 'Collaborative' in order to reflect this.

Publishing accounts of action research has always been one of the network's core purposes, and its regular bulletins reached a point in 1993 where the potential for a peer-reviewed journal was realized in the founding of *EAR*, an international journal that has also continued to grow. In 2006, the bulletin, drawn from the annual conference, was reinstated in recognition of the value of publishing work-in-progress which has not been peer reviewed.

Over the years, an extensive corpus of published work by CARN members and associates has emerged. The work overlaps with other transdisciplinary approaches such as evaluation and qualitative inquiry; for an insight into this authorship and the breadth and growing points of the body of knowledge, the pages of *EAR* and the records of CARN conferences on the CARN website offer excellent starting points.

Perspectives from John Elliott and Bridget Somekh on the history, development and growth of CARN can be found in the 2010 special issue of *EAR* which celebrates Somekh's contribution to the network and to action research more generally.

Philosophical Roots

CARN's focus on practice has developed an intellectual tradition that sees both social science and philosophy as its theoretical resources, though there are differing views on which of these disciplines merits greater attention. Pragmatists such as John Dewey and George Herbert Mead provide a perspective from across these disciplines, while Antonio Gramsci and Jürgen Habermas offer insights about the nature and potential of public spaces for the kind of dialogic activity which can critically challenge hegemonic discourses. Hermeneutic and ethnographic approaches have proved useful in the pursuit of naturalistic inquiry and also support the position that ontology and epistemology are interlinked. The tools of participatory inquiry and practice draw on the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire. These are some of the philosophical traditions that predominate, but they are far from exclusive. The network welcomes contributions from a wide range of philosophical positions which offer the ability to unsettle discourses that divide theory from practice and to elaborate their interlinkage.

How CARN Works

As a network, CARN is a product of the activities of its participants. There is a co-ordinating group with an administrative base in a UK higher education institution which meets three times a year, and often more

frequently, to act as a facilitator of those activities. But they are executed by the people themselves in different parts of the world. There are local CARN groups within institutions and regional networks. At the time of writing, there are 26 sponsoring partners in seven different countries, a Spanish-speaking and an embryonic German-speaking CARN network and Dutch and New Zealand networks. They may hold study days or organize more informal ‘camps’, or host a CARN annual conference, which since 2002 has alternated each year between a UK and a non-UK venue.

In keeping with the values of the CARN, these events are managed by the local institution(s). The aim is to enable a variety of spaces where people can come together to do action research, to network and to learn from each other. All events are open to non-members as well as members; what bonds participants together is a strong interest in social practice and social change through action research and the need to foster the range of skills and attitudes which enable people to adapt and grow in a context of rapid change. Members and sponsoring partners’ subscriptions provide the oil to keep the network engaged and connected and to support newcomers. Matters that are of strategic significance for the network are considered at CARN steering group meetings on conference and study days, where non-members take part as well as members.

There is a particular ethos that is engendered at CARN events, loosely termed ‘the spirit of CARN’. It is evident in the conference experience which supports a wide variety of modes of presentation, ranging from formal papers to interactive modes and creative expression such as dance, drama, poetry and song. Forums for interactive dialogue are promoted in the way the conference is organized, so that the ethos is not critical discussion for its own sake but rather supportive learning through dialogue across discipline boundaries and different traditions of action research. Work in its early stages can be presented without risk of rejection but benefiting instead from supportive inquiry. Action researchers hesitant to publish are inspired and validated. This supportive and nurturing space engenders the kind of collective spirit of inquiry and collaboration that befits the name of CARN itself.

The CARN website gives details about CARN conferences and other events that have taken place and are planned, along with publications and connections to other action research organizations, networks and sites. It provides a searchable tool to enable visitors to find CARN members by name and by country.

Ruth Balogh and Jane Springett

See also Action Learning; Critical Participatory Action Research; educational action research; narrative inquiry;

practice development; reflective practice; supervising action research theses and dissertations

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COLLABORATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Active engagement of community members in participatory research projects is often promoted as a strategy to empower participants, enrich the data gathered and improve research outcomes. Community members are sometimes welcomed onto research teams to partner in all aspects of the research process. However, empirical evidence shows that they are much more likely to take on meaningful roles with respect to research design and tasks related to data collection and dissemination than other important research activities. Community members are often left out of data analysis. Collaborative (or participatory) data analysis is an approach to democratizing this stage of the research process. This entry will (a) explore some of the reasons why researchers continue to dominate this research stage, (b) offer some suggestions and examples for taking a more inclusive approach and (c) discuss some of the limitations or additional considerations necessary for adopting and conducting collaborative or participatory data analysis.

Why the Widespread Lack of Inclusion?

Data analysis is commonly understood to be a highly skilled activity that requires in-depth training to do well. It is a time-consuming endeavour that is widely perceived to be tedious, difficult and somewhat arcane. It can be very technical and, when conventionally

approached, demands a high level of literacy, numeracy or both. Consequently, community members often opt out of this stage. Some are never invited. It can be argued that diverting community expertise, time and attention towards acquiring and polishing analytic skills may be an inefficient and inappropriate use of limited resources (particularly if academic partners are well positioned to take on these tasks).

In terms of promoting more equitable research relationships, it is not important for everyone to necessarily take on an equal share of all the work. Teams may decide that certain members are better suited to take on some tasks, while other team members pick up the slack in different areas. What is important is that everyone be given the opportunity to participate in those activities that they are interested in and able to perform. Furthermore, promoting equity may mean providing opportunities to build the skills and capacities of team members to engage in work that they are excited about and to find ways to be more inclusive.

Lack of community involvement in data analysis and interpretation may exclude those with the most to lose from important choices about shaping and interpreting study findings. When certain groups are systematically excluded from data analysis, we need not only to ask why but also to challenge ourselves to imagine how these barriers can be overcome. Rather than adopt a deficit model (i.e. considering community members to be unskilled/immature/illiterate/impaired), many researchers are finding ways to build on the skills, talents, competencies and wealth of knowledge of community members to engage them in accessible analysis opportunities. Recognizing that community members may see and understand the world very differently from researchers, these pioneers of collaborative analysis are creatively finding new ways to make the work inclusive and (often) more fun.

Old Methods, New Possibilities

Recently, several studies have begun documenting their participatory processes. Researchers partnering with children or youth, adults with intellectual disabilities and other marginalized populations have been at the forefront of the movement to advocate for and create more inclusive research practices.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Suzanne Jackson has written about a participatory group process she developed to analyze qualitative data with marginalized women. Jackson asked the women to come prepared for the first data analysis session by printing focus group field notes on coloured paper (one colour per focus group) and then cutting up the

responses by question. At the meeting, she broke the team up into dyads and gave each pair a rainbow bundle of all the answers to one particular question. The colours helped the women remember which focus group the responses came from. She asked each dyad to sort the responses by theme and then name each theme. Themes were later posted in a plenary session to identify those that cut across all questions. As a whole, the group began to answer the larger research questions. Later, the themes were rearranged to look at possible connections and what images came to mind to represent the work. Using this strategy with multiple groups, Jackson has shown how by breaking analysis down into digestible and accessible steps, non-researchers can meaningfully engage in and contribute to analysis. She suggests that clear instructions and excellent facilitation are required.

In another international example, Marisa Casale in South Africa collaborated with partners in Canada and the UK on a project exploring the role of faith-based organizations in HIV prevention. Learner and parent focus groups were facilitated by field research assistants in isiZulu (the local language). All focus groups were recorded, and the records were transcribed and translated. Several members of the large team read multiple transcripts and over iterative Skype conversations developed a coding framework. Transcripts were then reread and coded by at least two researchers using NVivo qualitative data management software. During this process, the coding framework was revised and refined. Each coded theme was then analyzed collaboratively by the research team, using the following analytic discussion questions: (a) What are the dominant ideas? Where is there agreement? (b) Where is there disagreement? What are the unique opposing views? Where are there contradictions? (c) Are there systematic differences among the ways in which this code was taken up by different focus groups? (d) What are the silences (as highlighted by reference to the conceptual framework)? Team members were encouraged to fill out individual worksheets for each code and 'come' to phone meetings ready to discuss and debate their understandings. The goal of these discussions was not necessarily to come to a consensus but to explore the range of ways of seeing and understanding data. Having multiple eyes and ears and social locations helped enrich the depth of analysis.

In both examples, what made these collaborative efforts work were clear instructions, strong facilitation, breaking the process up into accessible activities and a deep commitment from the teams to the process.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Jessica Kramer and her colleagues have written about their project to evaluate the engagement of individuals

with intellectual disabilities in a Participatory Action Research project. Over the course of nearly 2 years, the team met to conduct their work. In the eighth month of the project, they began to fill out a ‘who did what’ checklist to document and reflect control. In order to facilitate analysis of this exercise, university researchers inputted the data from the checklists into Excel and generated a variety of bar graphs, pie charts and line graphs to visually depict the responses. The diagrams were brought back to the larger team for analysis and discussion. First, they went over each graph to make sure everyone understood what information was being displayed. Next, they broke into small groups to explore questions such as the following: Why do you think this happened? What does it mean? How does it make you feel? Are you okay with this? What needs to change? Using the graphs (data) to help prompt the discussions grounded all partners and helped them engage in the analytics of making sense of their data.

Similarly, Suzanne Cashman and her colleagues describe how a team in New Mexico used graphs and charts to help make quantitative data more accessible for community partners in their project. Academic partners took responsibility for data entry and generating preliminary frequencies and diagrams. Subsequent analyses were guided by community responses to questions such as the following: What do the percentages mean? What is your interpretation? Are there any surprises? How do you make sense of them? What other relationships would you like us to explore? Researchers then took the data ‘back to the lab’ to do more complex modelling or statistical exploration and then came back to the larger team for iterative conversations about meaning and necessary subsequent analyses.

In both these examples, the university partners took responsibility for data entry and preliminary analysis but depended heavily on their community partners for interpretation and direction for future analysis. In both examples, they tried to make the numbers more accessible through graphs and charts and avoiding unnecessary jargon.

New Methods, New Probabilities

Recent innovations in participatory research approaches have changed the landscape. For instance, methods like Photovoice, where participants are given cameras to document their lives and then are collectively involved in analyzing their work, deeply embed analysis in the participatory process. Other arts-informed research methods like Digital Storytelling or group collage making invite community members to reflect, scrutinize and analyze as they go. These approaches clearly delineate analysis activities into the data collection process. Community arts have been adopted by many action

researchers to explicitly challenge the traditional power relationships between the researcher and the researched and make the research process more fun, transparent and accessible.

Other methodological innovations have also done a good job of incorporating analytical steps into participatory data collection. Concept mapping is an approach that uses collective brainstorming, sorting and rating activities to generate maps using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis software. Groups are then asked to interpret the maps and use them for planning. Similarly, community-based mapping blends modern cartography with participatory processes. It draws on local knowledge and expertise to create maps that depict important geospatial and political relationships. Critical analysis is key to creating the map, deciding on scale and what to include. Maps can be created by hand or using accessible GIS (geographic information systems) software (e.g. Google maps).

What all of these ‘new’ methods have in common is that they involve the collective creation of a map or exhibit. As such, in making decisions about what to display and communicate, conversations about what is important to know or share become part of the data collection process. Each of these methods also has a cyclical component of planning-action-reflection. Embedding the action research cycle into the method makes it very hard to divorce data collection from analysis.

Challenges and Limitations

The work is not without its ongoing challenges. Care needs to be taken to build in training around confidentiality and develop protocols that are attentive to the ethical dimensions of this work. Especially in small communities, it is very likely that participants will recognize each other when working with transcripts containing identifying information. A plan needs to be in place to consider and mitigate these risks.

Done poorly, the process can result in tokenistic or exploitative labour arrangements. It can perpetuate the privileging of already privileged voices (e.g. those that have time, money and skills are more likely to participate than those who do not). Furthermore, collaborative group processes often advantage extroverts with strong communication skills. Ironically, it is often the quiet introverts who have the most interesting things to say. Strategies need to be in place to draw out diverse perspectives and personalities.

Working collaboratively also runs the risk of creating a situation in which ‘groupthink’ (where the desire for consensus trumps sound analysis) dominates. It is important to remember that the goal of data interpretation is not to come up with one right answer but to explore and engage with a range of plausible

explanations. This is particularly important when there are major power differentials among group members. Reminding marginalized community voices that the reason they are at the table is because of a genuine desire to hear what they have to say can help. Providing a solid orientation, setting up ground rules and reflexively checking assumptions can also help minimize this risk.

When working with marginalized communities over long periods of time, care must be taken to set up realistic expectations. Where resources are available, providing honoraria, meals and transportation can go a long way towards validating time and experience. Furthermore, other social and psychological supports may be necessary to assist with diverse engagement.

Finally, there is a lack of consensus on what the role of the researcher ought to be in these arrangements. Some argue that researchers should merely be facilitators or midwives to the process. Others argue that researchers bring with them a wealth of knowledge and understanding too and should have an equal voice at the analytic table. As a team, it can be useful to engage in open and frank discussions about roles and responsibilities. In each example above, the researcher took on the role of facilitator and popular educator. She broke down traditional barriers or what it meant to be an 'expert' in the hope of opening up new lines of communication that might lead to different kinds of insights about her data.

Despite the promise, some projects are more participatory than others. What is clear across all the examples noted above is that engaging in collaborative analysis is time-consuming and resource intensive. It requires patience, creativity, a strong commitment to the process from all stakeholders and the human and financial resources to carry it out. In all the case studies reviewed, the authors felt it was well worth the extra effort.

Sarah Flicker

See also Community-Based Participatory Research; community-based research; data analysis; Participatory Action Research; Photovoice

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COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENTAL ACTION INQUIRY

The term *Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry* (CDAI) refers to a school of action research that was developed by William R. Torbert and his colleagues beginning in the early 1970s. CDAI integrates from diverse theoretical traditions including adult developmental theory, various mindfulness and attention practices, Action Science as articulated by Chris Argyris and his colleagues and the political theories of justice developed by John Rawls and Amartya Sen, to name but a few. CDAI begins with the recognition that all social actions are also inquiries and vice versa. In the first case, actions may serve as inquiries by generating unexpected outcomes and novel information from the environment. In the second case, all inquiries are in some sense also actions in their framing, biases, omissions, modes of communication and impacts on the external world. The explicit linking of action and inquiry leads to a central organizing question at the heart of CDAI: How can we simultaneously enhance the validity of the information upon which we act and the effectiveness and timeliness of our actions and inquiries?

Paradoxically, if researchers try to practice maintaining an inquiring stance in the midst of action, they will quickly realize that they forget to do it. In fact, the more one tries to observe oneself in action, the more one may realize that one is not even clear where one's attention is directed most of the time. For this reason,

CDAI treats attention and self-awareness as core skills that need to be developed through a process called first person research and practice (described below). This rigorous focus on attention and personal development is one of the central contributions of CDAI to the broader field of action research.

Drawing from the Action Science principles developed by Argyris and his colleagues, CDAI is a prescriptive theory that shares the goal of helping people moving from less effective Model I behaviours into more effective Model II behaviours. In CDAI, these two modes are renamed 'Mystery/Mastery' and 'Collaborative Inquiry', but they maintain the basic structure and functions of the Model I and Model II action logics of Action Science. As in the Model I action logic, the organizing principle behind Mystery/Mastery is keeping one's own goals and motives secret while trying to master the external world through unilateral uses of power. Collaborative inquiry shares the Model II organizing principle of developing shared goals through inquiry, collaboration and mutual uses of power.

One of the most important contributions of CDAI to the field of action research is its use of developmental theory. The integration of developmental theory helps address the central question of what kinds of people, groups, organizations or institutions can reliably practice collaborative inquiry. Because CDAI integrates attention practices (first person research), developmental theory and the basic principles of Action Science, it addresses questions that are not as well explored in other forms of action research. The unique contribution of CDAI to the broader field of action research can be found in its approach to answering three primary questions:

1. What factors enable individuals and organizations to engage in collaborative inquiry?
2. What kind of attention is necessary to remain awake to the evolving, moment-to-moment connections among one's own and others' intentions, plans, actions and outcomes?
3. How can people and groups develop increasing capacities to practice these skills with mutually transforming power and with single-, double- and triple-loop learning?

To address these questions, CDAI applies three sets of core ideas:

1. Four territories of experience and three kinds of learning that can become aligned through single-, double- and triple-loop learning
2. Three types of research and practice
3. Developmental theory

Four Territories of Experience and Three Levels of Learning

The idea that human behaviour is driven by semi-conscious mental models and even deeper, 'taken-for-granted' assumptions is a core insight that is shared among most action research approaches. Like many other schools of action research, CDAI recognizes the importance of exploring the relationships among one's purposes, strategies, behaviours and outcomes, which are called 'territories of experience' in CDAI. According to this school of thought, the human attention can (over the course of adult development) potentially develop the capacity to process experience across these territories simultaneously (e.g. purposes, strategies, behaviours and outcomes), allowing them to interact with one another in more timely ways. A fundamental claim of CDAI is that generating congruity among these territories at both the individual and the organizational scale by accepting feedback indicating incongruities is necessary for generating more timely actions and more collaborative and just outcomes.

The first territory of experience is the realm of *intentions* and is associated with the activity of visioning. This territory includes one's purposes, missions, aims and intuitions and the quality and focus of one's attention itself. The second territory is the domain of *plans* and is associated with the behaviour of strategizing. It includes game plans and strategies (both conscious and initially unconscious) for achieving one's intentions. The third territory of experience is the realm of our own *actions* as we experience them from the inside, our deeds, performances and conversational activities. The fourth territory of *outcomes* is associated with the activity of assessment and includes the impacts of one's activities, assessments of these outcomes, their broader and longer term environmental implications and so on. One of the central goals of CDAI is to help people and organizations pay attention to all of these territories of experience and the relationships among them in real time.

Another important aspect of CDAI is the theory of learning implied by reflecting on the links between each of these territories. In this area, CDAI draws from systems dynamics and cybernetic theory. However, CDAI reframes traditional cybernetic theory in terms that are congruent with the four territories of experience described above and has a unique perspective on triple-loop learning that focuses on the central role of attention and mindfulness in generating timely and effective actions.

According to CDAI (and related action research approaches), the depth of one's learning, and therefore one's ability to design more effective actions, is directly related to the number of linkages included in one's attention. Single-loop learning is the simplest

(and most limited) form of learning as it focuses narrowly on the link between actions (the third territory of experience) and outcomes (the fourth territory of experience). In a single-loop system, when current actions do not generate the desired results, a simple control device can alter the system's actions (within a narrow range) to generate more desirable results. A thermostat is the canonical example of a single-loop learning system in that it sends feedback about the state of the current system (the room temperature) to a heater, which instigates a limited set of actions (turning on or off) to keep the system within the desired parameters (the temperature set on the thermostat). A simple organizational example would be dropping the price of a product or increasing marketing activity to increase net revenue via increased sales.

Double-loop learning is the process of examining the links between one's strategies and actions to better understand the cause of some set of outcomes. Continuing with the previous example of increasing profit via sales, if the root cause of low sales is actually product quality, dropping prices could increase sales volume, which would also increase product returns and, thus, increase total labour and material costs, resulting paradoxically in reduced net revenue. Correcting these broader systemic problems requires a double-loop solution like assembling a quality control team composed of colleagues in marketing, customer support and production to identify the source of the quality issues.

CDAI shares with other action research approaches the idea that triple-loop learning focuses on one's deeper mission and assumptions and how these are related to one's plans and actions. In the preceding example, if the problem was found to be in the performance of a critical component made by a small number of unreliable suppliers, the organization might find it necessary to move into a new line of business entirely, thereby altering its basic mission. In addition to this basic definition, CDAI also includes an aspect of triple-loop learning that relates to the quality of one's attention. Specifically, CDAI argues that engaging in triple-loop learning requires the effective integration of three kinds of research and practice. This attentional aspect of triple-loop learning has yet to receive much attention from other schools of action research and represents an area of possible future integration.

First, Second and Third Person Research and Practice

One of the central claims of CDAI is that ongoing timely action requires the integration of three types of research/practice in the midst of practice. First person research and practice is focused on issues such as the ability to engage in self-reflection, recognize one's own

behavioural patterns and reactions and manage one's choice of words and actions to optimize their timeliness and effectiveness. Second person research and practice involves testing the congruence between our own and others' frames, actions and impacts. This aspect of CDAI includes Action Science methods such as balancing between advocacy and inquiry and so on. In addition to the *advocacy* and *inquiry* of Action Science, CDAI adds the ideas of *framing* and *illustrating* as additional parts of speech that are necessary for aligning frames and actions among people.

Therefore, whereas traditional Action Science approaches focus on two parts of speech, CDAI identifies four parts of speech that correspond to the four territories of experience described above. *Framing* is stating the purpose for a given conversation, event or occasion in pursuit of a shared purpose. *Advocating* is recommending a course of action, stating a fact or opinion, asserting a goal or option. *Illustrating* is painting a visual picture or offering a story based on some concrete observation that either supports or contests what is being advocated. *Inquiring* is asking a genuine question, inviting feedback, seeking input from others and so on. One of the fundamental observations of CDAI is that people typically emphasize advocating and illustrating and, as a result, rarely develop shared goals for their conversations or test for the impact of their words and actions in real time.

Third person research and practice is the kind of objective inquiry on third person 'objects' that is typical of traditional social science (and even some kinds of action research). William Torbert illustrates the distinction between first, second and third person research and practice with an anecdote about the moment when Kurt Lewin's researchers at Bethel allowed research participants to join them in their evening discussions of the day's observations. What had been a group of scientists engaged in third person research on the activities of participants earlier in the day (i.e. in the past) was transformed into first and second person research in the present when the participants began to receive feedback from the researchers and also began to question the interpretations of the researchers.

Table 1 presents a synthesis of the previous two sets of constructs (four territories of experience and three forms of research and practice) and lists the typical actions that occur at each territory of experience in each form of research practice. For example, in the first row (first territory), intention and attention at the individual level correspond to a frame (or purpose for a conversation) at the second person level and to a vision or mission at the organizational level. This kind of cross-level theorizing is typical of CDAI and is a source of both its strength and some of its limitations (which are discussed in the final section).

	<i>First Person Attention</i>	<i>Second Person Conversation</i>	<i>Third Person Organizing</i>
First territory	Attending/intending	Framing	Visioning
Second territory	Thinking/feeling	Advocating	Strategizing
Third territory	Sensing/behaving	Illustrating	Operating
Fourth territory	Perceiving/effecting	Inquiring/listening	Assessing

Table 1 *Four Territories of Experience and Three Forms of Research/Practice*

The final element of CDAI is focused on explaining what makes some individuals, groups or organizations more or less able to engage in this kind of real-time self-correcting activity and why it is critical to the development of more just societies.

Developmental Theory

The incorporation of adult development theory has been the most distinctive, important and controversial aspect of CDAI. The use of developmental theory began when Torbert encountered the theories of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson and Lawrence Kohlberg as a graduate student at Yale working with Argyris. Developmental theory was first used at the organizational level to analyze Yale Upward Bound, an organization that Torbert founded and studied as part of his doctoral work. It was only later that the framework was reapplied to the individual level and used to develop a psychometric instrument based on the Washington Sentence Completion Test and an organizational assessment tool, which together have been used to predict the success of organizational change initiatives.

CDAI identifies a set of eight developmental stages, or action logics, which can be used to diagnose personal and organizational development as well as social scientific paradigms. In early statements of the theory, the stages are described as being organized in a hierarchical sequence, with later stages being both more effective than earlier stages and containing the abilities of earlier stages. More recent statements of the theory treat them as widening circles of awareness and behavioural choices on a spiral of personal growth. As people progress through each developmental stage, the same set of basic issues, such as identity, power and love, get revisited at each transition.

Unfortunately, providing a complete description of each developmental stage as it is manifested at the individual, organizational and institutional levels is beyond the scope of this entry. However, because relationships with power are particularly diagnostic of different developmental stages, describing how an individual at each stage might view the use of power

in an interpersonal relation is one way to effectively summarize the developmental aspect of the theory:

1. *Opportunist*: Maximize own winning, minimize own losing—coercive power
2. *Diplomat*: Minimize eliciting others' negative emotions—reference power
3. *Expert*: Maximize rationality in self-presentation and goals—legitimate power
4. *Achiever*: Achieve own self-defined goals—productive power
5. *Individualist*: Optimize inquiry about whether actual performance aligns with our stated values—visioning power
6. *Strategist*: Optimize internal alignment and commitment of partners to shared vision—praxis power
7. *Alchemist*: Maximize mutual influence and positive freedom of choice at a given time—mutually transforming power
8. *Ironist*: Generate timely action (according to multiple criteria)—the power of liberating disciplines

This list illustrates the increasing mutuality in the use of power and timeliness of action that is characteristic of later stages of development. There is also an important dividing line between the first four stages of development, which are not open to double-loop learning, and the last four stages, which are. In an interesting parallel, the first four stages, where over 90 per cent of managers are found, closely mirror the governing variables of Model I behaviour in Action Science. In contrast, the last four actionlogics differ significantly from Argyris' Model II, which is described simply as maximizing valid information, free choice and internal commitment.

Applications and Limitations of CDAI

As mentioned above, the developmental component of CDAI has been its most significant contribution

to the field of action research. Originally based on Jane Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test of Ego Development, the CDAI measure of ego development was refined by Sussane Cook-Greuter and Torbert, is currently available in several versions and has been used in numerous organizational consulting engagements and academic dissertations over the past 20 years. Case studies and small quantitative studies have shown some validity for the CDAI ego development, but more research is certainly needed to assess its power as a predictive tool. In addition, because it uses sentence completion, it shares some of the same constraints associated with related sentence completion tests and developmental stage instruments. In particular, the instrument does not support a retrospective biographical analysis of a leader's development, nor does it shed light on the dynamics of development. E. Kelly's 2011 University of Lancaster dissertation on Warren Buffett provides a promising new analytic method for scoring detailed historical episodes of action. Finally, because developmental theory empirically predicts that leaders at later action logics are more capable of generating collaborative transformational development in their colleagues and organizations, CDAI strikes some people as being overly normative and hierarchical.

A second feature of CDAI that is both a source of its strength and a challenge to its future deployment in research and action is its tendency to apply its theories across levels of analysis and contexts. The evolution of its treatment of developmental theory provides a useful illustration of this phenomenon. As noted above, CDAI first applied and then reformulated Erikson's developmental theory for a higher level of analysis. Only later was it integrated with empirical measures derived from Loevinger's work to diagnose individual adult developmental stages. Since that time, the developmental framework has been applied across many levels of analysis and contexts and has been used to assess the developmental stages of people, groups, organizations, institutions and even scientific paradigms themselves. Similarly, the four territories of experience have first, second and third person manifestations as they are applied to the individual, group and organizational levels. This tendency of CDAI to extend its constructs across levels of analysis is both a source of its strength and a potential challenge going forward, in that its complexity may make it hard for future scholars and practitioners to master its many interrelated constructs and applications. Indeed, Torbert himself contends that it is not a theory to be mastered and then applied but rather an approach worthy of an entire lifetime of 'living inquiry'.

Pacey Foster

See also Action Science; authenticity; first person action research; Lewin, Kurt; second person action research; systems thinking; third person action research

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COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

The Collaborative Management Research (CMR) approach refers to a stream within the action research family that has been identified as a potent method for advancing scientific knowledge and bringing about change in organizations. At the most basic level, the CMR orientation claims that by bringing management and researchers closer together, the rate of progress in understanding and addressing issues such as creativity, innovation, growth, change, organizational effectiveness, economic development and sustainable development will be faster than if either managers or researchers approached these topics separately.

One of the most comprehensive definitions of CMR was advanced recently by William Pasmore and his colleagues (2008):

Collaborative Management Research is an effort by two or more parties, at least one of whom is a member of an organization or system under study and at least one of whom is an external researcher, to work together in learning about how the behavior of managers, management methods, or organizational arrangements affect outcomes in the system or systems under study, using methods that are scientifically based and intended to reduce the

likelihood of drawing false conclusions from the data collected, with the intent of both proving performance of the system and adding to the broader body of knowledge in the field of management. (p. 20)

Collaboration, Management and Research

CMR occurs in a natural setting within a specific business and industry context, involves true collaboration between practitioners and researchers, addresses an emerging specific issue of concern, uses multiple methodologies that are scientific, involves the creation of a learning system via the establishment of learning mechanisms, improves system performance and adds to the scientific body of knowledge in the field of management. At the core of CMR, one can find three terms or pillars: collaboration, management and research.

Collaboration is about a full range of relationships amongst individuals within and outside the boundaries of a system. In the context of CMR, collaboration implies research efforts which include the active involvement of managers and researchers in the framing of the research agenda, the selection and pursuit of methods and the development of implications for action (e.g. *co-determination* of the research, *co-evolution* and *co-interpretation*). Collaboration does not impose the requirement of an equal partnership in each of these activities, although it is assumed that a more equal partnership would be preferred. At the heart of this endeavour is ‘collective inquiry’, which is the joint pursuit of answers to questions of mutual interest through dialogue, experimentation, the review of knowledge or other means. To be more precise, management engages in collective inquiry to get a better understanding of a certain issue or phenomenon by means of input of scientifically valid knowledge from researchers. Similarly, scientists engage in collective inquiry in order to get a better understanding of a certain issue or phenomenon by means of practically valid knowledge from practitioners. If two parties don’t share a fundamental interest in learning, there can be no collective inquiry and no collaborative research.

The second pillar in the term, *management*, should have the same meaning to most. Yet this is not necessarily the case, nor can the meaning of *management* be fully explored within this entry. For some *management* is a noun: an individual or collective group of actors who aspire to influence the behaviour or performance of a system. *Management* (or *managing*) can also be a verb: the practice of those actors—in other words, what formal or informal managers actually do to achieve their intentions. In addition, *management* signifies an art or a practice or, otherwise put, what managers tacitly or explicitly know and believe about

how to go about managing an organization or a complex system. One can envision a three-dimensional matrix, in which one dimension focuses on the actions of different types of managerial actors (e.g. individual, organizational and systemic), the different settings are the second dimension (e.g. a single organization, networks of organizations, systems, regions or communities) and the third dimension is the aspect of management studied (e.g. specific managerial actions, systems of management processes affecting the organizational culture or performance and the co-ordinating mechanisms among networks of organizations). One can also add to this complexity by inserting additional dimensions, such as managerial roles. Thus, the question of what is management and how one should approach its study is open to debate, experimentation and discovery.

Research is the third and last pillar of the term. At the most fundamental level, what every form of research shares in common is the desire to understand something of importance through the use of means that limit the likelihood that false conclusions will be reached. What researchers aspire to add to the discussion of these topics is ‘objective data’, or rather to express beliefs justified by earlier research, by observations having been gathered through more rigorous methods and having been arrived at by a better application of a formalized logic than one would casually use in forming an opinion about something based on one’s personal experience or informal conversations with others.

The CMR Process

Leading CMR effort is a challenging task that requires careful attention to the context, the development of collaborative relationships, the collaborative research process and outcomes.

The *context* includes the nature of the external business context (e.g. the state of the economy, the characteristics of the industry in which the effort takes place and the national and regional characteristics as captured by cultural, political and educational dimensions), the nature of key organizational features (e.g. business strategies, structure, key processes, technology, the social system, economic performance indicators and management systems and dynamics) and the initial research activities (e.g. the preliminary dialogue with top management about common areas of interest, perceived legitimacy and the added value of a collaborative orientation and past experiences in collaborative research).

The *nature and quality of the emergent collaborative relationships* differentiate CMR from other specific orientations and have the most significant impact on the collaboration process and, in turn, on the

outcomes. The context in which the collaboration takes place does much to determine the quality of the collaboration that will eventually evolve, but the management of the collaboration is equally important, if not more important. In this sense, the quality of the collaboration depends on different factors. First, the establishment of the collaborative process sets in motion the emerging collaborative dynamics. This factor includes different variables, such as the perceived level of need for collaboration, the collaboration potential and the alignment of interests, values, languages and meanings. Unlike other orientations, the CMR process strives towards arriving at a common definition of the critical issue to focus on and then developing an agreement concerning the collaborative study and its scope. The organization does not seek help, and the researchers do not impose their studies; the collaboration here is really co-determined by the constructive dialogue between the researchers and the top management of the organization about a topic of mutual interest.

An integral part of the exploratory dialogue is the establishment of a collaborative climate. Nurturing a collaborative climate refers to the pioneering and learning logic, the building of trust and openness and, finally, the modelling of concern for others, respect and acceptance. As a part of the early dialogue with the top management, different ways to manage the project and the possible mechanisms to carry out the project are explored. Some tapestry of research project steering group and study teams that best fits the organization and topic under study is explored and established. A few of the key variables in this factor include (a) possible criteria for the formation of the collaborative research team(s), (b) the appropriate number of organization and academic members; (c) the structure, roles and resources (e.g. time, spaces) of the team; (d) diversity (e.g. in terms of basic demographics, motivation or personality) and (e) the development of a shared vision. This factor also includes the development of working processes, such as how the study teams and steering team should work, how the teams should interact with organizational members who are not part of the steering/study teams, what should be the most appropriate co-ordination mechanisms and how unanticipated challenges should be handled. Finally, development and possession of the skills and competences that are needed in the facilitation of the collaborative research process seem critical to both the quality of the collaborative relationships and the quality of the CMR process.

The development of the collaborative process can be captured by a cluster of different sub-processes and phases. These processes are influenced by, and at the same time influence, the *quality of the CMR process* among the actors involved in the effort. Since the quality

of the collaboration continuously evolves throughout the inquiry process, the delineation of which variables influence what other variables is complex. The variables can be organized based on those that have to do with the design of the collaborative research process, those that have to do with the inquiry process and those that have to do with the implementation process.

The first process is the collaborative research process design. It includes mutual education and learning with the top management about the emerging issue for the collaborative effort; the establishment of the research mechanisms, scope, resources and timeline and further mutual learning about the issue; the possible scientific research methods to be used and the design and management of the ongoing communication with the organizational members about the study. In this process, the key words might be two. The first is *pluralism*, both theoretical pluralism and methodological; in fact, given that different theories inform different methodologies and methods, methodological pluralism (drawing upon methods from different paradigms) becomes a useful partner to theoretical pluralism. The second key word is *change*, as collaborative research processes are best suited to the investigation of situations in which action leads to change.

The second process is the inquiry process itself. It is seen as an operative core of the collaborative process, and it is a joint process managed by the collaborative research steering group and study groups, if formed. Typically, it includes exploring alternative data collection methods and processes and finalizing them, training the research team(s) in data collection, systematic data collection, initial data analysis by research team(s) and developing the process for creating shared meaning and data interpretations.

The third process is the implementation phase. This includes identifying and formulating possible managerial implications and actions, and possible additional research actions, based on the shared data meaning or interpretation; presentation of the possible actions for change to the top management; top management's decision about the next actions and steps and actual implementation of the actions. This could lead to significant changes, and it influences the quality of outcomes of the collaborative effort. As change actions continue to take place, and ideally become an integral routine of organizational life, ideas for change could be enhanced and iteratively reformulated. Finally, the collaborative process itself as described is influenced by the quality of the collaboration, developed and transformed through the evolution of the effort. At the same time, the development of the collaborative process has a direct influence on the outcomes of the effort.

While one can capture the *outcomes of the CMR effort* in a variety of ways, four main factors seem

central in capturing the effectiveness of collaborative efforts. The first factor is the change implementation in the organization, which potentially includes organizational improvements, specific learning on the studied phenomenon, improvements of quality of work life, the development of organizational learning competencies and the possible observation and analysis of these learning and change processes. The second intended outcome is the creation of new scientific knowledge, that is, scientific production and research group development (in terms of knowledge and skills, both on the studied topic and on the collaborative processes). The third possible outcome concerns the creation of evaluative systems: A post-study review and/or a continuous monitoring programme can be developed to generate further reflections and learning about how the collaborative processes and the change actions were performed. Finally, the fourth outcome is the possible consolidation of a collaborative research protocol and coherent tools, the protocol for ongoing organizational learning and the tools and processes for continuous discovery.

These outcome factors and their quality are a result of the complex interactions, relationships, processes and activities that occur throughout the course of the collaborative effort. As the manuscript suggests, the outcomes of CMR effort are influenced by the development of the collaborative process and its quality, which in turn is influenced by the quality of the collaboration, which is itself influenced by contextual factors. To add to this complexity, the outcomes later influence the process itself, the quality of the collaboration and, at times, even the contextual factors, for example, the organizational features or the research group/s. The dynamic nature of the model helps explain the reasons for the variety of approaches and outcomes associated with collaborative efforts.

CMR and Action Research

Action research and collaborative research inquiry orientations have some similar and some distinct features. A comparative examination reveals the following: Both are focused on developing a deeper level of understanding of an important issue for both the system studied and the scientific community; the purpose of the study is identification, modification and transformation of the studied system; they constitute a transformational social science in the realm of practical knowing; they share the concern for the inquiry process and scientific rigour; the researcher is involved in the inquiry process and, lastly, both are concerned with system improvement and added value to the management science.

Action research and CMR are embedded in research, collaboration and the synergy between them. Both tend

to engage an external researcher in the conversation and discovery process. At the most basic level, action research efforts start from action and are followed by a collaborative inquiry process, and this refers to the ontology of 'action' and 'intervention'. CMR tends to start from the development of a shared view of a critical issue of interest to both the senior management and the researcher to investigate. This is followed by the exploration of alternative ways to design the inquiry mechanisms and process. As such, the CMR ontology includes 'collaboration' and 'intervention'.

Based on the different ontology, the context and the process within which action research and CMR take place seem to differ as well. Another key difference in the context of both action research and CMR is the initial interface with the system. In CMR, the initial interface is with the top management, which is viewed as a key actor in the process. In action research, the initial interface is not limited to the senior management, which is not necessarily viewed as a key actor. The initial interface tends to be with members at all levels of the organization.

Action research and CMR place the researcher as an observing, engaged actor. The interactive relationships that develop in both orientations between the researcher(s) and the members of the system generate a deeper level of analysis, insights and understanding. These sets of issues seem to be a critical contextual element for both action research and CMR. In CMR, the researcher is also continuously engaging with the senior management, maintaining the balance between senior management involvement and detachment from the study and facilitating the mutual education process and research skills acquisition. In action research, the researcher is mainly concerned with facilitating the inquiry process, facilitating the ongoing learning process and, at times, the engagement of senior management.

The role of senior management seems to differ in each approach. In CMR, the senior management is viewed as a key partner in the process and plays an important role in the initial framing of the research focus and the study design. In action research, the senior management is viewed as a possible partner but not a necessary one in the framing of the study focus. It usually will sanction the effort but is not necessarily involved in the study design. The structuring of the inquiry process seems to follow a similar pattern. In CMR, the orientation is different. Specific design alternatives are explored, and choices about specific structural and process configurations are made. Furthermore, following exploration of alternative learning mechanisms to carry out the study, specific choices are made about the most appropriate study-learning mechanism (in other words, steering committee, study teams, links between study teams and formal organizational management hierarchy).

In action research, the focus is on the effort of laying the foundation for a learning system, and learning systems seem to take a wide variety of shapes and forms.

Last, the inquiry process provides some additional insights into the similarities and differences between CMR and action research. In CMR and action research, the process follows collaboration around the exploration of a wide variety of data collection tools and processes, and choices are made about the most appropriate data collection tools and data collection process. In CMR, the senior management will be involved in the final decision about the recommended data collection tools and data collection process. In action research and CMR, following the data collection, study teams review the raw data and create the shared meaning of the data and identify possible action steps. In CMR, the management team will also review the raw data, the shared meaning of the data created by the study team and identification of the possible action items by the study team; they will then create their own shared meaning of the data and couple that with what was created by the study team and advance action items and steps.

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See also collaborative action research; Co-Operative Inquiry; inter-organizational action research; multi-stakeholder dialogue; organization development; practical knowing; work-based learning

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COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

See Critical Participatory Action Research

COMMUNICATIVE SPACE

See Critical Participatory Action Research

COMMUNITARIANISM

Communitarianism is an evolving philosophical outlook with a core emphasis on the need for reciprocal relationships in functional communities. Communities are functional to the extent that their members experience mutual co-operation rather than conflict as the norm. A characteristic communitarian concern is to oppose both top-down declarations on how everyone should live and any form of laissez faire thinking that suggests that individuals are always best left to finding their own ways without any collective structure. What it offers instead is an inclusive approach to assessing human interactions so as to determine what improvements can be made by all the members of any given community. It has a natural affinity to action research, especially given its focus on empowered community participation in problem-solving. This entry provides an overview of communitarian ideas and their relevance to the development of action research.

Historical Perspective

The earliest proponents of communitarian thinking include Mo Tze (a Chinese philosopher, ca 479–399 BC) and Aristotle (384–322 BC). Mo Tze criticized Confucian teachings for sacrificing genuine reciprocity for

the sake of preserving rigid hierarchies. For Mo Tze, people could not be expected to put up with conceding more resources and privileges to an elite on the ground that it would maintain order. Not only would such asymmetric divisions breed tensions that would stoke disorder, a truly sustainable form of social stability could not be secured without people co-operating with each other on mutually acceptable terms. Mohist philosophy therefore requires all social actions to be judged by the test of mutuality—one should bring about a state of affairs affecting others if and only if one is prepared to accept the equivalent state of affairs being brought to bear on oneself. Strong communities, on this model, are built on having members ready to support one another on the understanding that any support given would be reciprocated.

Aristotle's communitarian ideas stem from his opposition to the Platonic tendency to privilege abstract uniformity over the diverse experiences of actual social life. He objected to Plato's conception of an entire community as a singly organic entity, with its many parts being mere subordinates to the 'mind' represented by the ruling elite. In contrast, he viewed communities as composed of autonomous citizens who had to constantly deliberate and review what they had in common and how they could best pursue their shared interests. What was good for a community could only emerge from the lived experiences of the people concerned and not be defined by some absolute metaphysical idea in isolation.

The demands for co-operation on equal terms and for social prescriptions to be grounded empirically on what people actually experience were to be notably fused in nineteenth and early twentieth century Anglo-American civic activism. It began with the adaptation of Robert Owen's ideas in the development of worker and community co-operatives—the characterization of which led to the coining of the term *communitarian*. Communities could improve themselves by being liberated from socio-economic constraints which had hitherto held people back from making a greater contribution to the common good. By the turn of the century, communitarian-minded liberals such as L. T. Hobhouse in the UK and John Dewey in the USA were applying their social and epistemological critiques to debates regarding the participatory opportunities in schools, the workplace and public institutions in general. Their shared premise is that a thoroughly democratic culture would empower people to participate in shaping the decisions that affect their communities, increasing the likelihood of those decisions responding to the needs of the communities and building trust and confidence in their collective endeavours.

The influence of these ideas declined in the 1970s and 1980s, when the political culture in Britain and

America came to be dominated by the assumption that either social problems were of the kind that should be dealt with by an elite wielding strong authority (based on religion, status, expertise or wealth) or they were better tackled by individuals operating on their own (without the constraints of statutory regulation). The persistence of this dichotomous attitude in turn provoked a resurgence of communitarian ideas around the end of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, reflected by the twin criticisms of conservative defenders of oppressive hierarchies and liberal exponents of individual-centric morality. Communitarian alternatives for mending social divides were put forward by thinkers such as Philip Selznick, Michael Sandel, Amitai Etzioni, Charles Derber and Henry Tam.

Communitarian Principles

There are three communitarian principles that are central to assessing the appropriateness of interpersonal behaviour. First, the principle of Co-Operative Inquiry requires anyone making an assertion to be judged with reference to the extent to which informed participants deliberating under conditions of thoughtful and uncoerced exchanges would concur. Any provisional consensus reached by one group of individuals must in turn be open to possible revisions subject to examinations carried out with input from other groups. The ultimate strength of any truth claim rests in the likelihood of that claim surviving the critical deliberations of ever-expanding circles of inquirers.

Secondly, the principle of mutual responsibility requires all members of any community to take responsibility for enabling one another to pursue those values which stand up to the test of reciprocity. What an individual may value cannot expect to command respect from others if its pursuit is incompatible with the realization of goals valued by others. The range of mutual responsibilities would expand over time to cover direct and indirect care for dependents, help to those who would otherwise be neglected, safeguards for verifiable evidence and coherent reasoning and cultivation of personal abilities not inimical to those of others. Omission to support, as well as action to harm, would be deemed a breach of the responsibility owed to one another.

Thirdly, the principle of citizen participation requires that all those affected by any given power structure be able to participate as equal citizens in determining how the power in question is to be exercised. All those subjected to potentially binding commands should be entitled to learn about, review and determine how to reform the decision-making processes. This applies not only to government institutions but also businesses, schools and community organizations. It follows that

power relations should not retain structural or cultural barriers which hold people back from accessing information, putting forward their suggestions, questioning proposals or sharing in decision-making processes.

Development of Inclusive Communities

Communitarians share the objective of guiding individuals, institutions, cultures and laws towards general dispositions as well as specific policies that will enable people to live reciprocally in inclusive communities. The direction of travel for the development of inclusive communities is set by the three communitarian principles. The extent to which the character and behaviour of individuals and groups help or hinder human interactions in relation to the conditions advocated by those principles provides the reference point for judging their acceptability.

One of the key instruments for translating communitarian concerns into practical support for the development of inclusive communities is action research, or Action Learning. For any given community, neighbourhood, or organization, this involves providing all those concerned with the confidence, skills, support and opportunities to engage in shared deliberations regarding what they think is problematic, what they make of the available evidence and testimony, what suggestions for change are to be put forward, how conflicting views and priorities are to be resolved and what conclusions are to be drawn from their own experience and collected data about the impact of the selected actions.

The deployment of citizen-centric action research is an integral part of the development of inclusive communities and is a key factor in differentiating it from non-communitarian forms of social intervention where a programme, based on the claimed expertise of a small group, is rolled out without any serious prior engagement with the people who will be affected by it.

Examples of Communitarian Action Research

One of the largest programmes of communitarian action research was undertaken by the British government between 2003 and 2010. The 'Together We Can' programme initiated action research across the country to empower citizens to participate in shaping policy development, reviewing policy impact and influencing policy adjustment in the light of their experience. A common assumption running through the diverse action research projects (covering housing, health, crime, education, the environment and every other key public policy area) was that while the government was aware there were obstacles to efforts to advance towards more inclusive community life, it was only

through researching and learning with citizens themselves that sustainable progress could be made.

For example, the active learning for active citizenship initiative, also known as 'Take Part', arranged for trainers or facilitators to work with groups whose views had not featured in local service and policy development. In Manchester, resettled refugees and asylum seekers were enabled to produce a guide on what they could do for the city and how the city could help them settle more effectively into their new life. In Exeter, people with learning difficulties were given the support so they could explain to the public service care providers what worked well and what did not, so that informed improvements could be made.

The Civic Pioneers project involved a partnership of locally elected authorities from across the UK committed to learning from their citizens and from each other on how such learning could be continuously improved. The experience of the participating authorities and local citizens confirmed that the ongoing exchange with the public as civic equals, as opposed to mere service recipients or supplicants, had a key role to play in boosting public confidence and satisfaction with public institutions and in achieving shared objectives such as crime reduction, environmental enhancement, health improvement and significant savings both through efficiency gains and more effective prevention of costly problems.

In tackling crime and the fear of crime, communitarian Action Learning partnerships consistently delivered better results than comparable areas without such partnerships. In one case example in Bexley, London, crime fell across the board while the percentage of residents of the neighbourhood in question feeling safe after dark went up from just 22 to 93 per cent. When one initiative involving the deployment of locked gates to keep out burglars apparently failed to deliver burglary reductions in certain streets, the collaborative spirit engendered made it possible for residents in the area to inform the police frankly that they (the residents) had neglected to lock the gates. They immediately remedied the oversight, and burglary in those streets was brought down.

The effectiveness of involving citizens in ascertaining what public actions should be taken in changing circumstances was replicated in different areas, and not just in relation to crime and disorder. Tenants on housing estates given a role in reviewing local problems and prioritizing intervention consistently attained a higher level of satisfaction with housing services. Road safety projects, in Bradford, for example, centred on the observations and deliberations of people who lived in the areas concerned and led to safety measures which cut injuries by half and reduced fatalities down to a third of the baseline level.

Community health initiatives have also significantly benefited from communitarian action research. Instead

of treating people as consultees to feed into what the professionals would decide as health priorities, or as mere volunteers to implement plans that have been fixed, residents in project areas were invited to participate in facilitated discussions to identify what was causing the most problems and what they, with the help of the health professionals, could do to help their relatives and neighbours. The interventions developed included assistance in shopping for healthier food, spreading messages about particular health risks in hair salons and mutual inspections to spot hazards in homes which posed a real risk in causing falls, the single highest cause of emergency admission to hospitals for the targeted elderly group.

Communitarian action research has in the 2010s become a mainstream, if still underused, approach to finding solutions grounded in the experiences of communities themselves. Experiments in the transfer of assets from public bodies to community organizations, the raising of community shares to take over the ownership of private enterprises and community monitoring of locality-focused public services have all benefited from facilitators-researchers working alongside citizens to generate options to be tested, assessing emerging outcomes and drawing up proposals for longer term changes.

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See also Confucian principles; covenantal ethics; ethics and moral decision-making; feminist ethics

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jointly, in a ‘communal’ manner, how to improve it by interacting and exchanging regularly. Broader and more detailed conceptualizations of the term view CoPs as an exercise that goes beyond ‘practice’ in the sense that these may be groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and sets of expertise or skills in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis. As such, the development communities of practice can be seen as a central component of action research by promoting both theory and practice. In spatial terms, communities of practice can be located locally or can be virtual in nature.

The concept of CoPs appeared in the world of organizational theory and knowledge management in the early part of the 1990s with the realization that, using CoP concepts, practitioners in various fields can acquire valued knowledge from other community members and share explicit and tacit knowledge (with special emphasis on the latter). In the context of the rapidly expanding information economy, and given the current competitive business and NGO (non-governmental organization) ecology, in which the ability to master and apply data information and knowledge quickly, effectively and in an innovative manner are key, CoPs are naturally perceived as central vehicles to gain a competitive advantage. This entry will describe the characteristics of CoPs and CoP interventions, with a focus on their relationship with emerging information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Characteristics of CoPs

Harvesting, creating, sharing and leveraging of knowledge are what CoPs are working together to achieve. The exchange of knowledge in communities can take place explicitly or implicitly. Therefore, the distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge is important. Members in a CoP usually mutually dedicate and identify the relevant field of expertise or a particular topic to share their ideas. Community members may have different backgrounds, but they all work together towards achieving the same goal(s), using their knowledge, skills and abilities. In general, CoPs are self-emerging and self-organizing knowledge networks in which everyone can participate. Members of a CoP do not necessarily work together daily, but they find value in their meetings and interactions.

Usually, the members of a CoP have a common motivation to cultivate a climate of trust, learn together and develop best practices for the organization. The trust members develop is based on their ability to learn together: to care about the domain, to respect each other as practitioners, to expose their questions and challenges and to provide responses that reflect practical

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

In its narrowest strict sense, the term *communities of practice* (CoPs) is defined as a group of individuals who are concerned with a specific practice and learn

experience. It is their commitment to the process that keeps them going and their respect for the voices they represent that builds trust. This allows CoP members to openly share information, insight and advice; explore ideas and act as both human ‘transceivers’ and ‘repeaters’.

The data, information and insights they harvest, create and share ultimately accumulate into knowledge. As the CoPs not only extend across the units of a single organization but can also comprise members of separate organizations, this knowledge leads to the development of a common body of knowledge, approaches, techniques, templates, tools and methodologies within the CoP and beyond—to the organization(s) and the rest of society. Thus, CoPs have been cited as a vehicle for knowledge transfer and competence development and as a bridge between the theories of organizational learning and organizational performance.

Each of the CoP’s members brings a unique set of skills, which is then shared to create a greater body of knowledge and skills amongst the members of the community. This assists in innovation and knowledge creation within organizational units and across the boundaries of organizations. This also creates a good process flow of knowledge and accelerates innovation and intellectual property creation, which is usually well linked with the business strategy of the organization, thus creating benefits that are strategic in nature. As a result, in recent years, CoPs have gained increasing popularity as a way to manage the human and social aspects of knowledge creation and management in organizations and enterprises. Many organizations have implemented CoPs, and they remain one of the important vehicles of knowledge management in the twenty-first century.

CoP and ICTs

Ever since the invention of the electric telegraph, the telephone and radio communications, information technology has always been relevant to organizations and communities to help members connect across time and space and share relevant resources. With the introduction of the Internet as well as intra-organizational communication and information-sharing capabilities (LAN: local area networks)—sharing in an interactive manner is now affordable and easy to implement. New Internet Web 2.0 applications include social networks (Facebook), shared cloud document depositories (Dropbox), shared notes repositories (EverNote), video-sharing ecologies (YouTube), Wiki spaces (Wikipedia), individual and group blogging (Blogger) and micro (Twitter) blogging, information tagging and sharing tools (StumbleUpon) and much more. CoPs are now often being aggregated using these new, more

‘horizontal’ ways to connect and share information. This in turn further enhances networked thinking and new forms of converged data representation. The ability to converge text, audio, graphic and video information states of matter, combined with hypertext and hypermedia linking and embedding tools, allows CoP not only to share knowledge in a richer and more comprehensible manner but also to generate, express and easily share new insights in ways never seen before.

Given the developments in ICTs and the overall improved interaction capabilities they provide (Web 2.0 technologies, mobile computing), the link between CoPs and ICTs has become natural, especially with the vast penetration of Broadband and Cloud computing–related applications. The virtual manifestations of CoP are thus turning out to be the common and almost mandatory complement to real-world CoPs. CoPs can be very technologically advanced, using, for example, sophisticated intranets or corporate social networking tools, or they could be as simple as having a group of like-minded people discussing a work-related problem, seeking a solution, using no or limited technology. Because it is difficult for others to imitate or copy tacit knowledge, there is growing agreement that this type of knowledge is a key element in sustaining organizational competitiveness. It has been argued that sharing and internalizing tacit knowledge require active interaction among individuals. When it comes, however, to creating, accumulating and sharing tacit knowledge, the new Web 2.0 tools demonstrate a number of major advantages. As CoPs allow members to voluntarily create and share both explicit and tacit knowledge (easier from an IT perspective since the coming of the new Web 2.0 technologies), ICTs today can support both modes of knowledge creation, harvesting, dissemination and long-term storage, allowing things such as real-time co-authoring, group discussions without space-time boundaries, documentation of the evolution of knowledge generation and much more. Armed with these new digital information tools, CoPs are today more equipped than ever to be the primary organizational entity leading innovation and intellectual property generation within and beyond organizational boundaries.

CoP Interventions

A common issue in all implementation and intervention efforts of CoPs is the lack of a direct distinction between them and more familiar structures such as task forces, work teams and workgroups. Misunderstanding the differences and the nuances between these organizational manifestations turns out to be a major obstacle to effective implementation of CoPs. Perhaps the major difference between CoP and working teams, groups

and task forces lies in their temporal manifestations. A task force is a special type of team pulled together to address a specific problem, usually of broad scope. Often people are selected in order to represent for a fixed duration an organization, or a unit within it, in a co-ordinative negotiation of a solution or long-term strategy or policy. Teams and workgroups as organizational entities are also usually ad hoc and task oriented in nature. By contrast, CoPs exhibit no specific time-bound work objective but exist indefinitely, depending upon the issues around which they are formed. Indeed, CoPs usually share an evolving area of competence and are willing to share the experience of their practice in that particular area as a long-lasting effort.

Another difference is that CoPs are held together by the 'learning value' members find in their interactions, whereas task forces, workgroups and teams are held together by a task. When the task is accomplished, they disperse. Although the team members are likely to learn through task performance, this learning does not define the team—nor is long-term learning part of the team's mission. The team members' commitment and respective contributions to the task are the main source of trust and cohesion among them. The source of motivation for CoP members is different. They may perform tasks together, but these tasks do not define the community. It is the ongoing learning that sustains their mutual commitment. Members may come from different organizations or perspectives, but their engagement as individual learners is the most salient aspect of their participation.

Initiators and managers who wish to introduce CoPs to their organizations must understand that CoPs are fundamentally self-governing social entities with self-selected leaders and self-defined rules and regulations through which they operate. CoPs cannot be forced into an organizational structure; they only come into being in a natural manner. They are hard to 'domesticate', and in fact, almost by definition, they should not be made a formal part of the organizational structure or directly controlled by the organization. Additionally, CoPs are not static in nature but evolve over time. They change as the members of the community change. They can also change if there is a change in the organizational culture, in the organization's values or mode of operation or, most important, if the business strategy changes.

CoPs and Action Research

As the primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives, connecting people with specific shared areas of interest and allowing them to generate, share and disseminate the knowledge they

produce to their communities is of critical importance. CoPs as a mode of ongoing accumulated and documented conversation among individuals with shared interests and goals, especially when supported by new information technologies that are eliminating space and time constraints, are becoming a critical enabler to any serious action research initiative. The democratic, self-governed, collective, trusting and open mode and culture of interaction that are inherently embedded in CoPs perfectly suit the state of mind required in operating and maintaining most action-oriented research. CoPs can enhance and leverage any action research towards practical outcomes and assist it in creating new forms of understanding.

Yonathan Mizrachi

See also community of inquiry; insider action research; online action research; tacit knowledge

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COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTRES

Community consciousness in many low-income neighbourhoods emerged in the early 1960s. Direct involvement of the public in the definition of their physical environment and an increased sense of social

responsibility constituted a new movement. Following this movement, community design centres (CDCs), aiming to offer design and planning services to enable the poor to define and implement their own planning goals, were established in the USA. Community design is based on the recognition that professional technical knowledge is often inadequate in the resolution of design and planning problems. Initially, community design was based on the belief that people affected by design and planning decisions should be involved in the process of making those decisions.

Influenced by Paul Davidoff's advocacy model of intervention, many design and planning professionals rejected traditional practice. Instead, they fought against urban redevelopment, advocated for the rights of poor citizens and developed methods of citizen participation.

Federal programmes of the 1960s such as the Community Action Program and Model Cities encouraged the participation of citizens in improvement programmes. With these programmes, people outside the professions were allowed to make decisions about planning and financing. Citizens were given the right to participate in planning and implementation processes through grants and technical assistance.

The experiences provided by the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act in community action agencies and the stimulus of the Office of Neighborhood Development (part of the Department of Housing and Urban Development) strategically enhanced the economic development role of grass-roots organizations and the usefulness of professional advocacy networks such as the Association for Community Design. CDCs became the staging ground for professionals to represent the interests of disenfranchised community groups. The social momentum of the Civil Rights Act and the innovations of the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas Program were rapidly building a framework for change throughout the nation. Similar efforts took place in the UK that were referred to as Community Architecture. Other grass-roots activities were also occurring in Europe.

CDCs are dedicated to providing planning, architecture and development services unavailable to emerging civic organizations or established community-based development corporations. Design centre organizational structures range from architect-led non-profit corporations to university service learning programmes, to private practices and American Institute of Architects and community-sponsored volunteer programmes. Support for design centres came from Community Development Block Grants and other sources of funding to facilitate volunteerism. Services provided by most CDCs then and now have included the following:

- Comprehensive, participatory and strategic planning
- Technical assistance in the selection and financing of development projects
- Advocacy and support for the acquisition and management of housing and community facilities

The 1960s and early 1970s was a time of great organizational flourishing. Organized in 1963, the Architectural Renewal Committee in Harlem opposed a proposed freeway in Upper Manhattan. In Cleveland, Architecture-Research-Construction remodelled hospital wards, community-based treatment centres and group homes, working with patients, staff and administrators in a participatory design process. In Tucson, the design centre removed over 100 pit privies from barrio homes and replaced them with prefabricated bathroom units. Founded in 1973, Asian Neighborhood Design has a long history of work on issues in San Francisco's Chinatown. Today, it is a full-service professional planning and architectural service, dedicated to housing and community development throughout the region, with an annual operating budget of about \$4 million. In Salt Lake City, ASSIST, Inc. continues to provide accessibility design services, seeing more than 100 projects through construction each year. Architects, landscape architects and planners, working as volunteers and paid staff in CDCs, complete hundreds of similar projects annually.

Over the last 45 years, CDCs have been effective in providing a broad range of services in economically distressed communities. For the design and planning professions, CDCs have been the equivalent of what health clinics are to medicine and what legal aid is to law. People are served through pro bono professional assistance, but often after the injury has occurred. Long-term community-based planning and visioning processes require linkages between design centres and community organizations, with a full-time commitment to relieving distress in urban and rural environments.

CDCs evolved through two distinct phases. During the initial, idealistic phase, in an effort to help low-income people define their own planning goals and effectively present them to city hall, CDCs became advocacy groups, providing professional and technical support, including information, management know-how and design assistance. Towards the late 1970s, community design practices had gradually become less idealistic and more pragmatic due to a more conservative political climate. CDCs were almost forced to replace their political model of empowerment by an economic one. In response to the economic and political pressures of the 1980s, some CDCs remained project based. Such a centre is generally organized as

a non-profit corporation by an administrator through a local American Institute of Architects chapter and supported by Community Development Block Grants and other sources of funding to facilitate volunteerism.

Other, more comprehensive community design practice is carried out by centres that promote community-based control of local projects with related community improvement activities. Because these centres concentrate on providing a variety of services, they help generate projects for which architectural services will eventually be required. CDCs look to organizers, neighbourhood planning groups, individual low-income clients, community service committees and non-profit boards of directors for their leadership in building communities.

Design centres tend to receive favourable press reports in their local communities, which indicates that they successfully serve their advocacy mission.

A study of 114 community design practitioners was conducted in 2007 to identify the recent trends in community design practice compared with the initial principles. The findings revealed that current practitioners have diverged from the initial conceptualization of community design. Some of the terms used by practitioners, such as *sustainability* and *new urbanism*, are new to the community design field. According to Randy Hester, the current practices of community design are a diversion from the initial ideal of rebelling against the system as opposed to current practices of surviving in the system. It is, however, inevitable for a practice type to shift its focus in order to survive changing economic and social conditions.

It is no longer possible to plan effectively for people given the changing nature of the economy and the political landscape, and the speed at which these changes occur in cities and urban areas of the world. This notion stems from Kurt Lewin's concept of action research, a model that not only integrates theory and practice but also requires that one must act on a system in order to understand it and that the designer/planner will consequently have some effect on the outcome. Action research is a proactive strategy where research utilization has political and social relevance. By placing people and their concerns as the starting point, research takes on a more activist role and can be described as participatory research. Participatory Action Research involves practitioners in the research process from the initial design of the project through data gathering and analysis to the final conclusions and actions arising out of the research. Consequently, this distinguishes community designers from the more traditional practitioners.

Henry Sanoff

See also Asset-Based Community Development; design research; participatory design programming

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development, in its most general sense, is a field that focuses on improving the lives of people by changing the conditions through which they meet basic needs—food, clothing and shelter. Who should do what, how it should be done or what success looks like varies considerably based on who is being asked. Consequently, community development is not so much a single practice as a toolbox of practices and perspectives that have developed over time. Community development thus looks different in different places and at different points in history. There is also wide variation in perspectives on the theories that inform community development and the practices that should come from those theories in the USA versus the Global South. This entry will review some of the history, models and future directions of community development as a field.

Historical Influences on Community Development

It is difficult to determine the actual origin of the field of community development. For some, it might be the settlement houses of the early twentieth century. While beginning in the UK, the model spread to North America fairly quickly with the founding of the famous Hull House in Chicago by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in the late 1800s. The settlement house model was premised on the practice of a residential community worker in an immigrant neighbourhood who could both develop immigrants' abilities to adjust and succeed in their new city and influence city policy to support these new residents.

A second origin was the post–World War II expansion of programmes to influence the development path of the Global South. With the rise of a community development policy in the United Nations, various non-governmental international aid programmes and institutions, such as the World Bank, became associated with the term *community development*, even though many such programmes imposed top-down mandates for certain kinds of capitalist-friendly development, and the accompanying fiscal policy. At the same time, a number of US academics became involved with agriculture-related community development in the Global South.

In the 1960s, community development became more political. Critiques of top-down development models, destructive industrial-agricultural models and disempowering outsider-controlled processes gradually gave way to small-scale, locally controlled practices. Informed by books such as E. F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful* and the global reaction against industrial agriculture, community development also became more influenced by community organizing models that emphasized building local power as a foundation for community development.

As the protest wave of the 1960s and 1970s subsided, community development lost some of its politicized edge but retained an emphasis on small-scale local interventions. In particular, government funders and private foundations in US cities engineered a shift to defund politically successful community organizing groups in favour of organizations that did not threaten the existing balance of power. This strategy led to the rise of community development corporations (CDCs)—usually neighbourhood-based non-profit organizations that emphasized local housing or economic development. Such 'bricks and sticks' organizations concentrated on physical development, building housing and business storefronts in disinvested neighbourhoods.

Such technocratic approaches were criticized for not considering the need to empower neighbourhood residents, instead of just building business storefronts and housing. As CDCs went out of favour, funding for them decreased, and many folded or merged. A cheaper alternative, called capacity building, then expanded into the 2000s. Capacity building remained relatively depoliticized, however, and emphasized building community capacities to self-manage service organizations, run businesses and guide local development rather than to reshape the political-economic structures that created the problems to begin with.

Models of Community Development

The history of community development makes clear just how many models can inform the practice. There are many ways to distinguish the models.

The first distinction is between large-scale and small-scale development. While the large-scale model has fallen out of favour among those practitioners who self-identify with the practice of community development, it is still widely practised by institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In such a model, community development policy is set by international power brokers and agreed to by national governments. Projects are large-scale and capital-intensive, requiring high levels of technical knowledge to manage and maintain. In contrast, small-scale development emphasizes simple technologies that can be designed by local people and managed with a moderate amount of education. Consider the difference between centralized electricity generation and an easily maintained solar panel that can serve basic electrical needs, such as powering a reading lamp, for a single household.

In 1993, Peter Boothroyd and H. Craig Davis elaborated on this distinction in the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* by deconstructing the term *community economic development*. They explained that there were really three approaches embedded in the term. When the community is emphasized, the focus is on building grass-roots participation and relationships. When the economy is emphasized, the community's interests may be subordinated to the demands of business for profit and concessions needed to attract capitalist investment and jobs. When development is emphasized, the focus is on the social structural changes needed to help people meet their basic needs. Actual programmes, and the processes by which they are designed, vary depending on the emphasis.

Another way to differentiate community development approaches is by the extent to which they are comprehensive or specialized. The USA, through the CDC model, has developed a highly specialized system. Many CDCs not only specialize in a single section of a city, but they also specialize in only one aspect of community development, such as housing or business development. In some cases, a CDC may specialize by supporting business development for a single racial or ethnic group. A large number of international development models, such as those practised through the Institute of Development Studies in the UK, are much more comprehensive and combine community organizing and community planning processes with physical and social development projects.

There has also been a distinction in North America, now spreading across Europe, between needs-based and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). In 1993, John Kretzmann and John McKnight came out with their famous book *Building Communities From the Inside Out*. This book inaugurated the practice of ABCD. Their argument was that past attempts to solve

community problems were needs based, making community members seem helpless and putting the power for solutions to problems mostly in the hands of service providers. They instead started from the assumption that community members had 'assets' and all they had to do was mobilize those assets to develop their communities. The ABCD model's unintended drawback, however, was that it led to a blaming-the-victim mentality, distracting community workers and community members from understanding the outside forces working against community development that prevented people's assets from being effectively mobilized.

The controversy that developed over the ABCD model was symptomatic of an underlying debate between co-operation and conflict theories. Social co-operation theories argue that people who occupy very different and unequal stations in life nonetheless have more common interests than they have conflicting interests. Thus, they can come together and collaborate on community development projects. Social conflict theories argue that conflicting material interests, across lines of class, race, gender and other divides, create conflicts. Groups and individuals occupying more powerful class, race, gender and other positions win in that conflict unless those on the other side of the divide organize. It is easy to see, then, how community development workers who adopt a conflict perspective will deploy comprehensive community development models that emphasize local control and community member participation. Those who adopt a co-operation perspective will be more comfortable with corporate and government elites leading community development priorities. The two theories consequently lead to very different perceptions of stakeholders, with the powerful holding an antagonistic 'stake' from a conflict perspective and holding a complementary stake from a co-operation perspective.

The Relationship Between Community Organizing and Community Development

The debate between the conflict and co-operation models in community development also necessitates some discussion of the relationship between community organizing and community development. Community organizing is a practice of community work most associated with Saul Alinsky but also visible in many of the strategies of the Civil Rights Movement, especially those organized by Ella Baker. Community organizing emphasizes building the power of communities, especially neighbourhood-based communities, to influence government and corporate policies on a sustained basis. Consequently, the organizations built by community organizers were adept at public confrontation with existing power holders as they challenged the

systems of inequality in cities. Many of the issues that those groups took on—fair housing and local influence over economic development—were directly tied to community development.

So if one arranges various forms of community practice from the most conflict oriented to the most co-operation oriented, one will find traditional community organizing at the conflict end and the most top-down community development at the co-operation end of the spectrum. The most comprehensive forms of community development often include full-fledged community organizing. But it is difficult to combine the two practices because they come from incompatible models. Organizing power in a community can threaten the funders needed for community development projects. However, the community development possibilities available to a community will be limited unless the community is powerful enough to leverage funding for projects that elites may otherwise not support.

Some of those who think carefully about community work then emphasize the necessity of doing both community organizing and community development, however difficult they may be to combine. Steve Callahan and colleagues, in a widely read paper, talked about 'rowing the boat with two oars' regarding the relationship between community organizing and development. Randy Stoecker has also discussed how to co-ordinate the two practices.

The Issue of Participation in Community Development

As more grass-roots models of community have gained prominence, the question of how people participate in the community development process has garnered more and more attention. The Institute of Development Studies built an entire unit around the question of participation in community development in international contexts. In 2001, Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari produced an edited volume under the title *Participation: The New Tyranny*, questioning whether the lip service given to the topic of participation was supported by meaningful practice. Others have echoed the critique of participation practices as not being followed up with deeds. Some of these critiques have resurrected Sherry Arnstein's original ladder of participation to show how many of the 'participation' practices in many forms of government programming and community development are kept at the level of tokenism.

Forms of resident participation in community development have indeed ranged widely. Some CDCs don't even have democratically elected boards of directors or other forms of community accountability. Sometimes, residents are invited only to complete token needs surveys, or asset maps, or to review plans created by

others. But there are an equal number of projects that are born from residents, designed by residents and carried out by residents with the support of staff from CDCs and other non-governmental organizations who act as community organizers. Professional organizations such as the Community Development Society also promote codes of ethics that emphasize meaningful and powerful participation of all community members in the entire community development process.

Knowledge and Research Issues in Community Development

The field of community development has achieved status as an academic discipline in many places. There are academic programmes in community development or related practices such as community organizing and community planning in more than half the states in the USA. As the field has developed as an academic discipline, it has also become integrated with various research methodologies.

Some research and knowledge methodologies have been intertwined with community development for a very long time in the Global South. Perhaps the most famous of these is the practice of popular education, a form of community education where residents come together to participate in the design and implementation of their own educational process, often with an outsider who facilitates rather than leads. The most famous popular educator is Paulo Freire, who developed a form of literacy training with Brazilian peasants that integrated community development into the literacy training process. In the USA, a similar practice was evident in the work of Myles Horton, who helped found the Highlander Folk School (now the Highlander Research and Education Center), which was so central to the success of the Civil Rights Movement.

Another form of research integrated with community development came from Rajesh Tandon's work in India engaging residents in forms of research that helped them critique and transform existing power structures. Part of the global protests of the 1960s and 1970s, Tandon explicitly contrasted his practice of participatory research from what he saw as the more top-down model of action research developed by Kurt Lewin.

This work in the Global South became influential in similar research methodologies in the Global North. In Europe, science shops developed as university-supported services where community groups engaged in community development could seek out research support for projects. In the USA, community-based research and Community-Based Participatory Research were founded as models of research support for community development, particularly in the field of public health. These models, however, have had difficulty

maintaining an ethic of resident participation in their practice, and critics of current practices continually invent new labels to try and distinguish more participatory work when the existing labels get spoiled by those who do not understand the ethics and politics of community participation and control.

There are also a number of more specific research methods used in community development contexts. In rural contexts of the Global South, rapid rural appraisal is used by external experts to make the most out of limited research resources. The idea is to limit the research scope to only those questions that are truly worth knowing something about, and to limit the time and effort expended on the research to only the level of accuracy needed to produce knowledge that can guide effective practice. Rapid rural appraisal relies on existing documented information; indigenous knowledge; key indicator data; short, multidisciplinary site visits and focused interviews and observations. Participatory Rural Appraisal uses similar data-gathering techniques but shifts control over the generation of questions and research to residents rather than outsiders.

Needs assessments and asset mapping are also becoming staples of research supporting community development practice. In a needs assessment, the questions are focused on residents' concerns or perceived needs. In an asset map, the questions are focused on residents' skills and talents, as well as on community resources. The distinction between these two methods has become part of the debate between ABCD proponents and those working from a conflict model of community development. ABCD practitioners use asset maps, believing that they portray the community more positively than needs assessments. Of course, in community development, the focus is on improving the community, and an asset map is taking the long way around to determine what to improve. But needs assessments must be done carefully so that both community residents and outsiders can understand that needs develop out of a system of exclusion and marginalization rather than from the failings of residents themselves, or otherwise the research can indeed make people feel less, rather than more, hopeful.

Recently, a comprehensive model integrating community-based research and community development has been developed by Stoecker. The model steps through the process of diagnosing a community condition, developing a prescription for that condition, implementing the prescription and evaluating its effect. The community either acts as its own 'physician' in this process or as a full collaborator with outsiders who may have the needed expertise. At each step of the process, there are research tasks: researching the causes and consequences of the condition, researching the prescription options, perhaps doing research as a

community action during the implementation phase and, of course, evaluating the outcomes.

Future Directions for Community Development

The field of community development is at somewhat of a crossroads. In the urban USA, some CDCs became so successful at creating new housing and storefronts (or simply benefited from the improving economy of the 1990s) that they almost developed themselves out of business. Declining crime rates, skyrocketing housing prices and neighbourhood gentrification gave a less urgent appearance to urban community development. In the Global South, critiques of institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, along with the rise of redistributive governments in Venezuela and other places, seemed to offer a temporary sign that the existing community development practices either were not necessary or were already self-sustaining.

The global economic meltdown of 2008, however, is showing signs that the practices may not be sustainable and that even many of the successes may be undone. Housing foreclosures and failing businesses created ghost neighbourhoods again. The major community development question facing post-industrial cities such as Detroit, Michigan, in the USA is not how to grow but how to shrink. Rather than discussing how to rebuild housing for residents, policymakers are discussing how to remove buildings altogether, returning entire swaths of cities back to nature. Similarly, to the extent that the realities of climate change are becoming obvious, sustainability is entering into the community development discourse in ways never before seen.

What does community development look like in such a context? One of the new emphases in community development that seems to embody all of these interests is urban agriculture. As an extension of the 'locavore' philosophy, urban agriculture is developing areas of the city for growing things rather than for industrial production, commerce and housing. Bicycling and pedestrian routes are also part of community development in the 2010s. But while there are some isolated examples of local communities trying to do more comprehensive planning for self-sustainability, there is no widespread community development model for producing sustainable communities beyond abstract approaches such as the European *The Natural Step* model, which focuses on reducing resource extraction, waste, the degradation of nature and the degradation of humans. Whether such models will become prominent in policy and practice is perhaps the main question facing the future of community development.

Randy Stoecker

See also Alinsky, Saul; asset mapping; Asset-Based Community Development; Freire, Paulo; Highlander Research and Education Center; Horton, Myles; ladder of participation; Society for Participatory Research in Asia

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COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Community dialogue gathers people from different groups in the community together to meet for the purpose of engaging in deep democratic discourse. These groups include both stakeholders in the community and service providers. The participants in the process are people who jointly face common issues, problems and tensions that stem from their encounter or from shared situations that influence their lives in different ways. Usually, dialogue is generated to fill one or more of the following functions: problem-solving, providing a concrete response to a need, preventing the escalation of a situation such as inter-group conflict or laying the foundations for co-operation and influence stemming from an aspiration to engage difference and the challenges it poses.

The power of community dialogue lies in the interpersonal and inter-group co-operation that enhances the ability of communities to deal with problems. It enables people to get to know each other, to exchange information and to express thoughts and perspectives. It also enables them to influence the community's agenda, to discuss conflicts and dilemmas and to arrive at common solutions.

Community dialogue is not appropriate for every community and, in any event, requires adaptation to the cultural norms, values and goals of the specific community.

There are many parallels between action research and community dialogue. They share a common set of guiding principles as well as methods. As will be seen,

the two methods tend to go together and complement each other in different ways.

Guiding Principles of Community Dialogue

Community dialogue is guided by a number of general principles. These principles may contradict each other and need to be applied by each community according to its unique situation.

Deep Democracy

The depth of democracy is achieved through determined and honest efforts to enable a wide range of people in the community to have their voices heard, including those who are generally not heard. These efforts help democracy go deeper than the limited concept of democracy as 'majority rule', 'governance by the people' or defence of minority rights. Deep democracy is characterized by the legitimization of diverse interests, full transparency, listening and well-informed decision-making based on significant learning about the issues involved.

Deep Multiculturalism

Community dialogue strives to create a public space characterized by fairness and critical awareness of the explicit and implicit power relations that constitute it. Power relations among cultural identities do not enable the formation of a neutral space because different cultures possess resources and barriers that place their members in different positions in the space. Deep multiculturalism means adapting the public space to the different characteristics of the community members. This process of adaptation requires dealing with intercultural interactions through open discussion, negotiation and decision-making according to criteria that are explicit and clear to everyone.

Solidarity and Shared Responsibility for the Community

Developing a community perspective expresses common loyalty and concern among people with different identities. This commitment and concern apply to both the relationships among individuals and the public space that is considered to be common to all.

Commitment to Basic Universal Rules

Community dialogue requires establishing rules that enable people to remain true to a particular way of acting even when they have not yet formed a common denominator. These rules include integrity, carrying on fair discussion, direct and honest decision-making processes, commitment to carrying out decisions, fair

disclosure of information, living up to rights and obligations, refraining from coercion and exclusion and ethical behaviour on the part of professionals who take part in the process.

Methods of Community Dialogue

Community dialogue is a concept recognized worldwide, and there are many different practical approaches for applying it. At the same time, there is considerable ambiguity over the concept, and it is often used inaccurately to describe other community processes and tools. First of all, the term *community* can apply to functional spaces that are not solely geographical. Second, this process can apply to dialogue that takes place with different kinds and sizes of communities and uses methods that do not always involve direct, face-to-face contact.

In part, community dialogue methods give expression to deliberative democracy, which is based on discussion among participants for the purpose of influence and developing ideas but not necessarily for decision-making. In part, they give expression to participatory democracy, which emphasizes the participation of people in decision-making processes. It is not uncommon for power relations and control to be carried out under cover of co-operation and dialogue. Facilitators of 'community dialogue' must possess the awareness and the tools to recognize and deal with manipulations and covert processes that undermine fairness.

The methods listed below are not usually carried out all in one meeting. Each one is based on a process of detailed and sensitive preparation, professional facilitation, teamwork, learning, use of technology and communications, documentation and data processing. Accepted community dialogue processes include different kinds of meetings, gatherings and conferences that enable free and democratic participation of people from the community. Structured methods of dialogue led by facilitators and involving systematic recording and analysis of its contents include open space, town hall meetings, World Café, knowledge café, round tables and a participatory narrative model of learning about a community. Other methods, such as dialogue groups, provide a more open, intimate and long-term process. In addition, community dialogue can take place through representatives such as in-community coalitions, citizen-based consensus conferences, multiparty mediation and consensus building. These methods can be supported by communication mechanisms such as community newspapers, television, radio and Internet sites with forums and blogs that facilitate the transfer of knowledge and opinions. Community dialogue methods can include non-verbal forms of expression. For example, the use of material, movement and

the various senses widens the range of opportunities available to people to express themselves.

Uniqueness of Community Dialogue

A number of features of community dialogue practice come together to define its uniqueness. The following are some, but by no means all, of these defining features:

An Approach to Community Development

Community dialogue is not simply a method but also an approach to community development, based on the co-operation of community members as active citizens who together shape their way of life. Community development avoids centralization, exclusion, hierarchy and the exercise of authority since, as its name implies, it collectively develops and empowers people from the community. This approach is based on the belief that every person and each culture have something to contribute to the public space.

Community Dialogue as a Personal and Community Journey

Community dialogue is a personal journey no less than a community journey. The personal dimension enables people to expand themselves through listening to others with respect and acceptance. This kind of listening does not necessarily mean agreement, but rather, it ensures openness and a strong willingness to understand what the other is trying to say. This openness and acceptance are an important factor in generating successful dialogue since they lead to the emergence of change which begins with the individual person and spreads to the collective. Many philosophers, educators and therapists (e.g. Socrates, Nietzsche, Buber, Carl Rogers and Paulo Freire), as well as religious leaders from both the West and the East, see dialogue as a fundamental, complex action in which one person opens to the other and, through this openness, change begins to happen.

On the community dimension, dialogue can deepen the sense of community among people and lead to a deeper understanding of the meaning of community. This process creates an opening for finding the common and unifying factors that cannot be discovered by a shallow and unnatural universalizing of people. In a dialectical way, the engagement of conflicts that divide people can lead to the discovery of what is shared and unifying.

Conflicts Are a Part of Life

Community dialogue starts out from the assumption that competing interests, arguments, tensions and

conflicts are a part of life. Despite being the source of difficulty, blockages and delays, conflicts also contain within them points of power, strength and connection. It is not uncommon for them to constitute the starting point for change. Avoidance, denial or denigration of conflict is liable to make conflict worse over time and even more painful.

Dealing With the Intercultural Encounter

In order to make connections between people from the community, it is important to understand how culture contributes to this meeting among people and where cultural characteristics can present obstacles to dialogue. Engagement based on interpersonal and organizational cultural competence can help overcome some of these obstacles. This competence may include ensuring linguistic accessibility through translation; separate preparation for some of the members of different cultural groups; setting meetings for appropriate times for everyone, with consideration for holidays; culturally sensitive facilitation; the use of art and other non-verbal forms of expression and co-ordinating steps with leaders of the different cultural communities.

Size of the Process

Community dialogue can take place in many kinds of forums of different sizes. It can occur in small groups of only a few people or in large forums of hundreds and even thousands of people who communicate with technological assistance. In order to deal with issues that arise during the process, it is sometimes necessary to expand the circles of participants. For example, in dealing with educational issues, it might be important to include educational professionals and non-governmental organizations as well as representatives of parents and students. Alternatively, the dialogue will sometimes be more effective in small circles, with the understanding that in dealing with certain issues it is preferable to leave the dialogue to representatives or leaders who gain their legitimacy from their communities.

Between Dialogue and Action Research

Community dialogue is based on the same principles that guide action research. It aspires to create change through learning and the participation of people who have a stake in a particular issue. As with action research, community dialogue places issues of relevance to people on the agenda and provides them opportunities to participate in learning and in presenting different points of view. Both methods strongly stress the fact that much valuable knowledge

exists among the people in the situation and not only among the professionals and experts. Recognition of personal experience and feelings as important knowledge for decision-making reflects an important shift in understanding who 'owns' knowledge that is usually regarded as belonging to researchers and professionals. This issue is particularly relevant when participants in processes come from excluded groups whose voices tend not to be heard in the public space.

Both methods focus on dialogic learning that emphasizes exchange and mutuality among people committed to promoting a common interest. This kind of learning makes use of methods that moderate the influence of existing hierarchies and strives to create a free space in which critical thinking is legitimate. In both community dialogue and action research, the learning and action nurture each other. The issue of participation is another central feature of the two methods, both of which aspire to create processes in which different people are connected to the given situation and make their opinions heard. For this reason, different participatory practices and processes of outreach are a part of both methods.

The role of professionals takes on a similar character as participatory figures who consult, involve and enable others under the guidance of these methods. Finally, it is important to note that people learning to conduct community dialogue and those taking part in action research develop an awareness of the possibility of developing knowledge and generating solutions from within the collective.

Orna Shemer

See also citizen participation; democratic dialogue; dialogue; empowerment; hegemony; multi-stakeholder dialogue; voice; World Café, the

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COMMUNITY MAPPING

Community mapping is the process and product of a community getting together to map its own assets, values, beliefs or any other self-selected variable. It is about mapping by the community for the community using relatively informal processes. It is opposite to mapping by authority for authority using formal rules. It is a methodology that encourages and empowers the community to explore itself and to advance on action. It facilitates building meaningful and accurate knowledge of what a community looks like while allowing for that knowledge to remain in the community. It is a form of action research that has the capacity to significantly empower the community when negotiating with outsiders by enabling it to be in a stronger position when representing itself.

Both a Process and a Product

There are no formal rules determining the process of community mapping. But a number of recognizable steps do exist. A community usually (a) self-identifies, (b) agrees to engage in mapping itself as a community, (c) identifies the primary 'action' or purpose for mapping, (d) decides what information to collect, (e) completes information gathering, (f) analyzes the information focusing on the 'action' under consideration, (g) organizes and analyzes the information so that it can be meaningfully and effectively communicated and (h) uses the information strategically and as planned to achieve action.

The product of community mapping often includes an actual map to organize and communicate the information gathered. These maps can be hand drawn and abstract. Today, we more commonly see output in the form of highly sophisticated digital maps capitalizing on the latest in the geographic information sciences, digital multimedia and web-based cartography. Contrary to what the label 'community mapping' suggests, an actual map is not essential. The product can equally be written documents, tables and graphs or other media forms, including oral narratives. The outcome often is a combination of all the above.

In community mapping, the journey is as important as reaching the destination. The process of community mapping helps bring a community together to work on a common cause. The process facilitates sharing of insights about assets, attitudes, values and beliefs. The information products generated facilitate recording what was shared as well as communicating this to outsiders. The combination of process and product has the capacity to empower the community by making it better prepared to stand up against and/or negotiate with outside interests.

Applications and Uses

Community mapping has been employed for a variety of purposes ranging from natural resource inventories and bio-regional mapping to crime fighting and efforts to alleviate urban poverty. It has been used to support many different goals, including community building, planning, conservation, advocacy and reform. Examples of communities engaged in community mapping can be found all over the world. Using 'community-mapping images' as a web search query leads to web images of community-mapping products from across the globe. Clicking on any of the icons tells the story behind each initiative. Community mapping ranges from grass-roots efforts undertaken in isolation by a single community to highly organized global efforts, for example, Green Map, which has engaged over 800 communities in 65 countries to map green living, nature and culture.

Parallel Initiatives

Community mapping has been practised by civilizations for a long time without a formal label attached to it. Mapping information by the community about itself to advance a cause eventually became recognized as 'community mapping'. Today, there exist other names to reflect similar practice. The subtle differences between these initiatives can be confusing.

'Asset mapping' describes the process of community mapping where the primary focus is on the community recording its assets, which can be physical assets as well as emotional, including attitudes, values or beliefs. The advent of digital mapping and geographic information systems (GIS) led to interest in exploring how emerging technologies could contribute to community mapping. Participatory GIS is the combination of GIS, multimedia and Participatory Learning and Action, exploring interactive tools to facilitate spatial learning and group-based decision-making primarily to help disadvantaged groups. Underlying processes build on community-mapping principles. Public Participation GIS is a related effort bringing GIS capacity to marginalized populations to empower and give a voice in the public arena. *Counter-mapping* is a term that gained popularity with the introduction of the concept of Web 2.0 and the notion that the World Wide Web, and efforts like Google Earth and 'slippy maps' facilitate a service that allows users to interact and collaborate with each other counter to a world ruled by authority and specialists. Finally, Volunteered Geographic Information explores how to harness tools to create, assemble and disseminate geographic information provided voluntarily by individuals, including the marginalized.

Further Information

It is advisable to seek guidance and mentorship from those who can claim previous experience with community mapping. Universities and/or non-governmental organizations often are brought aboard as partners to help with specific design and management of the process. They often also give support with the translation of high-tech information into concrete information products.

Peter Keller

See also asset mapping; collaborative action research; Community-Based Participatory Research; geographic information systems; map-making; Participatory Rapid Appraisal

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COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY

A community of inquiry is a collaborative form of purposeful discourse focused on exploring, constructing meaning and validating understanding. Communities of inquiry are becoming critically important in a world of instant communication driven by the economic need for increased effectiveness, efficiency and innovation. In any organizational context, collaboration and critical thinking are of growing importance to remain competitive. Innovative collaboration and inquiry made possible by new and emerging information and communications technology are transforming how we learn and

grow in all segments of society. This is no less so in educational environments. This entry discusses action research's goal of contributing to community issues and the participants of those communities.

The use of the term *community of inquiry* was first adopted by Matthew Lipman in the 1980s, when he and his colleagues began to rethink educational practice from the perspective of a reflective paradigm. Critical reflection and dialogue are apparent in a community of inquiry when participants engage in respectful discussion but critically explore and challenge ideas and reasoning for the purposes of solving problems and constructing personal and public knowledge.

Description

The genesis of the concept of a community of inquiry can be historically traced to ancient Greece and is consistent with modern social constructivist epistemology. However, the term brings with it a degree of imprecision. The philosophical foundation of the community of inquiry concept has its origins in the work of John Dewey. Community and inquiry were important themes in Dewey's work that recognized the inseparability of the public and private worlds. Dewey believed that an educational experience must be socially worthwhile and personally meaningful. It is the fusion of public discourse and personal reflection that goes to the heart of the process of inquiry.

We begin our assessment of what constitutes a community of inquiry by analyzing the core concept of inquiry. In general terms, inquiry is a process leading to deep and meaningful understanding. We define inquiry here as a process of critical thinking and problem-solving based on the generalized scientific method, with the purpose of resolving a problem or dilemma and resulting in the growth of personal and collective knowledge. Critical thinking and making sense of questions are central to the inquiry process; however, inquiry does not take place in isolation.

For example, inquiry is not privately surfing the Internet. The Internet encourages ideological cocooning. It allows one to live within a set of assumptions and beliefs without challenge. It makes possible the reinforcement of one's biases with the avoidance of contrary perspectives and facts. On the other hand, communities of inquiry make use of the technological affordances of a rapidly evolving digital world that has the potential to create the conditions for sustained critical discourse, where breadth of access to information is fused with depth of critical thinking. In short, inquiry is inherently social and depends upon collaboration and community. Communities of inquiry take advantage of the connectivity of the digital world around us and actively engage learners in deep and meaningful learning experiences.

The social nature of inquiry draws our attention to the concept of community. A community is defined by its context and purpose and displays the characteristics of interdependence, collaboration, communication, trust and a common purpose. It is a place to connect with others and share. Community is essential to sustained inquiry, where participants feel connected to the goals of the group and sufficiently secure to challenge ideas, sustain the discourse, collaboratively construct meaning and validate knowledge. As such, a community stimulates public discussion and personal reflection. Beyond group identity, it is the elements of critical discourse and reflection that are inseparable in a community of inquiry.

Perhaps the most significant development of the concept of community in modern times is that we no longer have a restriction based on geography. Communication technologies not only have radically changed the way we create and sustain communities but also present a more complex dynamic. This increasing technological complexity creates a new challenge and at the same time provides enormous possibilities. What is crucial to understanding this paradigmatic shift is recognizing two important communication functions—accessing and transmitting information (one way) and engaging in open dialogue (two way). It is, of course, understanding the interactive nature of the latter that is central to a community of inquiry.

The best example of the idea of a community of inquiry can be found in the field of education, although variations can be found in the world of business and training (one variation being communities of practice). The fact that inquiry is learning centred and socially situated gives it an intimate connection to the educational process. Dewey believed strongly that inquiry is indispensable to the educational process. Communities of inquiry provide intellectual challenges and the environment for individuals to stretch their depth and breadth of knowledge. To understand the application of the community of inquiry construct, we turn our attention to a framework that has drawn considerable attention in the past decade.

Elements of a Community of Inquiry

We focus our discussion on what may be the most prominent, coherent and conceptually rich description of a community of inquiry—the Community of Inquiry (CoI) theoretical framework. The elements of the CoI framework were originally described over a decade ago. It is a generic framework, although it has been applied largely in online and blended learning environments. Since the original publication of the series of papers describing the CoI framework, considerable work has been done to develop and validate the framework.

Inquiry is a process that takes learners beyond assimilating inert knowledge. It is a process that often leads in unexpected directions. In the CoI framework, inquiry is labelled cognitive presence and operationalized through the practical inquiry (PI) model. PI is defined here as a multiple-phased process initiated by a triggering event and proceeding through the phases of exploration, integration and resolution. The PI model is a two-dimensional model. The first dimension, action-deliberation, reflects the sociological (shared) and psychological (private) aspects of inquiry. The second dimension reflects the perception-conception dimension of PI and the fusion of the shared and private worlds. At one extreme is the divergent process of the analysis of ideas, and at the other extreme is the convergent process of constructing meaning. The PI model represents a clear picture of the complex, collaborative constructive process of knowledge building.

However, as noted previously, inquiry is best realized through collaboration and community. In turn, community and collaboration are based upon trust. Creating a climate and cohesion that will encourage and sustain open communication is essential to a community of inquiry. For these reasons, a core element in the CoI framework is social presence. What then are the social elements that will support a purposeful academic environment including critical discourse and reflective thinking? How do we create a complex dynamic that includes intellectually challenging critical discourse while sustaining a respectful community of learners?

The key to answering these questions is to recognize that individuals first identify with the shared purpose of the group. It is only through purposeful collaborative activities that interpersonal bonds develop. The mistake is to focus too much on interpersonal connections and not enough on open communication and group cohesion. Consistent with this perspective, social presence is seen as participants identifying with the group, communicating purposefully in a trusting environment and progressively developing interpersonal relationships. It is important to note the dynamic nature of social presence (as with all the presences) in developing a community of inquiry, beginning with an emphasis on open communication, then moving to the development of group cohesion through collaborative activities and, eventually, establishing interpersonal relationships naturally over time. Social presence has been shown to be associated with satisfaction and perceived learning.

While social presence does provide the environment for respectful discourse, it does not guarantee a functional community of inquiry. The element that brings together cognitive and social presence in an optimally

functioning community is leadership. Leadership in the CoI framework is defined as teaching presence. It is important to recognize that in the context of a community of inquiry this responsibility is distributed and therefore assumed to varying degrees by all participants (note that this is why it is referred to as *teaching* and not *teacher* presence). Notwithstanding the collaborative nature of a community of inquiry, teaching presence plays an essential role and represents a set of three interdependent responsibilities—the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes. Like the other community of inquiry elements, these responsibilities are developmental and shift in focus over time. Teaching presence is required to initiate a community of inquiry and also to sustain the community through the functions of facilitation and direction, which ensures that its intended goals are achieved in a timely manner.

Practical Implications

When establishing a community of inquiry, social presence is of critical importance. The practical advice here is to focus on open communication and build group cohesion through purposeful collaborative activities. While introductions are important, excessive time spent on these activities on the front end may be counterproductive in establishing and sustaining a community of inquiry. The risk is that participants may lose interest, or they may become too personally attached to engage in honest critical discourse. It should also be noted that social presence as a whole will rise and fall over time as the nature of the activities evolve and community cohesion develops.

From an educational perspective, the practical challenge of a community of inquiry is moving inquiry effectively and efficiently through to resolution. Early research with informal learning communities has shown that without sufficient leadership, the group has a high probability of becoming distracted and fragmented. Sustaining a community of inquiry begins with design and the clear provision of goals and expectations. Next, whether it is an informal, non-formal or formal learning experience, a successful community of inquiry requires sustained facilitation and direction.

The great challenge from a teaching presence perspective is for the formal leader to provide the appropriate degree of presence. Research has shown that if the leader or another participant dominates a discussion, other participants will hesitate to engage in meaningful discourse. The same is true if leadership is absent. When there is too little teaching presence, discussion will wander and soon dissipate. This may happen when expectations are not clear or participants are not ready

to assume the responsibility to monitor and manage the discourse (metacognition). Similarly, there is the misconception that in a community of inquiry, the teacher is only a facilitator and should not be too directive; this may also be a mistake. In a purposeful community of inquiry, participants have a goal and expect that this will be achieved effectively and efficiently. Ultimately, this is the responsibility of the formal leader.

Conclusion

The importance of communities of inquiry for learning and creativity in a number of contexts is only just emerging and their potential broadly recognized. From the perspective of communities of inquiry, significant learning is purposeful, shared inquiry powered by curiosity and uncertainty. Communities of inquiry provide constructive collaboration that is the environment for problem-solving and creativity. Most successful organizations have recognized this reality in the digital age. It is through collaboration in communities of inquiry made possible by new and emerging information and communication technologies that the conditions for creativity and innovation leading to increased effectiveness and efficiency are created.

The opportunities for collaboration found in communities of inquiry are transforming organizations. In an educational context, the community of inquiry described here is emerging as the means to learn effectively in a digital age through sustained collaboration in constructing new ideas and knowledge. Communities of inquiry reflect the 'free inquiry' that Dewey espoused, along with teaching presence based on transactional relationships and not standardized outcomes. It is a process that creates collaborative environments that build social and cognitive connections among participants. The creative construction of knowledge is not predicable and therefore must be based in collaborative free inquiry.

Donn R. Garrison

See also Action Learning; constructivism; Dewey, John; dialogic inquiry; social learning

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COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

The Community University Partnership Programme (Cupp) at the University of Brighton, UK, was founded in 2003 with the objective of building long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships between the university and its local community. It was initially funded by seed money from Atlantic Philanthropies, an American philanthropic trust, to explore how universities could make their resources available to the local community in ways that were equally beneficial to local groups and to the university's core aims of teaching and research. While this work is more common in the USA and Australia, there was little precedent within the UK, and Cupp's initial period was one of exploration and experimentation. In 2007, when project funding came to an end, Cupp was incorporated into the university's new corporate plan with core funding for a team that includes a director, an academic, an administrator and three development managers. It remains very rare as a key strategic initiative within an English university.

The Initial Programme

The early phase consisted of active engagement with key university staff and colleagues from community-based organizations in order to determine the aspirations, possibilities, constraints and traditions of the different sectors. The team members were encouraged to 'define their work in the doing', and three pilot projects were established in 2004 which offered some important parameters for the programme as a whole. These included the importance of activities that address social exclusion, directly connect with areas of university expertise and have prospects for sustaining themselves beyond any initial funding.

Cupp established three interrelated aims:

1. To ensure that the university's resources (intellectual and physical) are available to, informed by and used by its local and subregional communities
2. To enhance the community's and university's capacity for engagement for mutual benefit
3. To ensure that Cupp's resources are prioritized towards addressing inequalities with our local communities

The role of the Cupp development team became largely one of brokerage, bringing together partners who could learn from each other through shared activity, and in Cupp's early days, seed funding provided start-up

money for small projects and academic ‘buyout’. By forming a group of senior researchers among academics interested in partnership working, Cupp was able to respond to a broad range of requests for research help and practical support.

The Help Desk

A key feature of the Cupp programme is the community-facing help desk which offers a route into the university. Universities are large and complex organizations, and the help desk provides the first point of contact for inquiries. Through networking and outreach activities, the help desk manager was able to promote the service and offer an initial chat with a researcher to help frame requests and explain the different ways in which the university might help. This could include research support, student involvement in either a practical or a research project or a longer term academic partnership.

Student Community Engagement

Taking a lead from the service learning movement in the USA, a programme of student involvement was added to the team’s profile. This began with the development of a generic undergraduate module offered across a range of schools in which students undertake a period of practical work with a community-based organization. Accompanied by a series of academic and reflective assignments, it enables students to gain academic credit for experiential work. Discrete modules were developed on a similar model for particular schools, linking practical experience with reflection and including theory and policy analysis. Cupp also brokers live research projects for postgraduate students, drawing from the European Science Shop model (www.livingknowledge.org). These provide valuable experience in an organizational context for students and enable organizations and community groups to have access to research that might not otherwise be funded.

Community Knowledge Exchange

In 2004, Cupp received funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for the Brighton and Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange. This was an opportunity to develop longer term funded partnerships with significant community impacts as well as academic research and curriculum outputs. Projects included ‘Count Me In Too’, a comprehensive analysis of the needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population in Brighton and Hove. In 2007, further funding from the HEFCE enabled Cupp to facilitate the South East Coastal Communities Programme,

which, in collaboration with eight other universities and their community partners, developed a range of projects aimed at improving health and well-being within disadvantaged and excluded communities.

As these funding streams came to a close, a local programme, ‘On Our Doorsteps’, focused on supporting small (£5,000) action research projects in close proximity to one of the university’s five sites. These are funded through donations and provide an opportunity for a community group and an academic to develop a working relationship. Over time, about half of these have led to mature, long-term partnerships.

Communities of Practice

Cupp’s work has been informed by Etienne Wenger’s Communities of Practice approach and Anthony Gibbons’ Type 1 and Type 2 knowledge. By constituting learning partnerships that focus on sharing practice and valuing different types of knowledge, those involved within them are able to take a more holistic view of areas of shared concern. Cupp have also contributed to national and global networks of socially engaged universities, sharing experience with other institutions in the UK and internationally through staff exchange, international seminars and consultancies. In 2008, The Beacon’s Project for Public Engagement was established with HEFCE funding to influence culture change and promote engagement within UK universities. Cupp have been able to support the Beacons on some of these initiatives, and university-community engagement has become more prevalent across the UK. However, as time and resources become increasingly scarce for communities and universities, Cupp and its partners have had to adapt their way of working to focus on those activities that are fully linked to core activities and do not require additional funds. This has included a greater focus on student engagement, the promotion of staff volunteering activities among all university staff and larger collaborative research partnerships. Now part of the Department of Economic and Social Engagement, they remain central to Brighton’s strategic mission.

Juliet Millican and David Wolff

See also communities of practice; community-based research; community-university research partnerships; Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production

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COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Growing calls for research that is 'community based' rather than 'community placed' and increasing attention to translational research that can improve intervention outcomes have contributed to the growing popularity of a variant of action research known as Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR). Building on the work of Barbara Israel and her colleagues in Michigan and of Lawrence W. Green and his Canadian colleagues, CBPR is a collaborative and systematic approach to inquiry that involves all partners in the research process, emphasizing their complementary strengths. CBPR commences with a research topic that comes from, or is of importance to, the community and stresses co-learning, capacity building and long-term commitment, with action integral to the research.

Historical Roots

CBPR traces its roots in part to the action research tradition of Kurt Lewin, Davydd Greenwood and William Foote Whyte and others in the 1940s and beyond. But it also finds parentage in the liberatory philosophy and methods of the Brazilian adult educator Paulo Freire and other scholar-activists of the 1970s and 1980s from Africa, Asia and Latin America, who emphasized action based on critical reflection and commitment to social transformation as a key component of participatory research. Finally, CBPR also owes a debt to feminism and feminist action research traditions, with their focus on the personal as political and the importance of women's voices in and ownership of research.

As Lawrence Green and Shawna Mercer have suggested, CBPR effects a change in the balance of power where research 'objects' become research subjects, offering not only their consent but also their knowledge and experience to the formulation of the research question and to many other aspects of the research process. It is to this *orientation to research*, with its accent on issues of trust, power, dialogue, community capacity building and collaborative inquiry, towards the goal of social change, that CBPR ideally is committed.

CBPR has evolved in many directions and occurs along a continuum. Applications of CBPR range from the use of community advisory boards (CABs) to help with sample recruitment, interpretation of findings and other specific tasks to the more emancipatory end of the continuum, with its accent on community engagement throughout the process. Increasingly, efforts are being made in both government-funded university partnerships and grass-roots, community-led partnerships to live up to the 'gold standard' of CBPR, with genuine, high-level community engagement throughout the process.

Principles of CBPR

Although many CBPR partnerships develop their own principles and tenets of engagement, the set of principles developed by Israel and her community and academic partners is among the most commonly used. Briefly, they suggest that CBPR

- recognizes the community as a unit of identity, whether the community is defined in geographic, racial, ethnic or other terms;
- builds on strengths and resources within the community;
- facilitates a collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of research, involving an empowering and power-sharing process that attends to social inequalities;
- fosters co-learning and capacity building among partners;
- achieves a balance between knowledge generation and intervention for the benefit of all partners;
- focuses on the local relevance of public health problems and on ecological perspectives that attend to the multiple determinants of health;
- involves systems development using a cyclical and iterative process;
- disseminates results to the partners and involves them in the wider dissemination of results; and
- involves a long-term process and commitment to sustainability.

However, Meredith Minkler and Nina Wallerstein argue that CBPR principles should also explicitly include attention to gender, race, class and culture, as these interlock and influence every aspect of the research enterprise. They add to this list a point on ‘cultural humility’. Developed by Melanie Tervalon and Jane Garcia, the concept of cultural humility suggests that while researchers cannot ever be ‘competent’ in another’s culture, they can demonstrate openness to learning about others’ cultures while examining their own biases.

A number of tools have been developed making possible the more rigorous and relevant assessment of CBPR projects, with special attention to their effectiveness in attending to CBPR principles. Mercer, Green and their partners in British Columbia developed reliability-tested guidelines for assessing the fidelity of CBPR projects to such principles. This Likert scale–type tool is now widely used by funders and CBPR partnerships to measure their effectiveness and to identify areas for improvement vis-à-vis CBPR processes. Israel and her colleagues similarly developed a set of questions used by many to assess their fidelity to the basic tenets of CBPR. Finally, websites, including Community-Campus Partnerships for Health and the University of Kansas’ Community Tool Kit, offer many useful resources.

Growing Support for CBPR

CBPR has received increasing recognition in the USA, Canada (where it is more commonly called community-based research) and elsewhere, particularly in fields such as public health, medicine, education, social work and urban and regional planning. Close to a decade ago, for example, the prestigious Institute of Medicine named CBPR as one of eight new content areas in which all schools of public health should offer training. Funding bodies in the USA including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and The California Endowment have been major supporters of CBPR. The CDC was an early sponsor of this approach—through the dozens of prevention research centres it funded at universities and which were conceived in part as portals of entry through which community organizations and academicians could collaborate on studying locally relevant concerns. Since the mid-1980s, NIH-funded Clinical Translational Science Centers have also offered major opportunities to bring CBPR into health sciences research.

Similarly, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research as well as the Social Science and Humanities Research Council in Canada have dedicated community-based

research funding streams. The National Research Foundation in South Africa has supported such work, as have national research funders in Brazil and global health entities such as the World Health Organization and UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization).

How CBPR Adds Value to Research

CBPR adds substantial value to research processes and outcomes. First, it helps ensure that the research question comes from, or is important to, the local community. In rural North Carolina, community residents who suspected a link between their itchy eyes and respiratory symptoms and the rapid proliferation of industrialized livestock operations conducted some initial ‘barefoot epidemiology’ to test their suspicions. After measuring the depth of wells and their proximity to the large hog operations, they approached an epidemiologist at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, about working with them on more sophisticated studies in this area. The research relationship born of this encounter has lasted over 17 years and involved numerous respected studies, supported by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (a division of the NIH), that in turn have helped contribute to policy change.

Yet even when the research question comes from an academic or other trained researcher partners, going to the affected community, meeting with respected community-based organizations or engaging an active CAB can help determine local relevance and, if needed, refine the research question. When Magboeba Mosavel and her colleagues wanted to undertake a CBPR study of cervical cancer in South Africa, where the rates of this disease are among the highest in the world, they began by forming a CAB. They learned that in South Africa, cervical cancer was of lower priority than HIV/AIDS, domestic violence and other problems. At their community partners’ suggestion, they broadened the scope of the proposed research from *cervical cancer* to *cervical health*, a term that respected this broader range of concerns.

Second, CBPR can improve the cultural acceptability of study instruments, often enhancing their validity. In a Chinatown Restaurant Worker Health and Safety Study in San Francisco, California, six worker-partners were hired and trained for extensive involvement throughout this CBPR effort. Both the lead community partner organization and the worker partners made substantial improvements to the draft worker survey that was used as a template. This review process increased the survey’s cultural relevance and ensured that ‘the right questions’ were asked. New, worker-recommended items were added (e.g. about whether workers who

did not smoke were called in earlier from breaks and whether workers had experienced a variety of forms of wage theft). Validated scale items which did not translate well into Cantonese (e.g. the CES-D [Center for Epidemiologic Studies—Depression] Scale's inclusion of the idiom 'butterflies in my stomach') were also flagged by the worker-partners, and brief explanations were subsequently included to make them more easily understandable to respondents taking the survey in Cantonese. Such culturally and socially appropriate additions resulted in a final product that was far more likely to achieve accurate responses and include issues that were of substantial interest in the community.

Community members can also play a key role in 'ground-truthing' or checking the validity of existing government or other data sets. In the rural Vulindlana region, South Africa, Admire Chirawodza Chirawoga and his colleagues used GIS (geographic information systems) to map the location of HIV testing and counselling facilities throughout the region. Using those maps as a starting point, community partners then walked and drove through the region to verify the existence and location of stationary and mobile HIV testing and counselling sites. Their ground-truthing revealed that there were many more sites than the official maps had suggested. This new knowledge led to a change in the planned intervention, providing new testing equipment to existing facilities rather than creating new ones which were not needed.

A fourth added value of CBPR involves its potential for improving the design and implementation of interventions, increasing the likelihood of success. Based in the rural community of Salinas, California, the 12-year old CHAMACOS project was initially designed as a cluster-randomized controlled trial of interventions to reduce the take-home exposure of children to pesticides from their farmworker parents. Yet two of the interventions included would never have succeeded had it not been for the input of farmworker members of the project's CAB. When CAB members were asked about the proposed addition of hand-washing stations in the fields, they pointed out that in Mexican culture, washing hands in cold water was believed to cause arthritis. With that information, the proposed intervention could be redesigned to include a water heater, and handwashing, both before lunch and before going home, was significantly improved. Such respect for community wisdom also helped build the trust that has enabled much additional collaborative work.

CBPR also can help in improving data interpretation. In the Chinatown study above, worker-partners pointed out that the high proportion of workers reporting that they got 'paid sick leave' (42%) was likely inflated, reflecting the fact that for many in this community, paid sick leave simply means taking a day off

when ill or caring for a sick relative and making it up later with no pay.

A sixth value added by CBPR involves its role in identifying and using new channels for dissemination. Although the importance of traditional academic and professional vehicles for dissemination of findings cannot be minimized, community partners can play an important role in determining how best to reach community 'end users' and policymakers. In Harlem, New York, concerns about the high rates of childhood asthma and the neighbourhood's extensive exposure to diesel buses and other polluting sources led to a partnership between the non-profit West Harlem Environmental Action and epidemiologists at Columbia University. They began by training high school youth to conduct bus and pedestrian counts and personal air monitoring at five key intersections for five 8-hour days. The data generated was both scientifically robust and deeply troubling. While the academic partner took the lead in submitting jointly authored articles to peer-reviewed journals, the community partner used numerous other avenues to 'get the word out' to the local community and policymakers. Seventy-five bus shelter ads, an alternative fuels summit, briefings and testimony, articles in a community newspaper and 'toxic and treasure tours' for local policymakers—highlighting not only toxic exposures but also the rich cultural heritage of the neighbourhood—were among the methods employed. Such dissemination of findings did not preclude subsequent publication of more detailed analysis but helped jump-start the process of community organizing and advocacy to bring about a number of policy changes.

A final and essential value added through CBPR involves its commitment to building individual and community capacity, leaving behind a community better able to study and address other issues of concern. A major outcome of the Chinatown study was the individual, organizational and community capacity built through the training and active engagement of the six worker leaders as well as 17 other community members who were hired and trained as surveyors. While the community partner organization gained new visibility and benefited from a major new grant, of equal importance was the training of a new generation of worker leaders, many of whom have remained active within the organization and in other efforts to improve their community.

Challenges and Limitations of CBPR

Many challenges are encountered by partners engaging in CBPR. Key among these is the time- and labour-intensive nature of the work. Building and maintaining partnerships takes substantial time both early on and throughout the research and action process. This

is often compounded when working with youth, low-literacy groups or immigrant workers, who frequently work long hours and return home to serve as primary caregivers across generations. Translation costs and time delays and the extra training time needed when working with partnerships that vary in education, social class and racial/ethnic background create extra pressures. Finally, CBPR's call to include action as part of the research process often requires the engagement of outside researchers and their partners well beyond the funded project period.

Conflicts and power dynamics are also a challenging but necessary part of the CBPR process. Partners who engage in a CBPR project must be comfortable dealing with conflict. Struggles over power, the just allocation of resources and elements of the study design and implementation are part of the process. Developing early on the ground rules, principles of engagement and memorandums of understanding will help address such concerns. Further, as Charlotte Chang notes, a strong process evaluation, with evaluators reporting back to the group periodically and 'calling time' when the project process needs to be attended to more directly, can be of significant value.

A related and challenging part of CBPR, particularly when conducted with university partners, is that ethical review board criteria were never developed with participatory research in mind. Indeed, requirements that the principal investigator (typically a university-based partner) assume overall responsibility for major project-related decision-making is antithetical to CBPR, with its accent on shared power and equitable participation in decision-making. Sarah Flicker and her colleagues in Toronto have developed a set of guidelines for institutional review boards as they evaluate CBPR projects. Importantly, these criteria stress the community- and not individual-level risks and benefits of research proposals. Yet, while a small number of universities have adopted such criteria or created subcommittees specifically trained to evaluate CBPR proposals, the continued mismatch between the principles of CBPR and the requirements of institutional review boards' approval is a substantial hurdle.

Some immigrant partners may be reluctant to air their concerns when doing so means challenging partners with more education and a better command of English, particularly in areas related to research. Demonstrated openness and valuing of the immigrant partners' contributions on the part of the academic and other partners is a strategy that has proven effective in this regard. Similarly, small-group meetings incorporating popular education elements of critical reflection and action which allow immigrant (and other) partners to talk amongst themselves and then have a representative speak to the larger body also have demonstrated utility.

Trade-offs between scientific and community concerns and priorities regarding research instruments and interventions are among the greatest challenges to academic and professional researchers and their community partners. The enhanced cultural sensitivity and relevance of research instruments made possible by high-level community collaboration may at times conflict with outside research partners' desire for the most rigorous research designs and study instruments possible. Community partners may question the relevance of certain validated scales or may oppose intervention designs such as randomized controlled trials since not all gain equal benefit. In rural Oklahoma, academic and 40 community representatives from eight tribal communities had agreed to partner on a study of a lay health worker intervention to address the high rates of lead exposure among children in this former mining community. Although the partners worked closely on many aspects of the study, an early decision by the academic partners to use White children as a control group raised strong objections among the Native American partners. As they explained, their marginalized status in the USA had led to their having experienced generations of exclusion, and they did not want to repeat this pattern by excluding White children who might benefit from participation. The academic partners agreed, noting that while the lack of a control group would weaken the study design, the exclusion of White children could indeed be seen as discriminatory and harmful; so the study design was changed. Continuing discussions about concepts like rigour and validity from a science and a community perspective as well as discussions of the need for both scientifically strong data and findings that matter locally and reflect local knowledge can help address, yet often not fully resolve, such conflicts. Academically trained researchers must therefore be open to considering changes in research plans while also helping share their own knowledge as the partnership continues to dialogue and engage in joint decision-making.

Not infrequently in CBPR and related approaches, community partners may wish to move quickly from preliminary findings to action, including advocating for changes in programmes, practices and policies, while academically trained research partners may wish to move more slowly, ensuring the accuracy of any findings put forward and, in some cases, waiting for peer review. Conversely, findings may emerge which could show the community in an unflattering light, which community partners would not want publicized. Continued dialogue and memorandums of understanding may be helpful in anticipating such 'what ifs' and deciding on ways to deal with them early on. However, such methods are not likely to preclude unanticipated issues which may require the utmost care to address.

Finally, challenges may emerge in relation to the evaluation of CBPR projects. Although a strong process and outcomes evaluation is integral to effective CBPR, this component also takes time and resources, which may be in short supply. Discussing early and often the importance of evaluation to the project's continued progress and achievement of its goals and, where possible, as Chang notes, having a designated evaluator and creating an evaluation subcommittee with members representing different partnership groups may increase the appreciation and efficacy of the evaluation.

Summary and Conclusion

CBPR involves many challenges, from the substantial time and labour involved through the compromises that must sometimes be reached over research design and other key aspects of the work. These challenges may be intensified when partnering with marginalized groups, often with low educational levels, limited command of the dominant language and severe time and income constraints. Yet the potential of CBPR for improving what Rachel Morello-Frosch calls the 'relevance, rigour and reach' of the research and for building individual and community capacity may well outweigh the limitations involved. As a form of action research that puts a special emphasis on the community as a unit of identity and action and on building community capacity as a part of the research process, CBPR is a valuable part of the action research continuum.

Meredith Minkler

See also capacity building; co-generative learning; community-based research; community-university research partnerships; Feminist Participatory Action Research

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COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

Community-based research (CBR) is a form of action research that involves research partnerships between university-based academics and communities, emphasizes lived and experiential knowledge to guide the research process and promotes capacity building to empower communities to take a leadership role in the research process. CBR projects bring project stakeholders together throughout the research process, from identifying the issues to collecting and analyzing the data, to developing strategies to bring results to policymakers with the goal of producing systemic social change. CBR shares key similarities with Community-Based Participatory Research, including recognition of the community as a unit of identity and an important resource for developing locally initiated solutions to issues affecting the community. CBR also privileges community knowledge in developing research questions over solely academic knowledge and a commitment to working collaboratively throughout the research process. However, CBR also has some important differences and unique attributes that will be discussed further.

Defining 'Community'

In CBR, *community* describes people with a shared experience (e.g. living with an illness or in a specific postal code), but it may also include a range of stakeholders working to improve their conditions. 'Community' in this sense can be understood to involve not only lived experience but also communities of shared practice in the form of activists and service providers who work directly with communities. This approach recognizes that while the perspectives of those directly affected are crucial for understanding an issue, organizing community members often requires the infrastructure and networks developed by allies.

Historical Development

CBR has roots in a number of social science disciplines and philosophical orientations to science and knowledge production. While these are diverse, Kerry Strand

and colleagues identify three core influences: (1) the popular education model, (2) the action research model and (3) the participatory research model. The popular education model draws on the influential writings of Paulo Freire and uses techniques from adult education and critical pedagogy to engage communities in identifying problems and generating solutions to improve their local conditions. Second, the action research model gives CBR its emphasis on producing change within local organizations and systems through ‘multi-sector’ partnerships involving academics, the community and government. Finally, CBR has been greatly influenced by the participatory research model, from which it took up the need to challenge positivist research models and recognize the perspective of so-called lay people in knowledge production.

The Role of the Academic Partner

The emphasis on community knowledge in CBR initiatives may suggest that academic partners are not necessary. Indeed, there are some organizations that have well-developed programmes of research and are able to conduct research without partnering with a university. However, the intent of CBR is not to position one body of evidence or expertise against another but to bring these together in a synergistic fashion, recognizing the particular strengths and assets of the contributing partners. Depending on the nature of the project and the community’s research capacity, the academic partner’s role may fall along the spectrum from leadership to facilitation. When a community does not yet have the capacity to undertake research, the academic partner may play more of a leadership role and direct the process with significant community input and consultation. When the community has more capacity, the academic partner may have more of a ‘facilitation’ role to support the community-initiated research process. In either case, the academic partners may need to help their community partners navigate various granting opportunities and provide access to ethics review, data storage and funding administration.

The academic partner may also bring a cadre of students into the project, who can work on the data collection and analyze aspects that require specialized training. This is called ‘service learning’ and encourages students to leave the academy and make their training (e.g. master’s level projects) useful to community-based organizations. Ideally, the academic partner brings the technical expertise, and the community partner brings a nuanced understanding of the context and pressing issues: Together, they are able to develop a research strategy that will be rigorous and meet the community’s needs.

The Role of the Community Partner

Community partners on CBR projects bring particular, specialized knowledge depending upon their social and professional location(s) within a community of interest. Community members are thought to bring expertise that is informed by life experience to research projects, including perspectives about the issues at hand and insights about solutions. This can include detailed local knowledge of local issues, networks and population dynamics, as well as facilitating access to local agencies and community members relevant to the research initiative. Community partners may come to the research initiative with a distinctive lens, one that is more informed by lived experience and local organizing, service delivery or advocacy work. Such a perspective can complement that of the academic partner.

In an effort to construct mechanisms for greater and more meaningful community participation, there has been a rise in the number of projects that seek to engage ‘peer researchers’. Peer researchers are members of a research study’s target population who are trained to participate as co-researchers. In some cases, peer researchers partner in all facets of the research. In others, peer researchers have been instrumental in one or more aspects of a project (e.g. recruitment or data collection). The role of peer researchers in CBR has been the subject of some discussion and critique as there may be unresolved tensions between ideal notions of community participation and the limitations of research as it is practised in community settings.

Stages of CBR: From Research to Action

CBR promotes an iterative and cyclical approach to research and action: Reflections on policy and practice influence the design of research, which is then used to improve that same policy and practice. The cycle is constantly starting over again and needs to be considered ongoing and part of the community’s processes. Like all good research, CBR starts with a research question and related methodological objectives. However, in CBR, the research question should be community initiated and relevant. Research questions may reflect lived experience (e.g. the experience of being a low-income parent) or come from practice encounters (e.g. service providers working with parents accessing services). Research questions are often determined through a process of consultation where various community interests are weighed. CBR projects tend to require considerable planning and negotiation to reach a consensus about what the critical issues are and how best to proceed. Once established, many projects undertake continuous research and action by using an integrated knowledge translation model where data is quickly integrated into

the partnering community organizations' practices and shared with decision-makers at multiple levels.

Defining Characteristics of CBR

A number of scholars have identified the principles for CBR which have guided many projects and served as the basis of CBR-specific funding requirements. Here, we identify and discuss some key characteristics of CBR and how they are taken up in practice.

Community Driven

CBR recognizes the importance of democratizing research and privileges research identified or initiated by communities. Communities should have leadership, or co-leadership, roles throughout the research process, and their needs and interests should guide the research design, including the development and refinement of research questions, and the selection of the methods.

Community Relevance

CBR prioritizes the lived experience of community members and the collective efforts through which communities organize to improve their conditions and circumstances. CBR should address and advance community-identified needs and promote the interests of community members and the representing organizations. Research methods should be chosen based on the particular context, the resources available and the larger change goals (e.g. Is the goal to improve a specific service or change policy at the state/provincial level?).

Collaboration and Partnerships

CBR projects recognize the importance of long-term and sustainable partnerships between academics and the community. Each partner brings unique skills and experiences necessary for undertaking the research. Once established, research teams should strive to develop equitable decision-making processes to attend to who controls the money, data and research products.

Capacity Building

CBR projects promote co-learning and knowledge exchange throughout the research process between the project stakeholders. The goal of capacity building is to enhance individuals' and organizations' capacity to conduct research and achieve goals related to promoting social change. Examples of capacity building include research training for staff and integrating community members in the research process to provide research and employment skills.

Attending to Process

Developing a CBR partnership takes time and a commitment to fostering trust between the project stakeholders. CBR teams need to attend to the power relations between stakeholders and use collaborative decision-making processes. Some teams adopt formal 'memorandums of understanding' that detail how decisions will be made and who needs to be involved in the decision-making processes. However, the key issue is that teams maintain open lines of communication between the project stakeholders.

Multiple Forms of Knowledge

CBR recognizes a plurality of perspectives, ways of knowing and techniques for producing evidence. CBR projects use a range of scientific methods, including both quantitative and qualitative, and often, they mix methods to capture a range of experiences. While there is no specific CBR method, many projects have included innovative arts-based approaches to allow community members without special training to participate in data collection and generation. CBR continues this openness to different ways of knowing and learning by disseminating knowledge back to the community in accessible formats that are able to reach multiple audiences.

Action or Outcomes Oriented

CBR differentiates itself from traditional forms of academic research by its commitment to fostering social change and producing tangible improvements in the lives of community members. When CBR is community driven and relevant, it will produce outcomes that are of interest to the community and result in greater buy-in and uptake of results from community members, community-based organizations and policymakers.

Benefits and Challenges of CBR

There are numerous benefits for both academic and community partners from researching together. CBR provides the skills and capacity that community-based organizations need to use research as a tool to improve their programmes and services and to produce data that will appeal to policymakers and other change agents. For academics, CBR provides opportunities for the direct application of their research in 'real-world' settings. This can be especially beneficial for graduate students, who receive hands-on experience and preparation for either an academic or a community position in the future. Overall, CBR brings together the best of academic and community knowledge to identify problems and develop solutions that might not have

otherwise been possible with the academic and community partners working separately.

However, despite the growing availability of resources to assist CBR teams, there remain a number of challenges and barriers to translating theory into practice. While both academic and community partners may be amenable to partnering, they each have respective constraints related to their roles that may limit their ability to partner. For the academic partner, their institution may not support their involvement in CBR or recognize the time it takes to develop partnerships before any scholarly outputs are produced. For the community partner, research may be an additional requirement on top of their already busy schedule of providing services to the community. For individual community members, it may be managing a health issue or other personal issues that limit their ability to participate. While funding is increasingly available for CBR, it may privilege data collection and be inadequate to sustain the research project throughout the change component.

CBR in Action: The Canadian HIV CBR Movement

In some communities, there is an especially strong legacy of work in CBR. In Canada, CBR focusing on issues related to HIV/AIDS has been particularly effective, marked by the development of a dedicated federal programme supporting the work of teams conducting CBR on HIV/AIDS-related issues. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research, in collaboration with HIV researchers, people living with HIV, and AIDS service organizations, have developed a unique 'HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research Program'. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research HIV CBR programme supports CBR that engages communities affected by HIV in all stages of research from designing the research topic to dissemination activities. The programme has a unique governance model that involves a steering committee composed of equal representation from researchers and community organizations. Proposals are reviewed by an academic and a community member and evaluated for both scientific merit and potential community impact.

Future Outlook

CBR is growing in popularity and has become the standard approach for research with many communities, including communities affected by HIV and of indigenous people. Recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization appointed a Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education. The objectives

of this role are to facilitate collaborations between researchers and communities in the northern and southern hemispheres, identify best practices in CBR and community engagement and support policymakers to make use of CBR. This recognition at the international level demonstrates that CBR is an important research and action strategy.

Adrian Guta and Brenda Roche

See also arts-based action research; collaborative action research; community development; Community-Based Participatory Research; experiential knowing; experiential learning

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COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH

A national non-profit organization founded in 1996, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) promotes health equity and social justice through partnerships between communities and academic institutions. The organization views health broadly as physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and emphasizes partnership approaches to health that focus on changing the conditions and environments in which people live, work and play. Its strategic goals are as follows:

- To mobilize the knowledge, wisdom and experience in communities and in academic institutions to solve pressing health, social, environmental and economic challenges
- To ensure that community-driven social change is central to the work of community-academic partnerships
- To build the capacity of communities and academic institutions to engage each other in partnerships that balance power, share resources and work towards systems change

CCPH's members—a diverse group of over 2,000 individuals affiliated with community organizations, colleges and universities, health-care delivery systems, student service organizations, foundations and government—are advancing these goals in their work on a daily basis. CCPH is governed by a board of directors who are national leaders with spheres of influence in key networks related to the organization's mission. What ties the network together is a commitment to social justice and a passion for the power of partnerships to transform communities and academe. Since its inception, CCPH has played a leadership role in advancing authentic partnerships that build capacity, generate knowledge that directly benefits communities and influence policies that affect health.

At CCPH's first conference in 1997, the organization engaged participants in a series of conversations to begin to articulate principles of good community-campus partnerships. Broad input was sought on the draft principles that emerged from the conference, and a final set was adopted by the board of directors in 1998 and widely disseminated. Through a similar process, the principles were re-examined and revised in 2006 (see below). The CCPH principles are not intended to be prescriptive or to be adopted verbatim but rather to provide a starting point or framework for discussion when forming or periodically reflecting on the progress of a partnership—to help clarify the terms of engagement and expectations among partners.

CCPH Principles of Partnership

- Partnerships form to serve a specific purpose and may take on new goals over time.
- Partners have agreed upon the mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and accountability for the partnership.
- The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness and commitment.
- The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.

- The partnership balances power among the partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
- Partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority by striving to understand one other's needs and self-interests and developing a common language.
- Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution.
- There is feedback among all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
- Partners share the benefits of the partnership's accomplishments.
- Partnerships can dissolve and need to plan a process for closure.

As the principles were being re-examined and revised in 2006, CCPH convened experienced community partners from across the USA to provide a stronger community voice to the advancement of authentic community-campus partnerships. The contention at the time, still largely true in 2013, was that community perspectives were usually missing from deliberations and decisions about these partnerships. Participants in that inaugural National Community Partner Summit articulated a framework for authentic partnerships with three essential components:

1. Quality processes that are relationship centred
2. Meaningful outcomes that are tangible and relevant to communities
3. Personal, institutional, community and political transformation

CCPH helps advance a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) paradigm in which community members and researchers collaborate to conduct research that builds capacity, leads to knowledge that directly benefits communities and influences policies that affect health. Increasingly, research funding agencies are identifying community engagement in research as central to understanding and addressing racial, ethnic, environmental and socio-economic health disparities. Substantial federal investments are being made to support faculty members and academic institutions to engage with communities and to conduct health research in and with communities. On one level, these supports are a welcome sign that CBPR is being viewed as rigorous, legitimate and effective. On another level, they raise genuine concerns in communities that have been harmed by research and have

experienced ‘community engagement’ as no more than recruiting minority participants into clinical trials.

Participatory Paradigm

Implementing the participatory paradigm is not easy to do, and this is where CCPH is having a significant impact. By mobilizing knowledge, providing training and technical assistance, conducting research, building coalitions and advocating for supportive policies, CCPH is helping ensure that *the reality of community engagement and partnership exceeds the rhetoric*. Below, a few organizational successes are highlighted.

Reforming Research Funding

CCPH’s strong relationships and effective communication with community groups from across the country contributed to a critical mass of community leaders being appointed to the Council of Public Representatives, which advises the director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The council’s recently released framework for community engagement and NIH’s formation of a working group to recommend community engagement strategies across the agency are direct outcomes of these efforts. CCPH challenged NIH’s recent decision to only allow universities to apply for funding that was intended to build research infrastructure in communities. Although the organization was unable to change the established eligibility criteria, it supported dozens of community groups in their negotiations with academic partner applicants. It also delivered testimony at NIH public meetings about the value of CBPR and the importance of community organizations as lead applicants, fiscal agents and peer reviewers. NIH subsequently invited community-based CCPH members to review applications for its CBPR grant programmes. CCPH helped design CBPR grant review processes involving community and academic reviewers for the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It co-founded the CBPR Funders Interest Group, a learning community of 56 private and public funders that support CBPR as a strategy for social justice.

Developing Authentic Partnerships

CCPH is frequently in the position of provocateur—asking tough questions (e.g. What makes a partnership authentic?) and challenging assumptions as academic institutions seek to become more community engaged (e.g. What are your motivations and goals for engaging with communities?). Community groups frequently contact CCPH for guidance on developing memorandums of understanding with academic partners and for ensuring that community members are appropriately

compensated for their time and expertise. With support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it produced the evidence-based curriculum ‘Developing and Sustaining CBPR Partnerships’ to help guide partnerships through a series of learning modules, exercises and best practices. This free online resource has been downloaded hundreds of times and incorporated into dozens of trainings.

Evolving Higher Education Policy

CCPH is often a leading voice nationally advocating for communities to have a voting seat at institutional decision-making tables. For example, it successfully argued for including community members on the National Advisory Panel for the Carnegie Foundation’s community engagement classification for universities. It boldly tackles persistent institutional challenges to CBPR, including university faculty promotion and tenure (P&T) systems. CCPH has led three national projects that have changed P&T policies to recognize CBPR, established CBPR faculty development programmes and launched a unique mechanism for peer reviewing and publishing diverse applied products of CBPR that would otherwise not ‘count’ for P&T.

Facilitating Community Ownership of Research

Often missing from investments in CBPR is the support for research capacity and infrastructure that is vitally needed in communities. As more community organizations enter into research partnerships with institutions as well as initiate and conduct research, it is clear that they need funding and research resources as well as supportive networks for professional development, mentoring and advocacy.

Towards that end, CCPH joined with the Center for Community Health Education Research and Service to obtain funding from the NIH for two successful National Community Partner Forums on Community-Engaged Health Disparities Research, held in December 2011 in Boston and in December 2012 in Washington, D.C. Through a national call for applications and a rigorous peer-review process, a diverse group of over 200 community partners from across the country have come together through these forums to deepen the knowledge and skills they need to successfully conduct community-engaged health disparities research, negotiate community-academic research partnerships and serve in leadership roles. Uniquely designed ‘by and for’ community partners, the forums have built an ongoing network for community partner professional development and peer support. The resulting network, formally established in January 2013 as the Community Network for Research Equity and Impact, aims to ensure that communities have a significant voice in

decisions about research practice and policy, are true partners in research and fully benefit from the knowledge gained through research. The recommendations being advanced by the network and supported by CCPH include the following:

- Communities want a shared, balanced and equal ownership stake in the decision-making system for the research enterprise at the federal, state, local and academic levels.
- Research-funding agencies must make meaningful financial investments to ensure that community leaders participate on national advisory councils, grant review panels and policymaking bodies related to research and that their voices are heard.
- Research institutions must be held accountable for equitable partnerships through clearly articulated memorandums of understanding with community-based organizations that describe the principles that will be followed and a plan for how these will be monitored and evaluated.
- Public research–funding agencies should establish a minimum set of standards when making grants to research institutions for community-engaged research. These would include, for example, the following:
 - o Community leaders and community-based organizations will not primarily serve as recruiters for research participants.
 - o Community leaders and community-based organizations will be compensated at the same rate of pay for their time and expertise as academic partners.
 - o Community leaders and community-based organizations will have equal say in how data is presented, published and used.
- Investments must be made in the training and mentoring of community leaders and community-based organizations.

Funding is needed to support the start-up and continued operations of Community Research Ethics Boards. These entities—accountable to the communities they serve and represent—play a critical role in ensuring that the community risks, benefits and feasibility of the proposed research are carefully considered.

Community leaders, community-based organizations and their allies must advocate for supportive changes in research funding and policy that lead to

- increased investments in CBPR,
- direct funding to community-based organizations for research capacity building and infrastructure,
- support for training and mentoring and

- a proposal for review panels that include community leaders as full reviewers.

Brand of CCPH

In the year leading up to CCPH's 15th anniversary in 2012, it critically examined its name, mission, values and vision. After reflecting on the organization's accomplishments, scanning the environment and conducting a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, the 'brand' or theme of CCPH that clearly stood out as consistent from its beginning was its commitment to principle-centred partnerships for a purpose: health equity and social justice.

CCPH believes that it is important for its mission statement to clearly state *why* it engages in community-campus partnerships. The original wording, 'to promote health (broadly defined) through partnerships between communities and academic institutions', didn't fully capture its vision of health equity and social justice. The organization realized that it needed to explicitly include the words *equity* and *social justice* in its mission.

Equity means all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential. The determinants of equity are the social, economic, geographic, political and physical environmental conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age that lead to the creation of a fair and just society. Inequities are created when barriers exist that prevent individuals and communities from accessing these conditions. *Social justice* is about sustaining a flourishing human existence, meeting fundamental human needs and eliminating oppression. Social justice is linked to health in three interrelated ways:

1. Health is constructed through the social and political conditions we experience and is therefore necessarily influenced by the just or unjust power arrangements that determine those conditions.
2. Health is an asset and a value, enabling people to live fully and realize their potential.
3. Health is a public concern associated with the decisions that a society makes for the collective good.

A deep dialogue about why CCPH engages in community-campus partnerships is especially important now as interest in community engagement and community-academic partnerships is growing, in particular around research. CCPH shares the concern, for example, expressed by the Community Network for Research Equity and Impact, that CBPR could simply replace the conventional approach to research without embracing social change, policy change, paradigm shifts and power sharing. In other words, if the 'why' of social

justice is not central to CBPR, then it is an empty buzzword, co-opted for purposes that can harm communities.

CCPH considers how it leverages assets as an organization to play a greater role in ensuring that the policies, practices and systems are in place for community-campus partnerships to thrive and have an impact. If it is successful in supporting authentic and equitable CBPR, it would expect to see that

- the research has been endorsed by formal and informal community leaders who have participated in its conceptualization, design and implementation;
- research budgets demonstrate equity of funding across the community and academic partners;
- research teams reflect the diversity of the communities engaged in the research;
- community advisory boards are replaced by community governing boards;
- community members involved in the conduct of research are fairly compensated for their time and expertise;
- requests for applications explicitly invite CBPR proposals and community-based applicants;
- there are mechanisms to support community groups to own and manage the research process;
- peer-review processes include an equitable number of community and academic peer reviewers who are properly oriented and prepared for their roles;
- indicators of genuine community engagement and CBPR are articulated and incorporated into funding announcements, review criteria and peer-review processes; and
- policy change is viewed as a legitimate and fundable outcome of research.

Sarena Seifer

See also Community-Based Participatory Research; community-university research partnerships; health care; knowledge mobilization; social justice

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- Developing and Sustaining Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships: A skill-building curriculum: <http://cbprcurriculum.info>

COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

High in the mountains of Srinagar, an Indian university and a civil society organization set up a research centre to support village groups in intervening in plans for

a large hydroelectric dam project. In the Philippines, university researchers and local government agencies enhance the capacity of municipal officials for environmental enforcement and the promotion of biodiversity. On Canada's Pacific coast, a university office for community-based research joins up with Aboriginal organizations to document and strengthen traditional languages. In southern England, a university partnership project helps families, service agencies and professors design research projects for children with complex needs. And in Denmark, a conservation non-profit, a university and local residents work together to analyze and improve the quality of water in a cluster of village ponds.

These are all examples of community-university research partnerships (CURPs): collaborative arrangements for the co-production of knowledge and associated learning and action. CURPs generate actionable knowledge aimed at advancing the public interest, especially among marginalized and vulnerable groups, in critical economic, social, environmental, cultural or political issues facing localities and regions. A growing number of cities and towns are supported by these partnerships in their efforts to rapidly understand and solve emerging problems in a globalized environment of turbulent and continuous change. Regional economic distress, homelessness, climate change, food insecurity, youth crime, gender inequality, ethnic conflict, corruption and authoritarian regimes—the list of problems addressed by CURPs is broad and constantly evolving. This entry reviews the basic structure and membership of CURPs and some of the methods they have used to conduct research. A discussion of some of the obstacles faced by CURPs is then presented, along with some recommendations for addressing them.

Membership, Structure and Values of CURPs

The community entities involved in CURPs may be non-profit organizations, co-operatives, community development institutions, local governments, social movement organizations, think tanks, professional or sectoral associations, social movements, foundations, social enterprises or private, for-profit businesses—or some combination of these actors. On the academic side, participants may include individuals—particularly faculty and students—working on specific projects or courses, research centres or extension offices, or even entire institutions. Sometimes a group of colleges or universities will join forces to work with local community partners on regional initiatives or campaigns. Often there is a partnership 'broker'—a unit inside the university or a non-profit outside—that brings the parties together, helps them develop a common understanding

and agenda and provides ongoing support to the knowledge production and utilization process.

Structures for governing CURPs take a variety of forms. Advisory boards or committees, working groups, task forces and project teams are common structures employed to guide and monitor partnered research initiatives. The terms of the partnership may be formalized in a written agreement, protocol or memorandum of understanding signed by the parties. The most effective CURPs are characterized by reciprocity, transparency, shared decision-making, mutual benefit and mutual respect, especially for the value of knowledge produced by the community partners. Ownership and use of intellectual property produced by the partnership should be shared as well. All of these elements can, and should, be encoded in the terms of the partnership agreement. The most dysfunctional and exploitative relationships between universities and communities feature knowledge extraction behaviour by professors and students and persistent asymmetries in favour of universities in terms of decision-making, funding flows and direct benefits, together with the wholesale privileging of academic knowledge.

CURPs constitute a specific form of the broader field of campus-community engagement. The higher education institutions with the deepest, widest and most sustained community engagement are those that, first, find ways of integrating faculty scholarship into the research partnership paradigm and, second, commit meaningful institutional resources—especially through multi-year budget allocations, targeted fundraising, permanent administrative support, integrated assessment systems and meaningful faculty rewards and incentives—to partnership efforts at all levels and across all disciplines.

Research Methods and Participation in CURPs

The research methods mobilized by CURPs vary considerably across partnerships. Qualitative methods such as open-ended key person interviews, focus groups, ethnographies, participant observation and case studies are often used by these partnerships. But so too are quantitative methods, including large-scale surveys and sophisticated statistical analysis of their results, randomized clinical trials and other experimental designs, especially in the hard sciences. However, the crucial element in the methodology of a CURP is that the body overseeing and guiding the research process represents all the major parties to the partnership. Ideally, this body should include substantive representation from the most marginal and vulnerable groups affected by the issue under study. This can be called the imperative of the primary stakeholder. Special training

and support are often required to enable these groups to participate effectively, on a 'level playing field', with more powerful and informed stakeholders. Among other things, it is often necessary for partnerships to provide for translation and interpretation into local languages; plus written agreement by the authorities not to seek retribution for critical comments by participants is often a necessary measure.

Such efforts to strengthen the power and amplify the voice of the stakeholders most affected by the issue under study are consistent with the activist stance and engaged methods of participatory research. Forty years ago, that field was consolidated by the coming together of social movement learning among Aboriginal, women's civil rights and labour organizations in rich countries and the anti-colonial politics and education movements of Latin America, Africa and Asia, particularly the dialogical praxis of Paulo Freire. Other traditions that have helped shape the methods of CURPs include the extension work of land grant universities in the USA, the science shop movement in Europe, universities in poor countries that are mandated to promote equitable development and the transnational networks of civil society organizations fighting for social justice. At the same time, recent years have seen the incorporation of online and social media tools into the methods of governance and knowledge production of CURPs. Collaborative, cloud-based project management, file sharing and communication platforms, SMS (short message service) texting, Skype calls, tele-learning, webinars, live streaming of meetings and conferences, videoconferencing, mapping via geographic information systems, data mining and data visualization software, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn (and their analogues in China and the Middle East) are some of the tools deployed in this regard. Used strategically, they can be powerful supplements to—but never replacements for—regular face-to-face interaction by the partners. Used indiscriminately, however, these tools can become time-consuming distractions that delay, defer and even undermine the core activities and outcomes of the partnership.

Overcoming Obstacles to CURPs

Experience indicates that there several obstacles that must be overcome for CURPs to achieve success. Chief among these is lack of money on the part of community organizations. In most countries, non-profit organizations in particular are badly underfunded and often lack the resources to participate in research partnerships. Indeed, the opportunity costs of their leadership or staff devoting significant time to CURPs are very high, given other pressures and priorities. What is required is ongoing, predictable funding that pays

for the time of community representatives working on CURP activities.

A second obstacle is lack of time on the part of faculty members, who are required to teach, do research, publish and sit on university committees, among an array of duties. Furthermore, in some parts of the world where university salaries are low, professors must supplement their income through consulting and other business income. In the short term, teaching release stipends for faculty doing engaged research can go some distance towards reducing this particular obstacle.

A third, and related, obstacle involves tenure and promotion policies in universities that are misaligned with community engagement in general and CURP participation in particular. Such policies act as strong disincentives for young professors, especially, to participate in CURPs. Campus-community partnerships for health have prepared tools for engaged professors to build their case for career advancement, as well as model tenure and promotion policies that reward, rather than punish, partnered research in the community.

One important success factor that can help reduce the effects of these and other obstacles is the presence of system-wide funding programmes for CURPs. One model is that of the Community University Research Alliance Program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada, which, over more than a decade, provided \$120 million in multi-year grants to a wide range of CURPs. Another funding programme model is the Seventh Framework Program of the European Commission and its predecessor programmes, which have made grant funds available for nearly 15 years to the Living Knowledge Network of science shops. For such programmes to be instituted and sustained, of course, it is essential for citizens to elect governments that value the kind of action-oriented, co-produced knowledge that CURPs deliver.

International professional networks have contributed to the theory and practice of CURPs as well. The Global University Network for Innovation, based in Spain, promotes CURPs in the context of the university's mission of social responsibility. The Talloires Network provides opportunities for university presidents to explore the experience of research partnerships as part of the university's engagement in civic affairs. The Living Knowledge Network connects and strengthens the science shop movement across Europe and elsewhere in the world.

For its part, the Global Alliance of Community Engaged Research has the advancement of the theory and practice of community-based and other forms of partnered research as its goal. The PASCAL International Observatory shares knowledge about CURPs as

part of its research and networking on social capital, life-long learning and renewal of place-based development. Finally, campus-community partnerships for health have built expertise and resources in Community-Based Participatory Research and engaged scholarship in the health field that is relevant to other disciplines.

CURPs have become permanent and essential instruments to enable cities and towns across the globe to analyze, navigate and adapt in a turbulent world. Rising inequality, extreme climate events and frequent food crises are only three of the complex, ‘wicked’ problems that such partnerships can and must be mobilized to address. The world needs more CURPs. In this paradoxical sense, the future of CURPs is bright. The challenge now, and the opportunity, is for community organizations and higher education institutions to prepare a new generation of leaders in both spheres to take CURPs to a higher level of effectiveness and impact.

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See also Community University Partnership Programme; Community-Campus Partnerships for Health; Cornell Participatory Action Research Network; Global Alliance on Community-Engaged Research; higher education

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COMPLEXITY THEORY

This entry explores complexity theory, its meaning, its origins, its foundational ideas and its relationship to action research. As a cross-disciplinary theory, complexity is concerned with evolving and changing non-linear systems and the inability to totally understand the whole system through an understanding of the parts. The entry argues that complexity can provide an epistemological, theoretical and methodological basis for action research, and a number of examples of such application are provided.

Complexity theory has emerged relatively recently as a valuable underpinning for action research theory and practice. As a collection of ideas, and thus perhaps more accurately referred to as ‘complexity theories’ (or sometimes ‘complexity science’), this body of literature has influenced a broad range of disciplines from biology, climatology, immunology, architecture and economics to education, business and psychology. Such cross-disciplinary relevance foreshadows the potential of *complexity* (the term used henceforth) as an epistemological, theoretical and methodological basis for action research.

Complexity is concerned with non-linear, evolving and changing systems—those that are unpredictable in that even if one were familiar with all the components of the system, one would still not be able to determine what exactly would happen next. Most social contexts

can be considered as such systems, but these ideas resonate particularly in contexts such as teaching and learning, management and organizational change, contexts where action research has traditionally been practiced.

Complexity acknowledges the inability to totally understand the whole through an understanding of the parts. Rather, it aims to understand the whole by understanding the interaction of its parts. At its briefest, complexity is concerned with the ‘big consequences of little things’, helping to understand how coherent and purposive patterns and wholes emerge from the interactions of simple, non-purposive components.

Complexity’s foundational ideas (outlined below) can help action researchers to ‘make sense’ of their research context, particularly the nature of change and learning. It is also argued that action research provides an appropriate meta-methodology for those who recognize and embrace complexity in the social sciences.

That said, the application of complexity to action research has not been without critique. Such arguments are often based on particular modes of practice of action research itself and are ultimately influenced by the ontology, epistemologies, philosophies, beliefs and assumptions of those engaging in it. For example, action research which is focused on hypothesis testing or generalization of findings may not sit comfortably with complexity thinking. Additionally, some working with complexity in the hard sciences have challenged the application of these theories to the social sciences more generally.

Origins

The literature explicating complexity owes much of its development to a group of eminent cross-disciplinary researchers, several of them Nobel laureates, working at the Santa Fe Institute in the USA. The historical background to complexity is well outlined by Mitchell Waldrop (1992) in his popularized book *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos*. This text references the seminal contributions of writers such as Fritjof Capra, Stuart Kauffman, Heinz Pagels, Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers.

While a number of writers drew loose connections between complexity and action research in the late 1980s and 1990s, the most explicit theoretical work in this area was made in the late 1990s by the Canadians Brent Davis and Dennis Sumara, who have gone on to publish key papers on the topic.

There is a close relational lineage between complexity and systems theory, which has been linked to action research by a significant number of writers. While complexity has much in common with systems theory, it places focus on some very specific concepts (perhaps considered ‘sub-theories’), which are considered as follows.

Foundational Concepts of Complexity

There are a number of key concepts which underpin complexity. Since these ideas have been applied in diverse disciplines and contexts, from the study of weather and ant colonies to the understanding of social systems, the language used when describing these concepts is often generic. For example, the term *agent* is used to refer to a contributing ‘part’ in the system; so this might represent a nerve cell, an ant or, in a social system, an individual or a collective entity, such as a group or corporation. Similarly, *schema* can be differentially understood in different contexts but generally refers to the sets of rules or patterns that guide and shape a system. Here, we focus on how these ideas are understood in the social settings most likely to be the focus of action researchers.

Change as Emergent, Self-Organized Adaptation

From the perspective of complexity, development and change are viewed as natural, evolutionary and emergent; a process which is neither imposed nor random. The interaction among the various ‘parts’ of a system and the ways the system is subsequently organized and structured in turn influence future events. Complexity thus views change as adaptation, stemming from the interaction, alignment and organization of agents into higher levels of complexity. Learning, for example, is viewed as adaptation to environment based on experience.

Feedforward, Feedback and Sensitivity to Initial Conditions

Complexity recognizes that, over time, interactions and events ‘feedforward’ to produce the systems which are discernible at any given point in time. However, complexity also acknowledges the role of ‘feedback’, by which past or present events influence events in the present or future. In this way, it is asserted that complex phenomena embody their histories and that processes are critically dependent on their initial conditions, conditions that may be unrecoverable or unknowable. This notion of sensitivity to initial conditions is the essential idea behind the often discussed ‘butterfly effect’, a metaphor that suggests that the flap of a butterfly’s wings can change the climate on the opposite side of the globe.

Homeostasis and Bifurcation

Homeostasis refers to the tendency of a system to maintain a stable, constant condition. Bifurcation (sometimes termed phase transition or, more popularly, ‘tipping points’) occurs when a system moves from one form of stability to another, resulting in new but

more complex stabilities. Complexity theorists recognize that such bifurcations are prompted by conditions which may not be known or knowable. Thus, the input of a new idea, individual, action or rule into the system at any point can lead to subtle changes which may subsequently lead to dramatically different outcomes, outcomes which cannot be predicted.

Agent Interaction, Redundancy and Diversity

Complexity is primarily concerned with the relationships and interactions between agents. It focuses on how behaviour and change are influenced by internal schema (the rules and patterns internal to the agent, which might—amongst other manifestations—include beliefs, values or assumptions). Such schema are constructed through interaction between agents and subsequently continue to change through such interaction.

‘Redundancy’ refers to a system having a degree of similarity or commonality in its characteristics in order for there to be some level of cohesiveness. However, systems also require a level of diversity among and between agents which enables novel responses, thus facilitating evolutionary possibilities. Such diversity can prompt either gradual emergence or rapid, radical bifurcation. As an example, if all the staff within an organization have very similar educational, socio-economic, cultural and experiential backgrounds, then the ‘system’ will be more limited in its capacity to respond in innovative ways when confronted with unforeseen stimulus.

The Relevance and Value of Complexity for Action Researchers

The idea that change is emergent and a process of self-organized adaptation is very consistent with the Lewinian cycle common to all action research. Action research, by virtue of its approach, mostly works with the complexity inherent in social contexts rather than trying to control variables or engage in reductive analysis. Most action researchers recognize that they cannot hope to understand or predict all the factors affecting their research context and that, while they can participate in the unfolding of understandings, they cannot prescribe what will be learnt or how the cycles will proceed. Both theory and subsequent cycles of practice emerge from the unique circumstances and experiences within specific contexts. This leads to particular understandings of generalizability. Complexity provides a theoretical rigour to such understandings, challenging action researchers to recognize the significance of aspects of their research which they otherwise may not notice—or only intuit as important.

Both complexity and action research are primarily concerned with the relationships and interactions

between agents (or participants). Participatory Action Research opens up what, in complexity terms, might be termed ‘collective possibilities’, providing a vehicle for co-researchers to seek and share meanings constructed from shared experience. Here, the schemas of these agents are critical in processes of change.

Action research can be considered a means to both promote and study processes of bifurcation and autopoiesis (from the Greek ‘self-producing’—simply defined as where the components of a system reproduce themselves from themselves). Consistent with complexity, it is not the schema themselves which are seen as governing change but rather the interaction of various agents and their own schemas.

Integral to action research is reflexivity—a mental process in which one questions and challenges one’s own assumptions, values, beliefs and practices, generally with other participants. The action, observation and reflection phases of action research might be viewed as introducing ‘noise’ or disturbance into a system to see what happens. In some instances, this prompts a state of non-equilibrium from which new possibilities, and perhaps new stabilities, emerge (bifurcation). From the perspective of complexity, such disturbance remains unpredictable and non-replicable, since each system is different in its initial conditions. Recognizing, celebrating and fostering diversity among participants becomes important, and complexity challenges us to consider whether everyone should be learning and doing the same things in the same ways (e.g. in training contexts).

Action research which is informed by complexity thus pays attention to the histories and events which can evoke significant changes in outcomes, not in order to generalize to other contexts or predict future change but to understand these emergent dynamics in all their richness. While many research approaches traditionally disqualify disconfirming cases and outlying data, action researchers embrace them, actively exploring ‘exceptions’ to better understand the change dynamics and inform subsequent cycles. For example, the acknowledgement and study of dissonant views and the potential consequence of this dissonance can assist us to understand the bifurcation points.

Action research can thus be an effective vehicle for engaging individuals and organizations with notions of non-linearity and emergence and supporting them to embrace complexity-informed perspectives on change and learning. It provides the opportunity to engage with phenomena while they are evolving and to explore the myriad variables that might be influencing the situation.

Examples of Application

Canadians Davis and Sumara draw on complexity principles to challenge their own teaching practice and to

collaboratively change the culture within their school through action research. They have applied the ideas through action research in a number of teaching contexts, from mathematics and language education to teacher education more broadly.

Renata Phelps and a number of Australian colleagues used complexity to inform several research initiatives focused on information and communications technology learning. Action research with pre-service primary and secondary teachers led to the development of a metacognitive approach, and further research investigated the implications of this approach for teacher professional development within the whole-school context. Also in Australia, Susan Wong draws on complexity to understand and inform governments' formation of regional development and telecommunications policy.

Stewart Hase, from Australia, builds on ideas from complexity in his seminal work on heutagogy, the study of self-determined learning. Action research is viewed as a key example of a heutagogical approach. Others have applied Hase's ideas to a range of areas of educational research, such as John Hurley's work on emotionally intelligent mental health nurse training.

The Italian researcher Michela Mayer draws on ideas from complexity in her personal exploration of crossing borders, between cultures, ways of thinking and ways of life, in a globalized world and her experience of action research with a group of teaching colleagues. In Iran, Mohammad Ahmadian and Mansoor Tavakoli explore the utility of action research to investigate second-language classrooms as complex systems.

In the UK, Matthew Atencio, Mike Jess and Kay Dewar used complexity to envision collaborative learning communities for physical education teachers. Cherry Kilbride and colleagues also employed action research, informed by complexity, to examine the lessons learnt from setting up an in-patient stroke service in a London teaching hospital, documenting the interplay of various non-linear but interrelated factors. Additionally, in Scotland, Laura Colucci-Gray and colleagues acknowledge complexity in their discussion of evidence-based practice and teacher action research.

Renata Phelps

See also generalizability; Lewin, Kurt; Participatory Action Research; reflective practice; systems thinking

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COMPREHENSIVE DISTRICT PLANNING

When decentralized decision-making processes are used both vertically and horizontally in the practice of social and economic planning at the district or local government level, it is called comprehensive district planning (CDP). Decentralized planning is an inter-related system of decision-making processes to arrive at an integrated, participatory and co-ordinated idea of development for a local area. Decentralized planning at the district, sub-district and village or city levels is necessarily a citizen-centric process through which participation of all stakeholders is ensured for economic development and social justice. It not only enables the marginalized, women and the deprived to express their aspirations and needs but also enables them to become part of the decision-making processes which affect their lives. Opposite to this, decisions taken and policies formulated through a decision-making process which does not include the beneficiaries in the process are known as a centralized planning process, often practiced in many countries around the world.

Viewing CDP in the context of action research makes it a platform for learning rather than plunging directly into problem-solving. This learning is multidimensional in nature. People sit together for the identification of felt needs and find ways and means to fulfil those needs through a process of consensus. In doing so, the marginalized and not so influential sections of society are able to participate, interact and in turn contribute to the preparation of the plan, thereby feeling empowered. CDP integrates local and traditional knowledge into the designing and formulation of projects. When local communities are involved in the preparation of plans, they also commit to monitoring its implementation.

Thus, CDP generates a learning process which initially results in planning as per local needs, opportunities and constraints, and in the long term leads to empowerment of the communities and effective support to local-level institutions. It not only helps in developing individual capacities but also strengthens institutional capacities for planning.

Goal

The primary goal of CDP is to achieve the well-being of the entire population of the district in all respects, in other words, participation in the planning processes, livelihood enhancement through preparing projects based on local resources and elimination of deprivation and social discrimination in any form (e.g. gender, caste, communal and economic).

Process

The CDP process is complex and often requires clarity in terms of what a district wants to achieve and who are the stakeholders needed to be involved in the process. A conducive and enabling environment is also crucial for the success of the process.

CDP can be viewed as a sequence of steps which include the following:

- *Mobilization of people to participate:* People from different walks of life, segregated on the basis of their social or economic status, are mobilized to participate in the process. Sometimes people get mobilized by themselves based on the necessity of the issue. In other circumstances, the role of civil society and citizen groups is important in this regard.
- *Meetings of stakeholders from different sections of societies to identify needs:* They have to develop a common consensus on the felt needs. They identify goals and set the vision for the district.
- *Focused group discussions among the different sections or groups, such as schedule castes, schedule tribes, youth, women, physically challenged and so on:* This is important because all the stakeholders are not comfortable enough to express their concerns and needs in front of the more privileged and powerful.
- Generation of a database for planning by the community themselves, using various tools such as social mapping, resource mapping, preparing a timeline, transect walk, seasonal mapping, problem tree analysis and so on
- Identification of variations in the planning unit and their causes, using various tools such as

rapid rural appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal

- Preparation of reports based on information collated using the above tools and techniques and their analysis
- Preparation of plans on the basis of these reports and depending upon the unit of planning
- Sharing of these plans with the larger public, such as the village or town/district
- Integration of local plans with higher order plans, such as development block or district level
- Approval of the plans by the appropriate body at the district level
- Integration of the district plan with the state plan or any other higher order plan.
- Formulation of projects on the basis of these plans with the support of technical and financial experts
- Approval of the projects by local-level institutions
- Implementation and monitoring of the plan

CDP and Action Research

The process of action research does not limit itself to knowledge generation; it is also applied to the process of utilization of that knowledge. CDP is a process which draws heavily on action research. When people or communities come together to find solutions to their needs, they collectively prioritize what is most important to be addressed, what are the resources required to address those felt needs, where these resources are available, what could be the most sustainable approach to utilizing those resources and what the benefits are in doing so. The planning exercise—from formulation to implementation—is a continuous process of inquiry, finding solutions and applying those to solve the desired, identified needs. The knowledge generated during the process is not only useful in the short term but in the long term also provides support to the process itself and sets a benchmark for the community to respond to. It is a process which brings together people to work for a common cause.

Anshuman Karol

See also citizen participation; local self-governance; microplanning; participatory budgeting; participatory governance; participatory monitoring; Participatory Rural Appraisal; participatory urban planning

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COMPUTER-BASED INSTRUCTION

This entry outlines how computer-based instruction can be designed and developed to produce a tool that supports the development of action research capacity.

Definition

Computer-based instruction, of which a common form is online or e-learning, uses the computer as a tool to support learning. It can be used as an independent tool but is often integrated with the Internet. It can be an alternative to face-to-face instruction, but its efficacy for learning is increased when it is blended or integrated with other modes of delivery.

The Growing Need for Computer-Based Instruction

The number and diversity of students entering higher education is increasing. This diverse cohort brings to the learning environment a diverse presence, for example, different motivations, life experiences, orientations and approaches to learning. Different approaches to instruction are required to cater to the needs of this diverse, global and international student body. Computer-based instruction can engage students, synchronously or asynchronously, through a variety of learning activities, for example, discussions, quizzes, blogs, games, wikis and assessments, and through multimedia resources. The integration of assistive technologies such as speech-to-text functionality expands the accessibility of this approach.

Relevance to Action Research

Action research, as an inherently iterative and evolving methodology, invites researchers to select tools that provide the best fit between their context and their research. Computer-based instruction provides a tool that offers multiple options to support key tenets

of action research. This tool can enhance and make possible collaborative learning and co-generation of knowledge through an online community of practice which invites participation regardless of geographical boundaries. It can act as a nexus for action with research, linking action with an international repository of research literature. Through the integration of reflective tools, the reflective practice that underpins action research can be encouraged. Computer-based instruction can also have a role to play in the development of action research capacity.

Good Design

The starting point for good design of computer-based instruction is adopting an action research approach. A collegial and collaborative team can work synergistically through iterative action research cycles of plan, act, observe and reflect. Time must be allowed for good design and development. Action research enables multilevel and multidisciplinary teams, with the benefit of drawing on the expertise and strengths that each team member can contribute whilst at the same time providing an environment where each person's capabilities are developed. This is aligned with a distributed leadership paradigm, where each participant assumes a leadership role for the design of the computer-based instruction module.

Criteria for Computer-Based Instruction

Through the design of computer-based instruction, for example, for learning about reflection, criteria were established for good design. These criteria are closely aligned with the principles of universal design for learning and are as follows:

- An aligned curriculum
- Interactivity
- Flexibility
- Scaffolded instruction
- A familiar online environment
- Usability of the interface

To ensure positive learning outcomes, the curriculum needs to be aligned. Clear aims for the computer-based instruction module are first articulated, from which learning outcomes are developed. Aligned with each learning outcome are the content, learning activities, teaching strategies, assessment tasks (if applicable) and supportive resources. Multiple iterations of the action research cycle are necessary to develop an aligned curriculum, as each learning outcome is individually evaluated and reflected upon before the action of further development and refinement occurs.

Computer-based instruction allows for an interactive learning environment. The freedom afforded by not having to rely on hard-copy text resources opens up opportunities for innovative pedagogy. Learners can be both self-regulated and self-paced, controlling their interaction with the computer-based content. Such features enhance learner motivation. Offering variety in how learners interact through learning activities also enhances the intrinsic motivation for, and engagement with, deep learning. Learners can engage and participate through traditional text-based activities or through video- or audio-based activities.

A strength of action research is its inherent flexibility. As you progress through each cycle of the process, the ongoing reflection allows you to adapt, adjust, respond to and redesign your work. Likewise, the design of any computer-based instruction for action research, for example, learning about reflective practice, also needs to offer flexibility. This flexibility may be achieved through offering students and teachers control and choice over what content is studied and what learning activities and teaching strategies are chosen and offering a range of resources to support learning. The strength of providing choice and flexibility is that developmentally appropriate content, activities and resources can be selected to scaffold the instruction and learning of students by responding to their stage of understanding and extending their learning to a higher level.

The computer-based approach enables, with ease, the sharing of multiple and multimedia resources. The resources can be sourced locally or through the World Wide Web, or if a gap and a need are identified, they can be created for your project. In the case of developing modules on reflective practice, a series of short YouTube videos were developed reflecting the multiple perspectives, or lenses, of students, teachers, colleagues and theory.

Decisions about the technological platform that is to be used can be influenced by the online environment or learning management system that is most familiar to the learner. Institutional influences may include policy directives on which platform is endorsed and supported by the learning institution. Usability of the interface needs to be evaluated to ensure that the computer-based instruction is easy to learn, is efficient to use, has few errors and results in high satisfaction for the learner.

Marina Harvey

See also communities of practice; critical reflection; online action research

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CONCEPT MAPPING

Concept mapping is a structured visual way to show the relationships among components within a knowledge domain. The map uses geometric shapes with connecting lines and words to diagram connections among the elements of a system. Concept maps give visual representation of the larger picture along with the more specific details. Words are used within the connecting lines to show the relationship between concepts. For example, if action research was the main concept at the top of the map, the connecting lines could say 'addresses', with links to the ideas of 'power', 'collaborations' and 'ethics' (see Figure 1). Mapping helps show how the construction of knowledge takes place by highlighting what individuals know about a topic in logical order, and it also highlights the relationship between themes. The linear progression between points on the map affords the ability to connect themes across disciplines, communities and constituents. Mapping is a versatile tool that can be used to show knowledge construction in all fields of learning. This entry explores the history of concept mapping and how it can be a useful tool for action researchers.

History of Concept Mapping

Concept maps were developed by Joseph Novak to shift learning in classrooms from rote learning to meaningful learning experiences rooted in a constructivist view of education. Concept maps in this context represent existing knowledge in addition to showing what students are currently learning. The process had the best results when students developed their own concept maps, compared with teachers' pre-made maps. Concept mapping afforded an opportunity for students to take ownership of learning, investing more in the process of knowledge creation instead of just memorizing facts.

Concept mapping has been used in various disciplines and settings, including programme planning and evaluation, educational settings, computer science, community health, business development and community planning. The process is useful in group settings

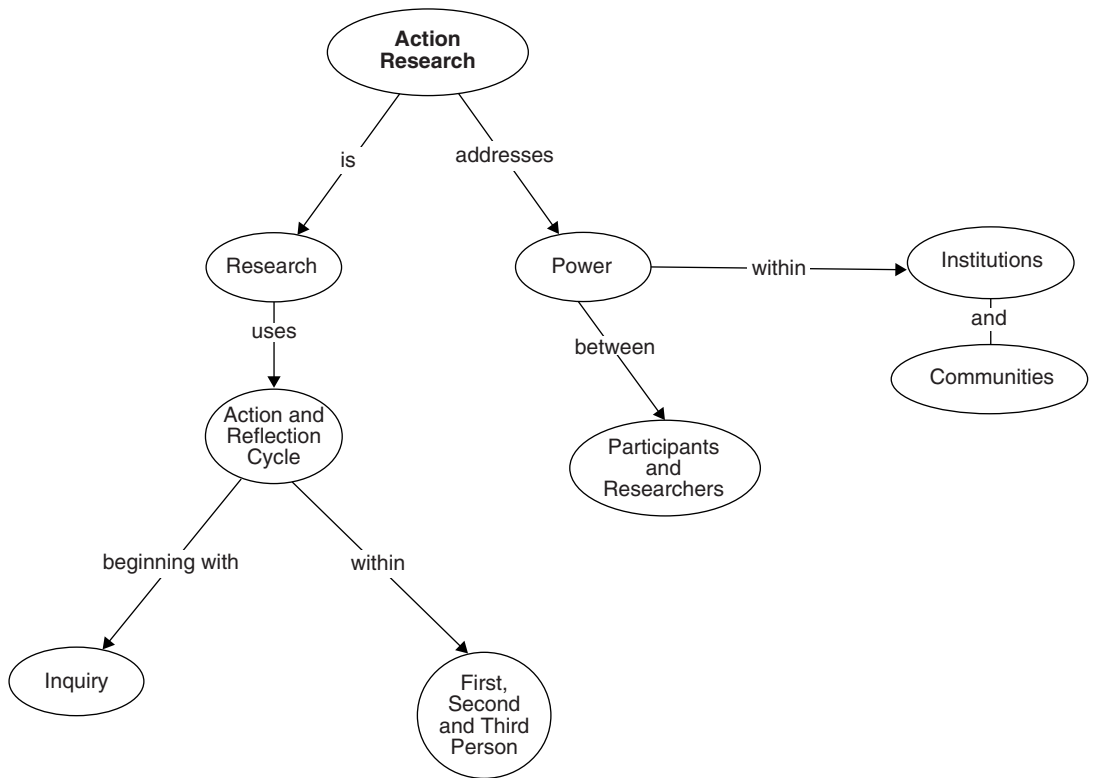


Figure 1 Concept Mapping

to help all involved see a topic or project in its entirety and therefore identify areas of strength and concern. Concept maps can also show what information is missing in learning and collaboration. In addition, mapping fosters creativity by helping people think about connections and relationships in a new way.

Action Research and Concept Mapping

As a tool for researchers and participants, concept mapping is useful in both individual and group action research projects to explore the development and relationships of various concepts, themes and ideas within the research. Concept mapping can be used to help refine and focus a project as well as to develop a general theme, sub-themes and a concept and/or question that relates to the research.

In collaborative settings, concept mapping can be used as a facilitation tool of knowledge construction within action research. Groups can use concept maps to develop questions and assessments, show knowledge generation and the development of ideas and highlight relationships among the ideas explored in the research. Concept mapping can be used in all the stages of an action research project, from planning to

implementation of findings and reflection, to show what questions the research will examine, the voices of researcher-participants, outcomes and analysis of process. Concept mapping in the pre-stages of an action research project could help document the knowledge that the researcher or participants will bring to the project, helping to construct learning onto previous knowledge. Therefore, concept mapping can help with planning in action research by building on an idea and former knowledge to form areas of development and inquiry. The individually developed concept maps can help create a shared vision of the project as well as show the diversity of knowledge among the constituents.

Multiple ways to create concepts maps in an action research process can include maps made by individuals and then compiled by a facilitator or a map made by a group with one central facilitator. Concept maps may also be used to take notes during research sessions, as an evaluative tool to see what learning occurred as well as to show knowledge generation when bringing new collaborators on board.

As a process for collaboration, concept mapping is an interactive, knowledge-generating activity to help action research groups share and communicate ideas and concepts that are meaningful for the group.

In addition, concept mapping within action research allows for reflective practice, allowing the participants to revisit the knowledge and to make changes as needed.

Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt proposes using concept mapping to develop Action Learning and action research projects to help clarify the project for those participating. Focusing predominantly on organizational learning and action research, Zuber-Skerritt offers guidelines and step-by-step help in using concept mapping in action research. In the educational arena, Roberts uses an action research framework to explore the use of concept maps to teach statistics in a university classroom. Roberts' central research focus investigates a variety of themes that emerge when using concept mapping as a teaching tool.

Valerie Louis

See also cognitive mapping; community mapping; facilitation; fishbone diagram; two-column technique

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community relations, law-based alternative dispute resolution, international development and diplomacy and research and teaching.

The 'field' is as diverse as the many names used to describe it. The differences in terms frame differences in the ways conflicts are understood and addressed. Perhaps the most differentiating feature is the extent of third party control over a conflict engagement process. All forms of dispute resolution, or third-party-supported conflict engagement, share a basic commitment to disputants' empowerment when it comes to the content and outcomes of conflict processing. The extent to which third parties guide and control the process, however, is one marker of difference between different approaches. Three primary approaches, among others, are described below.

Conflict management is functional and managerial in focus. Problems are viewed as based in competing interests, over which disputants may be assisted by a third party to find common ground, and ideally generate outcomes that foster 'mutual gains'. *Conflict resolution*, alternatively, focuses more on threatened or frustrated human needs and is organized around an effort to identify the sources of such problems and how they may be solved. In conflict resolution efforts, parties are brought together by third parties who assist them in defining their own problems in inclusive ways and in finding their own both/and solutions to previously us/them problems. Next along a continuum to an even more 'client-centred' approach, there is *conflict transformation*, in which confrontation between people is seen as a product of disempowerment and injustice, mostly for the weaker side, but for the stronger as well, in which, for example, men may be caught in cycles of oppression themselves when engaging in socially conditioned sexist behaviour. A way to summarize these three general 'baskets' into which the field may generally 'fit' are interests (management), needs (resolution) and values (transformation).

These baskets (and others) can be called 'conflict engagement', suggesting an inclusive, contingency-based formulation intended in part to transcend a battle of methods and instead suggest that different approaches are needed for addressing different types and levels of conflicts at different times.

Conflict Management and Action Research

Conflict engagement and action research share some important core assumptions about knowledge and data generation and use. This is particularly the case with less directive and more 'client-centred' resolution and transformation variants. While conflict management is often a largely expert-directed process with expertise in conflict analysis and its creative management

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict management is a diverse and growing field. Over the past 30 years, it has evolved out of a mostly activist-oriented peace and justice focus to become a more politically 'neutral' or 'multi-partial' amalgamation of theories, practices and interdisciplinary studies. There are now hundreds of peace and conflict studies programmes in the US and throughout the world, including graduate studies programmes leading to the new profession of conflict management or resolution. Work is found in areas such as mediation, coaching, management consulting, human resource management,

guided by a third party, conflict resolution, and transformation in particular, will often emphasize an 'elicitive' approach to knowledge and data generation. That is, these approaches will look to the parties and their native knowledge, cultural norms and experiential and intuitive expertise to frame the conflict issues and the ways in which they may be creatively addressed. In these cases, which may be viewed as akin to action research, the third party will be more of an organizer, convener and facilitator than an expert charged to determine and direct a process.

Perhaps a conceptually useful, if somewhat overstated, analogy is to view the role of the conflict manager as generally aligned with the role of the 'normal science' researcher. In both, knowledge is developed and data gathered to assist the researcher or third party in deriving authoritative understandings, or at least convincing hypotheses, about the nature of the issue being studied or conflict being addressed, in order to generate ideas or suggestions for solutions. In action research and the more elicitive forms of conflict engagement, these outside actors view the parties as the knowledge experts and any data generated by them as 'belonging' to the parties themselves. Data is gathered not so much for the third party or researcher to 'do something' with this information (e.g. generate new knowledge, write a research paper or determine the appropriate conflict intervention) as much as it is gathered and organized for effective feedback to, and decision-making by, those from whom the data was gathered.

Another common denominator between action research and elicitive forms of conflict engagement is collaboration. In both, there is a deep commitment to shared learning, systematic and Co-Operative Inquiry and ongoing reflection and participatory evaluation, all ideally leading to more effective action and deeper insights.

Jay Rothman

See also Action Evaluation; facilitation

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CONFUCIAN PRINCIPLES

Confucian principles in this entry refer to Confucius' ideas and perspectives towards social relationships, ethics, humanity, politics and education. Often related to Confucius is the term *Confucianism*, referring to an ethical and philosophical system based on Confucius' ideas but further developed by his disciples and followers, known as scholars of the Confucian school. Confucianism has embraced and absorbed new thoughts from many other scholars ever since its origin, but it still shares with Confucius the core Confucian principles, such as the virtues of humanity, social and ritual propriety, righteousness, loyalty and filial piety. This entry discusses the life of Confucius, his major principles and educational thoughts, his influence on current education and the connections between Confucius and action research, especially within educational action research.

Life of Confucius

Confucius (551–478 BC) was a Chinese educator, politician and social philosopher and the founder of Confucianism in ancient China. He is known as Kong Fuzi ('Master Kong'), or Kongzi in Chinese. His original name was Kong Qiu, in which Kong was the family name and Qiu was the given. The name *Confucius* is a Latinized version of Kong Fuzi, created by Jesuit missionaries to China in the sixteenth century. Confucius was born into a family with an aristocratic past in the state of Lu, now in Shandong province of China, during the Spring and Autumn Period (771–476 BC) of Chinese history. His father died at a young age, not long after Kongzi's birth. Growing up in poverty, Kongzi studied hard and enjoyed learning the great classics of Chinese literature, history, poetry, music and archery. During his early years, Confucius worked as a shepherd, clerk and bookkeeper, before he established his own private school around the age of 30. During his lifetime, he enrolled 3,000 students in his private school.

Confucius advocated the idea that those who excel in learning should serve in government, and many of his pupils became successful officials serving in government posts. Following this belief, all through his life, Confucius pursued a political career in order to practice his principles and create a unified and stable country. Around age 50, he was appointed to a position as governor of a town and then became the minister of justice in the state of Lu a year later and eventually deputy prime minister. Due to political disagreements and internal conflicts, he lost a campaign through which he tried to weaken the power of three aristocratic clans.

He finally left Lu with a group of his loyal disciples and began 14 years of political exile in the neighbouring states, seeking to persuade political leaders to adopt his beliefs. However, he did not see any of his political ideas implemented. With the help of one of his former students, Ran You, Confucius was able to resettle in Lu at the age of 68. He then devoted his last years mainly to teaching and writing and passed away at the age of 73 after losing his son and two of his favourite students.

Confucian Principles

The core of Confucian principles is about the cultivation of moral virtues and maintenance of ethics. In *Analects of Confucius* (2007), a collection of conversations carried on between Confucius and his students, these principles are shown to exemplify the notion of a noble man (*junzi*; 君子), with virtues such as humanity (*ren*; 仁), righteousness (*yi*; 義), social/ritual propriety (*li*; 礼), loyalty (*zhong*; 忠) and filial piety (*xiao*; 孝). Humanity is the first and foremost principle. In *Analects*, Confucius asked for the practice of respect, liberality, trustworthiness, earnestness and kindness to achieve humanity. Righteousness is the virtue of doing good, generally in connection with morally proper conduct. Filial piety means respect for, obedience to and service and duty to one's parents. Loyalty is an extension of filial piety at a different level, referring to one's duties to family, spouse, friends and country. Social and ritual propriety is about social norms that regulate how people behave towards others, such as family members, friends and superiors. Respect for elders by their children, for example, is one of the rituals practised. To acquire and maintain all these virtues, the best way is through learning and self-cultivation.

Confucius' beliefs are strongly embedded in the social context of his age. He lived in a time characterized by moral disorder, political upheaval and social chaos. The unified and peaceful country that existed in the earlier dynasty was replaced by the division of a number of small states fighting for supremacy. People suffered from heavy taxation, corrupt officials, social injustice and wars. It was under such circumstance that Confucius aimed at achieving social stability and harmony by restoring rituals from the earlier dynasty. The principle of social/ritual propriety asks for proper behaviour of father to son and husband to wife within a family, which when extended to society requires people to perform their own roles properly and everyone to play his or her part so that harmony and peace are maintained.

Confucius' political thought is based upon his ethical principles. He stressed the importance of ethics in rulers and officials for successful governing. Managing a country starts with improving and cultivating oneself

and requires all kinds of virtues and principles in working with its people and officials. In addition, family is the basis for ideal government. Confucius believed that if people are filial, respectful and loyal to their family members, then they are able to extend these values to others in the community and even the whole society. A cultivated self does not end with individual perfection but also helps and nurtures others by extending one's knowledge and virtues to other people.

Confucius on Teaching and Learning

Confucius was credited with establishing one of the first private schools in ancient China. He charged small fees for students who wanted to study with him and accepted them regardless of their social status, thus making education available to the non-aristocratic. Before his time, general education was open only to children from privileged families, and there was no full-time teaching profession. In accepting and teaching students from all classes, Confucius developed his own pedagogical beliefs. According to Confucius, teachers should adopt individualized teaching methods based on students' characteristics and needs. Students are supposed to be motivated learners who devote themselves conscientiously to study and take delight in learning. For Confucius, learning is considered as a lifelong effort achieved with reflection, humbleness and open-mindedness. Confucius' instruction stressed the importance of classic literature and transmission of the knowledge and wisdom contained there to students. He also paid special attention to the learning of social and ritual propriety from the Zhou Dynasty, with the purpose of instructing people to perform their roles and communicate properly and meaningfully with others. In addition to intellectual education, moral education played a significant role in Confucius' educational theory and practice. The purpose of learning is to acquire all kinds of virtues and to become an enlightened and educated person. Through the teaching of virtues, he hoped to cultivate the moral person, who could then contribute to the well-being of society, a bottom-up approach to reach social reform.

The influence of Confucius' thoughts on education has been tremendous in Chinese society. One of his major contributions lies in the recognition of the importance of education. Because of the perceived role of education in cultivating people and strengthening a nation, education as a goal in itself has been internalized through Chinese society, even by those who have not received any schooling. Education as a serious undertaking, ever since it was made available to students from all classes, has become a means for individuals from more humble backgrounds to achieve higher social status. Moreover, many of the values advocated

by Confucius, such as moderation, respect towards one's elders and social harmony, are still emphasized in schools and play a significant role in people's life. Nowadays, Confucius still has an important place in the education system of other countries in Asia, such as Japan, Singapore, Korea and South Vietnam, especially in the domain of moral education.

Confucian Principles and Action Research

One of the similarities between Confucian thought and action research is the emphasis on reflection. According to Confucius, reflection is about the inward examination of actions and the ethical principles one follows in one's life. 'Each day I examine myself on three matters. In making plans for others, am I being loyal to them? In my dealings with friends, am I being trustworthy? Am I passing on to others what I have not carefully thought about myself?' (*Analects*, Chapter 1, Verse 4).

As the practice of virtues is a continuous process, so is the act of reflection. Moreover, the idea of reflection being constantly reiterated in *Analects* is one of the abilities needed to be a noble man. It involves not only self-reflection but also an examination of and reflection on others' behaviours for the purpose of learning and improvement. 'When you see a virtuous person, try to be like him. When you see someone who lacks virtue, reflect upon your own lack of virtue' (*Analects*, Chapter 4, Verse 17). Self-reflection is also for understanding one's knowledge, capabilities and bias with the purpose of improving oneself. So the process of reflection is closely associated with learning, as it is acquired through learning and built towards learning. Likewise, in action research, reflection is a skill required for action researchers who think about and critically analyze their actions with the goal of improving their professional practice. Through the examination of action, it also attempts to identify underlying assumptions and feelings and how they relate to practice. As one of the activities in learning, reflection in action research is also considered a continuous process.

Another tenet shared is Co-Operative Inquiry represented in the roles of and relationships between students and teachers/researchers. Confucius was eager to learn and open to learning. Unlike his commitment to roles and compliance with ritual propriety in social relationships, he held a different attitude towards education. In *Analects*, Confucius said, 'Among any three people, there must be one who can be my teacher. I will select their good qualities and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them' (Chapter 7, Verse 22). To acquire learning, one has to seek for knowledge from the young and less sophisticated. This perspective is based on the understanding and acknowledgement that

each one in a community has his or her own knowledge, and learning needs the contribution of each member of the learning community. Regardless of role, no one can understand every single piece of knowledge; instead, we learn from each other. So the teacher-student relationship is not unilateral but a two-way and interactive process that requires the teacher to become engaged as a learner in the creative process of learning.

Co-Operative Inquiry in action research involves people researching a topic through their own experience and knowledge in order to understand and learn how to make positive changes. A key value shared by action researchers, thus, is respect for people's knowledge and ability to understand and address the problems confronting them. Regarding teaching and learning, Paulo Freire's dialogical approach emphasizes the interaction between teachers and students and their joint contribution to knowledge. It requires the active participation of teachers and students to produce knowledge through meaningful dialogue. Specifically, the role of the teacher as researcher in action research resembles the idea of the teacher as learner—the pragmatic stance towards knowledge of Confucius. The common thread between the two is the inquiry stance towards learning, a stance that allows them to act both as a teacher and a learner, and as a researcher and a learner. The authority of both teachers and researchers in their relationships with students and participants is challenged. Instead, respect and mutual learning are the key. Teaching is not transmission of established knowledge but mutual learning and an interactive process through which teachers gain more understanding towards subject matters and pedagogical knowledge.

Teaching and learning to Confucius are about the integration of theory and practice. Learning is situational, with students having to adapt and extend their learning to illuminate their lived experiences. As Confucius said, 'Learning without thinking is pointless. Thinking without learning is dangerous' (*Analects*, Chapter 2, Verse 15). 'Thinking' in the quote means to raise questions about one's surroundings and to link them with one's lived experiences. Confucius expected students to be critical thinkers by examining textual information in relation with reality and using traditional knowledge as a source for improving understanding of current circumstances. However, learning does not stop at being the purpose of informing action. It goes further by linking theory and cultural legacy to practice and achieves this only through actions. Confucius taught six arts: (1) ritual, (2) music, (3) archery, (4) charioteering, (5) calligraphy and (6) mathematics. These subjects included both knowledge from classic texts and knowledge achieved by doing and practising. In teaching, he used examples from reality by questioning and conversing with students. He took students

on field trips, during which he provided them with opportunities to link textual knowledge with reality by exposing them to social problems and encouraging them to reflect and debate about the issues. As noted earlier, Confucius also encouraged students to serve in the government and to continue studying after they became officials, as he believed that theoretical or textual learning informs practice and practice generates new knowledge. His way of teaching represents that learning is acquired through both reading of the classics and social practice. In addition, Confucius' conception of truth goes further, referring to one's ability to enact and realize what one says.

Likewise, action researchers also strongly advocate the integration of theory and practice. One of the tenets of educational action research is to bridge the gaps between academic research and practical implications in classroom settings. Action researchers recognize that theory informs practice and practice can generate theory. The purpose of learning and developing theory is to improve practice. For practitioner researchers, for example, action research provides them a tool to build their own practical theories of teaching and develop praxis by conducting classroom research and generating practical theories. Specifically in learning, one of the most influential educators in Participatory Action Research, Freire, proposed problem-posing education, in which students and teachers engage in dialogue with one another to understand and create knowledge. When teachers present learning materials to students, students are supposed to relate problems to their own experience and the world. Freire also believed that students' comprehension and critical analysis of knowledge would grow as they practise more. Similarly, John Dewey, another scholar whose work has influenced many educational action researchers, proposed that it is teachers' responsibility to provide opportunities for students to identify problems that interest them and help them see their connection to the larger society. Action researchers not only recognize the importance of linking theory and practice for the purpose of learning but also put this into practice by translating their experience into concrete actions. Both action researchers and Confucius agree with the idea that knowledge is achieved through action.

Last is the ethical standard of caring and respect. Confucius loved and cared for the people and the society. It was out of his love and care for the people that he established private schools and taught moral values to students of all classes. It is the same goal of achieving social justice that drives action research. Moreover, both Confucius and action researchers emphasize the importance of respect. One of the key Confucian principles, a variation of what is known as the Golden Rule, is 'What you don't want done to yourself, don't

do to others' (*Analects*, Chapter 15, Verse 23). A person of humanity, according to Confucius, does not impose his or her values upon others. Instead, he or she shows respect towards others, a respect for people's knowledge and ability to understand and address the problems confronting them as well as a respect for personal values and choice. Respect is equally valued in action research. It is the same ethical rule followed by action researchers that helps them build and strengthen their relationship with participants.

Although Confucius shares many thoughts with action research, there are also aspects of his ideas incompatible with the action research approach. With respect to the principle of reflection, for example, both recognize reflection as a way to learn and eventually to take action, but they differ in terms of the content of reflection. In addition to using reflection to understand one's knowledge, capabilities as well as bias and limitations, Confucius emphasizes reflection more on ethical practice. Reflection is the examination of one's consideration of one's behaviours and attitudes with respect to daily events, as well as comparison with others' behaviour. Generally, action research, especially with the influence of Freire, stresses critical consciousness and self-interrogation of hidden prejudices, narrow interests and people's own individual and group privileges rather than a moral examination of virtues and adoption of an ethical lifestyle.

The differences in reflection content can be further traced to divergence in the purposes of education. For Confucius, the emphasis on moral education is to train virtuous people who can be examples to others and who can bring good to the society. In a warring period of dangerous chaos, the goal of Confucius was to teach the people of China how to find the ethical way that could take the country back to the good old days when China was stable, civil, unified and virtuous. Education is used as the means to bring about a peaceful and civil world. It starts with the internal transformation of individuals and extends to larger social transformation. For Freire and action researchers, social transformation is to change oppressive social conditions and to create a more egalitarian society. Through critical consciousness and collective reflection, Freire encouraged people to question their own existence, to feel in control of their own worlds and finally to transform the material and social conditions of their existence. The purpose of education, therefore, is to promote liberation and overthrow oppression. These differences notwithstanding, Confucius has a great deal to teach modern action researchers, especially around the themes covered in this entry, which include co-operative learning, integration of theory and practice, the act of reflection and caring and respect.

See also critical pedagogy; Dewey, John; educational action research; empowerment; ethics and moral decision-making; Freire, Paulo

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CONSCIENTIZATION

Conscientization is an emancipatory pedagogical process developed by the educator Paulo Freire that is designed to teach students, through critical literacies, how to negotiate the world in a thoughtful way that exposes and engages the relations between the oppressor and the oppressed. Its central educational objective is to awaken in the oppressed the knowledge, creativity and constant critical reflexive capacities necessary to demystify and understand the power relations responsible for their marginalization and, through this recognition, begin a project of liberation.

Its commitment to critical reflection and transformative action makes conscientization central to action research as action research requires that the researcher perform the critical questioning inherent to conscientization in order to ensure that due consideration is given to important social, economic and cultural contributors to social justice in designing the research.

This entry, focused around Freire's use and development of conscientization, articulates the history of conscientization; the principles of the Freirean notion of this process; a detrimental—yet popular—misunderstanding of conscientization; how conscientization, as a liberating pedagogy, functions as an antidote to the detrimental pedagogies of what Freire termed 'banking education' and the vital role conscientization plays in action research.

History of Conscientization

Freire first wrote about conscientization in his educational theories on the liberating power of literacy for the oppressed peasants in northeastern Brazil whom he

was teaching. In this area of Brazil, blatant discrimination affected economic development and mobility for millions of peasants who, by virtue of their race, class, gender and culture, were sentenced to a perverse poverty with its ever-constant threat of death by hunger. Before he termed this mode of pedagogy 'conscientization', Freire had been working for some time with these peasants to develop their literacy in ways that would help them become critically aware of the socio-economic circumstances responsible for their dire poverty and to see how their silenced culture made them voiceless. The term is an approximate translation of the Portuguese word for Freire's pedagogical process that was given to Freire by Dom Helder Camara, a bishop from Recife, Brazil, who told Freire that the type of liberating literacy experiments he was engaging in with these peasants constituted a form of consciousness raising called *conscientização*.

For a while, Freire only used the Portuguese *conscientização* in his writings and teachings, despite being under pressure to translate the term into English. His initial refusal to translate the term was both political and pedagogical. It was political in that he saw the call to translate *conscientização* as emerging from the quasi-colonial expectation on the part of most English-speaking educators that published works in languages other than English be simultaneously translated because English speakers, unlike speakers of different languages, should not be expected to struggle reading works published in other languages. Freire, by refusing to translate his term into English, was in essence pedagogically challenging the parochialism of English monolingualism, which he believed, in the long run, constituted a type of linguistic de-skilling experienced by most English speakers, who remained unaware of the obvious benefits of multilingualism, unaware that their monolingualism sentenced them to a form of cultural and linguistic exile from the world of other languages and cultures, which incessantly produce myriad world views. He saw monolingualism, then, as a cultural cage that prevented English speakers from accessing the insights and knowledge so obvious to those educators who dared to cross cultural and linguistic borders. Eventually, however, Freire did agree to have *conscientização* translated into its approximate English translation, 'conscientization', and popularized the term in his writings.

Although Freire popularized the term, the process of conscientization has also been employed towards the goal of liberation by initiatives outside of Freire's teachings. Historically, this way of negotiating the world was popularly used by worldwide anti-colonial movements, whose major aim was to liberate subjugated people who had been sentenced to a life circumscribed in a culture of silence that relegated peasants

to voicelessness. The denouncement of colonialism, for example, found a rigorous analysis in the writings of Frantz Fanon, who called for the decolonization of the minds of oppressed Africans both in Africa and in parts of the world where African peoples had been enslaved. Fanon argued that their liberation included, in addition to political independence, the simultaneous development of a critical consciousness regarding the dominant forces that had sentenced them to a life of quasi-slavery, as they were inculcated with myths and beliefs that left most of the oppressed people to internalize inferiority with respect to their oppressors. This raising of consciousness among the oppressed was labelled, similar to conscientization, *conciensier*—a French word meaning the development of a critical consciousness in relation to one's position in the world and with the world—by Fanon in his seminal book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). While Freire was not the first to theorize this process, he was the first educator to rigorously use the concept of conscientization within an educational theoretical framework.

Understanding Freire's Notion of Conscientization

Importantly, Freire insists that to work towards freedom, conscientization must be employed with specific contents, objectives and methods designed to nurture liberation. At the heart of conscientization, then, is the desire to enliven the right of the student to have a voice and to create pedagogical structures that would enable students' submerged voices to emerge. Often, this means the reclaiming of the oppressed's own words as a process of coming to voice that will allow them to speak their word, engage their own identity and take hold of their destiny. It is this right that the dominant forces go to great lengths to suffocate, seeking to sequester the words of the oppressed—words that unveil the mechanism of oppression and are distorted or repressed in a society that often celebrates a language emptied of any commitment to democracy, freedom or justice. And so, for Freire, critically unravelling language to a liberating end was essential to his project of conscientization, as it was the only means through which he could have exposed and done justice to the complexity of the various concepts of oppression with which he dealt. This means that conscientization entails questioning what power relations are inherent in the terms or words that one is taught, such as what definition—against what, for whom and against whom—a certain term implies.

For example, imagine if instead of writing the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire had written the *Pedagogy of the Disenfranchised*. Negotiating 'disenfranchised' through a process of conscientization, analyzing it

through the above critical questions, reveals that the term is often overly used by the educated class and the media to refer to the oppressed, which, in turn, represses while hiding the actors of oppression. The first title utilizes a discourse that names the oppressor, whereas the second fails to do so. The *Pedagogy of the Disenfranchised* dislodges the agent of the action while leaving in doubt who bears the responsibility for such an action. This leaves the ground wide open for blaming the victim of disenfranchisement for his or her own disenfranchisement. This example is a clear case in which the object of oppression can be also understood as the subject of oppression. Language such as this not only distorts reality but is also a destructively powerful and easily hidden method often employed by dominant forces to distract attention away from the real issues that ail society. Consequently, the process of liberation for the oppressed in a society shrouded by a politics of distraction and mystification must include conscientization, as it develops the critical consciousness necessary for the oppressed to recognize, navigate and resist the forces that subjugate them.

In his work, Freire illustrates a wonderful example of the liberating powers of conscientization by relating a tale from when he was holding a 'cultural circle' during his literacy campaign in Guinea-Bissau. Once during this cultural circle, a peasant, who was part of the oppressed masses that Portuguese colonialism forbade from becoming literate, got up suddenly and said, 'Thank you teacher', before leaving the circle. Freire remained perplexed, thinking that he probably had said something that was culturally inappropriate and had unknowingly hurt the feelings of the peasant, who eventually returned to the cultural circle. When Freire, upon the peasant's return, inquired as to why he had left, the peasant, without hesitation, replied, 'Teacher, I know now that I can know and I don't need to come every day to know'. For Freire, this story reveals a process of fracturing the yoke of Portuguese colonialism, which for centuries had inculcated the Guinea-Bissau natives with myths and beliefs regarding their backwardness, their savage nature, their inability to read or write and their incapacity to know—myths and beliefs which were used as yardsticks to present literacy always as the hallmark of White European superiority.

In a more current sense, conscientization might be employed to combat the oppressively mystified language that is now often used (intentionally or not) by educators and the media. For example, many narratives, rather than actually referring to oppressed individuals as 'oppressed', instead label them as 'disadvantaged', 'disenfranchised', 'economically marginal' or 'minority', among other names, which obfuscates the true historical conditions that explain the current context of the situation within which the oppressed are living and

with which they must intervene to liberate themselves. This sequestration of language denies oppressed people the possibility to understand the dialectical relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. Therefore, it is by engaging in the process of conscientization and questioning the oppressive drives and dimensions of terms that an individual might begin to liberate himself or herself.

Misunderstanding Conscientization

Unfortunately, Freire's notion of conscientization is often incorrectly defined in ways that fail to do justice to what Freire had in mind. One of the most problematic common misunderstandings of conscientization is the paradoxical view that the process is applicable only in the 'Third World', as if it is an unviable objective for the societies of the 'First World', which are often perceived as more 'complex'. Problematically, this assumption, in refusing to acknowledge that Third World nations are complex in their own way, presents a false hierarchical dichotomy between the so-called (and hierarchically termed) First and Third Worlds. This dichotomy represents yet another sequestration of language designed to lead to a form of mystification—a distraction that functions as a reproductive mechanism designed to create a centre or a core of romanticized Eurocentric values while relegating other cultural expressions to the margins. Certainly, the Freirean notion of conscientization does not include this hierarchical dichotomy, which goes against Freire's intention that the process be liberating. In fact, negotiating this dichotomy with Freire's conscientization process could help bring to light horrors that are often hidden by this constructed dichotomy, such as that there are within the First World order what are often thought of as strictly Third World realities, characterized by ghettos and large-scale poverty, human misery and illiteracy, and that extant within the Third World are problems such as class privileges and the accumulation of capital and power by a minority of ruling elites and oligarchs, which are commonly perceived as belonging only to the First World. And thus, those educators who view conscientization as only applicable to liberation movements in the Third World are failing to truly grasp what conscientization actually meant for Freire.

Conscientization as an Antidote to Banking Education

In a curricular sense, conscientization is especially important as an antidote to the kind of unimaginative education that Freire termed 'banking education', a process in which the teacher 'deposits' knowledge into the student and the student uncritically receives, memorizes

and stores that knowledge. The banking model of education is largely supported by instrumental literacy for the poor, in the form of a competency-based skill banking approach and the highest form of instrumental literacy for the rich, acquired through higher education in the form of professional specialization. However, despite their apparent differences, the two approaches share one common feature: They both prevent the development of critical thinking that enables one to 'read the world' critically and to understand the reasons and lineages behind the facts and behind what may appear seemingly obvious but remain ill understood.

Literacy for the poor through the banking concept of education is, by and large, characterized by mindless, meaningless drills and exercises given to prepare students to take multiple-choice and high-stakes tests that reflect an often militaristic, controlled transaction of the teacher's narration and student's memorization of the mechanically narrated content. Consequently, banking education has as its major goal the fattening of a student's brain through the deposit of the teacher's knowledge, and thus detrimentally, under this pedagogical model, the understandings that students absorb do not emerge from their own creative struggles to negotiate the world. This kind of education invariably results in the paralysis of the learner's epistemological curiosity and creativity due to the overload of the usually imposed teacher's knowledge, which, because it often has very little to do with a student's sociocultural reality, is alienating for the student. Thus, a banking approach to education sets the stage for the anesthetization of the mind, for which Freire's process of conscientization, which demands that a student exercise his or her critical consciousness, serves as an antidote.

Conscientization in Action Research

Conscientization is an important part of performing action research as it prevents a disarticulation of knowledge that often anesthetizes consciousness, without which one can never develop clarity and confidence in one's interpretation of reality. It is only through conscientization that the apprehension of reality can occur which, in turn, requires a high level of political clarity. Conscientization in research which engages members of the oppressed community as equal partners can be achieved through the intervention of the researcher in the inquiry process by asking critical questions that uncover the larger social, economic and political mechanisms which create and sustain systems of oppression. Thus, the action researcher is not afraid to name ideology in his or her inquiry and critiques the facile call for the so-called scientific objectivity of researchers who might try to hide in the alleged neutrality of scientific pursuits and might not

be entirely indifferent to the interests of those who are funding and using their findings. In other words, action research clearly points to the dialectical relationship between subjectivity and objectivity and to the realization that the blind call for objectivity in scientism rather than science already involves a high dose of subjectivity. Unlike the false pretence of total objectivity supposedly required to avoid the research being contaminated by factors that are considered political, Freire's notion of conscientization requires that researchers acknowledge that all research is political in nature—the question is simply whose interests are ultimately being served.

Consequently, action research requires that the act of uncovering new knowledge is an act of knowing with which researchers are engaged by problematizing their role in the process of inquiry and their relations with respect to the humans and the subject matter being researched. Thus, action research is invariably Freirean in that it always involves conscientization, which, in turn, is predicated on praxis which requires both critical reflection and action—a process through which the individual, in transforming the world, is himself or herself transformed.

Donaldo Macedo

See also critical pedagogy; Freire, Paulo; post-colonial theory; praxis

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CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism has been defined as a theory of learning, as a theory of knowing and, more recently, as a paradigm guiding contemporary social science research. As a social science paradigm, constructivism reflects a set of beliefs about the world and how it can be understood and suggests various approaches to the study of human phenomena based on these beliefs. In the social science literature on constructivism that is most relevant to action research, this paradigm is

defined as a view of human beings as actively constructing knowledge, in their own subjective and intersubjective realities and in contextually specific ways. This world view evolved from constructivist thought and scholarship predominantly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, spanning the fields of philosophy, science and psychology. Outside the social sciences, definitions and applications of constructivism vary, as they have throughout history. Despite this variation, definitions across disciplines often include references to knowledge production and/or social processes. This is because these discussions of constructivism are part of what the social psychologists Kenneth Gergen and Mary Gergen identify as a social movement of constructivism. This is arguably the most encompassing movement in the history of constructivism. Other movements, according to Gergen and Gergen, include critical constructivism and literary/rhetorical constructivism.

Though not entirely distinct from the social movement, critical constructivism focuses on challenging authoritative accounts of the world and interrogating the power structures that influence these accounts. Similarly, literary/rhetorical constructivism has been identified as an area of constructivism that challenges scientific theories and their assumptions of universality, utilizing literary theory, rhetorical study and discursive arguments to do so.

As Gergen and Gergen have also argued, these overlapping movements of constructivism, and the various definitions and conceptualizations of constructivism offered in other disciplines, are not necessarily in opposition to one another. It is more fitting to view them as together contributing to contemporary understandings of a relational self, a core tenet of action research. They also reflect how the concept of constructivism evolved into a research paradigm through several important instantiations of scholarship and thought on constructivism. For ease of understanding, this entry focuses on the instantiations that are most relevant to understanding action research processes and constructivism as a paradigm of social science research—scholarship that could be classified as related to the social movement. Even when limiting discussions of constructivism to the social realm, vast scholarly terrain must be traversed to do justice to the various minds that have contributed to this form of constructivism throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The scholarship reviewed below provides glimpses into several of the many important topics that are part of this social movement, including considerations of constructivism as (a) an orientation to learning and development, (b) a meta-theory about the nature of knowledge and/or (c) a paradigm influencing contemporary social science research.

Historical Origins of Constructivism

Constructivism in the Early Twentieth Century

The constructivist account of learning and human development, prominent in education fields, dates back to the early 1920s, and specifically to the developmental psychologist and biologist Jean Piaget (1896–1980) and his research on the development of children. Piaget posited that children, as early as in infancy, are similar to little scientists, discovering the world and constructing knowledge as they move through it. Through interactions with their physical environments and through the cognitive processes of assimilation and accommodation, children’s mental models of the world or schemes change, incorrect theories are dropped and knowledge is learned.

An example of this is how children learn about cows, for example, by first assimilating their observations of cows with earlier learned theories, such as those about dogs. When they observe that cows neither bark nor wag their tails when happy, children experience some level of confusion and cognitive disequilibrium. This is because the new information is not fitting with the developed schemes. These cognitive schemes must be modified, or new schemes created, for children to understand that cows are another species and distinct from dogs.

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), another eminent developmental psychologist of the twentieth century, also argued for a view that children construct knowledge as they move through the world. Vygotsky made this argument, however, while emphasizing the social nature of knowledge production and learning. For Vygotsky, knowledge production and learning throughout development occur through interactions with culture and in relationships. Vygotsky can be credited with this initial transition in developmental theory from constructivism to social constructivism. Vygotsky’s social constructivism describes a process wherein learning and development occur through collaborative activity and socialization processes. In this conception, children learn through contact with their social environments, on an interpersonal and external level first and then on an internal level. An example of this learning process is a child pointing a finger at a desired object. This motion begins simply but becomes meaningful as others interact with the child and react to the gesture. The child then knows, and has a culturally situated understanding, that pointing will elicit the attention of others and involve them in an interaction with a particular end goal in mind.

Several decades after Piaget and Vygotsky’s earliest writings, Jerome Bruner applied a cognitive constructivist orientation to learning theories as well as to education research and practice. Bruner focused largely

on instruction and teaching, arguing that both should match the nature of discovery and individual learners’ cognitive abilities. Bruner specifically posited that instruction should offer children opportunities to build upon and reflect on their existing knowledge as part of the learning process. For Bruner, education should provide children the structure to work out learning new concepts for themselves, enhancing what they already know.

Constructivism in the Late Twentieth Century

Since these earlier theories and writings, scholarship on constructivism has expanded to include psychological theories and meta-theories about the nature of knowledge and reality. These later contributions to constructivism view human beings as actively engaged in constructing not only their own knowledge but also their subjective realities. The philosopher Ernst Von Glaserfeld (1917–2010) significantly contributed to further developments of this constructivist view and its more recent applications to research, largely by arguing for alternative interpretations of Piaget’s research.

Von Glaserfeld believed that in his work on the developing child, Piaget had already identified several important characteristics of knowledge production and the nature of reality, despite Piagetian theory being understood as predominantly an understanding of cognitive processes and learning. According to Von Glaserfeld, Piaget’s research forwards the notion that human beings are cognitive organisms that produce knowledge through interacting with their environments and that through continued interaction this knowledge is improved because it reflects the environment more accurately. Von Glaserfeld’s unique contribution to this understanding of knowledge production, however, is his claim that knowledge does not necessarily become more accurate through an organism’s interaction with the environment but, rather, more *viable*. Knowledge becomes more viable as it leads developing persons to be more successful in their worlds, but knowledge, or what can be known through continued interactions, may not mirror reality in an ontological sense.

Despite this subtle distinction, Von Glaserfeld espoused the belief that Piagetian constructivism was intended to apply to a human being’s experience of sensory objects and events, language, other human beings as well as himself or herself. Piagetian constructivism, for Von Glaserfeld, established an understanding that human beings shape coherent and structured worlds through experiences and interactions, and cognitive interpretations thereof.

With this view of constructivism, Von Glaserfeld contributed to another instantiation of constructivist theory: radical constructivism. Radical constructivism

emphasizes that the nature of knowledge is that it cannot replicate an independent ontological reality. If there is a true, knowable reality, it cannot be known to the cognitive organism as it is (or may be) in metaphysical terms. For Von Glaserfeld, Piaget provided a theoretical map and language for separating questions about knowledge and what can be known to a human being from questions regarding an ontological reality.

George Kelly (1905–67), the founder of personal construct psychology, also argued that every human being perceives the world through constructions of objects and other notions of the world. Kelly referred to the system of meaning people utilize to perceive their worlds as constructs. More recently, the psychologists Gabriele Chiari and Maria Laura Nuzzo further divided constructivist thinking in the twentieth century into two main categories: (1) epistemological constructivism and (2) hermeneutical constructivism. According to Chiari and Nuzzo, Kelly's personal construct psychology and Von Glaserfeld's radical constructivism could be classified as forms of epistemological constructivism because both suggest that there may be an external reality that is independent of people's own constructions of reality but that it's impossible for people to know of this reality except through their constructions of it.

In epistemological constructivism, these human-made constructions are nonetheless viewed as necessary for gleaning something about the world. In this way, epistemological constructivism adopts Von Glaserfeld's notion that knowledge should be viewed in terms of its viability rather than in terms of its accuracy with regard to representations of reality. Put differently, epistemological constructivism posits that human beings, as cognitive organisms, cannot be certain about whether their systems of meaning or constructions of the world correspond to an independent reality but they can ascertain (as with the young Piagetian child) if their constructions work for them.

In contrast to epistemological constructivism is hermeneutic constructivism, which Chiari and Nuzzo identify as the view that there simply is no external reality separate from that which is constructed and perceived by human beings (critical constructivism and literary or rhetorical constructivism would belong to the latter category). For hermeneutic constructivists, knowledge is a product of language and meanings developed through activity within a community, group, culture and/or society. For this reason, there are likely as many systems of knowledge as there are groups constructing and utilizing them through language, discourse and other socially constructed means. Hermeneutic constructivists also argue that the process of knowledge production cannot be understood without understanding how language is used by and given

meaning within a specific group. There is no knowledge, in other words, without interpretation, and interpretation is culturally and contextually specific and tied to histories and intersubjective group experiences.

Constructivism in the Twenty-First Century

These discipline-specific and meta-theoretical understandings and instantiations of constructivism throughout the twentieth century significantly moved forward the social science fields and research conducted therein. Through varying understandings of the cognitively constructed and constrained nature of reality as perceived by human beings, research with human beings could be theorized about and improved. Using Von Glaserfeld's terminology, the paradigms guiding research with human beings could be made more viable through adapting to what had been learned about knowledge production through Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Von Glaserfeld, Chiari and Nusser, among other constructivist thinkers throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Constructivism as a social science research paradigm in the twenty-first century echoes many of the ideas about the nature of knowledge production espoused by Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and Von Glaserfeld. An arguable difference lies in these scholars' primary focus on the processes through which organisms construct knowledge, as opposed to simultaneously considering this process of knowledge production, meta-theoretical questions about the existence of an ontological reality and how both should be approached as part of the research process. The education researchers Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln (among others) have written about and put into practice constructivism as a contemporary research paradigm, in which these different dimensions are considered. They have explained how, as a research paradigm, constructivism provides a framework for thinking about reality, how the researcher should go about studying reality and what tools the researcher should use to do both.

According to Guba and Lincoln, constructivism posits that reality can only be known through multiple mental constructions that are based on experience and socialization but are also local and specific in nature. While reality is necessarily constructed, the members of a group and culture may share aspects of the same reality. These constructed realities change, and their meaning depends on the individuals and groups experiencing them. They explain further that what researchers can ever know about reality, and the topics they study, is created through their interactions with the phenomena under study, the participants in a study, and/or other aspects of the research context. Here, the emphasis is placed on knowledge as created through

the research process, as opposed to knowledge that is discovered. For constructivists, these characteristics apply to the research process, regardless of which tools researchers use and the questions they ask.

Guba and Lincoln have described how this contrasts with positivist empirical approaches that are nested in the belief that there is one reality and that objects and events that exist within it have a universal, essentialist nature understood and experienced by all people in the same way. So too does it contrast with post-positivist beliefs about reality existing in a universally 'true' way, with human beings only being able to approximate understandings of its true nature because of our flawed intellectual mechanisms—not because it does not exist.

Constructivism in Practice

The sociologist Kathy Charmaz has written at length about what constructivism means for social science research in the twenty-first century. Charmaz has noted that when taking a constructivist approach to research, social scientists must assume reflexive stances towards knowing and representing studied life throughout the research process. This means that researchers must locate themselves in the realities they are studying, examining how their interpretive frames, life histories and interests and the research context influence their actions throughout. As also suggested by Guba and Lincoln, constructivist approaches to social science inquiry place significant focus on the relationships between the researcher and the participants in a study and how these relationships relate to the knowledge generated during and after a study runs its course.

These forms of a constructivist orientation to knowledge production and human relationships have also begun influencing theory development in social science disciplines that have been largely dominated by positivist and post-positivist paradigms, such as developmental psychology. Developmental psychologists such as Margaret Beal Spencer have recently forwarded models of human development that acknowledge that peoples' perceptions of experience radically differ depending on the aspects of the context in which they develop and the interactions they have therein with both other people and structures of power. Spencer's Phenomenological Variant of Ecological System's Theory model reflects a view of reality as experienced and constructed differently by developing young persons, drawing attention to their varying perceptual and appraisal systems. This model can be used to explain, in part, how a police officer can mean something entirely different to a youth of colour growing up in a 'high-risk' inner-city neighbourhood in the USA with experiences of police officers as threats compared with a Caucasian, well-to-do youth growing up in a

protected suburb with only positive interactions with the police.

Constructivism and Action Research

Contemporary understandings of constructivism in the social sciences highlight subjective and intersubjective social knowledge and view this knowledge as core to understanding human phenomena. As Gergen and Gergen have noted, this orientation to knowledge production is only one of many convergences between participatory and action research processes and constructivism. They have highlighted several threads that run through discussions of both, including collaboration and intersubjectivities in the knowledge production process, re-envisioning the world as opposed to remapping and re-articulating it (through, e.g., language and rhetoric) and prioritizing utility and practical impact over assumed objectivity and distance between the researcher and the researched. Gergen, Gergen, and Charmaz, among many other scholars, have argued that when these ideas are put into practice in research, the research process and products have the potential to reduce oppression, broaden dialogues around human compassion, increase cultural sensitivities and pave the way for continued collaborative action with the aim of creating more viable futures.

Participatory and action research projects that have occurred throughout the world in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have achieved some of these goals, in part by emphasizing that knowledge is not only created through relationships between people in a particular community or setting but also possessed by each human being (i.e. the concept of indigenous knowledge). Participatory and action researchers view the collaborative nature of knowledge production as an asset to the research process and make use of it, bridging the expertise of scientists with the expertise of participants in a study. Importantly, these systems of knowledge are often treated and remain as separate silos in much of the social science research informed by positivist paradigms. When these various experts come together in a participatory and action research project, diverse knowledge systems are united and more viable knowledge and action follow, towards effecting social change.

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See also critical constructivism; epistemology; intersubjectivity; ontology; Participatory Action Research; relational-cultural theory; social constructionism

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CONVERGENT INTERVIEWING

Convergent interviewing (CI) is both a way of designing a research study as well as a style of interviewing. The aim of CI is to collect and analyze people's opinions, experiences, attitudes and knowledge that converge around a small set of interviews. Originally developed by Bob Dick, then at the University of Queensland in Australia, CI was created to address primarily research areas in which the state of knowledge was less developed. Other researchers have argued that it is equally effective in areas where more is known about a topic but critical knowledge gaps remain. As a method, CI enables researchers to develop a flexible project that leaves the content of data collected unstructured, permitting reflexivity throughout the research process. Since its inception, it has been used in a variety of contexts: marketing/business and health and social sciences research more generally. This entry describes CI as both an interviewing method as well as a research process, and it also outlines how it can be usefully applied in action-oriented research.

CI as an Interviewing Method

In its original form, CI as a method designs the interview process to be guided by a general opening

question that sets the boundary for the area of inquiry and ultimately seeks to have participants comment on both the positive and the negative aspects. In that original form, the opening question asks a participant to reflect on aspects that are positive about the phenomenon or issue in question. Once all aspects of that response have followed through their normal course (in other words, the normal prompts asking participants to clarify the points raised or to provide more specific information), the participant is then asked to reflect on any negative aspects, based on his or her experiences, about the phenomenon or issue under study. In more recent variations of CI, the formal prompts for participant reflection on the positive or negative aspects have been dropped, and they are only introduced if the participant has not raised any of these elements in the initial part of the interview. For the second and subsequent interviews with different participants in the project, the interviewer also asks the participants to reflect on the applicability of aspects raised during earlier interviews that had not been already raised. For example, Participant 1 might raise three main issues. Participant 2 might raise two of the points raised by Participant 1, and he or she might bring up two additional points. By the turn of Participant 3, the interviewer will probe for all unique issues that were raised by Participants 1 and 2 but were not already mentioned by Participant 3. This process follows in this continuous and sequential pattern until no new issues are being raised over the entire set of interviews.

CI as a Research Process

This sequential pattern of the interviews is one of the strengths of the CI process as it helps the researcher arrive at saturation (in other words, where no new ideas are being introduced by the participants) more quickly. Moreover, when a project involves more than one interviewer, CI provides a process to ensure that the interviewers are being consistent to the ontology (in other words, recognizing when aspects of interest to the larger study are being identified in a non-directive manner) and epistemology (in other words, capably identifying what counts as 'knowledge' for the topic under study) of the project. The process afforded by CI when using two or more interviewers is that by design, the interviewers must have frequent conversations, usually shortly after an interview has taken place, to share the aspects raised by different participants. Equipped with that knowledge, the interviewers can then probe more quickly in subsequent interviews around aspects of convergence and divergence. Effectively, analysis begins immediately after the first interview is conducted. This constant-comparative process permits researchers to

test the emerging interpretations with each additional participant. This process can equally work even if only one interviewer is engaged in the data collection process, provided that he or she is systematic in recording emerging ideas to explore in subsequent interviews. The activities of the single interviewer can be strengthened through discussions with members of the research team even if those same team members are not engaged in data collection. Other strengths of the CI process include the ability to engage early with any pre-existing literature (unlike, e.g., Grounded Theory approaches, which may equally encourage constant comparison), as well as its maximum-variation sampling strategy, such that the topic of interest has as many inputs from different perspectives as possible.

CI for Action-Oriented Research

While CI has not been extensively used in action-oriented research, it is an interviewing technique and research method that is ideally suited to action research. Action research, by definition, is a group of people working together as a community of practice (in other words, people, albeit from different areas of expertise or knowledge, who share a common goal and are collectively working towards that goal) to effect change. CI prompts participants to reflect on both the positive and the negative aspects, or the things that work well and did not work well in their experiences with the topic under study. Very quickly, researchers can compile aspects of the experiences that might help facilitate change and identify areas that could create barriers, or at least identify those aspects that might make effecting change more difficult. Moreover, CI can allow for the evaluation of early interventions in action-oriented research through its constant-comparative process. Similarly, a modification to the CI process, as originally envisioned by Dick, that would work well in action-based research could be to adopt a more cyclical approach. Rather than relying on the sequential ordering of interview participants to dictate the reflections of earlier issues from earlier interviews, it could be possible to return to the earlier participants with insights gained from the later interviews to assess the relevance to the topic under study from a multitude of experiences. In this way, the development of knowledge and insights is not limited by the level of experience or knowledge of participants as determined by who is interested in participating and when. Hence, even if by timing, an early-interview participant has a great deal of insight and knowledge, it would be possible with a modified CI to return to that earlier and more knowledgeable participant to reflect on those aspects raised by later participants. This modification would extend the strengths of the CI process greatly

and would enable the greatest breadth of reflections across the analysis of the entire set of interviews.

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See also data analysis; epistemology; Grounded Theory; interviews; ontology

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Co-OPERATIVE INQUIRY

Co-Operative Inquiry is a way in which people who have similar concerns and interests intentionally develop together their own experience and action to make sense of their lives and acquire new ways of looking at things and, above all, to know how to act to change the things they may want to change and how to do things better. There is both an informative and a transformative dimension to the inquiry: Most co-operative inquiries are strongly action based (and thus transformative). Simultaneously, active change in the direction of enhanced human flourishing is also potentially informative about the human condition.

Co-Operative Inquiries develop progressively through a series of cycles, each cycle consisting of a move from a reflective planning phase to an action phase and back to a reflective review and further planning of the next action phase. Each person is a co-subject in the action phases and a co-researcher in the reflection phases. Thus, all the co-subjects are fully involved as co-researchers in *all* research decisions—about purpose, method and final outcomes—taken in

the reflection phases. There is usually an initiating facilitator who supports group members in exercising the high degree of autonomy and co-operation involved in this full democratization of the knowledge generation process.

The method also applies a radical epistemology involving a congruence of four forms of knowing: (1) propositional, (2) practical, (3) presentational and (4) experiential. Propositional knowing, or knowing that, is expressed in statements. Practical knowing, or knowing how, is expressed in the exercise of a skill. Presentational knowing, or intuitive knowing of significant pattern, is expressed in graphic, plastic, moving, musical and verbal art forms. Experiential knowing, or knowing by acquaintance, is manifest as imaging and feeling the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing. The full range of human sensibilities—a transparent body-mind with an open and unbound awareness—is available as an instrument of inquiry.

This entry outlines the typical development of a Co-Operative Inquiry and focuses on the inquiry skills, validity procedures and practical choice points which ensure methodological rigour and quality. Examples of co-operative inquiries, and the outcomes which have emerged from these, are also shared.

An Outline of Inquiry Stages

Stage 1 is a reflection phase for the inquirers to choose the purpose of the inquiry and the type of inquiry, a launching statement of the inquiry purpose, a plan of action for the following action phase and a method of recording experiences during the coming action phase.

Stage 2 is an action phase when the inquirers are exploring in experience and action some aspect of the inquiry purpose and keeping records of the experiential data generated.

Stage 3 is full immersion in the action phase with great openness to experience, applying an integrated range of inquiry skills (see below).

Stage 4 is the second reflection phase; the inquirers share data from the action phase and do the following:

- a. Review and modify the inquiry purpose in the light of making sense of the data
- b. Choose a plan for the second action phase to explore the same or a different aspect of the inquiry purpose
- c. Review the method of recording data used in the first action phase and amend it for use in the second

Subsequent stages will do the following:

1. Involve usually from five to eight full cycles of reflection and action (including the first cycle), with varying patterns of divergence and convergence in the action phases
2. Include a variety of intentional procedures in the reflection phases (as well as the special skills in the action phases outlined above) for enhancing the validity of the process. The purpose of these procedures is to free the various forms of knowing involved in the inquiry process from the distortion of uncritical subjectivity—that is, a lack of discriminating awareness. This occurs when, for example, the mind fails to do justice to the claims of the given cosmos in which it participates, to the claims of appropriate method and to the claims of dialogue and engagement with other minds involved in the same arena of participative knowing. All the validity procedures (see below) need to be planned for, or applied, within the reflection phases.
3. End with a major reflection phase for pulling the threads together, clarifying outcomes and deciding whether to write a co-operative report
4. Be followed by post-group collaboration on writing up any agreed form of report.

Inquiry Skills

The first group of these skills relates to radical perception in order to become descriptive and explanatory of the inquiry domain. All these skills relate to what is going on in a person when he or she is actually there, engaged with the experience.

Being present is about empathy, about meeting and feeling the presence of people and a world. The skill is about harmonic resonance and attunement, participating in the inner experience of people and the mode of awareness, the prehension, of things. It is a matter of indwelling the inward declaration made by the being of the other.

Imaginal openness involves being aware of the co-creative, participatory process whereby we both give meaning to and find meaning in our world through a combination of perceptual imagery, memory, productive imagination and conceptual constructs.

Bracketing means managing the conceptual labels and models embedded in the process of perceiving people and a world. The skill is about holding in abeyance the classifications and constructs we impose on our perceiving so that we can be more open to its inherent primary, imaginal meaning.

Reframing refers to conceptual revisioning in perceiving a world. With this skill, we not only hold in abeyance the constructs being imposed on our perceiving, we also try out alternative ones for their creative capacity to articulate an account of people and a world. We are open to reframing the assumptions of any conceptual context or perspective.

The second group of skills relates to radical practice with transformative intent in order to engage in action that seeks change within its domain. Again, all these skills relate to what is going on in a person when he or she is engaged in action.

Dynamic congruence involves practical knowing, knowing how to act, beyond ordinary competent action. It means being aware, while acting, of the bodily form of the behaviour, its strategic form and guiding norms, its purpose or end and underlying values, motives, external context, supporting beliefs and actual outcomes. At the same time, it means being aware of any lack of congruence between these different facets of the action and adjusting them accordingly.

Emotional competence is the ability to identify and manage emotional states in various ways. These include keeping action free from distorted reactions to current events that are driven by the unprocessed distress of earlier years; and from the limiting influence of inappropriate conventions acquired by social conditioning.

Non-attachment is the skill to wear lightly and without fixation the purpose, strategy, kind of behaviour and motive chosen. This is the knack of not investing one's identity and emotional security in the action while remaining fully intentional about it and committed to it.

Self-transcending intentionality involves having in mind—in the midst of one overall form of action—one or more alternative forms and considering their possible relevance and applicability to the total situation.

Validity Procedures

Research Cycling

If the research purpose as a whole, and different parts singly and in combination, are taken round several cycles of reflection and action, then experiential and reflective forms of knowing progressively refine each other through two-way negative and positive feedback.

Divergence and Convergence

Within the action phase of any one cycle, or indeed between the action phases of two adjacent cycles, the co-inquirers can diverge over different parts of the topic or converge on the same part or on the whole. This gives rise to innumerable combinations of divergence and convergence which, expressed through research cycling, can enable all forms of knowing to articulate the research purpose more thoroughly.

Reflection and Action

Since reflective and experiential forms of knowing refine each other through cycling between the reflection and action phases, this effect also depends on getting a right balance between these two phases, so that there is neither too much reflection on too little experience nor too little reflection on too much experience.

Aspects of Reflection

Within the reflection phase, there is a balance between presentational (expressive or artistic) ways of making sense and propositional (verbal or intellectual) ways. And within intellectual ways, there is a balance between four mental activities: (1) describing, (2) evaluating descriptions, (3) building theory and (4) applying what has been learned in one cycle to the management of the next.

Challenging Uncritical Subjectivity

Any inquirer is authorized at any time to adopt formally the role of devil's advocate to question the group as to whether one of several forms of uncritical subjectivity is afoot. These forms include (a) not noticing, or not mentioning, aspects of experience that show up the limitations of a conceptual model or programme of action; (b) unaware fixation on the false assumptions implicit in guiding ideas or action plans; (c) unaware projections distorting the inquiry process and (d) lack of rigour in inquiry method and in applying validity procedures.

Chaos and Order

This is not so much a procedure as a mental set which allows for the interdependence of chaos and order, of nescience and knowing. It is an attitude which tolerates and undergoes, without premature closure, inquiry phases which are confused and disoriented, ambiguous and uncertain. These phases tend in their own good time to convert into new levels of order. But since there is no guarantee that they will do so, they are risky and edgy. Tidying them up prematurely leads to pseudo-knowledge.

Managing Unaware Projections

The group adopts some regular method for surfacing and processing repressed templates of past emotional trauma, which may get unknowingly projected out, distorting thought, perception and action within the inquiry. The very process of researching the human condition may stir up these templates and trigger them into compulsive invasion of the inquiring mind.

Authentic Collaboration

Since intersubjective dialogue is a key component in refining the forms of knowing, it is important that it manifests through authentic collaboration. One aspect of this is that group members internalize and make the inquiry method their own, so that they are on a peer footing with the initiating researchers. The other aspect is that each group member is fully and authentically engaged in each action phase and in each reflection phase and is fully expressive, fully heard and fully influential in the decision-making.

Outcomes of Co-Operative Inquiry

There are four main kinds of inquiry outcome, corresponding to the four forms of knowing—(1) experiential, (2) presentational, (3) propositional and (4) practical:

1. Transformations of personal being through engagement with the purpose and process of the inquiry
2. Presentations of insight about the purpose of the inquiry, through dance, drawing, drama and all other expressive modes, which provide imaginal symbols of the significant patterns in our realities
3. Propositional reports which are informative about the inquiry purpose, describing and explaining how it has been explored, with full details of the inquiry method; provide commentary on the various kinds of outcome and give details of the validity procedures used and an overall appraisal of the validity of the inquiry
4. Practical skills involving (a) transformative action in fulfilling the inquiry purpose and (b) various kinds of participative knowing and collaboration used in the inquiry process

Some Examples of Co-Operative Inquiry Groups

A group of general medical practitioners formed a Co-Operative Inquiry group to develop the theory and practice of holistic medicine. They built a simple model of holistic practice and experimented with it in practice, exploring a range of intervention skills,

power sharing with patients, showing concern for the spiritual dimensions of doctoring as well as paying attention to their own needs as medical practitioners. The experience of this study contributed to the formation of the British Holistic Medical Association. This study was taken forward when a group of general and complementary medical practitioners worked together to explore how they might work effectively in an interdisciplinary fashion.

A group of co-counsellors met to map the processes used by self-directing clients in co-counselling sessions, and they had a further inquiry to explore the range of skills used in the midst of incidents in daily life to deal with the sudden re-stimulation of past distress.

A group of obese and post-obese women explored their experience together, looking in particular at how they were stereotyped in society and how it was difficult for them to obtain appropriate attention from doctors and other medical people. This is one of several inquiries in which groups of people with a particular physical or medical condition have taken active charge of how their condition is defined and treated. Two Black social work teachers established inquiry groups of Black social work students, practitioners and managers to explore in action their relationships at work, especially between Black managers and subordinates working together, and how a creative Black culture could be generated.

Several inquiry groups have met to explore ritual, mystical and subtle experiences in order to create forms of spiritual practice which are appropriate to the present times—and to open up the discussion on how the Co-Operative Inquiry process itself engages with the spiritual reality *of the relation between co-inquirers*.

Other groups have formed to explore questions of gender. One inquiry looked at how Black women might learn to thrive, as well as survive, in British organizations. Another looked at whether men in organizations need to explore questions of their gender in the workplace.

Practical Issues in Setting Up an Inquiry Group

Initiation

Most inquiry groups are initiated by one or two people who have enthusiasm for a purpose they wish to explore. They may be engaged on a research degree and are attracted to Co-Operative Inquiry as a means of doing research, but they might just as well be members of an interest group—a patient's group, a women's or minority persons group or a professional interest group—who see that Co-Operative Inquiry could be a way of moving forward their concerns.

Establishing a Group

The initiator's first task is to gather together a group of people who will be interested in joining the project. Sometimes the group is self-evidently formed, but more often it is recruited by some form of circular letter: For example, the Black social worker mentioned above invited social work managers, practitioners and students to a meeting to discuss mutual interests and propose the establishment of inquiry groups. Groups of up to 12 persons can work well; below 6 is a little too small and lacks variety of experience; above 12 needs time and possibly professional facilitation.

Contracting

It is most important that as far as it is possible people have an opportunity to define the inquiry agenda and establish the process of the group. But this does not mean that they have to start from a blank sheet: Usually the initiators put forward some proposal in a letter inviting people to a meeting to discuss the possible formation of a group. The meeting can explore the following agenda:

1. Welcome and introductions, helping people feel at home
2. Introduction by the initiators: What are we interested in researching?
3. Discussion by people in pairs of what they have heard informally, followed by questions and discussion
4. Introduction to the process of Co-Operative Inquiry
5. Pairs discussion followed by questions and discussion
6. Decision time: Who wishes to join the group?
7. Practical discussion: dates, times, financial and other commitments

It may be that a full discussion of items (1) to (5) is as far as a group can go in one meeting, and a second meeting is needed for decision-making and practical arrangements.

Devising an Overall Research Plan

Most groups agree to a programme of meetings arranged so that there is sufficient time for cycles of action and reflection. A group wishing to explore activities that are contained within the group, such as meditation skills, may simply meet for a weekend workshop which will include several short cycles of practice and reflection. But a group which involves action in the external world will need to arrange long cycles of action and reflection, with sufficient time for practical activity.

The holistic doctors group met to reflect for a long weekend after every 6 weeks of action on the job, and a health visitors group met for an afternoon every 3 weeks or so. An inquiry into interpersonal skill met for a weekend workshop at the home of two of the participants and then for a long afternoon and evening every month to 6 weeks, finishing with another residential weekend workshop.

Roles

It is helpful to agree early on how roles will be distributed. If the initiator is also to be the group facilitator, that should be made clear. It may be helpful to identify who has skills in group facilitation, inquiry facilitation, management of differences, working with distress and so on, and share out roles appropriately. Decide if you wish to be fully democratic and rotate leadership or if you would prefer one or two people to facilitate on behalf of the group. And so on.

Ground Rules

You may wish to agree on ground rules, particularly to preserve confidences within the group.

Writing

It is helpful to decide who the audience for your research is early on. Is it just for yourselves, or do you wish to influence some outside persons? If you wish to produce a written report or article, it is worth discussing who will write it and on what basis. Do all members of the group have to see and agree on it before it can be sent out? Or is it acceptable for one or two people to write their own report based on the group experience? Some groups adopt a rule that anyone can write whatever they like about the group so long as they state clearly who the author is and whether other group members have seen and approved the text.

John Heron

See also cycles of action and reflection; extended epistemology; first person action research; insider action research; practical knowing; quality; second person action research

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CORNELL PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH NETWORK

This narrative of the development of the Cornell Participatory Action Research Network (CPARN) is offered with multiple goals: (a) introducing the organization, (b) narrating its history and present status and (c) sharing the experience of trying to maintain action research within more traditional, conservative and expert-centric academic environments.

In the spring of 1992, a series of conversations on action research at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, sparked heated debates among graduate students, faculty and staff about how to support such work, and within a year, a small group of students and faculty established the CPARN. In the 20 years since, the network has waxed and waned—at times vibrant, at other times dormant. The current members of a revived CPARN are looking back on this history, but not to reminisce. Current members are looking back for the issues addressed, structures built and information gathered by CPARN’s alumni to inform a vision of CPARN’s future. The following paragraphs seek to both celebrate and critically reflect upon that inherited legacy.

In collecting this 20-year history, it is difficult and perhaps unnecessary to separate the public role that CPARN played within the global action research community from the personal role it played as a scholarly home for its members. CPARN’s broader impact on the action research community is what warrants its inclusion in this encyclopedia, but this entry hopes to also shed light on the more personal side, the side that generated so many strong personal commitments.

The network began as a means to collect and distribute information on action research. During the early

years of CPARN, literature on action research was not widely available, and the building and maintenance of the PARchives, begun by Davydd Greenwood and continued by Carla Shafer, Richard Simpson and Nimat Hafez Barazangi, was a direct response to that need. The collected information was essential for Cornell students and faculty and was made broadly available for distribution to other institutions and organizations. PARnet, a website founded in 1993 by CPARN member Carla Shafer, gave the PARchives a larger user-generated electronic presence and a common connection point to reflect on the global picture of action research. At its height, PARnet had over 600 user-generated resource references. The goals of this collection included the identification of trends and common elements as they emerged within the action research literature. At PARnet, users could find descriptions and discussions of shared concepts. Most critically, it provided a readily available way for action research scholars to find materials they did not otherwise have access to. It was the first action research website on the Internet. This experiment in information collection and distribution may be CPARN’s largest historical contribution to the action research community. During the 1997 ALARA World Congress in Cartagena, Colombia, CPARN took the lead in cataloguing and archiving all of the material Orlando Fals Borda had collected and made it available for distribution. CPARN’s participation in subsequent World Congresses in 2000 and 2003, in local and regional conferences and as invited guest lecturers all contributed to the network’s growing wealth of information, resources and relationships.

This proliferation of information spurred countless digital and face-to-face conversations during the ensuing period of network development. These conversations were a place for philosophical dialogue, practical debate and, at times, painful confrontation. As websites became more interactive and online publishing became more accepted, the network’s electronic presence shifted. In 2002, PARfem, a collaborative group established by Nimat Hafez Barazangi with a goal of fostering a learning environment to restructure the relationship between feminism and PAR, built an electronic presence. PARfem was born out of a CPARN project that brought Pat Maguire to speak in January 2002. Selected writings on feminisms and action research were collected and made available for purchase to facilitate that conversation. Later, a structured online dialogue was developed, intentionally designed for a safe, open and constructive discussion. In 2005, CPARN members published podcasts on the use of blogs by graduate action researchers. For 15 years, the use of digital communication technology remained a strong element of CPARN’s more official functions.

But apart from these larger organizational and programmatic functions, CPARN built an intellectual and social home for graduate students who valued democratic research practices within a larger institutional structure of expert-oriented research paradigms. Lacking proper support from critical friends and colleagues, completing a degree attentive to action research philosophies often proved quite difficult for individual scholars. David Deshler, now emeritus professor in the Department of Education, sensed this need and in the early 1990s began convening a series of consultations to provide constructive criticism to individual students doing action research. The ‘Deshler consultations’ were arguably the greatest benefit students received from participating in CPARN. Any student wanting advice on a project or paper could send out a notice to the e-mail list server stating a time and location, and a dozen or so network members would undoubtedly arrive, eager to hear ideas, pose questions, suggest resources and brainstorm avenues for moving forward. A support group of critical allies proved an invaluable element in graduate education at Cornell.

CPARN was a fluid organization, constantly being remade by the members of the time. CPARN members have often been (self)labelled as activist, outlier, rebellious, Marxist, Freirian, anti-system, why-can’t-my-committee-understand and strategically minded zealots. An organization full of such people, practically all of whom went through Davydd Greenwood’s action research class, was inevitably unusual. CPARN did not fit the conventional hierarchical mould of student organizations or academic units, though each year they were required to elect a chair, a president and, at one time, a director, even though the organization intends to operate on more democratic grounds. Given the unconventional students and structure, it is not surprising that the network ebbed and flowed with the tides, as four generations of students and faculty redefined CPARN’s identity and purposes.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, CPARN felt the effects of regional and international shifts. As compatriots built networks in other institutions, such as Syracuse University (with John Burdick and Pramod Parajuli) and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (with Budd Hall at the University of Victoria), specific individuals formed bonds of trust and collaboration. But over the same period, the absence and presence of individual faculty and the cycle of graduate studies constantly redefined the organization. During the past decade, as the language of participation became comfortably adopted and co-opted by graduate committees, Cornell and major institutions like the World Bank, CPARN’s internal discussions became more

exclusionary and confrontational around what participation was and was not. Eventually, the network folded, and in 2006, PARnet as an electronic resource was lost.

In the fall of 2010, Greenwood returned to Cornell University from a sabbatical and taught his biweekly action research course. Three graduate students in that course—Christina Davis, Jen Ayres and Courtney Knapp—asked what had happened to CPARN and whether it could or should be revived. Their questions led to plans and action, and CPARN is alive again.

Past CPARN alums have provided current graduate students with a vibrant legacy to continue and shape. The following list of lessons or questions will hopefully guide CPARN’s development, and CPARN’s story will become one to share with other student-based networks bringing action research into a new generation:

- *How do our many identities help and hurt our cause?* Building spaces together is tough, especially when everyone involved in the network consistently overcommit themselves. It is not a fault; it’s just who we are. The past has shown us that the spaces we collectively form must be challenging *and* safe. They must be places imbued with courageous dialogue and a welcoming spirit for both veterans and neophytes. CPARN at times can be ‘clubbish’, and this is an identity we must shed if we hope to sustain CPARN in meaningful ways for future graduate students. How the network grows—what it includes and excludes—is a question of particular interest especially in this time of increased administrative preoccupation with public engagement as a strategic initiative.

- *Which structures work?* Deshler consultations are the core of our support network and cannot be forgotten, but we have also created ground rules for dialogue that is productive for both research and the community. We can neglect neither if we hope to grow in our scholarship and lives. Additionally, meetings of all types must be fast, furious and productive if we are to be honest about our needs.

- *What fights must we fight at institutional levels in higher education to solidify our normative claim for democratic research?* CPARN has always had two identities: (1) the largely benign student group that has regular meetings and organizes great talks and (2) the underground student movement looking to de-colonize and democratize the practice of research. These two identities are linked in our everyday work, yet the latter is our overarching project. We and our allies hope to bring about a new era in scholarship. This will

require a revolution in university structure. Issues of tenure and promotion guidelines, incentives for collaboration and disparities in funding structures between communities and campus must all be addressed. As graduate students, we must consistently rethink our practical theories for changing university structure while being in it.

• *Lastly, what do we offer the larger action research community?* CPARN made a name for itself by making information available. With the rise of new information technology, we now have an opportunity and a challenge to redefine that role. What does a twenty-first century PARchives look like? If you have any thoughts or have a knack for design, let us know.

John A. Armstrong

Author's note: With contributions from past and present CPARN members, including Susan Boser, Davydd Greenwood, Helene Gregoire, Patricia Haines, Margo Hittleman, Richard Kiely, Courtney Knapp, Thane Maxwell, Scott Peters, Monica Ruiz-Casares and Alicia Swords.

See also critical friend; higher education; teaching action researchers

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Websites

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COVENANTAL ETHICS

A covenant is a pact defining the bond between parties engaged in a relationship. It can be a relationship between a professional and a client, between a researcher and the local participants or, as in the original meaning, between God and his people.

Covenantal ethics is based on the work of William F. May, founding director of the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility, USA. Although not an action researcher, May developed the concept of covenantal ethics to discuss the relationship between the researcher and the field, or 'host population' as he

refers to it. He developed the concept as particularly relevant to medical ethics and the relationship between doctor and patient.

As action research is based on a commitment to working for the good of others through engaging in processes of change, it is obvious that the ethical responsibility of the researcher goes beyond the conventional contractual relationship between the researcher and the local participants. Action research is closer to a covenantal ethics that is reciprocal and responsive in character. The researcher stands not outside the research process but alongside the local participants. The term *covenantal ethics in action research* refers to an understanding of research ethics that is based on the responsibility to act in the best interest of others. This responsibility should be demonstrated at every step of the process. This entry discusses the relevance of covenantal ethics in action research and the theoretical foundation of covenantal ethics, as well as giving examples of what this ethical foundation means in practice.

The Relevance of Covenantal Ethics to Action Research

Paralleling the basic values of action research, covenantal ethics can be operationalized in three specific practices: (1) the acknowledgement of human interdependency, (2) the co-generation of knowledge and (3) the development of fairer power relations. The basic premise for this ethical demand in action research is the recognition that human life is relational and so the notion of an objectified other is unacceptable. Action research does not do research *on* others, but rather, it explores the possibilities for changed practice together *with* others, with the local participants or the host population. The researcher and the local participants are co-researchers in developing new knowledge and new practice together, and their relationship is mutual and complementary.

Action research is based on a commitment to promote social justice. Therefore, the researcher has an ethical demand to take responsibility for the social consequences of the research and make it explicit both in practice and in communications about that practice.

This relational research process makes it even more unavoidable to be ethically accountable than conventional research approaches. Many other types of social science research aim at being used, in the sense of being applied to a practical political context. At the same time, even applied research is often less applied than potentially applicable. The researchers may reach a conclusion with practical and/or political consequences, but it is then up to others to actually implement this new knowledge. For practical or

political reasons, this may not happen. The proposed action might be costly, unwanted by people in power or unpopular with large groups that are satisfied with the status quo, or it may demand great efforts and much dedication of time resources. In conventional social science approaches, the researcher's responsibility tends to end with the publication of the research results. In action research, this is not sufficient.

Because action research *can* make a difference, the ethical responsibility becomes a question of what kind of difference one makes and for whom. Who benefits from the research and who does not? Should the researchers work only with powerless or impoverished groups, or is it defensible to work with big industry and rich companies? Will improving working conditions, competence level and worker influence in companies in First World countries lead to more low-skilled and underpaid jobs being outsourced to low-cost Third World countries? Will working to improve conditions for groups of people in a politically oppressive system serve to legitimize the political regime instead of opposing it outright through boycotts? On a smaller scale, would action research efforts to improve working conditions for employees in a company producing harmful products such as tobacco be acceptable? Should the ethical demand in action research compel researchers to only work for globally worthwhile causes, and what would be the consequences of this? Such are the ethical questions facing action researchers in a global world where what is done in one place influences what is happening elsewhere. There are no easy or absolute answers to such questions, but they need to be constantly addressed by ethically responsible action researchers.

Theoretical Foundation of Covenantal Ethics in Action Research

The theoretical foundation for this unconditional ethical responsibility to act in the best interest of others was laid by Knud Ejler Løgstrup (1905–81) and his concept of 'the ethical demand'. To Løgstrup, the ethical demand comes from the basic understanding that life is given as a gift that can never be reciprocated but can be reflected in our relationship to our fellow human beings. His understanding and fundamental idea is that people are always dependent on and thus delivered over to one another. This entails an unspoken demand to care for the other person's life. Løgstrup has relevance as a philosopher and a humanist, even if one does not agree with him as a Christian. In fact, Løgstrup defines himself more as a humanist than a Christian, and he argues that the ethical demand is founded in the relationship between recognized human beings. We are in this world together, and that places

a demand on everybody to care for the other from a purely humanist perspective.

This ethical demand is radical, by which Løgstrup means that it is absolute. There are no exceptions, and one cannot choose when one finds it appropriate to follow. This refers back to the humanist perspective of interdependency. He quotes Martin Luther, saying, 'We are each other's daily bread'—that is, we cannot live solitarily and outside the community of one another. This image is particularly relevant to action research because of the codependency of generating new knowledge and new practice together. Action research is not something researchers can do on their own, but it requires a working relationship with the local participants. Researchers and local participants are together what make action research possible; we are each other's daily bread. This gives the ethical demand an uncompromising quality that makes it particularly relevant to action research. The ethical demand is there also when it is not in the researcher's 'interest' to follow or even when it does not favour the interest of the researcher. In action research, the researcher has responsibility for the effects of the research on others, and the ethical demand is a framework for understanding this responsibility.

Practical Implications of a Covenantal Ethics in Action Research

There are at least three issues that need to be addressed when discussing the practical implications of covenantal ethics in action research: (1) how the research is established, (2) how the joint understanding is reaffirmed throughout the project and (3) how the ethical demand is addressed at all points during the project.

First, it means that the ethically responsible action researcher has to present the research agenda at the onset of a project (e.g. why one is interested in the subject, what kind of research interest inspires the research, etc.). Not only that, he must also state who the stakeholders or funding organization behind the project are and what their interests in the subject are. The researcher needs to discuss roles and responsibilities with the local participants, so that they all know what is expected of each of them and what the implications will be for the project. If the local participants are expected to run local activities in their own organization or enterprise, this needs to be discussed at the onset. Will the researcher(s) be responsible for taking the minutes from joint meetings, and will these be shared with the participants, and in what forms? What kind of changed practice is expected to emerge from the project, and how will the local participants benefit from it? Unless such issues are made explicit at the onset of the project, the co-operation is skewed in the researcher's favour.

The covenantal ethics of action research also mean that researchers need to take time at the outset to explain and describe their research approach. Even if the local participants are fairly familiar with action research, one cannot presume the detailed knowledge necessary to understand the repertoire of techniques and work forms the researcher brings to the project, nor will they be familiar with the research tradition fuelling the researcher's efforts. Second, covenantal ethics also means that the researcher needs to renegotiate the agreement to co-operate during the project. As time passes, the situation may change, new factors may arise and people may come and go. It is not unheard of to have to renegotiate the agreement to co-operate and the understanding of what this entails with new participants as the initial people quit their job, change positions, go on leave of absence or in other ways alter the existing relationships. The important thing is to remember that the terms of co-operation need to be fully understood by all participants, old and new.

There might be a temptation to 'oversell' the project to new participants to ensure that the project does not falter or even get stopped. A new manager in a company engaged in an ongoing action research project may find herself surrounded by researchers eager to convince her of the continued worth of the project. When one's own interests are the most touched, the researcher most needs to remember the ethical demand to act in the best interest of fellow human beings. This means to be honest and explicit about what the project entails, even if that may mean the end of the project. Further, badly understood agreements to co-operate rarely make for a successful project, and one might as well renegotiate the agreements to co-operate whenever necessary rather than hope problems will not arise.

Third, covenantal ethics means that researchers need to constantly question their own motives and actions. The responsibility is unconditional, and the responsibility is present all through the project. In conventional research projects, ethics is often only about formal, contractual themes, such as informed consent, confidentiality and access to data. Once this is negotiated, the researchers are free to perform the research, adhering to the rules agreed on. A covenantal ethics requires researchers to constantly scrutinize their motives and ask critical questions as to how the best interest of the participants is being cared for. This question does not have a 'once-and-for-all' answer but needs to be revisited throughout the research process.

Action research is a joint exploration of an unknown landscape where local participants and researchers alike contribute with their experience and knowledge of what is needed to find the way. Covenantal ethics means the constant need to ask oneself what is happening, what one's changing needs and wants are and how

one allows them to influence the research process. At some point, the researchers might come across something of great scientific interest but may realize that it could expose the local participants or make them vulnerable. Or the broader community might want a level of details on who did what that might harm or embarrass the local participants, and they might expect the researcher to feel no obligation to protect the participants. How does one handle those challenges? Whose interest should count the most? It is exactly in such situations that a covenantal ethics can serve as a compass guiding that process. As previously mentioned, the ethical demand is radical, with no exceptions. Therefore, the guiding principle should always be to act in the best interest of others and not put one's own interest first. This is the ethical demand of a covenantal ethics in action research.

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See also co-generative learning; communitarianism; ethics and moral decision-making; feminist ethics; institutional review board

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Criminal justice systems are vast and complex networks of state and privately run institutions generally designed to maintain and regulate social order. Ranging from local community practices to large government agencies, the criminal justice system is charged with both preventing and mitigating crime, as well as punishing and rehabilitating individuals who break the law. It also includes prosecuting and defending those

accused of breaking the law. The specific details of criminal justice systems differ widely across countries and even within countries; however, many fundamental principles are shared, particularly among Western nations. This entry first briefly describes the current US criminal justice system and some of its social justice concerns. Next, it provides two illustrations of Participatory Action Research (PAR) attending to parts of the American and British criminal justice systems. And finally, it raises three important questions to consider when doing PAR in this area.

In the USA, the criminal justice system includes law enforcement agencies (e.g. police departments, border patrol), courts (e.g. judges, lawyers and youth courts), prisons (e.g. jails, juvenile detention centres and community-based corrections) as well as parole, probation and post-prison activity (e.g. residential placement). Incarceration rates in the USA grew rapidly throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This is in part due to policies that limited judicial discretion and favoured lengthy sentences. Also contributing was the rise in 'hot-spot' policing practices that aggressively attended to neighbourhood disorder and low-level street crime. This 'zero-tolerance' climate—found both in and out of schools—often promoted entry into the criminal justice system, particularly for young men of colour, indigenous people and poor and working-class people.

The costs of incarceration are widespread, felt individually by those behind bars, collectively by families and communities and socially as cities, states and government face weakened labour forces and sizable prison budgets. Further, as the 'tough-on-crime' policies of the 1990s shifted emphasis and funding away from rehabilitation, those returning home from prison have had little meaningful preparation and support to ensure a successful transition. Many obstacles exist for those holding criminal records (even for non-violent crimes) as they seek basic living needs. As a result, recidivism tends to be high, particularly for those who are unable to access adequate educational, housing or employment opportunities. While the USA may be an extreme example among Western nations, the issues considered here are shared across criminal justice systems globally.

Though infrequent, PAR projects can be found addressing most slices of the criminal justice system and partnering with diverse sets of individuals, including communities in heavily policed neighbourhoods, prisoners who are currently incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals while they are transitioning home. Topics range from the influence of policing practices to recidivism implications of education in prison, to the family impact of parole policies. In other words, PAR researchers have found creative ways to study *with* those people most affected by *all* aspects

of the criminal justice system, and in the process, they have made important changes based on grounded expertise. In the next section, two such studies will be used to illustrate the vast possibilities of PAR.

Project Illustrations

Partnering With Police

Researchers from the London School of Economics partnered with a British police department for over 3 years to help improve community relationships and other law enforcement activities. This PAR project had several collaborative components. The first part involved an extensive review of the relevant literature, observations of policing activity and analysis of some of the department's archival data. The second part involved deep qualitative research in four distinct neighbourhoods or environments: (1) urban, (2) rural, (3) market town and (4) seaside resort. The research included further observations of police interactions and rich, open-ended focus groups and interviews with community members, particularly populations deemed hard to reach, as well as local officers. The evidence and insight from this work provided recommendations that the police department acted upon to achieve a set of effective changes. Change was monitored and ongoing support provided. Furthermore, the PAR process was anonymously evaluated by the police department a year after the first data feedback to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the work and the ways in which the partnership could continue to thrive.

There is a concern among some academics as to the potential dangers of partnering with such a powerful arm of the government as the police. Indeed, such an undertaking would require action researchers to consider the power imbalance carefully. However, this work provides an excellent example of the potential for academic-police partnerships. Through systematic, multi-method, longitudinal research, this partnership helped improve the police department's ability to execute community policing for its residents. It provided the police with immediate, evidence-based feedback as well as independent perspectives that could make visible the normalized or silenced issues within the organization. For example, the research revealed a level of repeated racist victimization towards some residents that was neither recognized nor understood by some local officers as racist. This led to wider discussion (that included residents) and further investigations as to whether certain racist events were being properly recorded and dealt with. Ultimately, this as well as several similar events unearthed from the research led to a series of diversity trainings.

In another example, data revealed that the local police were not connected enough to the desires and needs of the communities they served. The processes by which community members were consulted were found to be ineffective, and the residents reached were not satisfactorily representative of the larger community. As a result, the local neighbourhood police developed and distributed a very short survey to learn more about residents—an activity they called ‘road shows’. The officers collected 1,400 surveys from a broad sample of residents, and both the data and the data collection process proved very successful. It helped the police, in a representative way, to understand their communities better, while at the same time, it greatly increased their local visibility and created a context to engage with residents one on one.

Partnering With Women Behind Bars

Researchers from The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY) partnered with inmates from the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York State to conduct a 3-year, multi-method participatory study of the impact of college within a maximum-security prison on women in prison, on the prison environment and on women post-release. The participatory design included archival research on college records and documents, focus groups with current students and dropouts, interviews with women post-release, interviews with corrections officers who were either sympathetic or hostile to the college programme, surveys of faculty and university administrators and a focus group with the adolescent children of prisoners who had participated in college. In addition, the New York State Department of Corrections provided a quantitative longitudinal analysis of 36-month recidivism rates for all women who participated and those who did not participate in college during a 14-year period. All methods were co-facilitated by the CUNY Graduate Center and inmate researchers, with the exception of the interviews with women post-release.

The study, titled *Changing Minds*, demonstrated dramatic positive effects of college-in-prison programmes on women in prison, on the prison environment, on the growth and development of their children and on the long-term economic, social, civic engagement and recidivism outcomes of women once released. Specifically, the study found that the 274 women who participated in college while in prison had a recidivism rate of 7.7% as compared with a rate of 29.9% for the rest of the prisoners ($N = 2,031$). The skills, knowledge and healthier social networks gained through participating in college proved transformative for the women, for their children and for creating lasting successful transitions out of prison. And inside, college improved the prison

environment and its management, rendering it safer, with fewer disciplinary incidents. The research report, while multi-authored, and filled with photos, handwritten letters, and tear-out dear senator ‘action’ postcards, was written in one voice. It was distributed to prison superintendents and legislators in all 50 states and continues to be used towards efforts to rebuild and reopen college-in-prison programmes. Shorter brochures produced in both English and Spanish summarized the findings and were geared more towards providing data that would be useful for organizers advocating for college-in-prison programmes across the USA.

Questions to Consider

Though criminal justice systems vary internationally, many of the broad issues described in this entry are similar around the world. Thus, many of the critical concerns of PAR researchers studying this area can be generalized across countries. Three of these concerns are considered here.

Where Is Crime Located?

While not wanting to overlook individual agency and minimize personal responsibility for criminal behaviour, it is important for PAR research to carefully design studies that can position individual acts as systematically linked to oppressive or privileged contexts, cultural ideologies, institutional logics, legal definitions and the many outcomes of current social, educational and economic inequalities. Thus, it is useful within PAR research teams (whether with community members, inmates or police officers) to trouble dominant, often stereotypical notions of ‘crime’—where crime resides, what it looks like, who it looks like and what communities bear the biggest burden. It can be useful to analyze not only the collateral damages of the criminal justice system but also how and in what instances communities resist.

How Diverse Is the Research Team and Its Allies?

Locating the PAR project within the vast and far-reaching systemic web of the criminal justice system, and the ways these layers echo across communities—particularly poor urban communities of colour—is an important process in this work. Part of this process is organizing a research team, allies and a range of ‘sounding-board moments’ that can account for and bring these multiple sets of expertise and perspectives into contact with each other. *Expertise* defined broadly might include diverse community members who can provide complex and nuanced perspectives on their surroundings—such as those who currently are, or were, incarcerated as well as their families; individuals

who work within the legal and criminal justice systems, such as lawyers and current and former police officers, prison guards, superintendents and policymakers; and professional researchers and scholars who understand how to use multiple strategies for social inquiry. While the context of specific PAR projects will dictate what kinds of expertise are relevant and meaningful, establishing the research team as a ‘participatory contact zone’ that enables different standpoints to wrestle with each other can strengthen the overall validity of the research.

What Is Action?

Research-based action and activism is a steep climb if the goal is to change the criminal justice system—its policing, its courts, its laws, its policies and its prisons. These are long-term projects that involve community building, media engagement, lawsuits, voting blocks and legislation, to name only a few of the many mechanisms that together create social change. With a systemically minded perspective on the criminal justice system, a diverse group of experts on the research team and multi-positioned allies working with the project, it can be useful to think of action not as an end-of-research happening but as a series of efforts, relationship building, community awareness activities, support for legal activism, networking with grass-roots organizations, organizing political events and many other short- and long-term, small and large events—grounded in data—that are needed to support sustainable social movements.

Conclusion

No one is disconnected from the criminal justice system. Across many nations, policies such as the ‘tough-on-crime’ policies of the USA can serve to locate the problem of crime within the individual while its social, economic and cultural root causes go insufficiently addressed. Increased use of PAR to study the criminal justice system in partnership with those most closely connected and affected by it is a necessary step to unsettle dominant narratives of crime, criminals, punishment and rehabilitation, and to reimagine safety and justice internationally.

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See also advocacy and inquiry; Community-Based Participatory Research; Critical Participatory Action research; liberation psychology; quantitative methods

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CRITICAL ACTION LEARNING

Critical Action Learning (CAL) is a contemporary development of Action Learning which holds that learning and organizational development can be advanced when the power and emotional dimensions of learning are treated centrally as a site of learning about managing and organizing and learners draw from critical ideas to make connections between their individual and work experiences. The potential for criticality in Action Learning derives from the tensions, contradictions, emotions and power dynamics that inevitably exist both within a group and in individual managers’ lives. This entry provides an outline of the origins, traditions and key ideas of CAL. Examples of applications are illustrated before concentrating on the particular relevance to action research.

Origins, Traditions and Key Ideas

The term *Critical Action Learning* can first be found in print in a 1994 article by Hugh Willmott that called for greater application of critical thinking to management

education and development. The concern in CAL is that learning be seen as a means for individual or collective transformation or emancipation and not be simply confined to performance improvement. CAL has a number of distinguishing features, including its emphasis on the way learning is supported, avoided or prevented through power relations; the linking of questioning insight to complex emotions, unconscious processes and relations; and a more active facilitation role than is implied within traditional Action Learning. Key ideas in CAL are critical reflection, organizing insight, learning inaction, systems psychodynamics and active facilitation.

Traditional Action Learning

Action Learning is underpinned by the central assumption that learning derives from taking action and asking insightful questions about urgent problems or enticing opportunities. Action Learning was formulated around the formula $L = P + Q$, where L stands for learning, P for programmed knowledge (i.e. existing theory) and Q for questioning insight. Formal instruction and theory are not sufficient. External training, instruction or expertise cannot be relied upon, because the existing codified knowledge, whilst it may be drawn from, may not suit the specific context of a particular problem. Processes such as action and feedback, asking fresh questions, learning from and with peers and creating a multiplier effect between individual and organizational learning are central to Action Learning.

The objectives of Action Learning, as originally expressed by Reginald Revans, are

- to make useful progress on the treatment of some real problems or opportunities,
- to give participants sufficient scope to learn for themselves with others and
- to encourage teachers and others engaged in management development to help participants learn with and from each other.

Based on a philosophy of action (praxeology), Action Learning is a challenging educational method that is much more than simply learning by doing, in that it engages participants in risk-taking experimentation and a degree of self-challenge, on the basis that individuals cannot expect to change others or an organization if they cannot change themselves.

Critical Reflection

Although reflection is integral to the classical principles of Action Learning, this is often interpreted to mean simply an instrumental encouragement of participants to think about their individual experience of action, as in, for example, 'What did I do? What happened? What

went well? What would I do differently next time?' This emphasizes the rational but excludes the emotional and political aspects of the learning process. Purely instrumental reflection neglects the fact that action and learning are always undertaken in a context of power and politics, which inevitably carries a potential for conflict, anxiety and obstruction of learning. In response to this critique, CAL is a development of conventional Action Learning in that it aims to promote explicit critical thinking, giving recognition to the way politics and emotion are integral to organizing, as well as to the role they can play in facilitating and constraining the scope for learning. Critical reflection as a pedagogical approach emerges because these dynamics are treated centrally as a site of learning about managing and organizing.

Critical reflection engages a deeper reflection on the assumptions, values and unquestioned norms held about organizational and personal practices. Recognition is given to the ways in which the daily realities of participants are always undertaken in a context of power and politics, which inevitably gives rise to conflict and tension. CAL is a development of conventional Action Learning in that it aims to promote a deepening of critical thinking, giving explicit recognition to the role that politics and emotions can play in facilitating or constraining the scope for learning and organizing. Critical reflection engages participants in a process of drawing from critical perspectives to make connections between their learning and daily work experiences, to identify the assumptions governing their actions, to locate the historical and cultural origins of their assumptions, to question their meaning and to develop alternative ways of thinking and acting.

Key to this process is the emphasis on collective as well as individual reflection, going beyond simple reflection on action (learning from experience) to learning from organizing through reflection on existing organizational, political and emotional dynamics created in action. Part of the critical reflection process is to challenge the prevailing social, political, cultural or professional ways of acting. Through the process of critical reflection, adults come to interpret and create new knowledge and actions from their ordinary, and sometimes extraordinary, experiences. Critical reflection blends learning through experience with theoretical and technical learning to form new knowledge constructions and new behaviours or insights.

Four activities constitute critical reflection:

1. *Assumption analysis*: Thinking in such a manner as to challenge our beliefs, values, cultural practices and social structures in order to assess their impact on our everyday practices, and recognize our core assumptions about the order of the world

2. *Contextual awareness*: Realizing that our assumptions are socially and personally created in a specific historical and cultural context
3. *Imaginative speculation*: Imagining alternative ways of thinking about phenomena in order to challenge our predominant ways of knowing and acting
4. *Reflective scepticism*: Questioning universal truth claims or unexamined patterns of interaction through the above three activities

Systems Psychodynamics

Central to a psychodynamic understanding of learning from experience is the idea of learning from unconscious phenomena. Systems psychodynamics illuminates a distinction in organizing between behaviours and activities informed by rational task performance and those connected to emotional needs and anxieties. Psychodynamics in CAL draws attention to psychoanalytic defensive mechanisms, using concepts like repression, projection, pairing and regression, and links these to learning and organizing. An interest in unconscious processes challenges the assumption that improvement processes are necessarily rational and raises questions about the extent to which accepted practices within an organization, regarding learning and innovation, for example, are the result of unconscious processes that promote defensive attitudes, protectionism and dismissal of new ideas as potentially threatening. As such, CAL highlights that learning is connected to political processes and power relations at the individual, group and organizational levels.

Action Learning is inevitably a site of emotions because of its integral challenge and experimentation. This is supplemented within formal learning environments by inverting the traditional dependency of learners on the teacher, through emphasizing the responsibility of the learners for themselves. It is anxiety provoking not to be taught or told because it means that the learner is confronted with responsibility for what and how he or she needs to learn.

Emotions are a source of significant learning in three ways. Firstly, critical reflection has the potential to disturb or to provoke dissonance amongst participants. Secondly, the processes of organizing that constitute the dynamics of Action Learning sets often provoke a range of emotions, from frustration to excitement. Attending to and making sense of these is a rich source of experiential learning about organizational behaviour. Thirdly, the process of critical reflection provides language and concepts which help people acknowledge and make sense of feelings they may have long carried but ignored, for example, over tensions and contradictions they experience in life and/or at work.

Collective Reflection

Key to CAL is the shift of emphasis from individual to collective reflection, learning from recognizing, discussing and potentially transforming the social power relations central to organizing. Action Learning has usually viewed the Action Learning set as the primary vehicle for collaboration, where work-based issues are addressed and organization change is achieved through questioning and reflection. CAL gives explicit recognition to the ways in which Action Learning sets themselves become arenas for the interplay of emotional, political and social relations, in that they can mirror the range of inequalities, tensions and emotional fractures that characterize groups, organizations and societies. In this sense, it is the process of combining critical reflection with Action Learning that carries potential for learning and change. Psychodynamic insights show how the Action Learning set can be a parallel process in which the set dynamics play out as a microcosm of the wider organization or system. The dynamics within the set often mirror patterns and behaviours in the wider organization, for example, in how particular members respond to conflict and diversity, or whether or not they position the facilitator as an authority figure to react against. If the set comes to understand its own behaviours, this can provide valuable insights into the wider organizational or systemic life of which its members are a part. Not only can this lead them to identify what might need to change, but the set can also be a place for action, in that it is itself a social community in which people can begin to organize differently.

Acknowledging the emotional experience of attempts to learn within a learning set encourages the members of the set not only to question their own behaviour and practice but also to analyze the collective emotional dynamics as a way of understanding characteristic power relations, for example, across an organization, and to recognize how these might facilitate or limit learning.

CAL has also been employed for organization or systemic change by connecting Action Learning sets in dialogue with each other. Parallel to the engagement of individual managers in their own inquiries, problem-solving and developmental journeys, collective critical reflection also aims to engage with the wider power relations, for example, by being voiced to senior managers.

Organizing Insight and Learning Inaction

Action Learning has usually viewed the Action Learning set as the primary vehicle for collaboration, where work-based issues are addressed through questioning and reflection. CAL gives explicit recognition to

the ways in which Action Learning sets themselves become arenas for the interplay of emotional, political and social relations, in that they can mirror the range of inequalities, tensions and emotional fractures that characterize groups, organizations and societies. Russ Vince's concept of 'organizing insight' emphasizes the relationship between Action Learning and organizational learning and inquiry into the power and emotion within the organization dynamics in which Action Learning takes place. This illuminates the importance of critical collaboration—in other words, the opportunity to examine the politics that surround and inform the choices and decisions which constitute organizing.

In practice, for example, the facilitator might observe within a group that the pattern of interactions is dominated by some whilst one or two individuals are barely listened to. The facilitator might simply pose a question as to the significance of this. If the question resonates with the group members, it may be used to initiate a discussion on power and status within the group, perhaps extending to parallels within the immediate organization or network. As another example, individuals presenting anger at their immediate resource problems at work might be widened through peer or facilitator questioning to help them locate their own situation in a broader context.

CAL makes a further contribution to organization change through the insight of *learning inaction*, which highlights the ways in which organization behaviours and practices can restrict and discourage learning, through, for example, always prioritizing action over reflection, acting for the sake of action and at the expense of learning.

Facilitation in Critical Action Learning

The value and role of facilitators, or set advisers, occupies distinctive territory in CAL. They are commonly, though not always, used within traditional Action Learning groups, with a role to model the peer challenge/critical friend behaviours, to help the group establish ground rules and to develop questioning, reflective and inclusive team practices. Revans himself was ambivalent about the use of facilitators, because of his principle that participants have the expertise to solve their problems themselves and should not become dependent on external expertise or facilitation. However, in CAL, the implication is for a more active facilitation role, so as to illuminate the ways in which participants reinforce behaviours or power relations that sustain learning inaction. While traditional facilitation promotes reflection focused on the immediate presenting details of a task or problem, critical facilitation is concerned with promoting a process of critical reflection on the emotional and political processes within the

group dynamics and making conscious the social, political, professional, economic and ethical assumptions underlying participants' actions. Supplementing this experiential learning with theoretical learning to form new knowledge, behaviours and insights, facilitation within CAL also places importance on supporting the transfer of the resultant learning to practice both inside the group and outside, within the wider organization.

Examples

CAL has been integrated into management education programmes, such as M.B.A., for example, by integrating the social and political dimensions of learning, by according 'task' and 'process' issues equal importance. Participants draw from critical literature to explore parallels between the power dynamics (e.g. the dynamics of gender or race) they experience within their Action Learning groups and their work organization. Students may be asked to reflect critically on their development as managers and are introduced to critical ideas, drawing on feminism, Michel Foucault's ideas on power and concepts of critical education based on Jürgen Habermas and Henry Giroux. Through questioning their assumptions and the source of these, they develop new perspectives on ways of being a manager; they reach a transformed perspective of themselves through making new connections between patterns of thinking or behaviour at work, at home and in the programme.

To accept that engaging with group dynamics emotions and associated feelings of fear and anxiety is an important element in the learning process means that questions of feelings, power and authority become embedded in the curriculum. Risks are many and varied in learning groups; the expression of powerful feelings such as anger, the risk of speaking or not speaking, the risk of leading, fear and anxiety all have important implications for a programme, and students are actively encouraged to work with these issues as they surface. In other contexts, for example, in organizational learning and leadership/organizational development, various studies have examined the impact of CAL, particularly in relation to how emotions, power and politics can both enable and constrain the learning process. A key insight is that the relationship between learning and organizing is bound up with complex internal, interpersonal and social processes and dynamics, and particularly with the emotions and politics generated through attempts to learn within organizations.

Application to Action Research

The relevance of Critical Action Learning to action research is twofold. Firstly, there is a shared commitment to change and a common value that knowledge

should serve practice. Both CAL and action research eschew positivist and technicist approaches to research and practice, valuing praxeology instead, with its value for *phrónêsis* (knowledge derived from practice and deliberation) and *praxis* (purposeful action). Hence, CAL is a process in which knowledge is acquired through its relevance to the real-life engagements and tensions of the participants. A critical approach encourages reflection upon experience and active experimentation rather than the transmission of accepted knowledge and expertise.

Secondly, both CAL and action research place value on knowledge gained through the interrelationship between researchers' developing self-knowledge and emergent insight into the organizational context, as the researchers engage in action on meaningful issues. In this sense, the critical reflection and systemic thinking found in system psychodynamics are also seen by many traditions as integral to action research.

CAL finds application in management education and development and organization development through the integration of action-based processes of learning so as to create a synthesis of theory and practice grounded in real-world experiences through interaction with organizations. For example, learners may be encouraged to engage in a series of questions and conversations that mirror Revans' praxeology through corresponding with systems alpha, beta and gamma:

Alpha: What is the reality of my situation?

Beta: What do I need to know more about? What do I need to test out? What is my inquiry methodology?

Gamma: What am I learning about how I act in the situation? How does knowing more about this change how I act and how I learn?

Participants are supported to challenge their assumptions, to work with ambiguity and contradiction, to acknowledge emotions provoked by the situation and the learning and to develop a greater self-awareness both of learning about practice and of learning through practice. The knowledge generated may remain within the organization or, in the action research tradition, may be connected and made more widely available.

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See also Action Learning; critical reflection; praxeology; praxis

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CRITICAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Critical constructivism within a critical action research context presents a number of concepts which are connected to the inseparable acts of research, teaching and knowledge production. Critical constructivism is about research and pedagogy, and the multiple ways in which they are connected. The points fit together synergistically, as understanding one concept will enhance understanding of the others. This entry is not designed to fragment the concept of critical constructivism but to give those new to the concept better access to its main dynamics. Critical constructivism is grounded on the Frankfurt School's formulation of critical theory, in particular its attempt to explore how consciousness is tied to history. Guided by such concerns, critical constructivist teachers and researchers inspired by critical theory seek to expose what constitutes reality for themselves and for the participants in educational situations. How do these participants, critical constructivist researchers ask, come to construct their views of educational reality? Critical constructivist action researchers see a socially constructed world and ask, 'What are the forces that construct the consciousness, the ways of seeing of the actors who live in it?' Uncritical researchers attempt to provide accurate portrayals of educational reality, but they stop short of analyzing the origins of the forces that construct actor consciousness. Without such information, critical constructivist teacher-researchers maintain, emancipatory action is impossible. Descriptions of educational reality outside the boundaries of the

socio-economic cultural context hold little meaning for educators concerned with social justice and ethical action.

A criticalized constructivist action research is based on a critical theoretical qualitative framework. This framework consists of tentative notions, which change in all research contexts. For brevity, the following points outline the basic tenets of critical constructivist action research, as described by Joe Kincheloe in the *Critical Constructivism Primer* (2008):

- The world is socially constructed—what we know about the world always involves a knower and that which is to be known. How the knower constructs the known constitutes what we think of as reality.
- All knowers are historical and social subjects. We all come from a ‘somewhere’ which is located in a particular historical time frame. These spatial and temporal settings always shape the nature of our constructions of the world.
- Not only is the world socially and historically constructed, but so are people and the knowledges people possess. We create ourselves with the cultural tools at hand. We operate and construct the world and our lives on a particular social, cultural and historical playing field.
- Research in this context involves understanding the nature of these constructions. In the realm of knowledge, it is simple and misleading to study random outcomes of the construction process—isolated ‘facts’ and ‘truths’. Critical constructivist researchers are as much concerned with the processes through which certain information becomes validated knowledge as with committing much of it to memory. They are also concerned with the processes through which certain information is not deemed to be worthy or validated knowledge.

The research and learning process is intimately connected to the act of teaching. We must blur these categories and consistently examine knowledge production and research while at the same time analyzing teaching and learning. A key dimension of critical constructivism involves the complex interrelationship between teaching and learning and knowledge production and research. When critical constructivist researchers produce knowledge, they are not attempting to reduce variables but to maximize them. Such maximization produces a thicker, more detailed, more complex understanding of the social, political, economic, cultural, psychological and pedagogical world.

Research in the critical constructivist process is not to transmit a body of validated truths or outcomes. Instead, a central role of research involves engaging participants in the knowledge or research production process. A central dimension of research in this context involves engaging in analyzing, interpreting and constructing a wide variety of knowledges or research emerging from diverse locales.

Within the framework of critical theory, critical constructivists are concerned with the role power plays in research construction and validation processes. Critical constructivist researchers are particularly interested in the ways these processes privilege some people and marginalize others. Indeed, understanding the way in which power works within and around the research context would most certainly change meaning making if it were not considered.

Critical constructivists reiterate the notion, first raised by Paulo Freire, that knowledge is not a substance that can be deposited like money in a bank and taken out when it’s time to use it. This is applied to the act of research. Critical action research informed by constructivist ways of knowing does not ‘collect’ or ‘record’ data as a detached form of depositing observations. In the critical constructivist formulation, knowledge is constructed in the minds of human beings—minds that are constructed by the society around them.

Research is constructed when academic (or formal) knowledge intersects with lived (or informal) knowledges. A key skill of a critical constructivist researcher involves nurturing this synthesis of personal experience and knowledge. Such a pedagogical act is extremely complex, and researchers and teachers must work hard to bring the different perspectives together. They reveal how their own perspectives came to be constructed and how the social values, ideologies and information they encounter shape their meaning making, pedagogies and world views. In their search for ways to produce democratic and evocative knowledges, critical constructivists become action researchers of new ways of seeing and constructing the world. In this context, they come to value knowledges and forms of meaning making traditionally dismissed by dominant culture and mainstream academics.

Points of Consideration in Critical Constructivist Research

An understanding of critical constructivist action research helps make sense of the world in a rigorous and criticalized manner. Following are points to be considered when engaging in the emerging act of critical constructivist research.

Point 1. Critical constructivism is grounded on constructivism. Constructivism asserts that nothing

represents a neutral perspective—nothing exists before consciousness shapes it into something perceptible.

One must draw upon a constructivist epistemology to provide insight into how the pedagogical research world operates. Rejecting the rationalistic notion that there is a monolithic knowable world ‘out there’ explained by Western science, a constructivist epistemology views the cosmos as a human construction—a social construction. The world is what dominant groups of humans perceive it to be. This complicates our notion of theory. Positivistic or rationalistic theories were simple to the extent that they claimed truth-value on the basis of how they corresponded to true reality. More complex, post-positivistic theories study the various philosophical and social groundings of diverse theories, learn from them and understand their social construction. Critical constructivists take this understanding of social construction and add critical theory to the mix. Our pluralistic and multi-perspectival (or as it is termed elsewhere, *bricolage*) orientation is omnipresent, as we seek benefits from a variety of social, cultural, philosophical and theoretical positions.

In this theoretical context students of constructivism might ask these questions:

- How are our constructions of the world shaped?
- Are our psychosocial dispositions beyond our conscious control?
- What does this process of construction have to do with becoming an educated person?

Because people are often unable to discern the ways their environments shape their perception, the development of modes of analysis that expose this complex process becomes very important in our critical constructivist effort. This is where the term *critical* merges with *constructivism* to form critical constructivism. Thus, we understand the origin of our term, *critical constructivism*.

Point 2. Knowledge of the world is an interpretation produced by people who are a part of that world. Thus, understanding the nature of interpretation is essential.

From Constructivism to Critical Constructivism

In the twenty-first century, the need to understand the complexity of the educational world is almost a radical proposition in itself; many educational reformers see no need for teachers to be rigorous researchers and scholars. Indeed, current educational reforms demand disempowered teachers or researchers who do what they are told and who often read pre-designed scripts to their students. In a critical constructivist approach,

such actions are insulting to the teaching profession and are designed to ultimately destroy the concept of public education itself. The study of constructivism and critical constructivism induces us to ask important research questions: What is the purpose of schools? How do we organize them for maximum learning? What is the curriculum, and how do we conceptualize it? How do we understand the relationship between schools and society?

Such research questions cannot be answered thoughtfully without the help of diverse theoretical knowledges. Theory is a body of understandings that help us make sense of education, its social and political implications and how we as educational researchers fit into this complex mix. In the social theoretical domain, we might ask how the existence of socio-economic inequality along the lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion and language influences our answers to these educational questions. What happens to our answers when we bring an understanding of power to our analytical table? In this context, we begin to understand the forces that construct knowledge. This is central to understanding constructivism and critical constructivism. The insights of critical constructivism change the way we approach the research act. In transmission-based conceptions of teaching, there is no reason to study the learner, the teacher or the researcher—and how relationships are shaped by these participants.

Critical constructivists understand that the social, cognitive and educational theories we hold must be consciously addressed. Such conscious awareness allows us to reflect on our theories, explore their origins in our lives, change them when needed and consider how they may have unconsciously shaped our teaching and our actions in the world in general. Thus, we come to better understand—as great educators always should—the ways the world operates and how that operation shapes research.

Below, specific points of critical constructivism as it applies to action research are summarized:

Point 3. Interpretations cannot be separated from the interpreter’s location in the web of reality—one’s interpretive facility involves understanding how historical, indigenous, social, cultural, economic and political contexts construct our perspectives on the world, self and other.

The knowledge that critical constructivist researchers produce is grounded on the assumption that the world is shaped by a complicated, web-like configuration of interacting forces. Knowledge producers, like everyone else, are inside, not outside, the web. As previously mentioned, the knower and the known are inseparable—they are both part of the complex web of reality. No one in this web-like configuration of the

universe can achieve a god-like perspective—no one can totally escape the web and look back at it from afar. Indeed, critical constructivists argue that we all must confess our subjectivity; we must recognize our limited vantage points.

Point 4. The ‘critical’ in critical constructivism comes from critical theory and its concern with extending a human’s consciousness of herself as a social being—critical theory promotes self-reflection in relation to social power, and its ability to align our self-perceptions and world views with the interests of dominant powers.

Why are some constructions of research embraced and officially legitimized by the dominant culture while others are repressed? This is the type of question that critical researchers seek to answer. Indeed, the essence of critical constructivism concerns the attempt to move beyond the formal style of thinking which emerged from empiricism and rationalism, a form of cognition which solves problems framed by the dominant paradigm, the conventional way of seeing. Like Einstein’s physics, critical constructivist researchers attempt to use their understanding of the social construction of reality to rethink and reconceptualize the types of questions we ask.

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See also bricolage process; critical pedagogy; Frankfurt School; Freire, Paulo; Kincheloe, Joe

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CRITICAL FRIEND

The term *critical friend* invokes a paradox of sorts—placing in tension the commonly received ideas of each of the words in the pair. In that tension, however, is the power of what it means to be a critical friend. To define the phrase requires a re-examination of the two words and a recombination of the meaning when they are used in partnership. While the word *critical* often carries a negative connotation, here it is applied to infer higher order thinking, particularly bringing evaluation and synthesis to bear. This application of ‘critical’ does not carry a positivist notion of objectivity, but rather it is subjective. It is assumed that the critical friend brings his or her own lenses, which are formed from a unique set of experiences, histories and understandings, into the inquiry.

‘Friend’ carries pieces of its meaning from its vernacular usage and challenges others. In this context, a friend is one who comes into relationship with another with the expressed intention of sharpening the partner’s vision or understanding. The relationship is one that is sustained over time and is built upon trust, so that each individual in the partnership develops greater understanding of the inquiries brought to the fore—the relationship is reciprocal, not hierarchical. With these preconditions, critique can be received not as negative but as generative. A critical friend, in this sense, does not seek to bring quick agreement but rather to complicate by probing for deeper meaning and evidence and seeking possible alternative explanations, most often through the use of a protocol or process that is repeated regularly. For instance, critical friend groups may come together regularly and use a predictable pattern of presenting problems of practice, observations or research conundrums. Peers listen and offer responses in turn.

Similar to the notion of interpretive community in action research, the critical friend's role supports the co-generation of understanding and balances the closeness that the action researcher has with the data, participants and communities in her inquiry with an essential outside eye. The critical friend relationship offers understandings so that the researcher can see what might otherwise be elusive without the perspective of another person (or people). Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick, for example, use the metaphor of the optometrist, who offers first one and then another 'view' of the eye chart for the patient to try on as she discerns the clearest view.

The use of 'critical friend' has been most closely associated with educational action research and assessment efforts, first in primary and secondary schools and later in higher education. In all of its applications, the concept of the critical friend carries the assumption of a sustained relationship with the essential condition of trust.

Applications in Action Research

It is not uncommon to see published action research studies that seek to establish validity in their work by invoking a critical friend as a way of triangulating their research. While the spirit of this type of justification may be found in the critique the author received from reviewers or colleagues, the relationship between critical friend, action researcher and action research is far more complicated than being just a data point for triangulation. At the same time, as Mark Tappan points out, a functional critical friend relationship can indeed be a place where interpretive agreement is built.

Critical friends can serve numerous roles in the action research process; they can be insiders or outsiders to a particular research project. In this sense, insiders are those within the inquiry site who are closely associated with the contexts and/or circumstances of the investigation. Outsiders have no direct connection to the research site or context. For example, a community of critical friends may link action researchers involved in various projects to provide a venue to surface questions and uncertainties about process and the potential pitfalls of a research trajectory. Regardless of their position, critical friends can provide clarity to grey areas and bring a necessary muddiness to something that might have seemed prematurely clear. Particularly given the action researcher's stance to be in relationship with the participants, a critical friend can shine light into blind spots whether a researcher is in the first phases of defining the research question or working to understand outcomes. These groups should meet regularly and have a standard process for sharing quandaries and updates so that members of the group

have the opportunity to both seek and provide input in a supportive community.

School Contexts

Coinciding with the push for assessment of student learning in education, early mentions of the term *critical friends* in education appear in the context of educational reform. These conversations provide a counterbalance to the standardized testing movement and situate the root of educational change and student learning in teachers' deeper understanding of teaching and learning. A leader in the critical friend movement in the USA is the National School Reform Faculty at the Harmony Education Center. There, educators are trained to facilitate critical friend groups, predominantly in primary and secondary schools. Harmony Education Center has made a sustained effort to train and support the development of critical friend groups in support of teachers' improved practice since 1994. This movement bears similarity to other collaborative processes in formative and summative assessment (e.g. Descriptive Review and learning from looking). Critical friend groups foster teachers' engagement with one another around explorations of teaching, planning, practice and learning through regular and sustained interactions.

References to critical friends in the higher education literature also coincide with calls for greater accountability for student learning outcomes. Critical friends are fostering constructivist approaches to understanding educational outcomes and moving inquiry beyond individual classes to programme-wide or institution-wide initiatives internationally. For example, the Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolios project, which is conducting research and informing practice in this burgeoning sector of higher education learning assessment, cites the importance of critical friends supporting the work they conduct jointly in research cohorts and severally on their many campuses.

Critical Friends in Contexts Outside Education

Although the phrase *critical friend* emerges in the literature in fields outside education, and is used in modes of research other than action research, the associated meanings are not necessarily similar to that which is described above. However, the phrase does appear in research reporting in the fields of health, health education and psychology, both in the USA and internationally. These references, particularly where an inquiry approach to research is being used, can be characterized similarly to the discussion above. Regardless of the field, these relationships are deeply steeped in

constructivist intent and engender richer outcomes for those engaged in action research projects.

Vicki Stieha

See also classroom-based action research; Descriptive Review; educational action research; Listening Guide

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Websites

- Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research: <http://ncepr.org/index.html>
- National School Reform Faculty, The Harmony Education Center: <http://www.nsrffharmony.org>

CRITICAL PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Participants in Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) study their own individual and collective social practices to identify how these practices may be irrational, unsustainable or unjust for those involved in and affected by them. If participants discover untoward social practices or consequences, they work to avoid or overcome what is untoward about them. To conduct CPAR, the participants in a social practice reflect individually and collectively on their own practice with the aim of changing (a) what they think and say in their current practice (*sayings*), (2) what they do in the practice (*doings*) and (3) how they relate to the other people and things they interact with in the practice (*relatings*). Participants conduct collective *critique* of the conditions and traditions that prefigure the current forms of sayings, doings and relatings of their practices, with a view to understanding how they constrain or enable new ways of acting, individually and collectively. CPAR is a practice-changing practice: It is a social practice deliberately directed at changing other social practices.

CPAR is practised in diverse fields, for example, the women's movement, indigenous land rights, green and conservation activism, disease prevention and professional fields such as education, nursing, medicine and agriculture.

Critical Communities in CPAR

CPAR involves commitments which only participants themselves can enact in practice. CPAR as an approach creates the conditions for practitioners to do the following:

1. Understand and develop the ways in which practices are conducted 'from within' the practice traditions that inform and orient them
2. Speak the language, use the interpretive categories and join the conversations and critical debates of those whose action *constitutes* practice
3. Participate in and develop the forms of action and kinds of interaction in which the practice is conducted
4. Participate in and develop communities of practice through which the practice is conducted, both in the relationships between different participants in a particular site or setting of practice and (in the case of a professional practice) in the relationships between people who are collectively responsible for the practice (whether as members of a professional body or as researchers into the practice)
5. Contribute to the individual and collective transformation of the conduct and consequences of the practice to meet the needs of changing times and circumstances by confronting and overcoming what the participants themselves regard as
 - a. irrational, incoherent or contradictory in their understandings of a practice;
 - b. unsustainable, unproductive or unsatisfying in the activities and work of the practice and
 - c. unjust or harmful in the relationships among the people and groups involved in and affected by the practice

Participants in CPAR create critical communities to focus attention on legitimate concerns about their individual and collective work and lives, agreeing to work together to understand their work and lives more clearly, to act and work more constructively and to relate to one another and the world more sustainably. They form groups and networks that are 'public spheres' (inside and outside institutions) in which people participate (e.g. as speakers, as listeners, as observers or by absenting themselves) voluntarily, aiming to establish a critical distance from the formal structures of institutions and interest groups, in order to study problems and issues that arise in their work and lives and the conditions that shape their work and lives. In these public spheres, participants collectively aim to assist one another to establish the intersubjective

validity and legitimacy of their sayings, doings and relatings in their efforts to overcome whatever is irrational, unsustainable or unjust in the conduct or consequences of their practices. Participants in critical communities in CPAR decide together what they will explore (research) and what they will change (action). They understand their communal work and lives as socially constructed through people's actions in history that can be socially reconstructed, when needed, by people acting together, wisely and prudently, to construct new histories.

Theodore Schatzki has described 'practice architectures', the different kinds of arrangements that enable and constrain the form of current practices. These include the existing cultural-discursive arrangements we encounter in *language* (in semantic space), the existing material-economic arrangements we encounter in *activity* and *work* (material-physical space-time) and the existing social political arrangements we encounter in relationships of *solidarity* and *power* (in social space). Semantic space, physical space-time and social space are three dimensions of the *intersubjective space* in which people encounter one another and the world. Practice architectures, formed in the history of people's interactions, shape people's present and future interactions—but they can also be remade (transformed), enabling and constraining interaction in changed ways. Practice architectures form a 'practice memory' stored in arrangements of ideas in language, in arrangements and 'set-ups' of material objects (including people and non-human things) and in arrangements such as established social relationships between people and relationships between roles in organizations. Every social practice has its own practice architectures: arrangements that provide the language for the sayings of a practice, the physical resources and set-ups necessary for the doings of the practice and the social arrangements (e.g. role relationships) necessary for the relatings of the practice. Nevertheless, practice architectures do not determine practices: Practices are flexible; as people consider their changed circumstances, their practices vary and adapt to the local and immediate conditions.

Practices and practice architectures are not abstract entities or a kind of 'social structure'. Practice architecture theory understands practices ontologically—as real and as 'happening' in actual sites. Participants in a CPAR initiative are interested in the practice of 'teaching' as it unfolds in their particular place, amid the particular arrangements found in (or brought to) their particular site, as it affects the teachers and students (and others and things) there.

CPAR participants thus explore their own practices and the practice architectures that enable and constrain their practices, giving distinctive forms to 'the

way we do things here' (in the particularities of their local intersubjective space). They explore their own (individual and collective) sayings, doings and relatings (in their practices) and the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social political arrangements that enable and constrain their practices (tending to hold their practices in place, tending to cause their practices to be reproduced). In particular, participants aim to change the practice architectures that enable and constrain their interactions, by transforming the language they share in semantic space, transforming the material resources and set-ups they use in physical space-time and transforming the relationships of solidarity and power they engage in social space. Each of these arrangements is inextricably connected to the others in real social practices; changing one produces changes in the others. Participants in CPAR make these transformations in the interests of overcoming irrationality in their language and understandings (in semantic space), unsustainability in their use of resources and the material world (in physical space-time) and injustice in relation to one another and the world (in social space).

The familiar 'spiral of action research' captures the dynamism of this practice but understates its complexity. CPAR is rarely as neat as this spiral of self-contained cycles of planning, acting and observing and reflecting suggests. Stages overlap, and initial plans quickly become obsolete through learning from experience. CPAR as a practice-changing practice is more fluid, open and responsive. It is not important that participants have followed the spiral methodically but that they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their *practices*, their *understandings* of their practices and the *situations* in which they practice. CPAR creates forums in which people can join one another as co-participants in the struggle to remake the practices in which they interact—forums in which rationality and democracy can be pursued together, without an artificial separation ultimately hostile to both. The Habermasian theory of 'communicative space' and 'communicative action' establishes the principles under which the legitimacy and validity of practice are maintained.

CPAR opens a 'communicative space' in which people can reflect together on the character, conduct and consequences of their practices. CPAR transforms not only activities and their immediate outcomes (as in technical action research) or the persons and (self-) understandings of the practitioners and others involved in and affected by a practice (as in the case of practical action research) but also the practice architectures in which the practice occurs—the discourses (sayings) that orient and inform it, the things that are done (doings) and the patterns of social relationships between those involved and affected (relatings). These

are made by people and can be changed by people—by constructing other architectures and enabling new, potentially more sustainable practices.

Communicative Action and Communicative Space

‘Communicative action’ involves conscious and deliberate effort to reach intersubjective agreement among participants as a basis for mutual understanding to reach an unforced consensus about what to do in their particular situation. Why is this important? The alternative can only be an appearance (rather than the reality) of shared goals distorted by *strategic action* by individuals in pursuit of their own goals and self-interests.

The fundamentals of communicative action are often observed in everyday life—people try to develop agreements and understandings with those they work and live among. They come to some sort of consensus about how to proceed in a social setting. Agreements hold until unforeseen constraints (or possibilities) arise, then people seek to reopen discussions within the setting and perhaps beyond it in order to create new ways of working together. Ideas, working habits and ways of relating to each other are ‘unfrozen’ moments, when it is possible to re-create the practice architectures which shape practices.

Communicative action occurs when participants interrupt their practices to ask four particular kinds of questions (related to four validity claims). They ask whether their understandings of what they are doing (1) *make sense* to them and to others (are *comprehensible*), (2) are *true* (in the sense of being *accurate* in accordance with what else is known), (3) are *sincerely held and stated* (authentic) and (4) are *morally right and appropriate* under the circumstances in which they find themselves. The commitment to communicative action also opens up *communicative space* so that the disciplined work of CPAR can occur, building solidarity and underwriting understandings and decisions with *legitimacy* and *validity*. These are only guaranteed when people are free to decide individually for themselves what is comprehensible to them, what is true in the light of their own and shared knowledge, what is sincerely held and truthfully stated (*authentic*) and what is morally right and appropriate, proper in participants’ circumstances. Foremost among the criteria for legitimacy are participants’ understandings, needs and willingness to act.

Given the primacy accorded to legitimacy and participants’ central role in accomplishing it, how do people go about creating legitimacy? We argue that legitimacy arises in ‘public spheres’. Like communicative action, public spheres might also occur in everyday life. Again, active participation in public spheres

requires understanding their features and attending to key principles to ensure new understandings, ways of working and ways of relating to each other to achieve validity and legitimacy in the eyes of participants, those ultimately involved and affected and others.

Public Spheres

Public spheres are constituted as *actual networks of communication among actual participants*. In reality, there are many public spheres.

These public spheres are *self-constituted*. They are formed by people who get together *voluntarily*. They are also *relatively autonomous*—that is, they are outside formal systems such as the formal administrative systems of the state.

Public spheres frequently emerge in response to *legitimation deficits*—that is, they frequently arise because potential participants do not feel that existing laws, policies, practices or situations are legitimate. Participants’ communication is aimed at exploring ways to overcome these legitimation deficits by finding alternatives that will attract their informed consent and commitment.

Public spheres are constituted for *communicative action* and for *public discourse*. They involve face-to-face communication, but they could be constituted in other ways—via e-mail or the World Wide Web, for example. Public discourse in public spheres has a similar orientation to communicative action—it aims towards intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding and unforced consensus about what to do.

Public spheres aim to be *inclusive*. Whenever communication between participants is *exclusive*, doubt arises whether it is in fact a ‘public’ sphere. Public spheres are attempts to create communicative spaces that include the parties most obviously interested in and affected by decisions and also people and groups peripheral to (or routinely excluded from) discussion in relation to the topics around which the groups form.

Expressing their inclusive character, public spheres tend to involve communication in *ordinary language*. Public spheres break down the barriers and hierarchies formed by the use of specialist discourses and have only the weakest of distinctions between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ (they have relatively permeable boundaries) and between people who are relatively disinterested and those whose (self-) interests are significantly affected by the topics under discussion.

Public spheres presuppose *communicative freedom*. Participants are free to occupy (or not occupy) the particular discursive roles of speaker, listener and observer, and they are free to withdraw from the communicative space of the discussion. Participation and non-participation are voluntary.

The communicative networks of public spheres generate *communicative power*—the positions and viewpoints developed through discussion will command the respect of participants not by virtue of obligation but by the power of mutual understanding and consensus. Communication in public spheres thus creates legitimacy in the strongest sense—the shared belief among participants that they freely and authentically consent to the decisions they arrive at.

Public spheres do not affect social systems (e.g. government and administration) *directly*; their impact on systems is more *indirect*. In public spheres, participants aim to change the climate of debate, the ways things are thought about and how situations are understood. They aim to generate a sense that alternative ways of doing things are possible and feasible—and to show that some of these alternative ways actually work or that the new ways do indeed resolve problems, overcome dissatisfactions or address issues.

Public spheres frequently arise in practice through (or in relation to) the communication networks associated with *social movements*—that is, where voluntary groupings of participants arise in response to a legitimation deficit or a shared sense that there is a social problem that has arisen and needs to be addressed.

Conclusion

CPAR is a practice-changing practice. It aims to form communicative spaces—public spheres—in which people involved in and affected by practices can transform their understandings of their practices in the interests of more clearly understanding the character, conduct and consequences of their practice and of overcoming irrationality in their current understandings. They form these public spheres not only to change their understandings but also to transform what they do in the practice: to transform the activities that constitute their practices, especially wherever what they do has consequences that are unsustainable for the people involved or the wider world. And they form these public spheres to transform how people relate to one another and to the world, to overcome conduct and consequences that are unjust. To transform their practices, they do not rely solely on changing themselves: They also transform the practice architectures that enable and constrain their practices—practice architectures that tend to hold their practices in place and to reproduce existing ways of doing things. Changing these practice architectures means transforming the language they use, the ways they use physical space-time and the social arrangements that enable and constrain how they relate to one another and the world. Transforming themselves turns out to be not just a task of looking inwards, individually or collectively (as a group); it is also a task of

transforming the arrangements that exist in the intersubjective spaces in which we encounter one another—cultural-discursive arrangements in semantic space, material-economic arrangements in physical space-time and social political arrangements in social space.

CPAR is thus not primarily a research ‘methodology’ or a set of research techniques. It is an approach to research that aims to open up communicative spaces in which participants in social practices can explore the nature and consequences of their practices and consider whether their practices need to be changed. In CPAR, participants explore their practices through research conducted by them as members of a critical community, often with the assistance of others who join the community to help with the research. The purpose of CPAR is not so much to make contributions to knowledge, especially if that is understood to mean publication in academic books and journals, as it is to make a contribution to history: transforming the work, lives and situations of people in the interests of rationality, sustainability and justice.

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See also critical theory; Frankfurt School

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CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Critical pedagogy is a cross-disciplinary field that recognizes education as an essentially political practice

that should be utilized to advance democratic ideals and to end oppression. Specifically, critical pedagogues look at how education itself can be an oppressive force and how outside oppressive forces, such as neo-liberalism, shape the purpose and function of education. Critical pedagogy supports the empowerment of culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students and calls upon teachers to recognize how schools have historically embraced theories and practices that serve to unite knowledge and power in ways that sustain asymmetrical relationships of power and maintain the status quo. Critical pedagogy recognizes that all knowledge is created within a historical context, that all decisions about pedagogy and education are inherently political decisions and that schools can actually work against the interests of those students who are most politically and economically vulnerable within society. This entry will address the development of critical pedagogy as a branch of knowledge, introduce a number of key concepts used in discussions of the field, review the major intellectual influences on scholars working in this area and finally consider some of the challenges to critical pedagogy and how they might be addressed.

Development and Details

While Henry Giroux is generally credited with first using the term *critical pedagogy*, the work of Paulo Freire has had, inarguably, the greatest influence on this body of scholarship. Freire was a Brazilian educator best known for providing literacy education to peasants. His first, and most influential, book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in Portuguese in 1968, was written after a 15-year exile following his arrest for his work in education. This book was a response to the poor living conditions he found in the cities and countryside of his home country and challenged readers to consider the danger of oppressive elements in society and education. He focused specifically on the problem of what he called the banking model, a commonly used pedagogical model in which teachers make 'deposits' of what they consider to be true knowledge into the minds of students, which are assumed to be empty or without valuable knowledge of their own. Freire argued that the problem with the banking model is that it indoctrinates students to accept what the powerful class accepts to be true or valuable. Instead, students should be taught to be critical thinkers so that they can fully participate in democracy and become their own liberators. This critical thinking and liberation can be achieved, in Freire's view, only through the process of *conscientização* (or 'conscientization' in English), which encourages students to become deeply, socially aware and empowered through acknowledging

the social, economic and political realities that affect their lives. The end goal of *conscientização* is for students to realize that they have the power to change their own realities. Freire posited that *conscientização* can only be reached through dialogue, an educational strategy that requires humility and the exchange of ideas. The influence of his work on the work of the critical pedagogues who followed him cannot be overstated.

Giroux first published the term *critical pedagogy* in his 1983 book *Theory and Resistance in Education*, though he admits that he cannot remember exactly who first used the term and that Roger Simon may have used the term before he did. Giroux's work, as well as that of others who have written since the 1980s about emancipatory education, is greatly influenced by the work of Freire. In fact, Giroux and Freire collaboratively decided to call this field of inquiry 'critical pedagogy', rejecting terms such as *radical pedagogy*. Giroux began his work in critical pedagogy by first theorizing critical pedagogy and the work of Freire through critical theory, linking personal experience with public work and theorizing critical pedagogy through social movements. He advocates for what he calls 'public pedagogy', a concept that urges critical educators to reach beyond the boundaries of the classroom, into communities, workplaces and public arenas. He endorses educators' involvement in union and political activity. Giroux's work recognizes the complicated relationship between neo-liberal forces that aim to dismantle teachers' unions, reduce teachers' work to that of a technician rather than that of an intellectual and replace smart, creative, engaged teaching that stresses critical thinking with the oppressive policies of high-stakes testing, common core standards and other political education policies that stress the ability to obtain high scores on standardized tests. He has shown how these complicated relationships are at work in programmes in the USA such as President George W. Bush's 'No Child Left Behind' and President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's 'Race to the Top'.

Important Concepts in Critical Pedagogy

Most scholars who are now critical pedagogues came to the discipline after experiencing some kind of struggle in the classroom; critical pedagogy gives educators a language with which to talk about challenges in education and pedagogy, especially when those challenges are linked to oppression and injustice. Just as most critical pedagogy scholarship is based on the foundation of the work of Freire, critical pedagogues share a common lexicon with which to speak about education. Some of these terms include *praxis*, *problem posing*, *teacher talk*, *performance*, *banking*, *dialogue*,

dialectal theory, hegemony, counter-hegemony, cultural capital and *performance strike*. The term *praxis* is used in critical pedagogy to emphasize that a truly emancipatory education must be informed by a combination of theory and practice. Critical pedagogues believe that education should emphasize question posing or problem posing, because truth is always subject to critique and these critiques are best mediated through interaction and dialogue. Problem posing, according to Ira Shor, is in opposition to what he calls ‘teacher talk’, the habit of some pedagogues to ‘talk knowledge at students’ and the opposite of critical dialogue. Shor’s concept is closely related to Freire’s concept of *banking*, a term widely used to describe oppressive pedagogical practices that assume that students bring nothing of use to the classroom. Shor writes that the all too common and devastating result of teacher talk (or banking) is a student performance strike which motivates students to settle for low achievement, act out in violence or leave school altogether. He and others argue that this practice contributes to the schools’ part in the school-to-prison pipeline model—the idea that, more and more, schools resemble prisons, criminalize students or prepare students for the reality of prison life with constant surveillance, suspicion and harsh punishment.

Peter McLaren explains dialectal theory as a concept that reveals connections between history and current meanings, so that one can understand both sides of a contradiction. For example, educators can make use of this concept to understand how a school can be both oppressive as well as a route to empowerment. *Hegemony* is another term commonly used by critical pedagogues to explain that dominance is not obtained through coercion but through wilful submission of the oppressed, often through infiltrating dominant values culturally through institutions like school. This term is useful for critical pedagogues to question how educational practice may be, in fact, oppressive, even if the motives are good. Augusto Boal’s concept of the ‘spect-actor’ is one example of resistance or counter-hegemony to hegemonic forces. Not long after Freire published *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, his contemporary Boal published *Theatre of the Oppressed*. In this text, Boal put forth his theory for liberatory theatre, where actors stop a performance and invite the audience to become part of the performance by either participating in the production or making suggestions about what should happen next in the story. Boal referred to this role of the audience as spect-actor in opposition to a spectator. Boal created this model as an answer to what he saw as coercion present in theatre. He wanted participants to have agency in their experience at the theatre rather than act as passive receivers of the messages playwrights prescribed for the audience.

Critical pedagogy also regularly makes use of a term that originated from Pierre Bourdieu, namely, *cultural capital*. Bourdieu argued that general knowledge and experience are passed on to each new generation and are often informed by class. As a result, the dominant class pass down more—or what is considered more—valuable knowledge to their heirs, thereby maintaining power and the status quo. Some scholars have shown how this practice can be used to maintain oppression, while others, like E. D. Hirsch, have argued that it is the responsibility of educators to pass along ‘cultural literacy’ to all students so that they have access to the same knowledge as the dominant class.

Influences on Critical Pedagogy

While critical pedagogy was most prominently influenced by Freire’s work and was ignited by Giroux’s work, these scholars were, of course, influenced by the thinkers who preceded them. Freire spoke often of the influence of scholars like Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Georg Hegel, Georg Lukács and Jean-Paul Sartre. Giroux theorized critical pedagogy through members of the Frankfurt School, including Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse and Theodore Adorno. A major intellectual influence on critical pedagogy was progressive educators like John Dewey, who contributed a ‘language of possibility’. Dewey utilized his concept of community to explain the purpose of education in a democratic society and championed critical engagement in education. He and other social constructivists like Lev Vygotsky argued that whenever a student learns within a culture, that student is learning, on many levels, how to be a member of that culture. This theory is extended by Vygotsky into his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, the space between what a student can accomplish on his or her own and what the student can accomplish in a more social situation with the help of a peer.

Scholars who wrote about the role of racial oppression in the American education system or society in general have also had a noticeable effect on critical pedagogy scholarship. W. E. B. Du Bois’s 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk*, for example, focused on the impact of racism on minority race populations and especially the detrimental effects of segregated education on African American children. Carter G. Woodson, the father of Black history, wrote in *The Miseducation of the Negro* (2010) about the destructive effect of mainstream education on African American children. Giroux refers in his texts to speeches made by James Baldwin in the 1960s, when he asserted that educators were living in a ‘dangerous time’, and Giroux shows that the danger has not passed. Myles Horton, co-founder of the Highlander Folk School, later known as the Highlander

Research and Education Center, wrote that for education or institutional change to be effective, that change has to begin with the people themselves. This idea is a tenet of critical pedagogy. Freire argued that a critical pedagogy must be designed, in part, by the oppressed population it serves.

Further Examples

Many of the texts commonly associated with the study of critical pedagogy predated the work of Freire and Giroux but still applied the principles of emancipation, hope, consciousness and praxis found in their work. For example, in the 1960s, Herbert Kohl popularized the alternative school movement in the USA, which advocated for progressive schools and community involvement in schools. During the 1970s, Ivan Illich wrote about the Deschooling Movement, which sought to remove institutional control and values from schools. Born during the year the loudspeaker was invented, he saw schools as an institutional loudspeaker that could be used to propagate oppressive ideas among students. Maxine Greene, the 'mother of aesthetic education', has argued that reflective theories of knowledge, human nature, learning, curriculum, schooling and society have influenced the practice of progressive educators for over 30 years. She has made compelling arguments for the continued inclusion of the arts, physical education and music education in schools, arguing that educators must recognize the interconnectedness of the body, mind, emotions and spirit, so that the 'whole' student is educated.

Shor, a friend and co-author of Freire, also took on the large questions of critical pedagogy in his book *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change* (1992). This book addresses what Shor sees as the major questions of education: Why do schools limit students? How can this be changed? What helps students become critical thinkers and strong users of language? What kind of education can develop students as active citizens concerned with public life? How can teachers promote critical and democratic development among students who have learned to expect little from intellectual work and from politics? Shor argued that there is no such thing as apolitical education and all decisions made about education are inherently political decisions. He proposes what he calls 'empowering education', a critical-democratic pedagogy that is student centred and aims towards individual growth and social change.

Another important topic taken up by education scholars that finds its roots in critical pedagogy is that of high-stakes testing, common core standards or other standardized programmes like the No Child Left Behind legislation enacted in the USA during George

W. Bush's presidency. One of the most well known of these critics is Diane Ravitch, a former assistant to Lamar Alexander, President George H. W. Bush's Secretary of Education. While Ravitch worked for Alexander, she was responsible for creating many of the administration's state and national academic standards. She has since questioned the effect of these standards and points to the Finnish education system as an ideal model with well-prepared and supported teachers who all belong to a union, no standardized testing system and no privatized schools. Jonathon Kozol also writes about these programmes, especially in *Shame of the Nation* (2005), where he illustrates how these for-profit programmes from the highly profitable testing and test-prep industry often conceptualize the children of economic and racial minorities as having different needs from the children of the middle class and therefore more in need of strict discipline, basic phonics-based instruction and constant assessment. This book also shows how racism, racial apartheid in public schools, inequality in public funding and school inequalities have worked together to create a two-tier public schooling system in the USA that allows politicians and corporations to appear to want to fix problems in the school system while actually profiting from a broken system.

Critiques of Critical Pedagogy

While there are many proponents for critical pedagogy, there are, of course, critics as well. Feminist scholars like Elizabeth Ellsworth, Jennifer Gore and Carmen Luke have asserted that critical pedagogy's challenges of patriarchy have been superficial at best. bell hooks, for example, wrote that even though she found a kindred spirit in Freire, she was bothered by his sexist language. Many feminist pedagogues, however, do recognize that there are many similarities between feminist pedagogical practices and critical pedagogy; both are focused on issues such as empowerment of students, the power relationship between students and teachers, building communities, challenging traditional values, honouring the dignity of individuals and respecting diversity.

Language usage and language learning have been at the centre of other criticisms of critical pedagogy. Some scholars have condemned critical pedagogy's failure to engage scholarship on language, culture and oppression, especially concerning language learners. Others have accused critical pedagogues of using elitist and inaccessible language in their texts, thus creating a new form of oppression and exclusion. Indeed, Giroux discusses this problem at length and urges scholars to think of their scholarship as a public service.

Other critiques have drawn attention to the fact that most of the famed critical pedagogy scholars are White

men. Some scholars have addressed this issue by bringing feminist and critical race theory into the conversations surrounding critical pedagogy. Some scholars and thinkers who have been utilized in this conversation are James Baldwin, Frederick Douglas, Du Bois, Woodson, Martin Luther King Jr. and Derrick Bell, a critical race theorist with a legal background, who argued in texts like *Faces at the Bottom of the Well* (1992) that people of all races are victimized by racism and that the first step in sweeping changes regarding race is to acknowledge that racism exists. Similarly, critical pedagogues have made use of Gloria Anzaldúa's argument that the races must work together to end oppression.

Finally, ecological pedagogues have criticized critical pedagogy for its failure to fully address the planet's ecological deterioration. Ecological scholars have raised concern that critical pedagogy supports the further alienation of human beings from nature. Ecological pedagogy requires that scholars and teachers abandon anthropocentrism, or the idea that human beings are at the centre of the planet, and instead focus on helping students to become prepared to be not just citizens in a democratic world but also citizens of Planet Earth and all the problems associated with Planet Earth, including pollution, global warming and decreasing amounts of water. This approach is interdisciplinary and looks at how humans oppress non-humans. Freire, too, took up issues of the environment in *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1973) with his concept of the 'agronomist-educator', with which he argued that the agronomist as an educator must be aware of the worldview of peasants, so that their technical training is not reduced to non-existent neutrality.

Critical pedagogy is a field of inquiry that examines how oppressive forces like business, neo-liberalism and capitalism interfere with education in negative ways. Critical pedagogy has provided a lens for analyzing problems in schools and in educational policies for many scholars interested in social justice. Thinkers have used this branch of knowledge to address questions such as who has power over what happens in classrooms and why that power is desirable, what forces affect conditions and practices in the classroom and to what end and how we can best teach students to be active participants in a democratic society. Though critical pedagogy focuses largely on teaching and conditions in schools, this branch of knowledge cannot be reduced to a methodology for teaching because, as Freire showed, the oppressed must participate in their own liberation.

Tabetha Adkins

See also conscientization; dialogue; empowerment; Frankfurt School; Freire, Paulo; Highlander Research and Education Center; praxis; social justice

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CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Although born of two distinct academic worlds, critical race theory and action research are natural bedfellows. Critical race theory originated in the legal academy to expose the ways in which American law and its analytical paradigms create, reproduce and maintain hierarchical social status regimes, particularly those based on race and ethnicity. The term *critical race theory*, or CRT for short, has been in existence since the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the first identifiable CRT articles and essays were published in several leading American law journals. Those first pieces focused their critiques on American constitutional and civil rights jurisprudence as it had developed in the post-*Brown v. Board of Education* era (from the 1950s through the early 1980s), but its reach has broadened significantly since then to encompass a broad range of legal subjects,

including but not limited to criminal law, anti-discrimination law (which covers, e.g., the law of employment discrimination and affirmative action), tort law, property law and contract law. Additionally, over the past 30 years, CRT scholars have drawn heavily on non-legal disciplines, such as sociology, history, political theory, philosophy, cultural theory, literary theory and economics, to name a few. Thus, like action research, one of CRT's defining features is that it is inter- and cross-disciplinary, both internally (with respect to law) and externally (with respect to non-law fields).

Even more significantly, CRT shares with action research a 'first principles' commitment to addressing issues of community and social life, especially as they relate to social political and socio-economic inequality and how such inequalities are affected by the law. Because most CRT scholars are also trained lawyers who are particularly sensitive to and knowledgeable about the strategic significance and mechanics of both legal process and forms of remedy, CRT scholars have much to offer action researchers by way of collaboration and much to learn from action researchers by way of the same. To provide more insight into why this is the case, this entry first provides a brief history of CRT's origins within the legal academy. It then identifies and describes key intellectual insights of the CRT movement that coincide with the values and commitments of action research.

A Brief History of the Origins of CRT

Because it is still a relatively new field, many of CRT's original 'founders' are still actively involved in its ongoing development. As such, an overview of CRT must include reference to and some discussion of its history according to those key players, as documented in two essential CRT readers, both of which were edited by some of CRT's central figures. Both published in 1995, *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement (Key Writings)* was edited by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller and Kendell Thomas, and *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge (Cutting Edge)* was edited by Richard Delgado. The editors of both readers note the difficulty of choosing representative writings for inclusion in their respective compilations and the problematic nature of a CRT 'canon'. Additionally, *Key Writings* provides an insightful account of the founding of CRT that is, consistent with its basic philosophical tenets, deliberately explicit about the political nature of the CRT intervention into the then burgeoning field of critical legal studies (CLS), itself an explicit leftist intervention into the mainstream legal theory of the era. The following draws heavily from the *Key Writings* account.

CRT emerged in the legal academy during the early 1980s as a direct response to CLS. CLS, a left intellectual movement that had gained traction in the 1970s and 1980s in the legal academy, in turn drew from the more broadly focused legal realist movement of the early and mid twentieth centuries. While necessary for a deeper understanding of how and why CRT emerged when it did, a full historical account of legal realism and CLS is beyond the scope of this entry. For the purposes of this brief history of CRT, legal realists are often credited with introducing to the legal academy the argument, among many others, that law is neither neutral nor objective and that it both shapes and is shaped by politics and political struggle. Decades later, CLS scholars—or 'crits' as they are often known—pushed the boundaries of the realist claim, positioning themselves firmly on the left and in direct opposition to both conservative and liberal legal scholars. Crits exposed the ways in which the 'neutral' and 'objective' technicalities of legal doctrine had been used to mask the inherently political nature of the law, and the law's role in maintaining and legitimizing a stratified social order in the liberal state.

What all three—legal realism, CLS and CRT—share at their core is a deep scepticism of institutionalized forms of 'objective' legal knowledge (which includes legal doctrine and theory) and the institutionalized methods of knowledge (re)production, as well as a commitment to the critical analysis and deconstruction of the so-called neutral principles and systems of law. From that core, the trajectories of legal realism, CLS and CRT splinter, although at some points they occasionally re-converge.

The splintering within the CLS movement in the mid-1980s, which eventually resulted in the genesis of CRT, stemmed from the deep dissatisfaction within the CLS movement of law professors of colour, who were very few in number at the time, with what they regarded as the failure of crits, who were mostly White and male, to meaningfully contend with race in their critiques of social power as legitimated by law. Given the primary role race has played in the organization of American social, political and economic life and the overwhelming fact of racial inequality and subordination in the USA, many of these scholars of colour found especially problematic the CLS critique of legal 'rights' discourse as being indeterminate and without value in the struggle towards a more equal and communitarian society. While the then as yet unnamed race crits were sympathetic to the crits' indeterminacy critiques, they were less so to the crits' total rejection of rights discourse as a tool of liberation, given that African Americans had at that time only recently been granted full rights by the state. The crits' failure to comprehend the transformative nature of that political

reality demonstrated to the emerging race critics a tension between CLS scholars' theorizing of a more just society and their own race privilege. Thus, the race critics distinguished themselves from the critics by placing race at the centre of their critical discourse and by acknowledging the law's liberatory potential.

This political intervention into the CLS movement coincided with student organizing at elite law schools around the failure to hire faculty of colour in anything beyond token numbers. Most famously, when the late Derrick Bell, widely regarded as one of the first and most influential critical race scholars, left the Harvard Law School (HLS) faculty in 1986 to serve as dean of the University of Oregon Law School, HLS failed to hire a professor of colour to teach Bell's courses on constitutional law and race. When HLS students subsequently protested and organized around HLS' failure to do so, it responded that there were no 'qualified' minority faculty to hire. This response by a professed 'liberal' legal institution like HLS triggered a burst of activity that resulted in a student-organized class at HLS inspired by Bell's classes. The course, which focused on racial critiques and analyses of American law, was taught by professors of colour brought to HLS from other law schools. Many of its participants—both teachers and students—went on to become central figures in the establishment of CRT.

These two strands of CRT's history—its intellectual-activist genesis in response to the CLS movement and its activist-intellectual genesis in response to liberal, institutional race politics—make clear the connections between CRT and action research, despite the fact that action research is not particularly focused on race. The history of CRT as an intellectual project exemplifies its deep understanding of the political nature of knowledge production and the impact such production has on the organization of society, as well as its commitment to addressing sociopolitical inequality by challenging conventional modes of research and scholarship. Thus, race critics and action researchers have much in common, for, in short, they are both committed to creating a more just and equal society.

Two Key Features of CRT

Just as they share a general commitment to social change, CRT and action research share other, more specific core values and characteristics. As has already been mentioned, both, for example, reject the conventional academic wisdom that knowledge and knowledge production are or can be 'objective' and 'neutral'. Rather, both openly acknowledge and reckon with the political nature of doing academic research and writing within academic institutions. Both further reject the premise that there is or should be a singular methodology for

'doing' CRT or 'doing' action research. Over the past three decades, CRT has generated several other key insights that are more specific to an American legal context and have influenced a generation of legal and other scholars.

It must be noted here that the very act of choosing key insights for inclusion in this entry, from what is now a robust and diverse body of CRT literature, runs counter to a CRT ethos of inclusion, of counting every voice. Thus, the author wishes to make clear that many CRT scholars might disagree, justifiably, with the following identification of key insights. Having said that, a brief overview of two key insights—both of which comprise related and more specific tenets of CRT—follows.

The Legitimizing Function of Law

The first CRT scholars were deeply disillusioned and dissatisfied with the development and state of American civil rights jurisprudence and discourse in the post-*Brown v. Board of Education* era. While they appreciated the significant gains that had been made as a result of the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, they expressed deep reservations during the late 1970s and 1980s about the ways in which the courts in civil rights cases were then shaping anti-discrimination doctrine, notwithstanding the fact that many of those courts had ruled in favour of the minority plaintiffs. These race critics argued that the civil rights law of the time, and the anti-discrimination doctrine in particular, had become overly concerned with the positionality of the alleged defendants—termed 'perpetrators' by an early race critic, Alan David Freeman—while paying too little attention to the conditions and experiences of the plaintiffs, who had allegedly suffered as a result of it.

They did so, for example, by requiring the plaintiffs in both constitutional and statutory discrimination lawsuits to prove the *defendant's intent* to discriminate. Such proof requirements, these early race critics argued, not only had the effect of making it more difficult for plaintiffs in discrimination suits to make their cases in a practical sense, they also had the discursive effect of reinforcing the very social and institutional power structures and hierarchies that had given rise to such discriminatory practices in the first place. In this way, race critics theorized, the civil rights jurisprudence law of the time was actually functioning to *legitimate* discrimination, albeit in a less overt way than the civil rights cases of the post-Reconstruction era had. These race critics further warned that without some type of effective intervention, courts would continue to solidify the doctrine in this way. It is now almost universally agreed among contemporary race critics that the early race critics were right, for the intent requirement in

discrimination lawsuits, particularly under the federal anti-discrimination paradigm, has become increasingly onerous and difficult for plaintiffs to overcome.

The critique of the intent requirement in anti-discrimination jurisprudence is linked to another legitimating legal principle that is centrally and deeply revered by the liberal state, that is, the principle of 'formal' equality, which dictates that the liberal paradigm of formal equality should govern as the primary 'neutral' principle on which civil rights and discrimination cases should be analyzed and decided. Here, formal equality stands in stark contrast to 'substantive' equality. For race crits, substantive equality is concerned primarily with outcomes, that is, with the elimination of the *conditions* of social subordination, whereas formal equality is concerned primarily with equality of opportunity. Accordingly, formal (Aristotelian) equality, which remains the reigning equality principle in American jurisprudence, looks to treat, in the words of the feminist legal theorist Catharine MacKinnon, 'likes alike' and 'unalikes unalike'. It attempts to resolve institutionalized and systemic forms of discrimination simply by redrawing the lines between those who are the same (the 'likes') and those who are different (the 'unalikes'). Thus, under a formal equality regime, it is sufficient, for example, if the law treats men and women or Whites and Blacks similarly, where once it had treated them differently.

For law crits of many stripes (CRT, CLS, feminist legal theory), the problem with the formal equality paradigm is that it does not adequately account for the histories of subordination that created the inequalities—those original 'likes' and 'unalikes'—in the first place. Nor does the formal equality paradigm allow for the adequate consideration of context, that is, of the specific conditions under which both individual and collective experiences of discrimination and status-based oppression occur. That history and context *must* be considered in addressing legal claims of discrimination is another important tenet of CRT.

Critical Race Feminism and Intersectionality

Early CRT scholarship focused singularly on analyzing law through the lens of race. By the mid-1980s, however, feminist race crits had begun to articulate a new CRT critique that exposed another analytical shortcoming of anti-discrimination jurisprudence and discourse. They demonstrated how the courts, in determining which cases would go forward, essentialized and categorized plaintiffs in race discrimination cases as Black men and plaintiffs in gender discrimination cases as White women. At a practical level, this functioned to leave plaintiffs asserting claims specifically as, for example, *Black women*, without recourse, since

the courts dictated that they choose one or the other—race or gender—under the existing legal frameworks. Moreover, at the level of discourse, this functioned to render Black women and other women of colour invisible and voiceless and always subordinate to men of colour and White women.

Critiques such as these—which challenge the law's marginalization of the 'multiply burdened'—are part of a robust body of work referred to as critical race feminism. Intersectionality theory, associated most closely with Kimberlé Crenshaw, is likely the strand of critical race feminism that has had the greatest influence within critical race discourse, as well as on a wide range of non-legal disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, education and philosophy. It aims principally to address forms of subordination based on *interlocking*, identity-based categories such as race, gender, sexuality, disability and/or class. Moreover, intersectionality theory exemplifies how CRT can be employed to understand how the law constructs and maintains existing distributions of social power in complex, material and discursive ways.

Conclusion

CRT and action research share an important lineage grounded in critical thinking about traditional forms of academic work, always with their concern for social power and community in mind. CRT has proven to be a powerful tool in the uncovering of the law's subordinating structure and effects. But one of CRT's foundational tenets also calls for race crits to effect structural *change* in ways that respond to their own critiques of the law and legal institutions. Race crits, however, have not been as effective at proposing viable programmatic change as they have at critiquing existing frameworks and conventional legal discourses. Moreover, the intensely partisan and top-down nature of political reform in the USA and many (but not all) other liberal democratic states makes it difficult, though certainly not impossible, for CRT principles to be meaningfully incorporated into such reform. In the light of these political realities, action research can provide race crits with other ways of doing CRT that are more centrally focused on bottom-up, rather than top-down, approaches to creating a more just and equal society.

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See also critical theory; feminism; Marxism; post-colonial theory; social justice; subaltern studies; subalternity

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CRITICAL REALISM

Critical realism is a philosophical position that is attracting increasing interest in academic and professional fields. It offers the scholar or inquirer a lens for understanding human ontology (our 'being-in-the-world'), epistemology (how knowledge is formed and apprehended) and ethics (how we ought to act as moral beings). More specifically, it provides a philosophical tool for identifying causal mechanisms within a particular field of activity. For these reasons, critical realism aligns with the concerns of action research. Kurt Lewin, an important progenitor behind the method, viewed change as arising from a process of human reflection centred on progressive cycles of analysis, objective setting, formulating plans, executing them and evaluating the results. An initial cycle would lead to further cycles following the same basic approach, embedding change often directed to ideals founded on human betterment. This entry describes how critical realism enriches action research with analytical depth, enabling social researchers to gain a deep understanding of the social world and the nature of the problems which they seek to address and change.

The Key Tenets of Critical Realism

In sociology and social theory, a major concern centres on how human agency (the capacity to exercise choice, motive, intention and creative reflection) engages with

social structure (objective, enduring social patterns of behaviour often governed by social rules, prescriptions and norms). Essentially, the question concerns how much freedom actors possess and to what degree society constrains their behaviour. Different theories have tilted towards or emphasized one of the two polarities in their attempt to explain social life. Anthony Giddens, for example, in his theory of structuration, has argued against an over-socialized model of the person, suggesting that actors are not 'cultural dopes' but rather creative engineers of self and narrative in a changing world of reflexive opportunity. Pierre Bourdieu, alternatively, can be seen as taking a different stance, one emphasizing how outward structure shapes human consciousness and everyday, taken-for-granted action, even though actors can reflect on their options and make virtuosic interventions within circumscribed fields.

In contrast to these theorists, Roy Bhaskar, a leading thinker behind critical realism, has argued that actors shape their social worlds but, in turn, are constrained by social structures embedded in the fabric of social life. However, it is the nature of these structures that takes on a particular purchase in critical realism. In order to grasp the significance of social structure in critical realist philosophizing, we must turn to Bhaskar's view of the social world. His ontological conceptualization comprises three levels of reality, namely, (1) the *empirical* level, (2) the *actual* level and (3) the *causal* level. The first is reflected in what we experience through our senses. We hear discordant themes in a piece of classical music eventually leading to a climax of resolution. We see a broad vista appear before us out of the mist. We taste a much anticipated, fortifying meal. Such are examples of the empirical engagement with reality through the senses.

By way of contrast, the actual level of reality is what happens regardless of our engagement with it. Hence, events occur beyond one's sensory experience. The fact that a person cannot hear a concert taking place in a far away location does not mean that it has not occurred. One's range of sensory experience is truncated and restricted by spatial and temporal contexts, yet there is still an awareness that others are 'going about their business' and life continues in 'far away fields'. Reality does not have to be experienced by everyone for it to have ontological substance.

Lastly, the causal level has a major import in social life. Operating below the meniscus of the empirical and actual levels are unseen causal mechanisms. These mechanisms work synergistically to produce discernible effects in the empirical and actual levels of experience. In fact, it is by noting these effects that we can hypothesize about the existence and nature of these mechanisms. An example from the natural sciences

illustrates this point. Consider a sheet of paper spattered with iron filings. To the eye, there is nothing in the presentation of the filings signifying order. They appear as a random spread across the sheet. However, when a magnet is applied below the paper, the filings fall into a pattern around each pole of the magnet. The pattern is seen by the observer. It exists at the empirical level of reality. However, what is unseen is the mechanism of magnetism operating at the causal dimension. It is axiomatic that just because we cannot see immaterial forces with the naked eye, it does not mean they do not exist. Evolution has been an ineluctable, causal mechanism in the phylogeny of human development yet has no material properties per se.

These aforementioned examples come from the natural sciences. Yet Bhaskar is keen to extend his thesis on the causal level to the psychological and social aspects of being. An example from the psychological domain illustrates his stance. Take a young child removed from his parents' care and placed with a stranger. Most children who are securely bonded with their parents will show evident distress, anxiety and, ostensibly, rage given this situation. If the child is reunited with his parents after a short while, though, he slowly returns to his secure mode of being, feeling safe to explore and welcoming the parents' proximity. What the observer sees is the child's distress and subsequent calm. What is less clear, at this empirical level of observation, is what is causing the child's reaction when separating from and reuniting with his loving carers. In this regard, John Bowlby, a child ethologist, suggested that children develop through an unseen mechanism of *attachment*. When they feel secure in their parents' care, they are enabled to explore their worlds and develop cognitive and social skills. However, when threatened, they return to their secure base.

Bowlby's work highlighted the existence of the psychosocial mechanism of attachment in social life. Beyond this domain, however, are wider social structural mechanisms operating at the causal level to make events happen. In neo-liberal economies, for example, the pervasive mechanism of commodification acts to reduce social life to objects that have monetary value, that can be purchased, traded or cashed in. Commodification works in tandem with other neo-liberal mechanisms such as deregulation, liberalization and privatization to shape the nature of modern life, its cultural forms, media representations and civic engagements. Empirical evidence of growing inequalities and diminishing measures of well-being in many countries falling prey to the neo-liberal global order testifies to the working of these unseen mechanisms at the level of political economy.

The combined effects of these mechanisms operating at the causal level create an unpredictable smorgasbord

of cause and effect, with some mechanisms complementing each other while others act in countervailing opposition. That said, far from being a deterministic philosophy, critical realism also gives a central place to human agency in shaping outcomes in social life. Actors are affected by myriads of mechanisms but, through their intentions in different times and social contexts, sometime modify their effects. Therefore, causality is a complex affair involving the human being's subjective engagement with unseen forces that have an objective power.

Such mechanisms operate within a stratified world comprising numerous, interlacing systems. In short, reality is layered. If the scientist targets one level of reality and identifies the mechanisms within it, then indubitably, there is an aspect of reality lying beneath it, one giving rise to its fundamental laws and processes. Thus, the characteristics of many animals and plants can be explained by physiological mechanisms, but they, in turn, can be explained by deeper level chemical mechanisms, a prominent one being photosynthesis. So one can delve deeper, or 'drill down', increasingly into the microstructure of nanoparticles.

Equally, reality builds from these microscopic layers to the bigger social domains comprising institutions and political economy. This multilayered world can be studied by discrete disciplines ranging from quantum physics upwards through physical chemistry, organic chemistry, physiology, psychology, the social sciences, humanities, philosophy and theology. In all of this, one layer of reality generates the next in a process of continual emergence, yet, crucially, critical realism avoids attempts to reduce one layer to its deeper layer base. For instance, human psychology should not be reduced to human biology and human biology to chemistry. Reductionist explanations fail to do justice to the discrete objective properties of each unique layer.

Bhaskar's articulation of the three different types of reality—empirical, actual and causal—constitutes the main frame of his ontology of the person-in-society. But what can be said regarding his view of critical realist epistemology? Here, Bhaskar makes a distinction between the *intransitive* and *transitive* worlds. The former is the world that objectively exists. The latter is a human construction of that reality. In the transitive world, actors see reality through their perceptual lenses, coloured as they may be by theory, bias, past experience and cognitive heuristics. This notion reverberates with Immanuel Kant's distinction between 'things-in-themselves' (the noumenal world) and 'things-as-we-see-them' (the phenomenal world), and our limited apprehension of the former through innate, a priori mental structures. Yet, as our theories develop over time, as social science progresses, the gap between the intransitive and transitive domains

narrows, it is contended—much as in the metaphor of Plato's cave when light illuminates previously distorted and misapprehended images, revealing a more perspicacious view of reality as it really is.

These central tenets on the nature of ontology and epistemology are complemented by a discerned position on ethics. In this context, critical realism does not subscribe to the notion of a value-free science, which maintains 'the facts/value' distinction defended rigorously by most positivists. Critically, if one discovers the presence of oppressive mechanisms operating at the causal level of reality, then the social scientist is morally obligated to apply measures to negate their effects or at least expose them for what they are. Hence, in the face of discovering the alienating effects of commodification, one might well consider highlighting the need for de-commodifying measures. For example, this might involve prising the person's worth away from market mechanisms, which define people mainly in terms of their labour power. In this way, Bhaskar sees a connection between the production of knowledge in society and human emancipation. Essentially, negative value judgements can be made on phenomena which can be shown, through reasoned argument or evidence, to be false, hegemonic or exploitative. There must be a presumption in favour of making the truth of the case known through what we have found in our research endeavours.

Retroduction and Action Research

Building on these ontological, epistemological and ethical precepts, critical realism advocates a particular methodological stance of research inquiry—one essentially directed to the discovery of causal mechanisms in social life. This is termed *retroduction*. Andrew Sayer says that this involves the inference from a description of some phenomenon to an understanding of the causal properties producing it. In retroduction, the researcher seeks to apprehend how Event B was produced by A. This is an a priori process of thinking backward, one that tries to identify the causal mechanisms giving rise to the event. To expand on the nature of this inquiry, the researcher starts with a transcendental question. Kant said that such questions should take the following form: What must be the case for events to occur as they do? In other words, an inquirer has observed something of interest and now wants to understand the factors that have brought it about.

Inquirers respond to transcendental questions by developing hypotheses about what causal mechanisms may be operating in a given sphere. Such hypotheses often take the form of metaphorical hunches, inferences, models or analogies rather than tightly defined scientific conjectures that are meant to be tested empirically in controlled conditions. Ted Benton, pioneer of the critical realism approach, provides the

following example of how this might work: A study of the properties of electrons might compare them to the flow of water molecules along a river. Alternatively, a study of organizational life might compare it to a psychic prison. Or a study of patients in a mental hospital might conjecture that the experience amounts to a divestiture of their social identities. In retroduction, the aim is to hypothesize about the likely influence of multiple mechanisms producing interlinked, multiple effects in diverse fields. Given that this is a complex task, the inquirer needs to draw on theories that purport to examine deep, causal properties in psychological and social life in order to gain a tentative understanding of what mechanisms are at play. For example, in social research, these may be theories of identity, face-to-face interaction and institutional life. Additionally, retroduction can be linked with *complexity theory*: the construction of an overall system by defining its constituent parts (or subsystems) and how they are linked together to produce discernible effects.

Once hypothetical mechanisms have been elicited, the inquirer then seeks evidence to either confirm or disconfirm their presence. For example, if the mechanism of commodification was really at work, then the inquirer would expect to see evidence of human life being reduced to monetary factors or life being intractably linked to market principles. If, however, evidence from the empirical world is lacking, then alternative hypotheses need to be propounded and tested (using perhaps a different set of theories), until the point the inquirer has sufficient evidence to make a compelling case regarding some of the factors affecting causality in the area of inquiry pursued. This can be compared with a medical physician who observes outward symptoms in the patient, develops hypotheses about their underlying causes, tests whether they are present and reformulates her hypothesis if required.

Finally, if there is a strong case for believing that a number of oppressive mechanisms have been located, then the inquirer is duty bound to take actions to offset their effects. For example, if commodification is evidenced, then the inquirer might resort to a set of policy recommendations highlighting the need for de-commodifying measures. In a welfare context, this could include arguments for removing means testing for essential childcare services. In all of this, it is essential to remember that outcomes in social life are the combined effect of not only deep-seated mechanisms but also human agency working in specific temporal and spatial contexts. Human agents reflect on their circumstances. They use conceptual space to reflect on constraints and enabling factors and to take action accordingly. This is not to portray the actor as fully rational and instrumental. Human reaction is often embroiled in emotion. Nevertheless, we can distance ourselves

from feeling states to make changes in outlook or with regard to social standing.

Critical realism can provide a firm philosophical foundation for action research. Despite the fact that the method has been shaped by a range of differing perspectives and slants, and thus might be seen as a group of related techniques, its application invariably remains true to Lewin's articulation of a series of interlaced cycles of reflection and action with the aim of acquiring information which can potentially solve identified practical problems. This juxtaposition of 'reflecting' and 'doing' to effect problem-solving is consonant with critical realism's aim of being an *under-labouring* tool, that is, one that casts light on areas of difficulty so that ethical, emancipatory action can be taken. Action research, along with critical realism, subscribes to the notion that it is not enough to understand the social world: We must also act to change it, to further human well-being.

The cyclical, recursive and iterative nature of action research involves a series of processes: planning, acting, observing, reflecting, replanning, acting, observing and so on. It is within the observing and reflecting stages of the inquiry that retrodution can be employed to give the inquirers a deep understanding of the causal mechanisms potentially affecting the problems being addressed and the factors helping and inhibiting change. Some mechanisms work in tandem with others to produce beneficial effects, whereas others clash or are oppositional, producing a force field of mixed results.

In an educational context, one central mechanism might be social class, how it creates certain expectations of achievement, how it inculcates a habitus or set of internal thinking dispositions within children, shaping how they approach learning, how they make sense of the school environment and the role of teachers. The planning stage might then seek to incorporate approaches that challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about, say, children from a working-class background, heightening a sense of the language used in the classroom and expectations of achievement.

By discovering the causal forces at play, action researchers are able to modify their plans, actions and strategies aimed at change. The goal is to target mechanisms obstructing the desired change or worsening the well-being of human subjects and to promote or strengthen mechanisms that act in a contrary manner. Yet, more than this, they will be keen to factor in the impact of human agency when attempting to explain the nature of change and resistance. This is to try to empower human subjects to exercise their agency, particularly when using Participatory Action Research. Continuous cycles of reflection and action over time, applying the retroductive method within

critical realism, heighten the possibility of emancipatory change by exploring events within the empirical and causal levels of reality.

Stan Houston

See also epistemology; Lewin, Kurt; ontology; Participatory Action Research; philosophy of science; systems thinking

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CRITICAL REFERENCE GROUP

Action research has firm historical roots in a dialectic interchange between the Global North and the Global South and has gained its strength through collaborative partnerships between those with expertise in research methods and knowledge of social change theory and those who are most intimately affected by the issue at hand. Action research efforts hold greater potential to create meaningful change when the research team includes the people most affected by the problem being studied—the people whose lives the action research project aims to improve. Yoland Wadsworth coined the term *critical reference group* for the group of people the action research primarily intends to help, whose problems the action research seeks to solve. Ideally, the action research team centres its work on the critical reference group's most pressing issues. This entry offers ways to identify these groups and work in partnership with a full circle of stakeholders in creating new avenues for health and equity. We conclude by describing a project that brought Hmong women's previously unheard voices into the centre of action research.

Locating the Critical Reference Group: Eliminating Margins

Oftentimes in traditional research projects, people in the critical reference group have been subjects or mere participants in the research process. Action research at its best determines the research question from the lens of the critical reference group and is organized in such a way that people from the critical reference

group are fully involved in discerning how best to collect and analyze the data, deciding how to disseminate the results and planning meaningful actions to create change.

The critical reference group is not always immediately revealed. Action research teams must gaze widely to question who is most at risk, who is often overlooked, and who has been previously silenced in other projects. Specifically asking who is at the heart of the research question(s) often reveals the group(s) most affected. Furthermore, action research teams must critically question what potential untoward effects might arise from their work. What groups could be harmed in the quest for information? What outcome indicators must be collected and analyzed to ensure that a new vulnerable group is not created by our actions? Encouraging a community-level understanding of ethical issues, Edison Trickett gave the example of a project that aimed to reduce sexually transmitted infections through the creation of a government-sponsored brothel. The project succeeded in reducing sexually transmitted infections, but it also resulted in increased marital discord and divorce. The focus of concern expanded from sex workers and their clients to the partners and children adversely affected by divorce. To identify and expand the critical reference group, action research teams critically analyze who might be adversely affected by the issue being studied as well as who might be adversely affected by the research process or the community-based actions that result.

Blending Many Voices: Working From Polyvocality

Action research that includes the critical reference group as full partner involves movement from one group researching and another being researched to a collaborative exploration—a movement from a divided *them* and *us* to a collective, collaborative *we*. Bill Genat went further to suggest privileging the critical reference group so that new meanings can be incubated and situated local knowledge and theory can be recognized through the process of active, collaborative engagement. Carol Pavlish and Margaret Pharris concurred with this approach, pointing out that when all stakeholders in the phenomenon being studied engage in critical, inclusive dialogue about the meaning of the data analysis findings, and the experience of those who are adversely affected is fully understood by all, barriers to human flourishing can be thoroughly, systematically and enthusiastically deconstructed by people on all sides of the barriers.

To effectively break down the barriers to health and well-being for the critical reference group, action

research projects involve as many stakeholders as possible who possess the power and knowledge to make essential changes that could improve the situation. Involving more stakeholders than just the critical reference group increases the chance that more lasting change will take place. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett made a compelling case for the ill effects of societal inequities on those who are seemingly benefiting from them, and demonstrated that there is more general well-being in societies where equality prevails. When people who may be benefiting from the plight of the critical reference group are involved in the action research in a relational context, they are exposed to the effects of their actions or inactions and are more motivated to work to improve the situation. However, the action research team needs to discern how to surface what Wadsworth termed the critical discrepancies that may be suppressed or repressed and thus allow the poor conditions to persist. For this to happen, it is essential to commit to a process of listening deeply to understand the perspective of those most affected and to engage in a relationship where recognizing, talking about and dismantling power differentials is central. Follow-through on this commitment results in a new way of being in community and doing action research. This process knowledge, in and of itself, becomes one of the most powerful outcomes of the action research. A new solidarity arises. Lynne Young called for such decolonizing research methods to critically identify whose interests are being served and to uncover and correct unequal power dynamics. Inequities may include differentials in ability to participate due to lack of transportation, language and literacy problems, inconvenient meeting times, necessity for day care and other factors that privilege some to participate more fully and exclude other critical voices. The research process incorporates regularly scheduled interrogation of who is at the table, who needs to be invited in and whether the critical reference group is adequately represented in all major decisions and actions. Orlando Fals Borda saw this process of individual and collective transformative action as arising from a *liberationist/emancipatory ethos*.

Adopting a New Lens: An Example

Avonne Yang and colleagues provide an example of the importance of the centrality of the critical reference group in the action research process. In a community-based collaborative action research partnership between a university and a neighbourhood clinic community advisory board in the United States, the persistent, dangerously high blood sugar levels among Hmong women with diabetes emerged as a pressing issue. Hmong women from the community

expressed concern about the increasing numbers of Hmong women with diabetes and the very high blood sugar levels. A physician member of the collaborative offered the opinion that the women were *noncompliant* and lacked essential knowledge of diabetes. The collaborative decided that a broad qualitative view of what was occurring in the lives of this critical reference group was essential and that the effort would need to be done in Hmong using pictorial representations and oral reports, since written language was not part of most women's lives. Hmong nurse-researchers and students invited Hmong women with high blood sugar into the project as co-investigators. Together, they drew the women's life stories on large scrolls. After several weeks of adding details to the scrolls so that they represented the most important events and people in the women's lives, the women added the experience of diabetes to the unfolding life story lines. By comparing and contrasting the stories, the people involved in the action research could easily see how all of the women went from life in Laos that involved walking up and down mountainous terrain, engaging in warm interactions with myriad people in the community and picking and eating fresh fruits and vegetables from their gardens to life in the United States that involved sitting in their children's homes alone in front of a television set listening to a language they did not understand and being driven to the grocery store to purchase food wrapped in plastic, too fearful to walk outside by themselves. They recounted how their blood sugar levels rose and fell with their stress, sadness, trauma and depression. They knew about diabetes and conventional treatment, but they did not know how to live healthy, happy lives in their new country.

The action research team decided to hire a playwright to weave the women's stories into a play, and the students went on Hmong radio to invite the larger community of Hmong women with diabetes to a delicious, nutritious, beautiful dinner where the play was performed. The action research team asked the women what was missing from the play to better represent their experience and what in their opinion Hmong women with diabetes needed to live happy, healthy lives in the United States. The dialogue that ensued gave birth to meaningful action plans.

Each stakeholder group came to a new understanding of what they could do to promote human flourishing in this critical reference group. All stakeholders developed a new understanding of the important contribution of the Hmong people to US history and culture. Clinic and community leaders realized that they had an obligation to see that practices and structures were reorganized in the clinic and in the community. Hmong women had a deeper sense of their history, current

situation and future possibilities. A poster of the stories and findings was hung in the clinic, and dialogue sessions were held to engage clinic staff in reorganizing care. The word *noncompliant* fell from the vocabulary of the physicians, who realized that they were earning a salary but were not providing care that resulted in optimal health outcomes. A psychologist was embedded in the health centre, and a Hmong women's support group was initiated.

It is in the context of a story fully understood and relationships carefully tended that transformation becomes seeded and takes root. Addressing power differentials and uncovering who might be benefiting from the suffering of the people most affected by the situation at hand—the critical reference group—is an essential aspect of action research.

Margaret Dexheimer Pharris and Carol Pilsbury Pavlish

See also collaborative action research; community-based research; dialogue; Fals Borda, Orlando; narrative inquiry; post-colonial theory; relational-cultural theory; social justice

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CRITICAL REFLECTION

What are reflection and critical reflection in action research? What are the key models and approaches for critical reflection? How do researchers engage in critical

reflection? What tools assist with reflection? These questions are the focus of this entry.

Background and Definition of Reflection and Critical Reflection

A multitude of definitions of action research include reflection as a key element of the approach. For example, as early as 1988, Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart explained that action research was a form of collective self-reflective inquiry. Later, in 2001, Bob Dick considered that alternating action and critical reflection was part of action research. It is often said that in action research, reflection integrates the action and the research. Alongside the articulated centrality of reflection, however, there is an assumption that everyone knows what it is—this is not always the case. To understand what it is requires a short walk through the history of our understanding of reflection.

Although Donald Schön's work in the 1980s is most frequently referred to in defining reflection associated with the notion of enhancing professional practice through a process of structured thinking, this material in fact drew influence from the early Greek 'Socratic questioning' and John Dewey's work on reflection in the 1930s. In the 1990s, David Boud and his team indicated that reflection involved recapturing experience, thinking about this experience, mulling over it and evaluating it.

'Critical' reflection takes reflection to a deeper level because it has underpinning intents of emancipation and a fair, more just society. It is often linked to identifying and questioning the assumptions that govern actions and reframing, or developing, alternative actions. Stephen Brookfield's work in the 1990s has been important in defining that such a level of reflection inherently involves challenging prevailing social, political, cultural or professional ways of acting: a challenge that may provide an alternative to the majority position. Later work implies that there is threat to personal competence in such a stance, which includes being both self-critical and ethically alert.

Many descriptions of critical reflection within action research raise the importance of rigour. Proposals for how the latter is applied vary, from the use of robust self-questioning through to the more specific use of data- or evidence-based evaluation in critical reflection that can be adopted in the phases of action research. The context and approach employed for action research will influence choices around the extent and the type of rigour that is applied—a point raised in the recent book, *Evaluation of Action Research*, by Eileen Piggot-Irvine and Brendan Bartlett.

When defining the parameters of reflection and critical reflection, it is important to distinguish each from 'reflexivity', which is a process used to make overt an action researcher's internal dialogue about attitudes, values, beliefs, decisions and thoughts on the research. Reflexivity, though clearly distinctive, most essentially involves both reflection and critical reflection.

Approaches and Models of Critical Reflection

There are many approaches and models that can be used to critically reflect in order to learn from experience. The concept of reflection, in fact, has grown in tandem with interest in experiential learning, proposed by David Kolb in the 1980s. At a basic level, models of reflection exist to provide guidance to help look back over events that have happened and to turn them into learning experiences. Important models include those of 'double-loop learning' and reflection generally from Chris Argyris and Donald Schön in the 1970s and 1980s, later from the likes of Graham Gibbs and Chris Johns and more recently from Gary Rolfe and colleagues.

In Argyris and Schön's model, single-loop learning occurs when an action or strategy is changed without reflection on the foundation beliefs or values. In critical reflection, the goal is double-loop learning, where the latter examination of beliefs and values is seen as a prerequisite for substantive transformation in practice.

Schön's model of reflection describes 'reflection *in* action' as the ability to think immediately whilst engaged *in* action—a challenging level of reflection, because it requires us to respond appropriately and to have the capacity to change actions mid-performance. Reflection *on* action happens post-action and is much easier, though there is no question of its importance because reflection *on* action is intimately linked to the ability to critically reflect. There has been some debate about this model, essentially contesting that Schön did not clarify the reflective process or what happens in situations of tight decision-making time frames when the scope for reflection is limited. There is also assertion that he did not expand upon the psychological realities of reflection in action.

Kolb's model identifies reflection linked to experiential learning and the transformation of information into knowledge. Knowledge is seen to be sourced from observations, questioning and reflection on concrete experience or action. From this, there are generalizations or the formulation of abstract concepts which have implications that are tested in new situations. New concrete experiences then occur with further

cycles of learning. The goals of experiential learning are therefore understanding and improvement. Gibb's model extends beyond experience to an expectation of reflection at an emotional level on how participants felt in the experience, followed by development of an action plan for further improved action.

Johns' model, on the other hand, includes collegial sharing of guided reflections with five 'patterns of knowing' that incorporate analysis of the aesthetic, personal, ethical, empirical and reflexive elements experienced. The collegial sharing element of Johns' model resonates with the emphasis placed on collaboration and dialogue in action research by Piggot-Irvine and Bartlett. Such sharing allows a discursive, argumentative and self-critical culture for the public testing of assumptions and reflections; that is, it helps avoid the self-limiting reflection that Schön reminds us can be a trap. Critical reflection necessitates a strong discursive culture which is argumentative yet open and self-critical.

The model proposed by Rolfe and team involves just three questions: What? So what? And now what? These questions create a description, then scrutiny of the situation, followed by the construction of knowledge learnt and finally consequences for improvement.

Engaging in Critical Reflection

'How' to critically reflect is an important consideration that could be prefaced by the question 'Can it be learnt?' There is some agreement to suggest that it can. Brookfield, for example, has identified four learning phases: assumption analysis, contextual awareness, imaginative speculation and reflective scepticism. The first two of these phases overlap considerably with Michael Reynolds' speculation in the 1990s of four components or characteristics of learning to be critically reflective: (1) questioning assumptions (taken-for-granted beliefs and values that are often unquestioned elements of 'common sense'); (2) adopting a focus that is social rather than individual, in other words, having a social constructionist perspective where individuals' reflections are located within a community reflecting values, beliefs and norms; (3) paying attention to the analysis of power relations, that is, power and knowledge interplay and influence position in hierarchies of power and privilege on an individual's perspective, and (4) being concerned with emancipation—creation of a just society through reasoning about both historical and contextual perspectives.

Methods and Tools for Reflection and Critical Reflection

An extension of how critical reflection can be learnt is the employment of learning tools for engagement and

development. The list of tools is extensive but might include the following:

1. Keeping a journal/diary
2. Focus group technique
3. Interviewing and collaborative dialogue
4. Concept mapping and model building
5. Action Learning groups
6. Viewing experiences objectively through tools such as Repertory Grid Technique, Top Level Structuring, Nominal Group Technique or Plus Minus Interesting
7. Autobiographical storytelling (see Brookfield's work)
8. Sketching
9. Critical incident analysis

Chapter 2 in *Evaluation of Action Research* by Piggot-Irvine and Bartlett details the application, advantages and disadvantages of the first six sets of tools on the above list. Each of the tools is insufficient on its own, however. There are fundamental key questions that are needed as a basis for critical reflection with all of these tools. Brookfield has provided questions that have often acted as a guide for reflection, but two sets are offered next that are less well known. The first (Table 1) outlines questions for reflecting on academic teaching constructed by Ksenija Napan, which she says are linked to context, choices, flow, trust, relevance, integration and integrity.

The second set of reflective questions is more in the nature of 'prompts' that were developed by Piggot-Irvine for critically reflecting on the practice of action research. These ideas are summarized in Table 2, using William Glasser's categorization for subheadings.

There are limitations associated with critical reflection. It requires space, including uninterrupted time for data collecting and analysis, dialogue and debate. A further limitation lies in the measurement of the quality and outcomes of critical reflection, although assessing levels of reflection has been attempted by several authors, including Bud Wellington. The latter author defined the levels as the five orientations of immediate, technical, deliberative, dialectic and transpersonal.

Finally, critical reflection also has significant advantages, including its potential to enhance professional practice, to structure and reframe thinking and actions and to challenge ethics from a personal through to the societal level. As well as the previously noted requirement for 'space', it can also provide space for future work through the resolution of unresolved issues and relationships and the improvement of systems and processes.

<i>Questions Related to Appreciating the Context</i>	<i>Questions Related to Choices</i>
<p>Is my class a safe place; how do I know that?</p> <p>Which conscious activities do I undertake to make it safe?</p> <p>What do students do to co-create safety in the classroom?</p> <p>How do I convey my passion and interest for my subject?</p> <p>Do I know my student's names? Can I pronounce them?</p> <p>Am I interested in them?</p> <p>What are my most common criticisms about my students?</p> <p>What are their strengths?</p> <p>Which qualities characterize interactions?</p> <p>How is my course enjoyable?</p> <p>Do the students appear to be enjoying learning?</p> <p>What do I think they like the most about my class?</p> <p>What is interesting about it? How is it special?</p> <p>What do students remember the most at the end of the class?</p> <p>Which processes contribute to creating a learning community?</p> <p>How many students do their best? How come?</p> <p>What structures are essential for my course to be effective?</p> <p>What is negotiable about my course?</p> <p>How do students contribute to make it their own?</p> <p>Is my course challenging enough? Do my students appear to be bored?</p> <p>Would I like to be a student in my class? Why or why not?</p>	<p>What academic requirements are non-negotiable?</p> <p>What academic requirements, proposed by me and my academic integrity, are non-negotiable?</p> <p>How is flexibility manifested in my course?</p> <p>What choices do I make to make the course different each year?</p> <p>What do I believe about choices in academic work?</p> <p>What choices do students have in terms of process, content and assessment in my course?</p> <p>Which part of the course could be experimented with in order to create more choices?</p> <p>How important are choices for the students' future profession?</p>
<i>Questions Related to Flow</i>	<i>Questions Related to Trust</i>
<p>Have I ever noticed the flow in my classroom?</p> <p>What happened? Did anybody else notice it?</p> <p>How do I manage and encourage curiosity?</p> <p>What brainstorm activities do I enjoy?</p> <p>What activities do my students enjoy the most?</p> <p>What is the most interesting part of the subject I teach?</p> <p>What excites me?</p> <p>When am I most creative?</p> <p>How do I express my creativity?</p> <p>How do students express their creativity in classroom discussions, assignments and presentations?</p>	<p>How is trust manifested in my class?</p> <p>Does the content of my course require a level of trust between students themselves and between students and lecturers?</p> <p>How can trust be ignored in academic environments?</p> <p>How can trust between students be encouraged?</p> <p>Is there an 'us and them' culture between students and teachers? How does it manifest?</p> <p>Are students treated as colleagues? Do they need to do something to deserve this status?</p> <p>How is respect manifested within my department?</p> <p>How do I do it? How I see my colleagues doing it?</p> <p>Do I notice when students show trust?</p>

Table 1 Napan's Questions for Reflecting on Academic Teaching Practice

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

<i>Questions Related to Relevance</i>	<i>Questions Related to Integration and Integrity</i>
How will learnings from this course shape my students' future practice?	How do I see education having a transformational potential?
How is the content of my course related to what students do or plan to do?	How do I act with integrity, and how do I teach my students to do so? Is integrity teachable?
How much of my own and my students' practice is integrated in the course?	Is the course I teach compatible with my personal beliefs?
How often do practitioners contribute to my course?	Are beliefs something people should talk about?
How is mutual learning promoted?	How do personal beliefs influence professional practice?
What are my students' special skills and abilities, and how do they manifest them?	With whom can I talk when having an ethical dilemma?
How are they nurtured?	How are the values, skills, knowledge and beliefs integrated?
Are students aware of the relevance of this course?	How can I manage my power and not impose my beliefs on students?

SOURCE: Ksenija Napan. Adapted and reprinted with permission.

<i>Success/Worth</i>	<i>Quality Process</i>
Usefulness to team, organization, other stakeholders	Members had enhanced understanding of action research
Produced tangible results	Logical process followed that included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problem identification, • planning, • action and • evaluation
Made significant contribution to organization—short and long term	Associated with practical, concrete, action
Recipients of change provided positive feedback on impact	Balanced action and learning
Created change/transformation (individual, group, organization or beyond) in both insights and practice	Systematic recording of reflections throughout
Actions generated were timely and useful	Reflections of team supported by multiple data sources (triangulated)
Advanced knowledge and learning team and organization	Reflections and actions linked
Led to reflection and questioning of insights in and on action	Findings shared with those who provided the data
Produced sustainable learnings	Flexibility and responsiveness evident
Group members saw themselves as learners	Project was not too demanding or time-consuming
Outcomes publicly reported for critique by peers	
Reported accounts of how things had changed (or not), what had been confirmed or ignored and what had been made problematic	

Table 2 Prompts for Reflecting Upon Action Research Practice

Resulted in dissemination/presentation of learnings to stakeholders

Reporting of learnings made explicit the process, method and assumptions associated with the project

Improvements embedded in work practice

Fun/Enjoyment

Team members shared goals

Energy and excitement evident in team

Willingness to share knowledge, information and skills for problem-solving shown

Team had an appropriate mix of participants

Structure of the project encouraged creativity and innovation

Team overcame barriers if they arose

Team avoided competitive processes

Freedom/Choice

Team members free to select topics, aspects of project

Appropriate choices of topic available

Structure of project allowed for exploration of alternative solutions

Team developed its own ability to find solutions

Members willing to take risks and be innovative

Power sharing rather than hierarchical control exhibited

Willingness to suspend power and control in the group

Equity in participation of members

Members tackled hard questions and were unafraid to move out of comfort zone

Belonging/Respect

Non-defensive accepting of critique, challenge, feedback and new ideas

Openness and honesty with self and others evident

Dialogue engaged in

Alliances and networks formed and sustained

Team united by shared goals/visions for improvement

Team gradually shared a common language, culture

Members developed mutual respect, appreciated diversity

Members committed to the project and each other

Members shared responsibility for project outcomes as well as the process of learning and team building

Members committed to the use of interpersonal skills that supported the above

See also collaborative action research; cycles of action and reflection; double-loop learning; reflective practice; rigour

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CRITICAL THEORY

See Frankfurt School

CRITICAL UTOPIAN ACTION RESEARCH

The term *Critical Utopian Action Research* (CUAR) refers to a tradition within the Scandinavian action research milieu inspired by critical theory, with an emphasis on Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. In such a perspective, the intellectuals or the critical researchers are a kind of advocate for a critique of social structures which they find reified and instru-

mentalized in a way that leaves no room for humans to move, develop or change. In this tradition, the researchers' role is to outline and create awareness of the problems of the world, but they have no interactive role to play in actually bringing about change. CUAR is different. Here, the critical role of the researcher is to be active in the world by creating proposals for new democratic structures in society as a result of their research and findings.

Within the CUAR tradition, action researchers have special tasks in creating critical awareness about the necessity of change and pointing towards possibilities of democratic knowledge creation. The researchers are the facilitators and creators of arenas within which utopian ideas and new societal developments will emerge. While the CUAR tradition's origins lie in the area of organizational development, it has since developed within a broad palette of themes from organizational development to food production, marginalization from the labour market, nature management and eldercare. This entry discusses the history and characteristics of CUAR, as well as the core concepts and theoretical background of this tradition. Finally, an example connected to the inception of the CUAR will be provided.

Development of CUAR in Theory and Practice

There are four sources of inspiration for CUAR: (1) critical theory, with the idea of turning theory upside down in the sense that theory understood as critical thinking should express an understanding of what is in the light of what should be; (2) the work of Kurt Lewin on democracy and participative change; (3) socio-technical action research and the work with organization and social development and (4) future research and the underlining of social imagination and utopian-oriented ideas. From these four sources, Kurt Aagaard Nielsen, Birger Steen Nielsen and Peter Olsén developed the theoretical and practical framework of CUAR.

The CUAR tradition is characterized by its practical interpretation of critical theory. Critical theory represents an intellectual practice working with analyses of modern society within the framework of philosophy, social science and culture. The classical critical theorists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer were occupied with the relation between science and democracy and argued that if science is not democratic in its way of investigating the world, it will only confirm an undemocratic reality. Their errand was critical. If science only deals with observational facts, as positivism suggests, and science at

the same time becomes an important or *the* important player in development and planning, then humanism and democratic values will become excluded as essential dynamics because these kinds of values are not observational facts. A consequence of this is that society will end up being based upon an authoritarian and technocratic logic of development. These points are shared by Lewin, but unlike Adorno and Horkheimer, he believed that social science was able to play a positive, reformist role without ending up being integrated into the existing alienated society. For CUAR, this step towards a practically oriented science or research is an important part of the inspiration gained from Lewin. Implied in this is the argument that it is not only for scientific reasons that researchers working together with participants should be involved in the research field but also because there is a normative perspective holding that with the more active role of the researcher, they will be able to influence culture and society in a different way from other research disciplines holding a more passive role of the researcher. It is a way of thinking that when more participatory learning and change processes are included in the way research is conducted, it will influence the results and make society more democratic.

Lewin's methodology is institutionalized in the socio-technical tradition of action research. This tradition is characterized as an experimental practice in which researchers and practitioners co-operate around the development of organizational change and problem-solving. But the socio-technical tradition struggled with holding on to the changes and the participatory form within the organization, because the employers balked at institutionalizing a practice involving employees' participation to such a strong degree within the organization.

In the CUAR tradition, the experiences from the socio-technical tradition strengthened the notion of workers and researchers co-operating in practical projects. The idea in the CUAR tradition was that experiments and the development of new ideas should take place in a protected environment at the start, and an important point was that the experiment should hold an element of reversibility. In this way, two things were drawn from the socio-technical tradition: (1) the role of the researcher as an interactive participant and (2) the experimental part of being in the project with the participants.

The last and most significant inspiration for the CUAR tradition is from future research. Here, the tradition leans on the German future research philosopher Robert Jungk, who was occupied with inventing tools and arenas for democratic change. From his work, the CUAR tradition strengthened the ideas

taken from critical theory of what should be with practical and interactive methods to create and develop new and utopian drafts for a better future. Jungk was inspired by the same theoretical heritage as the founders of CUAR, and in that light, the fusion was natural. But there is also one specific point that the connection to Jungk supplies; that is the focus on the necessity of a utopian horizon to overcome the reified structures of society. The point of departure which is represented by Jungk's perspective, and also with the CUAR researchers, is the understanding that the future is being colonized by a small group of people. In this understanding, the future is shaped by a small elite, which for the majority of citizens results in an experience of powerlessness. With the utopian perspective and the democratic methods, Jungk believed it was possible to prevent us from going blindly into the future.

It is from these four sources that CUAR takes its theoretical inspiration and develops a new theoretical framework in which critique, utopian thinking and everyday knowledge meld with the knowledge and critical analysis of society by the researchers involved.

Central Aspects of Practice

There are three important areas which receive particular attention within the CUAR tradition, namely, (1) free space, (2) Future-Creating Workshops and (3) the role of the researcher.

For a CUAR-inspired project, one of the main features is the creation of arenas called *free spaces* in which dialogues and activities can evolve around imagination and dreams in an easier way than in the structure of everyday life. The free spaces are laboratories for social learning and imagination. Without them, the power of reality, as Herbert Marcuse puts it, will dominate even in the first step of a development process. The thinking behind the concept of free spaces came from Lewin and the German critical sociologist Oskar Negt. From Lewin came the idea of creating experiments in laboratories protected from reality for just a short time. Also, the concept of life space came from Lewin, which is founded in Lewin's focus on the necessity of freedom in the cultural and social formation processes. If the world is to be able to move in radical new ways, we need to lift the dialogues and activities out of reality for a short period of time. This is the reason why CUAR can be considered as a reformist action research tradition, because the purpose of the work within the projects is to reform reality. This is the heritage from Negt, whose work provides the inspiration for the CUAR tradition about social learning and, to use Negt's terms, social imagination and exemplary

learning. Thereby, the free space is also connected with imaginative processes towards practical social change and to the theory of social development, and in this sense, Negt is the bridge between critical theory and action research.

The CUAR tradition's palette of methods is wide, but the most significant is the Future-Creating Workshop. This type of workshop was invented by Jungk. Jungk was critical about societal future planning being dominated by experts, or what he called an expert culture. The invention of the Future-Creating Workshop was a reaction to and a break with this culture and an orientation towards favouring everyday knowledge and a less authoritarian and instrumental world. The Future-Creating Workshop has three phases: (1) a critique phase, where participants express their concerns about the existing system through a brainstorming session; (2) the utopia phase, in which participants express their dreams through a second brainstorming session followed by periods of group work where utopian ideas are developed by focusing specifically on dreams and wishes and putting a pause on reality; and (3) the realization phase, which is a twofold process in which the utopia groups first continue to develop the utopian ideas and then the work towards the realization of the different plans begins.

The third important feature is the focus on the role of the researcher. For the CUAR tradition, the epistemological foundation is built not only on the ideas of the hermeneutic tradition but also on the thought of the Norwegian philosopher Hans Skjervheim. In his work, he focuses on the premise of being human. His point is that being human includes being engaged in the world and the social field. Skjervheim argues that one cannot choose commitment; being in the world means being part of the world and thereby committed. This is an important point for the CUAR tradition and all action research. For Skjervheim, the point was also that dialogues are only possible when the interpreter and the interpreted individuals share some kind of practical case or interest. In this dialogue, both the researcher and the participant are part of the same process, hence the researcher cannot take the part of a bystander but must be reflexive about his or her normative engagement.

Example: Industry and Happiness—A Social Experiment

From 1989 to 1996, the project 'Industry and Happiness' was conducted by Kurt Aagaard Nielsen, Birger Steen Nielsen and Peter Olsén. It was from this project that the theoretical framework of CUAR took form. The project was designed as a social experiment, and the purpose of the project was to develop democratic

industrial production different from normal enterprise strategies and to systematically work with utopian perspectives from the actors involved. Different kinds of workshops were used, but the Future-Creating Workshop was the most significant. The main participants were a group of workers from the fishing industry and the researchers. Together they set out to develop the future of the fishing industry in a more humane and democratic way. By the end of the project, one of the utopian ideas from the Future-Creating Workshop, the so-called Factory of Wishes, became the origin of a concrete experiment of a new fishing factory in the city of Esbjerg. The factory existed for 1 year, and in that period of time, the workers and the researchers experimented with new organizational forms within the planning of work, with new technologies for filleting fish and new products for industrial production. The experiment was focused on mixing work and everyday life experiences. Several books and articles have addressed different aspects of the experiment, and the project has been the inspiration for many researchers from the CUAR tradition. On a practical level, the project has contributed to a revival of fresh fish as products in the supermarkets' refrigerated counters.

The critical utopian tradition contributes to the research tradition of action research by bringing forward the thinking that the utopian perspective has to evolve from a critical analysis—not just a scientific analysis but an analysis coming from the participants themselves, from their experiences and knowledge of everyday life.

Ditte Tofteng and Mia Husted

See also Frankfurt School; Lewin, Kurt; Nielsen, Kurt Aagaard; Search Conference

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CYCLES OF ACTION AND REFLECTION

Why are cycles of action and reflection important in action research? How are the cycles embodied in models of action research? Are cycles real or notional? Do cycles necessarily follow from each other? Are cycles always forward moving? How do cycles of inquiry relate to documentation of the investigation?

A Starting Definition

Action research is a term used to describe a family of related investigative approaches that integrate theory and action, with the goal of addressing important organizational, community and social issues together with those who experience them. Many researchers consider this approach to investigation to have been instigated by the theorist and social psychologist Kurt Lewin.

Action research is one of many investigative approaches developed in response to what were perceived to be problems with scientific method—the once dominant investigative approach. Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln have summarized these problems in their argument for naturalistic inquiry over the rationalistic model of inquiry. They address issues of truth, reality, the relationship between the inquirer and those under inquiry, causal relationship within the inquiry and the values that underpin the inquiry process, and they particularly focus on the nature of research when it involves people. Action research and other alternative forms of investigation evolved from the articulation of a belief system that embraced multiple truths and saw knowledge as arising from sources such as practice and experience. These discussions about what constitutes appropriate research with people have prompted some researchers to describe their investigative approach by using the term *inquiry* rather than research to emphasize the relationship between their method and alternative paradigms.

There are varying definitions for action inquiry. These represent both the different pathways by which investigators have come to this approach and the different ways in which aspects of this approach are valued. These different approaches are explored in some of the models that follow. Given that action inquiry often aligns with an ontological belief in multiple truths, it fits with the idea that there are also multiple definitions for this approach. While there may be a multiplicity of definitions, they are all related in a common approach. This approach involves iterations or cycles of problem identification, action planning, implementation, evaluation and reflection.

This section focuses on these types of iteration or cycles of action and inquiry.

Models Representing Action Research

Kurt Lewin proposed a cycle of steps in his articulation of action inquiry:

1. Identify a general or initial idea.
2. Find out the facts about that idea (reconnaissance).
3. Plan and take a first step of action.
4. Evaluate the impact of the first step.
5. Amend the plan, and lead into a second and subsequent set of steps.

This general plan of a process of investigation has been adopted into models which represent it cyclically by people like Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart (see Figure 1), who described the iteration as cycles of planning, acting and observing and reflecting. They emphasized the movement towards a change in the situation about which the investigator is reflecting and acting and how one cycle informs its successive cycles.

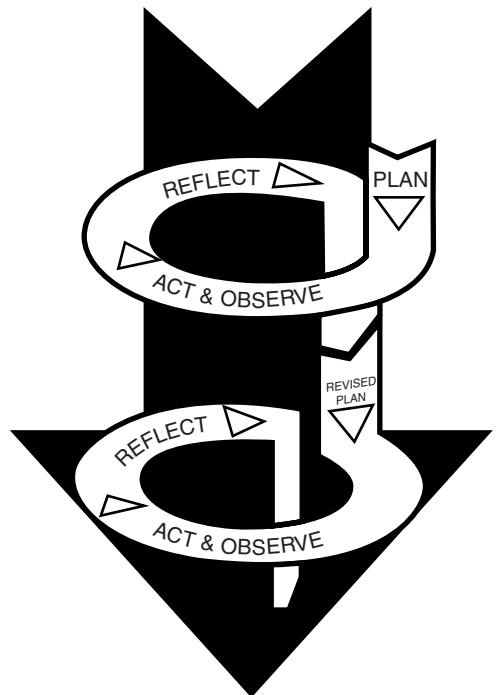


Figure 1 Kemmis and McTaggart Model

SOURCE: Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1981). *The action research planner*. Geelong, Victoria, Australia: Deakin University. Reprinted with permission.

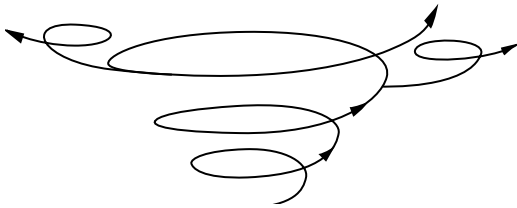


Figure 2 McNiff Model

SOURCE: McNiff, J., Lomax, P., & Whitehead, J. (1996). *You and your action research project*. London, England: Routledge. Reprinted with permission.

Jean McNiff similarly described a cycle (see Figure 2) as beginning with identifying an area of practice to be investigated, then imagining a solution, implementing the solution, evaluating the solution and changing practice in the light of the evaluation. She highlighted the ways in which iterations can spin off from the main investigation, suggesting that the outcome of the investigation may not be its original focus. Sometimes the study is driven by a tangential issue that often becomes the main study.

Richard Bawden proposed a cycle or iteration (see Figure 3) between the actual event and the mapping of the event. In his model, the investigators select the

events or things they propose to observe. They observe them from a particular perspective—their window of the world—and assimilate those observations into a mental pattern to make sense of the events and things in their own mind. Bawden calls this a map. This mapping process can also take into account the very window by which events and things are observed and raises awareness to critical reflection as well as reflection.

Relationship of Action Research Models to Learning Models

Bawden’s model emphasises the close relationship between action inquiry and learning models, particularly those which emphasize experiential learning. Perhaps the most recognizable of these learning models is the experiential learning model advocated by David Kolb, in which he notes the importance of reflection in the cycle, to make explicit the learning. These ideas followed the philosophical footsteps of the great philosophers, particularly those advocating reflective practice.

David Kolb describes a learning process that works through a cycle of concrete experience followed by reflection, then by the development of abstract concepts, leading into testing the new experience.

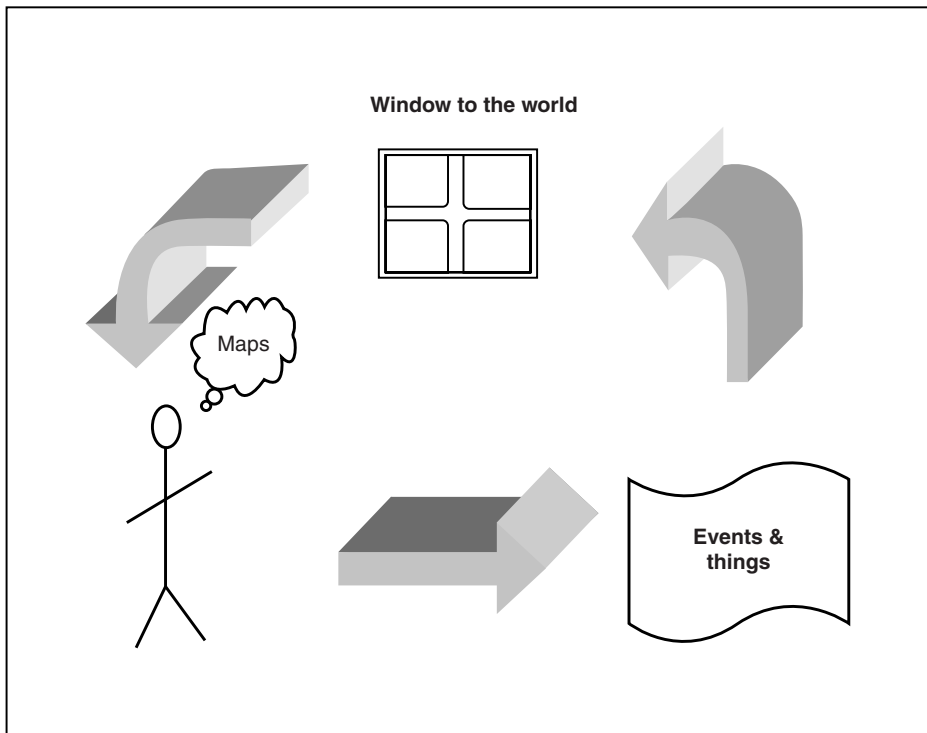


Figure 3 Bawden Model

SOURCE: Bawden, R. (1991). Towards action research systems. In O. Zuber-Skerrit (Ed.), *Action research for change and development* (pp. 10–35). Brisbane, Queensland, Australia: Griffith University. Adapted with permission.

Chris Argyris and Donald Schön proposed a similar model of learning, in which the person learns from his or her experience through a process of reflection. They described this as single-loop learning. The advance on this type of learning was described as double-loop learning and incorporated critical reflection, or reflection on some of the assumptions being made in the process of making sense of experience. This parallels Bawden's notion of the investigator taking into account the window by which he or she makes sense of events and things.

Reconnaissance: A Common First Cycle

The term *reconnaissance* was used by Lewin as one of the initial steps in fact finding about a situation being investigated. Reconnaissance continues to be mentioned in several of the contemporary models of action research, notably those processes of action inquiry advocated by Jean McNiff, Jack Whitehead and Phil Lomax. They described reconnaissance as the point in the investigative process at which the investigators clarify where they are starting from in their investigation. Paul Dillon advanced this notion of reconnaissance by suggesting that in an inquiry there is self-reconnaissance, examining what the investigator brings to the investigation, as well as situational reconnaissance, examining what the literature has to say about the specific situation under investigation.

Provenance: An Uncommon First Cycle

Part of reconnaissance can involve understanding where a particular practice or experience has come from. Most practices themselves have a provenance that explores the debates and revolutions that have informed the way in which that practice is undertaken.

Action inquiry itself is a good example of a practice having a disputed and debated provenance, including the dominance of scientific method and the challenge to this dominance through the paradigm wars, and the subsequent development of the range of approaches under the umbrella of action inquiry that have already been discussed. Like reconnaissance, provenance can be both situational and personal, the personal provenance recognizing the experiences that the investigator brings about his or her own knowledge of the practice under investigation.

The Oscillation Between Action and Theory

With each cycle of action leading into reflection, there is an element of theorizing which informs the choices about subsequent cycles. As the investigators makes sense of the action or experience they are observing, they begin to theorize about how that event might be

better explained. In many ways, this is how theory is developed, through iterative tweaking, continually making better sense of the real-world situation.

A Word About Models and Problematising Action Inquiry

In laying out these models, it is important to emphasize that models are not themselves truth. They are intended to be simplifications of otherwise complex concepts and practices. The value of action inquiry is the way in which the iterations can play out to respond to the complexity of everyday life.

Despite the sense of linearity of the iterations, cycles do not necessarily follow each other. McNiff indicated this phenomenon when she suggested that what might start off as a side cycle could in the end become the central focus in an investigation. This phenomenon is not restricted to action inquiry. In any investigation, what is seen as the focus of a situation at the outset may well be overshadowed by a more relevant finding or direction which later emerges in the investigation. This element of uncertainty, an unknown and unpredictable outcome, is what makes the investigation worthwhile.

Action inquiry is not always forward moving. An investigator can create a wealth of knowledge by also looking backward and identifying the provenance of a situation. This sense of reconnaissance of a situation that precedes the actual beginning of action research can build the understanding and the ways of understanding of the situation. The value of backward cycles of inquiry, exploring how a situation came to be, can also provide valuable insight into how a situation can be addressed in the current situation.

The notion of a cycle is a convenient way to emphasize the connectedness between moments of making sense of a situation. Each new understanding of a given situation helps to reframe the way in which that situation is both understood and addressed. What one person calls a cycle could by another be called a series of cycles.

Models provide a guide to investigative action, but just adherence to the steps identified in a model does not necessarily produce rigorous action inquiry. Kemmis and McTaggart drew on terms initiated by Jürgen Habermas to construct a hierarchy of action inquiry in the terms:

- Technical action inquiry
- Practical action inquiry
- Emancipatory action inquiry

This hierarchy suggests that investigations which simply followed the technical requirements of action inquiry, such as iterations, were deemed 'technical' action research. This sort of process failed to take into

account the paradigm underpinning the investigation that recognized the ways in which knowledge is constructed and the truth about that knowledge is valued. A similar label of technical action inquiry could be applied to a suggestion that there are a formulaic number of cycles of inquiry.

In contrast, practical action inquiry describes the process that not only follows the model of iterations but at the same time introduces elements of rigour to the process of investigation, continually seeking to know more about the topic or issue being investigated, such that there is an improvement in the situation. This rigour also involves transparency such that a reader can follow the process used by the inquirer.

In the same way, emancipatory action inquiry undertakes this growth in knowledge about the situation such that the underpinning values and beliefs about the situation, which actually inform the way in which the situation is viewed, become evident. The improvement in the situation may thus involve a completely different way of describing the initial situation and the factors that have an impact on the understanding of that situation.

The Cycles: A Scaffold for Documentation

Research gains authenticity through publication, and the device of cycles of inquiry can effectively scaffold the way in which the inquiry is described and published. Investigators can write about the ways in which a situation existed and was reviewed and how their interventions led to an improvement in the situation, which in turn feeds into a subsequent cycle of inquiry. They can also write about the reconnaissance of the situation to elaborate on the situation at the initiation of the inquiry. These descriptions of the inquiry process provide a transparency about the ways in which the investigators had proceeded, which enables a reader to understand, rather than replicate, the investigation. Investigators can document not only the findings from the investigation but also the processes for each cycle and the ways in which one cycle has informed subsequent cycles.

There is, however, a dilemma with this form of reporting, in that the effort to show the richness of each cycle and the ways in which the cycles collaborate can also be labelled by a reader as repetitive.

In Geof Hill's action inquiry study, which involved nine cycles of action research, he began with a simple cycle of observation and reflection. By the third cycle of inquiry, as a result of his reflection and mapping of the events, the framework for reflecting had identified three different fronts which he was investigating:

1. The theory underpinning his specific practice
2. The organizational theory in which his practice could be understood—its provenance

3. The beginnings of naming and classifying the ways in which he facilitated his practice

Writing to these three fronts made the process of documenting a cycle of inquiry more complicated, but it also conveyed the complexity of the practice and the complexity of the ways in which he was investigating that practice.

In providing a document to illuminate the process of investigation, the investigator is not suggesting that another investigator would follow the same line of investigation but is trying to make explicit the ways in which understanding of the situation changed as a result of continual observation and framing.

Documentation Which Illuminates the Problematic Nature of Research

Research practice is rarely straightforward; however, many research reports often read as if the investigation has followed a prescribed plan without any problems. Writing about research rarely reports the ways in which the investigator solved real research problems, and thus it perpetuates the misconception that the research process was unproblematic.

Bridget Somekh explores this problematic nature as she describes how action inquiry takes place in the workplace with no attempt to control the situation. This is a contrast to other investigative approaches which may attempt to control certain factors within a situation. Not controlling adds to the complexity and also to the richness of the description of the situation. This is seen as one of the features of rigorous action inquiry, that it be transparent, not so that it can be repeated but so that it is evident how each of the iterations has enabled the investigator to better understand and potentially change the situation.

The value of cycles of inquiry is that this complexity and richness can be articulated and an inquirer can demonstrate how problems were solved in the process of the inquiry.

Geof Hill

See also collaborative action research; critical reflection; reflective practice

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D

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis refers to the processes associated with surfacing meaning and understanding from the various data sets that may be collected during the action research project as a basis for further action and theory building. The embedded nature of action research in organizational and social settings has two consequences for data analysis in action research: (1) it is difficult to divorce data collection from data analysis and (2) researchers focus their data analysis on generating plans for action and other interventions and thus there is a paucity of consideration of the approaches to data analysis that lead to theory making. Accordingly, action researchers have adapted other qualitative data analysis approaches, such as thematic, narrative and discourse analysis, and there is a strong tradition of the use of Grounded Theory analysis to provide formalism and rigour. In addition, there is increasing interest in collaborative and participatory data analysis as a part of Participatory Action Research projects.

This entry provides insights into the data analysis process in action research. It commences with an overview of the nature of the data sets and iterative data analysis in action research. The entry then discusses the data analysis processes in greater detail, focusing first on mining the data, next on further interrogation and interpretation of the data and finally on telling the story and articulating the contribution to knowledge and theory.

The Nature of Data and Data Analysis in Action Research

Action research is a research approach typically applied in an organizational, educational or community setting whose central characteristic is that the outcomes of the research process are twofold, an action (e.g. a completed project or organizational change) and new knowledge or theory. Action research can be viewed as the ultimate

case study approach due to its systematic framework for gathering data and insights into an organization or a community and its processes and behaviour. Core to action research is a cyclical process, which typically embraces two layers of cycles. The primary cycle involves constructing what the issues are, planning action, taking action and evaluating action. Overlaid onto each stage of this cycle is the secondary, reflection-based cycle of taking action, experiencing, understanding and judging. This reflective cycle promotes inquiry into the four steps of the primary action research process and thereby generates learning about learning, or meta-learning.

Due to the cyclical nature of action research and the embedding of reflection as a key stage in the action research cycle, data analysis is in one sense integral to and ongoing throughout the action research process. Nevertheless, as the project draws to a close, there is a phase during which there is an enhanced focus on data analysis. In this phase, the researcher seeks to take an overview, make sense and generate understanding and insights from the base of evidence and reflection that has emerged during the action research project, with a view to contributing to knowledge or theory. This can be viewed as the summative phase of data analysis in action research, whereas the analysis in earlier cycles might be seen as formative. Typically, the summative phase of data analysis is inextricably linked to the writing up of a thesis or a report, with the insights and contributions to knowledge and theory emerging and cohering as the writing process progresses. The researcher works with two interleaved processes, associated with organizing and analyzing the data sets and writing up a thesis, report or other account. Both of these processes can be seen in terms of the secondary action research cycle and its four processes of taking action, experiencing, understanding and judging. Data analysis in this context is likely to draw on a range of sources and records and to be largely qualitative in nature.

Often, action research is ongoing through several months or years. During the entire period of action

research, the researcher gathers data through a range of different interventions and methods, including, variously, participation, observation, recordkeeping, notetaking, surveying and profiling, interviewing, running focus groups, photographing and videoing and journaling. In addition, due to the centrality of reflection to action research, journal keeping is regarded as particularly important. The journal, which is a record of observations, experiences and reflections on events, behaviours, relationships, attitudes, emotions, systems, processes and assumptions, is an additional data set that can be analyzed. For example, a retrospective comparison of journal entries is useful in identifying patterns and trends and may assist the researcher in anticipating responses, events and experiences.

In summary, then, surfacing new knowledge or theory from an action research process involves drawing on a rich collection of evidence, presented in different formats, to produce a coherent account. As with all qualitative research, there is no one right way to conduct data analysis—the only thing that is certain is that the process starts with a diverse set of data and concludes with a coherent account or narrative. In many cases, the process is iterative, and the data is interrogated in different ways, as discussed in the next sections. This data analysis journey has two key purposes: (1) to develop a story for further action or to acknowledge and sometimes perpetuate participation and engagement and (2) to build theory for publication in academic journals. Different audiences are associated with these two purposes that may prioritize different understandings and meanings, sometimes requiring different approaches to data analysis.

Mining the Data

The first stage of summative data analysis is concerned with developing a deep acquaintance with and an understanding of what might well be a large data set and then conducting appropriate data analysis that fully and accurately summarizes and represents the data that has been collected. Ultimately, any final account of the research will often draw on evidence from different events, people and data sets derived from different data-gathering methods, but the first stage is concerned with analyzing each data set separately.

Typically, the majority of data sets that need to be analyzed in action research are qualitative, and the researcher embarks on some process of sense making, which may embrace both ‘multiple ways of knowing’ and collaborative or participatory data analysis, where community members or stakeholders are actively involved in the data analysis process. Whilst some recent studies have elaborated on the process associated with participatory data analysis, traditionally there has been

little discussion of the data analysis approach adopted by action researchers to surface assumptions, test those assumptions and generate theory. Huxham, however, does offer a simple, stepwise model for action research data analysis, which is essentially based on using thematic analysis in a collaborative manner to create a conceptual framework and then revising and refining the conceptual framework in the light of other studies and comments from the community or other collaborators. Thematic analysis in general is a good approach for analyzing qualitative data, such as meeting minutes or interview transcripts. Typically, the researcher first seeks to identify key themes and associated sub-themes by deep immersion in the data. Once these themes and sub-themes have been identified, codes can be generated for each of the themes and sub-themes, which in turn are applied to the text under analysis to mark the occurrence of specific themes in different places in the data set (e.g. in different interview transcripts). Qualitative software packages, such as NVivo, may be used to assist in the organization and coding of the data set. The themes and the associated insights that can be surfaced from the data form the basis for a deep understanding of the focus of the research and a theoretical framework that assists in understanding both this situation and possibly comparable situations.

According to Dick, action research theorizing is typically abductive in nature, in that something unexpected is observed and, on this basis, a plausible hypothesis is developed to explain the observation. This hypothesis is the basis for the next cycle of research, which tests the hypothesis. This approach has a strong inductive flavour, where theory is derived from the situation and the data set rather than being predetermined or informed by prior research or theory. The significance of induction in action research and the limited guidance on data analysis in action research have led many researchers to make use of the more structured and formalized Grounded Theory approaches to data analysis. Grounded Theory, for example, has a process for moving from substantive theory (relating to a specific situation) to more general formal theory that has resonance in a variety of different contexts. Grounded Theory data analysis is a specialized form of thematic analysis. Strauss and Corbin suggest that the analysis starts by coding data line by line. Next, significant codes are raised to themes or analytic categories to support the following comparison processes: (1) ‘open coding’—the preliminary process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data; (2) axial coding—putting data back together again in new ways by making connections between categories and (3) selective coding—selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories and filling in categories that need further refinement and development.

Some action researchers also make use of other approaches to exploring meaning and developing theory from qualitative data, such as discourse analysis and narrative analysis. Narrative analysis and discourse analysis focus on the meaning that can be extracted by analyzing the language that is used in, for instance, documents or interviews. Narrative analysis examines the way in which, for example, stories are told during an interview, examining the plot, structure and genre. Discourse analysis examines the role of language in relation to the creation, maintenance and destruction of social bonds. Participatory data analysis research requires approaches that can involve people other than the researchers and which are often group based. A variety of different facilitated techniques have been used in this context, including Skype conversations, group-based thematic analysis, cognitive mapping and various other visualizations.

Finally, it is important to remember that action research projects may involve some quantitative data sets, such as survey data, or relevant secondary numerical data relating to the organization or other study context and its processes and performance, including, where appropriate, before and after measures relating to any action research intervention. Quantitative analysis software, such as SPSS, may be used to organize the data and to generate appropriate descriptive or analytical statistics, to profile the situation and to investigate the relationships between variables.

Further Interrogating and Interpreting the Data

Further interrogation and interpretation both of individual data sets and across sets will typically involve one or more of the following processes:

Seeking out agreement and disagreement to look for diversity of views and interpretation, to both resolve any contradictions or ambiguities and appreciate the extent of diversity: In qualitative data, this may emerge from categorization and sorting on the basis of the occurrence of themes, whilst examining who said what and how this might relate to the person's role, gender or other characteristic, as well as seeking to generate counts of levels of agreement and disagreement with specific views or points.

Developing visualizations of the data to assist in summarizing and categorizing and to aid understanding and interpolating: Such visualization may include diagrams, tables, mind maps, sketches, networks, rich pictures, 3-D representations and charts.

Hypothesizing and speculating to develop understanding and interpretation: This includes trying out different views on what the data means, reviewing and suspending assumptions and then exploring the data set for evidence to support the alternative hypothesis.

Distilling and explaining to summarize key findings in a form that can be explained to others and discussed with other researchers and possibly other participants in the action research process

Triangulating evidence from different sources (either different interviewees within a set of interview transcripts or data from different types of engagement, such as observation of staff, interviews with managers and desk research) to strengthen the base on which the claims, assertions and theory that emerge from an action research project are built. At least two, and preferably three or more, different pieces of evidence are regarded as necessary for triangulation. In some circumstances, a useful aid in the process of triangulation can be a triangulation matrix that shows which sources or data sets might contribute to answering which research questions or provide insights on which themes

Telling the Story and Articulating the Contribution to Knowledge or Theory

Writing up the interpretations, insights and learning that emerge from the data analysis and interpretation is the final phase of the data analysis associated with an action research project. It is during writing up that the final learning and understandings surface as they are articulated and the story emerges. Collaborative writing can be particularly beneficial in cultivating further reflection. The writing up of an action research project is central to the outcomes of the project, but on the other hand, it can be quite challenging and the written account can be difficult to organize. There are two key challenges. First, since action research often generates a lot of data, it can be difficult to select data for inclusion. In addition, the action research report presents both the project or context for the action research as well as the reflection that occurs on that research. Depending on whether it is a report for the organization that is being created or an academic thesis or project report, the balance of the written document may vary, but it is generally the case that at the core of an account of an action research project are

- the context in which the action research has been conducted;
- the new knowledge and theory that emerge from the project, both for the academic community and for the organization or community;

- the learning that has been achieved by both the organization or community and the researcher; and
- evidence that demonstrates that the research has been conducted rigorously, such that it is possible to have confidence that the knowledge and learning are ‘valid’ and/or ‘transferable’.

The story is the core of the reporting on the action research project. It is essentially a write-up of the data analysis and its interpretation. Key themes and sub-themes used in the data analysis are often used to structure the account, although for some studies a chronological account of events is more effective. Whatever the overall structure, the objective is to integrate perspectives from different sources and data sets and at the same time reference those sources. So typically for each sub-heading there will be both an outline of the relevant information that was found and an indication of the sources for this information. This may be supported and amplified by quotes from interviews, small extracts from documents, meeting agendas, timetables and charts, tables and figures. A clear distinction is made between the events, the voices of the participants and the interpretations of the researcher. The aim is to offer a narrative that is comprehensive and transparent so that readers can read it for themselves and make their own interpretations. This narrative can be differentiated from any theorizing by careful interleaving and sourcing of the research data and the researchers’ interpretations, by clearly signalling interpretations by placing them in separate boxes or columns, at the end of a section or subsection or in a separate section. Ultimately, the account of the research needs to culminate in recommendations for the organization or community as well as a clear articulation of the unique contribution to knowledge or theory that has been made by the action research project.

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See also case study; collaborative data analysis; Grounded Theory; journaling

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DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE

Democratic dialogue is a specific kind of participatory process which ensues from a practitioner’s perspective rather than from a theoretical discourse. It implies a problem-solving process that is used to address socio-political and economic-based issues that cannot be adequately and effectively solved by one or several governmental institutions alone.

Dialogue is an open process of communication which is embedded in mutual respect among the participants. The components that form an essential part of a dialogue are listening, learning and problem-solving. Hal Saunders, of the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue and the Kettering Foundation, has suggested that dialogue is based on participants listening deeply to each other’s concerns with a willingness to be changed by what they learn through the process.

The outcome of a dialogue is deep-seated qualitative change. In this sense, it is different from a debate, negotiation or deliberation.

Dialogue is different from debate in that it encourages diversity of thinking and opinions rather than suppressing the differing views. In the practice of dialogue, there is a premise that one person’s concepts or beliefs

would not dominate over those of others, and that each participant should be prepared to hear the other out, not with the intention of winning an argument but with the intent of social inquiry, rather than advocating or arguing one particular viewpoint. Debate, conversely, assumes only one right answer, and the debater is bent on proving that answer at all costs. Debate narrows views and closes minds, but dialogue can build new relationships.

Practitioners also find it useful to contrast dialogue with conflict resolution processes such as mediation and negotiation. Both mediation and negotiation seek a concrete agreement by satisfying the material interests that are dictated by the existing circumstances. But the outcome of dialogue can be broader than this. It can seek to create new avenues and ways for capacity building that would help solve the problem, or it can even bring to the negotiation table actors who generally would not be considered ready for negotiations but who are just as important for peace building.

Dialogue and deliberation are different processes but ones that may feature in resolving the same problem as discrete, complementary steps in a larger, participatory decision-making process.

The Dialogic Approach

Dialogic processes should incorporate inclusiveness, joint ownership, learning, humanity and empathy.

Inclusiveness makes sure that people are involved and participate actively in the process, instead of one or a few actors taking the lead and the rest following. With this participation comes a common sense of ownership in the dialogue initiative and outcome.

The learning processes embraced in the dialogic process make inquiry one of the most valuable tools for the practitioner. Being curious about people, listening to their stories and showing empathy are ways of connecting to them as human beings and treating them with respect. This means asking questions, not just to gather information but also to understand and learn from others. The aim of the dialogue should be to draw people in rather than imposing a dialogue on them. Many participants remain silent in the beginning. They should not be pushed into talking, but by creating a safe atmosphere, they can be lured into participation.

The principle of transparency is to be followed in a dialogic process. Once participants gain confidence to acknowledge issues that may be difficult or sensitive or embarrassing, they should share information with others. This lays a basis for trust among the participants as well as trust in the process itself. This is particularly challenging to establish in a dialogue, especially if it involves participants from different sides of political, socio-economic, cultural, religious and ethnic divides.

The role and nature of the facilitator in commanding such trust is at the core of a successful dialogue.

Learning entails being open to new ideas and perspectives, and this often requires acknowledging and relinquishing assumptions and preconceptions, at least temporarily; in other words, it entails self-reflection. Openness and flexibility of the dialogic process are crucial to making it relevant to principles of humanity. Taking different perspectives into account as one moves forward will establish a foundation of collective thinking on which trust and ownership can be built. In conducting this process, one has to constantly keep in mind an acute sense of reflectivity, or else the dialogue may relapse into a form of advocacy of a certain perspective or suppress those perspectives that the majority are not comfortable with. Understandably, such processes cannot take place within a time constraint. Hence, democratic dialogue in order to produce meaningful outcomes needs to have a longer term perspective.

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See also advocacy and inquiry; capacity building; facilitation; reflective practice

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DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW

The Descriptive Review of a child and child's work was developed in the late 1960s by Patricia Carini and her colleagues at The Prospect School (TPS), a private elementary school (from kindergarten through Grade 8) in North Bennington, Vermont, USA. The Descriptive Review process is one of a number of descriptive inquiry processes developed by TPS and its centre (the Prospect Archives and Center for Education and Research) over the 40 years of its existence. Like all the descriptive processes, it is based in acts of observation and description, reflecting upon what one sees in a community of others. Taking place in school settings,

these others often include other teachers, administrators and, importantly, parents.

Purpose

The purpose of the Descriptive Review is to come to know a child by immersing oneself in the expressions and meanings of that person. The belief is that these expressions and meanings will reveal, at least in part, the investments (i.e. what one values—where one has invested time and energy) and capacities of the child. Thus, teachers are able to ‘extend’ those investments and capacities, creating a space in which the child can grow.

The categories for organizing observations evolved away from a more classically developmental (i.e. Piagetian) way of looking at children to less categorical, more flexible and ‘bigger’ ways of seeing persons. Moving increasingly towards a phenomenological orientation, five areas of observation eventually emerged: (1) physical appearance and gesture, (2) connections to others, (3) strong interests and preferences, (4) disposition and temperament and (5) modes of thinking and learning. Recently, a focus on ‘context’—from the schoolroom to home, to the community and beyond—has been inserted into these areas for consideration. As with all reviews, the observations were then shared with a chair or co-chairs, who helped the presenting teacher to formulate a focusing question. The chairs and co-chairs were from among the group of participating teachers and staff. Being a school dedicated to descriptive inquiry, all teachers and staff were familiar with the processes. The question was meant to be exploratory and aimed at discovering the child’s strengths and passions rather than ‘problem areas’ or ‘weaknesses’. Labels are eschewed, as are questions that focus on ‘fixing’ students. The purpose is to be sensitively attuned to who children are and who they are becoming. While parents are often a part of the review process, the children themselves are not.

Descriptive Review of a Child

The process of the review often begins with reflection on a word that captures something of the child or the focusing question. This may be followed by a Descriptive Review of a child’s drawing or other creation or a close reading of a piece of his or her writing. Before the description itself begins, the chair shares the focusing question with the group. The heart of the process is the description itself. The presenting teacher describes the child according to the categories above, speaking uninterrupted for as long as it takes (usually about 30–45 minutes). At the end of the description, the chairs, who have been taking notes, make an integrative

summary of what has been presented. This is a crucial step in keeping the picture of the child in sharp relief. Throughout the description, the other members of the group listen carefully, taking note of questions or observations that they might want to return to. Once the description is complete and the integrative statement has been made, the chair asks for questions for clarification or expansion from the group. A free discussion is held at bay until the details of the description have been fleshed out. The session ends with recommendations (*as distinct from advice*) from the attending group that addresses the question and any other insights that have emerged from the process. Again, at this point, the chair makes an integrative statement that captures the themes and recommendations voiced in the discussion. The function of the chair allows the presenter to be entirely present to what is offered by the group, without her attention being divided between listening and recording or facilitating the process. The entire process generally takes between 2 and 3 hours.

At TPS, notes were usually taken by a designated notetaker other than the chair, and the documentation was filed in the child’s records. These records, which could include hundreds of pieces of writing, drawing, painting, constructions as well as reviews, were kept in Prospect’s archives and formed an ongoing record of the child’s development over the course of many years. (These documents, kept with the permission of the parents, number in the thousands and now reside in the Special Collections section of the University of Vermont’s library in Burlington.)

Descriptive Review of a Child’s Work

The Descriptive Review of a child’s work emerges from the same purposes as the Descriptive Review of a child. The ‘work’ is often a painting or drawing but can also be a piece of writing or a construction (e.g. blocks, forts, sculptures, etc.). The process for describing a work (with the exception of a piece of writing, which is described through a close reading) is simple in terms of procedure but difficult in that it forces participants to just see and not leap to interpretation or judgement. The process begins with a round of first impressions, which differ from description in that they are ‘first takes’. These impressions are summarized by the chair, and then several rounds of description follow, moving from literal description of what is seen (e.g. a yellow circle in the top right-hand corner of the painting vs. ‘a sun’) to recurring patterns, images and themes, and finally to focusing on the child’s presence in the work—that is, evidence of the ‘hand’ of the child, the choices made, knowledge used, planning exhibited, as well as evidence of the child’s personal standards. After each round, summaries are made by the chair as

a way of organizing and keeping track of the group's work. In the final summarizing statement of the review, it is important to note that there is no attempt to analyze the child or her work. Although the language remains richly descriptive, it does not attempt to pin down or sum up either the child or the child's work.

How This Work Links to Action Research

If action research is, as Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury have defined it, a participatory and democratic process that brings together action and reflection and theory and practice in the pursuit of practical solutions that also serve large human purposes, then the Descriptive Review processes fit every aspect of this definition. They are fully participatory, empowering both parents and teachers as knowers of children and their ways of being in the world. They put children and their flourishing at the centre. The processes are based in the rhythm of action-reflection in that description grows out of observation of children 'in motion' and ends with recommendations to bring back into that living context. The process in this regard is eminently practical and, most important, deeply human.

Carol R. Rodgers

See also classroom-based action research; Dewey, John; educational action research

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DESIGN RESEARCH

Design research is a term that covers a multitude of different kinds of research activity conducted by those concerned with, or engaged in, the field of design. It is often subdivided according to a distinction that Christopher Frayling adapted from Herbert Read's ideas on art education, distinguishing between research *into* art and design, research *through* art and design and

research *for* art and design. This division is not entirely satisfactory, both because it camouflages the important diversity of approaches and agenda encompassed by each of Frayling's categories and because there are many types of design research that either traverse these categories or fail to sit comfortably within them. Nevertheless, an expanded and qualified version of Frayling's categories can still usefully articulate the field, as follows.

Research undertaken *into* the activity of design involves the following:

- *Researchers who seek to analyze the activity or process of design in order to articulate it as a transportable or translatable tool:* This group includes cognitivist researchers interested in developing a 'science' of design that can be mobilized in fields such as artificial intelligence and software development as well as pragmatists interested in developing 'rule-of-thumb' methods for fostering creativity and entrepreneurial thinking, whether in design education, in business contexts or in developing strategies for social change. The models of the design process that have been developed by researchers in this area have strong similarities with models of the action research process, as has been widely noted.

- *Designers who research their own activity as a way of extending themselves and the potential of their field:* Note that this particular category of design research is characteristically not only *into* design but also *through* design and *for* design. This research may be informed by a creative arts framework, an action research approach or philosophies of practice as given, for example, in the work of Hubert Dreyfus or in the 'practice theory' of Theodore Schatzki and Andreas Reckwitz.

Research undertaken *through* the activity of design involves the following:

- *Designers who design provocative or engaging objects, insertions or interventions into the worlds that they participate in and design for, as a means of uncovering understandings about those worlds:* Such provocation through design may deliver insights quite different from those revealed by the usual research methods. This approach was pioneered by Bill Gaver, Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby in the 1990s.

- *Designers who use design as a way of collaboratively engaging with communities, in order to draw out understandings relevant to those communities:* This approach is often referred to as a co-design and is used in participatory design scenarios. In this instance, design is being used as a tool for collaboratively

researching the needs, desires and possibilities of a community. The two above approaches have much in common with Participatory Action Research. Further, to the extent that the design process echoes the process of action research, parallels can be drawn between research *through* design and action research. Just as action research is conducted simultaneously through and for the practice being researched, these kinds of design research are typically conducted not only *through* design but also *for* design.

Research undertaken *for* the activity of design involves the following:

- *Research for interaction design*: The emergence of interaction design as a distinct focus of design practice in the closing decades of the twentieth century (often in the context of the design development of digital and information technology interfaces) brought ethnographic and social science research methods into an explicitly reflective design process. The focus of interaction design on the dynamic interface between a designed thing and those who engage with it established a need for research understandings of the ongoing relations between humans and things in use that had not been as explicitly called for within traditional, object-oriented and aesthetically driven design practices. There is a considerable literature by interaction designers on the relevance of action research to their designing.

- *Research into the trajectories of designed things*: This includes research into the reconfiguration of the human and non-human worlds, which takes place as designed things enter into and take up roles within them. Researchers of these phenomena may be designers wishing to better understand the impact of their designing upon the world (e.g. those engaged in post-occupancy evaluation or other reflections on the relative success of a design-in-use); however, inquiry into the ongoing impact of designed things is more likely to be conducted by design historians, sociologists, anthropologists or environmental psychologists than by designers themselves. Research of this kind, when conducted by designers into the post-production and ongoing performance of their own design work, can be seen as a branch of action research. Data gathering is typically empirical and may be archival or ethnographic, while the approaches and attitudes of researchers may range from the positivist and cognitivist to the hermeneutic, post-structuralist and/or post-humanist. Note that this category of design research could equally be identified as research *into* design (or rather, into the products of design, i.e. design as a noun).

- *Research into the materials and technologies potentially useful to the activity of designing, or that can be employed in the production of designed things*: This research is often undertaken by designers in the course of their practice but may also be undertaken by engineers or other developers of materials, technologies and systems.

The above divisions of design research demonstrate the diversity of approaches and theoretical frameworks employed within the field as a whole. Among these, action research has an indisputable place. On the one hand, the underlying pattern of design activity appears to mirror that of action research. On the other, insofar as design research is conducted both *through* and *for* design, it qualifies as a form of action research and can parallel either independent action research or Participatory Action Research, depending upon the context and aims of the design research.

Similarities and Differences

The Design Process and the Process of Action Research

The structure of action research resonates with that of the design process insofar as both are projective, iterative and reflexive. Donald Schön's landmark text on *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983), which has become a central reference for both design and action research, uses the activity of design as an exemplar of the kind of expertise that is founded upon reflection-in-action. However, although the diagram of the design process that has been arrived at by researchers into design closely mirrors that of action research, the designer typically embodies this process without being reflectively aware of it *as* a process. Rather than deliberately undertaking a research process, the designer is focused on advancing the design and thinks only of the shifting, unfolding possibilities that come to view in the course of the 'design conversation'. By contrast, the action researcher explicitly sets goals, plans strategies and reflects upon outcomes. The designer, consciously, does none of these things. It seems that while designing may tacitly embody the activities that characterize expertise in general, action research renders the activities characteristic of expert practice into an explicit formula that structures the project. Although the process diagram may be similar, the embodied experience of being a designer is very different from that of the action researcher.

The Goal of Design and the Goal of Action Research

It has been widely observed that both design and action research are concerned with bringing about

change. While it is true that design can act as an agent of change and that this is an important capacity of design, the majority of everyday designed things are shaped by existing market desires and thus tend to reinforce or accelerate existing dispositions, habits and assumptions rather than redirect or challenge them. By contrast, design for change and design that seeks to innovate, like action research, are pursued with an explicit intention of achieving desired social or organizational ends. In particular, design's capacity to creatively reframe issues and contexts for action has been increasingly mobilized as a resource in addressing complex and wicked problems, especially in business and in social change contexts. Regardless of the effectiveness of particular design strategies, the agency of designed things commonly exceeds the intentions of the designer. For this reason, explicit reflection is essential within design for change scenarios. Action research methodology has been recognized for its value to designers in supplying a framework for explicit and critical reflection within the cycle of design.

Co-Design and Participatory Action Research

Co-design can be seen as a type of Participatory Action Research and often explicitly draws upon an action research methodology. The important contribution of design to collaborative action contexts is its generative mode of inquiry. The specific tools and strategies it brings to co-design scenarios include the design of 'probes' that trigger and enable communication between stakeholders and designers and the development of other design tools and prompts to facilitate stakeholder involvement. Equally important are the interpretive strategies that design brings to co-creation contexts. Reframing has been identified as an interpretive strategy of design that shifts thinking away from paths framed by preconceptions and embedded assumptions. These generative strategies of design, which are tacitly employed by designers, have been more explicitly articulated as tools within co-design and innovation scenarios. The outcome of a co-design process is a collaboratively developed design understanding that can inform the final development of a designed product or intervention.

Conclusion

The activity of designing has become a focus of interest for those in other fields who seek to initiate change within complex and ill-defined contexts of human action and practice. Design is generative. The logic that informs design thinking is abductive and moves from the initial conception to the developed proposal

through an iterative, open-ended 'design conversation' that routinely employs strategies for reframing understandings and critically repositioning possibilities. As the field of design research has developed over the past half-century, it has often paralleled action research; it has drawn inspiration from the same thinkers and research paradigms and shared many of the same goals and structures. However, design is also distinct from action research. The two areas of practice may inform and fertilize one another; however, the differences in approach that they offer to each other may be, in many cases, as important to recognize, and as useful, as the similarities.

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See also aesthetics; new product development; reflective practice

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DEVELOPMENT ACTION RESEARCH

Development action research is action research or Participatory Action Research (PAR) applied to the field of development. If development is perceived as a pedagogic problem-solving mechanism, linked with community learning, then PAR provides a unique way in which to both articulate the problematic features of a situation as well as construct effective and sustainable solutions at multiple levels: local, national and international. Whereas development studies engages with an understanding of the developmental needs of all societies, communities and nations, especially where people struggle with the dramatic changes induced by modern technology and economic structure and with the deep-seated impact of such changes, development action research implicates a shift away from isolated understanding to practical action and PAR in relation to these changes. There are various ways in which PAR helps us relate the world of understanding and practice to development. These are as follows:

- *Reflexibility*: Emphasizing group reflection and collective learning to create a grounded framework for action
- *Process orientation*: Focusing on how activities are constructed to produce valued results
- *Collaborative relationships*: Enhancing development as a collective enterprise that requires new social relationships combining diverse people and skills
- *Power*: Shifting the relationships between rich and poor, elites and marginalized
- *Change orientation*: Moving people into areas of social transformation
- *Expertise and resources*: Facilitating processes that draw out and develop local expertise, that is, capacity building

Reflexibility

As researchers work with people, listen to them and observe the ways they define and analyze the issues they investigate, research facilitators or animators increase their knowledge dramatically. Not only are they able to understand the complex local dynamics in which they are enmeshed, but their understanding of theoretical and methodological issues increases significantly. This not only provides development researchers and practitioners with increased expertise and understanding but also enables them to share their

knowledge gain in one context with people in another context in which they work.

PAR works through collective exploration of self-inquiry and problem-solving mechanisms. This helps one to unpack problems from a multidimensional and multi-stakeholder perspective. This exchange thus not only helps explore subjectivities as opposed to objective or scientific ways of problematizing an issue but also helps develop an epistemology rooted in intersubjectivities, that is, a discursive practice that emerges around collective experience that is debated and negotiated by individuals brought together by a common purpose but holding different opinions and perspectives. This therefore lays the ground for contestation as well as consensus building.

The core point of departure here with other epistemologies is the centrality of action. Since the solution has to be in the form of a collective action, as social practice or engaging transformational positions and politics, the predispositions and grounds for such action are already explored and hence can lead to effective social practices and policies. The process of praxis is also important in this respect. Praxis relates to the cyclical process of reflection-action-reflection, whereby practice and policies may not only evolve through reflection but feedback as responses from action into reflection—in other words further knowledge building. This last aspect enables theory building from the ground as opposed to theorizing from above.

Process Orientation

The success of many development initiatives is determined by results defined in terms of outcomes, outputs and impact. PAR, however, recognizes that many development activities need to evolve over a long period of time and through various phases and organizational abilities. Hence, it is essential to record and document the processes in a development initiative to register differential organizational capacities and relations between stakeholders that lead to valued results. This may take the form of best practices, success stories as well as the challenges faced during the endeavour.

But tools such as outcome mapping may also be used very effectively to relate process to outcomes. Outcome mapping is a planning, monitoring and evaluation methodology that defines a programme's outcomes as changes in the behaviour of direct partners. The process has three broad stages: (1) intentional design, (2) outcome and performance monitoring, and (3) evaluation planning. The method focuses on how programmes facilitate change rather than how they control or cause change. It promotes the participation

of programme staff, partners and stakeholders throughout all the above three stages.

Collaborative Relationships

Development indicates the evolution of a group, community or organization over a period of time. Throughout this process of evolution, one needs to engage in new social relations through, amongst other things, networking, organizing, self-development and skill diversification. PAR helps to upgrade organizations from the local to national and international, or by searching for local solutions through the help of national and international organizations by bringing together local knowledge and scientific expertise.

Both these processes (a) recognize the importance of local knowledge, (b) identify through collective participation the utility of how this knowledge may be used in action and the resource gaps that exist and (c) fulfil this gap through collaborative relations with the national and international stakeholders who are repositories of scientific knowledge.

An example of such collaboration can be seen in the case of small farmers in the famine-stricken district of northern Bangladesh, who came together to discuss their production needs and identified the need of a seed bank. They had some local knowledge of how to store seeds, but they needed to learn more scientific methods. Research Initiatives, Bangladesh, facilitated their training by the national Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, which in turn was funded by the CSISA (Cereal System Initiative South Asia) programme, a subsidiary of the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation. Now many scientists, national and international, visit Bangladesh to take lessons from this endeavour.

Power

Development is embedded in power relationships. Development activities are usually undertaken to provide service to the underserved or empower the disempowered. This naturally brings about a potential change in existing power relations. Class analysis perceives such change as naturally confrontational, whilst liberal development strategies approach it incrementally. PAR through engaging a multidimensional and multilayered perspective perceives such change as emerging through self-inquiry awareness and in a way that emanates from the people concerned and is not imposed from outside organizations, be it NGOs (non-governmental organizations) or a political party, unless the parties concerned have ownership of those institutions. Ownership of the change process through collective action by the concerned population is therefore central to such change.

Change Orientation

Development questions, especially those related to empowerment processes, get bogged down in questions of leadership. This has led many development practitioners to invest in leadership building, notwithstanding the fact that the existing leadership cultures may prove antithetical to the project itself through cultivation of authoritarianism. PAR may also fall into such a paradox, but the continuous process of self-inquiry is expected to keep a check and balance against the accumulation of power in the hands of a few and keep the emphasis on self-transformation that is expected to lead to social transformation. The role of the animator, the person who facilitates the discussions and inspires them without interfering too much in the process itself, is considered to be very important. The process of self-transformation is conceived in a continuous manner through a process of reflection, action and reflection (praxis), as defined before; it is expected that this orientation towards change will be reflected also in the real world through the actions of the group and the result will be social transformation.

Expertise and Resource

The importance of local knowledge and the necessity to help build local expertise, often with outside help, has been mentioned before. Capacity building as opposed to simply training must be the focus. Capacity building implies that one acknowledges both the strengths as well as the gaps in existing knowledge and insists that it be done in such a way that the group retains ownership and control over the way it is done. Capacity building therefore needs to be demand driven and not imposed from the top. An example from a Dalit group in Bangladesh reveals the methodological difference between training and capacity building through PAR as perceived by the Dalit group.

The women of the Rishi community (a Dalit community who are primarily leather workers) were asked why they insisted on coming to PAR meetings but were not equally interested in going to training sessions called by local NGOs. Their answer was as follows:

They come with their files and lecture us! We don't understand many things, it goes above our heads. Whereas when we sit with you it is *our* meeting. They are like *gul* (a substance with which local people brush their teeth). You can get in the market, but it is strong and makes our head spin. So we try to soften it up with *tamak* (tobacco). You are like *tamak*. It has absorptive capacity because it is of our own making!

This story helps strengthen and confirm the basic premise that people's knowledge does matter in the way programmes are built and shaped, be it rights oriented or developmental.

Meghna Guhathakurta

See also democratic dialogue; *gonogobeshona*;
Participatory Action Research; participatory governance;
subalternity

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DEVELOPMENT COALITIONS

A Development Coalition is a structure in which different partners come together to pursue a shared objective or create collaborative advantage. There have been regional and national development programmes, particularly in Norway, which have recommended Development Coalitions, which bring together large and small enterprises, public sector organizations and universities or research organizations. Sometimes a new legal entity is created, with implications both for business and for democratic accountability.

Action research is encountered individually, as per the *Action Research Journal* tradition and the *International Journal of Action Research* tradition of organizational change and renewal. These traditions are different but can be complementary. A link is through the integrative but often temporary role of a Development Coalition, as it facilitates collaboration. It can be seen as action research in itself, creating a structure which enables new possibilities.

Development Coalitions are not a distinct and separate category of organization, providing consistent contexts for individual action research and for analysis by economic geographers. In some cases, researchers are employed to follow the policy of the programme. In other cases, action research is used to develop and implement strategy.

There are historic cases of collaborative activity which we might now consider as action research, for

example, involving new NGOs (non-governmental organization, formed as Development Coalitions) to seek to abolish the slave trade. This tradition has continued in Latin America, in emancipatory action research. So the similarities between work in action research in Brazil and Norway are recognized.

Development

Individuals can achieve relatively little by working alone. We find partners, with whom we can engage productively and develop a sustained relationship. We build a network of contacts on which to draw in particular circumstances. We create collaborative advantage. When a new challenge arises, we build a 'coalition of the willing' from our partners and network contacts, with different backgrounds, and seek to bring about change. We can refer to this as a Development Coalition. It may cross previous borders, facilitating change and offering a context in which action research can bring results.

Development can take place in many contexts. It involves a move from the known to the unknown. People work together, creating social capital, if they trust their co-workers and feel a common sense of direction or shared value. They engage in 'pre-competitive collaboration'.

Dialogue and Development

Discussion of Development Coalitions arises from a context of dialogue at different levels, which has been underpinned by a number of separate research traditions, particularly in Scandinavia, where dialogue seminars and Dialogue Conferences play a prominent role. Within dialogue, individuals are able to reflect on their own professional experience. They encounter new ideas, learn from differences and re-describe their own experience. They do not necessarily reach agreement, but they are able to move on in their understanding, often working with new groups of people.

When considering enterprise and regional levels, work organization can be regarded as a missing link, both within and between organizations. In contrast to expert-led processes, the focus is on concept-driven development, where the lead comes from workforce participation. A pivotal role is played by the development organization, which is a temporary and transitional structure in which participants are able to explore new ways of thinking and working. The participants may alternate between work organization and development organization, taking ideas and experience with them. The European Union can be regarded as an arena in which development organizations are facilitated, both at the national level and through networks supported by framework programmes.

During the Norwegian Ph.D. programme ‘Enterprise Development and Working Life’, which was based on action research, there was frequent discussion of Development Coalitions. There were many relevant perspectives, sharing the same language, with contributions from political scientists as well as from economic geographers and sociologists. In Norway, with the enthusiasm for regional policies, the main focus was on regional Development Coalitions (RDCs), which were increasingly regarded as a central component of nationally funded programmes of enterprise development: ‘Enterprise Development 2000’ and ‘Value Creation 2010’. These involved projects deploying action research within funded programmes, using tools such as Dialogue Conferences and network orchestration. For action researchers in the emancipatory tradition, such as in Latin America, this has perhaps appeared incongruous.

Learning Together for Local Innovation

Although vocational training and regional development have an obvious potential relationship, it can be problematic. From a development perspective, the focus can be on networks of actors and the challenge of creating learning regions and regional innovation systems. Research in this hybrid context has meant bringing education and training together with regional development in coalitions. The approach has been to use European regional learning cases, from participating countries such as Germany, Norway, Portugal, Greece, Sweden, UK and Lithuania. Lessons can then be learned from the differences. Over a series of workshops, researchers will describe their own cases, in which they are personally involved, against the background of other cases.

Research has addressed the changing role of universities, for example, in Sweden, UK and Italy. In Scandinavia, there is frequent discussion of the ‘Triple Helix’ of government, the private sector and research contributing to Development Coalitions, while such arrangements can take many and diverse forms. The language bridges previously separate discourses, opening new flows of words and action in new, and possibly temporary, institutional contexts.

Scandinavian countries tend to share common values and characteristics—respect for work, social equity, dialogue and democracy in the workplace—in what have been relatively homogeneous cultures. This provides a backdrop for programmes in Norway, Sweden and Finland, which participants may have come to take for granted. Within that shared context, discussion of Development Coalitions and regional innovation systems is common.

Action Research

Some researchers see action research only in terms of individuals. This has been the main focus for the *Action Research Journal*. By contrast, *Concepts and Transformation: The International Journal of Action Research and Organisational Renewal*, now the *International Journal of Action Research*, is concerned with organizational change. There is a focus on empowerment, participation and democracy. The discourses are different but complementary. Development Coalitions may help bridge a gap.

As participants move from the known to the unknown, they take risks. They establish a common language with fellow-travellers. They search for ideas to be developed into sustainable activities. They look for partners who bring complementary expertise. The membership of the Development Coalition can change.

The action researcher recognizes that objective detachment is impossible. He is part of the problem under study and, perhaps, part of the solution. To pursue an agenda, the action researcher needs to work with others, building a collaborative framework to advance understanding. Where the researcher recognizes that his words, spoken or written, are also actions, he needs to identify a form of life in which to operate and a distinctive set of language games. As participants cannot rely on a ‘private language’, they need to be part of a group which shares meanings. Such a group is sometimes called a Development Coalition, or a ‘region’.

Regional Development Coalitions

In Scandinavia, work on Development Coalitions was applied in national programmes of enterprise development, in which the regional dimension was given increased emphasis. No two regions are the same in economic activities, leading institutions and distinctive cultural histories. New patterns of collaboration were required; discussion was at a level of analysis above the single enterprise and below the national government. At this intermediate (meso) level, geographical regions can be found. In Europe, they vary in size, having in common only the fact that they are regions. They host distinctive patterns of innovation.

In Scandinavia, there have been arguments for Triple Helix configurations of partners, bringing together government, industry and education or research (often through universities undertaking their ‘third task’). It made sense to find ways of linking small enterprises with other partners in remote geographical settings. The action researcher’s focus is on the development process, while economic geographers and political scientists seek to make sense of the existing structures.

In Norway, RDCs, first emerging from action research, became government-funded policy instruments. Researchers described a regional environment in terms of RDCs. Researchers were not autonomous actors but employees. Funding was from government rather than from companies. There was debate on the democratic credentials of a structure which represented a set of interest groups and could not claim to be detached. How could such structures achieve democratic legitimacy? If they were seen as temporary development organizations, such questions would not necessarily arise.

Those countries which see themselves as part of the Scandinavian model may regard it as natural for government, employers and trade unions to engage in dialogue. This makes it easier to develop Triple Helix structures. Social dialogue is in principle active across the European Union, but practice varies. This affects the context for action research.

Development Coalition as a Tool for Action Research

Philosophers have interpreted the world: The problem is to change it. The suicide bomber should not be emulated, taking individual action but not living to take subsequent steps. The Development Coalition offers a flexible and temporary mechanism for testing new ideas in practice. In an old country, there are numerous organizations, of varied age and strength, that can be engaged in a Development Coalition to bring about change. There is an overlap between political activism and action research. A successful politician may need a background in community organization and experience of brokering Development Coalitions. Can we deal with the challenging problems? Together we can.

Richard Ennals

See also dialogue; Participatory Action Research; regional development

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DEWEY, JOHN

Action research is closely associated with the philosophy of John Dewey (1859–1952), who is widely recognized as one of America's pre-eminent philosophers and a leading theorist of American democracy and is considered by some the most important philosopher of education since Plato. Thousands of journal articles, essays and books testify to Dewey's significant contributions in the fields of philosophical pragmatism, educational philosophy and political theory, with the lion's share of serious scholarly attention paid by political theorists. Scant attention has been paid, however, to Dewey's contribution to action research. While Dewey never used the term *action research*, the concept is emergent in his voluminous writings across a span of five decades. Two lines of theory converge in Dewey's philosophy, which he called 'instrumentalism', to form the underlying assumptions for action research: (1) Dewey's theory of knowledge and knowing and (2) his theory of democracy.

Dewey's Logic of Inquiry

Among other intellectual pursuits, Dewey was an epistemologist whose theory of knowledge was founded upon a conception of the universe as unstable, uncertain and hazardous. An advocate of evolutionary theory, he rejected dualistic philosophical systems that viewed the human mind as a psychic entity separate and distinct from the body. Mind, Dewey argued, is not a manifestation of some fixed, immutable reality that exists beyond the sensory screen and transcends human experience; rather, mind evolves in human society as a physiological adaptation to an environment that is constantly in flux. By their very nature, humans are sentient, problem-solving beings; they are also inherently social beings. An optimistic Darwinist, Dewey rejected interpretations of Darwin's theory that led conservative social theorists such as William Graham Sumner to advocate government *laissez-faire* and

the abandonment of social welfare. Dewey's Darwinism was meliorist, moral and activist; he viewed social reform itself as a mindful, adaptive, problem-solving response of human beings in society.

Dewey believed that human mental development, in its natural course, is the mindful, multilayering and reconstruction of life experiences that results from the individual's continuous resolution of dissonance in his or her environment. Each problem-solving experience provides a substratum for those that follow, the net effect being a spiral of growth that is marked by increasing complexity at each new level of mental functioning. Each new experience incorporates something that goes before it and, in this new form, represents an equilibration until a new problem intrudes upon it. Dewey argued that each complete act of thought, which he associated with meaningful learning, begins with a difficulty or perplexity, or 'forked-road' situation. His famous model of reflection describes a biologically formed, discursive problem-solving mode that productive human beings apply in their daily lives in all manner of problematic situations.

The following are the phases of reflective thinking which Dewey associated in general terms with the method of science: first, an ongoing activity that is not problematic, representing in biological terms a state of equilibrium; second, a meaningful problem that arises within the course of this activity, creating a state of dissonance or disequilibrium and stimulating further thought; third, refinement of the difficulty or perplexity to specify precisely its dimensions; fourth, the formulation and elaboration of an idea or suggestion into a tentative solution to the problem—a hypothesis; fifth, testing the validity of the hypothesis by an application—by visible action and observation of results or by mental action and contemplation of results—and sixth, a review or summary of the entire process that resulted in a conclusion or course of action to determine what was positive, negative or nugatory, constructing a cognitive stepping stone for dealing effectively with future problems in analogous situations. Dewey first specified this logic of inquiry in *How We Think* (1910), itself a reflection on his experiences in Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century; he amplified the heuristic in a revision of *How We Think* (1933), assigned it an evolutionary/biological basis in *Experience and Nature* (1925) and revisited it in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), perhaps his most important statement on the complete act of thought.

In sum, genuine learning, according to Dewey, only occurs when human beings focus their attention, energies and abilities on solving genuine dilemmas and perplexities—and when they reflect on their experience and, therefore, increase their capacity for future intelligent thought and action. Intelligence does not

develop simply as a result of action and experience; it develops as a result of continuous *reflective* action and experience.

Lessons From Hull House for Dewey's Theory of Democracy

Dewey's theory of knowledge was intertwined with his theory of democracy. His mature theory of democracy was powerfully influenced by Jane Addams and the women of Hull House, the nation's most famous settlement house, which Addams and Ellen Gates Starr founded in 1889 on Halsted Street, in Chicago's heavily immigrant Near West Side. Addams and the extraordinary women who joined her as Hull House residents—Florence Kelley, Agnes Holbrook, Julia Lathrop and Ella Flagg Young, among others—were practitioners of a form of action research in the three decades before World War I. Richly detailed reports of their social investigations were wedded to vigorous campaigns for progressive-reform legislation to eliminate sweatshops and regulate child labour. The women of Hull House assumed that their meticulous descriptions of dire social conditions would carry sufficient moral weight to impel legislative action; the purpose of their social research was to help produce change, not academic theory.

Dewey and Addams began their fruitful intellectual relationship in the early 1890s, when he visited Hull House as a member of the philosophy faculty at the University of Michigan. During his celebrated tenure at the University of Chicago (1894–1904), where he chaired the Department of Pedagogy and the Department of Philosophy and Psychology, Dewey frequented Hull House as an observer, lecturer and dinner guest, and he served as a trustee after 1897. The naturally bookish Dewey learned a great deal from the activist Addams, taking to heart her pragmatic view that knowledge was not truly knowledge until it was applied. More than any other influence in his life, with the exception perhaps of Dewey's feminist wife, Alice, Addams kicked Dewey into action.

For Dewey and Addams, the social function of education held the key to their shared dream of democratic communalism (or 'socialized democracy', to use the language of the Progressive era). They believed that a truly free and harmonious society could not be realized until the benefits and privileges of democracy were extended to every member. In his pre-Chicago essay 'The Ethics of Democracy' (1888), Dewey had declaimed that each member's 'participating in the formation or expression of the common will' and having a meaningful 'share in society' were essential conditions of a just society. For both Dewey and Addams, education for democracy was central to the realization of their shared dream of American democracy—and

they believed that their vision could be achieved by no other means. Accordingly, their intellectual work was intertwined with reform advocacy, which was gradualist and ameliorative, not revolutionary or militant.

During this period, Dewey emphasized the pivotal role of public schools in social reconstruction: The school would be the primary lever of social change. As Dewey argued in *The School and Society* (1900), a collection of his lectures to parents on the theory and practice of the University of Chicago's Laboratory School (famously known as the Dewey School, which he established in 1896), the democratic school would be organized as a 'miniature community, an embryonic society' permeated throughout with 'a spirit of social co-operation and community'. The unifying aim would be 'the growth of the child in the direction of social capacity and service'. One key means to achieve this aim was 'conjoint activity', the idea of children working side by side, co-operatively, on small-scale inquiries and community-building activities; young people would learn democracy by living democracy.

For all the powerful pedagogical insights it generated, however, the Dewey School was neither an embryonic society nor a miniature training ground for American democracy. It did not represent the rich diversity of Chicago's immigrant world—the parents of most of the students were faculty or staff members at the University of Chicago—nor did it introduce children to the real world of fin-de-siècle Chicago; Dewey School children learned nothing of the grinding poverty and horrific social conditions documented by the women of Hull House. By 1902, however, Dewey, swayed by the example of Hull House, had rethought his theory of school and society, and he now envisaged schooling for democracy against the backdrop of the real Chicago and his experiences at Hull House. Dewey glowingly acknowledged the influence of the settlement house in his seminal essay 'The School as Social Centre' (1902), which he presented that year to the National Education Association. Conceptualized along lines directly inspired by Hull House, a school functioning as a social centre would be a hub with educational, social and recreational activities for people of all ages and a centre and catalyst for continuous lifelong learning, with innovative programmes for updating technological and vocational skills. Most important for Dewey, it would be a working model of democracy that would engage people of different racial, ethnic and social class backgrounds in meaningful discourse with each other.

Dewey's Dream of American Democracy: The Role of Action Research

Propositions drawn from Dewey's reflections on his experiences at Hull House and at the Laboratory

School reappeared in different and more complex forms in his writings after he left Chicago for Columbia University in 1904. These new syntheses were integrated into Dewey's evolving theory of participatory democracy, which logically incorporates action research as a core method for realizing his goal of a 'Great Community', an integrated world of interactive democratic societies dedicated to the continual betterment of humanity.

Participatory democracy and action research are intertwined and inseparable in Dewey's post-Chicago oeuvre. They are jointly integral to the 'neighbourly community', which Dewey described as 'democracy's home'. The neighbourly community is the linchpin concept of *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), perhaps Dewey's finest statement on American democracy, which amplifies his famous claim in *Democracy and Education* (1916) that democracy is a 'mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience'. The neighbourly community would be achieved through the co-operative activity of the diverse racial, ethnic, class, national and religious groups that make up a city; these groups would form a deliberative 'public' that transcended their differences. This new deliberative, problem-solving, participatory public—'civil society', in today's discourse—would complement, reinforce and enhance representative government, not replace it. (In the 1960s, New Left activists, with specific reference to *The Public and Its Problems*, took up Dewey's banner and coined the term *participatory democracy* to describe Dewey's general approach.) A serious limitation of *The Public and Its Problems* was Dewey's refusal to designate the agent or institution that would catalyze his neighbourly community; apparently dispirited by the mania of scientific management that swept city schools in the 1910s and 1920s, Dewey had long since abandoned the 'school as social centre' playing this particular catalytic role.

For the purposes of action research, a second essential of Dewey's theory is participatory social problem-solving—an approach that defines contemporary action research. Here, Dewey wedded his Chicago idea of 'conjoint activity' and his evolving theory of inquiry (see above). The Great Depression lent immediate urgency to Dewey's call for a planning—not a planned—society, one in which schooling would cultivate in young people an ability joined with an inclination to engage in collaborative social problem-solving using the logic of scientific inquiry. The quintessential pragmatist, Dewey believed that the more ideas being shaped, re-formed and directed to the underlying causes of social problems through the give and take of informed democratic deliberation, the greater the likelihood would be of finding good solutions to those problems.

A third essential of Dewey's theory, also given increased impetus by the Great Depression, is his notion of industrial democracy—the idea that labour must have a deliberative, democratic voice in determining production goals and work conditions, that each worker must have meaningful input in the design and development of a product. In the workplace, as in all other sectors of democratic society, decision-making would be guided by Co-Operative Inquiry.

Dewey's Theory of Action Research in Perspective

Dewey's idea of Co-Operative Inquiry, which entails the democratic engagement of a 'public'—a unity that transcends traditional social groupings—in participatory research and collaborative social action, invites comparison with several notable action research projects since the 1940s. What 'Deweyan' essentials of participatory democracy do these studies incorporate? Kurt Lewin, the eminent social psychologist, field theorist and founder of topological and vector psychology, is an obvious first choice for comparison with Dewey. Lewin apparently coined the term *action research* in the 1940s while heading a series of action research studies. From 1939 to 1947, Lewin and two of his protégés conducted research on group behavioural problems related to industrial management and productivity within the Harwood Manufacturing Corporation of Virginia. By means of a field experiment, Lewin's team demonstrated the higher productivity of workers assigned to democratic decision-making groups vis-à-vis workers in managerial, autocratic groups, following the introduction of new technologies at the Harwood plant. The research itself was non-participatory (non-Deweyan in this respect), though it demonstrated the efficacy of democratically functioning work modes (Dewey's criterion for industrial democracy).

In 1945, Lewin created the Research Center for Group Dynamics at MIT, whose work was linked to the Commission on Community Interrelations (CCI) of the American Jewish Congress. The CCI conducted action research on community affairs, focusing on minority problems, ethnocultural conflict and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours—problems assigned great importance in Dewey's theory. CCI staff members coined the term *participant* action research to describe the involvement of community members in the research process from the beginning. Their 1947 social survey of a small American city, 'Northtown', was sponsored by 13 community organizations, including the Council of Social Agencies, the Council of Jewish Organizations and the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and was conducted by 73 volunteer interviewers provided by

the sponsoring organizations. The CCI's final report exposed discrimination against Blacks and Jews in housing, employment and public accommodations (though not in education) in Northtown. While this project meets Dewey's criteria of democratic dialogue and collaborative decision-making in the conduct of research, the endgame falls short on Dewey's criterion for action, as the CCI staffers notified the sponsoring organizations that any action programme resulting from the study would have to be organized and implemented without CCI's involvement; at the action stage, the experts parted company with the local activists.

Similarly, Dewey's theory illuminates the democratic processes and outcomes of two of the most important action research projects undertaken since 1950—one in Mondragón, Spain, and the other in rural Appalachia.

William Foote Whyte and his associates at Cornell University initiated action research agendas in Mondragón, in Spain's Basque Country, where 173 labour-managed industrial co-operatives, employing more than 19,500 workers, manufactured a diversity of products—ranging from heavy household appliances to electronic components, to automated manufacturing systems. The Cornell anthropologist Davydd Greenwood and the managers of Mondragón's Fagor co-operative group designed an action research study that focused on the prevalence of apathy and alienation within Fagor, an ostensibly successful experiment in industrial democracy. The action researchers found that Fagor's democratic governance processes, which guaranteed equality for all workers, had not fundamentally altered the social relations and work forms of the shop floor, which remained quietly though stubbornly hierarchical; as a result, the workforce was disgruntled. While this study provides an exemplary model of participatory research qua research directed towards industrial democracy and the creation of a 'neighbourly community', it is short on the action dimension of Dewey's theory: The research findings were not adequately disseminated, and Fagor's managers, even those who participated in the study, were unable to translate the results into an effective action plan to democratize the shop floor.

Another powerful example is a massive action research study in Appalachia, which was 'neo-Deweyan' in its organization, research and dissemination strategy and addressed the problem of absentee landownership in the region. Working in conjunction with the Appalachian Alliance, the Appalachian Studies Conference and the Highlander Research and Education Center, a group of concerned scholars and citizens from throughout the region undertook a mammoth survey of landownership in 80 counties in six states in the region, where valuable land was largely controlled by absentee

corporations, 'migrant' developers and local mountain elites. Based upon an exhaustive review of courthouse documents in each of the counties, the seven-volume document released by the Appalachian Landownership Task Force in the early 1980s exposed large-scale corporate tax evasion and governmental complicity in what the researchers argued was the corporate pillage of the region. For example, the corporations that controlled the region's coal mines and 79 per cent of its mineral wealth paid virtually no taxes on their mineral acreage, protected by corporation-friendly state legislatures. In 1983, the University Press of Kentucky published *Who Owns Appalachia? Landownership and Its Impact*, which summarized the task force's major findings and publically exposed the miscreant state legislatures. A limitation of this study, in the light of Dewey's theory, is that it did not provide ongoing collaborative problem-solving and continuous reflection on the landownership problem.

In summary, although Dewey did not coin the term *action research*, he developed a theory of instrumental intelligence and democratic instrumental education that undergirds the action research approach. Core ideas such as the deliberative public, or 'neighbourly community', and participatory, collaborative problem-solving can be traced to Dewey's seminal activities and writings.

Ira Harkavy and John Puckett

See also Highlander Research and Education Center; Lewin, Kurt; Participatory Action Research; pragmatism; Whyte, William Foote

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DIALOGIC INQUIRY

Dialogic inquiry is an approach to education that employs collaborative action research on classroom interaction to improve learning and teaching.

There is growing evidence that students develop a greater understanding of the topics they study when they have opportunities to engage in *dialogue* about them with their peers as well as their teachers. For this to become the norm of classroom interaction, however, two conditions need to be in place. First, students must feel confident in voicing their ideas and being listened to respectfully but critically by their peers and, second, their teacher must develop a 'dialogic stance', that is to say, an approach to class discussion that values more the attempt to achieve shared understanding than individual students' ability to reproduce what is considered to be 'correct' information on demand. To create such a classroom environment is not easy, for it requires a break with the didactic style of traditional education, which has been further reinforced in recent years by the emphasis at national and district levels on a standardized curriculum and assessment.

The adoption of an *inquiry* orientation to learning and teaching represents an attempt to overcome the constraints of traditional education, in which the curriculum is delivered to passive students irrespective of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and with little or no reference to their interests or life experiences. Dialogic inquiry is thus an attempt to use inquiry into a topic of interest to generate productive dialogue. This entry reviews two ways in which inquiry is being used: first, as an organizing principle in the development and enactment of the curriculum

and, second, as an approach to teachers' professional development.

Origins

The importance of dialogue with more competent others for children's linguistic and intellectual development was one of the more important findings of a large-scale longitudinal study of preschool children's spontaneous talk carried out by Gordon Wells in the Bristol Study (1969–84). Children who experienced more conversation with their parents and older siblings were more likely to make accelerated progress in learning to talk and more likely to be successful in school, as measured by tests conducted at ages 7 and 10 years. The reasons for their more rapid development can be attributed to two features of their linguistic interactions. First, as Michael Halliday observed, children naturally develop language to perform interactional functions that are important to them and, second, when others take up and help children to extend their ability to talk about topics that interest them, they are receiving assistance in what Lev Vygotsky called the 'Zone of Proximal Development'.

When a subsample of the children in the Bristol Study were regularly observed in their first 5 years in school, it was found that they rarely experienced the sort of linguistic and intellectual support they had received in their preschool years. They rarely asked questions about matters that interested them, and when they did originate a topic of conversation with a teacher, the teacher frequently diverted the conversation to a matter that she or he considered more important. In sum, in most cases, the education the children received was directed by their teachers, who followed a predetermined curriculum that did not, for the most part, build on their interests and life experiences.

Collaborative Research

On moving to Canada, Wells began to spend time as a participant observer in elementary and middle school classrooms where teachers agreed to engage in collaborative research with him. He made video recordings of what promised to be stimulating curriculum units and discussed excerpts from the recordings with the teachers in order to understand the conditions in which the students seemed to be most fully involved and willing to engage in extended discussion with their teacher and peers. What emerged from these exploratory investigations confirmed his belief, based on John Dewey's work, that adopting an inquiry orientation to the content of the prescribed curriculum could generate occasions for dialogue, in which the teacher would act as a collaborative leader rather than primarily as an evaluator.

Subsequently, with a grant from the Spencer Foundation, Wells undertook a collaborative action research project with a group of volunteer teachers to inquire into the effectiveness of starting a curriculum unit in a way that elicited questions that the students wished to investigate. They then organized subsequent activities to enable them to work in groups to research and report on their chosen topics. As they discovered, the students' questions and their attempts to answer them generated lively and productive discussion, which led to increased group and individual understanding of the curriculum material to be addressed. Furthermore, the effectiveness of this approach was enhanced, they found, when the student groups worked to improve an artefact that represented their findings, in the form of a model or an illustrated text to be presented to an audience, and when the unit concluded with a whole-class discussion in which they reflected on what they had learned about the topic and about their own strategies for learning.

Over the 10 years of the project, the teacher members became a cohesive action research group who shared their individual inquiries in monthly group meetings and together began to formulate the principles that underpinned both their teaching and their collaborative work as a group. In this, they were helped by their shared reading of key texts, the discussion of which formed part of the monthly meetings. As the project proceeded, they also began to disseminate their findings through conference presentations and publication. As they recognized, their collaborative action research enhanced their effectiveness as professional educators and also benefitted their students as they began to include them as co-investigators in their research. Quite early in their work together, they chose to call themselves the Developing Inquiring Communities in Education Project (DICEP).

Forms of Analysis

Dialogic inquiry gives rise to a variety of forms of data, which lend themselves to a variety of methods of analysis. As already mentioned, students' inquiries most often lead to some form of object the improvement of which for presentation to others provides an opportunity for critical analysis of its accuracy and coherence, which in itself is an important form of learning, whatever the topic or question investigated. Similarly, as the members of DICEP found, presenting the results of one's inquiry at a conference or in print calls for careful analysis of one's data and benefits greatly from the comments and suggestions of fellow members of the group.

The most common form of data collection was by means of video recording whole lessons, which were then transcribed in full or in part depending on the

question being addressed. Other forms of data that were collected included student-produced artefacts, such as models, illustrations and their written texts, as well as notes jotted down in class and written reflections after the lesson. Most often, a teacher-researcher carried out some form of qualitative analysis of particular events, drawing on video clips and transcriptions of them to illustrate her or his interpretation of the data set as a whole. Analysis of transcript data in a quantitative manner makes it possible systematically to address questions about the nature of the discourse that occurs under different conditions. For example, the form and quality of the discourse in different subject areas or different activity contexts can be investigated, or the effect of introducing a change in some aspect of classroom organization.

Examples of Quantitative Analysis of Classroom Discourse

Large-scale quantitative analysis of discourse data requires the creation of a coding scheme based on a comprehensive linguistic theory and designed to answer a specific question. In his work, Wells draws on Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics; he treats discourse as being organized at a number of levels, with units at one level including one or more units at the level below. For example, a lesson consists of a number of episodes, each having a pedagogical goal; each episode consists of one or more sequences addressing the same topic, which in turn consists of one or more exchanges. An exchange has an initiating (I) move, which typically gives or demands information and is followed by a responding (R) move, which either acknowledges the information given or provides the information that was demanded; in the latter case, there is frequently a follow-up (F) move, which may evaluate the response or build on it in a variety of ways, such as expanding it or requesting the responder to do so. This exchange structure is often referred to as I-R-(F). When the initiating move makes a demand, a further distinction is made between a demand for information that is assumed to be known and one that invites many possible responses. The follow-up move is also characterized with respect to the manner in which it takes up the response or fails to do so.

In one investigation of whole-class discussions in 45 lessons, the coding scheme was used to explore the relationship between the teachers' choice of question type—whether for known information or for exploration—the length and complexity of the students' responses and the type of follow-up move the teachers made to student responses to questions of the two kinds. While the results were complex, there was clear evidence that when the teachers attempted to adopt an inquiry approach, they were more likely to

initiate episodes in which they encouraged exploration rather than simply managing recitation of information and that in such episodes the students offered longer and more complex contributions. Also the teachers used the follow-up move more to sustain and extend the discussion than to evaluate student contributions.

In a second investigation carried out at the end of the DICEP project, a comparison was made between the discourse style of eight teachers earlier and later in their participation in the project. Drawing on the work of Martin Nystrand and his colleagues, three new categories were added to the coding scheme: Level of Cognitive Demand, Level of Evaluation and the occurrence of Student Questions of a substantive kind. While the later recordings showed evidence of the teachers having moved towards a more dialogic style, with higher scores on each of the added categories, the prevailing mode of discussion continued to be in the triadic (I-R-F) mode, and there were relatively few episodes of what Nystrand called 'true discussion'. Nevertheless, further qualitative analysis of these later recordings showed that the teachers were adopting a 'dialogic stance' and their students were taking a much more active role in the co-construction of knowledge about the topics being explored.

Achievements and Challenges

Dialogic inquiry is essentially a way of operationalizing a sociocultural theory of learning, particularly in contexts of formal education. DICEP involved three groups of learners: students, classroom teachers and university researchers. Each group engaged in different kinds of learning but collaborated with each other as they pursued their different inquiries. It was also an attempt to create a partnership between university researchers and public school teachers in enabling the teachers to (a) undertake their own professional development through collaborative action research and (b) share their findings with other educators through conference presentations and publication. Both these aims were convincingly met. Even when the funding for the project came to an end, the teacher members continued to work as a collaborative group, conducting and reporting on further inquiries. Furthermore, as other educators heard and read about DICEP's achievements, similar projects started up in other places.

While there is growing intellectual support for the principles underlying dialogic inquiry, there is also increasing difficulty in putting them into practice. Chief among these challenges is the current emphasis on a standardized curriculum and assessment of individual students' ability to answer questions of a 'known-answer' kind. Under these conditions, teachers receive little encouragement in (and are often prohibited from) exploring alternative approaches that are responsive to

students' questions and supportive of their collaborative attempts to answer them. Nevertheless, more teacher research showing the effectiveness of dialogic inquiry has the potential to hasten the necessary changes.

Mari Haneda

See also classroom-based action research; collaborative action research; community of inquiry; dialogue; educational action research

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enabled through critical questioning, a process not so easy for an actor to engage in on one's own. It is in such contexts that *dialogue* can be a meaningful method of inquiry in action research.

Dialogue has its roots in the Socratic didactics. Human philosophy, ethics and morality were elaborated through a public process of dialogue in the Greek era; Socrates made it a science. In contemporary usage, *dialogue* is a process of querying, questioning and reflection on the responses to those questions, with enablement and support from a facilitator-researcher. While dialogue implies a conversation between the two, in certain situations a team of researchers may engage a group of actors in a social setting in a *dialogue*; essentially, the process of inquiry is carried forward in a conversation which is critical, reflective and systematic.

Some of the early theoretical formulations for dialogue in action research came from the work and writings of Paulo Freire; in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Freire argued for the use of dialogue as a contribution to conscientization, a process of critical awareness of one's own reality, built on the basis of analysis of subjective experiences. Use of dialogue as a method of inquiry has been most elaborated since then. In this practical way, certain characteristics of this process of dialogue have emerged over time. In a systematic approach, dialogue as a method of action research can serve the purposes of inquiry when conducted as such. Drawing upon the work of Yoland Wadsworth, Rajesh Tandon (2002) describes a number of characteristics of dialogue as a method of inquiry:

- Questions of inquiry take into consideration topics of interest to the particular participants in that setting.
- Seeking information is not merely discussion, debate or argumentation; it is about listening and questioning.
- Questioning is neither adversarial nor consensus oriented; it is able to 'sit with' different and conflicting views. There is an emphasis on generating general questioning rather than the giving of 'answers'.
- All contributions are honoured, respected and heard.
- No content is excluded; all is worthy of discussion.
- People speak for themselves ('I') and not on behalf of others ('they' or 'we').
- The process is able to sit comfortably with silences.
- The process involves careful and focused listening and the giving of attention to other's and to one's own reactions; it involves also the

DIALOGUE

Inquiry into complex social realities entails a critical and reflective elaboration of various meanings and interpretations. In action research, the subjective realities of actors in a social system are full of valuable and relevant data for inquiry into the dynamics of that system. Subjective realities of actors in a given social setting are not easy to access, decipher or understand by another researcher, howsoever sensitive and experienced she may be. Articulation of subjectivity is

suspension or 'holding lightly' of current beliefs, ways of thinking, assumptions and so on.

- The conversation is held over time, possibly considerable time (at each time of meeting, e.g. 2–3 hours, as well as numbers of meetings). This aims to slow down automatic responses, to provide space for new ways of thinking.
- Over time it engenders trust, openness, transparency and risk-taking.
- It is an exchange where there is an iteration of listening and hearing and speaking. It rests on collective inquiry, depending very much on what takes place between participants as they trigger new thinking and reflection in one another.
- The facilitator works to introduce and remind people of the rules of dialogue and gently guides people back from other conventional, 'rut-like' ways of talking.
- The questioning seeks deeper levels of context and understanding of the roots of actions and behaviour; it is able to examine assumptions and loops of thinking.
- By getting insight into the ways we think and feel and the ways we think (and feel) about our thinking (and feeling), new insights are gained regarding our reflection and the actions which result from this process.

In using dialogue as a method of inquiry, researchers have to be prepared in certain particular ways. For a researcher engaged in action research, dialogue can be a powerful method of unpacking and revealing complex and hidden subjectivities. Some of the specific elements of preparation of the researcher (or her team) are derived from the above.

First, the researcher has to build and nurture a relationship of mutual respect and trust with the respondents (the subjects in the dialogue); without trust, it is difficult to facilitate opening up of the innermost dynamics and feelings.

Second, trust building takes time and investment; emotional opening up is a two-way process; dialogue is not psychoanalysis; hence, the researcher should be able to invest emotionally in the larger good of the social system and the actors within it.

Third, the capacity to listen, echo, resonate and empathize is essential in the process of dialogue; without listening, voicing gets interrupted in dialogues. In order to listen, the researcher has to be open to contestations and conflicts in relation to herself, her positions and views and her very act of inquiry.

Fourth, in certain stages of the dialogue, to go deeper into the underlying dynamics of the issues entailed, the researcher has to be able to confront and

cajole the respondents to continue their articulation of the issues. Capacity to confront has to be in addition to capacity to empathize.

Fifth, the dialogue needs to be recorded in a manner that captures the subjectivity of the process as well as the meanings behind it. Researchers have to be creative in using multiple modes of recording such dialogues for data assembly, collation, synthesis and analysis.

In conclusion, dialogue can be a powerful method of inquiry in those situations where the subjectivity of the respondents in a social setting is crucial to its understanding. Finding ways to engage the actors in inquiry so that they can articulate and reflect on their subjective experiences of the deep dynamics of the setting can be really rewarding. Many such successful efforts at dialogue also result in a deepening commitment of actors to transform their setting, in a way producing effective action outcomes from the inquiry itself. For this method of action research to be deployed properly in the process of inquiry, preparation of researchers is crucial. Many a time, the method is not used because researchers do not feel confident to do so. Efforts made to prepare researchers in a mentored mode can enhance the efficacy of dialogue as a method of inquiry in action research.

Rajesh Tandon

See also dialogic inquiry; Freire, Paulo

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DIALOGUE CONFERENCES

The aim of Dialogue Conferences is to provide an arena of discussion in which all those participating can create a common ground for their own further collaborative activities. Crucial to such projects is not the sharing of ideas but of experiences; people need to feel that the principles governing their public behaviour are ones in which they have all participated in creating. To date, Dialogue Conferences (and their close cousin, public conversations) have been used in work life reform, industrial democracy, regional and community development projects, local government economic planning, correcting gender and racial inequalities, health-care reforms, conflict resolution and in many other areas to do with the clarification

and resolution of public concerns. Two main origins and their developments—European and American—will be discussed. The entry also describes the steps involved in setting them up and discusses what it is that people can do together in such arenas that they cannot do as separate individuals.

European: The ‘Learning Regions’ Programme

In Europe, Dialogue Conferences had their origin in early efforts at implementing democratic theory with the aim of producing workplace democracy in organizations. In Norway, they were influenced by ideas drawn from the British Sociotechnical School, founded on principles originally developed in the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in the 1950s, and had the character of attempts to put theory into practice. These early attempts were unsuccessful. As Bjørn Gustavsen ironically noted, there seemed to be a lack of self-liberating interest among Norwegian workers, which led to the realization that working people seem to react against theories of democratization that are imposed on them. They seem to implicitly identify democracy as the right to create the theory which is to prevail in their workplace themselves.

Thus, what emerged out of these early attempts at workplace democratization was the importance of local theory, local ways of implementing the aims expressed within an open framework of general theory—such as giving people more freedom and competence in their jobs, claiming shop floor rights, participation in determining workplace conditions and so on. Local features, which might seem small and unimportant to outside observers, can make all the difference to those working in these conditions. All these lead to a reappraisal of the role of theory as such, and particularly that of general theory.

Attention thus shifted from efforts at implementing democratic theory to the conditions and processes that generate different forms of organization and to the importance of Jürgen Habermas’ concept of communicative action. This suggested that dialogue might be the answer. But how might all participants have an equal right to speak? How might the emergence of interpersonal processes different from those taking place in the ordinary hierarchical organization of an industrial enterprise be occasioned? In other words, how might the scene be set? How might open discussion as such be possible?

Crucial, among many other criteria central to the design of Dialogue Conferences—in American, as we shall see, as well as in European contexts—is the requirement that people speak in relation to their own actual lived experiences and not in terms guided by

what they take to be the meaning (their opinions) of a particular general concept for them in their workplace. And it is this—especially when it comes to the importance of local details—that strangely can put all participants on an equal footing.

When liberal democracies were first being developed, the ‘entrance ticket’ to the dialogue was mainly ownership rights, and work experience was excluded as something individual and singular, as not being in itself a resource for participation in such dialogues. But it now turns out that the opposite is the case. For not only does it create an equality of participation, but also such talk—although it might be expressed in terms of seemingly unimportant local details—can draw out a responsive reaction from those to whom it is addressed. The importance of all involved being able, spontaneously, to be responsive to the expressions of the others around them cannot be overemphasized. For, to the extent that all these particular expressions occur within a shared arena of common experiences, they will all be interrelated to each other. Thus, a shared sense of the overall landscape of people’s work life experiences within a particular organization, or economic experiences within a particular region, can begin to emerge.

Thus, in the turn away from general theory as a basis for the implementation of new practices—while retaining it as an open framework of desired goals—and the turn towards work experiences as a basis for the conduct of Dialogue Conferences, participants realize that they face two very different kinds of difficulties in life—not just the one they simply call problem-solving. There are also what they might call difficulties of orientation, which they resolve by arriving at an appropriate way of relating themselves to their, at first, indeterminate circumstances. For their initial task is to get clear as to what it is in the situations bewildering them that they need to attend to. As Donald Schön suggested some time ago, besides a problem-solving ability, competent practitioners must also undertake ‘problem setting’—a process by which, in interaction with the situation in question, they name the things to which they will attend and frame the context in which they will attend to them.

In line with Schön’s suggestion above, it is possible to set out a number of ‘orientational directives’ relevant to the creation and facilitation of Dialogue Conferences:

- Work experience is the point of departure for participation (concrete examples are important—in particular, moving events that one has been struck by).
- All concerned with the issues under discussion should have the possibility of participating.

- Dialogue is based on a principle of give and take, or two-way discourse, not one-way communication (participants must be responsive to each other).
- Participants are under an obligation to help other participants be active in the dialogue.
- All participants have the same rank in the dialogue arenas.
- Some of the concrete experiences possessed by participants on entering the dialogue must be seen as relevant.
- It must be possible for all participants to gain an understanding of the topics under discussion (time must be spent in achieving this).
- An argument can be rejected only after exploration of its details (and not, e.g., on the grounds that it emanates from a source with limited legitimacy).
- All arguments that are to enter the dialogue must be expressed by the actors present.
- All participants are obliged to accept that other participants may have arguments better than their own.
- Among the issues that can be made subject to discussion are also the ordinary work roles of the participants—no one is exempt from such a discussion (something unique can be seen from every position in a relational landscape).
- The dialogue should be able to integrate a growing number of differences (indeed, it is precisely from their integration into a living whole that a sense of a workplace's or a region's relational landscape emerges).
- The dialogue should continuously generate decisions that provide platforms for joint action.

Rather than functioning in any foundational manner, as a set of general underlying principles to which participants are meant to conform, when arrayed as a set of criteria, these directives can function as a set of reminders working to orient participants towards what Dialogue Conferences are. At certain crucial moments, they can work to bring to public attention unnoticed tendencies already at work in people's spontaneous ways of working with each other, and thus to refine and elaborate them further.

American: The Public Conversations Project

On the morning of 30 December 1994, John Salvi walked into the Planned Parenthood clinic in Brookline, Boston, USA, and opened fire with a rifle. He seriously wounded three people and killed the receptionist, Shannon Lowney, as she spoke on the phone. He then ran to

his car and drove 2 miles down Beacon Street to Pre-term Health Services, where he began shooting again, injuring two and killing the receptionist, Lee Ann Nichols. Ever since the *Roe v. Wade* landmark decision by the US Supreme Court in 1973, on the issue of abortion, the pro-life/pro-choice debate in America has remained unresolved.

Laura Rockefeller Chasin had already noticed in her work as a family therapist similarities between polarized public conversations and 'stuck' family conversations, when each person overgeneralizes and builds a case about the other person. Having already learned how to move from closed debate to more open dialogue, she and her colleagues began to wonder if what they had learned in the therapy room could be applied in the abortion controversy.

As they saw it, in a debate, (a) people speak of general principles from a position of certainty as representatives of a larger but absent group, (b) they defend their own beliefs, (c) they attack the other side, (d) they listen for the opportunity to oppose and, as a result, (e) differences become barriers, leading to insurmountable social problems. While in a dialogue (if it is staged and monitored appropriately), (a) exchanges occur in which people speak and listen openly and respectfully to each other; (b) experiences, perspectives and beliefs are exchanged; (c) people speak of individual experiences over a range of different stances; (d) people listen with interest and curiosity and speak to learn more and, as a result, (e) the differences expressed between them become resources for the group.

The groups involved ranged from four to eight participants, but groups of six seemed to be ideal. Sessions took place from 6.00 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. on weekday evenings. Seven important steps were involved in staging and monitoring the conversations:

Step 1: Known partisans of one side or the other in the abortion debate were contacted by telephone and offered the chance to experience their differences from each other and to explore them in a deeper manner than usual in a safe atmosphere. Participants were then sent a letter reiterating what was said in the telephone call about fostering a safe environment, along with the debate or dialogue table (see Table 1), some questions to ponder and the request to bring to the dialogue session 'the part of you that listens thoughtfully and respectfully to others, not the part that is prone to persuade, defend or attack'.

Step 2: On their initial arrival, participants shared a light meal and were asked to say a few words about themselves, without indicating on what side of the issue they stood.

Debate

Pre-meeting communication between sponsors and participants is minimal and largely irrelevant.

Participants tend to be leaders known for propounding a carefully crafted position. The personas displayed in the debate are usually already familiar to the public. The behaviour of the participants conforms to stereotypes.

The atmosphere is threatening; attacks and interruptions are expected by participants and are usually permitted by moderators.

Participants speak as representatives of groups.

Participants speak to their own constituents and, perhaps, to the undecided middle.

Differences within 'sides' are denied or minimized.

Participants express unswerving commitment to a point of view, approach or idea.

Participants listen in order to refute the other side's data and to expose faulty logic in their arguments. Questions are asked from a position of certainty. These questions are often rhetorical challenges or disguised statements.

Statements are predictable and offer little new information.

Success requires impassioned statements.

Debates operate within the constraints of the dominant public discourse. (The discourse defines the problem and the options for resolution. It assumes that fundamental needs and values are already clearly understood).

Dialogue

Pre-meeting contacts and preparation of participants are essential elements of the full process.

Those chosen to participate are not necessarily outspoken 'leaders'. Whoever they are, they speak as individuals whose own unique experiences differ in some respects from those of others on the same 'side'. Their behaviour is likely to vary in some degree and along some dimensions from stereotypic images others may hold of them.

The atmosphere is one of safety; facilitators propose, get agreement on and enforce clear ground rules to enhance safety and promote respectful exchange.

Participants speak as individuals from their own unique experience.

Participants speak to each other.

Differences among participants on the same 'side' are revealed as individual and personal foundations of beliefs and values are explored.

Participants express uncertainties as well as deeply held beliefs.

Participants listen to understand and gain insight into the beliefs and concerns of the others. Questions are asked from a position of curiosity.

New information surfaces.

Success requires exploration of the complexities of the issue being discussed.

Participants are encouraged to question the dominant public discourse, that is, to express fundamental needs that may or may not be reflected in the discourse and to explore various options for problem definition and resolution. Participants may discover inadequacies in the usual language and concepts used in the public debate.

Table 1 *On Distinguishing Debate From Dialogue*

SOURCE: Taken from Becker, C., Chasin, L., Chasin, R., Herzig, M., & Roth, S. (1995). From stuck debate to new conversation on controversial issues: A report from the Public Conversations Project. In K. Weingarten (Ed.), *Cultural resistance: Challenging beliefs about men, women, and therapy* (pp. 143–164). New York, NY: Harrington Press. Reprinted with permission.

Step 3: Orientation (20 minutes)—It was suggested that participants make agreements with each other to maintain confidentiality, to use respectful language, to let each person finish speaking and to allow 'passing' in response to questions.

Step 4: (45 minutes)—Three questions (two go-rounds and one popcorn) were asked. (1) We

would like you to say something about your own life experiences in relation to the issue of abortion. For example, something about your personal history with the issue, how you got interested, what your involvement has been. (2) What is at the heart of the matter for you? (3) Many people have within their general approach some grey

areas, some dilemmas about their own beliefs, or even conflicts within themselves. Sometimes these grey areas are revealed when people consider hard-case circumstances in which a pro-life person might want to allow an abortion or situations in which a pro-choice person might not want to permit an abortion. Or . . .

Step 5: (65 minutes)—Participants asked questions of each other.

Step 6: (20 minutes)—The dialogue was finished with the following questions: What do you think you have done to make this conversation go, or not go, as it has? Have you any parting thoughts you would like to share?

Step 7: Follow up—A few weeks later, a follow-up telephone call was made.

The consequences of such dialogues as these were reported in the *Boston Globe* report on the Public Conversations Project: ‘Talking With the Enemy’ (Sunday, 28 January 2001). In July 1995, six religious leaders involved in the pro-choice/pro-life debate, three from either side, were invited by the Public Conversations Project to meet, and they continued to meet for nearly 5½ years, over more than 150 hours; and 6 years after the shootings in Brookline, on the 28th anniversary of the US Supreme Court’s landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision, they decided to publicly disclose their meetings for the first time.

The early meetings were difficult. There were many clashes over each other’s language, with many disagreements still unresolved. Yet, even after a year of meeting, their increased understanding of each other affected how they spoke as leaders of their respective movements. And the news media, unaware of their meetings, nonetheless began noting differences in their public statements, their toning down of their rhetoric and their tendency to no longer attack their opponents. This seemed to be critical. Curiosity rather than anger at each other’s differences led to the creation of a previously lacking common ground.

The overall outcome of their meetings, however, seems paradoxical. For even after nearly 6 years of meeting, they remained deeply divided; they saw that their differences on abortion reflected two irreconcilable world views. So why did they continue to meet? Because as they faced their opponents, they were able to see their dignity and goodness. They also felt that they had become wiser and more effective leaders, more knowledgeable about their political opponents and more able to avoid being overreactive and disparaging and to focus instead on affirming their respective causes.

Conclusion

The focus, then, in the Dialogue Conferences and meetings discussed above, is on the new forms of relationship and the new worlds that can be created within them.

European Example. Although most of the criteria cited above emerged out of trial-and-error experiences with what is needed to make workplace and enterprise dialogues function, with hindsight, it is possible to formulate good reasons for their usefulness. For instance, the first orientational directive—the demand that work experience form the point of departure—leads people away from talking in abstractions, in representational ‘aboutness’ talk, and towards talking in terms of concrete, personal experiences: a moving way of talking that creates a felt response in listeners to which they can readily respond. Indeed, if the overall aim of Dialogue Conferences is to provide opportunities for all those concerned with a region’s development to create a shared sense of their previously unnoticed resourceful relations to each other, then their living responsiveness to each other is crucial. As noted earlier, like actors in a play, rather than the participants each separately experiencing the region in which they live and working as neutral, inanimate objects to which they must orient themselves individually in their responsive relations to one other, the Dialogue Conferences come to have a life of their own. When this occurs, all involved come to co-ordinate their activities together in being answerable to its calls. But this is only possible if all involved play out aspects of their roles with the others around them in responsive attendance.

American Example. Similarly, although the procedures followed emerged out of experiences in the family therapy consulting room, it is again possible with hindsight to formulate good reasons for them. What is crucial here in affording these results is the changed role of language and speech, a shift from talk functioning in a passive representational manner in relation to general concepts to its working in a moving, responsive manner, within the landscape of an extensive arena of shareable different work experiences. It is our responsive understandings that can change us in how we relate ourselves to the others and othernesses around us.

And it is in this respect—in emphasizing the importance of people recounting their particular, lived experiences rather than their general beliefs and/or principles—that the Boston Public Conversations Project parallels the Dialogue Conferences conducted in Gustavsen’s Learning Regions Program: It is not so much new knowledge as such that people gain in such experiences but new orientations, new ways of relating

both to the others and othernesses around them and to themselves. In more homely terms, there can be a shift in Dialogue Conferences and public conversations from what we might call ‘up-in-the-air’ to ‘down-on-the-ground’ talk.

John Shotter

See also Critical Utopian Action Research; Norwegian Industrial Democracy Movement; Tavistock Institute; Work Research Institute, The

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DIG WHERE YOU STAND MOVEMENT

The Dig Where You Stand Movement, or Dig Movement for short, was named after its central document, a Swedish handbook for industrial workers on how to research the history of their own work and workplace. Written by Sven Lindqvist and published in 1978, it helped create 10,000 ‘barefoot’ research groups in Sweden, Scandinavia, Germany, Austria and Canada. Their results were published in hundreds of exhibitions, books, pamphlets and theatrical plays, and more permanently in 1,300 Swedish ‘museums of working life’ with technical and methodological support by a new national institution, the ‘Museum of Working Life’ in Norrköping.

The idea of ‘digging’ for truth close to home can be traced back to Friedrich Nietzsche, who wrote ‘Wo du stehst, grab tiefhinein!’ (‘Where you stand, dig in deeply!’), *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Poem 3).

The idea of workers researching their own history emerged during the Russian revolution. Maxim

Gorky edited the periodical *History of Factories and Workshops*. Publication was suspended during World War II and then resumed after the war had completely changed character. Company history was now, in the East as in the West, written by professionals to celebrate company anniversaries.

The original idea of a workers’ history of work and workplace resurfaced in China during the Great Leap Forward (1958–61). It was called ‘Dig the Bitter Roots’, and the aim was to uncover the hardships and indignities of pre-revolutionary working conditions. The results were published in exhibitions, in newspaper articles and over local radio. Sven Lindqvist became aware of this movement while studying Chinese at Beijing University in 1961.

At the same time, a new interest in the remains of the Industrial Revolution emerged in the UK. Small groups of amateur historians gathered to protect and restore industrial buildings and machinery. The movement got its name from Kenneth Hudson’s television programmes and his book *Industrial Archaeology* (1963). Hudson inspired Gunnar Sillén and other professional protectors of the cultural heritage of Sweden to make their projects include industrial monuments.

For traditional historians, history has, by definition, been the past as recorded in documents written at the time. The lower classes, having left few documents behind, are by definition without history. The Oral History Movement in the UK attempted to fill this gap by systematically collecting and recording old people’s memories. Paul Thompson’s 1978 volume *The Voice of the Past* became the central text of the oral historians.

In Sweden, these ideas and their metaphor were combined under the heading ‘Dig Where You Stand.’ The Swedish way of digging differed from similar movements in Britain and Germany in its emphasis on the expertise of the worker. Lindqvist encouraged workers not to be afraid of being experts and to see their own workplaces as a point of departure for their research.

The Swedish movement also differed in its emphasis on power. Business ownership has brought with it the power to decide how company history should be presented and understood. The workplaces of thousands have often been seen from the viewpoint of a few owners and directors. Most workers know little about their forerunners, and Lindqvist makes it clear that it is imperative that this history be uncovered because the impact of this history still influences the present. Such was the message that fired the Dig Movement in the optimistic days of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Then came globalization, the economic crisis and the restructuring of European industry. Many jobs were lost; many diggers changed to a nostalgic mood. But

others rose to the challenge and continued to ask awkward questions: What happened in those closed rooms where others decided our fate? Was the outcome predetermined? Was there anything we could have done to change it?

Some of these questions became awkward not only to the company confronted but also to the diggers themselves: The fish are dying up to 20 miles out at sea. We must pose the moral problem: How much environmental damage is a job worth? How much dirt can a job produce and still be a valid contribution to the community?

The Dig Where You Stand Movement had its high tide in the 1980s. It did not reach its primary aim of increasing workers' power in the workplace. It did, however, bring together enough documentary, physical and oral evidence to make the working life of the working classes part of a permanently broadened concept of history.

Sven Lindqvist

See also Critical Utopian Action Research; Norwegian Industrial Democracy Movement; research circles

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DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Participatory video strategies have proliferated as technology has become more accessible, available and approachable. Digital Storytelling is a participatory approach to telling (and sharing) stories using new media technologies. By blending recorded oral narratives with simple yet compelling visuals, Digital Storytelling practices put the power of the media into the hands of the populace. It is becoming increasingly popular as a Community-Based Participatory Research method.

This entry briefly reviews the history of Digital Storytelling, describes how to make a digital story, explains how Digital Storytelling is different from other participatory video methods, offers examples of how digital stories are being used in community-based and academic settings and explores some of the unique ethical challenges associated with the method.

History

Storytelling has long been used as a strategy for engaging, educating and entertaining. Cultures around the world use stories to preserve and share historical knowledge and transmit values. Storytelling also serves a spiritual and ceremonial function for many indigenous communities. All stories are told through a narrator, who describes the plot, context and characters. Some stories are ancient and are reworked with each telling. Others are newly birthed. Everyone has stories to share.

The Center for Digital Storytelling was born in the early 1990s out of a desire to help people tell and share personal stories with grace. Drawing on the legacies of participatory development, Freirian education models of critical consciousness-raising and the feminist motto that the personal *is* political, the centre believed in the transformative power of everyday narratives. Eschewing the notion that art ought to be created only by those with talent and professional training, Joe Lambert and his colleagues sought to codify a methodology that would allow ordinary people to develop their own compelling narratives. The centre developed a concise

workshop format that blended ancient narrative techniques with modern audiovisual media, to help stories come alive and be more easily disseminated. Its work was steeped in the democratic ideals of developing critical multimedia literacy skills and helping people retain control over their own stories. The centre believes that bringing groups of people together to collectively work on individual stories is an important part of the process.

One of the features that make Digital Storytelling different from other traditional forms of story sharing is its potential reach. Digital Storytelling was born in the dawn of, and has evolved in tandem with, the Internet and social media era. Social networking platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, blogs, YouTube and countless others, have made sharing new media nearly effortless in areas where connectivity is easily available. As a result, the potential reach of compelling stories knows ever fewer bounds. Personal stories mingle with news and other forms of information to become powerful political symbols and codes for social struggles. In places where distribution via online or mobile tools is not possible, digital stories (or components of the original products) can be broadcast via traditional television and radio outlets.

What Is a Digital Story?

A digital story is typically a 2- to 5-minute short film that synthesizes some combination of voice recording, still images, video clips, music or audio and text. Stories produced by the Center for Digital Storytelling generally

1. are self-revelatory, told in first person voice;
2. convey emotion;
3. explore lived experience rather than fictional plots;
4. privilege still images and a simple visual aesthetic;
5. may include music and sound; and
6. are short (approximately 2–5 minutes in length).

Digital stories are produced in a workshop format with the assistance of skilled facilitators, in a safe, technology-enabled environment. The process of creating stories is viewed as just as important as, if not more important than, the final video product that emerges. Facilitators normally have expertise in group dynamics; various approaches to oral, visual and written narrative development and theory and video-editing software. Workshops generally take place over a contiguous 3- or 4-day period and result in final products that are ready for screening. (A minimum of approximately 24 hours is required to complete the standard process, which can

be spread out over multiple days or weeks, though more longitudinal and even short-form workshops have been practised.)

The Seven Steps to Creating a Digital Story

As practiced by the Center for Digital Storytelling, the process of creating digital stories usually involves all or some of the following seven key steps:

Step 1: Own your insights. In this stage, you choose a story you want to share. *What is the story you want to tell? What does it mean to you?*

Step 2: Own your emotions. In this stage, you decide on a mood for your story. Some stories are funny, others are sad or poignant or even angry. *What emotions do you want to convey? What audible, textual or visual strategies can you use to show emotion?*

Step 3: Find the moment. An effective or engaging story often employs a narrative arc that describes the lead-up to actions and events (climax), followed by resolution. When authors share facts, they are simply providing information. When authors tell a story, they can convey nuance and meaning without naming the moral or the data or lesson they might want an audience to glean. *Can you describe particular moments of change or truth in great detail? How can you reveal this transformation in your story?*

Step 4: See your story. A digital story is a multimedia piece. Audio narrative is complemented with supporting visuals and vice versa. *What images come to mind as you tell your story? Are they literal? Metaphorical? Abstract? How can they be used to add depth and impact to your story?*

Step 5: Hear your story. Now that you have figured out what you want to say, you're ready to record your voice. In this stage, you create a voice-over and make decisions about the soundtrack (e.g. music or ambient noise, silence or sound effects). *How do you want your story to sound?*

Step 6: Assemble your story. In this stage, you use video-editing software to bring all the elements of your story together. By laying voice, sounds and images and adding transitions and effects, you complete your final product. *How does it all fit together? What is the relationship between the different elements? Complementary? Redundant? Juxtaposing?*

Step 7: Share your story. The last step is to share the final product, first with yourself and

perhaps with others you've been working alongside. The collective story screening is a key aspect of a Digital Storytelling workshop. Once your video is done, it is important to take a moment to revel in your accomplishments. After sharing your story, you may decide you want to edit it further, limit its circulation or disseminate it widely. *How does an audience respond? How does it feel to know that others are witnessing your story? What does it feel like to have a story that was once inside you, now outside?*

How Is Digital Storytelling Different From Other Participatory Video Methods?

Digital Storytelling distinguishes itself from other forms of participatory video projects in a number of ways. First, digital stories typically focus on individual lives and experiences and are largely autobiographical in nature. In contrast to other types of film projects, they do not generally require actors to play out scenes or authoritative 'experts' to share facts or talk about people in a remote, third person voice. Instead, digital stories are rooted in personal accounts.

Second, digital stories usually employ a pared-down visual treatment rather than one that is flashy, laden with special effects or overproduced. Because still images are often easier to work with than video footage, and because more people have still images (or can create still images) than video, digital stories are often made up largely of still images. With tight workshop timelines, especially in groups with limited technological savvy, it is easier to support storytellers in becoming proficient at manipulating stills. The resulting slower pace of digital stories can sometimes help audiences focus on what is being said.

Finally, most digital stories are edited by their authors. Digital Storytelling workshops emphasize hands-on software training to enable storytellers to make their own decisions about what to say or show. This is in contrast to many other participatory video methods, which bring people together to determine the desired content for a film and sometimes assist with ideography but quite often rely on outside, 'professional' technicians to edit the final videos.

Uses of Digital Storytelling

Digital Storytelling is used for multiple purposes, depending on the overall vision of a given project. Its primary purpose is generally to empower workshop participants to tell their own stories and develop new media and technology literacy. Digital Storytelling is widely used in educational settings. The methods are

flexible and enriching enough that they can be used both in the elementary school curriculum and in post-graduate courses. Digital story creation is a unique pedagogical strategy that can be adapted by educators to help students reflect deeply on the connections between the personal and the political. The process of developing and sharing a story can be cathartic for many people. In addition, the products that come out of Digital Storytelling workshops can be used as tools to raise awareness about a variety of health and social issues. Some stories are also used for political organizing and advocacy. For example, the Center for Digital Storytelling's Silence Speaks initiative collaborates with organizations around the world to position Digital Storytelling as a method for promoting gender equality, women's health and human rights.

Increasingly, Digital Storytelling is being used by health and social science researchers as a strategy for gathering rich, multi-sensory data about important social issues. Both the process and the products can be studied by action researchers who are interested in participatory visual methodologies. The stories themselves provide important glimpses into how research participants see, understand and choose to depict their worlds.

Lisa Wexler and colleagues have worked with native youth living in 12 villages in northwest Alaska to produce 271 digital stories that explore how young people are growing up in a world very different from that of their parents and grandparents. Gendered analyses point to the need for more mentorship opportunities for young men in order to offer different role models of success. These findings can be used to inform the development of assets-based interventions that more closely align with local community values.

Similarly, Sarah Flicker and colleagues have used digital stories as a way to understand indigenous leadership possibilities. Her research team was interested in countering negative stereotypes and engaged 18 Aboriginal youth leaders in a workshop to tell their stories of HIV activism (www.TakingAction4Youth.org). Not only were the stories themselves understood as data, but the youth also participated in individual in-depth interviews to discuss the process, outcomes and potential of story sharing as a decolonizing strategy.

While the two examples highlighted above focus on indigenous communities in North American contexts, the method has been used all over the world to study a range of issues. Darcy Alexandra has used Digital Storytelling to explore the autobiographies and experiences of undocumented migrants to Ireland. Claudia Mitchell's work has focused on HIV prevention and gender-based violence in South Africa. She has written about the possibilities of creating longer composite

films that link, narrate and contextualize multiple individual stories.

Special Ethical Considerations: Multilayered Consent

As with other forms of visual research, those initiating an action research project using Digital Storytelling must first reflect on the special ethical considerations it raises. First and foremost, everyone involved in a digital story action research project must understand their rights and responsibilities with regard to the research.

Second, rather than asking workshop participants to simply sign a consent form that illustrates the risks and benefits of participation, consent is best viewed as a multilayered endeavour. It can be divided into the following:

- Consent to participate in a research project and to *create* a video: Risks and benefits should focus on issues related to group dynamics, the challenges associated with confidentiality in a group setting, the discussion of potentially sensitive issues or topics and what supports and safety measures are in place.

- Consent to have one's personal voice or image *represented* in a video: While participants may agree to have their own voice and images included in their story, it is important that they also obtain permission to include images of those represented in video or photographs who are not the authors. Training in how to ask for permission may be useful. Alternatively, groups may wish to brainstorm alternatives, including identifying names, information and faces. *How else might we be able to tell a story without compromising the confidentiality of those included?*

- Consent to have one's final product *shared*: Once the digital stories are finished, participants should own their story and have the opportunity to decide whether (or not) it can be shared and with whom. Participants may decide that they do not want their stories screened at all. They may decide that they only want them screened when they are present or for small groups in educational settings. Alternatively, they may want to share them much more widely online and through other distribution methods. Careful discussions need to take place about the risks associated with sharing content on the Internet (e.g. once it is up, it never really comes down). It is much easier to be conservative about distribution at the outset than later decide to take a story back. Wanda Whitebird, an indigenous elder, counsels that 'once you tell a story, you can never take it back'. This teaching is especially true of electronic media.

- Consent to waive rights of anonymity: After creating their stories, some participants may wish to share their stories widely but remain anonymous. Others might feel very strongly that they want to be credited for their work and have their names attached to their own stories. Both standpoints should be respected. Even if participants decide that they want to remain anonymous, facilitators may need to carefully review the content of their stories with them. In small communities, it may be impossible to safeguard identity, particularly if the stories or events described are well known. There is also always a risk that people's voices might be recognized. Each of these stages requires careful discussion so that participants understand the short- and long-term implications of their decisions.

Conclusion

Digital Storytelling blends the ancient art of storytelling with modern multimedia technology to create short films that have the potential to empower individuals and have an impact on communities. Increasingly, action researchers are leveraging the method to illuminate new ways of understanding health and social issues. Despite the potential that Digital Storytelling offers to those engaged in emancipatory scholarship and community-based practice, great care must be taken to ensure that thoughtful and informed ethical principles are employed.

Sarah Flicker and Amy Hill

See also arts-based action research; ethics and moral decision-making; narrative; oral history; organizational storytelling; Photovoice; storytelling

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Websites

Center for Digital Storytelling: <http://www.storycenter.org>
Center for Digital Storytelling's Silence Speaks initiative: <http://www.silencespeaks.org>

DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS

This entry provides a brief account of disabled people's organizations (DPOs), explores the links between their work and action research and provides three practice examples of action research involving or initiated by DPOs.

Development of DPOs

Disability is a broad term which is highly political and is defined in different ways. Traditionally, it has included people with a range of impairments which include, physical, sensory, psychiatric and intellectual. In the early twentieth century, disability was defined in terms of the impairment that people experienced, and they were frequently constituted as groups in need of medical care and protection. This approach to disabled people, with its focus on individual impairment and medicalization, has been termed by some disabled writers and academics, most particularly in the UK, as the individual or medical model. In many countries, over the past 50 years, there has been a profound shift in the way disabled people are viewed. A focus on the rights of marginalized groups following the Second World War, institutional scandals which revealed both the poor quality of life of the disabled people living in them and new theories and models of disability, such as normalization and social role valorization, led to a more rights-focused approach, which constituted disabled people as citizens who were 'disabled' not by their impairments but by societal barriers, such as discrimination, prejudice and the organization of society in ways which precluded their involvement. This approach, which places the responsibility for removing social barriers to inclusion on society, is known as the social model of disability. It has had a profound effect on government policies in the UK and underpins the UN Convention on Rights of Persons With Disabilities (2006).

The development of DPOs was an integral part of the movement to a rights-based approach towards disabled people. These organizations are formed, managed and controlled by disabled people and work for equality and rights. DPOs give a voice to disabled people and have had a profound impact on policy and practice; they have been a source of resistance to the view that professionals have the power to make decisions about their lives. It is difficult to identify when this movement began, but there are some very significant milestones. In 1969, the independent-living movement began in Berkeley, California, and remains a strong movement in many European and Australasian countries. The independent-living movement works towards self-determination, equal opportunities and respect for disabled people and for ensuring that they can exercise choice and control in their lives. In 1974, the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation began in the UK and became a significant force in shifting from the medical model of disability to the social model. People First, which represents people with learning difficulties, began in 1988, and DPOs representing people with mental health issues and sensory impairments were also developed during this time in different countries. Many of the DPOs represent specific groups of disabled people, while others are cross-disability in their focus. Some work locally or regionally within a country, others are national in their focus, while others work at an international level. For example, Disabled People's International has membership from 110 countries, more than half of which are in the southern hemisphere. DPOs have been a strong voice in campaigning and advocacy in relation to the rights of disabled people and in influencing the development of new forms of services which give disabled people power in their lives.

Action Research and DPOs

The values which have informed the work of DPOs have included the insistence that (a) such organizations be managed and owned by disabled people, (b) they involve disabled people actively in the work that they do, (c) their aims are based on the expert lived knowledge of disabled people about their own lives and are focused on the need to achieve societies where disabled people are not oppressed by barriers that prevent their full inclusion and (d) they work with and for disabled people.

The values which are espoused by DPOs in both their constitution and their work are well aligned with action research, described by Peter Reason and Hillary Bradbury as having the following characteristics:

1. It is democratic and participative—the research group contains members of the community being researched, and even if the main labour of the research is undertaken by only some members of the group, all come together as co-researchers to share data and make sense of it.
2. It develops and changes over time as a project evolves—it is 'live' and therefore responsive to the data discovered during the research inquiry. The form of the research process may therefore change as deemed appropriate by the research group, and the conclusions are emergent—it does not simply test a hypothesis.
3. It produces knowledge that is practical and useful in people's everyday lives and work.
4. Knowledge is created in and through action—there are cycles of action and reflection that lead to meaning or sense making, which is then tested again through action, with more reflection. It is grounded in participants' actual experience.
5. The research is for the general good—benefitting people, their communities and environments. Action research is not interested in abstract and non-useful information; the objective must be to improve the condition of the human and more-than-human world.

It can be said that action research aims to combine or blur the roles of researcher, research subject and activist, and to include all the different ways in which we can 'know' something—in other words, privileging not just intellectual ideas but also lived experience and feeling material. Action research is well suited to being used by disabled people and groups as it is pragmatic—there are no fixed techniques that have to be used, and so it can be tailored to the participants' strengths. We include three short case studies to illustrate how an action research approach has been used by groups of disabled people. Each of these case studies involved working with people in different ways and demonstrates the flexibility of this approach.

Doing Action Research With DPOs

Action research involving disabled people takes different forms. It usually involves representatives from DPOs or groups of disabled people who are integrally involved in the development and implementation of the research and action and also researchers who are disabled themselves or are collaborators with the DPO. There is a focus in this kind of research on

(a) strengthening the organization and the capacity of participating members in terms of knowledge and information, (b) developing reciprocal skills between researchers and disabled people from DPOs, (c) contributing new knowledge about the issues important to participants in the research and (d) developing action which can be used to remove barriers or to increase the power of disabled people.

Case Study 1: Living Safer Sexual Lives

Living Safer Sexual Lives was a 3-year action research study in Australia, which used life stories by people with intellectual disabilities to gain their perspective on sexuality and relationships and to take action arising from the research. The research was not initiated by people with intellectual disabilities, but their endorsement for the approach was sought through meetings with representatives from DPOs. Representatives were then members of a reference group which guided the research. Together with the researchers, they designed questions and ways of seeking contributors, resolved ethical issues and were actively involved in analyzing the life stories which formed the basis of the research. Because of issues of confidentiality, the reference group members decided not to be involved in the development of life stories or to contribute their own stories. The research aimed to undertake action as a result of the findings of the study to support people with intellectual disabilities to live safer and more fulfilling sexual lives. The key themes arising from the research were the desire of life story contributors for adult sexual lives, negative attitudes towards their sexuality by service providers and families, the hidden nature of many people's sexual lives and loneliness and isolation.

As a result of the research, the reference group made decisions about what forms of action should be taken. The reference group members with the researchers designed workshops for people with intellectual disabilities, families and service providers with a focus on attitude change and increasing knowledge of sexuality and relationships. Members of the reference group lobbied the government to change its policies and became representatives in a government working group which redrafted policies in relation to sexuality and relationships. They used their links with self-advocacy organizations during this process to advocate for change. People with intellectual disabilities were also involved in public speaking about the findings of the research and in media coverage of it.

Implications of the Study

Disabled people did not initiate this research issue in part because sexuality was a difficult and much

contested area of their lives. The process of action research was developmental, and the learnings from it were reciprocal. People with intellectual disabilities over time became more confident in discussing sexuality and more knowledgeable about the barriers many people confronted in leading safe sexual lives. Non-disabled researchers learned from disabled people about the increased sensitivity of the topic for them and the barriers to having their voice heard on this issue. The reference group was integral to undertaking research in this sensitive area and was a powerful influence in changing oppressive government policies in relation to sexuality and disabled people.

Case Study 2: Diabetic Services Users Group

This group was a Co-Operative Inquiry (CI) into the self-management of diabetes mellitus, commissioned in 1998 by the National Health Services in Gloucestershire, UK. The group met for eight sessions, facilitated by an independent researcher who herself had lived experience of chronic illness.

The aims were to enable participants to explore the nature of self-management of their diabetes, to enable them to manage their condition and the practitioners supporting them, to improve the design and delivery of diabetic services and professional practice and to raise awareness of the condition. The group aimed to build confidence and communication skills within the group, to enable effective feedback on the experience of using services and on possible future developments and to develop a template for the development of other, similar groups.

The research resulted in individual learning for group members, better informed professionals who had consulted with the group and wider influence through participants becoming members of the Clinical Audit Group, National Service Framework (NSF) Implementation Group and Local Diabetic Services Action Group. The group was effective in influencing service review and development and in the implementation of the NSF for Diabetes Services in Gloucestershire.

The CI methodology supported the empowerment of those participating in the inquiry. It was chosen because patients' lived experience was being undervalued by health professionals, leaving patients feeling deskilled. It was therefore important that the methodology chosen increased confidence in participants. CI is well suited as a participative research methodology where the primary source of knowledge is the self-directing person within a community of inquiry and individuals became increasingly self-actualized persons through the strengthening of self-esteem and the sense of self-efficacy as a result of participation in the research.

The CI group supported a process of conscientization, and a range of service providers were invited to

speak with the group about their services (e.g. the head of the chiropody service at the time when a reduction in service was proposed). The group became increasingly confident to question and challenge the assumptions underlying some service planning. This culminated in a report presented to the Local Diabetic Services Action Group at a joint meeting with the Diabetic User Group and participants being invited to be members of various working groups reviewing, planning and implementing services. Group members also reported being more assertive about the services they used.

Implications of the Study

This project is an example of the application of an extended epistemology. Within the CI group, the participants told stories about their lives as it was affected by their diabetes, shared their experiences and found areas of common ground. They also were able to learn from each other about what they might expect from the illness and the services. The group has demonstrated the value of storytelling as a method for transfer of information and the building of confidence/assertiveness. The value is its accessibility for patients as a conversational form, rather than their being required to find more formal ways to engage with each other or the system. They were able to explore and rehearse situations as diverse as exchanges with overprotective family members and negotiating with health professionals to have a service delivered in a different manner. Participants gathered a much fuller picture of what it was to live with diabetes, which served them well when some members of the group went on to sit on planning groups, such as that implementing the NSF for Diabetes Services in the county. They were able to feel more secure in these representative positions because they had gained a deeper understanding of how diabetes affected their lives and the lives of others, and of the services they used.

The system (the National Health Services) learnt something about how to listen to differently informed opinion—lived experience rather than expert knowledge from a medical model, including professionals' discomfort with having their practice questioned. The group demonstrated the value of experience—linking lived experience and expert knowledge, particularly in its later stage when heads of service met with the group to exchange views and stories of 'how things work' and how they are experienced by those they are designed to serve.

Case Study 3: Partnership Project With National Union of Women With Disabilities in Uganda

This project involved a partnership between the National Union of Women With Disabilities in Uganda

(NUWODU) and the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies in order to support the programmes and work of the NUWODU. This national umbrella organization aims to promote the social, cultural, economic and political advancement of women with disabilities through advocacy. The project was initiated by the NUWODU because it wanted to both increase the skills of its members in undertaking research and discover more about the lived experience of women with disabilities as a basis for campaigning and lobbying. This case study is an example of a group (NUWODU) commissioning academic researchers to undertake research for and alongside members of the commissioning group in order that NUWODU could itself acquire action research skills and experience. This teaching of research skills is common in action research projects and fits well with the model of emancipatory research described above.

The project involved preliminary identification of key issues of concern to women with disabilities; the development of links and networks with other organizations and universities in Uganda; the establishment of a reference group to guide the project; research training workshops for women from the NUWODU, and their subsequent involvement in interviewing women and analyzing transcripts to identify key themes, and the collaborative writing of the reports for the project. Fifty-two women were interviewed by six NUWODU researchers, with support from two students on placement.

Key themes arising from the research were policy and programme development and implementation, financial stability, accessibility, education and family. An overarching theme of attitudes towards women with disabilities was identified. At the end of the research, a number of recommendations were made. The reports do not indicate how these were followed up. However, the report was disseminated through workshops in Uganda, using leaflets and accessible booklets as well as the final report.

Implications of the Study

The research issues arose directly from the NUWODU, which sought assistance from the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies. The resulting funded research was managed as a partnership between the two organizations, with the Canadian Centre providing training and support for the women researchers and developing the analysis of the data.

The report of the research reveals that NUWODU was able to develop its research skills and capacity and to strengthen its relationships with other organizations as a result of the research project. The results were regarded as preliminary, with a stated need for

further research. As in all action research, there were both process and content objectives and outcomes. Increased skills and capacity building within the NUOWDU were seen as important objectives and were regarded as having been achieved, alongside the knowledge gathered about which issues were of importance to disabled women to inform the campaigning.

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See also community-based research; community-university research partnerships; conscientization; empowerment; experiential knowing; health promotion; human rights; tacit knowledge

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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Recent years have brought a flurry of excitement about the concept of discourse and the importance of discourse analysis in the human and social sciences. This has led to a growing set of contested definitions and competing theoretical assumptions, as well as

rival methods and research strategies. But it has also meant that the concept of discourse and the methods of discourse analysis vary widely with respect to their scope and complexity. Alongside traditional concerns with the importance of 'talk and text in context', which includes conversation analysis, speech act theory and various forms of hermeneutical research, Foucault and his many followers have developed archaeological and genealogical approaches to analyze scientific discourses and systems of power or knowledge; Norman Fairclough and others have elaborated 'critical discourse analysis', whilst Wodak has articulated a distinctive form of 'historical discourse analysis'. In the fields of policy analysis, Maarten Hajer has developed a form of 'argumentative discourse analysis', while Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and others have articulated a post-Marxist theory of discourse, which they apply to the emergence, sedimentation and transformation of social formations.

Such expansion in the scope and complexity of discourse analysis in the human and social sciences arose in part because of the impact of speech act theory and the evolution of linguistic philosophy, which has gradually moved the study of language away from a concern simply with the meanings of individual words, signifiers, phrases and sentences to a consideration of the wider linguistic and non-linguistic contexts within which these linguistic events or occurrences take place. What is more, the contexts are seen to include the associated forms of action and behaviour that are entailed by different forms of speaking or writing. As some philosophers have argued, linguistic utterances like 'I promise' are not just words, signs or even assertions but acts and discursive practices that carry a certain force and consequence. Action researchers may utilize discourse analysis, particularly in the context of doctoral research.

In an important sense, the various kinds of approaches elaborated in the social sciences reflect the different starting points of the various theorists or researchers involved, as well as the specific conceptual and theoretical *resources* they draw upon in elaborating their perspectives. For example, what might be called post-structuralist or post-Marxist discourse theory stems from initial attempts to use the work of Antonio Gramsci to tackle problems of class reductionism and economic determinism in Marxist theories of politics and ideology, which can be captured under the sign of essentialism in general.

Discourse and discourse analysis have been used to explore multiple themes and objects in the social sciences. But one set of questions that casts its shadow over many of these themes is the relationship between power, subjectivity and social practice. How, then, should this critical set of connections be conceptualized in the social sciences? Amongst the various approaches

that have sought to connect these elements, the work of Foucault and his followers, on the one hand, and the writings of Laclau and Mouffe and their followers, on the other, are probably the most developed, and this entry examines their accounts in more detail.

Foucault and Discursive Practices

Without adding new layers to the voluminous literature on Michel Foucault's concept of discourse and power, it is possible to pinpoint three pictures of power, each of which mirrors his different methodological orientations. Foucault's earlier archaeological analysis of knowledge focuses on the discursive production of *statements* or *serious* speech acts, in which suitably qualified subjects are empowered to make serious truth claims about objects, which are constituted within particular discursive formations, because of their training, institutional location and mode of discourse. Such utterances qualify as candidates for truth and falsity because they conform to a historically specific system of rules. They are held to be true or false because they are accepted as such by the relevant community of experts.

Foucault thus examines those discursive practices in which subjects are empowered to make serious truth claims about objects, which are constituted within particular discursive formations. Such subjects can do so because of their training, institutional location and mode of discourse. For example, assertions and predictions about the prospects of global warming only become statements when they are uttered by suitably qualified scientists and climate experts, who present plausible theories and evidence to justify their arguments. Foucault is thus able to account for the rarity of scientific discourse, the way science is demarcated from non-science, the relationship between science and ideology and so forth.

Power is important in this approach because it enables the archaeologist to locate moments of exclusion, in which certain statements are condemned to what he calls 'a wild exteriority', and because it highlights a positive set of rules that make possible the production of discourse. But, as Foucault himself later admitted, the question of power remained implicit and under-theorized in his early work. His quasi-structuralist theory of discourse ran aground on a series of methodological contradictions, not least because his purely descriptive intent pushed against the critical potential of the enterprise.

By contrast, his Nietzschean-inspired genealogical approach broadens the notion of discourse to include non-discursive practices, whilst stressing the constitutive function of power in the formation of scientific knowledge. Foucault thus broadens the scope of his investigations in this picture to stress the interweaving of various systems of 'power-knowledge' in the

production and disciplining of various subjects, and his genealogies enable us to explore the contingent and ignoble origins of such systems, whilst stressing the role of power and conflict in forging identities, rules and social forms. Yet he tends to conflate his account of power-knowledge with his critique of the scientificity of the human sciences, whilst reducing subjectivity to the disciplining of ‘docile bodies’, leaving little or no space for freedom, agency and critique.

However, in his final writings on sexuality, governmentality and subjectivity, Foucault offers a third model of discourse and power, which promises to address these difficulties. Here, he modifies his critique of the juridical model of sovereign power by developing a more strategic perspective that power is everywhere because it comes from everywhere. Power is the name we give to a complex strategic situation in a particular society. This new strategic perspective enables Foucault to rethink the relationship between domination, power, subjectivity and discourse, whilst developing his novel account of governmentality.

Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory: Laclau and Mouffe

Foucault thus offers three ways to investigate and reflect upon the role of discursive practices, and their relation to power, subjectivity and society. Although it is by no means definitive, it is possible that discursive practices in Foucault’s models are just a particular subset of social and political practices, which can and ought to be distinguished from other activities like kicking an object on a field. In a crucial respect, however, this is a problematical conclusion, for it is important to note that the latter activity is not without meaning, nor is it an element that is external to systems of sense and signification. Kicking an object in a particular context is an action, but it acquires its meaning and significance only within the context of playing a football match, for example. Its meaning thus differs from the angry response of a football supporter who kicks the ball into a nearby street after his team has conceded a late goal. At the same time, different social practices are themselves meaningful entities: They are thus instances of playing football or explosions of anger and frustration. Indeed, critical researchers also seek to characterize these practices in terms of their meaning, import and significance. They wish to render them intelligible in terms of rules and meanings. In short, language, actions and objects are intertwined in what can be called discourse.

Laclau and Mouffe’s post-structuralist account of discourse theory offers a fruitful way to conceptualize these various distinctions. In this view, discourse is an articulatory practice that constitutes social relations

and formations and thus constructs their meaning. Discourse is articulatory in that it links together contingent elements—both linguistic and non-linguistic—into relational *systems*, in which the identity of the elements is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. A key *condition* of this approach is that all such elements are contingent and unfixed, so that their meaning and identity are only partially fixed by articulatory practices. The outcomes of such practices are incomplete systems of meaning and practice.

In accounting for the formation of discourses, this approach stresses the primacy of politics and power. Discourses are thus constructed by the drawing of political frontiers between social subjects via the exercise of power. In this model, one force endeavours to impose its values and norms by winning the consent of its allies and by securing the compliance of its others, though force may be required to subject its opponents. The logic of hegemony captures this complex set of processes. An important condition for any articulatory practice (including hegemonic practices) is the radical contingency of all social and natural elements, which can always be constructed in different ways.

The radical contingency and historicity of the different elements that are located in particular fields of meaning are captured by the discursive character of social relations and processes. It is thus possible to disaggregate two key aspects of discourse theory: the discursive and the discourse. The discursive is best viewed as an ontological category—that is, a categorical presupposition for our understanding of particular entities and social relations—whereby every object or any symbolic order is meaningful, that is, situated in a field of significant differences and similarities. But equally in this approach, following thinkers like Martin Heidegger, Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida, it also means that such entities are incomplete and thus radically contingent. Each system of meaningful practice is marked by a lack or a deficiency, and its overall meaning or objectivity depends on the way it is socially and politically constructed.

By contrast, the concept of discourse refers to particular systems of meaningful or articulatory practice. Thatcherism or New Labour in the UK, the different forms of the apartheid system in South Africa or the radical environmentalism associated with social movements in contemporary societies can all be classified as discourses in this sense of the term. It follows from this discussion of the discursive that these systems are finite and contingent constructions, which are constituted politically by the construction of social antagonisms and the creation of political frontiers. Such systems are marked by a ‘constitutive outside’ that renders them incomplete and vulnerable. Every discursive formation thus involves the exercise of power, as well as certain

forms of exclusion, and this means that every discursive structure is finite, uneven and hierarchical. The emergence of crisis and dislocations in such systems enables agents to produce change by constructing and identifying with new discourses and projects.

Future Outlook

The discursive turn in the social sciences informs important trends in much social and political analysis, and this trend promises to continue in the future. The challenge for those employing the many versions of discourse analysis currently in circulation is to supplement their undoubted theoretical advances with greater attention to methodological questions about research design, the choice of appropriate techniques and research strategies and the articulation of adjacent theoretical approaches that can add more explanatory bite to their analyses. Critical in this regard is the production of exemplary case studies and comparative research that can demonstrate the importance of discourse in different disciplines and fields.

David Howarth

See also agency; hegemony; philosophy of science

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disseminate the process and findings. This entry talks about the process of ‘writing up’ an action research project. It will pay special attention to the unique features of action research writing. First, this entry reviews common barriers to writing and then discusses why it is important to overcome them. Next, it explores the process of writing up action research for peer-reviewed publications. The entry will also cover report writing and other creative possibilities and will provide a case study, the Toronto Teen Survey (TTS).

Overcoming Barriers to Writing

After being involved in a project for a long time, it can sometimes feel overwhelming to actually sit down and start writing about it. Often, when feeling exhausted from the efforts of *doing*, writing can feel onerous. This can be especially true when projects have already resulted in substantive community change or when they have resulted in no change at all. It can be particularly discouraging to write about failures. Sometimes, a researcher may feel shy about authoring a collective story or may feel that by putting ink to paper, he or she is appropriating the voice of others. Many researchers would rather be out in the community organizing than recording what has already happened. Writing, for whatever reason, is a real struggle for many.

Nevertheless, finding the motivation and stamina to write about research is valuable for a number of reasons. First, deep reflection can improve personal practice. The writing process forces researchers to think through, synthesize and organize their ideas. As they reflect on their project stories, they have an opportunity to creatively imagine new projects and possibilities for change. The experience can be generative and energizing. It gives researchers a contemplative opportunity to celebrate their successes, mourn their mistakes and, most important, learn from both.

Moreover, by documenting their work, researchers give others the opportunity to learn from the experience too. Knowledge generated through hard work, dedication and deep analysis can then inform the work of others. By disseminating action research, researchers contribute to a body of knowledge that can advance a field, inform theoretical development and create change. The documents produced can provide stakeholders with tangible products that validate their experiences. Often, stakeholders are proud of their contributions when they see the final documents. Finished products can also be used for advocacy and policy change and to lend ‘legitimacy’ to a cause.

Finally, for many researchers, written documents are professional and academic currency. They need to write to succeed (and in some cases graduate).

DISSEMINATING ACTION RESEARCH

It is important to share the results of action research endeavours. The written word is one popular way to

Consequently, writing is not so much a choice as an imperative.

Regardless of motivation, finding the time, energy and resources to write is necessary. The first step is to carve out time and space. Next, researchers need to figure out what they want to say. They will then need to identify who they want to say it to (and why). They need to assemble their authorship team, begin scripting, edit and then share the final products with the appropriate audience. Much like action research itself, the process is often cyclical and iterative. It is rarely linear or as easy as it sounds.

There are many ways to ‘write up’ a project and many potential audiences for the messages. Action researchers may choose to communicate the knowledge generated in the form of journal articles, reports, community newsletters, policy briefs, blogs, books or dissertations. The first step is to figure out *who* needs to know *what*. Deciding on the audience(s) and key message(s) helps the researcher figure out *how* he or she is going to tell the project’s story.

Writing for Peer-Reviewed Journals

Publishing work in peer-reviewed journals has a number of important advantages. First, the work is afforded greater credibility if published in a respected journal that is known to have a rigorous peer-review process. Second, it is very likely that the work will be improved by revisions made as a result of helpful comments from expert reviewers. Third, the work gets indexed in a standardized format in databases, where those seeking information are likely to find it for many years to come. This means that it is more likely to have a long and sustainable impact and to contribute to advancing the field of practice.

For a long time, action researchers felt that it was difficult to publish their work in academic journals. However, in recent years, action research has gone from the margins to the mainstream, particularly in the fields of health, education and development studies. Today, many conventional journals are publishing action research papers. In addition, there are an increasing number of journals that are interested in publishing action research work. Some have an explicit mandate to focus on participatory projects. Here are several examples:

- *Action Learning: Research and Practice*
- *Action Research*
- *Education Research for Social Change*
- *Educational Action Research*
- *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*
- *Health Promotion Practice*

- *Journal of Critical Thought & Praxis*
- *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*
- *Journal of Urban Health*
- *Living Knowledge: International Journal of Community Based Research*
- *Manifestation: Journal of Community Engaged Research and Learning*
- *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Indigenous and Aboriginal Community Health*
- *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*
- *The Canadian Journal of Action Research*

One challenge for the action researcher is to carefully balance an emphasis on the conventional manuscript elements that journals often require with the unique qualities expected of action research reports. What differentiates action research writing from other, more conventional types of academic outputs is a great attention to context, process and action. In other words, the goal is to share not only what was learned but also how it was learned and what was or will be done with the knowledge. Action research is also often about specificity rather than generalizability. Nevertheless, providing a ‘thick description’ or enough detail about what happened enables readers to determine in what ways the lessons are applicable to their own contexts. Action research manuscripts are more likely to be written in the first person and to include vivid descriptions of the authors, the project partners and their respective roles and contributions. Generally, a greater emphasis is placed on issues of partnership and process. For instance, it is not unlikely for manuscripts to describe the successes or difficulties encountered in carrying out the research or provide an explanation of the levels of participation among partners.

Often, manuscripts are written in more conventional formats that follow the model of introduction, literature review, methods, results and conclusions. Sometimes, the boundaries are more fluid. Other times (depending on the journal guidelines), manuscripts can be more creative. Usually, action research manuscripts end with some ‘actionable’ items or reflection outlining project outcomes and next steps—for the researcher, participants, settings and field.

Action Research has set out some clear criteria for manuscript review that may be useful for authors to consider regardless of where they are publishing:

- Does the paper have a clear articulation of *objectives* and explanation of how these were met?
- Is there evidence of partnership and participation?

- Does it make any new contributions to action research *theory or practice*?
- Is there an explicit description of *methods and process*?
- How *actionable* is the work? (Does it provide new ideas for action?)
- How *reflexive* is the work? (How have the authors acknowledged their own role and social location(s)?)
- Is it *significant*? (Does it have meaning beyond its immediate context?)

Similarly, Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson have asked writers to consider different forms of validity in action research work: the generation of new knowledge (dialogic validity), the achievement of action-oriented outcomes (outcome validity), the education of researchers and participants (catalytic validity), results that are relevant to local settings (democratic validity) and sound and appropriate research methodology (process validity).

When drafting a manuscript, it is important to pay attention to journal guidelines and features. In addition to style and voice, journals also have maximum word counts, which may limit what can be accomplished in one article. It is rare to be able to describe everything about a project in one article. It is best to focus on one clear part of the story. Some articles can focus on process (or methodological considerations), while others might delve more into results or outcomes.

Report Writing

In addition to publishing their work in academic venues, action researchers may also want to consider sharing their lessons learned in other, more accessible formats. Many projects choose to create a community-friendly or government report. These are generally concise overview documents written with a larger public audience in mind.

The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation recommends a 1:3:25 template for reports. It should start with one page of main messages. These should be takeaway actionable items and answer the following questions: What needs to change? By whom? When? Rather than focusing on all the results, this 1-page upfront is where the ‘ask’ goes. It should be followed by a 3-page executive summary that highlights key findings and then be supported by a more detailed 25-page report. The whole document should be written in plain language without too much research jargon.

Ideally, the report should cover context, implications, approach or methods (note that it may be best to use appendices for highly technical material), results and conclusions. The Canadian Health Services

Research Foundation also recommends using charts and tables to graphically portray data and make it more accessible. While not absolutely necessary, having the document professionally designed and rendered visually appealing can help with its uptake. Dollars spent on giving the product a published look are well spent when trying to engage a public audience that will be hesitant to read long documents that ‘look boring’.

A Case Study: The TTS

The aim of the TTS was to gather information on the assets, gaps and barriers that exist for young people attempting to access sexual health services. The TTS team was a collaborative group of service providers, students, researchers and policymakers. Over the course of 3 years, over 1,000 surveys were collected from diverse teens across the city, and focus groups were conducted with hundreds of youth and service providers. This information was used to develop community-specific strategies to increase positive sexual health outcomes for diverse youth in Toronto. The initial intention was to produce one report that would highlight key study findings. However, through the data analysis process, the researchers became increasingly convinced of the importance of tailoring the messages and strategies for specific communities of youth and decision-makers. They developed an innovative knowledge translation and exchange strategy. They worked with a graphic design firm to develop a look and feel for the integrated messaging. They identified various stakeholders and developed tailored products and messaging for each. These included (a) academic audiences/other researchers, (b) youth, (c) funders and policymakers, (d) service providers and (e) the popular press (see Table 1).

In order to target academic audiences, the TTS published many articles. The team negotiated with the *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* to dedicate an entire issue to the findings. Additionally, other articles were submitted to different journals (e.g. *The Canadian Journal of Public Health*, *The Journal of Adolescent Health* and the *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*) to maximize the audience. The team not only considered substantive issues as worthy of publishing but also wrote about ethical and methodological considerations in separate, focused manuscripts. In addition, a doctoral student nested her dissertation within the larger project.

Another important audience was the youth. The project had engaged over 1,000 youth across the city in an effort to improve youth services. In order to address the perception that nothing ever changes as a result of research, the team created a poster titled ‘You’ve been heard’, which fed results back directly to the community.

<i>Target</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Academic audiences/other researchers	Publishing peer-reviewed journal articles Conducting numerous presentations at key conferences A doctoral dissertation
Diverse youth	Distributing a youth-friendly poster highlighting key results Producing a youth documentary (getting involved in research) Producing a short public service announcement series to answer common sexual health questions Promoting through YouTube and Facebook Creating a website
Funders and policymakers	Producing a brief overview project report written in plain language/accessible text and including actionable recommendations Hosting a public launch with panel discussions Hosting key one-on-one meetings with decision-makers, senior bureaucrats and ministry officials Providing in-house training for municipal public health staff
Service providers	Producing eight population-specific short bulletins that attend to the specific issues facing various groups of young people (e.g. newcomers or partnering youth) Holding community-specific launches in partnership with large policy organizational partners
Popular press	Producing press releases Acquiring radio, television and newspaper coverage Writing op-ed pieces

Table 1 *Target and Medium of Different Messaging*

It was put up in recreation centres and health clinics across the city. The goal of the poster was both to report back what was found and to embed health promotion messaging. For instance, ‘Seven per cent told us you never got sex ed. Anywhere. If you aren’t getting what you need in school, call one of the numbers below to get the facts you need about sex and health’. In addition to the poster, the youth advisory committee drafted a bill of sexual health rights that was translated into seven languages, created mini-videos to answer common sexual health questions, designed a website and created a documentary about participating in research.

Funders and policymakers were targeted with key one-on-one meetings and a short but comprehensive report that was highly graphical and contained key stats, actionable recommendations and an accessible executive summary. Short (four-page) bulletins were also created to help service providers who worked with specific communities focus on the results that were relevant to them. An integrated media advocacy strategy

also helped ensure that the right messages were ‘written up’ in the popular press.

Process evaluations of these outreach efforts showed promising results. Municipal and provincial governments made changes to their policies and procedures. Many organizations that attended TTS events and/or received materials also made changes (e.g. changed clinic hours and developed confidentiality policies). Campaign materials garnered significant media attention, and over 1,000 people watched the documentary online. Academic articles have been widely cited.

By clearly delineating target audiences, relevant messages and messengers, the team was able to galvanize a broad-based response.

Expanding the Possibilities

Many other action research projects have also been creative about how they ‘write up’ their work to reach diverse audiences.

Kathryn Church, a disability studies professor at Ryerson University, worked with colleagues, students, alumni and other activists to create the exhibit 'Out From Under: Disability, History and Things to Remember' as part of an action research project. This interactive, award-winning, educational installation on Canadian disability history was prominently featured in a widely attended exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Ontario, and then in Vancouver, British Columbia, for the Olympics.

Nancy Davis Halifax, a health professor at York University, worked with Street Health (a community-based agency) to engage homeless and under-housed individuals in a Photovoice (participatory photography) project. The photos and accompanying written and oral narratives were turned into a travelling display that was featured at City Hall. By creating an interactive, highly engaging exhibit, the team was able to initiate a dialogue with city staff and politicians about the possibilities for change.

Tara Goldstein, an education professor at the University of Toronto, works with community groups to turn ethnographic research into play scripts that can be read aloud and performed by different readers and performers for a variety of different audiences. By scripting performances, Goldstein seeks to engage a wider public in thinking about the results of social science research. These examples demonstrate that 'writing up' action research can take a variety of different formats. Often, these more creative popular education strategies can help broaden the reach of research results.

One risk of this approach is that tenure and promotions committees at conservative academic institutions may not see these alternative forms of dissemination as 'valid' research outputs. While this seems to be changing in many places as universities become more interested and knowledgeable about community-engaged scholarship, it can still be an issue for junior scholars. The health field has been at the forefront of trying to creatively address this gap. A number of organizations have banded together to create an alternative peer review location for these sorts of original outputs. www.CES4Health.info is a free, online mechanism for peer-reviewing, publishing and disseminating products of health-related community-engaged scholarship that are in forms other than journal articles. CES4Health publishes videos, manuals, policy briefs, presentations and curricula.

Conclusion

Action researchers all strive to be 'good' writers and produce works that are strong, clear, cogent, concise, creative, logical, engaging, inspiring, fair and honest. The only way to get better at the craft is through

extensive reading and lots of practice. The more they create, the better they will get at sharing their messages and developing their fields. Careful attention to audience, message and messenger can improve the likelihood of their messages getting heard.

Sarah Flicker

See also academic discourse; collaborative data analysis; data analysis; dissertation writing

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Websites

- Out From Under: Disability, History and Things to Remember: <http://www.ofu.ryerson.ca>
Toronto Teen Survey: <http://www.TorontoTeenSurvey.ca>

DISSERTATION WRITING

Outlining how action research dissertations may be written is a complex task for several reasons. Firstly, as this encyclopedia demonstrates, because action research is a family of approaches that operate in a wide variety of settings and with great diversity, there is no single version of action research where one set of criteria might be considered definitive. Accordingly, there is no consensus on any one approach. Secondly, regulations and practices for the presentation of dissertations differ from university to university and from programme to programme. Thirdly, whether a dissertation is written by an undergraduate, a master's or doctoral student or a practitioner, doctorate accreditation sets norms for what a dissertation has to contain and how it is presented. This entry focuses on the broadly shared characteristics of an action research dissertation, which are generally seen as essential because the

dissertation is viewed as a formal, academic document, usually contributing significantly to the subsequent granting of a postgraduate degree.

An action research dissertation is an academic document and therefore needs to conform to academic requirements of justification of the topic and approach, demonstration and defence of rigour in methodology and methods of inquiry, familiarity with existing content and process literature and contribution to knowledge. In these ways, an action research dissertation is no different from most other social science dissertations, though its presentation and argument differ from traditional presentations.

Constructing and Writing an Action Research Dissertation

Practices describing action research dissertations typically suggest that it should be structured to deal with

- the purpose and rationale of the research,
- the context,
- the methodology and method of inquiry,
- the story and outcomes,
- self-reflection and learning of the action researcher,
- reflection on the story in the light of the experience and the theory and
- extrapolation to a broader context and articulation of usable knowledge.

This is not to say that such a structure would necessarily mean that each of these headings has to be a chapter in itself, or considered sequentially, but rather that these issues should be clearly dealt with formally. For example, the story may be spread over several chapters, depending on its length and complexity and the extent of the research project. Each of these broad expectations is explored in turn below.

Purpose and Rationale of the Research

The section on the purpose and rationale of an action research project presents the case, stating why the specific piece of action research is worth doing for whomever, why it is worth studying and what it is that it seeks to contribute to the world of theory and of practice. It is critical at the outset of an action research dissertation to make both a practical and an academic case for the research. This is not just an argument for credibility but a formal effort to locate the work in both a practical and an academic context. This is related in particular to two of the quality criteria generally associated with action research (see the entry 'Quality'), those of 'actionability' (i.e. the extent to which the paper provides new ideas that guide action in response

to need) and 'significance' (i.e. the extent to which the insights in the manuscript are significant in content and process, where *significant* refers to the meaning and relevance of the action research beyond its immediate context in support of the flourishing of persons, communities and the wider ecology).

Context

Context here refers to the social and academic context of the research. There are several context areas: the broad general context at the global and/or national level—culturally, politically, economically; the local geographical, organizational and/or discipline context, that is, what is going on in a selected organization, community, initiative or movement, and then the specific topic area. In action research, framing the social context is very important. For example, in the case of action research undertaken with a business organization, this description contains not only a presentation of the facts of the organization in its competitive setting but also a review of the relevant literature on the setting. Academic context is also important. Not only do researchers review the practical and sociopolitical context of their research, but they also review and critique the research carried out in that context to date and locate their action research in that tradition, thus laying the ground for their hoped for contribution.

Methodology and Methods of Inquiry

In all action research dissertations, there needs to be a chapter (or two) on methodology in which the action research approach, methodology and methods of inquiry are described. Methodology is the philosophical approach; methods describe what the researcher actually does. Accordingly, both methodology and methods of inquiry need to be discussed. As with any research dissertation, the theory and practice of the chosen methodology needs to be introduced. This is a matter of providing definitions of action research, some history and its main philosophical tenets. Secondly, a review of the practice of action research in the field in which the research is being undertaken may also be necessary, such as in nursing, education, information systems research and so on. Thirdly, this chapter needs to describe and review the particular approach within action research that is being considered, particularly if one approach is being used predominantly. Accordingly, for example, an introduction, review and critique of the theory and practice of Appreciative Inquiry would be needed if Appreciative Inquiry was going to be used in the dissertation.

On the subject of methodology, it is important to strike a balance between a critique of the limitations of other approaches and the need to solidly assert the fact

that a rigorous and credible method of research—which sits within a well-developed and established research tradition and is appropriate to the specific inquiry—is being adopted. The section critiquing other approaches to social science is particularly relevant where these have dominated previous research in the field and contributed to gaps and problems both in understanding and in practice. A balance is therefore needed between a critical appreciation of action research’s suitability and rigour and a critical understanding of how this sits alongside other social science approaches.

While the section on methodology provides the ontological, epistemological and axiological justification for the choice of action research, the section on methods describes how the action research is conducted. Methods of inquiry refers to the content and process of how issues are framed and selected, how participation is developed, how data is accessed and generated, how data is captured—extracts, notes, and minutes of meetings, journals, interviews or survey instruments, as well as visual or other sensory data—how others are engaged in the action research cycles of implementing the project and how political and ethical dimensions are addressed.

While all research demands rigour, action research has to demonstrate its rigour more particularly. This is because action research typically starts out with a fuzzy question, is fuzzy about methods in the initial stages and has fuzzy answers in the early stages. As the research project develops, methods and answers become less fuzzy, and so the questions become less fuzzy. This progression from fuzziness to clarity is the essence of the spirals of action research cycles. Accordingly, the dissertation needs to demonstrate clearly the procedures adopted to achieve rigour and to defend them. This means showing

- the use of action research learning cycles,
- how multiple data sources to provide contradictory and confirming interpretations were accessed,
- evidence of how one’s own assumptions and interpretations were challenged and tested continuously throughout the project and
- how interpretations and outcomes were challenged, supported or disconfirmed by drawing on existing literature and how this literature itself was challenged, supported and/or disconfirmed through the dissertation’s interpretations and findings.

Discussing Quality

It is important to be explicit about efforts to ensure quality in the action research project. Several frameworks are useful in establishing quality criteria

and in exploring quality in action research, and these can be applied to the dissertation work. For further details about these frameworks, see the entry ‘Quality’, which lists seven quality criteria. These typically refer to quality of participation, engagement with real-life issues, quality of the engagement in inquiry-in-action and development of sustainable outcomes. Action researchers face constant choices on these issues as they work through cycles of action and reflection: Being transparent about how these choices are addressed throughout the project is an important element of quality.

Story and Outcomes

The heart of the dissertation is the story or course of events. A critical issue is to consider the choices to be made, and the balance to be struck, between presenting, firstly, ‘the story’ (including perhaps even multiple versions or accounts, i.e. ‘the stories’) and, secondly, the meanings and interpretations attributed to these. The narrative of the story (or stories) needs to be sufficiently comprehensive and transparent so that the reader can arrive at the end of it and be able to judge for himself or herself the validity of the research, its claims to the creation of knowledge and any claims for its transportability. A degree of distance or separation between the story and its sense making can help demonstrate methodological rigour. At the same time, in justifying the methodological and presentational choices made around this, it is also important to acknowledge that the more interpretivist, constructivist epistemological paradigms (with which action research aligns itself) would argue that a seemingly factual representation is always still a particular, partial representation and that authorial and performative choices are made even at this stage. Given, therefore, that the separation of fact and interpretation is not a straightforward, uncontroversial matter, the author of an action research dissertation also needs to demonstrate discernment and critical subjectivity in addressing this tension and challenge.

Self-Reflection and Learning of the Action Researcher

An important part of the action research dissertation is the action researchers’ reflection on their own learning. The project may have challenged many of their assumptions, attitudes, skills and existing organizational relationships. This first person material is important as it contributes to the integration of the three voices—first, second and third person. It also corresponds with quality criteria related to reflexivity and critical subjectivity. This, of course, is one of the key ways in which an action research dissertation differs from many in the traditional social sciences, where value neutrality and detached objectivity are presumed to be both achievable

and desirable. Self-location as a change agent is crucial to the rigour of an action research dissertation, requiring that the author take a personal, involved and self-critical stance, as reflected in the clarity about the author's role, experimentation, self-interrogation and learning through the action research process.

Reflection on the Story in the Light of the Experience

Participants in a master's programme engaging in, for instance, an action-oriented M.B.A. programme use conceptual frameworks to make sense of what is going on. Their use of these frameworks aligns the story to theory, and through this alignment, they demonstrate their understanding of the theory and its application. For example, a conceptual framework that describes business strategies in developing better customer relationships may act as the foundation for a particular set of actions and reflections by the action researcher in an M.B.A. dissertation aiming to improve customer relationships for that researcher's firm.

Participants in a more research-oriented programme, such as a master's by research or a doctorate, not only align the story with theory but extend and develop the theory. This extension is an inductive process, coming out of the meta-learning of reflecting on the implementation of the action research cycles with the members of the systems as they enact the action research project. This extension or development of existing theory may be in content, process, methodology, presentation or form. In fact, it is here that much of the space and freedom to construct diverse and original forms of action research dissertations exist. Depending on the particular requirements and idiosyncrasies of specific degree programmes or awarding bodies, not to mention the author's own background, interests and points of focus, action research dissertations vary significantly in terms of the theoretical conceptualization, the methods developed and, significantly, the presentational forms through which the learning of the dissertation is communicated (see, e.g., the entry 'Extended Epistemology').

Extrapolation to a Broader Context and Articulation of Usable Knowledge

Action research projects are situation specific, and do not aim to create universal knowledge. At the same time, extrapolation from a local situation to more general situations is important. Action researchers are not claiming that every organization, situation or inquiry will unfold as the one presented in the dissertation. But they can focus on some significant factors, consideration of which is useful in other settings, such as organizations undergoing similar types of change processes. As a consequence of the reflection on the story and articulation of usable knowledge,

they need to articulate how the research project can be extrapolated (or transported) to a wider context.

David Coghlan and Patricia Gaya

See also academic discourse; quality; reliability; validity

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DOUBLE-LOOP LEARNING

Double-loop learning refers to the distinction between learning that keeps a behavioural system operating within a field of constancy and learning that changes what the system seeks to achieve or to keep constant. It is related to the distinction between first-order and second-order change. The emphasis on learning rather than change highlights the processes by which members of the system seek to improve how it functions. Double-loop learning is an important concept for action research because it focuses on what it takes for people and systems to make fundamental changes.

The distinction between single- and double-loop learning comes from the cybernetic theorist W. R. Ashby. Ashby used the example of a thermostat that turns heat on or off to keep the temperature near a set point. This is single-loop learning. When someone changes the setting, the system engages in double-loop learning.

Chris Argyris and Donald Schön introduced this distinction to the domain of leadership and organizational learning. They defined double-loop learning as behavioural learning that changes the governing variables (values, norms and goals) of one's theory-in-use: the theory of action that can be inferred from behaviour. They argued that learning processes and research approaches that may be adequate for single-loop learning are inadequate for double-loop learning. They developed the theory-of-action approach, also known as Action Science, to create knowledge that is useful for double-loop learning.

In Action Science, the concept of double-loop learning can be recast in terms of the epistemology of practice developed by Donald Schön in *The Reflective Practitioner*. Schön emphasized the activity of framing by which we make sense of a situation, setting the problem that we will seek to solve. Double-loop learning can be seen as reframing how we define situations, how we construct our role and what we take to be desirable outcomes.

Single- and double-loop learning can occur at any level of social analysis, including individuals, interpersonal relationships, groups and organizations. For example, as an organization grows, it undergoes changes that may require double-loop learning at several levels. It may shift from a traditional hierarchy to a matrix structure, requiring individuals to learn how to surface and manage conflict across boundaries. It may need to shift from a technology-driven, 'If we build it, they will buy' approach to a customer-focused approach that takes account of different needs in different regions. Customary work practices must change, and the changes must become integrated into the professional identities and working relationships of members of the organization.

Double-loop learning is unsettling, almost by definition. When individuals, groups and organizations face challenges, they typically respond with single-loop learning. When these attempts do not succeed, the most common responses are more single-loop learning and blaming others or the environment. Few individuals and fewer organizations are good at double-loop learning.

We can distinguish between behavioural double-loop learning and double-loop learning for instrumental, technical or policy issues. Double-loop learning on technical or policy issues may occur when individuals or small groups have breakthrough insights. Creating a culture conducive to breakthrough insights, however, often requires behavioural double-loop learning. And implementing new policies or strategies may require behavioural double-loop learning.

Behavioural double-loop learning entails changes in the values and frames governing how people interact. For example, rather than suppressing or avoiding conflict, people may learn to surface and resolve conflict. Rather than assuming that their own or their group's point of view should prevail and strategizing to make that happen, they may learn to invite other perspectives. Rather than leaving difficult or embarrassing issues unspoken, they may learn to raise them. This kind of double-loop learning increases the learning capability of an organization. It makes it more likely that the assumptions underlying current ways of dealing with technical, instrumental and policy issues will be identified and questioned.

Behavioural double-loop learning requires at least three stages. The first is discovering how current values and frames contribute to ineffective behaviour and

identifying alternative values and frames that could lead to more effective behaviour. The second stage is developing the skill necessary to produce the new behaviour in actual situations. This can take considerable practice, as initial attempts to produce the new behaviour often result in what Argyris has described as 'gimmicks', with the seemingly new behaviour used in the service of the old values and frames. Gimmicks are usually ineffective because other people see them for what they are. For example, recognizing that involving others in a decision process can increase their commitment to implementing the decision, people may attempt to 'involve' others in ways that do not give them any actual influence. The third stage in behavioural double-loop learning is to integrate the new behaviour, as informed by the new values and frames, into group norms and relationships so that it becomes the new normal.

It is possible to achieve some double-loop changes in organizations while bypassing behavioural double-loop learning. One approach is to bring in consultants or to convene a task force that is authorized to circumvent normal practices that keep problems hidden. The limitation of this approach is that it leaves in place the behavioural routines that prevented the organization from correcting the problem earlier and that will likely prevent correcting problems in the future. A second approach is to introduce systems and processes that make visible information that drives action, for example, the total costs across the organization for developing, producing, selling, delivering and servicing a product. Implementing these systems often runs into barriers rooted in the behavioural routines that are being left untouched, but it can be an effective way to improve some areas of organizational functioning. A third approach is to bring in new management with a mandate to make sweeping changes. Effective implementation of these changes may require behavioural double-loop learning on the part of organizational members, as when it is necessary to work more interdependently across units.

Robert W. Putnam

See also Action Science; advocacy and inquiry; ladder of inference; theories of action

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E

EDUCATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH

There are two distinct ways of engaging in action research which can be classified as educational action research (EAR). One of these designates any action research that is done within the larger field of educational practice—it is action research that is done with a focus on learning, in schools, community settings and other service settings and professions. This is a very large body of work, spanning a time period most often noted as beginning in the 1950s in the USA and re-emerging strongly in the 1980s. The second and more specific use of the term emerged in the 1970s in the UK, initially through the work of Lawrence Stenhouse, whose work in the Humanities Curriculum Project embodied core ideas of EAR. The focus of this project was on what we might now label as an ‘underserved student population’ and on curriculum as a set of principles (rather than set content) to be trialled in practice by teachers who were seen as researchers in a practice setting rather than as implementers of theories and curriculum established by academics and policymakers. This form of EAR became influential in Australia and has been disseminated widely in many education sectors and in a large number of international contexts.

It is important to note that there are widely differing orientations to the purposes and practices of EAR. Some have a strong professional focus, emphasizing the building of forms of collegiality and knowledge that can serve to enhance the functions and status of educational professions. Others have a strong personal focus, indicative of the identities of the researchers and their growth through the research process. Both of these have connections to social structures and therefore embody political focuses, as they articulate with or in opposition to systems of power and control. All share an emphasis, too, on building capacities for actions that promote learning for both educators and

those with whom they work—students and colleagues, as well as community members.

There is a longer and more international context for the term dating back to the early 1900s, most notably in popular education work, well developed in Danish folk high schools, and also in the initial development of social action-oriented forms of social sciences by scholars such as W. E. B. Du Bois and C. Wright Mills in sociology and in the social psychology of the Austrian J. L. Moreno. This particular antecedent, alongside work such as Jane Addams’ in the settlement houses for immigrants to the USA, is important to understanding the conceptual connections to the more collaborative, democratic (involving students and communities) and socially critical dimensions of EAR that gradually emerged in the 1970s and 1980s in some of the work in the UK and Australia and later in some US efforts.

The next section provides an overview of significant historical lines that have been influential in the development of EAR. It then outlines the unique and shared characteristics of EAR. The final section addresses the recent context and how it potentially both enhances as well as subverts educational agendas in the interests of neo-liberal global capital.

Brief History of EAR

Some of the earliest action research in education was done in the 1950s in the USA, associated with Stephen Corey and Hilda Taba. While this work planted seeds for later work emphasizing the importance of establishing links between educational practice and the need for teachers to be active in knowledge building about their work, it faded from prominence fairly quickly in the USA. In other parts of the world, however, there were the beginnings of constructions of what would be recognized as teachers as knowledge workers. The work and ideas of Stenhouse, noted earlier, in particular his

use of the term *teacher as researcher*, have had wide influence, developing further first through the efforts of John Elliott and Clem Adelman in the Ford Teaching Project. The Center for Applied Research at the University of East Anglia was a key site, fostering the establishment of the Classroom (later, Collaborative) Action Research Network and eventually leading to the establishment of the journal *Educational Action Research*. In the last two activities, Bridget Somekh, a classroom teacher who studied with Elliott, played a major role.

Stenhouse's influence also extended to Australia through activist curriculum circles in state education authorities who were reading Elliott and Adelman's work. 'Teachers as researchers' became something of a movement in Australia, connecting to the school-based curriculum development policies of several states and the expansion of upgrading teacher qualifications, especially among primary (elementary) teachers. Many teachers undertook further study, learning more about action research, including reporting their work in minor theses. Major Commonwealth government projects during the 1970s and 1980s in Australia, such as the Disadvantaged Schools Program, the School to Work Transition Program and the Participation and Equity Program, used action research to underpin their projects in schools and to conduct participatory and/or community-oriented evaluations. Stenhouse's ideas fitted well with the school-based curriculum ideas, building up teacher judgement through teacher research. They also challenged project groups to go further and claim that space more academically or theoretically.

The influence of the Deakin University Action Research group, led by Stephen Kemmis, extended the work through its distance education postgraduate courses from the late 1970s on. Through the materials developed for these courses, primary sources on action research were made available. The course teams were also able to publish and use a number of project reports, making them more widely available and spreading the ideas and methodological debates around action research in education. Wilfred Carr and Kemmis also published the initial version of their book *Becoming Critical*, which presented EAR through the lens of the critical social theory of Jürgen Habermas, advancing a socially critical, emancipatory model of EAR. It is also important to note that the developments in EAR in Australia in the 1980s involved connections between educational action researchers and people in other arenas, for example, Yoland Wadsworth, who came largely out of the public health sector, and through her a whole range of other sectors engaging in action research, enriching the debates through cross-fertilization of ideas, facilitation workshops, sharing writing and supporting another across sectors. Bob Dick's action research and Action Learning courses

and resources have provided community and educational researchers access to a wide range of networks, particularly assisted in recent years by an active website and his biannual reviews of books in the field in the journal *Action Research*.

The US 'teachers as researchers' movement in the 1980s tended also to spread through partnerships with teacher education programmes, for example, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where partnership projects with schools and doctoral projects began to circulate through theses and project reports. The long-standing progressive educational work of Vito Perone and the North Dakota Study Group is another example of work that embodies the deep connections between practitioners and systematic inquiry. At the same time, though not initially connected, the concept of 'inquiry as stance', to explore the necessary association of research with the work of teachers began to be developed by Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle, eventually confirming the growth of another generation of teacher-research work into the twenty-first century. EAR also re-emerged in master's programmes for teachers and in professional development programmes, often authored by scholars with connections to the early USA work. A recent volume in this tradition, Gerald Pine's *Teacher Action Research*, highlights the crucial role that the knowledge generated by teachers plays in educational improvement.

Unless associated with universities, EAR project reports are rarely to be found in refereed journals or books; rather, school authorities, professional development publications and professional journals provide records beyond the project participants. This has made it difficult to gauge the spread of ideas and practices of action research, particularly historically. The difficulty of building knowledge in a cumulative way—both about the processes used for action research and the substantive knowledge generated—has attracted debate on all continents, as people seek out advice and reports through networks, often in translation. The Spanish-speaking networks have been particularly strong in bringing together key players to share their knowledge. The Collaborative Action Research Network (noted above) has provided a useful gathering place and record, spilling over into the work of the *Educational Action Research* journal and to numerous websites that have been developed to disseminate both the ideas and the works of EAR. The latter have increased the visibility of EAR, but they vary greatly in their orientation and standards.

Key Characteristics of EAR

Despite the large variance and debate over whether EAR is a distinct methodology, there are many widely

shared assumptions and characteristics. Probably the most important of these is the idea that all people involved in educational practice (students, community members, parents, teachers and administrators) can be vital generators of knowledge—not only appliers of ‘best practices’, determined by researchers often at a distance from educational practice. In this, it shares with many forms of action research a challenge to traditional power-knowledge relationships. Specific to EAR, however, is the focus on educational knowledge production.

An important aspect of the generation of knowledge through EAR is that it builds the capacity to educate. This sometimes focuses on the professional knowledge base (understanding how learning takes place or how teaching could be improved), while at other times, it has focused on individual professional development (teachers learning more of how they personally could enhance their work). The capacity to educate, however, is deeply connected to the social context. Some forms of EAR emphasize this dimension, looking not only at individual student or teacher learning but also at the multiple factors which influence important outcomes, such as equality of income or autonomy. In this sense, EAR pushes beyond truncated views of ‘what works’, towards questions that address the inherent worthiness of educational actions. While this area is frequently articulated only within localized contexts, articulation with broader social movements could possibly be dependent partly on the breadth of the attempt at broader social explanations.

Perhaps true of other forms of action research, ‘actions’ in EAR are by nature tentative—they are not based on the ‘results’ to be applied but rather are hypotheses to be continually tested. Making change and creating knowledge are thus inherently interconnected. This is particularly important to action research in education due to the long-standing tensions over the nature of an educational science. For EAR, the purposes of educational action are always open to examination, not externally fixed, with ends and means equally problematic.

Early forms of EAR in the UK and Australia were deeply connected to changes in curriculum and evaluation. Proponents were able to build on newly developing forms of case study and qualitative research. Stenhouse and others were certainly aware of the group dynamics and organizational development work of the Tavistock Institute, quoting their work and sharing concerns with links between theory and practice, yet EAR emerged as distinct, teacher- and curriculum-centred work. From the outset, too, it recognized students as agents in their own education. This form of EAR has explored the meanings of ‘educative’ in terms of both action and research. Most simply, EAR highlights

the ways in which one of the main purposes of the research is that of educating the participants in the research process, as well as those to whom the work is disseminated.

Enduring Dilemmas and Ways Forward

Much of action research in education has developed with deep ties to universities and to teacher education. While this has served both to support and to legitimate EAR, it has also meant that some of the tensions currently experienced by universities have worked antithetically to EAR’s aims. Increasingly, universities themselves have been under significant threat, with the underfunding, audit cultures and managerialism common in other education and public sector organizations making significant impact. This has tended to privilege research that brings in money, results in speedy refereed publications and that adds cachet to the university’s public image. The role of universities in contributing to human knowledge for the public good has been significantly eroded as universities have become increasingly embedded in the struggle for market-driven knowledge economies. Such conditions make it increasingly difficult for action researchers in education to pursue questions in which means and ends are intertwined. While some staff continue to privilege work with communities, pro bono research and long-term projects with action research methodologies, others (particularly new faculty) feel pressured to comply with narrower and shorter term research agendas.

A further consequence of associating EAR with universities has been the individualization of projects as a result of teachers doing action research as part of their graduate diploma or master of education qualifications. While many such EAR projects can be connected to significant issues of educational practice, the use of projects for individual assessment and qualifications has contributed to conditions which are inimical to co-operation and collaboration. If projects are carried out by individuals on their own practice, this raises questions about the extent to which a change in context could be achieved, with a tendency to focus more on change within narrower fields of practice under the control of the individual educator. Issues of how action or activity is linked to social or institutional practices receive minimal attention when the field of action is individual rather than collaborative.

This is particularly true when collaborations among interest groups (students, parents, community members, professional educators) are not encouraged within the individual knowledge-credentialing links in universities. Articulating EAR projects with local or larger political struggles over education remains difficult because of their connections to universities rather than

to communities, unions or social action advocates. In this, there can also be a narrow or limited view that 'educational' refers only to benefits for those in the profession, rather than the whole public. In this way, EAR produces knowledge for a new market, but it does not produce new knowledges for social change.

As a result of the strong political attention paid to education sectors in most countries, the politicization of research—what counts as evidence, who is licensed to conduct research—has tended to work against EAR whilst creating conditions which call forth attention to ethical and collaborative investigation. Neo-liberal conditions for human services have had particular impacts in education sectors, making educational qualifications part of the individualization and privatization of work. Teachers, schools and their students, for example, are praised for successful competition in areas measured by test scores, while educational institutions in areas of high poverty have become seriously underfunded in many countries. These are not conditions conducive to co-operative or collaborative action research. The emphasis on accountability and means-end measurement also makes it difficult for educators to have research which works from lived experience taken seriously as a form of research. Nevertheless, many educators have managed to find ways to build community and investigate urgent problems that emerge in their daily practice towards social justice ends.

In struggling with the current conditions, including political and economic pressures, action researchers in education fields have continued to find EAR important, an approach that usually needs continual new introduction and exploration. The term *EAR*, because of its almost generic use, could be seen as encompassing a wide range of methods and research approaches, from positivist to emancipatory. However, the conditions also make it more likely to resonate with a claim on the term as highlighting the educative-interpretive and educative-emancipatory aims and processes needed to explore new practices and new explanations for educational practices and their settings.

Susan E. Noffke and Marie Brennan

See also classroom-based action research; collaborative action research network; Critical Participatory Action Research; Noffke, Susan; practitioner inquiry; Tavistock Institute

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EMERY, FRED

Frederick Edmund Emery (1925–97) was better known as Fred Emery. His contributions to organization development—and social science generally—were substantial. The methodology which underpinned his theory and practice was action research, evidenced by a strong emphasis on democratic participation and practical change and underpinned by his deep analysis of communication, learning, social systems and participation. This entry summarizes his history and some of his more important contributions to integrated theory and practice.

History

Emery was born in Narrogin, Western Australia, a drover's son. His early career demonstrated his academic prowess. At the age of 14, he was Dux (the highest ranking student in a class) of Fremantle High School in Western Australia. He studied science at the University of Western Australia, graduating with an honours degree in 1946 and joining the university staff the following year. Then, moving to the psychology department of the University of Melbourne, he contributed to the literature on rural sociology. He was a UNESCO research fellow in social sciences in 1951–2, developing an association with the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, whose research methods were

strongly influenced by the action research approach of Kurt Lewin. Emery completed his Ph.D. at the University of Melbourne in 1953.

His return to the Tavistock Institute in 1958 led to a fruitful collaboration with a group of practical researchers. Key among them was Eric Trist, who with Emery contributed to a version of systems thinking known as open systems theory. Together, in 1965, they published their much cited *Causal Texture of Organizational Environments*. Their collaboration continued after Emery returned to Australia in 1969; in 1972, they published *Towards a Social Ecology*. Both documents, though cognitively sophisticated, are understandable and have clear practical implications. So are several other theoretical publications by Emery from this time.

In 1969, Emery became a senior research fellow in the Department of Sociology at ANU, the Australian National University. Then, still at ANU, he joined the Centre of Continuing Education in 1974. He continued to develop open systems theory, theories of employee participation and the practical applications of both.

His appointment with the Centre for Continuing Education at ANU was discontinued in 1979. From then until his death in 1997, he persevered with his theoretical and practical work as an independent scholar. His house at Skinner Street, Cook, was in continuous intellectual ferment as international and local scholars, business people and community activists moved through his lounge room on a daily basis.

The Australian National Library has a collection of over 700 of his unpublished documents and letters. His work has been continued and extended by his wife, Merrelyn, who has also made contributions to theory and practice in her own right.

Contributions

Emery is known for impactful practical work that is based on an integration of theoretical understanding and practical experience. This work has been influential in some organization development and community development practice. Underpinning his extensive work was a profound conceptual understanding of the relationship between organizations or communities and their environment. This he formulated as open systems thinking. In addition, he understood well the relationship between individuals, teams and organizations or communities and how to engender genuine and full participation. The two theory-backed processes for which he is best known are the participative design workshop and the Search Conference.

A participative design workshop consists of a number of simple but penetrating analytical tools that a work team can use to redesign their work to be more democratic, satisfying and productive. Using it, a team

shifts from a typical command-and-control structure closely managed by a team leader, characterized by the concepts the Emerys named Design Principle 1. It becomes a self-managed team following Design Principle 2, in which the team takes responsibility for most of the functions previously exercised by the team leader. The team leader then becomes a 'boundary rider' (in Emery's words), managing relationships with other teams. In addition to improvements in worker engagement and satisfaction, very substantial improvements to productivity have been documented.

A Search Conference (formerly known as a futures search) is a participatory visioning activity. It was originally developed by Emery and Trist and further refined by Fred and Merrelyn Emery. It is used in organizations and communities, desirably always tailored to the specifics of the client group. Though there are variations, it usually begins with a consideration of the wider context in which the client group operates. It usually takes place over 2 days and nights with a 'deep slice' of participants—that is, a sampling of all organizational levels so that participants are the organization in microcosm. It is usually conducted off-site. The outcome comprises both a strategic set of goals and specific action plans for achieving them. The size of each Search Conference is limited to allow full interaction. To involve larger numbers of people, it may consist of several parallel or sequential conferences.

In both participative design workshops and Search Conferences, participation is full rather than consultative. Senior managers do not use their formal authority except where boundaries are negotiated at the beginning or at the end of the activity. The people who have to implement the agreed-on actions are those who decide the actions to be implemented. Consequently, there are cultural outcomes in addition to the more practical outcomes. The culture of the system shifts to become more democratic and engaging, making better use of its people while better satisfying their needs. Participants become more aware of the environment with which they must interact if they are to be successful. It is not unusual for Search Conferences and participative design workshops to be used in conjunction.

Alan Davies

See also Norwegian Industrial Democracy Movement; Search Conference; socio-technical systems; systems thinking; Tavistock Institute

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EMPOWERMENT

To empower is to give power or to enable. As a process, empowerment fosters capacities in individuals, groups and communities to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. As a transformational approach, it takes into account the felt needs of the actors and encourages collective involvement. However, such mobilizations and the actors' transformative agency do not develop in a flash. Social and political contexts too emphasize particular issues around which transformative initiatives tend to get organized. Participatory Action Research creates conditions that foster empowerment and initiates alternative paradigms of change based on the principles of social equity and justice.

This entry discusses the underlying assumptions of empowerment paradigms. The first section reflects upon the notion of power. The second section situates the issue of unequal power relations in the context of knowledge production and its use. The third section defines empowerment, analyzes its dimensions within the framework of knowledge production and utilization and highlights the importance of Participatory Action Research in facilitating the process of reflection, analysis and action.

Understanding Power

At the heart of the concept of empowerment is the idea of power. There is, however, no one way of understanding power. Its meanings are diverse, ranging from the pejorative to the positive, from absolute domination to collaboration and transformation.

Power has two central aspects: (1) control over resources (physical, human, intellectual, financial and the self) and (2) control over ideology (beliefs, values and attitudes). The stratification and hierarchy within society excludes some individuals and groups from accessing valuable resources that confer power. Powerful groups have access to and control over the resources and mechanisms that shape social, cultural and ideological notions of what is normal, acceptable and/or safe. They have access to formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions and procedures of decision-making. They can exert control over the decision-making agenda by devaluing, discrediting and excluding the concerns and representation of less powerful groups. The views and meanings of people who control strategic relationships and resources are frequently thought of as 'real' and are regarded as unquestioned 'givens'. Internalization of the ideologies of power relations as a natural state of affairs affects the ability of powerless groups to participate influentially in formal and informal decision-making. Powerlessness is, therefore, linked to the devaluation of their own knowledge by those who are powerless.

The most commonly recognized dimension of power is domination—power *over* others. Broad historical, political, economic, cultural and social forces inculcate certain abilities and dispositions in some actors to affect the actions and thought of others. Having 'power over' has pejorative associations with repression, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption and abuse. In the absence of alternative models and relationships, people tend to repeat what we can call the 'power-over' pattern in their personal relationships, communities and institutions.

The 'power-over' dimension takes on visible, hidden and invisible forms. Visible power derives from the formal or public rules and processes governing interpersonal processes such as membership in collectives, electoral laws and budgets. Hidden power determines which agents/agendas become part of interpersonal processes and the ability to control (often from behind the scenes) the settings in which agents interact. Invisible power is defined through the processes of socialization, culture and ideology that undergird what is considered normal, acceptable and safe. This kind of power constitutes and maintains the macro-political economy and serves to define the possible field of action of others.

Contemporary research has offered new perspectives on power characterized by collaboration, sharing and mutuality. Three alternative modalities—'power with', 'power to' and 'power within'—offer positive ways of expressing power that create the possibility of forming more equitable relationships. By affirming people's capacity to act creatively, these expressions

of power animate some of the basic principles for constructing empowering strategies.

'Power with' has to do with building collective strength and with finding common ground among different interests. Based on mutual support, solidarity and collaboration, 'power with' multiplies individual talents and knowledge. It can help bridge different interests to transform or reduce social conflict and promote equitable relations. Advocacy groups seek allies and build coalitions drawing on the notion of 'power with'.

The notion of 'power to' is based on the presupposition that every person has a unique potential to shape her life and the world. When based on mutual support, power opens up the possibilities of joint action—of 'power with'. Paradigms of citizen education and leadership development for advocacy are based on the belief that each individual has the power to make a difference.

'Power within' has to do with a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge; it includes an ability to recognize individual differences while respecting others. 'Power within' is associated with the capacity to imagine and to have hope; it affirms that there is a common human endeavour for dignity and fulfilment. Many grass-roots efforts use self-reflection as a tool to help people affirm personal worth and recognize aspects of their 'power to' and 'power with'. Both these forms of power are referred to as 'agency'—the ability to act and change the world.

Power and Knowledge

Unequal relations of knowledge perpetuate unequal power relations. Inequalities abound in access to information, in the definition and production of legitimate knowledge, in the preference for expertise over practical know-how and in decision-making. The printed word is almost universally given greater validation than practical engagement. Elements of the power of expertise are generally assailed by a lack of accountability on the part of experts towards those affected by the knowledge produced.

The production of knowledge is perceived to be a specialized profession, legitimately produced only by those formally trained in it. Such institutionalization of expertise results in knowledge being divided into specialities and organized into disciplines. Special disciplines, journals and guilds of experts—or the 'knowledge elite'—research the problems of community to evolve new insights and theories. While reporting on community issues, experts often tend to distil community knowledge so that it fits into predetermined external data requirements, which further form the basis of lopsided interventions. As a result, the self-assessed

priorities of the community itself often remain unaddressed or even unacknowledged.

The cult of expertise supported by institutions of research over the years has neglected the actors in the situation as sources of knowledge as well as its legitimate owners. Professionally trained researchers are seen as bona fide producers of knowledge, while others are seen as lacking the capacity, insight or techniques for knowledge production.

The disenfranchised and poor members of society, who are often the subjects of research, not only internalize the inevitability of socio-economic inequalities but also doubt their capacity to produce knowledge and to utilize it for solving their own problems on their own terms. Consequently, the experiential and intuitive insights of popular knowledge have been devalued. This crisis of knowledge is further reflected in the fragmentation of practical wisdom; in the distortions in the local, regional, and national ecosystems and in the tensions related to cultural revitalization and reclamation.

Countering power hegemony involves producing and using knowledge in a way that affects popular awareness and consciousness. Empowerment entails the exercise of informed choices within an expanding framework of information, knowledge and analysis of the available options.

Knowledge, Social Change and Empowerment

Empowerment is about understanding existing power relations and taking practical actions that challenge oppressive power structures. It involves the exercise of power by the powerless, such that they become more able participants in decision-making processes and gain control over the resources in their environment.

Knowledge that responds to the ideas, experiences and needs of ordinary people promotes empowerment. The process of inquiry or knowledge production brings people together to critically reflect on common problems and needs. Further, it relates particular experiences to general sociopolitical realities. This kind of collaborative activity creates a living and practical knowledge, based as much on intuition and experience as on technical expertise. An understanding of the existing oppressive reality and control over the process of knowledge generation are empowering. People not only learn to value their own knowledge, but they also use any new knowledge they create. The synthesis of popular knowledge with new knowledge strengthens the capacity for change.

Participation is the core concept in empowerment. It implies active involvement of the concerned persons in various stages of the learning process—in other words, the definition of the problems, the learning needs

and goals, the collection and analysis of problems, the design of programmes and the use of the analysis for empowered knowledge creation. The notion of empowerment builds upon the Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire's work on 'conscientization' in adult literacy and community development. Conscientization, or 'critical consciousness', involves a critical analysis of social and economic systems, development of a sense of self and collective efficacy to work towards greater equity in those systems.

Production of knowledge must be complemented by the action upon it. Participants in the process of knowledge production must find space for critical investigation and informed self-assessment of their reality in order to effect change. By involving people in gathering information, knowledge production itself becomes a form of mobilization. New solutions are tested and tried again. Knowledge is, thus, embedded in the iterative cycle of action-reflection-action. Through such processes, the notion of action can be deepened from solving day-to-day practical problems to more fundamental social transformation. The process of empowerment, while instrumental in bringing about change at an individual level, also emphasizes the importance of collectives of individuals in understanding and transforming social reality. The process of collective discovery and decision-making enables individuals to accept change more readily.

The coming together of people around a specific issue to think, plan and act is 'mobilization'. People start with problems of immediate concern. With increasing conscientization and the experience of participation in planning action, they diversify their actions to include larger issues. The success of one action sets in motion the flow of successive joint actions. Collective actions require (a) consciousness of the need for organizing and (b) the availability of organizational mechanisms in which people have confidence, over which they have control and which they can use as organs for their actions. People may construct new organizations of their choice or use the existing ones over which they have effective control.

Since the process of empowerment is initiated in the context of the actual reality, an existing problem provides the initial motivation for engaging in the research process. People are more likely to initiate the process of change for situations in which they are already aware of the problems and are articulate enough about them, though they may or may not employ the resources of trained experts. In some other situations, some outsiders—activists, educators, facilitators, community animators or researchers—provide the initial problem focus. The interveners adopt the position of facilitators, catalysts or change agents, rather than assuming

positions of condescension. Their role is to initiate a participatory process and to take steps to ensure a steady increase in the level of control local participants have over the process.

Here, Participatory Action Research assumes significance. By enhancing stakeholders' critical consciousness and resources such as knowledge, social networks and a sense of community, Participatory Action Research ensures that they have a voice in the process of decision-making and can play a concrete role in solving their own problems effectively.

Mandakini Pant

See also Community-Based Participatory Research; conscientization; Participatory Action Research

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ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

The engagement of practitioners within the action research field is a source of ongoing debate. This entry argues that engaged scholarship addresses this issue by locating action research in the wider domain of research perspectives ranging from basic research to co-production of knowledge and design science. The layout of this entry is as follows. Firstly, the concept of engaged scholarship is explained, with action research being proposed as an exemplar and subset of that approach. Locating action research within the engaged scholarship framework is done by examining one novel form of action research called dialogical action research (DAR). Furthermore, a case study is briefly presented that synthesizes both of these concepts.

Engaged Scholarship

Andrew van de Ven describes engaged scholarship as a participative form of research for obtaining the views of key stakeholders to understand a complex problem. By exploiting the differences between these viewpoints, he argues, engaged scholarship produces knowledge that is more penetrating and insightful than when researchers work alone. Engaged scholarship has a number of facets: a *form of inquiry* where researchers involve others and leverage their different perspectives to learn about a problem domain; a *relationship* involving negotiation, mutual respect and collaboration to produce a learning community and an *identity* of how scholars view their relationships with their communities and their subject matter. Furthermore, the likelihood of advancing knowledge for science and practice can be increased by engaging with practitioners and other stakeholders in four steps: (1) firmly *grounding* the research problem or question in a real-world scenario, (2) *underpinning* the research with alternate theories, (3) *evaluating* these theories through the collection of relevant evidence and (4) *communicating and applying* the findings vis-à-vis the research problem.

According to this schema, there are four stages in an engaged scholarship project. The stages can happen in any sequence and can be summarized as follows: (1) formulating the problem using the *who, what, where, when* and *why* approach; (2) building theory through *abductive, deductive* and *inductive* reasoning; (3) devising a research strategy to empirically examine the proposed theories and (4) *interpreting and applying* these findings to solve the problem identified at the initial stage.

Typically engaged scholarship will fall into one of the following categories: (a) *informed basic research*, which is normally undertaken to describe, explain, or predict a social phenomenon; (b) *collaborative basic research*, which comprises greater stakeholder involvement than basic research; (c) *design and evaluation research*, which addresses practical problems and (d) *action/intervention research*, which involves an intervention to treat a practitioner's problem. In keeping with the theme of this encyclopedia, we will now examine the last category, drawing on a specific form of action research.

Dialogical Action Research

Action research originated from the work of Kurt Lewin during the 1940s and has been summarized as an approach that synthesizes both theory and practice together with researchers and practitioners involved in a programme of change and reflection. DAR is a proposed novel variant of this methodology. In DAR, the scientific researcher does not *speak science* or

otherwise attempt to teach scientific theory to the real-world practitioner, but instead, he or she attempts to speak the language of the practitioner and accepts the practitioner as the expert on his or her organization and its problems. In practice, the approach involves regular face-to-face dialogues between the researcher and the practitioner to examine and remedy the research problem. In their schema, the role of the researchers consists in suggesting actions based on one or more theories taken from their discipline. The implementation of these suggestions is left to the judgement of the practitioners based on their experience, expertise and tacit knowledge, together with their reading of the organizational situation that confronts them.

DAR draws heavily on Donald Schön's model of professional inquiry, consisting of a pattern of five features: (1) a situation requiring attention, (2) a surprising response, (3) a reflection-in-action, (4) critical examination and restructuring and (5) an on-the-spot experiment. These features make a fundamental distinction between traditional forms of consulting and DAR in that the latter always involves reflection and learning. Furthermore, action research, unlike consulting, involves someone who has academic expertise rooted in some scientific discipline, where teamwork takes place between researcher and practitioner and where *negative feedback* is seriously taken on board.

There are two concepts, the scientific attitude and the natural attitude of everyday life, that form four features which differentiate dialogical DAR from existing forms of action research: (1) adopting the scientific attitude, (2) adopting the natural attitude of everyday life, (3) accepting the role played by the social and historical context and (4) understanding the role played by the social and historical context. It is incumbent on researchers to obtain an understanding of the social, cultural and historical context of the organization in which the research is embedded. As regards the philosophical underpinnings, they classify DAR as viewing reality through a social constructionist lens. In this vision of DAR, the scientist makes suggestions to the practitioner, but the practitioner remains the *agent of action*, using his or her explicit and tacit knowledge. Furthermore, DAR sees the role of the researcher as having the following attributes in the one-on-one dialogues: firstly, to *listen* in order to identify the problem that requires some action; secondly, to *gather* the facts to form the basis of deciding what suitable theory can be applied to the problem area and, thirdly, to *suggest* appropriate actions to the practitioner and *monitor* them.

A Practical Application of DAR

We will now provide a brief summary of a study of the role of information systems in the facilitation of

change to illustrate the DAR methodology. The investigation involved a 2-year longitudinal investigation of innovation in a multinational corporation's subsidiary, where the researcher had the status of a temporary employee. The first year took a case study approach with interviews across a wide area of the organization, together with the specific examination of one process innovation: a lean manufacturing initiative. The second year focused on an innovation management project and the introduction of another process innovation SIM (short-interval management) in the subsidiary using the DAR approach. In the area of theory, the research built on antecedent innovation perspectives and argued that the discontinuities resulting from advances in information and communications technology, together with developments in the innovation literature, pointed to the need for an ecological approach. In the area of practice, the main conclusions of the study were that the research approach provided an interpretive space for the practitioner. The joint development of a localized innovation framework and the adoption of a process innovation SIM facilitated a conceptualization of the sometimes obscure notion of innovation. Furthermore, the work suggested that there is still a gap in the understanding of the role of information systems in supporting innovation and proposes that a return to broader definitions of an information system can support practitioners tackling this complex area. The findings of this case study indicated that DAR can help address the perennial call for more relevant and rigorous collaboration between academics and practitioners and is a pertinent example of engaged scholarship in action.

This claim can be examined in more detail vis-à-vis the steps, stages and forms of engaged scholarship outlined above. The study was in the engaged scholarship category of *action/Intervention Research* in that it involved an intervention to treat a practitioner's problem—the need to change the subsidiary to become a recognized innovative location. The case study followed four steps: (1) *grounding* the research in a real-world study of information systems innovation, (2) *underpinning* the research with a number of alternate theories (e.g. resource-based theory, process innovation theory and ecological systems theory), (3) *evaluating* these theories through interviews and other recommended case study data-gathering techniques and (4) *communication* of the findings through the publication of academic papers. There were four stages in the project as proposed by the engaged scholarship taxonomy: First, the problem was *formulated* through intensive interaction with practitioners throughout the organization; second, theory was built through *abductive* reasoning since the identification of ecological systems theory

involved a creative leap; third, DAR was *devised* as the research strategy based on its initial publication in a leading journal and, fourth, the findings involved the *interpretation* of the data gathered through the detailed transcription of interviews during the DAR process.

Brian Donnellan

See also Action Science; action turn, the; dialogic inquiry; dialogue; large-group action research; Participatory Action Research; *phronêsis*; Pragmatic Action Research; praxis

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ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as 'any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity'. There is now widespread scientific agreement that human activity has been primarily responsible for recent climate change. This entry briefly summarizes the empirical background to this phenomenon and the policy implications, before reviewing past and present action research efforts that seek to respond to the various ecological and social issues that are posed by it. The entry focuses on outlining the various opportunities and challenges arising for action researchers, including the current state of the

field's engagement with these issues and opportunities for future development.

Background on Climate Change

The contribution of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane and water vapour to the 'greenhouse effect' that raises the earth's temperature to habitable levels was demonstrated by John Tyndall in 1859. In the 1890s, the Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius calculated the effect of doubling atmospheric CO₂ to be an increase of global temperatures of around 5 °C (broadly in line with current estimates).

Emissions of CO₂ rose by a factor of 16, to around 35 billion tonnes per annum, between 1900 and 2008 (US Environmental Protection Agency data). Polar ice records show that the long-run variation over the 740,000 years prior to the industrialized period had been between 180 and 280 parts per million (ppm). In the spring of 2013, the concentration of CO₂ passed 400 ppm. When the contribution of methane and other GHGs is added, the effective concentration is higher still. Climate policy appears to have had little or no effect on this trend.

These increases in atmospheric CO₂ come from increasing use of fossil fuels, deforestation and also agricultural practices. There is reason to expect some 'feedback effects' (e.g. the release of methane from beneath the Russian tundras) that could suddenly accelerate warming. Some opposing feedback effects (e.g. if cloud cover were to increase the reflection of radiation from the sun) are also likely. Nonetheless, there is broad consensus that increases of between 2 and 4 °C in temperature are likely within the twenty-first century; that these will have serious consequences on the well-being of humans, on economies and on ecosystems and that the greater the warming, the more serious the impacts will be.

The water cycle will be particularly affected by climate change (e.g. by floods and droughts), with knock-on impacts on the design of buildings, on agriculture and in many other economic and social areas. The impact of temperature on ecosystems is likely to be very significant as species travel towards the poles (or to higher elevations) at differing speeds, risking what the UK scientist Sir John Lawton called 'unravelling the fabric of nature'.

Climate policy addresses two concurrent and urgent transformations: (1) *adaptation* (adapting human and natural systems for the climatic changes that are expected and that may already have begun) and (2) *mitigation* (reducing emissions of GHGs and other 'forcing activities' so as to stabilize temperatures). Both are essential: adaptation because delays in the climate system mean that climate change will continue for decades, even if

all emissions were to stop tomorrow, and mitigation because changes much beyond 2 °C may be beyond our species' capacity to cope.

Both are extremely challenging. Human socio-technical systems (e.g. settlements, employment, water distribution and use, distribution, agriculture and energy systems) have typically been designed with broad stability in *climate* (as opposed to short-term *weather* fluctuations) and easy availability of energy as taken-for-granted assumptions. This means that current social and economic behaviour is to a large extent 'locked in' to poorly adapted, high-energy patterns. This, alongside the huge scale of change that is required, is why responses appear to be so difficult.

The Potential Relevance of Action Research

There are several compelling reasons why action research could assist these transformations:

- a. There is a strong ethical alignment. Many have argued that human and ecosystem flourishing is at the core of action research.
- b. Reflective practice, a core aspect of action research, is crucial when calling taken-for-granted assumptions into question.
- c. Research shows that working together with other people is very strongly correlated with pro-environmental behaviour. Action research, as an inherently relational and action-oriented discipline, provides many opportunities to facilitate this.
- d. Research also shows that finding a sense of 'agency' (i.e. finding responses that are personally meaningful in response to information about potentially distressing issues such as climate change) is crucial to people moving from suppression of awareness to engagement. The reflective practices typically used by action researchers can help people access their deeper motivations.
- e. Different responses to climate change are urgently needed. Action researchers' willingness to risk creating new knowledge, rather than merely researching what already happens, is essential.
- f. Kurt Lewin's insights that change is facilitated more by identifying and removing barriers than by reinforcing enablers and that the best way of understanding a system is to attempt to change it (because hidden and perhaps unconscious barriers that reinforce the status quo become more evident) show the benefit of action and reflection cycles in addressing large-scale changes.

Some Major Challenges to Action Researchers

Nonetheless, despite the apparent potential, there is as yet relatively little evidence of action researchers engaging in a satisfactory way with this issue. There are some important barriers that need to be overcome that might explain this. Some are present in other fields (e.g. in work on HIV/AIDS) but not necessarily to the same degree; others may be unique to work on climate change. The following are among the more intractable.

Need to Work Beyond Participants' Current Experience

We are still at the very earliest stages of climate change. While the earliest impacts (e.g. flooding) are probably already happening, it is as yet difficult to differentiate the early signs of climate change from normal weather variations. Potential major thresholds (e.g. methane release, rainforest combustion and major changes to ocean currents such as the Gulf Stream) still lie in the future. This means that many of the more significant impacts and energy constraints to which responses need to be found are not yet within human experience but *must* be encountered conceptually, for example, through global climate models. Many attempt to overcome this by engaging with current extreme weather or with incremental energy conservation measures, and these may be skilful first steps. However, action researchers need to be clear that these are far from representing adequate engagement with the issue of climate change.

Repressed Awareness

There is considerable evidence that there is significant repression of awareness of climate change. For instance, a study in Hampshire, UK, for the SPACE project showed that those most at risk of flooding (one of the most common climate impacts) were (with high statistical confidence) significantly less likely to think that they were at risk from climate-related flooding. Again, action researchers are likely to find considerable difficulty in finding co-researchers who actually wish to engage with the subject matter in any depth.

Radically Different Capacity

Even when there is some awareness that climate issues may be relevant, people's capacity to engage with them varies significantly and is often extremely low. Several surveys (e.g. of almost 2,000 organizations carried out for Defra, the UK Environment Ministry, in 2012–13 and of European cities conducted for the European Union [EU] in 2012) have demonstrated that organizational capacity

varies significantly and that high capacity remains extremely rare. It is still rarer in the general population, where the issue of climate change is often confused with issues such as recycling or ozone depletion. This means that the 'framing' of projects is typically often at a frustratingly low level. Action researchers, to the extent that they themselves are of sufficient capacity, are likely to need considerable time to help co-researchers identify interesting questions.

Different Timescales

Action researchers are used to working with predominantly social systems, where examples such as the fall of the Berlin Wall or of apartheid in South Africa show that transformations even of seemingly intractable problems may occur remarkably quickly. However, climate change actions need to take account of two very different systems that intertwine with people's behaviour in complex ways and that radically challenge notions of rapid change.

First, people's actions both condition and are conditioned by long-lasting technical systems such as energy production and distribution, transportation, public and private buildings and irrigation and drainage. When bad decisions on these are taken, later actions can be 'locked into' a particular trajectory for many decades or even centuries. Human behaviour then becomes predominantly path dependent, with little or no potential for 'emergence'. The challenge for action researchers and other change agents is to identify such decisions early and then to build the necessary capacity to take them well very quickly.

Second, such 'socio-technical' systems then influence natural systems, for which the timescales range from a few decades to many millennia. The impact of actions on natural systems, which underpin both economies and social systems, is a crucial test, but of course, these lack 'voice' and can be very difficult to understand.

Both the complexity of interactions (between a particular decision and the wider social and ecological context within which it sits) and the extended timescales make direct evaluation of any particular decision extremely challenging and probably unrealistic in most cases. These factors make the very notion of 'learning from experience' very challenging in a climate change context. Again, the action researcher may have little option but to rely on surrogate measures (e.g. complex conceptual models of energy or of climate impacts) to evaluate outcomes.

Need to Work Across Scales

Action and consequence on climate issues are greatly separated not only by time but also by space. A gram

of CO₂ emitted in Beijing has exactly the same ‘climate-forcing’ effect as one emitted in Wichita, Kansas. A carbon-trading scheme creates an immediate incentive to ‘offshore’ carbon-intensive manufacturing to other, less regulated parts of the world, with potential increases in carbon intensity. Even the effectiveness of saving energy is questioned in reducing carbon emissions since the money saved is then invested in carbon-generating activities. On the adaptation side, the paving of a front garden upriver contributes to flooding far downstream, and moving to a more resilient supply chain may radically reduce the capacity of discarded suppliers.

In other words, even at the smallest scale, climate change actions cannot be separated from their systemic context, but this context is so vast that even in theory it would be impossible to draw an adequate boundary to contain it. Again, learning from action and consequence is profoundly challenged.

Multidisciplinarity

It would clearly be naive to think that social sciences can contribute much in isolation when even crucial process skills (e.g. reflection on outcomes) cannot be separated from the physical or engineering context. Nor can technical solutions be pursued without consideration of the social context: If climate change is to be contained and reversed, then many people need to behave differently.

Climate change research must therefore be an inherently multidisciplinary endeavour. It is natural, probably appropriate, that natural scientists and engineers should play a leading role in responses to climate change. For action researchers, who may sometimes consider themselves to be at the edges even of social science, it may be hard to enter, let alone find influence within, potentially transformative projects. To the extent that they do, their continued influence depends on them also being able to bridge the divide between natural and social sciences.

Examples of Practice

The examples of action research in the climate change field can be evaluated against the extent to which they engage the challenges above.

First Person Approaches

Climate change is an issue of such scale and urgency that first person action and reflection cycles investigating the generic question ‘How can I improve my practice?’ are manifestly insufficient: The challenge is not only to reduce one’s own emissions but also to understand and intentionally to transform the systems that

govern one’s own emissions and those of multitudes of other people. Nonetheless, first person reflective practices are an invaluable tool for change agents on any issue, including climate change. Examples of this, some of which are in the climate field, were provided by work in the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice at the University of Bath in the UK, which is described elsewhere in this volume.

Second Person Approaches

Second person approaches help action researchers support, collaborate with and sometimes lead others who work in this field. When used alongside sympathetic reflection processes, such practices are helpful in identifying and making sense of the barriers to change. They are perhaps the core of action research for climate change, since few actions to respond to an issue of this scale can possibly be effective at an individual level.

Third Person Approaches

Third person approaches can potentially enable learning (e.g. about barriers to change) to be taken from the project to the systemic level (e.g. from the company to the industry and from the local to the national or international level). They are essential to effective action research for climate change. However, there are challenges both in devising the appropriate learning ‘architecture’ and in handing learning over from the insight-rich but more case-based world of action research to the more methodologically conservative domain of mainstream social and natural science.

Participatory Action Research

There are an increasing number of projects in the development field. For instance, Paul Mapfumo and colleagues used Participatory Action Research in Ghana and Zimbabwe to empower communities to mobilize and self-organize in responding to climatic changes. Again, in Ghana, Blane Harvey and colleagues collaborated with local radio stations to support research by farmers into the challenges of soil erosion and sea level rise. Both projects successfully identified constraints to change, potentially moving the research agenda forward. Not surprisingly, both also focused on the impacts that are already being experienced and did not engage particularly with future changes.

Learning Histories

Peter Reason led a multi-university UK government-funded collaboration with industrial partners to investigate how to accelerate the transformation

to a low-carbon economy, also using a Learning History approach. While providing significant insights into the challenge of large-scale transformations, the project was subject to the inherent limitation of the Learning History approach, that it does not fully take the 'action turn'.

Co-Operative Inquiry

David Ballard undertook a substantial and protracted collaborative inquiry with a group of managers into how a major UK construction company could respond to the challenge of sustainability, focusing on climate issues. Participants, in cycles of action and reflection, radically changed their position on the issue and were successful in stimulating a step-change improvement within their organization. However, while progress was consolidated after the project, the learning process itself did not become self-sustaining within the company.

Several of the second person approaches described above attempted to take learning to the third person level, with all failing for different reasons. For instance, the Participatory Action Research approaches quickly uncovered constraints (e.g. strong vested interests) that were difficult to engage with. The project led by Peter Reason on low-carbon innovation was part of a mainstream social science research initiative managed by the UK Research Councils. Although the project was well received, the inter-project learning architecture was not sufficiently developed to allow emerging research questions to move forward. In the example of Co-Operative Inquiry, it was not possible to find the institutional partners to carry emerging research questions to the next round of inquiry.

However, there have been some interesting examples of large-scale projects from outside the action research community that come close to third person action research approaches:

- The EU-funded multi-country SLIM project (Social Learning for the Integrated Managing and sustainable use of water at catchment scale) of 2001–04 was one of these. 'Social learning' was seen as the 'collective learning process that can take place through interactions among multiple interdependent stakeholders when proper facilitation, institutional support and a conducive policy environment exist'. Action in pursuit of learning was actively encouraged, and much of the approach would be familiar to action researchers. This project helped establish the EU's 'Water Framework Directive', which arguably brings social learning into a vitally important aspect of policymaking that is deeply affected by climate impacts.

- The Netherlands is among the nations most threatened by climate impacts. The government-funded and ambitious 'Knowledge for Climate' programme comes as close as any initiative to a full third person action research programme (although this term might not be recognized). Action inquiry is carried out in a set of 'hotspots' across the nation, where challenges are investigated in depth by practitioners who are supported by natural and social scientists of various disciplines but not directed by them. Long-term climate resilience is explored alongside current extreme weather or shorter term trends. Learning flows have been strongly established, with the research agenda being updated over time through lively participative conferences.

Opportunities for Action Researchers to Contribute

The arguments and examples above show that action research has already contributed in several important ways but that its full value appears not yet to have been realized. They suggest that the following challenges are among those that need to be addressed to build upon this early work:

- a. Finding ways of engaging with future and geographically distant climate impacts that lie beyond the experience of participants in projects
- b. Focusing research onto longer term decisions, where prospects for change are greater and which potentially leave the participants and future citizens at risk if these opportunities for change are not realized
- c. Building collaborative working relationships with researchers from other disciplines, including natural scientists and other social researchers, for example, economists and those active in the environment and behaviour field
- d. Engaging with policymakers at various levels (e.g. in ministries, in cities and in industries) to help design and facilitate large-scale programmes of research, designing and facilitating the learning architecture that can potentially integrate many different streams of research to develop more systemic approaches to change

David Ballard

See also action turn, the; Co-Operative Inquiry; environmental justice; first person action research; Participatory Action Research; second person action research; sustainability; systems thinking; third person action research

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- Knowledge for Climate Research Programme (Netherlands): <http://knowledgeforclimate.climateresearchnetherlands.nl>

and Julie Sze have conceptualized environmental justice as praxis, noting that it draws from and integrates theory and practice into a mutually informing dialogue. Framing environmental justice in this way provides the flexibility needed to allow it to encompass the wide variety of dynamics that are brought forward by many different populations, problems and places.

Theoretical Lens

Academic research employing an environmental justice lens tends to be interdisciplinary, participatory and concentrated in the social sciences. It is concerned with systemic issues of power and ownership in relation to nature, capital and labour that produce disparities in access to environmental benefits, such as parks, gardens, bike paths or farmer's markets, and in the distribution of environmental burdens, such as air and water pollution, contaminated soils and toxics in the workplace. Scholars working in this area tend to cast a broad net to allow consideration of how the exploitative relationships between industrial actors and marginalized communities, including workers, transcend into peoples' everyday lives. These scholar-activists are typically interested in breaking down the disciplinary boundaries that may exist between research on health, work and environmental issues. At its most basic, employing an environmental justice lens means that we take account of the sharing of costs and benefits associated with environmental policy and natural resource development decisions and the extent to which the decision-making has meaningfully included the participation of the affected communities.

Social Movement: 'We Speak for Ourselves'

The environmental justice movement distinguishes itself from the mainstream environmental movement by making grass-roots political organizing its central priority. Where environmentalists over the past three decades have invested heavily in legal strategies as a means to achieve social change, the environmental justice movement, in contrast, explicitly calls this focus on law reform into question by noting how it continues to privilege elites at the expense of people working on the ground to improve their communities. Similarly, the environmental justice movement has focused on the health and well-being of people rather than on the need to protect 'the environment', conceptualized as wilderness spaces, endangered species or national parks, with the last sometimes dismissed as 'playgrounds for the rich'. Thus, activists in the environmental justice movement are increasingly turning their attention to environmental harms derived not only from air, water or soil contamination but also from toxic workplaces,

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental justice is a social movement and theoretical lens that is focused on fairness in the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens and in the processes that determine those distributions. That is, it is concerned with both the fair treatment and the significant involvement of poor, racialized and indigenous communities in environmental policy and natural resource development decisions that have typically resulted in those communities bearing more than their 'fair share' of environmental harms. Jonathan London

urban planning and transit decisions, conditions in public housing projects (e.g. lead paint or mould), water and sanitation services on native reserves, urban 'food deserts' and so on. Their work highlights the relationships between profit incentives, the unsustainable production of waste, exploitative labour practices and differential exposure to pollutants. At the same time, environmental justice activism and scholarship emanating from within indigenous communities tends to emphasize the interconnectedness of people and their environments and the narrowness and short-sightedness of the approach that would separate the well-being of ecosystems from those who depend on them.

Origins

The environmental justice movement is often considered to have emerged in the USA in the late 1980s as poor communities of colour organized to fight the disproportionate siting of hazardous waste facilities in their neighbourhoods. In this context, an 'environmental justice community' came to be understood as a racialized population of a lower socio-economic level surrounded by or affected by dirty industry, typically petroleum refineries or coal-fired utilities, chemical plants, municipal landfills, nuclear plants or hazardous waste dumps. It is commonly said that these are the communities that need the most, in terms of resources and policy attention, but receive the least. The US Environmental Protection Agency defines environmental justice as 'the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, sex, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies'.

The origins of the environmental justice movement in the USA are sometimes traced to Love Canal, where a low-income community of mostly White residents plagued by birth defects, cancers and respiratory problems in upstate New York in the 1970s was led by a determined group of self-identified 'housewives' to both trace the path of the contamination (to a toxic underground 'plume' from leaking drums of chemical waste left behind by Hooker Chemicals) and eventually win compensation and relocation for the residents. The state agency's meagre initial attempts to buy out homes in the area became a notorious example of the devaluing of low-income people's health, and it cemented the inclusion of America's poor in conceptions of environmental justice. Lois Gibbs, who led the struggle and went on to found a national environmental justice organization, would later say that the 'media and general public . . . have *finally got it* . . . [the environmental justice movement] . . . is about people and the places they live, work and play'.

The centrality of race to the US movement was established by the iconic uprising in Warren County, North Carolina, that played out in the early 1980s. When Warren County, a predominantly African American community, was chosen as the state's dumping ground for truckloads of soil laced with PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), the people of Warren County unexpectedly rallied. The struggle, although ultimately unsuccessful, drew national attention to the issue and stimulated a rash of empirical studies that would later provide support for the phenomenon of environmental racism. The most important of these studies was undoubtedly the 1987 report by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, which defined environmental racism as 'intentionally selecting communities of colour for waste disposal sites and polluting industrial facilities' and demonstrated that race, and not household income or home prices, was in fact the best predictor of the location of hazardous waste facilities in the USA.

If the environmental justice movement was conceptualized in the 1970s and 1980s, it had been building for a long time, like a river 'fed by many tributaries', in Luke Cole and Sheila Foster's words. Important influences included the American Civil Rights Movement, the struggles of migrant farmworkers led by Cesar Chavez in California in the 1960s and the struggles against uranium mining by Native Americans. In Canada, indigenous people fought in the 1960s and 1970s against the pulp-and-paper industries, which were making them ill through mercury-poisoned water; the aluminium and auto manufacturing industries, which fouled their territories and their bodies, and the long-range transport of industrial pollutants that penetrated even mother's milk. The movement has gathered strength over the past three decades as residents of affected communities and their allies have come to realize that the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards today can be traced to the same social and economic structures which have produced slavery, colonization, segregation and other forms of systemic oppression. These connections were articulated at the First National People of Colour Summit in 1991 in Washington, D.C., which produced 17 principles of environmental justice drafted by hundreds of grass-roots and national leaders from the Americas and beyond. The sociologist Robert Bullard, co-founder of the summit and one of the first to sound the alarm on 'environmental racism', called the conference the most important single event in the movement's history.

Tensions and Questions in Contemporary Environmental Justice Research

It is now well documented that racialized and marginalized communities, including and perhaps especially

indigenous communities, in many parts of the world bear much more than their 'fair share' of environmental burdens; it is also becoming increasingly clear that the disadvantaged and historically oppressed peoples *within* those communities will often be disproportionately harmed, often along the familiar social gradients of gender, class, sexuality, caste, (dis)ability and so on. With respect to gender, it is worth noting that at the second People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 2002, Peggy Shepard of West Harlem Environmental Action argued that women on the ground are driving this movement, despite the fact that they remain under-represented in leadership roles. And as Barbara Rahder has demonstrated, there are structural and spatial inequities in production and reproduction inherent in the neo-liberal political economy that serve to perpetuate this reality. Deficiencies in childcare and eldercare regimes and the persistently uneven and gendered division of domestic work exacerbate the problem. Debates persist over whether the central role of women in this movement is an expression of an inherent ethic or politics of care or, as Sherilyn MacGregor has put forward, a form of politicized ecological citizenship.

As environmental justice activists began to encounter success in their battles against the siting of industrial facilities and hazardous waste sites, the charge of 'NIMBY-ism' (Not in My Backyard syndrome) began to plague the movement. It became clear that the successful grass-roots struggles in the USA, Canada and other nations of the Global North, led by women, could be displacing heavy industrial facilities and hazardous waste disposal sites in a way that would intensify the burdens facing people in the Global South. The rallying cry 'Not in Anyone's Backyard' was the movement's answer. The Anti-Toxics Movement, the Climate Justice Movement and the resistance to tar sands pipelines that is currently building across North America, all serve as important examples of how movement activists and scholars have put forward solutions that seek to address the root causes of problems rather than simply pass the impacts of business-as-usual industrial development on to the next most vulnerable community.

The notion of climate justice illustrates the North-South dynamic: It is indisputable that the most marginalized peoples and impoverished countries of the world are the least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, and yet they will and do bear the biggest brunt of the burden of climate impacts. Juan Martinez-Alier's phrase 'effluents of affluence' describes the way in which overconsumption in the North fuels much of the problem in both the North and the South. The notion that the 'environmentalism of the poor' is a *new* phenomenon, however, is highly contested. While activists in the Anti-Toxics Movement sometimes posit that a whole new brand of environmentalists is emerging and

that this group is composed of youth and women from working-class, immigrant and racialized communities, for whom the environment is not an abstract ideal but an immediate, concrete reality, others counter that these grass-roots, participatory and community-based organizations build on a rich history of resistance. Environmental historians have challenged the once popular notion that racialized and immigrant populations are 'too busy surviving' to care about the environment. In fact, it has been argued that it was instead a question of redefinition: Once the 'environment' was conceptualized to include housing, transit, work and pollution concerns, it became obvious that poor and marginalized people have been 'environmentalists' all along. Other scholars do acknowledge the real barriers that being 'busy surviving' creates, and they also highlight the lack of meaningful opportunities to participate for many disenfranchised local residents and the way the prevailing benchmarks for demonstrating credibility and authority are highly skewed towards the expert knowledges of elites.

Important questions around representation and agency inherent in the idea of 'speaking for ourselves' persist as difficult ones to resolve for movement activists and environmental justice scholars. It seems clear that, as Ramachandra Guha has argued, what is 'new' about the environmental justice movement is not the 'elevated environmental consciousness' of its members but the ways in which it is transforming the possibilities for fundamental social and environmental change through collective action and the forging of new forms of grass-roots political organization. A key element in the process through which local residents transition from victims to agents of change—participants in the decisions that affect their everyday lives—is the realization by ordinary people that the power relationships within a given policy setting or decision-making structure are fluid and contestable and can be shifted. Environmental justice struggles thus often become battles over data and expertise, as local residents engaged in popular epidemiology come to recognize the way power and authority are gained and held. It is a movement fundamentally engaged in a transformative politics.

Environmental Justice and Action Research

Effective research in the environmental justice framework has tended to involve robust partnerships between local communities, organizations and/or groups of activists seeking to achieve environmental justice and university-based researchers employing participatory action methodologies. These collaborative efforts have proven to be very fruitful in many cases, but they should not be understood as easy or straightforward to implement. New models are emerging that seek to combine

and enhance the expertise, capacities and perspectives of the partners in order to meet, primarily, the needs of the communities and, secondarily, the aims of the researchers. Creative scholarship exploring practical strategies and tools for successfully building and managing these collaborations is demonstrating how such partnerships can strengthen and enrich research outcomes and how Participatory Action Research can advance the goals of community activists in the best of cases.

Principles of collaboration that are emerging include attention to the preservation of voice and decision-making authority for the community, arrangements in which the ownership and control of the data generated by the research is maintained by the community, as well as the authority to share it. Effective collaborations also often include an explicit commitment from researchers that they will try to increase the capacity of existing community groups and individuals over the course of the partnerships (leaving the organization in 'better shape than they found it') and that they will appropriately compensate individuals and organizations that contribute to the work for their expertise, time and intellectual work.

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See also agriculture and ecological integrity; social justice; social movement learning

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EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is concerned with studying the nature, limitations and justification of human knowledge. Epistemological questions focus on issues such as what is knowledge, what the relationship is between the knower and the known and how knowledge claims are justified. For example, is it possible to obtain objective knowledge about the world? Is human knowledge a social construction or even an illusion? Does a knower actively create knowledge, or is knowledge something discovered by a disinterested observer? Epistemological considerations underlie assumptions about how to conduct research, the appropriateness of methodological choices and the kind of knowledge sought through investigation. Action researchers, in an effort to articulate, and to some extent justify, their own practices to a wider community of scholars, have contributed to these ongoing discussions. Broadly speaking, action researchers have called for a practical form of knowing generated through participative, collaborative interaction that is simultaneously context specific and value driven.

To understand the epistemological positions taken by action researchers, it is beneficial to place such questions within a historical context. Many epistemological problems stem from the distance one assumes between a subject and object or a knower and the known. For example, a central issue in epistemology is how a knower can come to have knowledge of an external world. This duality between the subject and the object has framed the different epistemological positions taken towards social research. However, various vantage points have challenged a strong subject/object division. Action researchers have joined this reappraisal in an effort to formulate their own epistemological perspective. The first section of this entry provides a brief overview of three epistemological positions: objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism. This is

followed by placing the subject/object duality within a historical context. This background serves to contextualize the response of action researchers who have rejected such dualities in an effort to develop useful knowledge that facilitates human flourishing. The final section addresses the justification of knowledge within action research or validity concerns.

Synopsis of Common Epistemological Positions

In *The Foundations of Social Research*, Michael Crotty describes three epistemological positions embedded within theoretical frameworks and methodologies. These epistemological positions are objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism. Objectivism contends that the objects or phenomena under investigation have existence irrespective of human input. This position imposes a sharp distinction between the knower and the known. Under this view, truth is something an observer aims to discover. Knowledge coincides with the correspondence version of truth, wherein theory aims to apprehend the pre-existent structures of the world. Weaker versions of objectivism, though still reliant upon a strong subject/object division, recognize objectivity as a regulatory ideal. Under this weaker version, researchers strive to eliminate bias, though inferences drawn from research can at best approximate the intrinsic structure within a particular phenomenon. Constructionism questions this view, which depicts truth as inherent within an object of investigation. Constructionists argue that truth is instead constructed through engagement with an object of investigation. This position does not necessarily deny the existence of objects, but instead, it contends that meaning is emergent via interaction. Subjectivism contends that truth is subjective as meaning is completely imposed by human subjects. This position reflects the most drastic departure from realism by contending that the meaning of a phenomenon is a sole act of human creation.

These epistemological positions inform methodological choices. For example, if meaning resides within an object irrespective of human input, then an investigator may distort this untainted image. Thus, objectivists argue that various controls should be implemented to eliminate this form of bias. These controls aim to create distance between the researcher and the object of investigation. Both constructionism and subjectivism reflect a rejection of this view when depicting knowledge as inseparable from human action. They differ, however, in the extent to which meaning is imposed, with subjectivism exhibiting a more radical departure from realist sympathies. To some extent, both constructionism and subjectivism illustrate a movement away from the dualistic world

view inherited from René Descartes. Action researchers have also rejected a strong subject/object division by emphasizing a form of researcher participation that embraces a vibrant intermingling between the knower and the known. A distinct separation between the subject and the object has therefore become suspect. The next section places the subject/object divide within a historical context.

Placing the Subject/Object Divide Within a Historical Context

In his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes provides a basis for a dualistic division between a subject and object. Descartes attempted to provide a secure foundation for knowledge by separating true from false beliefs. Anything beyond doubt, Descartes accepted as certain. He then questioned whether all of his experiences could be the result of a deceitful demon. Given this scenario, he could not initially escape the possibility that the external world was illusory. However, there was one thing beyond doubt—namely, that he was capable of posing questions. This led to *ergo cogito sum*, or the famous ‘I think, therefore I am’. From this secure foundation, Descartes attempted to establish knowledge of the external world. In subsequent arguments, he also reasoned that since the mind could be clearly and distinctly imagined from the body, it must be a separate substance. The mind was therefore immaterial, whereas the body was extended in space like other physical objects. This dualistic depiction of humanity was extremely influential in Western thought, and various philosophers sought to derive knowledge from an apparently certain truth that there is an ‘I’ that exists.

Descartes views the ‘I’ as independent from the world. This set the stage for various positions towards the subject-object relationship. For example, since we have certain knowledge of a ‘self’, how does this subject come to know a seemingly distant world? A good analogy is that of a mirror. Knowledge consists in reflecting the external world and thus coincides with objectivist discourse. It is critical to point out that this separation between a knower and the known depends upon a privileged first person perspective. Descartes presumes that his internal thoughts are meaningful. However, if it could be shown that internal thoughts are only meaningful because we inhabit an external world, then the subject/object divide is suspect. In other words, our internal language has meaning only because we embody an existent social reality. This is the general conclusion of Ludwig Wittgenstein, who suggests in *Philosophical Investigations* that Descartes’s ‘I’ is a function of grammar. This entailed a radical shift in understanding language. Language is no longer a

mirror aiming to reflect the world, but it is instead a practice whose meaning is socially negotiated.

Prior to Wittgenstein's critique, epistemological questions based on Cartesian dualism took centre stage in many philosophical circles. The theoretical language of science, at least in order to be considered knowledge, must correspond to the world in the right way. However, Wittgenstein's later work challenges this view by looking at language as a practice. This focus not only poses problems for subject/object dualities, but it also acted as an impetus for examining how language informs reality. Moreover, viewing language as a communicative tool and as an element of culture suggests that meaning is understood via action by examining how words are actually used. In many respects, Wittgenstein's critique provides a basis for examining meaning-in-action that simultaneously criticized dualities that are antithetical to the aims of action research.

Inquiry as Action and the Basis of Practical Knowing

Action research is more than a singular method merely accumulated within a researcher's methodological toolbox. However, there are particular aspects of action research that have informed epistemological considerations. These considerations stand in contrast to objectivism, which is reliant upon the subject/object dualisms. Just as Wittgenstein's critique has contributed to what has been labelled a 'linguistic turn' in many disciplines, action researchers have called for an 'action turn' in social inquiry. This action turn consists of an articulation of inquiry as action, coupled with a concern for co-constructing actionable knowledge for problems encountered within specific social contexts. Put differently, action researchers aim to develop a working knowledge via participative interaction that is useful in fulfilling the desired aims and purposes.

Conceptualizing inquiry as action has two epistemological implications that are worth considering. First, action researchers embrace a participatory world view that is both collaborative and value laden. For example, researchers with an objectivist epistemology may attempt to study community organizations in order to discover the universal factors that facilitate worker well-being. Their methodology may entail representative sampling of workers, measurement of working conditions and experimental manipulations. Action researchers, on the other hand, would engage these workers in a collaborative effort to facilitate the desired change. This may require clarifying desirable ends, articulating what is needed to facilitate these changes and evaluating the extent to which the implemented change resulted in valued outcomes. Action research is therefore future directed in that it aims to facilitate

change based on an assessment of improvement or human well-being. In fact, action researchers approach a topic or issue because of an assumption that it is primarily deficient or in need of change. The facilitation of change requires an articulation of what is desired or valuable within the partnership. This partnership exists between the researcher and those who are immersed within a particular social system. Thus, the action researcher rejects the role of researcher as observer and, instead, grounds inquiry within democratic processes. This also entails questioning fact/value distinctions by arguing that values guide inquiry. To put this succinctly, values are the stimulus for action.

This leads to the second epistemological consideration, which is a focus on situational as opposed to universal knowledge. Action researchers are concerned with lived problems encountered within specific socio-cultural settings. The circumstances within these environments, valued outcomes and pathways to facilitate change are unique. For example, one community organization may desire to improve the lives of youth subjected to gang violence, whereas a second community organization may aim to assist families living in impoverished conditions. Each organization has constructed aims, a distinctive cultural milieu and social systems that have questionable generalizability across other settings. Consequently, the knowledge needed to enact change is idiosyncratic to the concerns and constructions within each social system. What works in one social system does not necessarily work in others. However, in experimental design, an important consideration is establishing external validity. This involves examining the consistency of causal effects across distinct populations and settings. What is desired in action research is a practical form of knowing grounded in an ability to achieve desired ends within unique contexts. Contrary to an examination of external validity, action researchers are concerned with transferability, or the efficacy of strategies that lead to change across various circumstances.

The epistemological considerations addressed in this section provide a framework for elucidating the concept of practical knowing. Practical knowing contrasts with efforts to derive universal knowledge, or knowledge that generalizes to all settings and populations. Practical knowing stems from the idea of praxis. Though many philosophers and social researchers have discussed this idea, Paulo Freire in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* considered praxis to be a form of knowing that allows people to act upon ideas in the pursuit of transformation. This focus on transformation is central to the values exhibited by action researchers, who seek to foster social change towards the betterment of humanity. Practical knowing entails an understanding of the conditions that inhibit transformation, possible

avenues towards change and their consequences. Practical knowing is therefore consistent with the participatory role of an action researcher, who co-constructs information that leads to action. Acts are directed towards the fulfilment of specific goals and purposes.

Justification of Knowledge Claims Made Through Action Research

An important consideration when discussing how epistemological positions inform inquiry is to examine the criteria utilized to justify knowledge claims. As is evident from the preceding sections, the collapse in subject/object distinctions and the value-laden nature of the knowledge creation process pose challenges for using objectivist criteria to justify knowledge claims. Experimental design and methods coincide with objectivist aims, which seek both internal and external validity. An experimental design may implement various controls (e.g. methodological or statistical) to remove validity threats. Thus, action researchers have faced the burden of justifying their research as a contribution to knowledge as opposed to being a polemical device for advocacy.

Some action researchers respond to such critique by challenging the very presuppositions upon which positivist criteria for validity stand. They argue that the role of the subject as being a mere conduit between the object and knowledge is unrealistic and fundamentally deceiving. As previously discussed, objectivist criticism presumes a dualistic divide wherein the creation of knowledge requires purifying the knower from the known. According to many action researchers, this kind of purification is both impractical and unproductive. Instead, knowledge is co-created, given valued aims and purposes. This practical form of knowing may therefore require distinct validity concerns. Validity is not ensured from eliminating the knower, but it may instead be grounded within the utility of pragmatic resolutions aiming to solve problems. As an illustration, consider an action researcher entering a local school district. She may work with new science teachers as they navigate the curriculum, parental and administrative demands, as well as state standards with respect to teaching evolution. This may entail working directly with hostile parents and political advocacy at a local level. Validity in the context of an action research study may therefore extend beyond score-based interpretations and instead be exhibited by monitoring the development of praxis within social settings.

Engagement is not a choice in action research; it is required. Hence, action researchers from various epistemological traditions have developed criteria for maintaining validity in action research. They proposed democratic validity, which requires the researcher to

consult and present the widest spectrum of perspectives or opinions on the issue and to accurately represent the voices of all parties involved. Outcome validity demands that the action resulting from the research lead to some form of resolution to the problem. To maintain validity of process, action researchers have developed and used qualitative strategies like reflexivity, triangulation, prolonged engagement, participant debriefing and member checking. Catalytic validity requires that there be active participation by both the researcher and the participants in an effort to facilitate change within and beyond the research setting.

Therefore, action researchers seek the credibility and trustworthiness of the researcher and the research process and link the outcomes of research with involvement in its implications. Given that values are an impetus for action, research quality is exhibited by the extent to which the ends of such action are manifest. Knowledge is useful when it leads to transformation or praxis. Practical knowing is therefore concerned with 'what works' here and now. Validity concerns may therefore be restricted to an examination of this aspect of practical knowing.

Conclusion

Many positions towards epistemological questions reflect the influence of a subject/object dichotomy inherited from a dualistic depiction of humanity. This dichotomy reinforced a view of knowledge consisting of a subject who discovered meaning residing within an object of investigation. Such a dualism is antithetical to the aims of action researchers, who have sought to clarify how practical knowing can transform the world into a better place. This requires abandoning a 'God's-eye' view, wherein the researcher has special access to universal knowledge. Instead, knowing is much more tentative, problem focused and driven by a concern to better the human condition. This practical form of knowing occurs via direct participation, and this in turn collapses strong subject/object divisions. Action, and thus research, is value driven. Evaluation of research quality therefore tends to be utility focused in that useful knowledge leads to valued transformations.

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See also ontology; philosophy of science; *phrónēsis*; practical knowing; praxis; validity; Wittgenstein, Ludwig

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EPISTEMOLOGY OF PRACTICE

See Practical Knowledge

ETHICS AND MORAL DECISION-MAKING

Ethics is a practical science focused on how we put values into action. It is the study of ethical relationships we have with human beings, sentient creatures and the physical world in which we live. It is the study of what we value in these relationships and the decisions we make based on those values. As a study, ethics develops both conceptual and empirical frameworks to articulate meaning and practice.

Ethical systems are intended to clarify and advance our understanding of moral relationships and the value-based decisions we make. Ethical systems give us basic tools for practical reasoning and define fundamental terms used in moral discourse so that in our relationships with others we may avoid misleading ambiguities. As models for moral action, these systems help us critique our actions and the actions of others. Ethics may also refer to a specific set of values that define a group or a pattern of decision-making. Codes of ethics define and set the standards for many professions, corporations and organizations.

This entry provides a brief description of three major ethical systems as developed by Aristotle (384–322 BC), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and John Stuart Mill (1806–73). The intent is to illustrate how these systems function as models for ethical decision-making

and describe how these models may inform the work of action researchers in community and organizational settings.

Two general observations about these ethical systems: First, since the very earliest writers and continuing actively today, philosophers have developed numerous ethical systems. None of these systems were developed in a vacuum. Many authors preceded these three theory builders, and their work continues to generate new revisions and extensions as well as new theoretic models. They were selected based on the stature these systems hold among the philosophical community of scholars and because they identify important conceptions of ethics commonly in use and practice throughout society today.

Second, none of these accounts has proven to be without its merits or its faults. Critics find the systems powerful enough to warrant exploring ways to improve them, and followers find ample opportunities for building upon the positive qualities as they take into consideration an increasingly complex and changing ethical landscape.

Most important of all, each of these systems illustrates a significantly different approach to ethical decision-making. Although philosophical theorists focus on detailed nuances in each system, the intent here is to identify the practical lessons we can acquire from these models, ones that will assist us in moral decision-making and in understanding values in action.

Aristotle and Virtue Ethics

In building an ethical system, Aristotle takes as his starting point a search for the good. He states in the opening words of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, ‘Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good’ (1094a) (this and the following textual citations are from Immanuel Bekker’s 1831 translation of Aristotle’s work from the original Greek). The ethical question, for him, is to find the good that all human beings seek and the special qualities we have as human beings that enable us to achieve the good. In what follows, he proceeds to give us both a definition of the good and a functional analysis of how human beings ought to live their lives in order to achieve that good. Aristotle is writing in what will become a naturalistic tradition. Trained as a biologist, he looks at human behaviour as a scientist—using observation to build a moral system grounded in what he argues to be fundamental conceptions of human nature.

Aristotle’s approach to finding the good towards which we all aim is to examine human activities, the things we do. ‘For just as for a flute-player, a sculptor, or any artist, and in general, for all things that have a

function or activity, the good and the “well” is thought to reside in the function, so would it seem to be for man’ (1097b25). Although he recognizes that there is a wide variety of human activities with just as many goals, these are just intermediate goods. His search is for an intrinsic good that is common to all human activity. After examining a number of instrumental goals, Aristotle concludes that the end towards which all human activities ultimately aim is our pursuit of well-being or happiness (‘*eudaimonia*’).

His task, then, as an ethicist is to give an account of how we may achieve this good. Aristotle argues that the unique capacity and skill of all human beings that enables us to achieve the good lies in our ability to make rational choices based on moral virtue. (‘Human good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with virtue’ [1097b22–1098a20].) Practical reason coupled with moral virtue enables us to fulfil our nature and achieve well-being. However, for Aristotle, ethics is more than just knowing what is good; it is about doing and living a good life through action. Happiness is virtuous activity, and we achieve well-being through doing virtuous actions. This he identifies as moral excellence.

A fundamental ingredient in achieving ethical excellence is developing a moral disposition. Like a star athlete who builds muscle memory through practice, excellence in moral behaviour can only be achieved by building moral ‘muscle memory’ through practice. The moral virtues that we recognize and praise—compassion, courage, generosity, honesty and temperance—are the building blocks to a disposition that we commonly identify as one’s moral character. Moral wrongdoing, by contrast, results from acting in a manner that violates the moral virtues (e.g. acting in a cowardly or dishonest manner) or from faulty practical reasoning (e.g. seeking the wrong end, an end that will not bring about well-being).

Embodying good moral character means using our practical reason not just on one or a few occasions but over a lifetime. A truly virtuous life requires consistent and coherent practice and results in a natural harmony between our actions and the end—the good towards which we all aim.

Kant and the Ethics of Respect for Persons

Kant begins his effort to construct a moral system in much the same manner as Aristotle by defining what we mean by the word *good*. (‘Nothing in the world—indeed nothing even beyond the world—can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a good will’ [*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 393]). However, he proceeds in this endeavour in a far different manner and reaches

a much different outcome in terms of both the structure and the content of his moral system.

Kant, in arguing that a good will is the only thing that we can conceive as good without qualification, sets his theory of practical ethics apart from the others in three critically important ways: First, the good will is not based on empirical observations but rather on rational argument. Second, the good will is not an instrumental or teleological good; the rightness of the good will is not based on achieving some end or goal. Third, the good will is a free will, the rational capacity to impose on ourselves moral laws. Kant argues that what is unique about human ethical decision-making is our autonomy or freedom to construct moral laws and impose those laws on ourselves. Moral laws cannot be derived empirically from observing the various things people do, nor can they be based on a generalization that all human actions aim at some end.

Kant argues that moral laws, like the physical laws of the universe, must apply to all people without qualification. These laws take the form of a categorical imperative (CI). He distinguishes CIs, which command without exception (‘Do X’), from hypothetical or instrumental imperatives, which tell us how to act if we wish to bring about some end result (‘If you seek Y, do X’).

Kant identifies three fundamental moral principles:

1. ‘Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law’ (CI #1, 421).
2. ‘Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only’ (CI #2, 429).
3. ‘Act according to the maxims of a universally legislative member of a merely potential realm of ends’ (CI #3, 439).

Taken together, these three moral laws constitute the basis for Kant’s ethical system. These moral laws apply to all rational moral agents, at all times and places; they dictate that we are morally obligated to treat one another with dignity and respect and that it is our moral autonomy, our rational free will, that binds us together as moral agents. In Kant’s system, moral law constitutes the fundamental principles of how we ought to treat one another.

A fundamental key for understanding Kant’s ethics is human freedom. Moral agents are autonomous beings who have both the freedom to make moral law and the freedom to impose that law upon themselves. Freedom for Kant goes beyond the common notion of freedom as the absence of law or constraint (negative freedom) to a positive concept of freedom as the

rational capacity to enact moral law upon ourselves. It is our autonomy as moral agents that gives us moral rights and enables us to bind ourselves to being held accountable for the moral duties we bear towards others. To understand the moral relationships we have with others, Kant's system counsels us to ask the deontological question: What obligations do I have in this relationship?

Mill and the Ethics of Utility

Mill opens his most influential work in moral philosophy, *Utilitarianism* (1861), with the observation that 'from the dawn of philosophy, the question concerning the summum bonum [highest good], or, what is the same thing, concerning the foundation of morality, has been accounted the main problem in speculative thought' (chap. 1, para. 1). Like Aristotle, and contrary to Kant, Mill takes a naturalistic approach to moral theory building. Relying on science and observation of human actions, he argues,

The creed that accepts as the foundation of morals 'utility' or the 'greatest happiness principle' holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure. (*Utilitarianism*, chap. 2, para. 2)

Mill was certainly not the first philosopher to propose utility as a moral system, but his concise and clear statement of its principles has guided much of the discussion ever since.

Mill refines the utilitarian principle in two very significant ways. First, he argues that in calculating the amount of happiness an act may produce, we can distinguish between the amount of pleasure and the quality of that pleasure. For instance, an act that may produce more physical pleasure would not on quantity alone supersede intellectual or aesthetic pleasure. Both quantity and quality matter when measuring the happiness an action may produce.

Second, in an attempt to refute charges of egoism, Mill argues that when an individual seeks to maximize his or her own happiness, the overall consequence will be to maximize the well-being of all people. He writes that the utilitarian standard 'is not the agent's own happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether' (chap. 2). And, as a forerunner to contemporary environmental advocates, Mill goes even further in suggesting that 'the end of human action . . . the standard of morality . . . [is] to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation'.

Although Mill argues that the moral worth of actions is to be judged in terms of the consequences of those actions, he also acknowledges that our actions may have multiple ends or may be done for multiple reasons. For instance, he argues that the Aristotelian virtues are not intrinsically good but are only valued as a means to happiness, no matter the praise we may give to them. 'The utilitarian doctrine is that happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being only desirable as a means to that end' (chap. 4).

However, Mill's text is less clear when it comes to the status of moral rules. Act utilitarianism claims that we can only judge the moral worth of an individual act—as in 'Did my singular act of truth telling result in a greater degree of happiness or not?' In contrast, rule utilitarianism claims that because the moral rule that we should tell the truth can be shown to bring about the greatest degree of happiness, if we follow that rule our act will be morally justifiable even if the consequences do not result in the greatest happiness. Act and rule utilitarianism both find support in Mill's work, and thus, the discussion continues.

Conclusion

It was noted at the outset that ethical systems may function as models for decision-making. They can illuminate the values we use in everyday decision-making and help us identify the basis upon which moral confusion or moral disagreement occurs. This concluding section provides a brief look into how these ethical systems may serve as useful models for decision-making.

Aristotle is often identified as the originator of virtue ethics. His system, and that of other virtue ethicists, examines human actions and identifies the qualities those actions represent. His moral qualities or virtues (compassion, courage, fairness, generosity, honesty, honour and temperance) are praised, and their opposites are condemned. We hold in high regard as exemplars of moral behaviour individuals who consistently reveal these qualities in their ethical decision-making and refer to a life lived as demonstrating one's moral character. As a model for decision-making, virtue ethics counsels us to make moral decisions based on the qualities of moral behaviour that the act illustrates. Faced with a moral choice, what quality of moral character will my choice represent? Will I be acting courageously or in a cowardly fashion, generously or in a miserly manner?

Kant is identified as a deontologist because he stated that the moral rightness of an act depends on doing one's duty and conforming to the moral laws we have imposed on ourselves. He rejects the consequentialism of Mill, which justifies moral action based on achieving an end result and argues that moral action must be judged not upon what we may or may not accomplish but upon how

we treat others. He fundamentally shifts the moral focus from ends to means. As a model for decision-making, the first task is to strip away our particular wants and needs, our particular time and place, and ask, 'Is the moral principle I am choosing one others should follow if they were in a similar position?'. The second task is to ask, 'Will my action treat others in a manner that respects their moral dignity?'. For Kant, it is our self-governing reason that establishes the equal worth of all people and requires us to respect the humanity in others. Embedded in Kant's formal system is a very strong link with the moral principle known as the golden rule: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'.

Mill is identified as a consequentialist because in his account of utilitarianism the moral rightness of the action is based upon the ends to be achieved. In such a system, the ends are often said to justify the means. Mill defines morally justifiable actions as those that bring about the greatest amount of good (pleasure or happiness) for the greatest number of people. Likewise, immoral actions are those that result in more pain or displeasure for the most people. As a model for decision-making, the morally correct choice is one that will result in the most good for the most people. For Mill, moral action is about what we aim to achieve and not the qualities of character or the duties we have to others.

Action research can be defined, at least in large part, by a shared approach to moral decision-making and values that includes (a) respect for the knowledge and experience of others (Aristotle and Kant), (b) a commitment to democratic participation and process (Mill) and (c) a commitment to working towards greater equality and social justice in our own communities and on a global scale (Rawls).

The practice of action research reflects an Aristotelian emphasis on the moral qualities of mentors in scientific research and the integrity and moral character researchers demonstrate in interactions with participants and the communities in which they work. Action research, following Kant's model, is grounded on a fundamental recognition of the moral worth of each person in the community and the professional obligation to treat individual volunteers with respect. And, guided by a concern for working towards the greater social good, action research also adheres to the precepts of Mill's utilitarian model.

Action researchers are keenly aware of the ever-changing nature of ethical practice. Each of these models, and others, can be helpful in clarifying misunderstandings between researchers, volunteers and the communities. Ethical models can help us identify situations in which values conflict, for instance, when acting on the researcher's interest to improve overall social welfare may injure a volunteer and violate the duties to a community.

Three very different models for ethical decision-making were considered, and yet each represents ethical decision patterns common in human experience. Mill in his treatise *Utilitarianism* specifically refers to features and arguments found in Aristotle and Kant. These three models for decision-making each reveal to us aspects of Western ethical thought that are present in decision-making today. Understanding, comparing and contrasting these models can assist us in being more informed ethical decision-makers. The tools they provide may help us be more aware of the basis for our own ethical decisions. They may not only help us understand how others make decisions but also reveal some of the reasons that give rise to moral disagreement.

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See also communitarianism; Confucian principles; covenantal ethics; feminist ethics; indigenous research ethics and practice; liberation theology; *phronēsis*

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ETHICS PROTOCOLS

See Institutional Review Board

ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography originated as a distinct methodology in the early twentieth century with the professionalization

of anthropology under Franz Boas in the USA and Bronislaw Malinowski in England. These pioneers shaped the practice of living in field communities for months or years as participant observers and as collectors of texts and accounts. For sociologists, the important methodological moment was the development of the Chicago School of ethnography, led by Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, whose interest in 'natural areas' and social ecology produced a vigorous and wide-ranging set of studies of urban social change. Ethnography, much expanded and much interrogated as a methodology, was subsequently appropriated and honed in a wide range of disciplines and subject areas, including education, medical studies, science and technology, deviance studies, innovation and entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, international development, communications, organizational development and, not least, action research. All these fields use ethnography as a means of illuminating lived experience where social and cultural contexts are poorly understood. Ethnography, which intrinsically involves a feedback cycle of using newly acquired information to inform and modify the direction of the inquiry, fits well with the process of collaborative or co-generational action research, in which researchers and practitioners develop an increasingly comprehensive understanding of an actual or potential social, community or organizational change. The following entry deals with the general uses of ethnography, the varieties of ethnographic approaches, the basics of research design, approaches to data collection, the writing of field notes, interviewing and capturing multiple realities.

Ethnography is primarily used for discovery and secondarily for verification, while quantitative studies are best for assessing the distribution or range of known phenomena in different populations. Ethnography is often seen as an alternative to quantitative research; however, it can be combined with a variety of quantitative approaches, using an ethnographic 'wrap' around a quantitative method. In ethnography, the researcher is the primary instrument of fieldwork, usually within a natural community, often as a guest in face-to-face interaction with other participants, with no more than moderate control over the field situation, particularly in Participatory Action Research, in which the community collaborates in the research.

Theoretical Perspectives

Ethnography is a contextual method that seeks holistic understandings of persons in social settings. It can be used in a deductive framework but is more often used inductively. A widely used inductive approach is 'Grounded Theory', pioneered by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, which seeks to identify emergent

themes in the data and to construct abstract categories to explain the social processes observed. This 'objectivist' Grounded Theory attempts to explain and predict social formations, while the twenty-first-century 'constructivist' version of Grounded Theory by Kathy Charmaz and others emphasizes the multiplicity of realities and the need for researcher reflexivity. Another prominent perspective, symbolic interactionism, focuses on community life and the construction of intersubjective understandings rather than individual perspectives. While some ethnographers limit their craft to a discovery role, others use ethnography for hypothesis testing and verification, using the many 'natural experiments' of social, cultural and economic change occurring all around us. Ethnography is useful whenever the research goal is to discover how people experience events and processes and create or change meanings in communities.

Research Design

A research design should specify the initial question or research problem under investigation, the kind of data and sample needed and a strategy for analysis. Alternately, a research design can be developed through a process of co-generated learning by the community and an ethnographer or facilitator, intended to empower the participants. A research question might focus on a natural experiment in which an organization or community is coping with change or initiating an innovation. Will a new, web-based diabetes management programme on Lakota reservations be more accepted and effective than current health programmes? Can heritage sites in Derry-Londonderry, Northern Ireland, co-operate to create a more comprehensive public narrative of the contested history of this city? Whether these experiments succeed or fail, the lessons learned should be helpful in understanding the struggles for or against change in these communities. Projects can be focused, efficient and even relatively 'quick' if the ethnographer plans carefully, builds a foundation through open-ended interviews, develops a database through semi-structured and structured interviews and uses project management techniques to keep the project on track. Informal, open-ended interviews can reveal whether or not the initial research question is salient for the research population.

Diversity and Data Collection

Earlier, ethnographic studies tended to assume consistency or homogeneity within study populations. However, the culture of a corporation, to take a convenient example, is not simply the creation of the founder or the CEO but is likely to exhibit diverse

situated meanings for the employees. Ethnography can address this diversity to identify people who agree or disagree with each other and what life circumstances may have contributed to that agreement or difference.

Much of ethnography involves collecting narratives or stories: explanations of how and why things happen, how some processes work, how change occurred and how persons feel about it or what people expect of the future. Historically, the ethnographer's relationship with participants has ranged from exploitive to collaborative, with current ethical practices favouring collaboration.

Participant observation—'being there' in the field—has been the hallmark of ethnography. It includes a variety of activities, ranging from virtually pure observation to fully engaged participation. Using both approaches may be appropriate to gain different kinds of information. In a study of heritage sites, for example, one could silently observe and record the way visitors experience and use museums. The fieldworker could also participate in guided tours with children, families or young adults to see how persons of different ages and interests respond. In participatory research teams, members of the community may be collaborators in collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data for the public. Who owns the data? Different approaches to ethnography provide different answers.

Field Notes

Even before researchers enter the field, they should begin recording field notes of several kinds, beginning with a description of their expectations for the study. As the fieldwork gets under way, begin with 'jotted notes' with phrases and names, taken down during or shortly after the interviews or observations. These notes can then be fleshed out in digital files. Written notes can be coded as descriptive notes, analytic notes or personal notes, separating the 'factual' description from theoretical or methodological interpretations and from descriptions of the fieldworker's personal emotions or reactions to the research experience. The analytic notes should be revised as new ideas or understandings develop in the course of the fieldwork. Notes should be archived rather than deleted, as earlier drafts form a record of the evolution in thinking. In another iteration of the descriptive field notes, the researcher can code the notes for focal variables, themes or patterns of interest, using numbers or phrases recoded and explained in a code book key. In longer term projects, the management of texts and documents becomes potentially burdensome and may be best done with database software. In any case, a record of the trajectory or cycles of the co-generative learning in action research should be preserved.

Interviewing

Additional techniques include several different types of interviews: long interviews with cultural experts and structured or semi-structured interviews with a wider range of persons, as needed in different phases of the research. Given the convenience and reliability of digital recording technology, it is often best to record interviews if the consultant gives permission. The 'empathetic interviewer' doesn't just gain information from the consultant but helps produce it by listening, questioning and reacting in the conversation. Interviews can evoke strong emotions, and the researcher needs to be thoughtful about the relationship with the consultant in order to avoid any form of exploitation, either of the consultant or of the interviewer.

Early in a project, the researcher may be interviewing leaders or gatekeepers who may help with access to the community or research site. Relatively brief, informal interviews help fill in many of the broad outlines of a research site. It may be appropriate to begin with a 'grand tour' question, such as 'Tell me how this office operates' or 'What is your typical day like?' Such interviews help indicate which variables may be most important for the subsequent research. To avoid confusion, it is best to start with no more than five important variables in the project. Most questions will be opened until the ethnographer gains a basic understanding of the site. Short interviews could be used to verify and extend the information, particularly with persons in different structural positions. Semi-structured interviews and structured interviews can be used to discover how widespread the agreement (or lack of agreement) is concerning key issues. Only when the fieldworker has a better grasp of the social setting should she use structured interviews or questionnaires. Nothing is more off-putting for a consultant than to be asked culturally confusing or meaningless questions.

Multiple Realities

Among the possible initial analytic frameworks for studying social situations is the following set of categories, organized by John Lofland: actors and acts (participants and what they do), activities (how acts are organized into a larger whole), settings (the spatial and temporal location and positioning of the activities), ways of participating (the roles available in the setting), relationships (the relationships among the actors and their activities) and meanings (the cultural or countercultural import of the activity for the participants). This framework moves from persons and their behaviour to the increasingly macro aspects of the setting, including the meanings that unite or divide the participants in the setting.

The fieldworker can explore cultural domains by 'freelisting', or asking consultants to talk about the elements or components of a particular domain, such as 'business success' or 'problems facing this organization'. The fieldworker can also freelist the components of business success with other cultural experts until no new components are mentioned. From this complete list of culturally relevant forms of business success, the fieldworker can then explore individual priorities—which kinds are most important—by using a card sort technique. Starting with a set of cards, with each form of success on a separate card, ask consultants to sort the cards into three piles: (1) most important, (2) moderately important and (3) least important. Taking this procedure a step further, the consultant can sort each of the three piles by importance, producing a complete ranking of forms of success. The degree of agreement or disagreement among cultural experts can be determined empirically, using consensus analysis or other statistical methods. When dealing with organizations, it may be helpful to use the freelisting and card sort approach to explore the variations in the participants' priorities concerning the mission of the organization and the challenges it faces. Since it may be important to discover the multiple realities for different persons in the community or setting, the researcher needs to develop a sampling strategy, involving either probability sampling or non-probability sampling.

While building a foundation of data, the fieldworker can seek additional sources of information that illuminate the research question. For example, after completing a study of several themes of Welsh personhood, a research team constructed and validated a series of scenarios or brief narratives exemplifying each of the themes. The scenarios were then shown to samples of Welsh residents in different communities, who were asked to rate the 'Welshness' of the behaviour in the scenario. The analysis of these structured interviews gave further nuanced support to the initial ethnography. This process of gathering different kinds of data to reflect on a research problem is sometime called 'triangulation', using additional types of data to either reinforce or modify the initial interpretation. In action research, the use of multiple forms of data lowers the risk that the project will fail to illuminate the problems facing the community or organization.

Additional Techniques

While ethnography usually employs participant observation and interviewing, these foundational methods can be partnered with a variety of other qualitative research techniques, such as mapping or creating diagrams, flow charts, organizational charts and decision trees. These concepts can be helpful for collecting

information as well as representing it in reports. By asking persons in a range of ages to draw maps of the city of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, we found that young persons were less likely than middle-aged adults to describe the city in terms of exclusively Protestant and Catholic territories. Flow charts can be used to trace and describe processes, particularly those complex processes involving many actors and different organizations or agencies. Decision trees show the way people evaluate the factors that go into a decision, such as which crops to plant. This approach can clarify the issues and the steps involved in individual decision-making, leading to structural change. In organizational research, the formal structure of the organization chart may be contrasted with the informal structure, including personal networks that enable workers to bypass particular procedures.

Narrative analysis, imported from the humanities, provides a framework for assessing the meanings of key events, natural disasters, community crises or personal challenges. Stories may have thematic similarities, such as self-sacrifice for the community, a martyrdom motif. Plot structures have at least three stages, beginning with (1) an initial circumstances or condition, followed by (2) a challenge to that status quo and (3) a resolution (or not) of that challenge. 'How did you come to start this business?' is a question designed to evoke an entrepreneur's story. Entrepreneurial stories can be characterized by different plot types, including the 'opportunity plot', in which an employee gets an exciting and unexpected chance to start a new firm and launch a new career direction.

Comparative Perspectives

One valuable way of learning more about the chosen social setting is, ironically, to study another similar social setting. Even a brief comparative study of another site can reveal important similarities as well as differences in the two sites and can reduce the 'risk' that the research design will not be successful in producing key understandings. The study of a web-based self-managed system for diabetics on Lakota reservations featured two different sites, one where computers were available only at the community health centre and one in which home computers were given to each of the diabetics. The persons with home computers were more empowered: They were more successful in managing their illnesses, and their children tended to excel in school, an additional benefit.

Data Analysis

Data analysis should not be a separate or distinct stage of the research process. Instead, analysis runs

throughout the project. Ethnography is an iterative process in which the researcher alternates between data collection and data analysis in a continuous feedback loop, constantly testing what she thinks she knows against new evidence. Periodically during the fieldwork, the researcher should write a brief paper or a long abstract of her findings to discover, provisionally, what she knows. These provisional findings can then be critiqued to reveal the weaknesses, gaps, overconfident assertions or wrong-headed ideas that inhabit the text. These problems signpost further steps in data collection. It may be appropriate to ask key consultants to read the abstract (or discuss a verbal equivalent) in order to gain some feedback on the analysis, provided no promises of anonymity are compromised. In participatory research, the data analysis may be a team project involving both the ethnographer or facilitator and the community.

Reciprocity

A prerequisite for a successful project is not only to obtain permission to do research with the relevant population but to establish an ethical and transparent relationship with the persons involved as well. Fieldworkers are often drawn into a variety of collaborative roles during their research and sometimes become a resource for the local community, even after their departure. In the interest of reciprocity, the fieldworker needs to be alert for opportunities to be helpful. Personal gifts for those who have been most valuable to you may also be appropriate. Make certain that consultants have the contact information for fieldworkers after their departure.

Writing Reports

Since the ethnographer is the most important tool of research, ethnographic writing is more personal than most social science reports. Over the past few decades, ethnography has been critiqued from several perspectives: positivist, naturalist, feminist, constructivist and postmodernist, among others. One outcome of these legitimacy battles is the recommendation that authors reveal their thinking and acting in the field reflexively, making the reader more conscious of the positioning of the author in the text. Ethnographers, of course, are positioned in time, culture, history, gender and political situations. Increasingly, we expect them to reveal how these factors have informed their research decisions and their writing. Ethnography remains a powerful, if imperfect, method for action research and for conveying an understanding of the lived experience of persons to others who are differently situated.

D. Douglas Caulkins

See also action anthropology; case study; co-generative learning; cognitive mapping; collaborative action research; community development; Grounded Theory; narrative; organization development; organizational culture; Participatory Action Research; symbolic interactionism

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EVALUATION

Evaluation is a field of inquiry that generates questions, seeks answers, examines action and impact and promotes change. Despite the fact that we are constantly evaluating in our daily lives, many people do not understand evaluation. The reason for the confusion stems from the fact that like action research, evaluation strives to observe, analyze and stimulate change. These activities are often perceived as a form of inspection and are met with suspicion and negativity. Both fields deal with the following questions: What are we doing? How are we doing it? Does it work? Can we do it better? The main difference between the two is that evaluation looks at someone else's programme or intervention while action research examines one's own programme or action. The first part of this entry will present a broad description of the field of evaluation. Then we relate it to action research, followed by evaluation methodologies, and ending with the issues facing evaluation, including ethics, politics and use.

In order to understand the field of evaluation, it is necessary to define the major players in an evaluation and the purpose for which an evaluation is commissioned. The commissioner of the evaluation is the person or persons who have a financial, administrative or ideological stake in the operation and results of an intervention. Commissioners enlist the help of an evaluator to determine questions of the value, worth and merit of a programme or intervention. The object of the evaluation, be it a programme, an intervention or an organization, is called the *evaluand*. In addition to the

commissioner, *stakeholders* include those who operate the evaluand, those who participate in it and those who benefit from it. The evaluator or evaluation team consists of professionals trained in research methods and evaluation approaches, often in another, related discipline, such as anthropology, education, management, psychology, sociology and statistics, to name but a few. Evaluations are commissioned for a variety of reasons. Funding agencies often request an evaluation to verify that their money is spent well. Governments request evaluations to make sure that the taxpayers' money is invested well. Programme designers and providers request evaluations to determine whether to continue, disseminate or terminate interventions. Organizations commission evaluations to examine the effectiveness of the organization or the effect of interventions on and within the organization to learn from their success or failure. Decision-makers and policymakers request evaluations to help them make educated decisions concerning an intervention, programme or policy. All evaluations should inform stakeholders and generate knowledge and learning that lead to a better functioning society. However, it is important to keep in mind that the reason for the evaluation drives the evaluation design and frequently involves either internal or external political concerns.

Programme evaluation traditionally belongs to two separate but sometimes overlapping types: formative and summative. Formative evaluation examines the implementation of the programme, and summative evaluation examines the impact of the programme. Formative evaluation focuses on studying the intervention, its goals and its strategies and examines the extent to which the actual implementation matches the intended implementation. Furthermore, formative evaluation can examine short-term results. The evaluator provides stakeholders with a thick description of the programme, and they decide whether it is being implemented as intended and, if not, what changes need to be made in order to fulfil their expectations.

Summative evaluation examines the short-, mid- and long-term results of an intervention once it has been implemented. It examines the extent to which intended and unintended changes have occurred as a result of the intervention. Sometimes, summative evaluation ignores the implementation of the programme and examines only the results. This is called *black box* evaluation, as opposed to *process* evaluation, which examines the process of an intervention as well as the outcomes. Over the years, more and more evaluations take into consideration both formative and summative considerations while focusing more on one or the other.

Many organizations hire evaluators to conduct an evaluation of their organization or of an intervention or programme within the organization or carried out by

the organization. These evaluators are called *external evaluators* because they are not part of the organization. Other organizations hire evaluators to be part of the organization and to conduct evaluations from within. These evaluators are called *internal evaluators*. Each kind of evaluation has advantages and disadvantages that can be offset. On the one hand, internal evaluators are deeply familiar with the evaluand and may therefore be subjective. On the other, while more objective, the external evaluator can be too far removed from it. There are methodological tools that can compensate for these factors: triangulation, validity testing, peer testing and so on. Whether external or internal, evaluators usually begin an evaluation by thoroughly acquainting themselves with the evaluand. Some evaluators begin by studying the goals of the programme, with the aim of matching the goals as stated with the goals achieved. This is termed *goal-oriented evaluation*. Other evaluators prefer *goal-free evaluation*, in which they learn the goals through observation of action in the field.

Stakeholders and participants of an evaluation have different functions in the programme, for example, as the funding agency, director and staff and programme beneficiaries. They also vary in the extent of their involvement in the evaluation. Participation can run the gamut from minor participation, signing a contract and answering questionnaires to participating fully at every stage of the evaluation, from conception to final recommendations. The latter is most closely related to action research. These types of evaluation will be discussed further on in this entry.

Relevance of Evaluation to Action Research

Both action research and evaluation are forms of applied research. The principle difference between the two lies in the driving force of the research. The reasons for conducting an evaluation are usually external. Someone commissions the evaluation. The reasons for conducting action research are internal. An organization or a group of people decides together to undertake an exercise of action research in order to examine and learn from its actions. It should be noted, however, that some organizations decide to conduct an evaluation and the impetus comes from within, using either an internal or an external evaluator, similar to action research.

Action research and evaluation are large, multidisciplinary fields that overlap in significant ways. Both forms of inquiry seek to examine action, learn from it and make decisions based on the knowledge produced through the process. Similarly, they are action oriented, providing information to inform either ongoing action or future action. In addition, they are both rooted in an iterate process of observation, data collection, analysis,

reflection, renewed observation, data collection, analysis and reflection, and so on. Moreover, both forms of inquiry are applied to a variety of pursuits: business, education, health, medicine and welfare, to name but a few. Finally, both action research and evaluation produce evidence-based insights through the use of a broad range of research methodologies and techniques. These are discussed in the next section.

Evaluation Methodologies

A wide range of research approaches is available to evaluators. In broad terms, these include quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods approaches. Evaluators choose their approach based on the context of the evaluand, the purpose of the evaluation and their own research predispositions. The context of the evaluation often dictates the methodological direction since it can pose numerical, linguistic and logistic constraints. The purpose of the evaluation also indicates methodological approaches. If the purpose is to better understand a large programme, then a mixed-methods approach may be preferable to either quantitative or qualitative methods. If statistics are desired to confirm or disaffirm the effectiveness of an intervention, then quantitative methods would be most appropriate. Some commissioners prefer random control trials (RCT) to determine the impact of a programme; however, it is very difficult to design the perfect RCT evaluation programme given the large number of variables involved and the difficulty in selecting a 'matching' population. Increasing numbers of evaluators employ a combination of methodologies to ensure a deeper understanding of the evaluand so that correct and meaningful decisions can be made concerning it.

Research designs vary as well and also depend upon the context, the questions the evaluation seeks to answer and the purposes of the inquiry. Evaluators use descriptive and exploratory designs, such as surveys, case studies, narratives, comparisons with an absolute standard, comparisons over time using pre-, post- and periodic designs within one population. They can also follow quasi-experimental designs, in which they compare the study population that participated in the intervention with a control group that did not.

Formative evaluation is normally conducted through observations, interviews, focus groups and the examination of programme documents. In other words, formative evaluation instruments tend to be qualitative instruments. In order to validate these instruments, evaluators employ triangulation, a method used to minimize bias and error through the use of multiple sources of data collection; multiple observers, times and spaces and other data collection methods. A variety of methodological instruments is available to them, including

focus groups, case studies, narratives, photographs, video and more, to obtain a clear picture of the implementation of the programme. Evaluators can administer pre- and post-questionnaires in order to examine the immediate influence of the programme upon termination. Questionnaires are a quantitative instrument and can be analyzed statistically. However, when the numbers are insufficient to conduct a significant statistical analysis, analysis can be conducted qualitatively.

Summative evaluation usually relies on standard quantitative methods: RCTs of quasi-experimental designs that compare the programme population with a control group, either pre and post, or over time at fixed intervals. Frequently, since some summative evaluations are commissioned after the programme begins, they employ a pre- or post-design, relying on self-reporting. RCTs are preferred by many commissioners but are difficult to conduct unless the subject of the evaluation serves a very large population in a context where a similar population can be randomly selected for the research. This kind of evaluation study is furthest from action research in concept and nature.

Both formative and summative evaluations take into account the theory that drives the programme, *programme theory*. In most cases, programme theory is not explicit. It is not conceptualized and documented by stakeholders. In many evaluations, it is the evaluator's task to reveal the theory that drives the intervention, through careful investigation. This process often entails converting tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Sometimes, the evaluator and the stakeholders build a logic model that clearly outlines programme theory so that it can be examined from a number of perspectives. Are the assumptions behind the intervention logical, well thought out and evidence based? Are the necessary inputs available in order to carry out the programme? Do the activities actually take place? Do the outcomes follow logically from the outputs? Where are the discrepancies? What's missing? What are the unintended outcomes? The questions *why* and *why not* should accompany each of these questions.

The evaluation methodology closest to action research is responsive, participatory and context-bound evaluation. As mentioned, the kind and number of participants in an evaluation vary. Some evaluators consider the subject of evaluation from the outside and do not involve any of the stakeholders other than for data collection purposes. Others involve participants on an administrative, operative level at all stages of the evaluation: formulation of evaluation questions, deciding on the appropriate research design, collecting data, analyzing findings and drawing conclusions for decision-making, programme changes, disseminating or termination. Still others conduct a participatory process, including all levels of stakeholders,

from programme funders, designers and operators to programme beneficiaries. All forms of participatory evaluation can take place at all or some of the stages of the evaluation depending upon the degree of participation desired and feasible for a given programme. Many evaluators maintain that all the stakeholders can learn through the process as well as the findings of evaluation by reflecting on their actions in a mindful and educated manner and by generating knowledge that will help them design and implement better programmes. This approach to participatory evaluation most closely resembles action research approaches.

Evaluation Issues

Evaluation issues fall into four main categories: context, politics, ethics and use.

Context

With the spread of globalization and increasingly heterogeneous populations, evaluators are paying greater attention to context and its influence on the success or failure of programmes as well as on the evaluation itself. It has become more difficult to attribute changes in attitude and behaviour to a specific programme or intervention. Evaluators have to take into account the context of each programme site and examine other factors that may contribute to the intended outcomes. This attention to context has given rise to contribution theory, which attributes outcomes to a combination of factors that produce the same result. Thus, the knowledge generated by the evaluation covers a broader range of phenomena and is difficult to apply to other programmes at a superficial level of dissemination. In other words, the programme could be excellent in a specific context but would not work well in a different one. Programme success or failure to produce intended outcomes can be due to the fact that implementation took place at the wrong time, in the wrong place or with the wrong population.

Politics

Evaluations are conducted in order to investigate the merit, value and worth of an activity, and the findings of that investigation are sometimes used to either extend or terminate that activity. As such, evaluations are driven by funding considerations and are, thus, often commissioned for political reasons. Most evaluation commissioners have some kind of agenda associated with the investigation of an intervention or programme. Furthermore, different stakeholders have different agendas depending upon their stake in the evaluand. Large national programmes involve huge sums of money, which are often distributed along

political lines. External and internal politics may differ. The funding organization may want to either justify its spending or support closing a programme for a specific reason. Sometimes, a programme director requests an evaluation in order to terminate a programme that is politically threatening. The evaluator is placed in the awkward position of having the findings more or less dictated before the evaluation is even carried out. Evaluators tread a thin line between pleasing the commissioner and revealing the truth about a programme. Sometimes, a functioning but not very successful programme is preferable to no programme at all. Tact and interpersonal skills are part of the evaluator's toolbox. Strongly connected to these issues are the issues of ethics in evaluation and evaluation use.

Ethics

Ethics is an important element in the conduct of an evaluation. The evaluator collects data in order to allow decision-makers to make educated decisions and is privy to sensitive information in the process. Similar to other kinds of researchers, evaluators must abide by certain rules of conduct concerning informed consent, anonymity of sources, confidentiality and honesty. In addition, evaluators work closely with stakeholders to build, maintain and honour trust with respect. Many evaluation associations have published guidelines or standards according to which evaluators must work. Most of the guidelines are based on the North American Joint Committee on Standards of Educational Evaluation—for feasibility, utility, propriety and accuracy—with different organizations making adaptations according to the context and culture in which they operate. These are straightforward and apparently easy to follow; however, when confronted with the messy world of programming, reforms and interventions, evaluators face complicated and complex situations that are not always clear. For this reason, ethical dilemmas are a frequent subject of discussion among evaluators.

Use

One of the frustrating issues involved with evaluation is its use. Since evaluation is a form of applied research, one expects it to be applied. Such is not always the case. There are two kinds of evaluation use: process use and use of findings. Process use means that the organization has learned to be more reflective and responsive about its actions from having participated in the process of the evaluation. Use of findings refers to changes in the programme that result from the recommendations of, or the knowledge generated by, the evaluation. This use focuses on decision-making concerning continuation, termination or dissemination of

the evaluand. Although evaluators have found that the more involved the stakeholders are in the evaluation, the greater the chance for either kind of use to occur, budgets do not always include the extra time and funding needed to allow for such involvement. In addition, timing is a crucial factor in the use of evaluation findings. If the evaluation is commissioned after an activity has taken place, then the knowledge it generates is minimal in terms of that activity. If the deadline for the renewal of funding precedes the deadline for the evaluation report, then the evaluation findings might be irrelevant.

At the outset of an evaluation, many evaluators design the evaluation for maximum intended use by the intended users.

Evaluation is akin to action research in that both fields promote learning about and from our actions, which can be used to improve our actions. Using similar methodologies, they both seek to generate knowledge that will create better, more efficient and more meaningful activities.

Barbara Rosenstein

See also Action Evaluation; Appreciative Inquiry; ethics and moral decision-making; evaluative inquiry; focus groups; mindful inquiry; multi-stakeholder dialogue; participatory evaluation; quantitative methods; reflective practice; theories of action

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EVALUATIVE INQUIRY

Evaluative inquiry (EI) combines the notions of investigation and evaluation to promote evaluation that is ongoing and embedded in routine practice. EI values both the processes and the outcomes of evaluation and therefore is juxtaposed with a view of evaluation that is episodic and oriented to specific points in time or specific decision-making needs. The development of EI parallels the focus on learning in organizations in the work of Peter Senge, Donald Schön and Chris Argyris beginning in the 1980s and into the 1990s. Evaluators attuned to organizational and human resource development saw the potential for evaluation practice to support individual and organizational learning through systemic and systematic inquiry built into routine organizational operations.

EI overlaps substantially with action research, particularly as it is done within organizational contexts. Both forms of inquiry employ an ongoing, iterative process or a spiral metaphor, and both seek positive change through examination of data and reflection on those data. Perhaps a key difference is that action research builds on a plan of action, while EI builds on a plan of inquiry about an evaluand, which results in a plan of action. Evaluative inquiry might therefore be a strategy that supports action research's stages of reflection and planning.

What follows is a description of evaluative inquiry: the process of evaluative inquiry, evaluative inquiry's basic characteristics and an example to illustrate more concretely what evaluative inquiry looks like. The discussion will conclude by illustrating how evaluative inquiry is particularly important in organizational contexts.

Evaluative Inquiry Process

Evaluative inquiry typically proceeds in three phases: focusing, investigating and applying what is learned. The first phase is focusing the inquiry, a phase in which a team or committee determines what the evaluation will focus on, determines who the stakeholders are and

defines the most important evaluation questions. In the focusing phase, evaluation teams might make use of a wide range of strategies to create this focus, including the development of logic models, interviewing stakeholders to determine what the relevant issues are and using Q sorts or Delphi techniques.

The second phase of evaluative inquiry is doing the investigation or collecting the data and evidence to answer the evaluation questions posed in the first phase. The third phase, and the phase that most especially distinguishes evaluative inquiry, is applying what is learned from the evaluation. Many evaluations end with the delivery of a final report to decision-makers, but evaluative inquiry through continued engagement of an in-house evaluation team, and perhaps others within the organization, is committed to using the evaluation findings to (a) strategize about the findings, (b) develop action plans based on the process and findings and (c) monitor actions.

Characteristics of Evaluative Inquiry

Evaluative inquiry combines the fundamental purpose of evaluation (judging the merit, worth or value of something) with the idea of inquiry in a particular way. This approach is characterized by a number of features that may not be extant in every evaluation approach (see Figure 1).

Dialogue

Evaluative inquiry, indeed most forms of participatory evaluation and action research, calls for dialogue among stakeholders, including the evaluator. Dialogue presumes that there is a high likelihood that differences in aspirations and the means to achieve desirable ends will occur within an evaluation context, be it a programme, project, organization or community. Public and verbal articulation of perspectives is, however, key to the development of common understandings of what is and what ought to be, which are the essence of a plan for improving practice.

Many techniques can be used to create dialogue, for example, storytelling (individual and collective), Appreciative Inquiry, individual or group interviewing of stakeholders and deliberative forums. Deliberative forums illustrate the key features of dialogue. A deliberative forum is a face-to-face dialogue space that is managed by skilled moderators (often the evaluator), ranging from a few hours to a full day, and engages multiple and diverse stakeholder groups in discussions at potentially all phases of the evaluative inquiry. Such deliberative forums can be used to focus the inquiry by framing what the evaluand is, defining its features and beginning to develop a sense of what is desirable

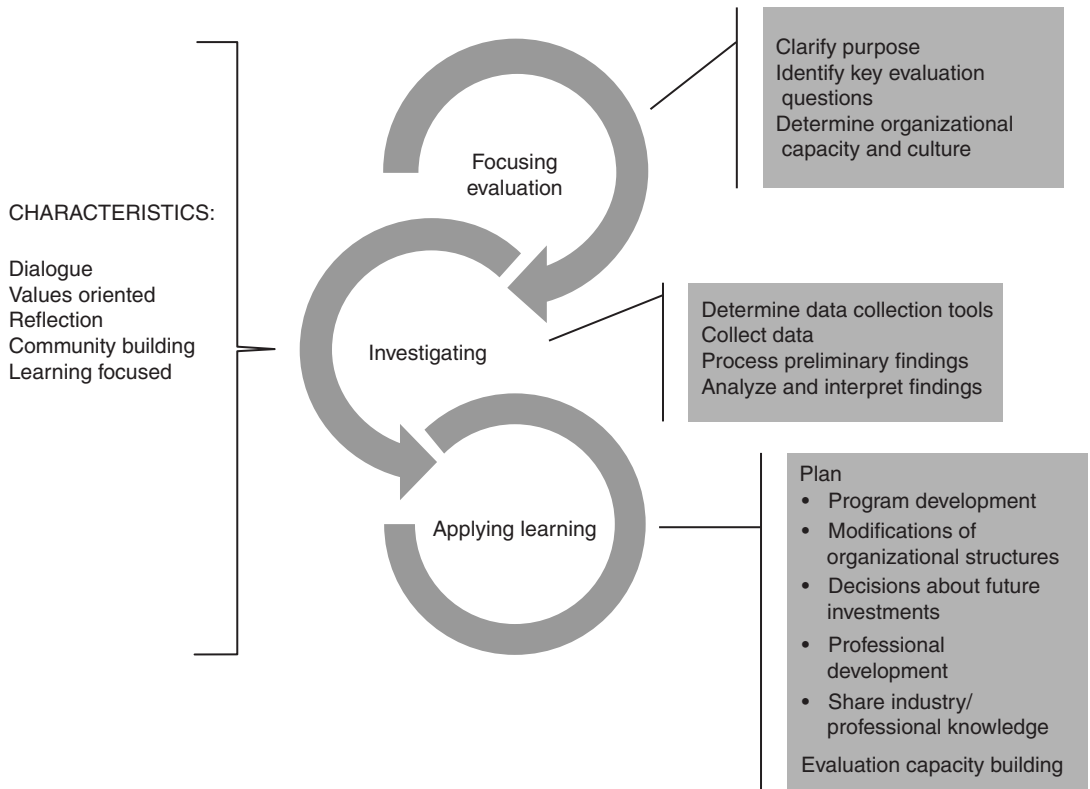


Figure 1 *Features of Evaluative Inquiry*

and undesirable. Deliberative forums can sustain this dialogue in later stages of the evaluative inquiry, when data can be put to use in the development of an action or learning plan. Strategies for dialogue that are most effective are inclusive and foster genuine participation among stakeholders.

A critical consideration for establishing and supporting dialogue among all stakeholders is attention to issues of power. Not all stakeholders, as groups and even within groups, are equally prepared and able to engage in dialogue with one another. These asymmetrical power relationships suggest that often stakeholders will be unwilling or unable to come to the table and that the evaluation process must create a dialogue that would otherwise not naturally occur. When the evaluation context is characterized by these power differentials, one strategy is to build a dialogue in stages. The first stage is to engage with individuals in the same role (service providers, service recipients with particular characteristics, managers, etc.) to build trust and elicit important issues for those stakeholders. All too often, this step is seen primarily and mistakenly as a means to developing a coherent view of common issues. For example, within a school

evaluation context, the presumption is that teachers as a stakeholder group share a perspective on valued outcomes and the means of getting to those outcomes. In reality, there is often much variation within a stakeholder group. But beginning by creating a dialogue among those with common positionalities and roles can lead to the second stage, which is to bring together perspectives within and across stakeholder groups relevant to the particular evaluation inquiry context.

Dialogue may or may not result in consensus among stakeholders, and it is easy to assume that consensus building is a more valuable outcome. But for evaluative inquiry to have an edge in positive change, differences are critical. When all stakeholders see things the same way, value the same things and tell the same stories about themselves and their circumstances, things stay the same. Dialogue emphasizes engagement, not agreement, and is a means to learn about one's own position as well as that of others. Indeed, the idea of dialogue suggests that this engagement is less about revealing stakeholder perspectives and more about forging an understanding of perspectives through the dialogic process.

Values Oriented

The dialogue in evaluative inquiry is decidedly values oriented, and the emphasis is on understanding the values of various stakeholders within the evaluation context. While there is a long-standing notion that facts and values are distinct, it is more frequently the case that the two are conflated. In other words, what we see as a statement of fact, the way things are, implicitly contains values about how things ought or ought not to be. This conflation is not problematic within a family of participatory approaches to evaluation, and parsing out the two is not particularly critical.

It is important, however, to distinguish between a perspective that sees values as data and one where values are integral to the evaluative inquiry. In the former case, the evaluative process may focus on procedural means for describing, negotiating and resolving the differences among values to identify what is problematic, to devise plans of action and to identify how one knows if the action is working as expected. Values are a property of individuals or organizations and can be described and analyzed in the same way as other data. So, for example, whether a parent values early-childhood education because it provides affordable childcare or because it provides preparation for school has the same meaning for the evaluation as, say, whether the parent is older or younger, that is, as demographic difference. The values are useful data points for making a judgement about whether early-childhood education is working. On the other hand, the evaluation process may be the means to continuously confront and critique values as an ongoing practice without the expectation that a single goal or strategy must be defined.

Evaluative inquiry adopts the latter position, that is, that values are integral to the evaluative inquiry, which itself becomes part of lived experience and professional practice. The disclosure of values, which are often competing, becomes integral to an ongoing discourse about how to achieve complex multiple goals. With the day care example, dialogue becomes critical to examining possibilities for the existence of multiple values and asks whether early-childhood programmes can provide both affordable day care and school preparedness by examining the complementarity and the contradictions.

Reflection

While dialogue illustrates that evaluative inquiry engages multiple stakeholders in building an understanding of what is valued and how to attain valued processes and outcomes, there is also a presumption that dialogue fosters reflection. This reflection includes both self-reflection and collective reflection. Often, the

dialogue within evaluative inquiry elucidates what is valued and even how those values can be enacted or brought to fruition, and reflection is a part of dialogue. But reflection should also be understood as the extent to which the actions we take, individually and collectively, bring us along in our practice, whether that is a social or professional practice context. In other words, reflection is also about gathering and processing evidence about the relationship among values, plans, actions and outcomes.

For evaluative inquiry, reflection is more than the sort of personal reflection that has for some time been a part of good professional practice and is often associated with ongoing professional development and improvement of individual practice. This sort of personal reflection is built into learning to become a professional and continuing to hone knowledge and skills for being a good doctor, lawyer, teacher and so on. Reflection in evaluative inquiry also extends to a collective reflection within social and work environments, what has been referred to as productive reflection. Less a matter of particular strategies and more a perspective on the culture of workplaces and social contexts, collective reflection can be manifest in debriefing sessions, group meetings, and continuous-improvement sessions. This idea of collective reflection is meant to disrupt hierarchical relationships and to encourage challenging assumptions, consideration of the values and interests of all and disperse control across stakeholder groups. This collective reflection emphasizes the importance of building communities of practice and social life that create productive fulfilment for individuals as well as the organizational contexts within which they work and live.

Community Building

Evaluative inquiry, through dialogue and reflection, values individual contributions but emphasizes a collective engagement and responsibility for engaging in the continual process of examination and improvement of social and work contexts. Creating and sustaining communities is therefore a natural part of an outgrowth of evaluative inquiry. Clearly, evaluative inquiry is easily implemented when such communities already exist and are therefore reinforced, but critically, the evaluative process also builds these communities.

These communities are referred to variously as professional learning communities, communities of practice and communities of learning and practice. Regardless of the label, they are all characterized by continuous, structured collaboration that generates new understandings, a collective personal responsibility for valued outcomes and shared visions of the future. By participating in the three phases of evaluative inquiry,

through dialogue and reflection, such communities can be either reinforced or created. The success of community building is dependent on these processes, but it also requires trust, mutual respect and a willingness to de-privatize the practice or work within the context of the evaluative inquiry. The de-privatization of practice is especially critical in organizational contexts where individuals work alone or privately—teachers, computer programmers and park rangers are good examples of work roles that may naturally privatize practice. Evaluative inquiry through community building provides a context in which working alone becomes explicitly connected to shared goals, values and expectations for success.

Building community is a process, as described above, but it can also be a product. Through evaluative inquiry, there is a possibility that formal groups may develop: groups that coalesce around an evaluative inquiry project but that become an ongoing part of the organizational structure, with connections to other parts of the organization. For example, a group of faculty might come together to evaluate their teacher education programme and through that evaluative inquiry create an ongoing community: a community that sustains efforts to review and rejuvenate the programme, for example, through seminars, workgroups or providing services across the entire college. Such communities are often small (fewer than 10 people), and in organizations that embrace evaluative inquiry, there might be many such smaller communities connected through linkages that sustain the total organization.

Learning Focused

There are three primary ways in which evaluative inquiry focuses on learning: (1) developing shared values, (2) working towards an explicit sense of what desirable outcomes are and (3) developing evaluation skills that are sustained beyond a particular evaluation activity, what is referred to as evaluation capacity building (ECB). Through dialogue and reflection, as described above, evaluative inquiry emphasizes the importance of making more explicit what stakeholders value, including fundamental values (e.g. productivity, altruism, cost-effectiveness, engagement), and how those values reflect the desirable outcomes for a programme or organization (increased sales, lives saved, decreases in homelessness). Making values explicit may lead to a shared sense of what is important, which in turn facilitates the development of programmatic and organizational goals and activities that people can commit to and work collectively towards.

Another kind of learning that may result from evaluative inquiry is ECB. Through involvement in evaluation, particularly as it becomes a systemic activity,

organizational members can develop evaluation knowledge and skills that lead to sustainable evaluation practices within that organization. To realize the potential of ECB, evaluative inquiry must plan specifically to use strategies that provide evaluation experience in an educative way, such as through coaching, mentoring, technical assistance, developing communities of practice and so on. Using a focused ECB strategy, evaluative inquiry is more likely to result in the creation of sustained information management systems, ongoing strategic planning and resources for evaluative inquiry and ongoing learning from evaluation processes and information.

An Illustration of Evaluative Inquiry

A concrete illustration of how the three phases and the five characteristics of evaluative inquiry are manifest may be helpful. Imagine that a preschool has decided to do an evaluation of its programme, motivated by a desire to provide the best experiences for children given the programme community's needs and values. Table 1 gives an overview of what this evaluative inquiry could involve. Although the example is brief and lacks much detail, it illustrates movement through the phases of the evaluation, identifies which characteristics of evaluative inquiry are emphasized at each phase and gives a brief description of possible evaluative activities.

EI in Organizational Contexts

Much of social life and programmatic efforts to improve the quality of social life are embedded in organizational contexts, which themselves are embedded within institutions. For example, we may teach at a particular school, which is in turn part of the institution of education. Institutions (e.g. education, religion, government, family, media) are complex social forms that are ethereal and often beyond our grasp. They embody established and structured roles, patterns of behaviour and relationships, and encapsulate the enduring features of social life. Social institutions are typically systems of organizations, and most often we focus on organizations as the concrete manifestation of institutions. Organizations are tangible, and as we live through particular organizations, we sustain or reinvent those more vague institutions. So organizations have become a key context for thinking about and improving social life. Organizations are concerned with efficiency and effectiveness; they manifest at one time primarily in static conceptions of productivity and profitability but are now additionally concerned with a more dynamic sense of efficiency and effectiveness. Learning, capacity building, social responsibility, sustainability and

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Characteristics Emphasized</i>	<i>EI Activities</i>
Focusing	Dialogue Values oriented Community building Learning focused	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create EI team (teachers, parents, evaluators) b. Create opportunities for preschool programme stakeholders to share beliefs, values and knowledge about preschool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delphi technique c. Based on the above, define the theme(s) and foci of the evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Theme</i>: play and academic preparation • <i>Specific focus</i>: curriculum d. Plan for how stakeholders will participate in the second phase of investigating
Investigating	Dialogue Learning-focused	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. EI team collects data to investigate the curriculum's contribution to both play and academic preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of formal curriculum documents • Observations of preschool activities • Teacher report on student outcomes • Parent report on student outcomes b. Analysis of data
Learning	Dialogue Values oriented Reflection Community building Learning focused	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. EI team plans for communicating and reflecting on the results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day-long workshop for stakeholders to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ deliberate and reflect on how the curriculum does and does not support play and academic preparation ◦ plan curriculum revisions b. Organize stakeholders for the next cycle of evaluative inquiry c. Identify ways to support future evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory of evaluation skills learned • Identify infrastructure that supports inquiry

Table 1 *An Evaluative Inquiry (EI) Illustration: Evaluating a Preschool Programme*

innovation are the new manifestations. EI has most notably been developed within organizational contexts, seeking ways to build positive, productive work environments concerned with efficiency and effectiveness in all these various forms.

Using EI as a primary strategy can facilitate developing an organizational culture that promotes learning and ongoing change. This strategy is enhanced when organizations are what are referred to as 'learning organizations'. Learning organizations are characterized by a number of attributes, including the following: (a) there is a clear mission that is supported by employees, (b) the organizational leadership empowers employees and encourages creativity, (c) experimentation and risk-taking are rewarded, (d) systemic ways exist for sharing and retaining knowledge, and (e) teamwork and co-operation are valued over

individual accomplishments. These attributes represent a commitment to systemic learning and change that can be facilitated by evaluation. By using core attributes of evaluation, like stakeholder engagement and systematic problem definition and inquiry, EI becomes an organizational activity that supports and enhances these attributes.

The ideas inherent in EI are applicable to many contexts, but the ideas of sustainable learning through evaluation lend themselves especially well to understanding what works and to promoting values and goals within particular organizational contexts.

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See also Appreciative Inquiry; evaluation; organization development; participatory evaluation

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EXPERIENTIAL KNOWING

Experiential knowing is the ground form of knowing in what Heron and Reason refer to as ‘extended epistemology’, including experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowing. In their everyday lives, people use these four forms of knowing and implicitly engage with them in different ways. Individuals cultivate their knowing through direct experience; they voice it through expressive imageries, such as stories, the arts and performances; they make sense of it through propositions that are intelligent to them and then they use it for their actions in their lives. These four forms of knowing are the essential bases for action research.

This entry discusses experiential knowing and experiential knowledge, as well as its relevance to participatory research. It also includes ways of knowing within the framework of action research.

Experiential knowing, at its simplest meaning and as defined by Heron and Reason, refers to individuals’ direct familiarity with other people, objects, events and places that they personally encounter in their lives. It is implicit, but the moment the experiential knowing is cultivated, it becomes real to the knowers. Experiential knowing can also be simply put as ‘felt’ knowing. It is through people’s subjective feelings and what they emotionally embody in the presence of others and the world that they come to know about other things. Often, it is difficult to express verbally and to explain to others, and it certainly cannot be captured objectively.

Additionally, experiential knowing signifies knowing that individuals cultivate by recalling their experiences: things that they learn or acquire tacitly (e.g. how to ride a bicycle). It also means people’s perceptual experiences or understanding of things (such as what it

is like to give birth, to live in poverty or to have HIV/AIDS). It makes use of their unconscious or implicit thinking and knowing, rather than relying on explicit propositional knowledge. The focus of experiential knowing is on situated and everyday existence as it unravels to the knowers, rather than the knowing that is imposed by outsiders.

Experiential knowing is instinctive and unknown to logic because individuals cultivate their knowing without having to consciously think about how it is known. This way of knowing unfolds from many forms of practices, including what people do in their everyday life. They use sight, sound, smell and touch to sense the things around them. Through their sense making and feelings, they can claim to have experiential knowing. They represent their experiential knowing in the form of idioms, such as stories and creative activities, as in the arts.

Experiential knowing is also intuitive because it coexists with the feelings of knowing, which often leads to some motive for action. To experience something is to embody it and to feel it, to know that it exists. In order to experience something, one must take part in it. To take part is to create and to realize. Thus, experiential knowing is inevitably both subjective and objective, and relational to both the knowers and what is known. The knowing is instantaneous and less immediately intervened by propositional knowing. When a person becomes HIV positive, his or her experience includes the subjective experience of living with HIV and the feelings of relief when having access to antiretroviral therapy, as well as the objective act of adhering to medications and having to deal with other disruptions in his or her life. This experiential knowing may be accompanied, for example, by the propositional knowing that his or her life is prolonged as long as medication adherence is strictly observed.

Experiential Knowing and Experiential Knowledge

Knowledge may be understood as the present existence of a continuing process of knowing. Thus, experiential knowing produces experiential knowledge. Knowledge here refers to the ingredients that represent the experiences of individuals. It includes knowledge of feelings and thinking. It is what Shapiro calls the knowledge of ‘what it is like’.

To know ‘what it is like’, an individual must have a direct experience of an event, and must connect himself or herself meaningfully to the event (whether that is giving birth, swimming in the sea or being imprisoned). Experiential knowledge is what William James referred to as ‘knowledge of acquaintance’. It is knowledge that people hold through being familiar with such

reality (e.g. what it is like to live with poverty). Individuals become acquainted with things, people and places through feelings, the senses and bodily experiences. Thus, experiential knowledge is also an 'embodied knowledge'. It is embodied because it creates and depends on the specific circumstances of people's lived experiences. It is the product of reciprocation of one's body with the world. Embodied knowledge is subjective and is instantaneously known to the knowers.

In the health domain, as an exemplar, individuals acquire their experiential knowledge through being familiar with their own illnesses, through both their bodily experiences and the mental states that accompany the illnesses. It can also be acquired through their experiences with the care and support they encounter. The experiential knowledge of the patients can be used to complement the biomedical knowledge of the health professionals and is crucial for the provision of sensitive health care. It helps health professionals to know what it is like for patients to live with such illnesses, how they deal with such problems and what helps them deal with their condition. Subsequently, appropriate health care may follow.

In health care in most Western societies, this kind of knowledge is subsumed as 'lay' or 'non-expert knowledge' and is seen as less accurate than expert knowledge. As such, it often does not count as valid knowledge and has no power. However, although the experiential knowledge of one person may not have the same power as expert knowledge, the collective body of experiential knowledge of many individuals can transcend into what Maijer, Rijshouwer and Linse term *experiential expertise*. This experiential expertise can be used as a tool to bargain for better health care for the patients. Within the current model of patient-centred medicine, the experiential knowledge of patients or consumers plays a crucial role. This model necessitates the incorporation of both physical and emotional embodiments of the consumers in the provision of appropriate and sensitive health care.

The experiential knowledge of health-care providers themselves is also a valuable source of knowledge for the provision of care to consumers. Therapists who have cultivated experiential knowing and knowledge about a particular illness can have an enriched and profound connection with their clients. Jeffrey Hayes terms them as the 'wounded healers'. Because of their own experiential knowing and knowledge (through their own experiences of pain and fear, loss of the sense of self and utter intimate turmoil), these therapists would proclaim less stigmatizing conviction about their clients as well as have a deep sympathy towards them. They also hold a strong belief in their clients' capacity for recovery, even those who have been severely disabled by their health conditions.

Within the health sciences, it is noted that propositional knowledge grounded within a biomedical paradigm dominates the research domain. But propositional knowledge is built on other ways of knowing, particularly experiential knowing. Because of propositional knowledge is so dominant, other ways of knowing that access experience more immediately and richly (e.g. experiential knowing) tend to receive less attention. Experiential knowing may be perceived as an inferior kind of knowledge, since it fails to meet the so-called scientific standards of knowing, which are based on the presumed superiority of objectivity and absolute truths. But as this entry has discussed, the experiential knowledge of the consumers can contribute greatly to biomedical practices.

Similarly, in health research, the experiential knowledge of the consumers can contribute to both the relevance and the appropriateness of biomedical research. Based on their experiential knowledge of their illnesses, the consumers can be an important source of knowledge to researchers, which can complement their research conduct and outcome. The experiential knowledge of the consumers provides broader perspectives to which many researchers do not have access.

Experiential Knowing and Action Research

Action research is about creating spaces for communication. Rather than seclude people from their daily experiences, action research values 'other ways of knowing about the world'. In seeking to produce usefully and locally relevant knowledge which can respond to real-world problems, it necessarily values the experiential knowing of local people.

Simultaneously, action research aims to be a learning experience for inquiry participants. Establishing the direction of the research requires active and informed participation by the community. Thus, individuals are seen as active players within the research process, as opposed to passive citizens who have research performed on them, as is often the case in more orthodox research methods. Participants take an active role, preferably from the early stages of the project, and through this active, experiential involvement, they cultivate new knowledge and skills and hence have increased self-confidence. This process is professed to empower people and assist them to change their lived world.

Actively engaging in a process of learning helps people to realize what they know, and that their knowledge is valuable. This in turn empowers them to be able to take control of their situations more effectively. The production and/or articulation of experiential knowledge becomes legitimized through being publically shared and socially heard. The collective knowledge or

popular knowledge created serves to empower groups and communities to construct solutions for their shared burdens. Through participating in action research, people can come to understand themselves as experts in their own lived situations, thus heightening their confidence and self-belief as legitimate knowledge producers and users.

Accessing Experiential Knowing or Knowledge

Within action research, there are different means through which people can cultivate their experiential knowing in a richer way: These include knowing through words, knowing through images and knowing through the body. These ways of knowing also allow researchers to access their participants' experiential knowing and knowledge meaningfully. Action research often adopts communication strategies that have a hands-on nature. This is particularly so when the research involves vulnerable and marginalized groups. Many of the so-called unorthodox methods employed in action research are crucial if the researchers wish to give people an opportunity to participate fully. Examples of some of the means through which experiential knowing may be accessed include knowing through words or through storytelling, knowing through arts-based forms and visual forms and knowing through the body, embodiment, and performance.

Experiential knowing is a foundation of the knowing cycle in action research. Building on experiential knowing, presentational knowing can be developed, which leads to propositional knowing and practical knowing. Experiential knowing is of deep and immediate relevance and significance in the lifeworld and can ultimately lead to emancipation, which in turn enables people to alter their conditions for the better.

Pranee Liamputtong

See also arts-based action research; Co-Operative Inquiry; empowerment; extended epistemology; health care; narrative; narrative inquiry; performed ethnography; Photovoice; practical knowing; tacit knowledge; Theatre of the Oppressed

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EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning is an alternative approach to adult education that developed along with advancements in the scientific and philosophical understanding of how humans develop their cognitive structures and deep knowledge. It emphasizes the importance of individualized learning goals and objectives pursued through a carefully crafted plan featuring a series of increasingly challenging field-based learning activities that students create and reflect upon with the assistance of one or more guides (teachers, mentors, coaches) in order to acquire important forms of new knowledge, skills and competencies.

Brief Overview

The following entry provides a brief description of experiential education, a review of the defining characteristics of this form of pedagogy, the history of experiential education's origins and evolution, an explanation of its growing popularity and a presentation of the typical experiential learning process.

At the beginning of many experiential learning processes, individual learners are often asked to imagine the life and career they would like to have 5–10 years from the present; they are then asked to identify the new knowledge, skills and competencies they will have to acquire and master to reach their near-term life/career goal. With the assistance of a skilled

experiential educator, they create a learning plan for a specific period of time (6–12 months) that identifies two or three critical learning objectives focused on the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and competencies essential to making significant progress towards achieving their near-term life/career goal.

For each of these objectives, learners formulate a series of increasingly challenging field-based learning activities to pursue at work, at school and in the community to enable them to make progress towards achieving these milestones. In designing their plans, learners are often encouraged to construct a capstone-like project as a culminating activity for each of their objectives, which will challenge them to integrate all they have learned relative to a single learning objective, thereby demonstrating their mastery of this topic and/or skill. In addition to a clearly stated near-term life or career goal, specific learning objectives and a robust list of field-based learning activities culminating in a capstone project, learning plans provide the documentation individuals will generate to share their work with others, clear criteria for determining whether or not they have achieved their learning objectives, a list of skilled practitioners who, along with the learner, will help them evaluate their progress and a timeline for completing the plan.

Key Characteristics of Experiential Learning

A number of factors distinguish experiential learning from simple ‘learning by doing’. Among these are the following.

Strategic Nature

Learners engaged in experiential education assume responsibility for establishing their own individualized near-term life and career goals. They subsequently undertake a systematic assessment of their ability to pursue these goals, formulating a detailed learning plan to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies required to achieve this outcome. In this way, they function as self-directed learners who proactively choose what, when, how and with whom they wish to learn.

Highly Reciprocal

Experiential learners carry out an increasingly ambitious set of field-based learning activities, culminating in one or more capstone projects that require them to integrate all they have learned about a particular topic and/or field. Throughout this process, the learners, their teacher and the individuals within the practice setting (i.e. the organization or community) where they are working provide them with ongoing feedback on

their performance. Such feedback often causes them to refine their approach to a particular task, an outcome that Argyris calls single-loop learning. Occasionally, input provided by colleagues and mentors prompts them to revisit and alter their world views, theoretical frameworks, learning goals and objectives and practice methods, in a process that Bateson calls deutero-learning, Argyris calls double-loop learning and Mezirow describes as transformative learning.

Reflective Practice

Experiential learners are expected to maintain a detailed field journal chronicling their major field-based learning activities, especially those that William Foote Whyte describes as ‘critical incidents’ that have a major bearing on their learning objectives. When reviewing their field notes, experiential learners are asked to critically reflect on those experiences that have major theoretical, methodological, empirical, policy, practice or ethical implications. During this process of systematic reflection, they are strongly encouraged to compare their lived experience in the field, which Clifford Geertz describes as ‘local knowledge’, with the ‘expert knowledge’ articulated by leading scholars within their discipline. Invited to critically examine the apparent contradictions between these two competing forms of knowledge, experiential learners are expected to move from being passive consumers of others’ theories to active participants within the theory-building process. Asked to develop new theories that better describe the world ‘as it is’, experiential learners are subsequently asked to ‘test’ these new theories by implementing organizational and community-scale interventions based upon these ideas to determine if they, in fact, have the desired effect. Through what Schön describes as ‘reflective practice’, experiential learners are expected to become increasingly skilful practitioners as well as effective theory builders whose experientially generated theories, over time, affect the work of others in their field.

Highly Challenging

Experiential education requires learners to become highly skilled in individual goal setting, learning plan development, field journaling, critical incident analysis, reciprocal learning and theory building. This approach to student-centred education requires learners to be introduced to and trained in the fundamentals of experiential education, ethnographic fieldwork, micro- and macro-organizational behaviour and urban ecology. Having mastered the principles and practice of experiential education in a highly structured university setting, individuals are expected to use these newly developed competencies to function as self-directed

learners for the remainder of their lives, constantly learning from the environment in which they are living, working and learning.

Origins and Evolution of Experiential Education

The importance of lived experience as a critical source of knowledge and wisdom was the basis of the ancient Greek concept of *phronēsis* (practical wisdom) and is also at the centre of many philosophical works (e.g. Dewey, Bourdieu, De Certeau) and scientific research (e.g. Piaget, Maturana and Varela, Bronfenbrenner). Drawing from theory, education scholars have developed a critique of traditional pedagogy that views the learner as a passive recipient of 'preconceived' knowledge. On the contrary, experiential learning views the learner as an active agent of his or her own learning only if he or she is a part of collective learning and change processes. It is not surprising, then, that experiential learning has emerged within the context of pro-democracy movements all around the world in the early 1960s. At that time, educators like Illich and Freire in South America, Horton in the USA, and Dolci in Europe challenged what they described as the 'banking method' of education, in which students were viewed as little more than empty vessels to be passively filled with the received wisdom contained in society's great books. At that time, experiential learning emerged as a powerful new pedagogy to encourage oppressed people to recognize and challenge the status quo, pursuing individual emancipation through social change.

Inspired by liberation movements under way in Asia, Africa and South America and the American Civil Rights Movement, students started to demand more active and relevant forms of education. In the USA, supported by research funded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the theoretical and pedagogical work carried out by scholars affiliated with organizations such as the National Society for Experiential Education, the Council of Adult Education and Learning and the Community Development Society, growing numbers of secondary and post-secondary teachers began to pursue various forms of field-based learning. Some added studio or workshop courses to their curricula, enabling students to apply and extend what they were learning within traditional classroom settings to solve challenging rural and urban problems identified by community residents, institutional leaders and municipal officials. Others created internship programmes through which students could earn credits in recognition for new knowledge and skills acquired while doing either placement or project-based work with local public, non-profit or private firms. Finally, many campuses, following the leadership provided by

the Campus Compact in the early 1980s, established offices to encourage faculty to redirect a portion of their research and teaching effort to involve their students in collaborative research projects with local residents and leaders, focused on the resolution of thorny environmental, economic and social problems confronting poor and working-class communities.

Growing Popularity of Service Learning and Civic Engagement as One Form of Experiential Education

Between 1983 and 2012, the number of US college and university presidents supporting the Campus Compact's efforts to promote Boyer's notion of the 'scholarship of engagement' increased from 3 to more than 1,100, making this one of the most visible and significant transformation movements in American higher education. What explains this extraordinary growth? While the nation's economy showed modest signs of improvement during this period, the income, wealth and power disparities separating the haves and have-nots in society widened dramatically, causing an increasing number of American families to live in persistent poverty. In addition, students have become increasingly concerned about their ability to secure a decent job upon graduation regardless of the quality of the school from which they graduate. As a consequence, many undergraduate and graduate students decide to pursue a variety of 'hands-on' learning experiences to separate themselves from other equally qualified candidates seeking employment. Parents whose children have been forced to take on considerable debt to finance their education are also concerned about their ability to secure gainful employment upon completing their university studies, believing that the concrete work products generated during service learning courses and internships can provide their children with the labour pool advantage they require. Colleges and universities that consume vast amounts of municipal services and pay no local property taxes are being increasingly challenged to encourage their students, staff and faculty to contribute to the economic and community development efforts of the towns and cities where they are located. This pressure recently intensified when the US Congress held hearings on the rising cost of tuition, which has significantly outpaced inflation as well as increases in median incomes.

The Experiential Education Learning Process

The most popular explanation of the experiential learning process is provided by the Harvard University educator David A. Kolb, who views it as a cyclical process that introduces learners to an orienting theory summarizing

the best scholarship available on how individuals can effectively study and transform the learning environments, cultural settings and organizational/community contexts in which they are operating. The purpose of the orienting theory is to introduce the learner to an understanding of how the system he or she is entering works when it is optimally functioning, the factors responsible for its ongoing maintenance and the forces that can lead to its transformation. Within this theoretical framework, learners are introduced to a practice setting that provides 'concrete experience', offering a rich and revealing exposure to the phenomena they are most interested in understanding. This opportunity to observe, influence and be affected by the factors and issues of most significance within a practice setting challenges learners to compare competing theories regarding these phenomena with their own experiences. Following a period of deep immersion in the organizational and/or community setting they are most interested in understanding, learners are invited to engage in a critical process of 'reflective observation' to identify the factors most responsible for maintaining the status quo within the organization and/or community, as well as those dynamics leading to significant forms of organizational or systemic change. Having done so, learners are subsequently asked to engage in a process of 'abstract conceptualization' to pinpoint the consistencies and contradictions between the current state of scholarship related to a particular phenomenon and their lived experience. In so doing, learners are asked to make the transition from being passive recipients, users, and objects of others' theoretical work to becoming active co-creators of new theories that better explain the world as it is and the process by which it might be transformed. In the final, 'active experimentation' phase of the process, individuals are invited to assume the role of a participatory action researcher, 'testing' the validity, reliability and replicability of their new theories and hypotheses by using these ideas to intervene in the organization and/or community of which they are a part to enhance its functioning. After years of systematic observation, Kolb and his colleagues observed significant differences in the manner in which individuals navigate the four stages of the experiential learning process. Over time, Kolb developed a highly reliable instrument for determining individual 'learning styles' that enables learners and their organizational/community partners to anticipate the kinds of support they might need at various points in the process to optimize their learning outcomes.

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See also Action Science; adult education; Community-Based Participatory Research; conscientization; critical reflection; double-loop learning; reflective practice; transformative learning

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EXTENDED EPISTEMOLOGY

Extended epistemology is a concept originated by John Heron and developed in collaboration with Peter Reason to call attention to and legitimate the many ways in which individuals come to know beyond the boundaries of abstracted, intellectual thought alone. Heron and Reason offer four interrelated ways in which people know:

Experiential: knowing directly through experience

Presentational: knowing through artful means

Propositional: knowing conceptually

Practical: knowing through skilful doing

This, more inclusive epistemology, which moves from an over-reliance on concepts and theories to include embodied, expressive and practical action realms, offers a radical foundation for the participatory processes and exploratory practices upon which action research is built.

This entry introduces the idea of an extended epistemology and examines how this orientation towards knowledge is a key characteristic of action research.

The Idea of an Extended Epistemology

Epistemology: the study of the nature and scope of knowledge

Extended: widespread or extensive, with spatial magnitude

An extended epistemology stresses the need to know phenomena in many ways beyond, but not excluding, the intellectual. How individuals encounter, understand and respond to themselves, others and their contexts comes from knowing through their senses and bodies as well as the ideas, assumptions and theories that live in their minds. In everyday life, people interweave each of these ways of knowing more or less consciously. An extended epistemology invites one to make such knowing intentional, conscious and explicit—to cultivate value and pay attention to all the ways that people come to know, not just through conceptual thinking.

In positivist-oriented academia, such ‘more than intellectual’ knowing can be devalued in comparison with conventional theorizing and empirical knowledge generation. It might then be positioned firmly away from everyday research practice. Similarly, organizational life rewards and normalizes thinking as the prime way of knowing and empirically derived facts as the only worthwhile outcomes. However, Heron and Reason see the extended epistemology as an interesting developmental challenge for individuals’ (and institutions’) critical subjectivity and place it at the centre of the action research paradigm.

Others, too, are now explicitly seeing an extended epistemology as a timely and essential component of our human response to global socio-ecosystem challenges. If quality action research is concerned with human (and more-than-human) flourishing, then the human intellect alone, whilst clearly useful, is not enough for us to respond to the challenges we face as a species. And if Einstein was right when he said that no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it, we need to expand our consciousness in order to address the issues of our time, broadening the very idea of mind in order to address the problems that our societal norms impose on us and the more-than-human world.

Heron and Reason have advocated for this, more inclusive approach over many years, proposing that this extended epistemology has four interwoven ways of knowing. These four ways embrace the preverbal, manifest and tacit knowings we might associate with artists, crafts people and our own visceral, sensory vitality. The four ways of knowing, in more depth, are as follows:

1. *Experiential knowing* means the direct encounters with others, the world, the contexts and the organizations people live in—the daily experience of being alive, the ground of being through sensory information and perception.
2. *Presentational knowing* draws on experiential knowing, drawing on that which is particularly relevant and (re-)presenting it or exploring it further through the arts, storytelling, image making, movement, dance, sculpture or music. Presentation knowing is the human aesthetic response to experiential knowing.
3. *Propositional knowing* is made up from the concepts and propositions that form from the ground of experiences and explorations of those experiences through presentational knowing. It emerges from the bottom up and may be tacit or explicit.
4. *Practical knowing* is a knack, skill or ability to do something. It is action based on all the other types of knowing, a culmination of all our knowing into action in the world.

These multiple ways to knowing invite the researcher or co-researchers to reconstitute themselves as more whole, with a greater thoroughness of investigation, following many pathways to knowing (in the sense of both becoming acquainted with and knowing intellectually about a distinction which is still made linguistically, e.g. *connaître* and *savoir* in French and *kennen* and *wissen* in German). John Shotter’s work on *witness* and *aboutness* thinking supports such a framing. He says that witness thinking concerns an embodied, spontaneously responsive understanding of the dynamics of events (which might be associated with experiencing, presentational and practical knowing) and aboutness thinking takes as its basis the more usual forms of thought we pursue in our intellectual lives (which might be readily associated with propositional knowing).

A *comprehensivist* approach (Buckminster Fuller’s term) is thus being called for at the level of both research and researcher, giving rise to both an outer and an inner epistemological equity where diversity in knowledge construction is acknowledged and valued. Action researchers, then, have a responsibility to expand their epistemological capacity.

Pyramid and Cycle

The four ways of knowing are strongly interrelated, and together they may be considered either as a hierarchical *pyramid* culminating in practical knowing or as a *cycle* in which each successive way of knowing

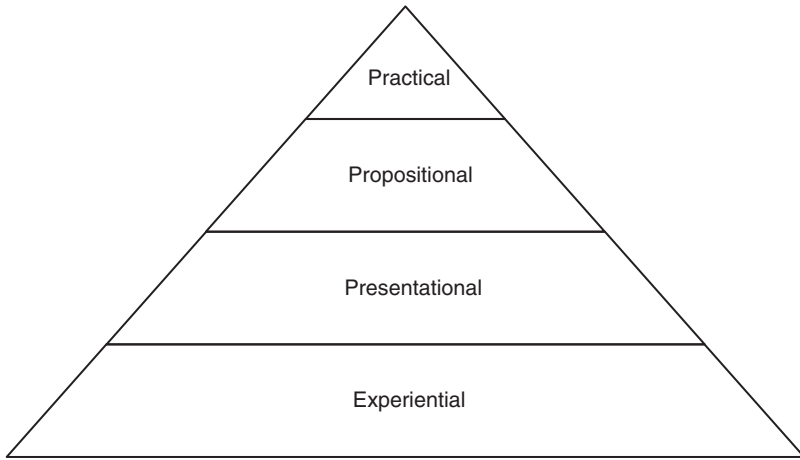


Figure 1 The Pyramid Model

builds on previous iterations of all the different ways of knowing.

The *pyramid* model of the extended epistemology starts at the base of an up-hierarchy with the undifferentiated immediacy of experiential knowing and an underlying assumption that the basis of all knowing is our involvement in the raw substance of life. From this, the presentational form emerges as we dwell in experience and re-present that experience in storied, visual, musical, three-dimensional and embodied forms. Analyzing these (re-)presentations of experience and their patterns over time gives rise to propositions, ideas and theories. This propositional knowledge then supports and informs our skilful practice in the world, calling for a unity of mind and body in action. All the ways of knowing culminate in our practice, giving primacy to the practical as knowing taken into the world (Figure 1).

The *cyclic* model of the extended epistemology invites one to start anywhere and move around the different ways of knowing in circles and spirals (Figure 2). For example, starting at the point of practice, practical skills offer individuals a new and enriched sense of being in the world, which steadily and fundamentally changes the nature of how they experience their being in the world, which in turn informs, refines and deepens their imaginative responses and creative presentations of their lived experience, leading to more honed and subtle conceptual models and theories, and these propositions help evolve practical skills, offering a new and enriched sense of being in the world and so on. The cyclic model is particularly examined by Reason and Heron when they consider Co-Operative Inquiry models.

The spaces in between each of the ways of knowing and the ways in which each one arises from its predecessor and their relationship with each other are as

important as the definitions of the ways of knowing themselves. This process may be formally split into stages (especially in terms of Co-Operative Inquiry) or may be experienced as an all-at-once phenomenon, where the ways of knowing overlap in messy and lively ways (especially in first person inquiry). The systems thinker Gregory Bateson talks about the interplay of all the many ways of knowing, using the metaphor of a bridge connecting intellectual and emotional thought in artistic and skilful ways.

In both cases—the up-hierarchy and the cycle—the underlying assumption is that individuals cultivate and pay attention to all the ways of knowing, rather than typing themselves into one or other as a preference or style; one doesn't have to be good at all the ways of

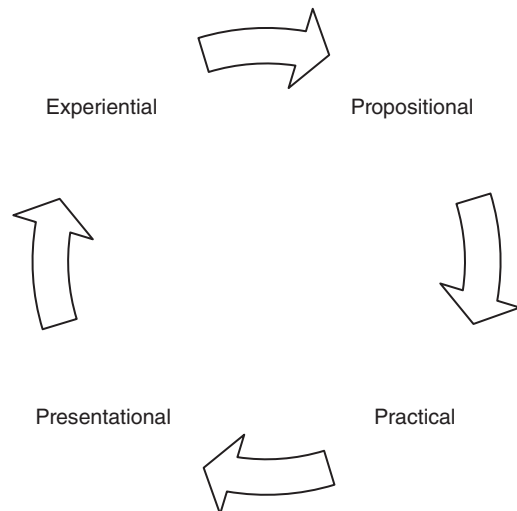


Figure 2 The Cyclic Model

knowing to get value from them. Richard Sennett, who writes about the skills and mindset of craft-based, practical knowing, called for the rift between our different ways of knowing to be healed so that the fault lines between practice and theory are repaired, enabling one to conduct one's life with skill.

How, then, might we bring depth and quality to each of these four ways of knowing in pursuit of Reason and Bradbury's core purposes of action research of human flourishing, working with issues of practical significance, of participation and democracy, of knowledge-in-action and of emergent developmental form?

Depth and Quality in Experiential Knowing

Experiential knowing forms the ground upon which action research finds its roots, trading speculative abstract theorizing for earthy, engaged living. Attending to experiential knowing demands that researchers broaden the boundaries of what they consider to be of relevance to their research, including feelings and perceptions, unheard voices and muted longings. It brings their bodies, emotions and sensations back into the frame alongside their thoughts and ideas. Cultivating such a body-intellectual implies opening the senses *at all stages of the action research process* to a wide array of experiences which *may* be of significance.

Questions that help bring quality to experiential knowing include the following:

- How open am I to encountering that which is unfamiliar and different to me?
- How might I challenge my ingrained habits?
- How do I openly seek new encounters?
- How do I deepen my contact with experience?
- Whose experience counts in my research?
- How do I cultivate an awareness of how I am simultaneously influencing and being influenced by the context I am in?

Depth and Quality in Presentational Knowing

The development of presentational knowing in action research is not just about how researchers might present their work or their inquiries to each other (although moving beyond the taken-for-granted aesthetic norms of academia is useful). The qualities of their seeing, their gaze, and the awareness they transmit also count in ways which do not mean that they have to be good at any of the arts—they do not have to be skilled at drawing or singing or moving, but they do need to be present to what moves within them, what demands to be expressed and what images play in their mind's eye.

The full category of presentational knowing was a late addition to Heron's theory, encompassing

intuition, reflection and imaginative thinking. It was only through experiencing the value of coming to know the world in this way that he came to believe that presentational knowing was valuable in its own right, not only as a bridge between experiential and propositional knowing. Presentational knowing is the least mediated (most immediate) way of knowing following direct experience. It enables researchers to dwell in experience, gaining depth and insight. Heron asserts that by taking responsibility for presentational knowing in their lives, researchers can no longer delegate it to artists. Instead, they need to bring this form of knowing back into the daily mainstream of their lives in order to know the patterns of things.

Chris Seeley explores this work further, asserting that as a latecomer to the concept of extended epistemology, presentational knowing needs to be taken more seriously through rigorous, full-bodied inquiries which bring what the eco-art historian Hildegard Kurt calls aesthetic competence into the cognitive process. Arts-informed research similarly demands that researchers become physically engaged in the arts in some way. Presentational knowing in action research—an arts-enriched action research—does more than just present or re-present experience. It may be used to articulate knowing when words fail one, to juxtapose images and show paradox, to illustrate a specific point, to help participants make sense of and understand an experience more thoroughly, to enrich linguistic expression or to provoke audiences by challenging or disturbing the senses.

Questions that help bring quality to presentational knowing include the following:

- How do I experiment with a variety of presentational forms and not just those with which I feel safe or familiar?
- How do I open myself to playful unknowing and allow myself to be surprised?
- How do I cultivate my imagination?

Depth and Quality in Propositional Knowing

Propositional knowing means knowing about something in conceptual or theoretical terms. Whilst Jung suggested that humans could be mistaken in their privileging of intellectual or propositional knowing, the propositional remains the main type of knowledge valued in contemporary industrialized societies. Propositional knowing frames and names arguments and standpoints in ways that enable them to act in the world, whilst wielding great power in shaping what they *think is true*. All too easily, propositional knowing as a tentative and contingent *process* gets reified into propositional knowledge as a fixed, unquestionable

thing. Reason and Heron remind researchers that they must not confuse the map with the territory, whilst recognizing the radical importance of both informing practice usefully through established theories (e.g. those of feminism, systems thinking or relational practice) and deriving new theories which have been thoroughly grounded in experience.

Questions that help bring quality to propositional knowing include the following:

- Is the proposition clear?
- How I am exercising critical judgement in my sense making?
- How is this proposition linked to what else is in the field?
- What underlying assumptions might I be taking for granted in this proposition?

Post-Linguistic Propositional Knowing

Heron speculates on a further evolution of propositional knowledge into what he calls a post-linguistic propositional knowledge. Here, language might be transcended altogether—a way of perceiving and expressing knowledge that fits closely with Goethe's concept of the phenomena themselves being the theory. Or forms of language may be used to express a way of knowing which no longer sees objects as split off from subjects—as, for example, in Arran Stibbe's eco-linguistic work on haiku, which suggests that it encourages readers to move beyond language and intellectual abstractions towards a more direct connection with the world around us.

Depth and Quality in Practical Knowing

Practical knowing is a high calling which slowly transforms the world through our actions. Reason and Heron suggest that this is the culmination and fulfilment of the other ways of knowing, employing mind and body in unison for transformative purposes. It has practical, not theoretical purposes—it is the enactment of ideas. It is within practical knowing—not propositional—that the change that so many organizations and individuals seek and prize so highly is situated. This is not to imply that our practice needs in some way to be perfect. Indeed, an action research account without evidence of Bill Torbert's *stumbling gait* of not knowing, blind alleys and mistakes would be reduced to a bland victory narrative.

Questions that help bring quality to practical knowing include the following:

- How do I cultivate my skills and know-how over time?
- Is what I am doing worthwhile? To whom?
- Am I fooling myself that my practice is achieving what I think it is?

A Final Note on Extended Epistemology and Gender

In some spheres—business, academia, organizational life—intellectualism is tacitly highly valued and tacitly associated with the masculine metaphor of linear, self-contained, potentially rigid and controlling stability, whilst other ways of knowing are either dismissed (or repressed) as non-masculine or associated with the metaphorically feminine qualities of a more embodied, sensuous (and potentially smothering) fleshiness. Taken separately, there is clearly much scope for degenerative power relationships between these two approaches to knowing and expressing what we know. Equally, there is great potential for creative intercourse in the spaces between the two.

Chris Seeley

See also aesthetics; arts-based action research; Bateson, Gregory; Co-Operative Inquiry; experiential knowing

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F

FACILITATION

Facilitators use their knowledge of how humans absorb and share information, interpersonal dynamics and process tools to help groups, organizations, communities and conference participants achieve specific objectives and desired outcomes. Facilitation engages participants in various parts of the action research cycle for tasks such as observing and reflecting, generating data and ideas, seeking patterns, identifying next steps and making group decisions.

The Field of Facilitation

Organizational and community leaders convened groups in conversation long before the word *facilitation* came into common usage. Indigenous communities have met in circles and have used reflection and graphic thinking for centuries for planning, observation and community building. Facilitation has been influenced in more contemporary times by the 1960s and 1970s work of Kurt Lewin, Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal and the work in psychodrama and child drama, including the work of Brian Way, Peter Slade and Gavin Bolton. Theatre-based communication exercises such as improvisation and role play have also influenced and informed the learner-centred and experiential learning processes used in facilitation.

Functions of Facilitation

Meeting, task and conference facilitation engages groups to do the following:

- *Communicate*: Clarify viewpoints, articulate experience and emotion and find common ground
- *Reflect*: Observe, review, assess and plan
- *Think creatively*: Imagine, note patterns, generate ideas and explore alternatives and variations

- *Work effectively as a team*: Collaborate, share knowledge across disciplines and culture, share thoughts during times of conflict, navigate programmatic or organizational change, make decisions and strengthen networks and relationships
- *Design and collaborate on tasks*: Design products, programmes and systems and identify next steps and actions

The Facilitator's Role

Facilitators may be internal to an organization or community, or external—and they may work with participants face-to-face or virtually. Often a facilitator will be part of an arc of meetings. Because of their speciality in group dynamics, learning and communication, they can not only design and guide the meeting process and idea exchange but also inform planning, documentation design and other elements of the action research cycle. Some facilitators specialize in facilitator-directed or participant-driven processes, very large-group work or the use of multiple learning modalities.

There are different philosophies about a facilitator's role and different situations or methods that require facilitators to fit their role to a process. Facilitators may act as guides, orchestra conductors or universal translators—naming key thoughts or feelings, making observations back to the group or drawing out different individuals with a minority opinion or less power. Depending on the meeting's objectives and desired outcomes, they may instead take the role of witness more than interventionist, setting up the group's process and task and remaining fully present throughout—but not stepping in to help the conversations at all, even at times of passion or conflict. Particular methods allow for participant self-organization, with groups conducting their own discussions and generating their own documentation. In some methods, a facilitator's intervention can lessen participants' engagement, remove their responsibility or eliminate opportunities

for participant skills building and interpersonal communication. Power dynamics can also affect learning, expression and inclusion. Furthermore, every group includes diverse individuals, such as reflective thinkers, quick responders, visual thinkers, kinaesthetic thinkers and relational thinkers. Therefore, the facilitator considers both role and process to fit the meeting objectives, the desired outcomes, the group culture and other elements.

Analysis and Pre-Work

The phase before the meeting is called pre-work. It is done in partnership with a key organizational or community point person or small team in preparation for the event and post-event follow-up. This analysis includes a full exploration and discussion of objectives, realistic and achievable outcomes, the time and physical space available, the numbers of participants and why those participants were chosen. It may also involve an outreach strategy to identify who else might inform, support, block or care about the task or situation. Facilitators need to be aware of the context: what came before and what follows each meeting or activity, how the ideas or information generated will be used and what are realistic expectations given the capacity and realities of the organization, community and individuals. Facilitators provide input for documentation design that best fits the task, process, time, culture and capacity of a group. They take into account the power dynamics and language, underlying issues and participants' existing experience with the task or issue. They use information about participants' diverse and individual abilities and disabilities to inform the design and materials and to design the physical site and to plan the food and beverages to maximize dialogue and process. This full ecology of elements is taken into consideration when a facilitator selects a process for achieving the desired outcomes for a particular meeting or activity.

Selecting a Method or Process Tool

Selecting a process tool is not a linear task, such as scanning a list of methods for a 50-person group or always using focus groups for participant feedback. Each question about the elements mentioned above reveals a series of next questions—everything informs everything in the planning and success of a dialogic event. An initial conversation may name certain objectives—which may clarify a need to expand the diversity of participants to include other users, designers, resource providers, minority opinions and even vendors and competitors. This may then inform a change in venue or meeting length, the selection of process or a different documentation design. It may

even inform a need to change the event date to allow for more relationship building and design of diverse forms of outreach as a strategy to ensure diversity and inclusion. The location, type and timing of food or the decision whether to include an activity or speaker at lunch during a meeting can lessen or support a group's depth of thinking, depending on the design or method selected. These discussions in the pre-work phase can often clarify a need to adjust objectives and desired outcomes to something more achievable or different than was discussed in the initial conversations.

Facilitation Methods, Processes and Design

There are many named and unnamed processes and activities that facilitators use to fit the task(s) after this analysis, and there are different designs possible for each meeting or section of a meeting to achieve the goals. Such methods and activities used in action research may include the following sample: focused conversation, inquiry circles, focus groups, World Café, Open Space Technology, silent reflection and journaling, kinaesthetic modelling, Appreciative Inquiry and futures search. Certain processes scale up to work for groups of 5–3,000 and/or work in diverse countries and cultures, while other processes work only in very specific cultural contexts or with a group size specific to that method.

There are also diverse forms of documentation design that are either built into or can be used with the many different dialogic methods, activities and approaches—such as an *Open Space Book of Proceedings*, theme-clustered word and image collages from a World Café, mind maps from a futures search, reflection cards combined to create word clouds, graphic templates showing participants' key thoughts and images or verbatim transcriptions of focus groups.

A facilitated meeting does not always include identifying actions or next steps. There are times when it is important to let information and ideas percolate, allowing brain and body to rest and integrate the information and ideas generated. Participants need opportunities to reflect upon and review the documentation from their meetings and take time to seek patterns or identify additional skills, resources, policy, information or collaborators for the next steps. In many cases, action is not part of the design because the purpose of the meeting is knowledge sharing or understanding across differences and/or because the group is not ongoing or does not make decisions. Action and next steps are also not designed into a meeting when actualizing those steps is not realistic—for example, when the participants in a meeting do not have the mobility, organizational or community role, resources, information, flexibility or freedom to own those next steps or be supported in their success.

Learning About Facilitation

While there are written resources about facilitation, there are also workshops offering experiential learning. The key to learning a facilitated process lies not just in what it looks like to a participant—such as beginning with chairs in a circle or placing written ideas on a wall to discuss patterns. The facilitator must also fully understand the elements unseen by participants, such as how to design or select a tool for maximum efficacy with the existing power dynamics. Facilitators must know how adjusting meeting length or changing a process affects dynamics, achievables, deliverables, productivity and outcomes. They need to know when to intervene and when intervention impairs participants' abilities or co-responsibility. They also need to know when not to use a method, which methods cannot compress into shorter times and when shared experiences, decisions and organizational or community pressures may create tension, conflict, or feelings of grief and loss within the group.

Facilitation and the Action Research Cycle

The action research cycle is participative, often qualitative and reflective—and it best involves participants who are engaged and committed. Facilitation can also welcome and make visible different points of view or opinions and highlight diverse roles and collective responsibility to support the work and learning. Data collection is an essential part of action research, and the facilitation design can inform diverse documentation designs integrated into each process, conversation, reflective meeting and group task. Participants can self-document, or an additional person can document, depending on the process. Facilitators can also inform what may support follow-up and sustainability for lessons learned with their knowledge of human behaviour change, motivation, resistance, engagement and involvement. Therefore, facilitation at different points before, during and after cycles maximizes planning ability, knowledge exchange, communication, idea generation and productivity.

Lisa Heft

See also Appreciative Inquiry; Boal, Augusto; dialogue; focus groups; Freire, Paulo; Lewin, Kurt; organization development; Participatory Action Research; reflective practice; storytelling; World Café, the

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FALS BORDA, ORLANDO

Orlando Fals Borda was a leading Colombian sociologist and a key advocate and theorist of Participatory Action Research (PAR) within Latin America and globally. He was the founder of the Faculty of Sociology at the National University of Colombia, where he later served as academic dean and then as professor emeritus. He was also a member of the Colombian National Constituent Assembly, where he played a very important role in the National Assembly that gave birth to the Colombian constitution of 1991. Born in 1925, he died in Bogota in 2008 at the age of 83.

In his early years as a sociologist in Latin America, Fals Borda was widely known for his work on and with peasant communities in Colombia and also for his work on social movements and social change. Building on this work, Fals Borda also became known internationally for his pioneering work on the theory and practice of PAR, the method of linking social investigation to popular participation in order to bring about social change as well as to contribute to knowledge. In 1979, he published one of the first essays on this theme in English, titled 'Investigating Reality in Order to Transform It: The Colombian Experience'.

Within Colombia, one of his best pioneering works on the importance of peoples' knowledge was symbolized by his four-volume book titled the *Historia doble de la Costa* (Double History of the Coast), published from 1979 to 1986. The book was unique because it was published in two columns, one growing from the peasant knowledge and peoples' history of the region,

the other from the more academic and theoretical studies on the same topic. Fals Borda argued that a good PAR researcher should learn to write in multiple forms, depending on whether the lessons are addressed to peasants, activists or intellectuals.

Building on this work, for the next three decades, he continued to apply the approach in his own work in Latin America and to spread the approach to other countries. In 1991, he co-edited with Mohammad Anisur Rahman (a leading Bangladesh thinker and activist) one of the first international collections on participatory research, titled *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly With Participatory Action Research*.

In 1997, he was the principal leader and organizer of an international conference on action research in Cartagena, which brought together over 1,800 people from around the world, representing dozens of intellectual streams of action research. For a number of years before this conference, Fals Borda had played a global networking role, travelling around the world to identify people working in various ways on action and participatory research. For instance, he was a key participant in one of the first international meetings on PAR, organized in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, by the International Council of Adult Education and UNESCO.

In 1995, Fals Borda gave the keynote address to a meeting of US sociologists, titled 'Sociology and the Pursuit of Social Justice'. For Fals Borda, the event was a kind of 'homecoming'. He had received his sociology training in the USA, working first with Nelson Lowry at the University of Minnesota and later with T. Lynn Smith at the University of Florida, where he received his doctorate in 1955. Yet, as he observed in his address, this was the first time he had returned to the USA in some 40 years, to attend a US sociology meeting. On the whole, American academia had shunned his activist participatory methods and his activist approach. And his links to militant peasant movements in Colombia had caused the US State Department to refuse him entry visas as well. His return was a symbolic moment, for it also showed the growing willingness of US academics to learn from the approaches of international colleagues.

In that speech, he shared various guidelines for sociological research which summarized his approach:

- Do not monopolize your knowledge or impose arrogantly your techniques, but respect and combine your skills with the knowledge of the researched or grass-roots communities, taking them as full partners and co-researchers.
- Do not trust elitist versions of history and science which respond to dominant interests,

but be receptive to counter-narratives and try to recapture them.

- Do not depend solely on your culture to interpret facts, recover local values, traits, beliefs and arts for action by and with research organizations.
- Do not impose your own ponderous scientific style for communicating results, but diffuse and share what you have learned together with the people, in a manner that is wholly understandable and even literary and pleasant, for science should not be necessarily a mystery or the monopoly of experts and intellectuals.

In the summary of this speech, Fals Borda also shared his vision of the role of participatory research in the social sciences:

If this type of committed, participatory research really helps the poor peoples (which are the majorities of the world) to exercise their human and social rights; if it unveils the conditions of their oppression and exploitation, if it assists in overcoming the constraints of savage capitalism, violence, militarism, and ecological destruction, if it endeavours to understand, tolerate and respect different genres, cultures and races, and to heed the voice of others, then sociology and the social sciences can be expected to survive well and meaningfully the tensions of the modernity.

Words such as these from Fals Borda continue today to inspire participatory researchers and social scientists around the world.

John Gaventa

See also academic discourse; Participatory Action Research; social justice; social movement learning; World Congresses of Action Research

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FEMINISM

Feminism consists of (a) the belief in the necessity of political, economic and social equality of the sexes and (b) organized activities on behalf of women's rights and interests. Etymologically, feminism is derived from the French term *féminisme*, connoting femininity in the mid eighteenth century. It was in the mid twentieth century that feminism first emerged as a term for advocacy of social, political and economic rights for women equal to those of men.

There is not one feminism with which all feminists would readily agree but many different ways of expressing feminist thought and action. To observe, analyze, understand and ultimately end discrimination against women and girls in all areas of the private and public spheres is a unifying factor for all feminists. *How to redress and through what lenses to understand oppression are complex questions embedded in specific political, economic, social, cultural, geographical and historical contexts.* Feminism, here, is understood as an overarching term that comprises a myriad of concepts, ideas, grass-roots movements and diversity of scholarship. This entry will offer a brief history of feminism and describe the place of feminist scholars in higher education as well as the connection between action research and feminism.

A Brief History of Feminism

Feminism is sometimes depicted chronologically in terms of so-called waves. These waves (periods of time) designate certain political eras of the feminist movement that were concerned with particularly pressing issues at the time. It should be emphasized, however, that feminist agendas are marked by both continuity and change. The end of a wave does not imply that the issues raised within it ceased to be of interest or significance for the next generation of feminist activists and scholars.

First wave feminism roughly spans from 1809, when women in Connecticut were allowed to execute wills, to 1928, when all women in the UK were given the right to vote equally to men.

Simone de Beauvoir maintained that in the fifteenth century, Christine de Pizan was the first woman who wrote in defence of her sex. This is merely one example of women engaging in women's rights centuries before the first wave emerged as an explicit movement with a clearly defined goal. There was no first wave without its significant precursors in all parts of the world. There is a synchronicity in time and a likeness in themes between Persia, now Iran, and the USA. The Conference at Badash, Persia, and the Seneca Falls

Convention, held in the USA in the summer of 1848, addressed similar issues, such as the advancement of women to social positions, economic independence and marital equality. Women at both events met with considerable protest and resistance, and women at both events received support from men who were advocates for women's legal rights equal to men's.

The early Western feminist movement would be almost unthinkable without Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which she wrote in response to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's influential *Émile, Or on Education*, in which Rousseau expressed the essentialism of his time based on the commonly held view of girls' and women's subservience to men as a God-given, natural order. It is said that Wollstonecraft's ideas largely contributed to the first British suffragettes' thinking. Central to the first so-called wave that emerged in the late 1700s or early to mid-1800s, depending on what historical account is drawn upon, was women's right to vote, and in the time just before and during the First World War, women from many different countries, some at war with each other, convened to advocate for world peace. Jane Addams, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, was one of the leading figures in that movement. As chairwoman of the Woman's Peace Party, she was also elected president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1915. In that capacity, she attended the International Women's Conference in The Hague, the Netherlands, where it was decided that she head their commission for solutions to end the First World War.

The second wave of feminism emerged in the early 1960s. Some hold that Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* laid the groundwork for the second wave feminism in the USA. It focused on women's right to participate on equal terms in public life, equal pay for equal work, and women's rights over their own bodies, for instance, abortion rights versus pro-life movements. Second wave feminists also addressed sexuality, family politics, conditions in the workplace, as well as legal inequalities to women's disadvantage. Marital rape laws, violence against women and divorce laws are some examples of legal inequalities. In other countries, women were successful in advocating for free childcare. Sweden is one such example, where Nobel Peace laureate Alva Myrdal laid the groundwork for Sweden's preschool system in the 1930s. State feminism in Sweden took root in the early 1970s, when the powerful Social Democratic Party made it part of its platform. Gender equality is supposed to permeate all areas of policy, especially family policy. Since the 1970s, the Swedish childcare system has grown in both size and scope. Parents are entitled to 480 days of paid leave per couple and to subsidized, full-time preschool

from the day the child is 1 year old. Feminist historians hold that the second wave feminist era in the USA ended in the early 1980s, in part owing to much dispute within the movement.

Third wave feminism, which emerged in the 1980s and early 1990s, emphasizes identity, ethnicity, class and locality to a greater extent than did second wave feminism. Third wave feminists seek to distance themselves from what they perceive as (upper) middle-class White feminism of the second wave. They also try to avoid the 'essentialism' that they consider permeated second wave feminism. Moreover, third wave feminists reject claims of a global feminist cause, as third wave feminists do not accept the notion of a feminist universalism. Third wave feminism is arguably characterized by more pluralistic approaches towards sexuality and choices of personal expression. Broader definitions have emerged on the multiple meanings of sex as well as the multiple meanings of empowerment and oppression with regard to sexuality.

Critics of third wave feminism point out the lack of a single cause. The absence of a cohesive goal for third wave feminists is regarded as both necessary and a problem. Some hold that the third wave feminists' broad-mindedness would not be possible to the same extent with a more definitively defined goal, whereas others argue that the absence of a shared cause and purpose is a weakness with regard to creating possibilities of sustainable, political change.

There is some debate as to the emergence or existence of a fourth and even a fifth wave of feminism, or whether the wave model is no longer applicable in times of post-feminism, post-colonialism, masculinity and gender studies, as well as global activism, all of which emerged during third wave feminism. Some argue that depicting feminism in terms of waves no longer does justice to the largely varying movements, activities and feminist strands of theory, while others emphasize the importance of a historical and political awareness of the feminist waves.

The Black women's movement challenged the agendas of second wave feminism as being too White and middle class and far removed from their own concerns. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa are two such critical scholars, who in 1981 published the anthology *The Bridge Called My Back*. Feminist voices from outside English-speaking countries have pointed out that US- and UK-based feminist agendas had little or nothing to do with their realities but, nonetheless, set the tone for what feminism seeks to achieve. This, they argue, has led to post-colonial oppression in that women's concerns in other parts of the world remain invisible and unheard. The fact is that issues and concerns in non-English-speaking countries are, to some extent, absent from the mainstream literature

on feminism, despite the efforts of bell hooks, Chandra Mohanty, Margaret Abraham, Esther Ngan-ling Chow, Laura Maratou-Alipantri, Evangelina Tastsoglou, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Edward Said, Marie-Claire Belau and many others.

Higher Education, Feminist Scholars and Knowledge

Academia has a long history of oppression of women. Possibilities for women to contribute to the overall body of what was and is considered valid knowledge were scarce, especially in times when most academic disciplines were closed to women. Women who, from the late nineteenth century onwards, gradually succeeded in obtaining access to higher education had to negotiate gender stereotypes while being educated by and into a system historically hostile to women. The male-dominated academia denied women epistemic authority, to put it in Dorothy Smith's words, irrespective of scientific discipline, while simultaneously producing knowledge that portrayed women as intellectually inferior. From 1850 onwards, this was particularly the case with evolutionary biologists, who, in keeping with Darwin's teachings, postulated that women's brains were analogues to those of animals. Entirely unscientifically, they also claimed that women had overdeveloped 'sense organs' to the detriment of their intellect. Carl Vogt, a natural history professor at Genova University voiced that the child, the female and the senile White male shared the nature of the grown-up Negro. Darwin's followers expressed that women are more emotional and therefore less cerebral. Judging by the output of scholarly work (course literature, scientific articles, etc.), at least one generation of biologists was influenced by Darwin's widely held views of the intellectual inferiority of women. The medical profession was not long in joining the biologists in mere conjecture, for instance, about women's 'hysteria' emanating from their wombs and somehow impairing the brain.

This multifaceted resistance to women's presence in higher education has posed problems for non-feminist academic women and feminist academics alike. Their work and knowledge have been systematically dismissed, which has led to a misrepresentation not only of women but also of the knowledge produced by them, which does not find its way into the mainstream body of recognized knowledge. Nancy Fraser discusses the problem of recognition and the consequences of non-recognition in her work.

When questions directly derived from various feminist activist movements began to make inroads into academia in the 1960s in the Western world, a time that coincided with the Western second wave of feminism, women scholars began to concern themselves with feminism as

a potential new scientific paradigm, a topic discussed in, among other works, *The Science Question in Feminism* (1986) by Sandra Harding. These scholars, most of them women, did not enter academia as feminist scholars, but they became feminist scholars out of necessity, as they have described in accounts of their scholarly work.

Feminist scholars are not alone in questioning traditional conceptions of scientifically valid knowledge expressed in terms of falsifiable, repeatable facts based on an understanding of universalism that has systematically excluded the majority of people. The scientific reproduction of gender inequality, expressed through the exclusion of women from knowledge production, is still in evidence, but feminist scholarly activities take place that aim to rectify the misrepresentation of women in higher education. Feminist scholars, on the whole, strive to end the scientific reproduction of gender inequality.

One example of such an activity is Louise Morely, a UK-based feminist scholar who poses questions as to how women in higher education can be empowered as leaders, thus taking on a full role in contributing to the structures and systems. Debates on the consequences of women's exclusion and disqualification from knowledge production focus on

- the under-representation of women in leadership,
- obstacles and possibilities with regard to women's progression in academia,
- potential actions for change to be taken,
- culturally diverse curricula and syllabi,
- transnational feminism and collaborative partnerships, and
- participatory methods of teaching and learning.

Knowledge in the context of higher education and feminism is, in Dorothy Smith's terms, an issue of achieving epistemic authority. The old dispute on the validity and rigour of the knowledge produced was revived by feminist scholars' insistence on the significance of situated knowers, as well as the importance of research that included women in the process of inquiry. Helen E. Longino argued that value-neutral science is impossible, and Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich, a philosopher, explicates this further in her 2005 work *Transforming Knowledge*. According to her, objectivity as a validity criterion for rigorous research is faulty. Yet it is perpetuated, rendering the transformation of knowledge hierarchies a difficult and complex undertaking. For this reason, feminist theorists and practitioners alike aim to transcend dichotomies and bridge the gaps between what is perceived as practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge.

The Ninth International Conference on Gender and Education, organized by the Gender and Education

Association, took place in London in April 2013, and it reflected the complex and intersecting interests and concerns of feminist scholars. Key debates included the following:

- The interplay between the dynamics of education, work, employment and society in the context of economic crisis and political upheaval
- Diversity in education in the context of new equality regimes and continued educational inequalities
- The exploration of organizational ambivalence, change and resistance
- The role of feminist research

The above key concerns are all the more important at a time when higher education is confronted with the challenges of a shift from the Humboldtian ideal for universities as the public good towards the marketization of knowledge.

Current and Future Challenges: Feminist Movements and Action Research

Feminist movements, historically, are often referred to as political movements whose purpose it was and is to eliminate social and political injustices that place girls and women in unfavourable positions or even dangerous situations with limited or no power over their bodies and lives.

By the mid-1990s, most Western countries were responding to the challenges posed by women's movements and feminist analyses of inequalities. They started to develop 'state feminism' in order to create institutions and policies that not only incorporate gender equality but also serve to implement it at the practical level. Such developments at the national level are challenged by changes in the international political landscape, which are brought about by the increasing importance of the European Union and the United Nations. Regionalization and decentralization, reforms of the welfare state and government and the introduction of gender mainstreaming have also created new problems that require an ongoing commitment from various political, not least feminist, movements.

In the context of feminist movements and action research, situated knowers are regarded as potential agents for change within their communities of interest. However, these communities of interest are no longer necessarily locally rooted. Owing to the development of technology, feminist activists and scholars in the twenty-first century can exchange information and act globally at considerable speed. They use social media, for instance, to gain access to feminist bloggers in

otherwise almost inaccessible areas of conflict and war. Social media are also used for collaboration between (political) organizations of similar or overlapping interests in order to co-ordinate, for instance, fundraising activities for specific causes. A new sense of global solidarity has emerged, while women and men even in remote areas engage in context-specific action towards social change together with action researchers. Action researchers have to develop new methods of data collection in order to connect with situated knowers, as meeting in certain geographical places is not always feasible, practical or safe. As a consequence, access to situated knowers will have to be renegotiated through the use of technology and channels that were almost unheard of until the end of the twentieth century.

Feminist movements and feminist action research critically examine knowledge and 'truths'. Feminist action researchers and activists seek to uncover the ways in which dominant forms of knowledge systematically justify the subordination of underprivileged groups. Some feminist action researchers suggest that unless knowledge is produced in a participative manner, it is neither valid (as it will inevitably be irrelevant or even detrimental to those concerned) nor ethically acceptable. This corresponds well with feminist epistemologies that advocate integrative approaches to knowledge production.

Conclusion

Feminism and (feminist) action research may well contribute to more sustainable knowledge owing to the embodied ethics involved throughout the entire knowledge-building process. The various strands of feminist theory in combination with action research set standards for an integrative knowledge production. These standards develop and are renegotiated over time to include the historically marginalized or overlooked. The ethical underpinnings of action research necessitate critical self-reflection, but most of all, they stipulate accountability towards the researched. It could be argued that action research is an approach that suits the purpose and goals of feminism, be that within the context of feminist research or feminist activism.

Claudia Gillberg

See also feminist ethics; Feminist Participatory Action Research; gender issues; higher education; human rights; philosophy of science

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FEMINIST ETHICS

Professional ethical research codes draw from philosophical inquiry into ethical action and empirical work on the response of researchers when confronted with ethical dilemmas. Recently, feminist philosophers, practitioners and researchers have brought a unique perspective to the ethical practice of researchers. This entry describes feminist ethics and the contribution that an ethical framework makes to understanding and conducting ethical research. We describe the debates among feminist theorists and apply feminist ethical theory to a specific action research methodology, Participatory Action Research (PAR).

Description and Development of Feminist Ethics

All ethical theories examine the nature, consequences and motives of action and establish principles for adjudicating between competing ethical claims. Feminist ethical theories build on and extend traditional ethical theories by challenging assumptions and offering alternative perspectives.

There are diverse and multiple feminist theories that inform feminist ethics, including liberal, Marxist, radical, relational and postmodern. Despite the differences among them, five common themes reveal agreements across these theories that define feminist ethics: (1) women and their experiences have moral significance; (2) attentiveness and subjective knowledge can illuminate moral issues; (3) ethical practitioners should engage in an analysis of the power dynamics inherent in each context; (4) the critique of patriarchal distortions of reality must be accompanied by a critique of racist, classist, and homophobic distortions and (5) ethical psychological practice (in research, therapy, teaching, etc.) requires action directed at achieving social

justice. Each theme is discussed below and applied to the practice of PAR.

Feminist ethicists assert that women and their experiences have moral significance. This theme grows out of the fundamental feminist observation that most of Western thought has been deeply rooted in patriarchy. Under patriarchy, male experience is privileged and women are assigned rigid, narrow roles (the virgin/whore dichotomy), reducing the complexity of women's experiences to simple caricatures. The feminist ethical enterprise is an effort to eradicate the misrepresentation, distortion and oppression of women. Feminist ethicists reassert the value of women and claim that examining women's experiences provides a more adequate understanding of human experience. Mothering, friendships, peacemaking and so on are important areas for identifying ethical concerns and illuminating ethical virtues. When feminists have researched the experiences of women, they have articulated virtues and values: attentive love, connectedness, responsibility for others and the ethic of care. Feminist ethicists claim that these virtues must be included in a more comprehensive understanding of ethics.

Carol Gilligan described the ethic of care as a moral orientation that she identified through research on the moral dilemmas women and girls face. Gilligan and other relational philosophers, including Nel Noddings and Sara Ruddick, argued that because women and girls are assigned to the roles of caretakers as mothers, they develop a moral self characterized by the ability to form human connections and a heightened concern for others. Originally, Gilligan and other relational feminists argued that the 'feminine voice' was significantly different from the 'masculine voice', which is concerned with abstract rules of justice, an autonomous rather than a connected self and a moral compass characterized by justice rather than care.

However, empirical research demonstrates that the ethics of care and of justice can be found in the responses of both women and men. Furthermore, feminists have observed that the 'women = care' versus 'men = justice' dichotomy is a dangerous distortion of reality, which fails to attend sufficiently to the diversity among women, limits expectations of men and keeps women in a subordinate (caring for others) status.

Feminist ethicists insist that the values associated with women, such as empathy, are equal to the values, such as justice, associated with men. They reinterpreted women's experience from a feminist perspective. For example, what might be called 'women's passivity' might be understood as peacefulness; maternal thinking is as sophisticated as deduction. Relational feminists argue that relationship-based morality is essential for a fully moral human being and a more adequate moral theory.

The second theme of feminist ethical theory claims that attentiveness and subjective knowledge can illuminate moral issues. Feminist ethical theory places great importance on grounded and particular knowledge. This contrasts with the dominant Western notion that knowledge is objective and verifiable. Ethical feminists try to understand the subjective realities of women's experiences. The ethical researcher is obliged to take the research participants' perspectives and to create a process of inquiry that allows participants to express their affective knowledge and subjective experience without distorting it.

Radical feminist theorists, such as Mary Daly and Janice Raymond, view women as innately different from men because of their unique biologically based experiences (e.g., giving birth or breastfeeding). They claim that women's values and virtues are unavailable to men. Radical feminists question how it is possible to separate the true nature, ethics and epistemology of women when they have developed within patriarchy. Women, they argue, may not be able to dismantle patriarchy, but they can save themselves through separation from men and immersion in feminist-womanist ways of knowing, doing and being. In place of male distortions and dominance, radical feminists propose a separate, subjective women's consciousness and way of being.

While recognizing the value of separatist feminists' critique of patriarchy, most feminists disagree with separatism as a strategy. They argue that it is necessary to engage with the oppressor in order to achieve the feminist social and ethical agenda of enhancing the human condition. They also caution that embracing a separate 'women's way of knowing' may reinforce destructive stereotypes about women. They point out that essentialist theories based on biological differences create a false universalism that privileges gender and ignores race, ethnicity, class and other attributes that contribute to identity.

The third theme of feminist ethics is informed by the work of multicultural ethicists like Kwame Anthony Appiah, who caution against focusing exclusively on gender oppression. To do so privileges Caucasian, heterosexual, middle-class women over women of colour, lesbians, poor women, women with special needs and so on. Multicultural feminists point out that gender intersects with other forms of oppression (ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, ability, etc.), and for most women, gender is *not* the target of most interpersonal and sociopolitical oppressions. Feminist ethical researchers must embrace human diversity and work for the empowerment of all oppressed groups. The goal of feminist ethics is not only to show that women are oppressed but also to rid the world of all oppressions.

The fourth theme of feminist ethics asserts that individuals' experiences are deeply affected by power dynamics. In order to adequately represent that experience, ethical feminist researchers are required to engage in an analysis of the power dynamics within the context being researched. Power hierarchies are inherent within every specific situation, and feminist ethical theory requires that practitioners critique how one's own positions of power affect one's perceptions. This self-critique and analysis of power relationships must occur in ethical research.

Postmodernism has offered important tools for engaging in power analysis. Deconstruction of 'woman' within patriarchy reveals the subordination, labelling and sexism that have limited opportunities for women. Feminist ethicists have drawn from postmodernism's challenge to the assertion of rational objectivity, which renders power dynamics invisible. However, postmodernism also is problematic. Feminist ethicists note that if there is no moral absolute, it is difficult to make an argument against oppression. Postmodernism rejects all overarching explanatory theories as 'grand narratives'. How then does one explain the ubiquitous existence of patriarchy and sexism? Feminist ethicists argue that the analysis of gender and how it is constructed within patriarchy can illuminate oppression and dominance over other groups. Further, once the oppression is revealed, practitioners have a responsibility to act.

The final theme of feminist ethics requires action directed at achieving social justice. Feminist ethical theorists strive not only to define what ought to be but also to try and improve the human condition. Institutions, laws, practices and foundations of knowledge must be made more just and more caring, and ethical researchers must use their knowledge to bring about change at all levels—individual, familial, communal and structural (educational, legal). Feminist ethical theorists emphasize the shared process of discovery and interpretation among people. They seek and value solutions that affect entire communities; they encourage actions that occur in collaboration rather than in competition. The ultimate goal of feminist ethics is to enhance the human condition and to create a more just and caring world. Research is an arena in which feminist ethics can advance this emancipatory agenda.

Application of Feminist Ethics to PAR

PAR is a methodology that requires co-participants to collaborate in order to identify research questions, develop research goals and methods, collect and analyze data and implement the results; here, feminist ethics are applied to PAR in the context of university and community collaboration. Through consistent and

cyclical iterations of reflecting-researching-acting-observing, researchers draw on the knowledge and experience of local people and aim to develop participants' critical consciousness and promote changes in the local community and broader sociopolitical environment.

The bedrock of PAR is the establishment of authentic relationships among university- and community-based researchers. This is consistent with the recognition of feminist ethics that women and their experiences have moral significance (Theme 1). In PAR, academic-based researchers don't assume a neutral or objective stance. Instead, they genuinely open themselves up to be affected by the lived experiences of community-based participants, and they fully enter into the experience of the community.

The first stage of PAR is typically a period of 'getting to know one another', in which the academic-based researcher develops relationships with community members in informal ways (attending community meetings, helping out with community initiatives, etc.). These relationships, which take time to establish, particularly when the researcher is an outsider and may represent the oppressive group, are cultivated through periodic check-ins and shared spaces for collective reflection. Just as feminist ethics emphasize the voices and experiences of women as significant, PAR aims to redefine reality from a historically marginalized perspective, and in so doing, it hopes to enlarge and correct understanding of the human experience.

Consistent with feminist ethics, PAR researchers emphasize subjective, lived experience as a valid way of knowing (Theme 2). Community participants are viewed as experts in lived experience and grounded knowledge of their oppression and survival, while academics may offer technical skills, knowledge, political action and spheres of influence. No one way of knowing is valued over another. Deliberate and informed interrogation of, and reflection on, knowledge construction is central to PAR. While multiple research methods may be used in PAR, including empirical surveys, interviews and focus groups, PAR researchers emphasize the use of expressive, qualitative methods that aim to elucidate the subjective experience of participants. These methods include storytelling, dialogue, reflection, photography and drama, which help participants express their idiosyncratic, subjective experiences from the 'bottom up'. Moreover, the subjective lens of the researcher is made visible in PAR. PAR researchers reject the assumption that knowledge is apolitical and instead offer a critical examination of how their values, assumptions and standpoint affect the research questions, process, and knowledge generated. The PAR researcher, like the ethical feminist practitioner, must be committed to continuous self-reflection.

Typically, PAR is practised within communities that have been exploited and oppressed. In accord with feminist ethics, all discriminatory distortions must be analyzed for the causes of oppression (Theme 3). Such distortions occur when dominant cultures ignore the lived reality of subordinate groups. To correct this imbalance, PAR projects are collaboratively researched with marginalized communities, and actions based in those understandings are generated and reflected upon, prompting a new iteration of knowledge-action-reflection.

Also, like feminist ethicists, PAR practitioners are continuously engaged in an analysis of context and power dynamics, particularly within the research relationships (Theme 4). PAR practitioners aim to understand the contexts that cause oppression and develop plans to address those causes. The assumptions embedded in traditional research designs are critically analyzed; and emphasizing the co-construction of knowledge, skills and resources, PAR seeks to reduce the power differentials between academic- and community-based participants.

Feminist ethics mandate that ethical practice requires action directed at achieving social justice (Theme 5) is at the core of PAR. Building the capacity of individual participants through the research process is a central goal. Knowledge is inextricably linked to action that transforms the immediate contexts of participants' lives and also works towards broader systemic changes. Researchers focus less on the research questions and more on the social problems that the community identifies. Ultimately, through the PAR process, community participants develop the skills necessary for understanding and changing their circumstances and contributing to broader social change.

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See also covenantal ethics; ethics and moral decision-making; feminism; Feminist Participatory Action Research

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FEMINIST PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The term *Feminist Participatory Action Research* (FPAR) refers to a participatory and action-oriented approach to research that centres gender and women's experiences both theoretically and practically. In the academic and non-academic literature, FPAR is referred to as a paradigm, a theory, a research framework, a conceptual framework, a research approach and a research methodology. Most commonly, FPAR is understood as a conceptual framework that enables a critical understanding of women's multiple perspectives and works towards inclusion and social change through participatory processes while exposing researchers' own biases and assumptions. In sum, FPAR attempts to blend the most promising aspects of feminist theories and research with Participatory Action Research (PAR). This entry will cover the history of FPAR, questions of power and knowledge, FPAR as a conceptual framework and the ethical questions that arise in engaging in FPAR.

History

Some claim that the earliest writings that attempted to articulate a blending of perspectives arose in the USA in the 1980s when Budd Hall asked, 'How can participatory research be human centred, not man centred?'. Yet the praxis of FPAR goes much further back in time to the early pragmatists and feminists such as Jane Addams, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 for her Hull House community project and her peace projects, where action and reciprocity, rather than charity and one-dimensional models of knowledge, were practised. Indeed, significant work in the spirit of FPAR has been carried out by women for far longer than is generally known. Class, race, religion, women's issues, (illegal) immigration/migration and global peace were taken into consideration and acted upon in social change projects in the

USA, Europe and other parts of the world more than 100 years ago.

From the 1980s onwards, these approaches were named feminist-informed action research or feminist action research (FAR). Essentially, FAR borrowed the theoretical and methodological accomplishments of both feminist research and PAR to provide an action-oriented framework that explicitly dealt with gender and women's experiences. Patricia Maguire in her groundbreaking doctoral work, *Doing Participatory Research: A Feminist Approach*, used PAR while critiquing its androcentric, or male-centred, bias. She argued that girls and women had distinctly different experiences from boys and men and could not be subsumed under labels such as 'the community' or 'the oppressed'. What was necessary was a deliberate focus on gender as an analytic category in order to strengthen participatory approaches to research. As FAR gained a foothold in the literature, it blended critical feminist theory with PAR. Critical feminist theory argues for the centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness, skills and institutions, as well as in the distribution of power. Historically, references to biology naturalized and legitimized the view that women were inferior to men. Critical feminist theory viewed gender as a social construction that socialized women and men and validated male dominance, power and control. As a theory, it lent an understanding to the ways in which modern societies function to reinforce social inequalities along with envisioning new ways of transforming them.

Since the time feminism emerged in the late 1960s as the second wave of the women's movement, it has become a field of study and developed significantly both theoretically and methodologically. Under names such as women's studies or gender studies, it has also become a part of many academic institutions around the world. As a result of these major shifts, there is a long history of feminist writings that draw attention to negotiating research relationships, building knowledge based on lived experience and the politics of voice and representation in meaning making. As the study of girls, women and gender relations has matured over the past four decades, so has the discourse on FPAR. Feminists now tie gender to other axes of power and privilege, examine masculinity and boys' and men's experiences and problematize the traditional male/female binary.

The argument put forward by feminist action researchers was that aspects of PAR and critical feminist theory cohered ontologically and epistemologically as both sought to shift the centre from which knowledge was generated. They also shared an intention to work for social justice and democratization. By combining feminist research's critique of androcentrism with participatory research's emphasis

on participation and social change, FAR provided a powerful approach to knowledge creation for social and personal transformation.

Since the early 2000s, researchers have been developing a clearer understanding of FAR and have moved towards FPAR in an effort to draw attention to the significance of participation. In the *SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, Colleen Reid and Wendy Frisby outlined some initial FPAR dimensions, which included centring gender and women's diverse experiences while challenging forms of patriarchy, accounting for intersectionality, honouring voice and difference through participatory research processes, exploring new forms of representation, reflexivity and honouring many forms of action. In their chapter, Reid and Frisby invited researchers to further develop the dimensions as they engaged in the work.

As FPAR has developed into a robust conceptual framework, what has evolved concurrently is a wide range of researchers, activists, and advocates who identify with some dimensions of FPAR but do not necessarily label their work as such. In the literature, there remains diverse language for FPAR. The varied terms in the literature to name FPAR-like approaches include, but are not limited to, feminist community research, PAR, community-based research, community health research, capacity-building research and post-colonial research. How researchers name their approaches may depend largely on their disciplinary background, institutional politics and the research community. Indeed, gender and intersectionality can, and often do, figure prominently in these approaches.

FPAR methodological strategies can vary considerably and span local, diasporic and global contexts. In some cultures, it may not be safe to be associated with feminism or women's issues. It may also be that researchers or practitioners working in the field with girls and women do not identify personally as feminists and therefore do not associate their work with FPAR. Others argue that there are negative connotations associated with the label 'feminism' and that these inherent judgements get in the way of the work. Within such arguments is the contention that the women's movement is less relevant today than it was 30–40 years ago. Without question, the relevance of the women's movement is highly contextual and cultural since gender roles and relations vary dramatically around the world.

An additional challenge for FPAR, similar to participatory research, PAR and action research, is how the work is disseminated. Not all who are engaged in FPAR publish their work in academic peer-reviewed forums. Much of FPAR is driven and directed by the community, where there may be little impetus for engaging in scholarly writing and dissemination. Consequently, it is likely that important work done at

the community level remains unknown to scholars and practitioners internationally. Also, for researchers publishing their work in academic fora, there still exists a language and cultural divide that makes it difficult to learn from FPAR experiences internationally.

Fundamental Questions Around Knowledge and Power

Knowledge has been created, controlled and made available by hierarchical educational and political systems. An ongoing epistemological question posed when engaging in FPAR is what is at the centre and what is at the margins of knowledge making or, in other words, who is knowledge generated for, by whom and for what purpose. In FPAR, the research is done ‘with’ and ‘for’ those involved as research participants.

In FPAR, as well as in other approaches to feminist research, the web of power dynamics is variously referred to as oppression, marginalization, discrimination, ‘otherness’, disempowerment and subordination. Regardless of how the exercise of power is named, the work and ongoing challenge in FPAR is to understand the complexities of power, recognize the multitude of ways in which it can be expressed and devise efforts to use it responsibly.

FPAR’s ontological and epistemological stance challenging the authority of the researcher and shifting traditional power relations can be seen as controversial. It can be met with resistance from mainstream researchers, who define scientific rigour as the ability to verify (or falsify) research results through enforcing distance between and differential statuses to the researcher and the researched. While the prepositions ‘for’ and ‘with’ are key to FPAR, more traditional conceptual frameworks typically do research ‘on’ and ‘about’ the research subjects. Due to its critique of power, FPAR explicitly challenges dominant approaches to research, disciplinary silos and taken-for-granted assumptions that render invisible the diverse experiences of girls and women.

Given the questions revolving around power that derive from FPAR’s ontological and epistemological stance, in FPAR there is a deep commitment to being reflexive. Reflexivity involves interrogating how differences in power and privilege shape research relationships in diverse contexts. All participants in FPAR—whether from the academy or the community, or some combination of locations—are expected to be reflexive in learning and in reassessing their individual and collective participation and actions. With FPAR’s commitment to reflexivity, traditional roles and relationships in research, which can be disempowering for research participants, are challenged and often shift; also the researcher becomes a ‘learner’ alongside

the participants and more fully contributes to efforts towards social change.

As a Conceptual Framework

The fundamental concepts and practices that define FPAR include (a) feminisms, (b) participation, (c) action and (d) research. Although FPAR itself cannot lay claim to any one of these concepts, FPAR brings them together into a coherent conceptual framework that is value driven. FPAR is not a rigid model for application but rather a dynamic and evolving framework that is continually shaped by those who are engaged in the work.

Feminisms

Feminisms require that any study carried out as FPAR will centre and honour gender and women’s diverse experiences. Gender and women’s experiences are central to FPAR in several ways—in understanding how different forms of patriarchy create domination and resistance, in identifying key issues for research and in giving explicit attention to how women and men, and those who do or do not identify with either of these binary gendered categories, benefit from action-oriented research. To challenge the notion of patriarchy means considering how women generally live in different material and social circumstances due to gendered power relations and globalization.

It is now generally agreed that there are multiple feminist theories rather than a ‘grand narrative’ that captures the experience of all girls and women. As a result, FPAR researchers may draw on a range of feminist theories to inform their work. In some feminisms, there is greater attention to the full spectrum of oppressions and disadvantages, which suggests that gender may not be the primary lens to understand girls’ and women’s experiences. Intersectional analyses contend that power shapes and is shaped across intersections of gender, race, class, income, age, ability, migrant status, sexual orientation and so on.

Participation

Participation requires persons to solve pertinent issues in a given context, in which the researcher collaborates with the participants in an effort to seek and enact solutions to problems of major importance to a community. In FPAR, participants are actively involved in all stages of knowledge production, including identifying the research problem, collecting and analyzing the data and translating the knowledge. The praxis of participation has to be defined within each FPAR project. Through open dialogue with everyone involved in the research process, the ways such intersections

interrelate with one another can reveal experiences of subordination, domination, exploitation and privilege.

In FPAR, researchers are also deeply aware of their own role and take a facilitative role rather than sitting back as distant observers or attempting to control the entire process. FPAR aims to foster democratic, interactive and empowering relationships that are committed to making women's voices more audible.

Action

Action means using the findings of a study or project to make some kind of positive change. Action can occur during or after an FPAR project on both individual and collective levels. Action can be seen as a dynamic process with manifold yet equally significant meanings, such as engaging in reflexivity, obtaining knowledge and making individual and collective efforts towards change. Action requires reflexivity and the willingness to learn from others as well as share information, knowledge, thoughts, concerns and ideas. Participation and action are linked; there cannot be action without participation in FPAR. An ongoing challenge for FPAR, similar to PAR, is to be clear about the nature of the action that was taken, by whom it was taken, its effect and how it is interpreted by different participants over time and space. Action encompasses the short- and long-term outcomes of an FPAR project, with consideration to the sustainability of what was created and learned.

Research

Research in terms of the generation of new knowledge is a fundamental concept and practice of FPAR. The research in FPAR challenges both academic traditions as well as non-academic communities. Similar to feminist research, FPAR aims to test prescribed ways of conducting research by challenging traditional boundaries. Diverse and divergent forms of representation are central to FPAR because of its inherently participatory and action-oriented nature and the range of people who may be involved. FPAR researchers explore alternate strategies for disseminating research findings that are appropriate, meaningful and accessible to everyone involved. Examples of innovative approaches to representation include (but are not limited to) diaries, journals, dialogic and interactive interview formats, participatory workshops, photography, film, visual art, theatre and co-writing.

The Primacy of Ethical Involvement

Collectively, the four concepts and practices of FPAR—(1) feminisms, (2) participation, (3) action and (4) research—shape FPAR's epistemological

stance and raise fundamental ethical questions, including the following: Who is the research for? How are women participating? What comes from the research? Are the research questions and actions meaningful and important to everyone involved? Notions of validity are central to the concepts and practices of FPAR. While many have named validity criteria in slightly different ways, essential to FPAR are the notions of internal, external and catalytic validity. In order to uphold internal and external credibility, participation, voice and representation are essential, thus demanding attention to power dynamics and trust building. Catalytic validity, another ethical imperative in FPAR, demands serious attention to the actions that are generated from an FPAR endeavour.

Summary

FPAR is a participatory and action-oriented approach to research that centres gender and women's experiences both theoretically and practically. It blends the most promising aspects of feminist theories and PAR with four central concepts and practices: (1) feminisms, (2) participation, (3) action and (4) research. FPAR has the potential to transform the way research is done as well as how practitioners think about their opportunities to change their communities, organizations and practices.

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See also agency; feminism; feminist ethics; Participatory Action Research; reflective practice; validity; voice

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FIELD THEORY

Social space and field theory were central to the social psychology of Kurt Lewin and provided one of the foundations of organization development and action research. Subsequently, however, they were left behind as systematic tools for building organizational theory and guiding practice. In sociology, however, Pierre Bourdieu used social space and field theory as a basis for his ‘reflexive sociology’, and in recent years, there has been a revival of interest in social space and field theory in sociology and human geography. This entry will describe the origins of the constructs of social space and field theory, their application by Lewin and the sociologist Bourdieu, their development by contemporary scholars and the relationship between these constructs and action research.

Social Space: A Relational View of the World

Lewin’s revolutionary approach to psychology was based on the idea that all psychological and social phenomena need to be understood in terms of ‘social space’. Social space is distinct from physical space, though the two constantly influence each other. Social space forms out of links created when people’s thinking and feeling are put into action and elicit responses from others, which then shape their thinking, feeling and action. If the interaction is temporary or fleeting, a social space is unlikely to form. However, when interactions are sustained over time and become patterned, they take on a particular configuration that differentiates them from other patterned interactions. Differentiation is a mental act that leads to the creation of a space outside, but not wholly independent, of the individuals who constitute it. All relationships, from the simplest to the most complex, are differentiated social spaces. Couples, groups, organizations, cultures and whole societies are all configurations of social space. They differ in the level of complexity and their specific characteristics, but they all are based on the same fundamental construct.

Lewin’s use of social space was strongly influenced by the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer and his concept of ‘relationalism’. Cassirer made a distinction between the logic of things, or substantialism, and a logic of relations, or relationalism. Substantialism is rooted in the intuitive sense that the world is constructed from independent, material objects and can be best grasped by understanding these things. It is also reflected in the widely accepted notion of causality as change, or variance, induced in one distinct thing as the result of the impact of another distinct thing. A ‘relational logic’, on the other hand, accords primacy to the relations among entities. In other words, reality is best grasped as an ordering of the elements of perception through a process of construction that gives them intelligibility and meaning.

Cassirer (1923/1953) argued that modern science was moving steadily from a substantive to a relational logic, using the concept of geometric space as a totally abstract way of representing physical relations. Space is not a physical concept but rather a mental creation that can be used to *think relationally* about making order from any given set of elements. Lewin adopted this idea of space as an essential construct for theorizing about the social world. He was one of the first social scientists to realize that psychology, and the social sciences in general, was limited by a substantialist logic that viewed reality in terms of separate entities (i.e. variables) that directly influence each other. He introduced the idea of a social space in order to shift the focus to a relational logic, which is essentially the basis for holism and ‘synergy’—that is, the whole (i.e. the relations) is greater than the sum of its parts (i.e. substantive entities). This whole, however, is totally abstract and invisible. What makes social space such a useful construct is that it focuses neither on the individual nor on the collective as the unit of analysis but rather on the processes through which individuals, in interaction with others, construct their shared worlds. It became the basis for the idea of group dynamics and concepts such as norms and cohesion.

Field Theory: Causality in Social Space

The concept of field was borrowed by Lewin from physics as a way of accounting for *causality* in social space. By the twentieth century, physics increasingly faced problems that could not be solved through Newtonian mechanics, which attributed causality to the behaviour of physical bodies when subjected to forces or displacement from each other. The main difficulty was explaining how certain bodies seemed to influence other bodies without direct contact (e.g. electromagnetism). The turning point was the Faraday-Maxwell concept of the electromagnetic ‘field’, in

which causality is attributed to the influence of this field on the elements that constitute it. Thus, fields can be understood as spaces that not only link different elements into a kind of network but also exert force on and shape the behaviour of their constituents. The basic components of a social field are (a) the individual and collective actors or agents who constitute the field; (b) the relationships among these actors, with a particular focus on relative power (e.g. hierarchical or equalitarian); (c) the shared meanings that signify what is going in the field and make it intelligible—meaning holds the *social* field together and exerts a truly human force that differentiates social fields from fields in the world of nature—and (4) the ‘rules of the game’ that govern action within it. In the social world, fields cause people to think, feel and act in certain ways. The meanings and rules of the game become internalized into the constituents of the field and shape their behaviour.

Lewin introduced the construct of the ‘life space’, which he defined as the ‘totality of facts’ which determine the behaviour of an individual at a certain moment. When Lewin referred to ‘facts’, he was not referring to ‘objective’ facts but to the internalized field—all those perceived elements that have an influence on a person at any given moment. This construct was expressed symbolically in the well-known formula $B = f(P, E)$ (behaviour is a function of person and environment) and pointed to the link between the internal and external worlds. Thus, human psychology was conceived as a ‘field’, and the life space represented the state of the field at any given moment. Each change of a person’s life space means either expanding or contracting that person’s ‘space of free movement’—that is, the range of what is possible for that person to do or achieve.

A generation after Lewin, Bourdieu, who was also influenced by Cassirer, used the concepts of social space and field theory in building his ‘reflexive sociology’. In this framework, social space is a set of points differentiated into fields (e.g. a professional field, artistic field, academic field, religious field), each of which has its particular ‘structure of difference’—that is, a unique logic and hierarchy that shapes the behaviour of different position holders. The social world consists of individuals who occupy ‘points’ in particular fields that determine their positions vis-à-vis each other. Bourdieu used the term *habitus* to designate the logic that governs a particular field. The *habitus* is a cognitive structure that regulates the behaviour level of an entire field and is internalized by people as a kind of psychological schema that determines how to perceive reality and how to act. The mutual shaping of social structures and individual consciousness accounts for the relative stability of social fields.

Field theory provided Lewin and Bourdieu with a construct for understanding the seemingly invisible

influence of social structures on individuals and one another. What makes social space and field such useful constructs is that they focus neither on the individual nor on the collective as the unit of analysis but rather on the circular, reflexive processes through which individuals, in interaction with others, continually construct and reconstruct their shared worlds (Friedman, 2011). Fields are both phenomenal (i.e. in people’s minds) and structural (‘out there’), linking the internal world of people with the external social world through an ongoing shaping process. Field theory obviates the distinction between agency and structure, seeing them as integrated and analyzable by the same set of constructs. For this reason, both Lewin and Bourdieu believed that field theory provided a general theory that could dissolve the strict disciplinary distinctions among the social sciences.

The Fall and Rise of Field Theory

Although many of Lewin’s ideas and concepts had a major, lasting effect on the social sciences, his followers mostly abandoned the field theory itself. One reason for this was the fact that field theory presented a fundamental challenge to social science in terms of the knowledge it produced, its division into separate disciplines and its research methods. Rather than carrying on the revolution, most of Lewin’s disciples took many of the ideas and concepts out of the context of field theory and researched them using the methods of mainstream social science. Another reason for the stagnation of field theory was that Lewin failed to clearly and systematically conceptualize field theory and its conceptual tools in ways that others could learn and use. For example, after Lewin’s death, almost no one continued to use the visual representations of social space and field that are so prevalent in his writings. Bourdieu’s version of field theory had a somewhat greater impact on sociology, but it too was relegated to the margins and was rarely applied systematically.

Field theory, however, maintains its potential because the fundamental problems in the social sciences which led both Lewin and Bourdieu to field theory have not gone away. Thinkers and researchers in a number of fields have recognized the usefulness of field theory for unifying dualities (agent and structure) and capturing the tension between stability and change.

Social Space, Field Theory and Action Research

Social space and field theory were implicit in the concept of action research as first set forth by Lewin and

John Collier. One central thrust of Lewin's argument in 'Action Research and Minority Problems' (1948) was that the 'problem' was not the minority itself but rather the majority—that is, the dominant field in which they found themselves. Therefore, minority problems could not be addressed by simply focusing on the minority, but rather they required inquiry at the level of the attitudes and relationships that generated the problem. Indeed, action research can be seen as research focused on the field as a whole rather than the individual parts. From the perspective of field theory, the democratic, participative ethic of action research is, at least in part, a means of making this possible. Contemporary approaches to action research have placed emphasis on the importance of opening up communicative space as an essential part of the action research process. In any case, social space and field theory constructs offer a valuable, relatively untapped resource for action research that links the intra-psychic, interpersonal and inter-group levels of experience.

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See also Argyris, Chris; Critical Participatory Action Research; Emery, Fred; force field analysis; intersubjectivity; Lewin, Kurt; phenomenology

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FIRST PERSON ACTION RESEARCH

First person action research refers to an approach to research undertaken by researchers as an inquiry into their own actions, giving conscious attention to their intentions, strategies and behaviour and the effects of their action on themselves and their situation. It is distinguished from second person action research, which refers to research practices usually undertaken in small groups, in which the participants are both actors and researchers, involved in an inquiry into issues of mutual concern, and third person action research, which involves large groups of people who cannot be known face-to-face in a wider community of inquiry. These approaches are interconnected, first person inquiry skills providing a foundation to second person research and second person inquiry offering a basis for wider systemic research.

When doing first person action research, researchers are involved in articulating and critiquing the knowledge inherent in their actions in order to understand their practice better or become more effective in the pursuit of worthwhile aims for themselves, their community or workplace or the wider world. This suggests two significant features of first person action research that distinguishes it from more traditional research. The focus is on practical rather than theoretical objectives, and the researcher is both the subject and the instrument of research.

This entry reviews the background and characteristics of first person action research and introduces the practice of first person inquiry. It gives particular attention to the need for critical subjectivity and concludes with some recent examples.

Background to First Person Action Research

Although questions of self and person occupied the greatest minds in Greek philosophy, it was Augustine who, in the fourth century, first engaged in a lengthy and detailed exploration of himself as a knower. His *Confessions* became a model for autobiographical writing for more than 1,000 years. To understand the human mind, Augustine wrote, 'Do not go outward, return to yourself. Truth dwells within'.

While Augustine's work introduced a paradigm shift in the ways of thinking about the self, he could not have anticipated the advent of modernist and postmodernist challenges. The modernist epistemology required empirical evidence, something the premodern world view could not provide. As a result, the self was discarded as a reliable source of knowledge. But neither

the premodern nor the modernist mind has been able to respond to the postmodern challenge. All knowledge claims are monological, in Jürgen Habermas' terms—that is, they assume that as phenomena are presented to consciousness, the mind is able to grasp their truth. But this ignores the contextual influences on human perception—a critique that postmodernity has levelled with devastating consequence.

As a distinct approach to human inquiry, first person action research formally emerged in the 1980s as a way of doing research that restored the inquirer to the centre of inquiry. While aware of the modernist rejection of the subjective, the pioneers of this approach returned to the grounding of experience in all knowing and argued for a fresh appreciation of the self as both subject and instrument of inquiry. To achieve this, they articulated a critical stance, first proposed by the anthropologist Margaret Mead as 'disciplined subjectivity' and described by Peter Reason and John Heron as 'critical subjectivity'. What is called for in the current intellectual environment is an ability to bring the insights disclosed through reflective participation in experience into critical dialogue with other voices. This process will be discussed later.

Some will find the roots of this approach in the epistemological pragmatism of John Dewey. Others will see its origin in the prioritizing of the practical (knowing how) over the conceptual (knowing about), as articulated by John Macmurray. Yet others may look to Immanuel Kant's views of autonomy and rational agency, or they may see it as a natural consequence of the embodied knowing of feminist research.

Characteristics of First Person Action Research

First person action research is not a research method. It is an approach to research, a way of thinking about practice. For many, the intention of first person action research is not just informative but also transformative. The goal is not so much to prove something as to improve it.

In contrast to traditional empirical research, action research does not separate research and action into two separate activities. Action and research are seen as two aspects of the same activity—creating knowledge in and through action. Although action researchers offer the fruits of their inquiries in words (or other forms), they are conscious of the difficulties of presentational and propositional claims—for them, knowledge resides in their practice. Theory making is dynamic, responding constantly to the situation.

Like all forms of research, first person action research has a purpose. It seeks understanding in order to transform. The theories-in-action are not always

fully formed. Action researchers often find that the question changes as the inquiry proceeds. But what is likely is that the initial trigger for first person action research is a question, a contradiction or a dilemma faced in the inquirer's practice. It may also accompany larger scale inquiries, giving facilitators greater access to their own sense making as they work with others.

First person action research may have some or all of the following features:

1. It is a systematic and sustained inquiry into personal practice.
2. It has a purpose, either to inform or to transform. It can serve technical, practical or emancipatory ends.
3. It recognizes multiple ways to knowing—sometimes described as an extended epistemology that, following John Heron, includes experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowledge. Practical knowledge is the natural culmination of all inquiry.
4. It employs multiple intelligences (Howard Gardner) in probing experience.
5. It is methodologically pluralist. There is no agreed or fixed methodology. It involves a disciplined use of the full range of human sensibilities supported by an experimental approach to the skills and tools of inquiry, assembled to suit the occasion.
6. It involves an iterative interplay between action and reflection, often described as cycles or spirals of inquiry.

Arguably, it is premature to attempt a definition of first person action research. Barely a generation has passed since it emerged formally as a form of academic research. Despite the enthusiasm the approach engenders in some circles, it is still in a rudimentary phase of development. There are as many ways of doing first person action research as there are researchers doing it, and it cannot be easily codified into principles or guidelines.

The Process of Knowing

First person action research subjects our perceptions, assumptions, values, ways of thinking, strategies and behaviour to critical inquiry. Rather than observing ourselves as objects, we come to know by experiencing ourselves as subjects, with direct awareness of our acting and knowing. It makes no pretence to universal knowledge. This is inquiry by the self into the self-in-action. We are the instruments of inquiry. It involves the conscious appropriation and practice of the knowing

process—knowing how we know. The stages of knowing move from experiential awareness through existential understanding to critical judgement and action. Although laid out below in linear form, the process, in practice, is iterative. The researcher moves through these stages, backwards and forwards, in pursuit of the deeper meaning implicit in his or her experience.

The ground of this knowing is experience. Gadamer reminds us that to have an experience, it must run counter to mere existence. Our attention should be captured by an external stimulus. But we can equally discover any moment as an experience by giving it our full attention, by being surprised by what we may find in it. Experience involves participation in and resonance with the reality of the situation. This is knowing as *connaitre* (or in William James' words, 'knowledge by acquaintance') rather than knowing as *savoir* ('knowledge about'). For an experience to be an experience, we must be fully immersed in it. This is what we mean by being 'present'. It is like waking up and glimpsing, just briefly, a quality of participation in the moment.

As research instruments, the human being is incredibly sophisticated and versatile. We possess an array of perceptual tools that can be employed alone or in different configurations to deepen the experience, each sense yielding knowledge from a different perspective. So first person researchers bring to their task the whole of themselves, body, mind and spirit, turning moments of existence into vivid experiences by attending to the moment with full sensuous awareness and retaining in memory traces of the experience for further imaginative reflection.

But our senses need training. Experiential knowing begins in seeing, hearing and touching the world around us. These sense organs must be open, receptive and alert to their surroundings. Our senses are, of course, inundated with sense impressions all the time, so the inquirer must be selective, developing a disciplined attention which distinguishes something from its surroundings, placing it in the foreground while other things recede into the background. Phenomenologically speaking, we open up to 'things in themselves', allowing reality to disclose its own truth.

The ability to observe without drawing conclusions allows alternative ways of perceiving the situation. The discipline of suspending, noticing the chattering of our minds and resisting the way our mental models want to close down the inquiry in premature claims, opens up fresh awareness. Some practitioners of first person action research may engage in meditation or mindfulness practices to enter this state of awareness.

Besides sensory data, the inquirer may draw on emotional and imaginative awareness as well. One's feelings may point towards the nature of the relationship one has with the situation, revealing in bodily

reactions the position in the process. And sensory exposure to the situation may fuel the imagination to be processed in dreams or expressed in bodily or artistic form. To borrow the words of William Blake, we begin to see not *with* the eyes but *through* the eyes. And this will apply equally to the other senses as well. Some will find in this approach a corollary in gestalt theory, a practice of whole-field awareness that works with what a person is sensing and feeling rather than what that person is thinking or interpreting.

At this stage, the researcher may perceive what Gerard Manley Hopkins called the 'inscape' of things—the inner shape of things. As researchers dwell in the presence of the 'other', connecting emotionally and spiritually, it reveals its true nature. They are able to name it, not just label it. They 'see' the extraordinary in the ordinary. In ancient times, soothsayers, prophets and clairvoyants were called *seers*—able to hold the 'other' with reverence and awe.

This process is not introspective. It involves a shift in relational space. As individuals immerse themselves in a situation, the boundary between the self and the situation dissolves, and the subject-object duality fades. They no longer look out at the world as detached observers. They notice their connection to the world. They have moved from seeing the situation as an object to embracing it as a subject. A participatory consciousness can arise. They meet reality no longer, as Martin Buber described it, as an 'I-It' encounter but in an 'I-Thou' relationship. In an 'I-It' encounter, 'It' is an object separated from oneself. The 'I-Thou' relationship, on the other hand, describes the intimate connection and the interpenetration of being.

Critical Subjectivity

Making sense of experience is not a separate process from living it. Researchers act in the situation on the basis of momentary insights or existential understandings that suggest a way forward. As Donald Schön has observed, they will adjust their behaviour on the basis of the 'back talk' of reality as the situation responds to their actions. Insights are a halfway house between experience and more substantial claims to knowing. In the first stage of first person action research, the experiential stage, when researchers are immersed in the situation, the discipline of attention requires a suspension of judgement. The researchers must not rush too quickly to label, categorize or theorize. But now they have arrived at a place where insights are pushing themselves for acceptance, and they must be tested. It is time to redirect their attention towards the generative process of knowing in and through action.

First person researchers are well aware of the potential for self-deception. People can and do fool

themselves. A variety of techniques can aid the reflective process, subjecting their insights to critical appraisal. Judi Marshall has developed an approach to what she calls ‘living life as inquiry’, by exercising the inner and outer arcs of attention, moving upstream to reflect on what is taken for granted—the beliefs, values and assumptions they carry with them into the experience—and downstream to observe others in the situation, listening to their reactions and insights. Many first person practitioners use the techniques of what Chris Argyris calls ‘Action Science’, including the ladder of inference, left/right-hand column analysis or Bill Torbert’s attention to the incongruities between purpose, strategy, action and outcome.

These tools can heighten perception and test the insights we have in practice. But these alone are not sufficient. The postmodernist critique of the philosophy of consciousness is that all perceptions are perspectives. Hidden from view in the insights we may have of the situation are the embedded cultural influences that blinker our perception. To deepen critical understanding, therefore, our insights must be brought into dialogue with other voices, to modify and deepen our claim to knowing by exploring the similarities and differences between our existential understanding and the standpoint of others, in our field of practice and beyond.

Action research, and first person action research in particular, is concerned with knowledge that informs practice. It therefore has moral purpose, not just epistemological intent. The researcher is concerned not just with knowing but also with discovering what is good. The whole enterprise of first person research is a form of moral inquiry, addressing professional dilemmas and moral conflicts. The critical judgement needed to act wisely in the world brings into focus the community of practice in which the researcher works. First person inquiry is not just for *me*, but it is also for *us* and for *them*.

Examples of First Person Action Research

At first glance, Margaret’s research is large scale, using learning histories to investigate the ways in which local government organizations are responding to climate change. The stories she tells disclose, in particular, the human dimension of change in the complex and often messy reality of local government. The outcome stands as witness to the possibility of systemic learning in response to climate change.

But alongside this process, Margaret presents a personal journey of discovery, what she describes as the narrative arc of her involvement in the project. Her first person inquiry, running alongside or underneath the public form of the research, takes us inside to understand the choices she makes in facilitating the process and

the assumptions that shape her practice. In a work that ostensibly offers insight into socio-technical change, the personal pronoun occurs frequently. But this personal account of her attempt to embed herself with practitioners and organizations involved in carbon reduction projects in the UK is significant. She tells us how, as the project developed, she engaged critically and dynamically with theory, wrestling with her own disquiet at the existing theoretical frameworks and mapping the emerging conceptual space in which to hold the project experience. This attention to the self, in the midst of a large-scale inter-organizational inquiry, adds a richness and quality to the study that would not have been present in more conventional qualitative research.

Sometimes, first person action research provides a way of exploring fundamental contradictions in professional practice. Stephen is involved in an inquiry into conflict in the leadership of faith-based organizations. His interest arises from his own experience of what are sometimes quite acrimonious relationships between clerics and professional management that contradict the espoused values of the organization. Drawing from the analysis of organizational behaviour by Argyris and Schön, he observes the ways in which he and others navigate the gap between their espoused values and values-in-use, by denying its existence, making the issue un-discussable and the un-discussability itself un-discussable.

As the chief operating officer of a small educational institution, Stephen is engaged in an auto-ethnographic study of this phenomenon. This involves careful attention to his own ways of making sense of the experience and his telling of the story of the wider social and cultural context in which he works. As a prominent participant, he inevitably faces tough ethical decisions in the ways in which he probes the situation and in how he tells the story. He has chosen a novel solution. As he gathers stories from his own experience, he presents them as an allegory, recasting the encounters in an imaginative retelling of the exchange between the prophet Nathan and King David, a historical moment familiar to his constituency.

Practitioners often face dilemmas that call for rigorous inquiry to resolve them. Sara is a writing instructor in the Transitional Studies department of a local community college. She describes the expectations on her department as to achieve within a 15-week semester what 6 years of high school have failed to achieve—equipping her students with the basic skills necessary to progress in the college system. As a White, middle-class, middle-aged teacher, faced with a classroom of disengaged and, at times, actively hostile young adults, she experienced a sickening dissonance between herself and the educator she wished to be.

Approaching this dilemma as first person action research, Sara began to realize a fundamental flaw in

the way ‘proper’ English is taught, which promotes it as an improvement on their natural idiolect rather than as a second language (a convention by which we can communicate with other English-speaking people). But it was only when she acted upon this insight that she and her students experienced a radical and fundamental shift in attitude and learning capacity. The paradigm shift forged on the anvil of her dilemma resulted in a change of practice that transformed her classroom experience. The dilemma had a cultural rather than a pedagogical root, leading her to conclude that inattention to the cultural source of the problem had resulted in an educational injustice that was depriving her students of access to the benefits of further education.

Her inquiry exposed a fundamental contradiction in her practice between her espoused values (equality) and action (perpetuating the notion that academic English is superior to the vernacular language). The transformation experienced in the classroom was remarkable.

David Adams

See also Action Science; autobiography; ladder of inference; learning pathways grid; living life as inquiry; phenomenology; practical knowing; practitioner inquiry

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FISHBONE DIAGRAM

Dr Kaoru Ishikawa formulated a visual analysis tool for considering the causes of a specific problem or event. Originally used in the Quality Circle in the 1960s, Ishikawa’s diagram offers a systematic way to visualize cause-and-effect relationships and is considered

one of the seven basic tools of quality control. The diagrams may be called Ishikawa diagrams, cause-and-effect diagrams or fault trees, but because the diagram itself actually looks like the skeleton of a fish, it is commonly referred to as a fishbone diagram.

The fishbone diagram assists stakeholders in considering a single effect, problem, situation or event and then generating ideas about the causes related to that issue. The process of using the fishbone diagram encourages stakeholders to think through all the possible causes and their relationships to the problem in order to generate an effective solution. Using the fishbone diagram to identify and analyze a specific problem allows stakeholders to organize thoughts about potential causes and arrange the causes by importance. Once the information and ideas have been entered onto the diagram, the visual graphic created illustrates both the relationships and the hierarchy of events.

Using a fishbone diagram may be beneficial to stakeholders who need to answer *why* or *how* questions and, furthermore, could be used in a variety of contexts. Historically, the fishbone diagram has been used in quality control and industry, but the potential for using the diagram in other settings is great. Education, community issues, advocacy, environmentalism and other areas where issues arise or changes must be made are also areas where stakeholders would benefit from the careful, systematic and visual analysis of key concerns that using the fishbone diagram allows.

When designing a fishbone diagram, the head of the fish corresponds to the problem, issue, event or objective. Along the spine of the fish skeleton are vertical ribs that summarize the potential causes of whatever has been identified in the head. More detail, subcategories or examples may be added under any category identified as a rib with a horizontal line coming out of the rib. While quality control has typically identified relevant cause categories such as machines, methods, humans, materials and environment, the categories can be modified to suit the analysis needs of the stakeholders. Stakeholders may make up their own categories or may wait to identify categories after themes are recognized in the idea generation phase. It is important to note that when using a fishbone diagram, the problem solvers work backwards. That is, the effect is identified first and the causes of the effect are identified next.

When using a fishbone diagram with a team, the team must first identify a single, key issue to be examined. Once that single issue is identified and written into the head portion of the diagram, group members may brainstorm all possible and real causes of the issue. If the group is using set categories, such as people, places, procedures and policies, or another predetermined set of categories, group members may quickly identify subcategories along the ribs. When

the categories have been established, the group must raise questions to determine the contributing factors in each category. Asking the group to answer the question ‘What are the people issues that cause the identified problem?’ establishes the factors to be considered. The group can next consider each factor individually by asking, ‘Why does this happen?’, to determine the sub-factors. The process may continue until all potential causes are exhausted, at which point analysis begins.

Analysis of the diagram begins with visually scanning the diagram. Stakeholders should review the information and ideas generated when there is consensus that enough information and detail have been created for thorough consideration. During analysis, stakeholders will need to identify which factors appear in more than one category. Those repetitions indicate

the potential for being a probable cause of the problem identified. The fishbone diagram can be visually simple or complex depending on the amount of detail created by the group. The fishbone diagram may need to be broken into separate diagrams if it becomes too complex.

Some fishbone diagrams may be computer generated forms filled with boxes and lines that allow the user to fill in the blanks (Figure 1). Other fishbone diagrams may be less formal, hand-drawn or instantly created digital images generated entirely by the user (Figure 2). Poster paper or chalk/dry erase boards may be used along with sticky notes so that the identified items may be moved around the diagram freely (Figure 3). Fishbone diagrams are useful because of the visual analysis they offer, but the appearance can vary so long as the basic skeleton is used.

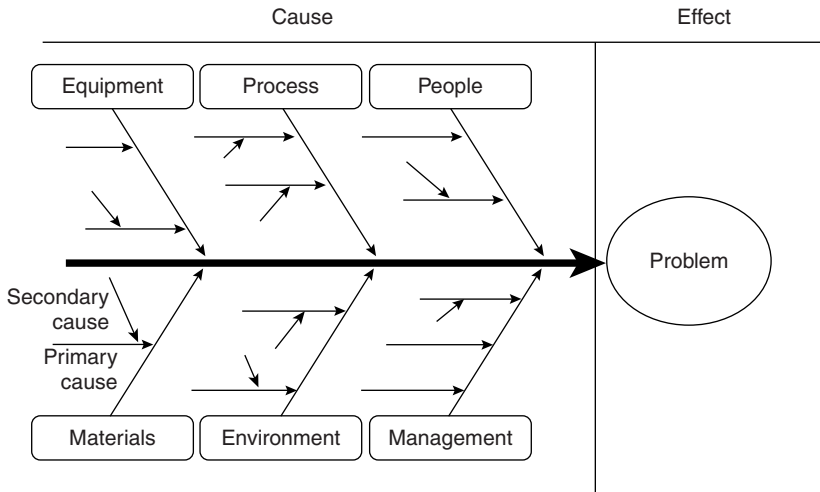


Figure 1 Computer-Generated Fishbone Diagram Sample

SOURCE: Diagram courtesy of Fabian Lange, Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ishikawa_Fishbone_Diagram.svg.

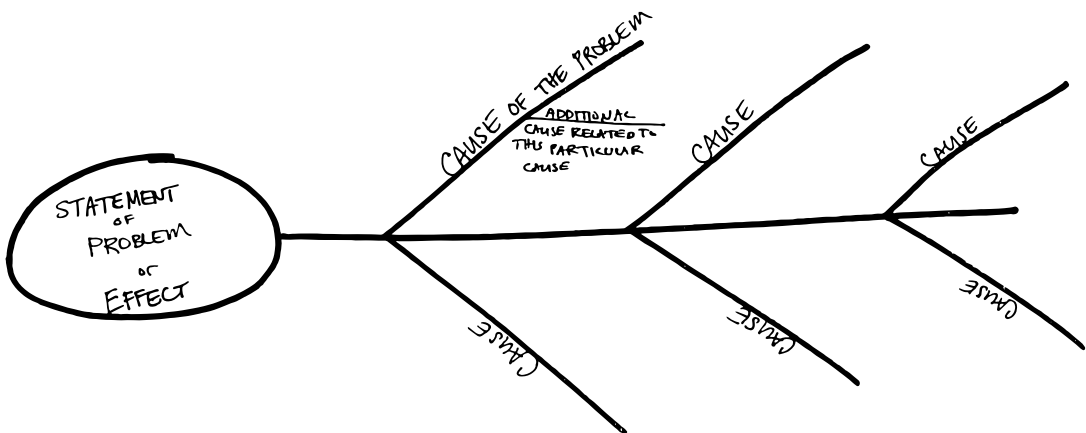


Figure 2 Hand-Drawn Fishbone Diagram Sample

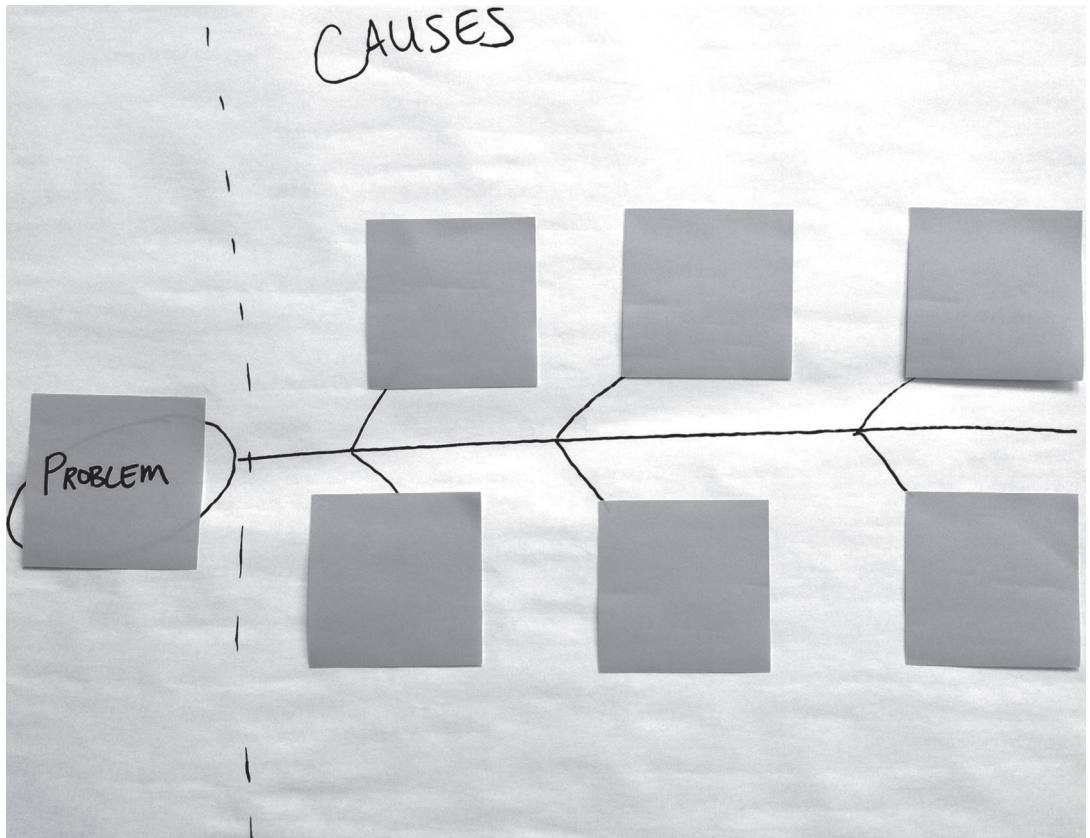


Figure 3 Board and Post-it Fishbone Diagram Sample

The fishbone or Ishikawa diagram is appropriate for action research for a number of reasons. First, while a single individual can use the fishbone diagram, the diagram works well in settings where multiple members of a team or group are working together. The diagram offers a visual display of information that is easy to read and interpret, making it appropriate for action research participants in a variety of settings. That is, no special training, area of expertise or education is required to begin using this diagram to identify and analyze problems or in beginning to solve problems. The use of the fishbone diagram encourages stakeholder participation because of the focus on seeing the whole picture when it comes to identifying problems and specific causes.

Dusty Columbia Embury

See also asset mapping; concept mapping; force field analysis

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FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are a qualitative research method utilized to enhance understanding about a particular phenomenon. In a focus group, participants are gathered together to share perspectives and thoughts regarding a pre-defined topic. Participants are selected purposefully as they share characteristics and experiential knowledge regarding the group’s focus. The researcher endeavours to create a safe, welcoming and non-judgemental environment conducive to participants sharing feelings and personal experiences. Differing perspectives on a particular phenomenon are encouraged, and researchers typically conduct multiple focus

groups with similar participants to acquire a range of viewpoints as well as patterns and trends.

With a focus on community and social issues, focus groups are a particularly fitting method for action research. Focus group participants may be from similar religious, ethno-cultural, sexual identity, or gender backgrounds and communities, or they may share experiences with drug use, homelessness, health and mental health challenges or other social issues. The effectiveness and power of these focus groups are partly due to trust, resulting in part from the shared histories and experiences, which facilitates the sharing of personal stories. While focus groups may not be ideal for everyone, as they involve self-disclosure within a group of people with whom some may feel uncomfortable, participants often describe them as positive and supportive experiences. This entry discusses the history of focus groups, focus group characteristics and the salience of focus groups to action research.

History of Focus Groups

Social science researchers began to explore more non-directive approaches than the traditional researcher-directed individual interview in the late 1930s. Researchers questioned the ability of individual interviews that used predetermined questions and placed the researcher in the dominating role to acquire accurate, non-biased perspectives from participants. Non-directive approaches with open-ended questions provided the opportunity to shift the controlling role from the interviewer to the participant and create space for participants to share experiences and issues of importance in their lives.

There was no immediate acceptance or uptake of the focus group method among academics. This lack of acceptance was not particular to focus groups but extended to qualitative methods in general. Quantitative methods were socially constructed as more reliable, valid and conducive to producing high-quality evidence than qualitative methods. Market researchers—rather than academic researchers—began implementing focus groups in the 1950s to inform product design, advertisement and sale strategies. It was not until the 1980s that focus groups were integrated into academic research. Focus groups share several common characteristics across contexts and purposes.

Characteristics of Focus Groups

Focus groups can serve varied functions, and the timing of the focus group plays a large role in determining its purpose. Focus groups can be used to gather information to inform programme development, for example, in needs assessments. Before programme

implementation, focus groups can also provide an opportunity to pilot-test ideas, programmes or products. During and after programme implementation, focus group feedback may be used for programme evaluation. Focus groups can also be used in various stages of the research. At the beginning of the research process, focus groups can be used to pilot-test survey tools and modify the research design, and following other research methods (e.g. surveys), focus groups may be used to acquire feedback and to enhance understanding of the findings and next steps.

Participants

Participants are selected to partake in a focus group because they share a common feature relevant to the study's purpose, such as socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation), occupation (e.g. health-care provider, sex worker), health issue (e.g. diabetes, HIV, cancer) or life experience (e.g. homelessness, substance use, parenting). The similarity between participants is established by the focus of the study, guides participant recruitment and can be broad (e.g. anyone who has parented) to specific (e.g. mothers living with HIV in a particular city). The shared characteristic is discussed with the group. For example, if participants are selected because they are all women living with HIV, the group is informed that it is a group of women living with HIV. Focus group studies can employ a single-category design, where one type of participant is selected to acquire in-depth information, or a multiple-category design, where focus groups are conducted with different types of participants to compare and contrast various perspectives.

The ideal size of a focus group is 5–10 participants; for particularly sensitive topics, a smaller size of 6–8 people is recommended. Researchers must seek a balance between having a size small enough to enable people to speak of their experiences and having enough people so that diverse viewpoints are presented. The maximum number of participants typically recommended is 12; with larger focus groups, there is limited opportunity for each participant to share insights and observations, and this may lead to participants having side conversations, which detracts from the effectiveness of the group. Additionally, some participants may not feel comfortable speaking in larger groups.

Data Collection and Analysis

To understand the phenomenon being studied, researchers ask open-ended questions and analyze the findings within and across focus groups. It is recommended that researchers conduct a minimum of three focus groups with similar groups of participants to acquire diverse perspectives and to reach saturation.

Saturation occurs when no major new themes emerge after conducting several focus groups. Horizontal communication between focus group participants facilitates the sharing of personal experiences. Moderators should be trained to probe participant statements and create a safe space for sharing different views. Qualities of effective moderators include respect, an anti-oppressive and strengths-based approach, empathy, objectivity, awareness of the importance and objective of the study and the ability to be non-judgemental.

Focus groups are typically digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim and can be entered into qualitative analysis software to facilitate data analysis. There are multiple theoretical approaches (e.g. Grounded Theory, thematic analysis, phenomenology) used to identify, analyze and report themes in qualitative data; most of the approaches integrate inductive and deductive analyses. Inductive analyses may be used to identify new themes that evolve in focus groups, and deductive approaches can be used to explore themes identified by the guiding theoretical approach and the previous literature.

Questions

Researchers should ensure that focus group questions are thoughtfully ordered and structured in order to be clear and logical. Questions at the beginning of the focus group should be general to encourage people to begin talking and open up, and as the focus group progresses, questions may become more specific and personal. The researcher should ensure that the environment in which the focus group is conducted is a comfortable and safe space for participants to respond to questions openly.

Challenges and Limitations

The efficacy of focus groups in gathering in-depth and insightful information is in large part dependent on the skill of the moderator, the participant recruitment strategy and the research context. Focus groups have been criticized for several reasons; for example, there are concerns that people may try to portray themselves in a positive light and may omit information that may reflect negatively on them. Others are concerned that participants may not share feelings and emotions in the group context. Additional challenges and limitations of focus groups include managing dominant voices, the trend towards focus group participants reproducing normative discourses and the different abilities and comfort levels of participants in articulating thoughts and experiences. An ethical challenge in focus group studies is the inability to guarantee confidentiality; the researcher can request participants to refrain from sharing details of the focus group discussion outside the

group, but participants also need to be informed that they have no control over whether such information is shared.

Focus Groups and Action Research

Focus groups are a particularly fitting method for action research as they have the potential to engage communities in determining research agendas geared to creating social change. Participatory and community-based approaches to focus group research began in the early 1990s with the engagement of non-academics and community members in research. Community-based organizations, educational institutions and local government frequently utilize focus groups in action research. Action research approaches to focus groups engage communities in all stages of the research process—from research design to recruitment, implementation, data analysis and knowledge translation—and aim to develop genuine, equitable and collaborative relationships between researchers and community members, volunteers and/or peers. An action research approach to focus groups has several features distinguishing it from other approaches to focus groups: a longer study completion time frame (e.g. 6 months); a smaller number of participants (5–8); multiple decision-makers, including researchers and community members; implementation of focus groups in community-based organizations and other community venues; a participatory approach to data analysis, often involving several team members; dissemination of results to the community and the engagement of community members as peer researchers.

Engagement of Peer Researchers

Creating an environment conducive to sharing diverse perspectives is critical to the effectiveness of focus groups. To facilitate an equitable dialogue within focus groups, researchers may take multiple steps to address power differentials that could compromise participants' safety or comfort level in sharing experiences, perspectives and beliefs. For example, researchers select participants with similar life experiences and hire skilled moderators who may have similar characteristics to participants. Action research approaches to focus group research engage 'peer researchers' in focus group design, recruitment, moderation and analysis. The definition of peer researcher is contested and context specific but generally refers to persons who have equal status and shared life experiences, such as a health issue. Peers can help to bridge the power differentials between researcher and participants and may also experience the research process as empowering and educational. Similarities between the moderator

and focus group participants are important to consider, particularly for focus groups exploring sensitive and personal topics. For example, a focus group exploring sexual health among HIV-positive women may want to consider having a female moderator, perhaps one living with HIV. The gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, language and socio-economic status of moderators may all play a role in the comfort level of participants communicating openly and honestly in focus groups.

However, researchers have not only problematized who exactly constitutes a 'peer' but also question if power differentials are indeed minimized in research involving peer researchers. There is debate regarding whether the shared cultural background between the moderator and participants will facilitate communication or whether it may present barriers because of confidentiality concerns and/or reduced explanations of the role that culture plays in experiencing or understanding a particular issue due to an expectation that the moderator already shares this knowledge and understanding. Peer researchers themselves may experience challenges engaging in focus group research as they enter the research process with differing knowledge of the different aspects of research (e.g. recruitment, moderation, analysis) and may struggle to navigate boundaries in the communities in which they live, work and socialize.

Approaches to Focus Groups

Action research approaches to focus groups may involve diverse methods rather than simply responding to questions pre-determined by researchers. For example, participants can (a) list the items relevant to a topic; (b) choose ideas to discuss in the group; (c) select and discuss pictures from newspapers and magazines; (d) draw pictures and discuss the ideas in the images; (e) generate flow charts; (f) conduct mind mapping, referring to brainstorming of ideas and concepts related to a particular issue; (g) imagine alternatives, possibly facilitated by the use of music, meditation or guided imagery, and (h) conduct a project before the focus group, for example, creating a scrapbook, reading assigned materials, taking a log or writing journal entries. These methods engage participants in a different and fun way, change the focus group pace, facilitate creativity and have the potential to generate fresh insight.

Action approaches to focus group methods were initially driven by a lack of resources and the subsequent need to engage community members and volunteers. Yet community involvement in focus group research resulted in myriad benefits for not only the research outcomes but also the peer researchers themselves. There are challenges, however, in implementing action research approaches to focus groups. There are unique training

needs for community members engaged as researchers, a longer time frame for the project and potential difficulties in collaboratively setting decision-making priorities among multiple stakeholders. In sum, focus groups are an excellent tool for attaining the objectives of action research as they provide the opportunity to explore social, political and health inequities and can facilitate understanding of participants' experiences, feelings and recommendations about complex issues.

Carmen Logie

See also Community-Based Participatory Research; community-based research; Participatory Action Research; quantitative methods

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FOLK HIGH SCHOOL MOVEMENT

The folk high school (FHS) movement is a well-known popular adult education (Danish *folkeoplysning* and Swedish *folkbildning*) phenomenon in the Nordic countries that through its history spread to other countries and continents. The concept of a social movement denotes an organized effort of a group of people to change something within society. The FHS is a residential institution for adults of all ages offering a broad range of non-formal learning that generally does not lead to any qualification or certificate, but nowadays certain courses can provide eligibility to higher education (e.g. in Sweden, Norway and Finland) or in some cases can give special qualifications (e.g. in Sweden and Finland). Traditionally, however, the FHS concentrated on basic- or advanced-level popular education. The FHS is called *folkehøjskole* in Danish, *folkhögskola* in Swedish, *folkehøgskole* in Norwegian and *kansanopisto* and *työväenopisto* or *kansalaisopisto*

in Finnish. The FHS gives a sense of community to its participants, along with an opportunity to develop and reflect on one's knowledge and experiences in a rich learning environment. The FHS movement was meant to bring enlightenment to ordinary people at a time when education was not equally distributed. This entry concentrates on the background and development of the FHS in Nordic countries and elsewhere. It also examines the Nordic model of the FHS and its role in fostering active citizenship and democracy through action research.

Background and History

The idea of the FHS is immediately associated with its founding father, Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872), a Danish priest, poet, historian, politician and adult educator and a Danish Church reformer. The idea of wanting to create a *folkehøjskole* was a desire Grundtvig expressed repeatedly in his writing. As a strong critic of the existing formal advanced-level schooling in Denmark, which at that time focused solely on educating the most privileged members of society using the German language (he called it a 'school of death'), Grundtvig believed in the idea of a school for the common people. It needed to be related to their lives and history, giving them an identity to develop individually and collectively. Grundtvig outlined a proposal for the Academy at Søro, on the island of Zealand, which he presented to the king, as a place for prospective leaders to meet, a united search for enlightenment, where the gap between the unlearned and the learned, the civil servant and the peasant could be bridged. This interplay should create an understanding of the common heritage within Danish history, language and culture. This idea was, however, never realized by Grundtvig himself but, following his design, was set up by others. In 1844, the first FHS was established at Rødding in the Danish-speaking Northern Schleswig by Christian Flor with the aim of struggling against the then strong German influence. Later, all FHSs were in one way or another influenced by Grundtvig's idea, that is, education for the fatherland and enlightenment for citizenship, with the living word as a means of instruction—in other words, narratives and storytelling in contrast to the boring books used at schools.

In 1851, a new model was created by a charismatic person, Christen Kold (1816–70). His school, Ryslinge Field, was less theoretical and more religious, putting more emphasis on Christian personality than citizenship education, but the living word dominated education totally. Kold began his career by starting schools for children, and he gradually designed them for young adults. The school was characterized by

freedom, but not entirely; Kold played the role of a patriarchal father. He moved the school twice before it was established in 1862 in Dalum. His impact on the development of the FHS movement was enormous, as well as on free schools (for children and youth). In 1863, there were already 15 FHSs in Denmark, and this reached a total of 45 with 2,071 participants in 1869.

FHS in Nordic Countries

Outside Denmark, Herman Anker and Olaus Arvesen in 1864 at Hamar, Norway, founded the first FHS Sagatun High School. The next was opened in 1867 by Christoffer Bruun, who is known as the father of the Norwegian FHS. Of the 34 FHSs operated in Norway in the years 1864–94, only 4 survived to 1904, because of financial difficulties facing these privately funded institutions. The trend changed in 1919 when support came from the state, and already in 1920, there were 28 FHSs, with 2,000 students.

The FHS idea also came to Sweden from Denmark, but it took some time to start a school. The first three were opened in 1868, at Hvilan, at Önnestad and at Hervestad in Skåne, a region in southern Sweden. There was at the time a strong intellectual influence coming from Copenhagen to Lund University, and Grundtvig was well known in Sweden. Thus, it is doubtful that FHSs were created independently of the Danish influence. It is also clear that the Finnish FHSs were inspired by the Danish institutions. Already in 1889, the first school for the Finnish-speaking population was opened at Kangsala by Sofia Hagman. In the same year, the first Swedish-speaking FHS in Finland was opened at Borgå to serve the Swedish Finnish community. Finland was a part of Sweden until 1809; thus, there was and still is a significant Swedish-speaking population. At the end of the 19th century, there were 16 Finnish and 5 Finnish Swedish FHSs.

The FHS in Other Countries

Even outside the Nordic countries, the idea of the FHS spread. First, in 1871, the FHS idea was brought to North America by Danish immigrants to the USA. The Society of Danish Lutherans started folk schools that educated young Danes for almost 60 years. Between 1882 and 1911, six schools were opened and lasted for a shorter or longer period of time, the first at Elk Horn, Iowa, followed by schools at Grant, Michigan; West Denmark, Wisconsin; Nystad and Tyler, Minnesota; Kenmare, North Dakota, and Solvang, California. In Alberta, Canada, the Daum folk school was opened. Another interesting contribution to the movement was the Highlander Research and Education Center, which

was established as the Highlander Folk School in 1932 along the model of the Danish FHS movement.

Already in 1900, the first FHS inspired by Denmark opened at Pszczelin near Warsaw, Poland, which at the time was occupied by Russia. It offered 11-month residential courses to young men from the countryside. In addition to gardening and agricultural courses, Polish history, literature and language were taught secretly. The next FHS was founded in 1904 at Kruszynek, for women using the same curriculum. In 1909, two new institutions were established—at Sokolowek for men and at Golotczyzna for women. In 1912, the school for boys called Bratne was opened in Krasiczyn, situated on an agriculture farm.

In Great Britain, adult educators had been in contact with the Danish FHSs already in 1890. George Cadbury with support from the Quakers founded two institutions—Woodbrook College in 1903 and Fircroft College in 1909, both at Selly Oak, close to Birmingham. Later on, in 1929, Coleg Harlech in Wales and, in 1937, Newbattle Abbey in Scotland were opened, both modelled on the Danish pattern.

Before World War I, FHSs were founded in Germany, Switzerland, Croatia and Hungary (which was then part of the Habsburg monarchy). After the war, FHSs were opened in the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Estonia and Austria, and after World War II, they were founded in France by Erica Simon, in Africa (in Tanzania with help from the Swedish SIDA [Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency]) and in India. Today, the Nordic FHSs contribute to developing and supporting popular adult education in Africa (e.g. South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda), Latin America, Asia (e.g. Vietnam) and East Europe (e.g. Latvia).

Characteristics of the Nordic FHS

Grundtvig was inspired by Romanticism, his visit to Trinity College, Cambridge, and Iceland's story-telling at Kvældvaka, an activity already known from medieval times, which meant a household's members gathering during evenings for indoor activities with handicrafts and story-telling. The FHS is by definition a residential institution, a boarding house with leisure and sports facilities, in which participants and staff preferably live together. It creates a social milieu in which students' socialization to norms and values, and to the democratic society generally, takes place. These common values, which were originally founded on a set of Christian principles, include equality, equity and freedom of speech, as well as respect for each other and oneself. A community of self-governed participants and staff adopt a set of responsibilities and rights that they have agreed upon. Interaction among its members

creates a space for learning how to co-operate, handle conflicts, solve problems and enjoy being together. One learns democracy on the spot; thus, a form of authentic civic learning takes place there. The FHS creates a non-formal educational environment where people learn from each other by means of discussion, studying books and exploring social reality through project work, problem-based learning and study circles. There are both general and special knowledge and skills to be learned. Participants are responsible for their learning, and they decide together with the teachers on the programme on the methods of study. FHSs play an important role in their communities as centres for lifelong learning, community development and cultural work for a multicultural and democratic society.

The FHS has developed according to two traditions—the Danish and the Swedish. Traditionally, the Danish FHSs run 5-month-long winter courses and 3-month-long spring courses, as well as short summer courses, which are less theoretical than the Swedish FHS programme, although this has changed somewhat given the shift in focus to preparing students for further education. Approximately 70 FHSs are currently spread across the country in rural areas and smaller towns; some are old, some quite new; some are large, with 100 students, while others have only 30 participants. All but one are residential and create micro-cultural communities for students and staff. Most of them have a general content. Over the past few years, FHSs in Denmark have been attended by almost 50,000 participants, mostly young people, but there are a few institutions for those younger than 17 years, and some are for senior adults. Some 2 per cent of Denmark's adult population participate in an FHS, mostly in short courses, but 21 per cent of those who attend FHS take courses lasting several months. All FHSs run general courses, but some are specialized in a single discipline, such as music; others focus on lifestyle, where personal development, health and physical exercise are the main topics; and still others are biblical and spiritual. They are private institutions, but some are financed by municipalities, and all of them have some courses subsidized by the state.

There are currently 150 FHSs throughout Sweden, most of them residential. They offer general courses to adults, with a minimum age of 18 years. Usually, applicants with little prior education are given priority. As FHSs have the freedom to establish their courses according to the special emphasis and profile of the students, they give participants substantial opportunities to influence the content of the studies based on prior knowledge, interests and needs. Thematic studies and project work are usually the common methodology of the Swedish FHSs, where participants' experience from work and social life is a base for activity.

Some of the teachers use action research in their study groups as a methodology, especially in advanced courses. The Swedish FHSs have at least three types of courses: (1) long-term general courses, (2) special courses (i.e. professional and vocational) and (3) short-term courses. The long-term general courses last from 1 to 3 years. Tuition is free of charge, and national student aid is available. General courses can qualify as university studies. Approximately 12,200 participants attend the general courses every term. FHSs also provide special courses in music, the media, crafts, theatre, languages, health care and tourism, and some of these courses are vocational (e.g. for youth recreation leaders, drama pedagogues, journalists and treatment assistants). These attract 16,000 participants every term. In short-term courses of various kinds, approximately 57,000 adults participate each term.

In Finland, there are about 90 FHSs, which offer residential, general courses as well as initial and further vocational training for adults. Social and humanistic subjects, art and languages are provided in the long-term courses. But there is also an increased number of short-term courses, mostly offered during the summer. Moreover, a majority of FHSs run Open University courses. FHSs differ in size; there are institutions with up to 450 participants and those which have only 30–40 participants.

Norway has today 77 residential FHSs all over the country. They run longer general courses in art, music and social and natural subjects for young adults (18–25 years) who have completed their upper secondary education. These FHSs traditionally run longer courses, based on the belief that it is an advantage to establish a longer relationship with students and teachers. However, short-term courses are also offered, but only to elderly people, and a few FHSs provide special courses for adults with disabilities. The FHSs have places for 60–100 participants. They are owned and run by private organizations, as is the case in Sweden, but 10 are funded by county or municipal authorities. There are no tuition costs; student loans and stipends are available through the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund to support living expenses and study materials.

FHS Role or Citizenship and Democracy

The FHS movement spread to other countries with new ideas of learning; its educational activities contributed to people's organization in different social movements. In the Nordic countries, participation in popular education is still very high. As Grundtvig once thought, FHS brought enlightenment and civil education to the people. Today, FHSs are places for life transitions for many people, and they are highly appreciated. As flexible institutions with highly devoted and specialized staff,

FHSs are opened for research on adult learning and are involved in research together with students, which connects their practice closely with that of action research.

Agnieszka Bron

See also adult education; Highlander Research and Education Center; Horton, Myles; research circles; social movement learning

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FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

Force field analysis is commonly described in training and organization development manuals and handbooks as a useful problem-solving and decision-making tool. It is a very practical technique for mapping forces that

impinge on a change situation. Behind this simple technique is a sophisticated and complex theory, which is often missing from accounts.

At the centre of force field analysis is Kurt Lewin's notion of the force field, which has its origins in physics and usually refers to magnetism or electricity. Lewin used it to understand human behaviour by conceiving that systems exist in a steady state of 'quasi-stationary equilibrium'. There are two assumptions. One is that every living system is in a state of change, and the other is that all systems are homeostatic; that is, they always tend towards some level of stability or equilibrium. In Lewin's terms, this equilibrium is kept in balance by a field of forces acting in different directions: some towards change and others towards stability. As long as these forces balance each other, the system remains in equilibrium. If one set of forces becomes stronger than the other, then change either takes place or is resisted so that the status quo remains intact.

Force field analysis is, therefore, a map of a change situation where there are forces driving for change and there are forces restraining change. Driving forces could be a drop in income, competition from

other groups or a felt need for change, to take a few examples. Examples of restraining forces could be an unwillingness to move from what is familiar or antagonism towards those promoting the change. Forces may be economic, political, technological, individual or group. They can be rational or irrational, recognized or unrecognized, general or specific. In Lewin's thinking, the force field is constituted in the present—what forces are actually bearing on a present situation, and what is driving and restraining a move to a desired situation (see Figure 1).

During the Second World War, Lewin was involved in a series of projects that were aimed at changing meat-eating habits. Because of the recession due to the war, there was an effort to promote types of meat such as kidney, liver and heart. The drive to promote these types of meat was necessary because they were perceived as second-rate and somewhat undesirable to be served to families. It was found that what was eaten in households depended on what housewives judged to be appropriate for their families, and therefore, they made the choices of what meat to buy or not. The project consisted of two basic approaches. One group of women was given

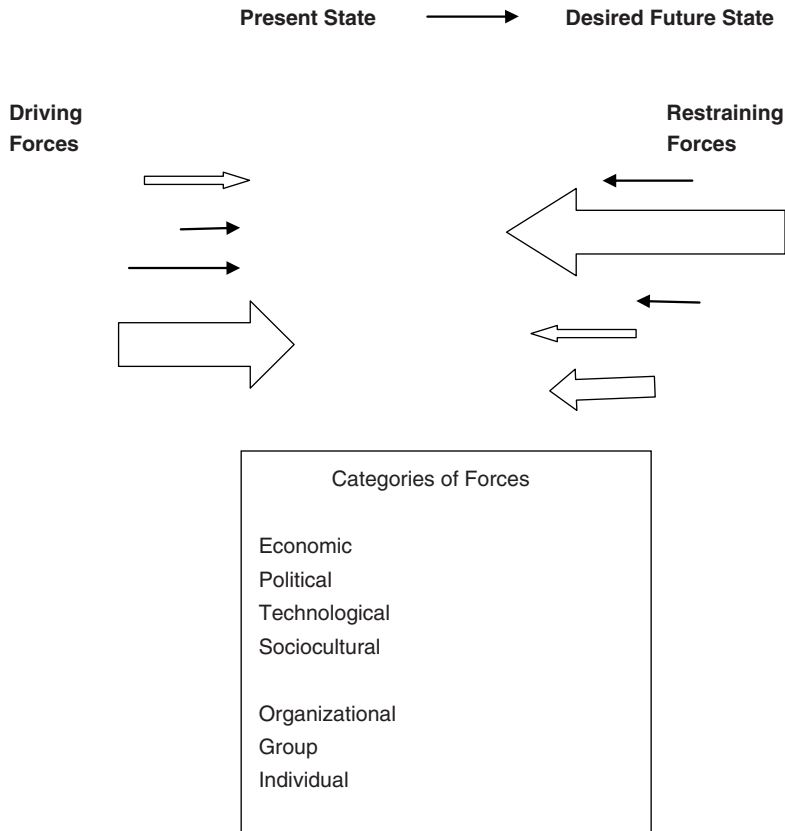


Figure 1 Force Field Analysis

a lecture on the nutritional value of the meat and provided with information leaflets and recipes; after some months, it was found that 3 per cent of them had changed what they bought for their families. The other group met in smaller groups and discussed topics of general health, the war effort and the problems of getting their families to change their taste habits. The same recipes which were distributed to the other group were offered as optional resources. After the same period, it was found that 32 per cent of them had changed what meat they bought for their families. Lewin's conclusions were that when the driving forces for change were increased (i.e. lectures to promote the qualities of particular forms of meat, thereby implicitly pressuring the women to change their buying habits), equivalent restraining forces strengthened to resist them. Increasing the driving forces for change did not help change take place. A decrease in the restraining forces (i.e. the group discussions in which the participants talked about their own and their families' attitudes to the types of meat and how they formed their own conclusions and developed their action plans) helped change take place. Lewin's key insight was that a focus on reducing restraining forces is more effective in bringing about change than a focus on increasing driving forces. This is the core insight of force field analysis.

Constructing a Force Field

There are five steps in constructing a force field:

Step 1: Define the target of change in terms of a direction from the current situation to a desired future situation.

Step 2: Map the forces driving change and restraining change. An example of a driving force might be the need for change coming from commercial competition, with a parallel restraining force being the lack of trust in those proposing the change.

Step 3: Identify and weight the forces. Driving forces and restraining forces do not have the same power or weight. Some driving or restraining forces may be much stronger than others. So the key is to weight them so that the more powerful forces are identified. In the above example, weighting the lack of trust as being more impactful than, for example, opposition to moving premises would be central to a change in the force field's equilibrium.

Step 4: Identify the restraining forces that can be reduced. In line with Lewin's insight about reducing restraining forces, select those restraining forces that are more important or

amenable to being reduced. In the above example, reducing the lack of trust would be the key to change

Step 5: Develop a plan of action to reduce the restraining forces. For example, what would need to be done to reduce the lack of trust?

Force field analysis is a practical tool for individual and consensual group decision-making. It is a method of focusing on the realities of the present and the desired future direction by emphasizing how understanding of the present situation leads to action. It takes the dynamism of the multiplicity and counterbalancing of forces driving and restraining change into account. In this manner, it is an action research and organization development process. While force field analysis is often presented as a simplified tool and is divorced from Lewin's complex field theory, it remains a useful tool.

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See also field theory; Lewin, Kurt; organization development

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FOURTH GENERATION EVALUATION

See Authenticity

FRANKFURT SCHOOL

The Frankfurt School refers to not one but three inter-related entities. The first is a physical institution, the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, which is a university of critical sociology started in 1923. The second is a group of neo-Marxist thinkers, who

primarily operated from 1923 to 1950 and who laid the philosophical and social theoretical foundation for what is now known as critical theory. The third entity is a movement of critical thought, propagated by these original thinkers, that has progressed onwards to new groups of theorists. The school, theorists and movement are united by a similar philosophical and research agenda that supplements and extends Marxist critique to other facets of society, unveiling new forms of capitalist oppression and social liberation. Although espousing a variant of Marxian praxis, critical theory will ultimately stand as the Frankfurt School's legacy, and several theoretical and research groups, including action research, draw from the Frankfurt School's work to inform their own practice.

History of the Frankfurt School

The Frankfurt School's history is typically separated into three distinct phases. The first phase (1923–31) serves as the Frankfurt School's formative years. Although Marxism held something of a tenuous position in Germany during that period, numerous scholars, spurred in part by György Lukács' canonical *History and Class Consciousness*, sought a university through which the principles of Marxism could be taught and in which a Marxist research agenda could be housed. This intellectual climate, along with an endowment from Hermann Weil, led to the school's initial construction, and under the leadership of Carl Grünberg, the Frankfurt School operated as a school of orthodox, scientific Marxism that ultimately held little significance outside the period.

This would all change when Max Horkheimer took over the leadership of the Frankfurt School and oversaw much of the work performed during the second phase (1931–50). Horkheimer, along with Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Löwenthal and others, would gradually transform the Frankfurt School, leading it away from rigid scientific Marxism towards interdisciplinary critiques of modernity, culture and technology. These powerful critiques would also draw important contributions from surrounding thinkers such as Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer, their strong affiliation to the Frankfurt School leading many scholars to include them as honorary members. The new Frankfurt School programme now consisted of forays into the visual, musical and literary arts, along with strong efforts into philosophical and social criticism. Linking all these diverging critiques together was a profoundly critical approach that inspired examinations of capitalism, modernism, the Enlightenment, mass culture, positivism, phenomenology and Nazism. The rise of Nazism, and the Frankfurt School's unrelenting critique of it, led to many of its key members migrating

to the USA, bringing critical theory with them and serving as influences on post-World War II critical movements.

The third phase of the Frankfurt School commenced when Horkheimer and Adorno returned to Germany and was carried into the twenty-first century. This third phase can be separated into two distinct movements. The first movement consists of the final work of Horkheimer, Adorno and other original members. Now highly regarded as intellectuals and looked upon favourably by the left as precursors to the 1960s liberal movements, the Frankfurt School theorists would continue onwards with their programme, particularly expanding their critiques of mass culture, technology and positivism. The second movement contains the work of their students and successors, such as Jürgen Habermas and Axel Honneth. These theorists would continue the critical theory mission and advance into new territories such as threats against and the means for the preservation of public spaces, critiques of advanced capitalism and discussions regarding Internet technology. Although this third phase undoubtedly reflects clear demarcations from the second phase's mode of critique, the similar critical motivations and the rigorous execution by Frankfurt School theorists impart consistency, power and a critical ethos to their theory.

Characteristics of the Frankfurt School

Marxism operates as the fundamental precursor to several of the Frankfurt School's initiatives, but what sets apart the Frankfurt School is that it took several Marxist tenets in new directions, creating one of the more substantial neo-Marxist movements of the twentieth century. What distinguishes Marxism from neo-Marxism can be somewhat vague at times as there are numerous foundational similarities: a sustained critique of capitalism, a pronounced sensitivity to ideology and an emphasis on class struggle and the marginalization of the proletariat. Nevertheless, neo-Marxism, particularly that practised by the Frankfurt School, can be characterized as a critical divergence from orthodox Marxism, which followed the publication of Marx' *Capital*, witnessing Marx shed his Hegelian vestiges for a more scientific analysis of capitalism. Additionally, the variant of Marxism practised by Lenin and the former Soviet Union also stressed a colder, scientific modality, which the Frankfurt School rebelled against when formulating their own theory. Critical of science's totalitarian propensity towards the monopolization and dehumanization of truth, the Frankfurt School's neo-Marxism was based in philosophy and the humanities. This would facilitate a greater humanist strand in their thinking as well as foster a stronger interdisciplinary approach. These facets, in

particular, would enable the Frankfurt School to generate critiques of media, technology and culture that were previously only peripheral to Marxian analysis. In incorporating this wide array of formerly neglected elements, the Frankfurt School's neo-Marxism would serve as the primary channel through which critical theory would be derived.

Critical theory represents an essential characteristic of the Frankfurt School, one that would eventually rival Marxism as the prominent theoretical framework in analyzing the oppression of marginalized populations. The Frankfurt School's initial critical theory operated as a philosophical movement combining facets of Marxism with Freudian psychoanalysis, Friedrich Nietzsche's critiques of power and other theoretical movements in the social sciences. From these origins, critical theory would, in time, separate itself from its Marxian antecedents to forge its own critical path. One of critical theory's major distinguishing characteristics is an explicit interpretive framework that often casts judgement on society's oppressive forces. While Marxism calls for the end of capitalism, the scientific aspect of orthodox Marxism still resonates with value neutrality; therefore, capitalism's flaws are analyzed through empirical or historical measures.

In critical theory, the sources of oppression are exposed with well-orchestrated moral and value judgements, which occasionally leads opponents of critical theory to label it as overly polemical or pessimistic. Nevertheless, critical theory, while still often employing Marxist dialectics, is best utilized as a meta-theory or a theory behind theory. Keenly applicable to the oppressive abstraction and ideology of conventional theory and logic, critical theory can be employed to critique the harmful fallacies and missteps of traditional thought. Even Marxism, with its over-reliance on economic determinism, can be analyzed through a critical theory perspective, but critical theorists' primary targets are typically similar to those of the original Frankfurt School: capitalism, political ideology, technology and the media. A critical theorist, therefore, can examine the media's tendency to instill a culture of passive consumption that goes beyond a Marxian analysis of class. This philosophical aspect of critical theory has enabled it to hold crucial relevance in the postmodernism of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, where critical theory is blended with a semiotic analysis in order to examine the oppressive tendencies within language, where the discourse of exclusion and marginalization are present within the public sphere.

For the Frankfurt School, critical theory led to numerous powerful critiques of society with implications that stretch beyond their post-World War II origins. One of the most pervasive of these critiques was Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of the

Enlightenment as it relates to a threat to reason. For the Frankfurt School, pure reason was a profoundly human capability; reason not only enables people to be critical of their circumstances and surroundings but also allows for a deep recognition of the structures that exist underneath the surface. Through reason, one can analyze concepts such as ideology in order to explain societal conditions and behaviour. However, the Frankfurt School perceived reason as threatened not only by capitalist systems but by philosophical ones as well, namely, the Enlightenment and positivism. A fetishized version of rationality was created via these philosophical systems, one that provided human beings with an epistemological framework engineered towards domination of nature and each other.

The Enlightenment birthed philosophies such as empiricism and positivism, and modernity subsequently coupled them with a scientific rationality, providing theorists with a false sense of objectivity, through which they would mistakenly derive arguments regarding the nature of reality. A scientific totalitarianism would spread through numerous philosophical frameworks, effectively eclipsing reason as the primary means of understanding the world. With the Enlightenment mentality, basic sense data obtained by observation and conclusions drawn through experiments would usurp deep reflection of what existed behind appearances. Moreover, governments, businesses and other institutions would adopt variants of this mentality, which would lead to any number of oppressive, anti-humanist practices. From the rigid, corporatized measures of Taylorism to the warped utilizations of scientific and bureaucratic methods in the Nazi and Soviet regimes, the Frankfurt School painstakingly analyzed a variety of efforts that elevated institutionalized rationality to an absolute truth.

Along with their critique of the Enlightenment, Horkheimer and Adorno advanced a more modern critical theory typically referred to as the culture industry. Within this particular set of critiques, the Frankfurt School would broaden ideological criticism outside the Marxian confines into a new critical perspective of culture. Perceptively aware of the encroaching influence of the media and technology on society, Horkheimer and Adorno would harshly criticize the nascent mass culture of the 1950s and 1960s as the product of industrialized and corporatized mechanisms fixated on expanding their control and maximizing profit. Culture, as a natural and organically produced entity that unites people towards positive social action, is replaced by a superficial clone, and cultural artefacts, such as music, become mass-produced and sold to an eager populace of passive consumers. In their critique of the culture industry, Horkheimer and Adorno extend Marx' commodity

fetishism (a theory in which commodities are provided with power that transcends their actual value) to another level. No longer is it enough for the social order to own the working life of citizens, but now people's entire lives are caught up in a culture of consumption, and this condition is not necessarily one dependent on social class. Rich and poor alike are all consumers in the culture industry, willingly sacrificing a culture of their own creation in favour of conforming to the popular taste. Although some have criticized this theory as elitist and overly negligent of popular culture's subversive and unifying energy, the culture industry, for many people, seems extremely relevant several decades after its conception, when media power is several times more substantial and the Internet culture is inextricably linked with consumption.

The other Frankfurt School theory that holds considerable importance in contemporary times is Marcuse's theory of one-dimensionality, highlighted in his book *One Dimensional Man: Studies in Ideology of the Advanced Society* (1964). Linked to the theory of the cultural industry, Marcuse's one-dimensionality again decries a society in which consumption is a pervasive social force. Skilfully melding Marxist theory with ontology, Marcuse advances a different theory of alienation, one not born out of purely class-based exploitation but rather stemming from abundance. Particularly focused on the post-World War II prosperity in the USA, Marcuse discusses how higher wages and a comfortable lifestyle breed a passive mindset that dulls an individual's creativity and critical mind. A one-dimensional society is one founded upon consumption, standardization and similar institutional rationality, akin to Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of the Enlightenment. Individuals now express themselves through a series of purchases; a comfortable lifestyle deadens one's social awareness, compelling individuals to be less likely to upset the often oppressive societal mechanisms driving society's impulses towards consumption. Once again, one-dimensionality is not merely a twentieth century problem but is indicative of well-developed societies where civic-mindedness is in direct competition with a never-ending bombardment of media and advertisements.

The Frankfurt School and Action Research

The Frankfurt School's primary contribution to action research is its work in critical theory. As an ostensibly political methodology that often works with marginalized populations, action research finds a crucial cornerstone in critical theory, and this theoretical framework has splintered in numerous directions pertaining to race, gender and discourse. Within every one of these

critical frameworks, one can chart a genealogical line back to the Frankfurt School's critical method. For instance, Critical Utopian Action Research is heavily influenced by the work of the German theorist Ernst Bloch, who had ties with the Frankfurt School. This represents just one example of the Frankfurt School's substantial influence, and while action researchers are proud to emphasize the performative, participatory and practice-based facets of their research, theory must have a strong place in any action research project. Theory instils ethos within the work and provides a crucial lens through which research can be situated in a proper context. Critical theory is a theoretical framework that is highly reflective of action researchers' methodological aims towards fostering social change and valuable criticism of the status quo, and thus the Frankfurt School serves as an important precursor to the action research tradition.

One critique provided by the Frankfurt School's critical method that has substantial relevance to action research is the thorough critique of positivism offered by Horkheimer, Adorno and others. Although action researchers are clearly willing to incorporate quantitative methods into their projects, a purely positivist research project operates at the other end of the methodological spectrum when compared with the political, socially constructed action research project. The Frankfurt School's critique of positivism is of considerable historical importance. Again, returning to their critique of the Enlightenment, Horkheimer and Adorno perceived positivism as a method that supplanted reason in favour of rationality. Moreover, with its emphasis on observation and exclusively scientific methods, positivism only approached the superficial appearance of reality and could not penetrate into the ideological superstructure at the heart of many social issues. Indeed, the Frankfurt School often cast positivism as ideology, for positivism held a tendency towards a totalitarian hold on truth, as if all researchers needed were positive methodologies, a mindset that the Frankfurt School linked to a bourgeois mentality. In their critique of positivism, the Frankfurt School anticipated action researchers' perspective that positivism lacked sensitivity to humanism and social concerns as well as a pivotal link to practice.

In addition to these powerful critiques, the Frankfurt School also shares with action research a desire to embrace interdisciplinary methods and theories. As previously mentioned, the Frankfurt School programme extended outside the realms of pure social research into other fields, primarily in the arts and the humanities. Adorno wrote extensively on theories regarding music. Horkheimer and Marcuse incorporated numerous veins of philosophy into their social theory. Benjamin was one of the most important and

original literary theorists of the twentieth century. All of these ventures into other fields were integrated into the Frankfurt School's social research initiatives, creating a unique interdisciplinary framework that informs action research. Arts-based action research and participatory research theatre deftly blend literary and aesthetic traditions with research methodologies. In the hope of making the research process accessible to as many people as possible, combined with an ambition to dissolve needless disciplinary barriers, action researchers advance the Frankfurt School's interdisciplinary approach to a realm outside the academy and into the hands of research participants.

This activity links to the final connection between action research and the Frankfurt School, that of praxis. Like many theoretical projects influenced by Marxism, the Frankfurt School advocated its own system of praxis, the concept that links theory and practice. What sets the Frankfurt School's praxis apart from others is that it was primarily connected to students. Student movements in the 1960s were often influenced by Frankfurt School texts, in particular Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man and Reason and Revolution*. Marcuse possessed faith in the revolutionary potential of student groups, a faith that has been adopted by many action researchers. Another pertinent factor contributing to the Frankfurt School's student-centred praxis is the very nature of its theorists' texts, which are characterized by a rhetorical difficulty that could potentially alienate more general populations. Nevertheless, the universities across the world that practice action research are likely to embrace Frankfurt School praxis due to the role of students within the approach as well as the emphasis on theory, which corresponds to an intensive study indicative of a student's daily life.

The Frankfurt School's importance to the development of action research cannot be overstated. In numerous ways, the Frankfurt School anticipated several notable characteristics of action research and provided a wide array of theoretical texts for action researchers to utilize in their critiques. As a school that openly challenged the dominant systems of ideology present in numerous areas, the Frankfurt School demonstrated how theory could be properly mobilized as a weapon against coercion and domination. The decades following the Frankfurt School's most productive period have witnessed a vast number of schools and movements adopting and revitalizing many of the Frankfurt School's theoretical tenets, and action research certainly is one such movement. Openly critical of oppressive structures and employing theory as a critical tool in their research approach, many action researchers operate as the academic progeny of the Frankfurt School, enlivening their critiques with action

in order to help people and challenge the pervasive modes of oppression that drew the Frankfurt School's critical attention.

Joseph Cunningham

See also Critical Action Learning; Critical Utopian Action Research; Marxism; postmodernism; praxis; social justice

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FREIRE, PAULO

Participatory Action Research (PAR) can be conceptualized as a process of research, education and action in which participants transform reality and transform themselves. Unlike traditional, expert-model, top-down approaches to research, PAR gives community members a central role in the research process. This includes participation in the identification of the problem, the formulation of research questions, the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, the formulation and communication of conclusions and the implementation of an action plan. This field has evolved from several traditions and has been influenced by different sources. Prominent among them are the contributions of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921–97), who is considered one of the most influential thinkers informing the world of action

research. This entry connects Freire's ideas with the theories and practices of PAR.

Life and Work of Paulo Freire

Freire was a twentieth century educator, writer, philosopher, public intellectual and political activist. He was a legend in his own lifetime and today is one of the most widely known educational theorists. His contributions to PAR can be better understood if they are related to his educational ideas and projects, and these, in turn, cannot be isolated from his personal biography and from the geographical and historical contexts in which he lived. The fact that he was born and raised in one of the poorest and most unequal regions of the world, and that his family experienced economic hardship during his childhood, helps to explain his sensitivity to issues of social inequality and his orientation towards social justice. Likewise, the different religious orientations espoused by his parents and his exposure to the liberation theology movement during his youth helps to explain his emphasis on diversity and his commitment to social equality and the emancipation of the poor. Moreover, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America and elsewhere explain his emphasis on grass-roots participatory development and on social transformation.

Freire was born in 1921 in northeast Brazil, the youngest of four children, to a church-oriented Catholic mother and a Spiritist father. From early childhood, he adopted his mother's religion. His father, a police officer, respected that decision and even attended his First Communion ceremony. In examining his past, Freire said that with this and other similar gestures, his father taught him the importance of respecting the ideas of others even if he did not agree with them. Through conversations with his father, the young Paulo was introduced for the first time to information about the social injustices and political struggles in Brazil. He learned from his parents to read and write at a very early age. They taught him literacy skills as a game, having him write his own words on the earth with a stick. Interestingly, years later, Freire became famous for developing a literacy method that started with the reality and the vocabulary of learners and not with words chosen by curriculum developers. During his adolescence, in the context of the economic crisis of the 1930s, Freire's family struggled to make ends meet. The experience of living in poverty among poor rural families helped young Paulo become more aware of the social world around him and develop a sense of respect for and solidarity with all human beings, regardless of their background.

In his youth, Freire studied philosophy, sociology of language and law. Eventually, he became a lawyer

but soon discovered that education was his true vocation. At that time, he married a teacher named Elza Oliveira, who provided him enormous emotional and intellectual support and with whom he would have five children. Through their participation in the educational activities of the Catholic Action movement, Paulo and Elza became involved with the incipient liberation theology movement, with a programme oriented towards social justice and a 'preferential option for the poor'. Freire worked as a high school teacher and then as Director of Education and Culture of the Social Service of Industry, where he developed educational programmes for workers and their families and developed a participatory governance system based on dialogue, self-management and a combination of study groups and action groups. At the Social Service of Industry, Freire invited students and parents to participate in debates about education and society. He believed that social problems such as malnutrition and child labour could be better addressed with the participation of parents and the community and that this involvement could enable parents to participate in the design of school projects and eventually take part in decision-making processes regarding the curriculum. He also created 'workers' clubs' in which members examine their problems and seek collective solutions. Although at that time Freire had not yet had the opportunity to theorize his practice, in retrospect these experiments could be seen as early contributions to the field of PAR.

A few years later, Freire became the first director of the University of Recife's Cultural Extension Service, which brought literacy programmes to thousands of peasants. For Freire, the challenge was not just to teach literacy skills but also to give voice to the people so that they could transition from a culture of silence to one of confidence and political participation, in which they would become masters of their own destiny. Based on this conception, which is closely aligned with PAR's approach to knowledge construction, he developed a literacy method that started from the experience and words of participants, and he surprised everyone when 300 sugarcane workers in the village of Angicos learned to read and write in only 45 days while engaging in a critical analysis of their own reality. As a result of this success, Freire was asked to implement a national literacy campaign. This work was abruptly interrupted in 1964 with the overthrow of the government of Joao Goulart by a military regime, which sent Freire into exile for 15 years. During this period, Freire established residence first in Santiago de Chile, where he continued his adult education work; then in Boston, where he worked as a visiting professor at Harvard University, and finally in Geneva, Switzerland, where he served as educational advisor to the World Conference of Churches. As part of this work, Freire

participated in educational programmes in several developing countries, especially in Africa.

Freire became known for his method of teaching adult literacy, but what he developed was not just a method. It was a political pedagogy predicated on critical reflection and collective transformative action in order to develop more democratic societies. Freire's proposal for social transformation could be summarized in three key concepts: (1) education, (2) politics and (3) humanization. What Freire proposed is, fundamentally, a political-pedagogical project aimed at humanization. Freire's triangle of transformation, then, embraces (a) the direction of the transformative project (humanization), (b) the main social activity to move in that direction (education) and (c) the recognition of the power dynamics and ideological struggles related to the social forces opposing and supporting those changes (politics). In this project, PAR plays an important role.

Freire's Influence on PAR

Although Freire seldom used the concept 'Participatory Action Research' in his writings and talks, his proposals on knowledge creation, participation and action clearly inspired this tradition. This influence is repeatedly acknowledged in the literature in this field, where he is often referred to as one of its pioneers. This literature highlights Freire's emphasis on using research to address injustices, his belief that people can be subjects of their own history, his community education projects aimed at the liberation of the oppressed and his understanding of educators and students as active participants in the educational process, and by extension in the conception of researchers and the researched as collaborators in the research process. In the PAR literature, we can also find a connection between Freire's educational efforts towards the development of a critical consciousness, which comes in part from the capacity to establish relationships among facts and in part from the capacities to establish such relationships as developed through research activities. Having said that, it is pertinent to clarify that for Freire awareness is not an end in itself. For him, what is important is its relationship to a project of social transformation in which action and critical reflection are intertwined, and here is where his impact on PAR is particularly noticeable.

Freire's theoretical and methodological contributions have also inspired projects that nurtured relationships between CHAT (Cultural-Historical Activity Theory) and the tradition of PAR oriented towards personal and social transformation. These projects are grounded on the assumptions that the two are strongly compatible and complementary and that the

Freirean school of PAR offers an orientation towards politics, ideology and social justice that can help in connecting CHAT's emancipatory aims more fully to the problems faced by people in their everyday lives.

Budd Hall and Orlando Fals Borda

This section explores the historical connections between Freire's contributions and the PAR movement. In this exploration, two simultaneous developments in different parts of the world during the early seventies were found to be particularly relevant. One was the work of Budd Hall, currently a professor at the University of Victoria, Canada, who in the early seventies worked in Tanzania during the period of Julius Nyerere, took a leadership role in the early years of the International Council of Adult Education and, in 1976, organized an international PAR with nodes in Toronto, New Delhi, Dar es Salaam, Amsterdam and Santiago. The other was the work of the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda (1925–2008), who in the early seventies involved peasant communities in research activities that were previously confined to trained researchers and organized the first PAR conference in 1977 in Cartagena, Colombia. While these two developments occurred relatively independently of each other, and whereas they approached the issue of PAR from different experiences and disciplinary perspectives (adult education and sociology, respectively), both Hall and Fals Borda were influenced by similar ideas that were in the air at that time, particularly the insights generated by Freire's writings and the incipient movement of popular education. In retrospect, it seems that in the seventies PAR was an idea whose time had come.

Hall was a young researcher in Tanzania in the early seventies. He conducted a survey on adult education needs for the Ministry of Adult Education, obtaining poor results. He then realized that he gained more useful information about the learning interests of rural Tanzanians by listening to their stories in the village bar than through a seemingly scientific approach. Although he did not experience a transformative shift at that particular moment, the combination of different experiences and influences eventually led him to think about knowledge creation in new ways. Prominent among those influences were his dialogues with Freire. As part of his functions, Hall co-ordinated Freire's visit to Tanzania in 1971. Hall had been exposed to Freire's ideas on research as engaged practice through his reading of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, particularly the section on 'thematic investigation'. Through the conversations he shared with Freire at that time, Hall had the opportunity to start challenging his own assumptions about the research process. Gradually, he became

in contact with colleagues from different parts of the world who were thinking along the same lines, including Marja Liisa Swantz from Finland, Rajesh Tandon from India and Francisco Vio Grossi from Chile. The culminating moment of that process was a conference that Hall organized in Dar es Salaam in 1976, in which a call was made to learn and share experiences in 'participatory research'.

Fals Borda, after founding the first sociology faculty in Latin America in Bogotá and a period of teaching and research at Columbia University and at the United Nations in Geneva, returned to Colombia in 1970 to undertake independent research and activism in the impoverished Atlantic Coast region. During those years, he started to involve the community in research activities. Fals Borda recalls that at the time he had access to the manuscript version of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which was circulating through informal networks throughout Latin America before its publication in New York. He also became familiar with Freire's work in Africa through the World Council of Churches. One of the elements of Freire's writings that influenced Fals Borda was a humanistic approach based on the principles of solidarity, commitment, tolerance and pluralism. Another was the integration of knowledge and political action, combining the collective study of reality with concrete interventions to change it through cycles of reflection and action. A third was a profound and genuine respect for the knowledge and experiences of the oppressed. The culminating moment of these experiences was the first international conference on PAR, which took place in Cartagena, Colombia, organized by Fals Borda in 1976.

This conference attracted scholars and activists from all over the world and gave worldwide recognition to PAR. After several years of working on parallel ideas and projects, Hall and Fals Borda finally met at the Cartagena conference, which Hall remembers as one of the most impressive intellectual experiences of his life. At that time, Hall was using the term *participatory research* and Fals Borda was using the concept of *action research*. Eventually, Fals Borda was the first one to coin the term *Participatory Action Research*.

Conclusion

In examining the historical evolution of PAR, it is evident that the theories, methodological approaches and practices of Freire have played an important role, particularly in the early stages of the field (1970–76) that culminated in the Cartagena Conference. The main influence was probably the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which was published in 1970. At least two ideas presented in that book had an impact on

the epistemological challenge to traditional social research. First, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire talked about the ability of all people to be knowers and creators of their world, where they are conscious of their oppression and have a commitment to end it. He believed that individuals have the capacity for reflection, for conceptualizing, for critical thinking, for collective planning, for community organizing and for social transformation. A corollary of this proposition is that educators and researchers should have faith in people's capacities and that people have the right to participate in the production of knowledge. Second, based on his experiences with literacy programmes, he contended that research is not a neutral, objective endeavour, because knowledge and power are always intertwined and research, like education, could be oriented towards the preservation of the social order or towards its transformation. In a world characterized by great inequalities, educators and researchers could opt to side with the oppressors or with the oppressed.

These two ideas, when combined, suggest that research can be part of an emancipatory educational project and that people can participate actively in the definition of the problem, in the analysis of its causes and in the actions taken to address it. By investigating their reality, people feel ownership of the process of knowing, and this, in turn, nurtures a confidence in their capacity that leads to community action. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, as well as in many other publications that followed it, Freire called for a research approach that is at the same time collaborative and liberating, that is, an approach that encourages the active participation of researchers and participants in the co-construction of knowledge, the promotion of critical awareness and an orientation towards transformative action. As he said, it is about naming the world and changing the world. This is, in essence, the soul of PAR.

Daniel Schugurensky

See also adult education; Boal, Augusto; conscientization; critical pedagogy; Fals Borda, Orlando; Participatory Action Research

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G

GADAMER, HANS-GEORG

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) was one of the great philosophers of the twentieth century. He developed philosophical hermeneutics, a philosophy that elucidates the self-understanding of human beings in encounter with one another and the world. This entry outlines his life history and major philosophical contributions, focusing on the relevance of his body of work for action research.

Born in Marburg, Germany, at the beginning of a tumultuous European century, which he outlasted, he had a lonely and difficult childhood. His mother died when he was just 4 years old. His father, a professor of chemistry, was a strict disciplinarian and was always disappointed in his son. Although only 14 years old at the outbreak of the First World War, Gadamer came of age at a time of German defeat, when many around him were in despair at the horrors of unbridled modernity. He joined a circle of students clustering around the poet Stefan George. The poetry renounced the quotidian world and transported its adherents into a realm of higher spirit and eroticism. The strands of his later work began to emerge—history and its unavoidable effect, scepticism regarding the universality of science and appreciation of language and aesthetics.

Gadamer studied under Martin Heidegger in the twenties. Heidegger published his great work *Being and Time* in 1927, in which he proposes the ‘hermeneutics of facticity’. Humans, he says, being aware of themselves and their inescapable mortality, care before all else for their own being. We interpret the world with concern for our own future. As such, being, or ‘Dasein’, is positioned and seeks to understand. While Heidegger later abandoned the study of hermeneutics, his student Gadamer continued to work on it, and after many years of teaching and quiet development of his understanding of understanding, he published his great work *Truth and Method* in 1960. A brilliant and

thorough book, *Truth and Method* explores philosophical hermeneutics from its roots in Aristotle and Greek philosophy, through its role in European religious exegesis and romantic historicism between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, to its present-day illumination of the phenomenology of human understanding. In his ramble through education, art, history, language and the whole of the Western philosophical tradition, Gadamer demonstrates how we always come too late to know everything and how method is always second to pre-existing understanding. He protested at those who rashly tried to turn philosophy into sociology and method into the way of finding truth.

Truth and Method is written in clear and conversational language, remaining always true to its argument of coming to understanding through conversation. It begins with challenging the use of scientific method in sociology, arguing instead for a humanistic stance which recognizes how all of us see humanity from our inescapable standpoints. Science is dazzling and useful, but it can only methodologically control a small proportion of life. The point is not to discover a method for understanding life but to understand the nature of experience. Experience pulls us up short and makes us rethink. We bring to each encounter our own historically affected consciousness, which is provoked by the encounter, and our horizons may grow a little—we learn something beyond our present standpoint. In this event, we become aware of our differences as well as our commonalities, and we pay attention to the truths of affects like language, sympathy and love.

In the seventies, Gadamer was criticized by his student Jürgen Habermas for putting too much emphasis on the effect of tradition in understanding. Habermas accused the hermeneuticist of missing the emancipatory potential of criticizing ideology. However, in a later shift, Habermas put aside emancipatory utopia and replaced it with discourse ethics, a system based on a hermeneutic model of engagement between people. At around the same time, Jacques Derrida

famously shunned Gadamer, criticizing his work as utterly opposed to his own deconstruction of meaning in encounter. Yet he too came to friendly engagement with the old man when Gadamer clarified to him that the horizon of meaning is never reached and there is only a fusion of possibilities.

Gadamer died in 2002, an active philosopher to the last. In his last years, he emphasized that the soul of hermeneutics consists in the possibility that the other might be right and that human brilliance lay in strengthening the argument of the other. For all the years of his life he had evaded politics and idealism, but in the end, he conceded a final political consequence of his hermeneutics:

We may perhaps survive as humanity if we would be able to learn that we may not simply exploit our means of power and effective possibilities, but must learn to stop and respect the other as an other, whether it is nature, or the grown cultures of peoples and nations; and if we would be able to learn to experience the other and the others, as the other of our self, in order to participate with one another.

His work appeals to the value of participating with others, to conversation and practical reason, all values of deep relevance to action researchers. In action research, as in hermeneutics, neither the researcher nor the researched are dominant, continuities are agreed on, differences are reconciled but maintained and sophisticated historical consciousness does not come to grips with its own naiveté. The second edition of *Truth and Method* ends by saying that it would be against hermeneutics to finish with a conclusion; the dialogue will continue. It is the final sentences that perhaps suggest most clearly Gadamer's relevance to action research, in its emphasis on unending dialogue. If we consider action research not as a method but as a philosophical orientation towards coming to understanding with others, it is possible to see how Gadamer's philosophy might just be right.

Patta Scott-Villiers

See also hermeneutics; phenomenology

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GENDER ISSUES

Understandings of gender and its social significance have been subject to debate and reconfiguration since early feminist scholars first established a distinction between sex and gender. Sex, it was theorized, was a category based in physiological differences between males and females, while gender was a social and cultural construct that coded a wide range of characteristics and attributes as masculine and feminine. Differentiating the two concepts was thought to deconstruct essentialist ideas that men's and women's roles and aptitudes were biologically determined and therefore natural rather than socially produced and inscribed. Based on the sex/gender distinction, some feminist scholarship argued that power and privilege were disproportionately allocated, favouring masculinity while subordinating femininity and creating an imbalance in power that led to gender inequality. More recent scholarship, however, has critiqued this categorical approach to gender for reproducing binary thinking in which masculinity and femininity are seen as opposites that inhere in male and female bodies. The dichotomy of male/female is simply replaced by dichotomies based on social norms and gendered expectations (masculine/feminine)—thus remaining blind to the diversity that exists within gender categories and the similarities that exist between them. The binaries created between male/female and masculinity/femininity have been exposed as false, as research in both science and social science has shown diversity in both sex and gender, indicating that both concepts are better understood as fluid rather than as static or dualistic.

In the light of these critiques, some current gender scholars advocate a relational approach to understanding gender and gender issues. Defining gender, then, still means taking social structures into consideration, but it is also about the relations between people, bodies and institutions. These relations exist not only between men and women but also among men and among women, while recognizing that even the categories man and woman are variable, fluid and subject to change. As Raewyn Connell suggests, gender

is multidimensional, simultaneously encompassing economic relations that involve capital and financial relationships, power relations that involve actors who hold varying degrees of power, emotional relations that occur among and between people and symbolic relations that derive meaning from the structures in which they appear. Gender is the active social process that brings reproductive bodies into this relational history. To engage with gender issues is to enter political discourse that necessarily involves elements of both power and resistance. Given the complexity inherent in defining gender, locating and understanding gender issues in relation to action research necessitate finding points of commonality between theories of gender and the research process itself.

Gender and Action Research

The commitment to foregrounding issues of gender in research is attributable to feminist research practices that uphold the goals of empowerment while paying close attention to power relations, both in society and in the research process itself. Like action research, gender-focused research strives to allow research participants to create their own agendas, to allow researchers to ally with communities or to work in the communities they are from and to ensure that collaborative research teams are involved in the decision-making that constitutes both research design and dissemination. For these reasons, gender-conscious action research has the potential to create empowering and transformative outcomes. Action research is attentive to systematic relations of power in the construction, creation and dissemination of knowledge, and gender is central to these power dynamics. Likewise, as understandings of gender become more refined and inclusive, so too do the understanding of action research and its commitment to individuals and communities.

Nonetheless, feminist researchers have critiqued action research processes for their lack of attention to gendered dynamics, underscoring the fact that gender blindness does not advance the ideals of inclusion and emancipation. Both the roots and the consequences of gender inequities can go unnoticed or unrecognized in action research because dominant gender relations are often already firmly ensconced in communities and organizations. To this end, conscious attention must be paid to ensure that gender issues are explicitly recognized, analyzed and made visible in the research process. Research teams must also pay attention to practices or methods that may be unintentionally marginalizing team members or participants, and thus replicating or reproducing normative or oppressive gender relations. For example, ensuring that mothers are able to participate in the research process means being

attentive to gender roles that may constrain their ability to be involved. Providing childcare or child-friendly research spaces is one way of ensuring that gender issues are taken into consideration when conducting action research.

Action research that has been attentive to gender has also been criticized for approaching gender in ways that are oppressive or that re-inscribe the privilege of researchers who are in positions of power. For example, academic feminist theory that is generated by researchers in what Jessica Danforth and others have called the academic-industrial complex is often far removed from the lived realities of people in communities and can be harmful rather than supportive if applied in colonizing ways. Approaching gender issues from an elitist perspective, even unintentionally, can impede the work's empowerment potential by perpetuating the marginalization of local views and understandings, or of traditional knowledge. Gender issues in action research can manifest in the form of lack of attention to multiple perspectives, in the form of inappropriate application of elitist theory or through assumptions rooted in academic privilege that do not resonate with the real lives and lived experiences of diverse groups of people. Fostering research environments of cultural humility and consensual 'allyship' are critical in ensuring that gender analysis is both sensitive and culturally appropriate.

Doing Gender: Categorical Understandings

Understanding the complexities around gender issues in action research requires familiarity with the evolution of feminist conceptions of gender. Early feminist scholars distinguished gender from sex in order to make visible the socially constructed nature of gender (masculinity and femininity) and to counter the essentialist view that biology is destiny. The thinking at the time argued that although biological differences are predetermined, gender differences are the outcomes of oppressive social dictates that prescribe how women and men should act. Although these divisions were internalized through patriarchal discourses, differentiating between sex and gender meant that they were not immovable but were instead changeable through political and social action. Through this lens, gender is understood as the socially produced differences between male and female, and between masculine and feminine, with each category operating in a dichotomy with the other. This oversimplification essentializes gender as existing only within these two polarities where one is either/or but not both or neither.

This way of conceptualizing gender is known as categorical thinking, and it is criticized for classifying bodies, behaviours and even gendered experience

in a bifurcated manner. Categorical thinking signals an incomplete understanding of the fluid and dynamic nature of gender and tends to produce a great number of research studies that are gender specific, analyzing the differences between men and women but not analyzing the relations between and among them or between and among their relations with other institutions, systems and histories. To this end, research that studies gender issues has tended to understand men and women as two separate, unproblematic categories. In many cases, the term *gender* has become synonymous with women, which removes the important relational and dynamic aspects of the concept. Increasingly, researchers in this area of study have complexified the understanding of gender to underscore the ways in which gender is an activity or a performance, as well as an embodied social structure. Gender expression, then, is a process that one engages in rather than a static either/or factor.

Intersectionality

Early categorical thinking about gender also failed to take diversity into account in its understandings of the impacts that gender has on women's and men's lives. Race, class, sexuality, ability and any number of other social identities have significant implications for how one understands and experiences gender. Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term *intersectionality* to explain how biological, social and cultural categories interact simultaneously to contribute to systemic social inequality. Gender does not act independently of these other factors; instead, forms of oppression interrelate, creating systems of oppression that intersect with one another. Each of these oppressions is embedded in policy, law, the media, education and other economic, political and social institutions, creating a multidimensional structure of relations that interacts with gender but that is not captured by categorical thinking in which women or men are seen as homogeneous groups. In these ways and through these structures, gender inequalities are created and complexified, but importantly, they are also challenged and resisted. When the categories are not static or unmoving, they are also not impermeable to change.

Undoing Gender: Relational Understandings

In contrast to categorical understandings of gender, relational understandings are multidimensional and take into account a number of intersecting and overlapping relations between and within people and institutions, as well as at macro- and microlevels of society. Relational conceptualizations of gender are also attuned to the historical and colonial realities that structure people's experiences of gender and identity.

Inequalities are not created by accident but are rather systematically engineered by processes and structures that are rooted in long histories of conquest, cultural erasure and intentional marginalization. These processes are, and have always been, gendered in nature. At the same time, the relational understanding of gender allows that structures and relations are transformable, creating space for resistance, activism and action. In this regard, action research and gender issues align nicely to contribute to a gender-aware mandate for change.

Masculinity

A relational understanding of gender issues also includes men, ensuring that gender does not become conflated with femininity or women. Instead, gender issues are also those related to masculinity. Just as femininities are produced by a series of interconnected relations, and are created and contested in and by those relations, so too are masculinities. As Connell suggests, masculinities are constituted by social practices that are reflective of male embodiment, such as violence and fatherhood; however, these are not the sole determination of masculinity. While hegemonic masculinity or dominant forms of masculinity are often those that are most discussed, there are any number of forms of masculinity that are enacted by men, women and intersex people every day and across the globe. Moreover, subordinated masculinities influence dominant forms, re-emphasizing the importance of studying gender from a relational rather than a binary perspective. As Michael Kimmell and others have emphasized, masculinity is not a monolithic category. Rather than being static categories that are affixed only to one particular embodiment, genders are variable—female bodies exhibit masculinity, just as male ones exhibit femininity. Thinking about gender issues relationally allows for the reconstruction of masculinities and femininities as an array of possible gendered identities.

Transgender

In the socially dominant, dichotomous gender system of North America, people who are genderqueer, gender fluid or transgender are often discriminated against or left out of the gender equation. People who do not fit, or who refuse to fit, rigid gender binaries have been systemically marginalized by discourses of sex and gender. Medicalization—a social process through which normal human conditions become medical problems in need of treatment by medical professionals—has played a key role in this marginalization. The medicalization of sex and gender, particularly by the discipline of psychiatry, has created diagnostic labels that both criminalize and pathologize

those whose gender identities do not conform to a rigid binary model. Paying attention to gender issues in action research, then, means being aware of its implications for the empowerment and support of transpeople rather than contributing to the further marginalization of trans communities. *Trans* is an umbrella term that includes a variety of people whose gender expression or identity is not represented through or within dominant social expectations of gender. The term includes, but is not limited to, transsexual people, transgender people, transitioned people, genderqueer people and some two-spirit people who choose to identify with the term.

In order to speak, write and research relationally about gender issues, understanding the term *cisgender* as a complementary term to transgender is instructive. Cisgender is a term that describes people whose self-perceived gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth, their bodies and their personal identity. The term *cisgender* unsettles the assumption that people naturally experience being male or female in a way that matches their birth sex. Using this term draws attention to the fact that though certain assumptions, namely, the binaries and the naturalized alignment of sex and gender, are socially encoded and deeply embedded, there are more than two ways to experience gender. Following from this, cisnormativity is a concept used to explain the underlying social expectation that all people are cisgender, and it problematizes the assumption that, for example, people who are born male at birth always grow up to be men. These types of gendered assumptions are so pervasive that people who identify as trans are often excluded or marginalized through the policies and practices of individuals and institutions. These cisnormative assumptions are also firmly embedded in research practices and in the construction of knowledge. Action research that focuses on gender issues must consider, include and foreground the perspectives of trans-identified people. Intersectional approaches are also important in working with trans communities because compounding factors, such as being indigenous or being young, can further exacerbate marginalization and exclusion.

Two-Spirit

Importantly, however, categories such as transgender do not always translate between languages or cultural contexts. Likewise, some cultures do not link gender identity to biological sex, and they already understand gender as being multiple and fluid. Cultural and historical contexts are central to understanding gender issues. Colonialism and neo-colonialism have had devastating, and continuing, impacts on identity, tradition and culture across the globe. In North

America, colonial contact and genocidal policies attempted to extinguish traditionally accepted practices around gender, sex and sexuality; however, indigenous communities have resisted and are reclaiming their traditions and teachings. To this end, *two-spirit* is a contemporary term adopted by many indigenous lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans individuals. Many indigenous people have highlighted the insufficiencies of using the settler language, English, to explain and define indigenous identities, especially because the language is so binary in its structure that it leaves little room for gender spectrums or gender fluidity. Nonetheless, *two-spirit* is a term that builds bridges between the past and the present to recognize traditionally accepted gender roles that were found in many 'North American' indigenous cultures. Although different indigenous peoples understand *two-spirit* according to their own individual traditions, the term usually refers to a person whose body simultaneously manifests both a masculine and a feminine spirit. Two-spirit people had special roles in their communities and were often seers, leaders, healers, mediators or medicine people. Two-spirit identity manifests as a challenge to colonial conceptions of gender binaries and sexual dichotomies, reclaiming gender variance while also decolonizing communities. Self-determination of the labels, gender or otherwise, by which one chooses to identify is empowering and emancipating and should be an essential piece in action research processes.

Gender in Action Research: An Example

Recent examples of action research projects that are doing and understanding gender issues well provide models for promising practices in research. These projects are instructive in the ways in which they conceptualize gender, integrate intersectional thinking and involve communities in critical leadership roles to confront gender issues.

Trans PULSE

Trans PULSE is a community-based research project that investigates the impact of social exclusion and discrimination on the health of transpeople in Ontario, Canada. The Trans PULSE Investigator Team is composed of seven trans and three cissexual people, who create partnerships with communities, service providers and academic researchers. The research team has the express goal of ensuring that transpeople feel ownership over the research process and its outcomes. In other words, transpeople are not only involved in the research, but they are also the drivers of the research agenda. The research team also insists that the project involves capacity-building measures, which ensures

that the research process itself is transparent, comprehensible and inclusive. The team employs participatory data analysis strategies so that knowledge flows multi-directionally between academic, service-providing and community team members.

Moreover, trans community members and their allies interviewed and selected the academic researchers with whom they would work, recognizing the past harms that had been done to trans communities by academic and medical researchers. Through this process, top-down research processes were inverted, and control was granted to the community. The project also created and employed a community engagement team comprising 16 trans community members from across the province who were reflective of Ontario's diverse demographic and geographic composition: (a) people from rural and urban areas, (b) people of various age groups, (c) people who are newcomers, (d) people from various ethno-racial communities and (e) people with different trans identities. The team is meaningfully involved in many aspects of the project, from survey and interview design to outreach and promotion, to the creation of a strategy for social change. This action research process is reflective of genuine attention to gender issues and is an example of how action research can both empower and create social change.

Future Outlook

The scholarship and activism around gender and gender issues will undoubtedly continue to grow and evolve as understandings become more complex and further rooted in the global realities of colonialism, neo-liberalism and economic policy. While understandings of gender issues have changed significantly in the past several decades, the fact remains that action researchers must consider gender as a salient, yet intersectional, factor in research agendas, research design and research outcomes. Researchers should be aware of opportunities to reimagine gender in ways that are inclusive, empowering and decolonizing. Through participatory research with and for communities, these possibilities for new gendered knowledge creation become social and political realities.

Vanessa Oliver

See also anti-oppression research; empowerment; experiential knowing; feminism; Feminist Participatory Action Research; LGBT; social justice

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GENERALIZABILITY

In research, generalization is the application of a finding from one study or in one situation to other studies and situations. As described below, it may take different forms depending on the nature of the finding and the situation. Generalizability is the ability of a finding to be generalized to other studies and situations. It is through generalization and generalizability that a study can contribute to theory. Generalization takes different forms depending on the nature of the research process and what is researched. In action research and related processes such as case study research, generalization and generalizability can be contentious. There, some have argued that the uniqueness of a single research situation inhibits generalization. Some have proposed, on philosophical grounds, that the concept of generalization belongs in traditional research, not elsewhere. Others respond by pointing out that such views depend on too narrow a definition of generalization. Yet others like Yvonna Lincoln sidestep the controversy by using other terms, such as transferability, instead of generalizability. Or, like Robert Stake, they suggest that generalizability in qualitative research (including action research) is more the responsibility of the user of research than of the researcher. These topics are further explored below.

Generalizability and Action Research

In most of its forms, action research can be regarded as alternating between stages of action and reflection.

An action is carried out. The researchers then reflect on the action and its outcomes and plan their next actions in the light of their reflection. Through reflection, the researchers increase their understanding both of the situation and of the actions that are likely to improve the situation. To the extent that they and others can use the new understanding elsewhere, generalization is possible, and a contribution to knowledge can be achieved. This is very different from the quantitative research processes for which generalization was first posited as an important characteristic. For traditional research, generalization is powerful when it applies. An expectation has developed in some quarters that all good research should display the same qualities. However, this overlooks two important considerations. One is that in traditional research, the results generalize only to situations in which all and only the same variables are operating. That is rare in field research. The other is that non-experimental forms of research may pursue different outcomes or research situations that are less tractable or observe a different design logic. Generalization may then take different forms or be achieved in different ways.

Unlike traditional quantitative research, much action research uses an emergent process—one that is modified and refined gradually as understanding of the research situation deepens. This has two further implications. The first is that a situation doesn't have to be understood fully at the beginning—and it seldom is. As understanding of the research situation develops, so do the theoretical and practical implications deepen. Second, action researchers may therefore learn as much about the research process and how to modify it as they do about the situation that is being researched and improved. Peter Checkland, writing about the form of action research known as Soft Systems Methodology, has been explicit about this. He strongly urges that the conceptual framework of the research and the intended methodology are specified ahead of time. They are then modified through engagement with the research process.

Forms of Generalizability

For the reasons discussed above, generalization in qualitative research differs from that in quantitative research. Once determined, a physical constant like the speed of light is expected to apply universally. Such formal generalization applies to physical objects. A second form of generalization is known as statistical generalization. It occurs through statistical analysis of complex situations. The analysis may uncover a widespread pattern within a sample drawn from a defined population. The pattern can then be expected to apply with a defined probability throughout the population.

Such statistical generalization may occasionally be found in action research when quantitative studies are embedded as part of some larger study—for example, in some Community-Based Participatory Research. A third form of generalization has been termed *analytic generalization* by Robert Yin and others. The findings from a particular study can be used to refine existing theories, which in their refined form can then be applied elsewhere or by others. Other forms of generalization have been proposed as responses to the criticisms sometimes made of action research.

Criticisms of Action Research and Responses

Some have criticized action research (and case study research) by applying criteria developed for quantitative research. They claim that it is not possible to generalize results from a single situation. Unless the situation is deliberately chosen to be representative of a class of situations, it can be difficult to know how representative it is. Allen Lee and Richard Baskerville, among others, have responded that this embodies a definition of generalization that is unnecessarily narrow. They and others have proposed a number of varieties of generalization, each suited to a particular type of research process. As a further example, Eric Tsang and John Williams offer five varieties: (1) theoretical (equivalent to Yin's analytic generalization), (2) within population, (3) cross-population, (4) contextual (i.e. from one situation to another) and (5) temporal. Which of these is applicable will depend on the research situation and the research design.

Action research subsumes many different varieties of research. Dawn Chandler and Bill Torbert write of '27 flavours' of action research, and some of those 'flavours', in turn, contain several varietal forms. Action research is conducted for different purposes at different times. Sometimes, local improvement is the main outcome desired. At other times, publication is intended, and a contribution to knowledge is strongly desired—as it must be, for example, in most dissertations and theses. Different action research studies vary enormously in scope—from individual to multi-organization. Individual practitioners use action research to improve their own practice. Generalization may then be difficult even if there is interest in it. Other researchers such as Björn Gustavsen conduct studies in whole industries. Generalization within the industry is thus easier.

Social systems, 'human activity systems' as Checkland calls them, are complex. Their complexity renders them inherently unpredictable. Generalizations may be possible, though with substantial uncertainty. Statistical generalization allows for uncertainty in quantitative statistically analyzed research by identifying the

probabilities with which something can be expected to exist or occur. A possible strategy for qualitative research (including much action research) is to allow the same uncertainty without requiring numerical probabilities to be assigned. Michael Bussey adopts this approach, advocating the use of what he names fuzzy generalizations.

Action research has also been criticized for its lack of rigour, again sometimes by applying quantitative criteria. If research is poorly done, the findings are unlikely to be trustworthy even within the local situation. Attempts at generalization then become pointless. In response, action researchers acknowledge that some research is poor. In that respect, action research is no different from any other form of research: Poor research quality hampers generalizability. All research approaches have their exemplars and their poor instances. Criteria are more likely to be useful if they take into account the particular nature and purpose of action research. In particular in action research, as Davydd Greenwood has pointed out, the plans and their supporting assumptions are tested by being enacted and their outcomes noted.

Motivations differ from researcher to researcher. For academic researchers, publication is likely to be a priority and the choice of journal important. Consequently, preferred theories will often be precise and detailed, specifying relationships between tightly defined variables. Practitioners may prefer to give priority to being able to take what they have learned in a study and apply it in other settings. Their interest is then more likely to be in knowing what actions are most likely to yield beneficial outcomes in those other settings. Precision is less an issue, as they expect to use informed trial and error to modify their actions in each situation they encounter. For them, theory in the form of a theory-of-action approach may be more useful. Such a theory will specify the salient features of a situation, the assumed outcomes that are desired and the actions presumed to produce those outcomes in that situation. Ideally, though less essentially, the assumptions underlying the judgements about situation, outcomes and actions can also be specified. On the other hand, participants involved as co-researchers may desire little more than that the present situation is improved by the research.

Two other approaches for dealing with the criticisms of action research (and qualitative research generally) are worth attention. Lincoln has championed the virtues of replacing quantitative criteria with other criteria. Stake reverses the onus for generalizing appropriately by placing it on the user of the research. The user, Stake proposes, is better placed to decide if the use falls within the scope of the original findings. These approaches are addressed in more detail below.

Transferability

With Egon Guba, Lincoln proposed avoiding the concepts of quantitative ('positivist') research by substituting alternative terms. The concepts of generalizability, validity, reliability and objectivity were replaced by transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability, respectively. Subsequently, Guba and Lincoln abandoned these terms in favour of concepts that did not attempt to mirror any quantitative counterparts. By then, however, *transferability* had become the common usage. For some authors, it is now the preferred term. Others use *generalizability* and *transferability* interchangeably. Transferability is discussed at greater length under that title as a separate entry in this encyclopedia.

The Scope of Generalizability

Generalizability is achieved to the extent that the later research falls within the scope—the boundary of application—of the research whose findings are to be used. Stake's approach, which he called naturalistic generalization, was to suggest that this is best decided by those who are seeking to make use of earlier findings. Consider researchers at the time of carrying out a study. They are unlikely to know which other researchers may make use of the research findings from that study. It is easier, then, for the later researchers to take responsibility for generalizing wisely. If they decide that their study falls within the boundary of application of the earlier study, it is appropriate that they make use of its findings.

Note that the later researchers, if action researchers, may be able to make use of research even when there is some doubt about the scope of the earlier research. As mentioned earlier, action research is an emergent process that does not require a detailed pre-design of a study. It can be modified as the study proceeds and the research situation becomes better understood.

Note, too, that the earlier researcher can aid later generalization by describing the research situation well.

Strategies for Enhancing Generalizability

Various strategies can be used to increase generalizability, including triangulation, multiple studies or multiple research situations in a study, communities of practice and peer review, using the literature to establish the likely scope of findings and the use of maximum-diversity samples and negative case analysis. For more detail about these, see the entry 'Transferability'.

Bob Dick

See also integrating Grounded Theory; rigour; Soft Systems Methodology; theories of action; transferability; validity

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GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Geographic information systems (GIS) are a standard analytic and information management tool in government. They enable analysts to layer information in spatial databases, understand the links between disparate spatial variables and analyze the impact that changes in one variable (e.g. the increase in impervious surfaces as a result of development) have on other variables (e.g. the speed and volume of storm water run-off). Manipulating traditional GIS software and databases requires technical expertise, reinforcing technocratic control over decision-making and making external critiques of decisions based on GIS analysis more difficult. While maps can offer powerful ways of understanding relationships and potentially causation, the units of analysis, measurement categories and boundary definitions chosen can also bias information because they assume a particular interpretive framework.

Democratizing Spatial Data

However, in recent decades, action researchers and community activists have effectively democratized

access to the tools and data in some communities. Social geographers have argued the case for Participatory Action Research as a way to create shared geographic knowledge, increasing community residents' capacity to engage in (and define) policy debates. Interactive mapping portals enable users with no specialized GIS knowledge to access multiple data sources, overlaying information to answer questions they define themselves. Empowering users enables meaningful participation in research, breaking down the monopoly of 'expert knowledge' and allowing users to critique official interpretations of data.

One example of these efforts has been the emergence of community information systems in the USA, empowering communities and enabling critical analysis of spatial data that can effectively challenge technocratic decisions. Community residents have been trained to use interactive mapping programs to draw together data in new ways, enabling them to identify relationships that official analyses have ignored or obscured. Spatial inequalities often reflect social and economic inequalities, but until the advent of GIS, it was difficult to tie these to inequalities in service provision, enforcement of regulations and other government actions. New spaces have been created for a Participatory Action Research agenda focused on community interpretations of spatial data.

Community information system advocates (often based in partnerships between community groups, university researchers and broader public interest organizations) have gathered existing public data, combined it with service provision data from government agencies and often added data generated from within the community to create new ways of understanding spatial relationships. Combining data sources and analyzing spatial patterns enable groups to trace potential causal links and identify how service inequities, for example, may affect disadvantaged communities. Bottom-up research, with questions defined by community members rather than government agencies, identified new action strategies to address shared problems. It also provided the evidence base needed to change pre-existing practices.

Applications

In Providence, Rhode Island, USA, a land information system enabled community development groups to track the relationship between 'nuisance' complaints, reported housing and health code violations and tax delinquency. GIS analysis enabled community members to identify the spatial clustering of problem properties, highlighting priorities for redevelopment efforts, for resident participation in controlling the community environment by reporting complaints consistently and

for enhanced code enforcement in problem precincts. In Memphis, Tennessee, USA, police incident reports are analyzed against other community information to identify spatial patterns that can enable proactive policing efforts. For instance, GIS analysis identified concentrated robberies of Hispanic day labourers leaving building sites with cash pay. Police were able to target existing and potential hotspots during the afternoon and evening hours, significantly reducing the victimization rates. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, community organizers used the results of blood lead level tests required for all children entering school to identify where affected children lived to increase residents' participation in city lead abatement programs and help the city target their efforts to address the problem. Between 1996 and 2005, the incidence of children with unsafe lead levels was substantially reduced in the worst affected neighbourhoods.

Spatial analysis has also informed action research focused on natural resource management and the links between environmental quality and public health. GIS has enabled collaborative partnerships among multiple stakeholder groups, with local residents, environmental scientists, farmers, government agencies and environmental advocates sharing the information essential for the co-management of resources. In Far Northern Queensland, Australia, the Herbert Resource Information Centre maintains a GIS facility supported by local government, researchers and key stakeholders as a basis for collaborative decision-making. Multiple layers of spatial information can be accessed through a public portal that requires no specialized GIS knowledge. The project has improved the quality of local decision-making and has also been used to integrate GIS into local schools.

Potential and Limitations

GIS enables action researchers to identify, highlight and address the spatial manifestations of social and economic inequalities. It can democratize the technical expertise that government decision-makers typically rely on to defend decisions, enabling an empirically grounded critique of how information is gathered, interpreted and used. Community access to interactive mapping capabilities and spatially related data can change the way knowledge is defined, opening up new participatory potential and new spaces for action.

However, democratizing access to data faces challenges. A key challenge is how access can be ensured, given the digital divide between affluent communities, where computer and Internet access is ubiquitous, and disadvantaged communities, where it is not. Public libraries and local schools can substitute for home access but only if they have the resources to do so.

Further, meaningful access also entails training in even the most user-friendly interactive systems.

A second challenge is the difficult issue of data confidentiality. While standard public data sources such as the census explicitly protect confidentiality, address-based local administrative data varies from less sensitive (e.g. property sales and ownership) to extremely sensitive information, such as that relating to health, previous criminal convictions or child abuse reports. If all information is publically available at a disaggregated scale, confidentiality will be severely compromised. Spatial aggregation can protect confidentiality at the cost of reduced specificity. While in theory, GIS offers limitless potential to empower community residents and offer new ways of creating knowledge, in practice, limits are needed to protect legitimate claims to privacy and confidentiality.

Heather MacDonald

See also citizen science; computer-based instruction; map-making; online action research

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GLOBAL ALLIANCE ON COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH

The Global Alliance on Community-Engaged Research (GACER) was created by representatives of universities, networks and civil society organizations from 14 countries at the 2008 Community-University Expo Conference hosted by the University of Victoria, located in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. During the initial meeting, funded by the International

Development Research Centre, representatives examined how the strengths of various global networks with particular focus on community-based action research could be best advanced for the common purpose of utilizing knowledge and community-university research partnerships to strengthen the capacity of grass-roots organizations working towards democratic social and environmental change and justice, particularly among the most vulnerable people and places of the world. Rajesh Tandon is the founder and president of PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia), India, and Budd Hall of the University of Victoria, Canada, served as the founding chair and secretary of GACER.

Subsequently, in 2009, core research partners of the Global Alliance on Community Engaged Research led a global participatory research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the International Development Research Centre of Canada. The project focused on strengthening community-university research partnerships for sustainable development and involved different types of community-university research partnership structures engaging in action research and strengthening engaged teaching and research, globally. Stories emerged about the collaborative, complementary and challenging nature of community-university research partnerships and their Participatory Action Research approaches in the co-construction of new knowledge to tackle complex and interrelated social, economic and environmental issues affecting their local and regional communities. Such collaborations have made a positive impact on the lives of people and the environment in which they live by drawing on multiple types of knowledge, experiences and wisdom across sectors, cultures and regions while overcoming the challenges of engaging as partners and allies in participatory initiatives.

GACER's role in building a networked-knowledge democracy is to amplify and render visible the energies from diverse networks and to work on advocacy and policy development relating to community-university research partnerships. The first Asian regional conference on Community-University Engagement was co-sponsored by GACER and the UNESCO Regional Office with the leadership of Dr Chan Lean Heng and the rector of the Universiti Sains, Malaysia. This conference brought together 500 participants in Penang. In Uganda, GACER has been involved in Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity, based in Busoga Kingdom, led by Professor Paulo Wangoola. The central objective of Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity is the promotion, advancement, interpretation and presentation of the Afrikan knowledge base, epistemology and ways of knowing. Also in Uganda, involvement in strengthening linkages between community groups and Makerere University resulted in Makerere agreeing to collaborate

with GACER on the next steps in strengthening African networking in these areas. In Senegal, the successful project partnership between two GACER allies, Community-University Partnership Programme of the University of Brighton and the African Participatory Research Network, culminated in the organization of the first African conference on Community University Research and Engagement in Dakar, Senegal, on March 2011. Conference outcomes focused on regional, national and continental advocacy and policy development.

Face-to-face connections are ideal in initiating, building and strengthening relationships, partnerships and networks. In a relatively short time, the technologically networked spaces in which we live have provided the infrastructure to facilitate ongoing connection and communication among community-engaged research networks through affordable and accessible means via mobile phones, text, video chats and conference calls, in addition to face-to-face contact. Over the past years, GACER has collaborated with groups of international community-university research and engagement networks to initiate three formal global dialogues.

These global dialogues have provided opportunities for networks to connect, communicate and collaborate, bringing issues to the fore which tend to otherwise remain fragmented. Agreeing upon and articulating the principles of community-university engagement were initiated in the first global dialogue held in 2010, titled 'Enhancing North-South Cooperation in Community-University Engagement'. For example, agreement of community-university engagement is articulated as 'respectful and genuine collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of democratic partnership and reciprocity' (p. 1). In 2011, 'Community-University Engagement in 2030: A Scenario', the second Global Dialogue Communiqué developed by networks, envisioned community-university engagement and the co-construction of knowledge with community partners as being mainstream, along with 'respect for and recognition of knowledge contributions of all parts of the world and all linguistic groups, of Indigenous Peoples, the poor, those differently abled and those who were considered excluded in the early 2000s' (p. 3).

Collectively, community-university research networks have the potential to act and call to action those in local, regional and national spaces, challenging boundaries, naming barriers and blurring the edges of policy towards creating social, institutional and environmental changes.

See also community-based research; community-university research partnerships; Participatory Action Research; Society for Participatory Research in Asia

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GONOGOBESHONA

Gonogobeshona is a Bengali word which means people's research. Generally, it has come to be known as the local nomenclature for Participatory Action Research (PAR) in Bangladesh. The name evolved from a field in Dinajpur, northern Bangladesh, and was coined by the farmers and landless peasants, women and men in rural Bangladesh, and gained popularity in PAR groups generated by Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). Other organizations working at the grass roots, such as the Hunger Project and Brottee, also use the term, each with their individual interpretation and nature of praxis. RIB has used the term *gonogobeshona* keeping with the trend of PAR that was started in the 1970s by Md. Anisur Rahman and Orlando Fals Borda.

A central concept in *gonogobeshona* is the premise that when it comes to knowledge and the ability to think, no group, class or community is more 'advanced' than the other. What happens in reality is that due to the turmoil and challenges faced in daily lives, some find less time to think. Such people may submit their thinking to more powerful classes in order to survive. At the same time, the middle class is often regarded as the 'knowledgeable' class to the common people. As a result, many among such people start to believe that they do not possess any ability to think like the educated, and they become dependent on the educated classes for thinking. But this does not mean that their ability to think is lost; rather, it just may have lost

the edge. The aim of *gonogobeshona* is to get those edges back to sharpness so that they can engage in deep social analysis themselves. *Gonogobeshona* enables them to carry out a collective social analysis through which they can work together in improving their standard of life. In addition, the experience thus gathered can be discussed collectively by them so that they can improve their scientific knowledge—in other words, collectively agreed knowledge following collectively agreed methods—and can take newer initiatives, individually and together, to improve their lives. In a nutshell, this process initiates collective praxis among the working class.

Another legacy is intimately connected to *gonogobeshona*, and that is the legacy of Paulo Freire. He thought that people will understand the reality of a society not through formal knowledge but through collective self-analysis and, in the process, will realize that they can change their reality themselves. This will further encourage them to take newer initiatives. This process of gathering experience and of reanalysis and then taking new initiatives based on those analyses will start the process of praxis. This praxis will enhance their awareness of reality and knowledge and carry the potential to become a self-sustained continuous process. This philosophy of Paulo Freire was used in many countries in the self-development of the common people, such as in adult education in Angola and Guinea Bissau, in the Bhoomisena Movement in India and in Sri Lanka and Nicaragua.

RIB used this methodology mainly in working with the marginalized communities. These communities included Dalits or untouchables, indigenous people and women. *Gonogobeshona* works through stimulating people's own collective praxis. It brings out the creativity in people in multiple directions and in a holistic way. Spontaneous participation of people lies in the centre of this methodology. Indigenous or local knowledge and self-analysis are given as much importance as knowledge developed by experts and brought to assist people's action when relevant, for example, the knowledge of agricultural experts, but nothing is imposed upon the people. This results in a rise in self-confidence so that development processes remain people-centric.

Animators play a pivotal role in *gonogobeshona*. Animators are the agents who can stimulate people into creative action. It is the animators who initiate and demonstrate organizational skills in a combined effort to tackle difficult challenges and bring out of the people their innate and latent creativity with regard to problem-solving. Animators often act as the link between the common people and technical knowledge, skill and resource persons. An animator can emerge from the group itself or may come from outside.

Validation of knowledge by the group concerned is an important part of *gonogobeshona*. The subject under discussion is presented to everyone so that they can review it from their own perspective and share their thoughts with each other, after which a common decision is validated by the group.

In Bangladesh, the *gonogobeshona* process is usually activated through group discussions in village or neighbourhood courtyards. It works as a way to reach out and generate confidence amongst the community members and enables them to engage in individual and collective self-development in an environment of trust. In the practice of *gonogobeshona*, both the individual and the collective are important to reach a decision. They follow the path of self-development by collectively utilizing their knowledge in an unfavourable environment. Through this process, changes are brought about in the perception of these communities. *Gonogobeshona* at first transforms the ‘self’ and then affects the collective through interaction. Change is affected first at the individual level, and it is then extended to the community.

Gonogobeshona understands power to be the relationship of domination dependence in which the control of knowledge and its production is as important as material and other social relations. We know that knowledge that affects people’s lives is seen as being the monopoly of expert knowledge producers—in other words, those who exercise power over others through their expertise. The role of *gonogobeshona*, however, is to enable people to empower themselves through the application of their own knowledge in a process of praxis (action-reflection-action) or conscientization. In such research, people affected by adverse social conditions use their own insights, acquire information from existing public records and generate new knowledge by means of analysis and systematization in order to arrive at creative solutions to their problems without depending exclusively on external interventions.

As it gives importance to indigenous or popular knowledge, which is deepened through a dialectical process of people’s interaction, *gonogobeshona* can be seen not only as a research methodology but also as a philosophy of life.

Suraiya Begum

See also development action research; indigenous research methods; Participatory Action Research; praxis; Research Initiatives, Bangladesh

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GRAMEEN BANK

With the aim of creating access for poor, socially marginalized people to financing options, Grameen Bank (Grameen) embarked on its journey in the 1970s. It was originally established as a project in Jobra, Bangladesh. In his endeavour to free poor villagers from the grasp of traditional moneylenders and enhance their access to financial services, Professor Muhammad Yunus founded the Grameen Bank project in 1976, which eventually transformed into a formal bank in 1983. At the core of Grameen principles lies the access and well-being of millions of its borrowers, over 97 per cent of whom are poor women. In its approach and methodology, Grameen challenged the dominant idea and belief that poor people are not credit worthy, that poor women are non-bankable.

Informed by the knowledge and experience gathered from its engagement with poor men and women, Grameen delivered its breakthrough methodology known as the Grameen methodology. It offered loans at zero collateral requirements, a huge shift in the lending culture and practice in Bangladesh. To remain constantly viable and accessible to the poor, Grameen undertakes regular review and analysis of its approach and modalities and their responsiveness to the diverse needs of the poor; based on the feedback received from the field, over the past decades, Grameen introduced many changes in its approach, methodology and business processes, resulting in increased flexibility in its approach, improved quality of its products and easy access of poor women (and men) to loans.

The Grameen Approach and Methodology

The overarching goal of the Grameen methodology is to provide financing options to the poor, who are otherwise considered ‘not credit worthy’. To assist poor women and men in their fight against poverty, Grameen introduced

an innovative approach to banking based on the local realities in rural Bangladesh and in close consultation with the people it serves. Building savings; offering collateral-free loans, primarily to women, and delivering financial services at clients' doorsteps are some of the key ingredients of the Grameen methodology. A fundamental principle of Grameen is that the bank goes to the clients instead of the clients going to the bank.

Grameen challenged the dominant notion of 'credit worthiness', bringing a massive change in the approach to banking with the poor. From its engagement with the poor people in Jobra, and eventually across the country, Grameen strengthened its arguments that poor people do have the skills and ability to manage loans and businesses and that it is the policy environment and the procedures of banking institutions which create obstructions and prevent the poor from accessing loans. Grameen argued that it is the inherent potential of individuals which determines their creditworthiness and that all individuals, irrespective of their socio-economic strata, are eligible to access loans and credits. To Grameen, access to credit is a fundamental right.

Organized in small, informal solidarity groups, Grameen borrowers operate in a close-knit environment. Groups serve as support mechanisms for the members; the background of the group members, which is generally cohesive and homogeneous, provides further assurance and encouragement to work collaboratively while each of them manages her or his own business and loans. Interdependability and reliability work as bonding agents among the members. Instead of any legal bindings, the borrowers are connected to each other and with Grameen through a shared vision. The rigorous consultation and discussions among and between the group members and Grameen staff, which is an inherent practice and held periodically, provide further insights and offer a troubleshooting mechanism, enabling borrowers to make informed decisions and Grameen to remain focused. Beyond meeting monitoring requirements, the periodic meetings and consultations offer a great opportunity to address emerging issues and concerns; they also serve as a mechanism to gather knowledge and evidence of the relevance and adequacy of the Grameen products and services and provide a way to verify the effectiveness of its policies and procedures to deliver on its mandate.

Grameen Bank and Action Research

Although Grameen faced many criticisms, including allegation that the rate of interest is too high, its borrowers are caught in a spiralling debt trap and it does not help the extreme poor, over the past decades, it has become an icon for microcredit and a viable option for millions of poor. Today, Grameen operates in all

64 districts of Bangladesh, covering over 97 per cent of all villages in the country, and the model is being replicated overseas.

The efforts of Grameen to reach out to the rural poor by offering them useful and affordable products and services reflect the values and principles of action research, which have been evident in its practice from the very onset. In actuality, Grameen methodology emerged from an action research that was conducted in the 1970s. Massive use of collaborative inquiry and organization development has been observed in its operations.

Grameen began its operations by analyzing problems, as it was argued that a credit system must be based on a survey of social background as opposed to predetermined banking techniques. Such analysis and surveys are facilitated by the use of action research. Grameen values the knowledge and experiences of the poor in determining the effectiveness of its methods and products and troubleshooting mechanisms; in this respect, the use of group mechanism—meetings and consultations with the borrowers and the assessment and feedback of front-line workers, the 'foot soldiers' as they are called, who serve as the interlocutors of the bank and the borrowers—reflects the extent to which Grameen applies the methods of action research.

The launch of Grameen Bank II in 2001, which was an outcome of rigorous review and a big departure from its classic system, provides further evidence of the massive use of action research. Although the central assumption remains the same, that poor people always pay back their loans, in Grameen Bank II, the rigidity and inflexibility of its classic system was addressed and the reality of the borrowers was placed at the centre. Based on the experience gathered and lessons learned, Grameen reworked its products, rules and methods and formulated Grameen Bank II, which delivers custom-made credit services.

Shipra Bose

See also empowerment; social accountability

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GRAMSCI, ANTONIO

See Hegemony

GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded Theory is an inductive research methodology for generating knowledge and understanding. It is also the product of this research process, the theory itself. Typically associated with qualitative research, Grounded Theory can be used with diverse types of data, for a variety of substantive research problems, often including practical applications. Grounded Theory research can be altered in the field as analysis suggests new directions. This flexibility, attention to applied usefulness and responsiveness to ongoing work in the field make Grounded Theory well suited for action research. The integration of data collection/construction and analysis is at the heart of this methodology. Beginning with the landmark work of Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, this entry traces further developments in Grounded Theory methodology and the core on which grounded theorists agree, discusses research strategies in some depth, introduces modifications in how the methodology is being used and ends with lessons from Grounded Theory applications in action research.

History

Glaser and Strauss' publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* in 1967 offered an elegant, yet rigorous, alternative to the then dominant quantitative research tradition in the social sciences, integrating theory and research in the process. This alternative, with its variants, has become perhaps the most widely used qualitative methodology, yielding rich bodies of literature in disciplines as diverse as sociology and nursing, communications and education, informatics and art. Although Grounded Theory is, at heart, fairly straightforward, there are varying emphases in Glaser and Strauss' work, revisions and further developments by them and their students and claims of Grounded Theory for work that incorporates only some of the relevant strategies. The possibilities can be confusing, so that Grounded Theory is both widely used and widely misconstrued. Despite

differences and disagreements, grounded theorists come together on core principles and share fundamental strategies. Grounded theorists share a commitment to constructing theory through rigorously working their data rather than beginning with existing theory, focusing on process and using logic that is distinct from that of quantitative approaches. The fundamental strategies that they use to build theory include early and ongoing simultaneous analysis and collection of data, constant comparative methods, theoretical sampling, multiple stages of data coding and memo writing at multiple stages and levels of analysis. These strategies do not follow a linear process, but they are iterative and interwoven.

The rich diversity amongst grounded theorists began with Glaser and Strauss themselves, with Glaser quantitatively trained and Strauss influenced by the Chicago School. As originally developed, Grounded Theory was realist and objectivist, even positivist or neo-positivist. The reality of the social world was seen as unproblematic, as was the neutral stance of the researcher, whose task it was to 'discover' theory to explain that world. The inductive logic of the approach called for working without preconceived theory, which Glaser emphasized more strongly in his later work. Strauss and Juliet Corbin brought a more post-positivist and subjectivist sensibility to Grounded Theory with their recognition that participants bring to the table subjective understandings of the world which complicate, but do not eliminate, the goal of developing empirically Grounded Theory. They elaborated analytic techniques to facilitate this effort. Many, including action researchers, have welcomed the concrete, structured approach of this elaboration and find it useful for legitimizing their work for funding agencies, policymakers and the like. Kathy Charmaz broke away from variations on objectivist, positivist approaches with her constructivist (also called constructionist) Grounded Theory. From this stance, research data is not collected per se but is constructed through interaction with participants. Meanings of data are not inherent, to be discovered, but are formed through the simultaneous and ongoing data analysis and collection. Although this does not go as far towards inclusion as does full participatory research, it explicitly incorporates participants' voices in the theory generated. In constructivist research, the focus is on the phenomenon under investigation. Research methods are tools in a reflective process, guidelines rather than standardized procedures. Charmaz advocates attending to injustice in Grounded Theory work, a clear point of connection to much action research.

Research Strategies

As this brief review demonstrates, Grounded Theory is a living, growing, adaptable methodology for generating

theoretical understanding of social phenomena. Its approaches are sufficiently varied for use by researchers from many orientations and fields. These features, particularly the conceptual freedom, have been noted as empowering for researchers. This empowerment can be amplified for all involved when Grounded Theory is used with Participatory Action Research.

Fundamental strategies used by grounded theorists consist of simultaneous data collection/construction and analysis, constant comparative techniques, data coding, memo writing and theoretical sampling (all described later). These strategies are worked iteratively, so that one continually goes back and forth between them, deepening and fine-tuning the analysis and developing the theory in the process. Using these analytic techniques without simultaneous data collection is becoming increasingly common, and it is called 'Grounded Theory Analysis'. This practice misses key points of Grounded Theory work.

Grounded theorists begin analysis with the first transcribed interview, set of field notes, document or whatever form of data is being used (simplified to 'interview' below), so that the data collection/construction and analysis continually inform each other. Thus, in coding the first interview, one looks not only for what the first participant had to say but also for what to listen for, add to or alter in the second interview. One begins the constant comparative process with the second interview, comparing its codes with those for the first. This might spark an insight, leading to the first memo. And so it goes, throughout the project.

The constant comparative approach is less a specific technique than a commitment to continually compare one's current work with what one has already done. For instance, a coded interview is not filed away as 'finished', only to be accessed in bits and pieces when writing. Instead, it is examined anew, in comparison with each subsequent interview. Similarly, new codes and categories (see below) are compared with those constructed earlier.

Coding, the most basic analytic step, involves attaching descriptive labels to bits of data so as to categorize or summarize them. Active verbs are especially valuable as codes to keep the focus on the process. Initial coding, referred to as line-by-line or open coding, is close to the data. Words used by research participants often suggest the most useful labels. Codes might be sparked by sensitizing concepts (potentially relevant general concepts from the literature), issues that seem important to participants, interesting or unusual phrases or terms used by participants, ideas raised by multiple participants and the like. While some codes might leap off the data page, most are developed through reading and rereading the data and comparing data between interviews. As the researcher collects or constructs

more data and makes more comparisons, he or she moves to selective or focused coding, with attention to codes that come up more frequently and/or seem to be analytically significant. These codes apply to data from multiple participants or events. The researcher begins to see that some codes seem to refer to larger, underlying issues/phenomena/processes; subsume other codes and/or hang together somehow. These have the potential to become analytic categories. At this point, the distinction between a code and a category blurs. One might label and distinguish the properties of categories, referred to as 'axial coding'. This deepens one's analysis, helping the researcher to elaborate categories. One can use theoretical coding to connect categories that seem to be related to each other, thus integrating categories and raising the conceptual level of abstraction. These ongoing comparisons between codes in multiple data documents, between codes and data and between various codes are made simultaneously with collecting or constructing more data. Memo writing is used to move between various levels of coding and between coding and theoretical sampling. Grounded theorists begin writing memos as soon as they have ideas about their codes, which is almost immediately. Early memos describe initial codes and connect data to researchers' interpretations. Later (or reworked) memos become more analytical, explicating properties of focused codes and/or categories, laying out potential relationships between categories and the like. Memo writing guides grounded theorists between levels of coding and between codes and categories. Essentially, grounded theorists write memos to themselves and for themselves as a means of analysis. As researchers deepen their analysis, their memos become more abstract but maintain their connections to data. They expose holes, such as properties of categories that are inadequately described or categories developed with too little evidence. This part of analysis guides the continuing data collection/construction, via theoretical sampling (see below). At later stages of the project, memos constitute the preliminary write-up of findings. Well-fleshed-out memos become drafts of portions of papers.

Theoretical sampling is undertaken to fill in gaps discovered through memo writing, to follow up ideas suggested by the analysis, to clarify processes and the like. Theoretical sampling is sampling for analytically meaningful data. This might involve seeking additional participants to interview or events to observe that can be expected to shed light on the research problem, but that is not necessarily so. It might mean going back to earlier interview participants or others who attended an observed event to ask specific questions about an analytic category or puzzle. The point of theoretical sampling is to collect the data needed to further develop the ongoing analysis. It is a critical link between the

ongoing data collection and analysis, a hallmark of Grounded Theory.

Although there are many ways to look at the validity of Grounded Theory, the most pertinent for practitioners of action research is the criterion of relevance and/or usefulness to those living the phenomena under study. This has been a feature of Grounded Theory methodology from its original development by Glaser and Strauss and continues to be of concern for many in the field.

Modifications in Grounded Theory

Recent modifications in Grounded Theory practice serve to expand the use of this methodology in new areas and ease the burden of this labour-intensive approach. First, the use of Grounded Theory in mixed-methods research is growing. Mixed methods' uses range from guiding measurement development to interpreting the outcomes of intervention tests to ensuring that the findings of a larger study are relevant for stakeholders. Second, the use of computer-assisted analysis is growing. A variety of packages are available to help manipulate data, particularly the retrieval of coded textual data. However, these do not replace the analytic work of making sense of qualitative data.

Grounded Theory Applications to Action Research

Action researchers have used Grounded Theory methodology in multiple ways. Solution-focused interviews can be used to help educators develop their own answers to problems in the course of research, even when their participation in the project is somewhat limited. The methodology can serve as a bridge between theory and practice, whether by interrupting

the 'top-down' implementation of research findings that are not relevant for practitioners or by building theory in the context of 'local' research by practitioners. Because both Grounded Theory methodology and action research are concerned with findings that are useful for those in the field and use iterative/circular processes, these come together beautifully to integrate the development and testing of relevant theory and interventions or policy initiatives.

Linda Liska Belgrave

See also constructivism; data analysis; design research; ethnography; integrating grounded theory; interviews

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H

HAWAIIAN EPISTEMOLOGY

Ua ola loko i ke aloha. Love gives life within.

Love is imperative to one's physical, mental and emotional welfare.

Hawaiian epistemology is a distinct strand of the larger field of indigenous epistemology. It describes the specificity of a universal framework first organized as local knowledge shared and held within an island nation fashioned by exquisite isolation. This saltwater philosophy of knowledge introduced the idea of cultural empiricism formed by blue oceans and blue skies and asks questions that recognize enduring patterns. Hawaiian epistemology is described within seven categories:

1. Spirituality and Knowing: The Cultural Context of Knowledge
2. That Which Feeds: Physical Place and Knowing
3. Cultural Nature of the Senses: Expanding Ideas of Empiricism
4. Relationship and Knowing: Self Through Other
5. Utility and Knowledge: The Role of Function in Knowledge
6. Words and Knowledge: Causality in Language
7. Body/Mind Question: Illusion of Separation

Spirituality and Knowing

There is a vast world beyond our understanding. Within Hawaiian epistemology and other indigenous systems, spirituality is a synonym for unseen connections and our role in their production and meaning. For example, *auamo kuleana* describes both the carrying of one's responsibility and the mystical amplification of its potential when the carrying occurs joyfully. It is a growing field of study described by post-quantum

sciences as dynamic interdependence, non-locality, complementarity and the implicate order. The acumen of a mutual causal relationship with the world, detailed within an active rapport with seen/unseen systems, is an event horizon of knowledge native scholars and cultural practitioners are clarifying.

That Which Feeds

Geography shapes knowledge. Hawaiian epistemology prioritizes awareness within context as consciousness vital to the purpose and display of knowledge. The land is ancestor, teacher, parent, provider and nurturer, continually shaping and defining the nation. Hawaii is an island nation protected, preserved and nurtured by oceans, lands, skies and heavens.

Cultural Nature of the Senses

Senses are culturally defined. Hawaiian epistemology introduced the idea of *cultural empiricism* because of the nuanced qualities of how cultural people, distinct to a place, see and participate in the world. For example, island people know the ocean. There are individual and collective histories and priorities to what is valued about sights, sounds, smells and so on. Tides have aromas, moon phases change tides and fish have a connection with both. All are named, understood and recognized. These empirical moments are the substance of Hawaiian culture, and the willingness to engage in their meaning is the subject of much study.

Relationship and Knowing

Dynamic interdependence, played out in the world, best describes this category. In Hawaiian thinking, life may evolve through

- *'ike pono*—steadiness of intention,
- *'ike pono*—insights gained from truthful behaviour and
- *'ike pono*—justice-seeking expression of goodness.

Knowledge is thus principled and contextual, with rituals and processes developed to maintain this *pono* ('harmony' or 'truth'). *Ho'oponopono*, one such ritual of engagement, helps families heal and release disharmony. This highlights the epistemological priority of forgiveness and details the importance, practice and intelligence of *aloha*.

Utility and Knowledge

Knowledge must have a function to thrive. If knowledge is to endure, it has to have a purpose and a link to the needs of people and place. For example, useful plants were named, events were memorized and chants were delivered to emphasize this intersection. Hawaiian and indigenous knowledge systems have an inherent logic born from the multiple needs of the collective found in place.

Words and Knowledge

Words have life—they heal or they break. There is a causal linkage between ideas and the actuality of life, and its potential is strengthened or collapsed by words. Hawaiian epistemology highlights this type of quality in knowledge exchange, with the beauty and depth of its own quality understood via the Hawaiian language and Hawaiian proverbs, stories, songs, poetry and chants. There is a wellspring of cultural information helping us see how each word, idea or thought simultaneously manifests our world. Ancient ideas from the minds of ancient peoples connected to natural systems are vital to the transformation of scholarship and society.

Body/Mind Question

Knowledge is both embodied and beyond body. The distinction between looking (*nānā*) and seeing (*'ike*) fine-tuned Hawaiian epistemology and its role in consciousness. In Hawaiian thinking, mind/body is united with heart. *Na'auao* ('enlightened intestines') is a synonym for heart, wisdom and understanding that recognizes the simultaneity of thinking, feeling and observing. It is the detailing of such ideas that deepens Maoli/Hawaiian thinking and efficacy.

These seven categories are then linked to universal ideas with regard to knowledge production and exchange and help clarify an indigenous process of thinking:

- Knowledge that endures is a *spiritual act* that animates and educates.
- *We are earth*, and our awareness of how to coexist has always been present.
- Our *senses are culturally shaped*, offering us distinct realities.

- Knowing something is bound by how we develop a *relationship* with it.
- *Function* is vital with regard to knowing something.
- *Intention* shapes our language and creates our reality.
- *Knowing is embodied* and in union with cognition.

For action researchers working within a Hawaiian context or for those who are seeking an epistemological stance that reflects the values of indigenous Hawaiian peoples, this short description of principles and practices can serve as a foundation for further exploration.

Manulani Aluli-Meyer

See also epistemology; indigenist research; indigenous research ethics and practice; indigenous research methods; Māori epistemology

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HEALTH CARE

Action research represents a minority of all health research but is increasingly recognized as an approach that adds relevance to the health research process and its outcomes. It continues to garner attention as health systems face increasing accountability by those who fund them and those they serve and as health research funders come under increasing pressure to demonstrate not only that they generate new knowledge but that this knowledge is translated into better health and more effective health systems and services.

As has been the case in many areas where new knowledge is intended to create action, research in health has suffered from a tension between the needs of evidence-based rigour and contextual sensitivity. Health practice at the clinical, community or population levels should be founded on the best available evidence for what works, but it is mired in the provisos of *what works for whom, when, where and in what circumstances*. The creation of evidence-based knowledge has historically privileged various internal validities over external ones. Calls have therefore been made to increase the contextual relevance,

and thus applicability, of research results by creating evidence-based practices (procedures, interventions, programmes, policies) from practice-based evidence. This includes evidence derived from real practice settings, such as clinics, hospitals, community health centres, communities and populations. It further implies that stakeholders within those settings should be equitably engaged in creating this evidence, from identifying the gaps or needs through undertaking research and interpreting research results, to implementing, evaluating and disseminating the findings. At all levels, from the clinic to the whole population, those who must act on the results of research, be they clinicians, service managers, patients, health organizations, communities or policymakers, are much more likely to do so if they have been involved in the research process and the results meet their personal or practice needs and goals. Therefore, the various levels of health research have increasingly adopted a participatory, action-oriented approach.

Action Research in Health

Health research has employed different action research traditions at its various levels. At the clinical level, Participatory Action Research, as an end-user-engaged form of implementation research, has attempted to bring together health-care providers, managers, institutional decision-makers and often patients in the creation and application of new practices and procedures to create better and more efficient health outcomes. At the community level, Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) has been the dominant form of action research. CBPR has been used to address immediate health issues and to redress historical mistreatment or underservice, to promote individual and community empowerment and to build community capacity to address future health issues. CBPR has thus created and translated knowledge for better health and promoted social and environmental justice. At the community level, participatory partnerships have traditionally included university-based academics working with community members, leaders, health-care providers and service organizations. At the population level, action research has historically adopted a modified form of CBPR that has attempted to include all the relevant community voices as well as those of policymakers from public health and other fields mandated to create public policy and programming geared to increase the overall health and well-being of a population. The CBPR approach accomplishes the goals of combining community relevance with scientific rigour, resulting in policies, programmes and interventions that meet the actual needs of a given population and take a form that makes it likely that people will actually benefit.

In addition, it promotes policies and programmes that address the social determinants of health that constrain individuals' health behaviour choices.

Action Research in Different Health Settings

Action research in health at the various levels has been applied to address myriad particular action needs. Broadly speaking, these have been evidence-informed clinical practice that meets the practice goals of health professionals in both private and institutional settings, patient-centred health-care planning and delivery, community-based health promotion in various areas, evidence-informed public policy and programming and medical or health professional education reform.

Evidence-Informed Clinical Practice

In both institutional and private practice settings, health-care professionals are inundated with evidence-based clinical practice guidelines often based on decontextualized evidence from randomized clinical trials. Health professionals do not doubt the foundation or efficacy of a particular guideline but may decide that it is not relevant or *effective* for treating the patient before them at that particular moment. In other words, the usefulness of decontextualized evidence is limited for clinical decision-making. Furthermore, clinical practice guidelines from various disciplinary sources may provide varying or even conflicting guidance which needs to be interpreted and reconciled for individual patients. A solution to this dilemma is the participatory production and/or implementation of practice guidelines that derive their evidence base from the actual practice settings in which they are meant to be applied. Even where clinicians' input into the production of therapies and procedures is not possible, their full engagement in the means of putting the evidence into action—in other words, participatory implementation—will greatly increase their relevance and contextual applicability. Sensitivity to contextual practice needs turns evidence-based practice into *evidence-informed* practice. Examples of efforts to create and implement setting-sensitive, evidence-informed guidelines exist from various institutional settings, including hospital emergency rooms and intensive care units, as well as more generalized guidelines applicable to both primary and specialized care in mental health, addictions and chronic disease management.

Patient-Centred Health Services Planning and Delivery

Proceeding from the above discussion of clinical practice needs is the need for contextually sensitive

and adaptable, evidence-informed guidance for the co-management of health care by patients and providers. The contemporary move towards patient-centred medicine and clinical co-management requires the creation and implementation of knowledge that is comprehensible across a broad spectrum of health literacy levels and which is adaptable to the individual needs of patients and their lived lives. The usefulness of decontextualized evidence is doubly limited for clinical decision-making involving patients and health-care providers, particularly in primary care settings where all parties are often dealing with multi-morbidity and complex life issues. Action research provides a solution through the co-production of evidence-informed guidance which is robust enough to generate action plans that are sensitive to individualized needs. Examples of this include the adoption of a participatory research approach within practice-based research networks, where individual clinics are seen as communities of practice, generating setting-specific knowledge that is then generalized through consolidation within the larger research network. Participatory Action Research approaches have also been undertaken for patient-centred care in, among other areas, mental health, chronic disease management, dental care and multi-morbidity.

Community-Based Health Promotion

Historically, geographically or ethno-culturally defined communities had been the targets of top-down, academic-driven research. Researchers would identify a health-related gap in a given community setting and propose, fund, design, deliver and evaluate interventions to address it. This form of community Intervention Research has been termed *helicopter research* by affected communities who had often served as little more than test or data extraction sites, while receiving little or no direct benefit and most often never hearing from the researchers once the study was completed. Since the 1980s, however, self-identifying communities have increasingly mobilized to identify and address pressing health issues, with or without external academic support. Community-based health research is founded on the action research principles of participatory need identification, mobilization and evaluation, coupled with capacity building, empowerment and community ownership of the entire process. Research topics may originate solely from the community or from academic or other observers; but the topic must meaningfully resonate with or meet the real needs of the community in order that it values the research process enough to take ownership and ultimately sustain its effects. CBPR has most often taken the form of participatory Intervention Research, creating programming that addresses health behaviour issues and

builds on pre-existing strengths at the community level (i.e. primary prevention). In this way, it has addressed, among others, issues of obesity and chronic disease, notably diabetes and heart health, as well as HIV/AIDS prevention and service delivery, addictions and mental health. The CBPR approach has also been used in assessment or exploratory studies aimed at creating a better baseline understanding of certain community issues, often as a precursor to co-developing health-promoting action. These studies have used various research designs (observational, exploratory, quasi-experimental and experimental) and employed qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. The fundamental participatory factor is that the community has taken ownership of the process, has identified the issue or need, is methodologically involved in creating and interpreting the new knowledge and is committed to the implementation or dissemination of the findings.

Evidence-Informed Public Policy

The 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion called for a shift away from public health policies and programming that addressed individual behaviour towards those that addressed the upstream social determinants that constrained individuals' opportunities to make healthy choices or have access to health services. By addressing and realigning the social and economic forces that placed a higher burden of risk and ill-health on vulnerable populations, health promotion attempted not just to increase the mean health of the population but also to create *health equity* by ensuring that the well-off did not get healthier at the expense of the vulnerable, underserved or less well-off. Community empowerment became a central tenet in this movement, with a greater role for community and citizen involvement in the identification of population health promotion needs and the means of addressing them. Over the ensuing years, this has been applied inconsistently and with mixed results. Although local and regional public health planners have attempted to engage communities, they and national agencies have most often failed to move beyond top-down planning and implementation and have largely continued to address individual behaviours or measure success through individual-level outcomes. Those efforts that have successfully engaged with communities have adopted modified CBPR approaches that include community leaders and community-based organizations, along with public health policymakers and academic researchers, to identify and address population health issues and their upstream determinants. Examples of participatory public policy programming are most often to be found around issues emanating from well-defined and sufficiently mobilized communities, such

as is the case with indigenous health and HIV/AIDS policy programming.

Medical/Health Professional Education Reform

Although physicians and other health-care professionals are rigorously trained in evidence-based practice, many find that they lack the cultural competence or sensitivity to deal with patients or issues outside their immediate experience. Some of the blame has been laid on an education system that often does not value diversity and rarely attempts to expose professionals to environments outside controlled clinical settings. This has led to the underservice or disservice of indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations, including immigrants, those living on public assistance and the homeless. Participatory curricular reform is a movement to bring together members of vulnerable communities with professional orders and academic curriculum developers to reform the way undergraduate and graduate students in the health professions are trained. Examples of this include creation of indigenous health curricula to expose medical students to the specific cultural-historical context in which they will ultimately be treating indigenous patients and service delivery placement opportunities for students and interns to work among various vulnerable populations within community clinics. Many of these efforts have been evaluated and have been shown to increase service providers' sensitivity and lower incidences of mistreatment or refusal of service.

Conclusion

At all levels—clinical, community and population—action research in health has attempted to merge the best available evidence with end-user experience and contextualization in order to create effective change. The inclusion of the end users and beneficiaries in the production of new action-oriented knowledge, be they patients, health-care providers, communities or policy-makers, has helped ensure that treatments, procedures, interventions and programmes have met the actual needs of those who must deliver or receive them.

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See also Community-Based Participatory Research; health promotion; HIV prevention and support; Participatory Action Research

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HEALTH EDUCATION

Health education encompasses a variety of planned learning opportunities and experiences aimed at fostering knowledge, empowerment and skills in individuals, groups or communities, so that they may make decisions about and take actions to improve their health. Deemed an important component of health promotion, health education may focus on conveying information regarding risky personal behaviour and other risk factors which can be changed or avoided through lifestyle modifications in diet, exercise and other behaviours that have an impact on health and through access to the health-care system. Health education may also impart information on social, economic and environmental conditions that have a negative impact on health so that action can be taken to render them more conducive to good health. Health education can occur through educational institutions, health-care providers, interactions with others, exposure to the media and social marketing and action research.

Action research combines theory, education and action to address organizational, community and social issues with the involvement of those who experience these issues so as to improve understanding and practice. It provides a rich, collaborative learning environment where health education takes place through transformative learning. Through its participatory approach, its emphasis on dialogue, its reflective process in learning and its focus on action, action research fulfils the empowering and enabling goals of health promotion and reflects the current transformative learning trend in health education. Transformative learning takes place when individuals develop the critical

consciousness to deconstruct prevailing ideologies; recognize the social, political, economic and personal constraints on freedom and realize that they have the power and agency to challenge and act to change social conditions and structures of power. This transformative learning is health education aimed at enabling individuals, groups and communities to increase control and take action over their health and its determinants.

The origins of health education as a component of health promotion are presented, followed by its link to action research through a health promotion approach that embraces the social determinants of health and through transformative learning that takes place in such settings, leading to individual change and ultimately to social change for better health. Future research directions are also discussed.

Origins

The 1970s marked an important turning point in health education with the realization of the limitations of medicine, pressures to reduce medical costs and a social and political climate which professed individual control over health. The Lalonde Report from the Government of Canada in 1974 and the US Surgeon General's *Healthy People* report in 1979 both discussed the role of individual lifestyle and personal behaviour in influencing health and expanded this view of health to include the role of environmental factors and social conditions in affecting health. In 1984, the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe defined health promotion as 'the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health' and included strategies such as changes in institutions, legislation and policy in addition to lifestyle and behavioural changes. In 1986, the Government of Canada released the Epp report, *Achieving Health for All: A Framework for Health Promotion*, which identified self-care, mutual aid and healthy environments as health promotion mechanisms. In the same year, the First International Conference on Health Promotion led to the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, which identified five key action areas: (1) building healthy public policy, (2) creating supportive environments for health, (3) strengthening community action for health, (4) developing personal skills and (5) reorienting health services.

In this new era of health promotion, which recognized that health was influenced by factors beyond medical care, health education took two directions. First, it focused on promoting changes in behaviour and lifestyle to foster optimal health, with the assumption that individuals have power and agency over personal decisions and actions regarding their diet, exercise and other behaviours and that these changes can lead

to better health. Second, health education strategies targeted changes at the institutional, legislation and policy levels to foster social conditions conducive to health, in keeping with the environmental model of health promotion.

Early health education emphasized lifestyle and personal behaviour change and the reduction of risk factors for disease, which did not adequately consider individuals' capacity to respond to or act upon their health, given the environmental challenges they may face. It reflected the values systems of liberal nations, which embrace individual responsibility for one's successes and failures, and tended to overlook the underlying social conditions which influence individual behaviour and ultimately have an impact on health. For example, an individual's social class has long been established as an important, if not *the* major, risk factor for disease. Since a state's approach to public health is reflected in its policy, health promotion which emphasizes the social determinants of health can influence policy and foster social conditions conducive to health for all. In 2005, the Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World revised the definition of health promotion as 'the process of enabling people to increase control over their health and its determinants, and thereby improve their health', to punctuate the social determinants of health. However, the Bangkok Charter has been criticized by the People's Health Movement and academics for diluting the democratic language of the Ottawa Charter and reverting back to and reinforcing the emphasis on individual responsibility.

The terms *health promotion* and *health education* have often been used interchangeably. Some draw a distinction between the two terms, stating that health promotion encompasses a combination of health education and health advocacy. Given that health promotion has evolved into a strategy that reaches beyond lifestyle and behaviour education to include acting on the social determinants of health, health education has a role to play in creating social conditions conducive to health for all. This social justice approach, which strives for health equity, blurs the distinction between health education and health advocacy, since health education strives for social change. Health education can influence political, economic and personal decisions by educating policymakers, mass media and other influential sources and advocating for healthy public policy, environments, attitudes and behaviours; by fostering the empowerment of individuals, groups and communities who have been disproportionately affected by morbidity and mortality; by cultivating the importance of both experiential expertise and inter-sectoral collaboration for action and by provoking critical understanding of the underlying causes of inequity. Health education can incorporate processes

for communities' meaningful participation and control, thereby encouraging their empowerment through gaining understanding and control of personal, social, economic and political forces and actions to improve social conditions. Health education can achieve this emancipatory objective through action research.

Health Education and Action Research

Action research arose as an innovative approach to address the limitations of social research to result in improvements in practice. In health promotion, action research promised to narrow the apparent research/theory/practice divides. With the realization that health education needed to go beyond promoting changes in personal behaviour and lifestyle and the recognition that social conditions influence the ability of individuals, groups and communities to make decisions and take action to improve their health, it became clear that oppressive social conditions that render some groups more vulnerable to poorer health needed to be addressed. Action research conducted from a critical and emancipatory approach attempts to study and reduce health inequities through the democratic participation of those affected by them. It assumes that truth is found in and created through relationships of power and that what is accepted as known is that which those in power declare. It also assumes that knowledge is socially constructed, historically situated and based on values and places this context at the centre of the research process. Knowledge is influenced by each individual's background, context and understanding of his or her social position related to intersections of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, culture and other factors. People thus make sense of their experiences through the dominant ideology and from their contextual position in the structures of dominance. A critical and emancipatory approach challenges societal beliefs, assumptions and perspectives; brings attention to and scrutinizes the relationship between social systems and individuals; uncovers the sources and dimensions of inequities and focuses on the empowerment of human beings to overcome and transform structural disadvantages.

Action research conducted under the critical and emancipatory paradigm views knowledge production as an emancipatory act. It places critique at the centre of knowledge production and aims to cultivate a critical ability to question, deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge in the interest of emancipation. Critique is aimed at systemic and institutional structures, their creation and how they may be changed to minimize or eliminate their oppressive effects on certain groups. Under this paradigm, action research seeks emancipation both within the research process and within

society. This goal is realized through a transformative knowledge production process.

The collaborative approach of action research creates a privileged site for transformative learning. Core elements of transformative learning include individual critical self-reflection, conscientization and empowerment as well as group processes and relations that foster co-learning in dialogue and shared power and decision-making. Conscientization or critical consciousness occurs when people develop critical skills and come to recognize their role in changing their social conditions. It leads to empowerment when individuals develop these skills, gain mastery over their lives and improve equity and quality of life. Co-learning occurs when all partners exchange information, learning, experiences and perspectives and develop a deeper understanding of each other and of the phenomenon at hand. For co-learning to take place, partners must collaborate to create an environment of trust and mutual respect and openly acknowledge, discuss, challenge and realign power imbalances through a more equitable definition of roles. Partners must commit to a process of self-reflection and cultural humility to recognize their cultural beliefs and assumptions and break through stereotypes which may be preventing them from being sensitive to another's culture. They must work within each other's different agendas and politics and embrace the discomfort that comes with the acknowledgement of the economic, social, cultural and gender inequities that are at the root of oppression. Through this process, they come to understand power relations and redress power imbalances towards equity.

Health education that adheres to the principles of health promotion encompasses addressing social, economic and environmental conditions that affect health by fostering environments where action can be taken to change social conditions to render them more conducive to good health for all. In the context of action research, health education takes place through the transformative learning process, which leads both to individual transformation and ultimately to social change to create a more equitable society. More research is needed to better understand the relationship between action research and transformative learning in order to adopt a more informed health education practice. The effectiveness of achieving improved health outcomes through this approach to health education also needs further investigation.

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See also community-based research; conscientization;

Critical Action Learning; health care; health promotion; Participatory Action Research; social justice; transformative learning

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HEALTH PROMOTION

Participation in decisions that affect one's health is a fundamental concept in health promotion. It is built into the widely recognized definition of health promotion from the Ottawa Charter: 'Health Promotion is a process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health'. Enabling people to increase control over the factors affecting their health has led to much work in the health promotion field on processes of participation from the individual to the societal level. Thus, health promotion is a good fit with the basic principles and processes of Participatory Action Research (PAR). Both focus on action and value participation and empowerment, as well as giving voice to those with less voice in decision-making processes. This entry will describe how participatory processes are integral to health promotion and how PAR is used by health promoters. The skills required of health promoters that are congruent with PAR are described. The challenges of using PAR in health promotion are discussed, and some ideas about future directions are stated.

Health Promotion Basics

It has been known since the Alma Ata declaration in 1978 that participation in decisions improves one's health. Having that sense of control is a direct contributor to one's health, as well as enabling individuals and communities to advocate for changes to situations that are bad for health. For example, direct discussion with caregivers about one's health care can lead to faster recoveries, and families working together can advocate for soil testing and removal when their children show signs of lead poisoning. Although health is affected by individual behaviours like smoking or physical activity, it is also affected by socio-economic policies and conditions in the environment that are beyond individual control, such as lead in soil or poverty. Health promoters rapidly recognized the importance of socio-economic policies and the environment and that creating supportive environments for behaviour change and changing policies are health promotion strategies. The first three major strategies in the Ottawa Charter recognize the importance of involving community members in addressing the broader policy issues through 'Building Healthy Public Policy', 'Creating Supportive Environments' and 'Strengthening Community Action'. Engaging community members in actions to improve their health often means working with the most marginalized and those with the weakest voices in political processes. For example, residents of a high-rise apartment building in Toronto did not like the drug dealing happening in the lobby of the building, so they met as a group (many for the first time) and brainstormed possible solutions. They organized community functions in the lobby in front of the elevators for families in the building, thereby creating an environment unsupportive of drug dealing and strengthening their sense of community. These are examples of health-promoting strategies built around participation.

PAR in Health Promotion

PAR is a natural fit for health promoters. It requires participatory processes, connects research directly to action and focuses on giving voice to those usually excluded from research and decision-making. PAR's espoused processes enable participants to create and share experiential knowledge and then work together to take action. PAR could be seen as a type of health promotion intervention. Through direct involvement, participants can be part of the planning and creative process from the beginning, including the determination of the data collected, interpretation and actions to take. The problem of how to 'disseminate' the research is non-existent—participants already know what to do with the results. This connection between action

and research is what health promoters strive for in all interventions.

From a research perspective, what do health promoters want to know? At a very basic level, they want to know how individuals, communities and societies change and what interventions work best. There are many theories of change at each of these levels that provide guidance for health promotion interventions, and much has been learned from traditional research methods. However, health promoters also find that contexts vary a great deal, and it is necessary to talk to those in the communities about what works for them and use a range of strategies at individual, community and societal levels. The experiential knowledge of community members is important to understand for the successful implementation of programmes and for successful community-relevant research. For health promoters working in community settings, PAR becomes a research method of choice, especially when working with people isolated and marginalized from mainstream society for a variety of reasons.

Healthy Settings

One of the best examples of multiple health promotion strategies working together using participatory methods is the Healthy Settings movement. The World Health Organization has endorsed particular criteria that schools or communities need to meet to be designated as a 'healthy school' or 'healthy community'. These criteria state that planning for healthy municipalities, communities, schools, workplaces, hospitals or islands requires the participation of all stakeholders to envision a positive future together and generate ideas about solutions and next steps that address individual to policy actions. For example, in a healthy school planning process, principals, teachers, students, parents, school staff and surrounding community members need to be involved. In many cases, academic and community researchers have assisted in needs assessments and the development of actions in healthy settings through using PAR methods.

Skills Required for PAR and Health Promotion

The rigour of PAR requires its practitioners to be reflexive about their role and values and how they affect the research process and to have interpersonal skills so that they can facilitate participative processes. Reflexivity is a useful but underutilized aspect of health promotion practice and represents a relatively new area of focus in the published literature. The ability to facilitate community engagement processes is a carefully crafted skill that is part of the training of

health promoters in some programmes in Canada. PAR can help health promoters be reflexive and enable practitioners to understand their role and values. True PAR requires humility on the part of the researcher and an ability to treat community members as equal partners in research. These qualities fit in with a community-based health promotion practice, which also requires respect for others and a willingness to empower and enable others to take control. This is also consistent with health promotion values of social justice, equity and local autonomy.

Challenges of Using PAR in Health Promotion

Despite the natural fit between PAR and health promotion, there are few examples of PAR with direct reference to health promotion in the published literature. There are three main challenges to seeing a stronger connection in the literature: (1) the desire by health promoters to be recognized as legitimate in the health field; (2) the wide range of interventions and theories in use in health promotion, some of which are more amenable to biomedical research methods, and (3) the political nature of health promotion practice. The health field has been dominated by the medical model and research paradigms that have epidemiological, clinical and economic/administrative origins. In its attempts to gain legitimate status within the health field, health promotion has tried to show its value through the use of those methods. When health promoters are engaged in community development and advocacy, it has been an uphill battle to prove the worth of these interventions using the gold standard research method—randomized controlled clinical trials. The participatory basis for health promotion work has contradicted the use of randomized controlled clinical trials as the gold standard for research and evaluation. In addition, the need to adjust tools and interventions to the individual and community contexts and the focus of health promotion on actions to change political and environmental contexts challenge the role of traditional research methods that try to maintain a constant context in order to study the intervention. The requirements of journal publishers and academic reviewers in the health field have also made it difficult for health promoters to use PAR and get their work published. Those with more success have published in the education and community development fields.

Due to the breadth of practice of health promoters, from those who specialize in individual behaviour change and health education to those involved in community development and changing public policies, there is a range of appropriate research and evaluation methods. With this in mind, PAR is not suited to every aspect of health promotion. Natural experiments,

quasi-experimental methods and realistic evaluation methods are being used in health promotion research and evaluation.

In addition, it is important for health promotion practitioners to recognize that participation has many forms and only some of them match the highest standard of PAR: participation in all phases of the research process. Given the range of health promotion research practices, there is a range of levels of participation. For example, health promoters use collaboration or coalition building as a strategy to work with all stakeholders that affect or are affected by a policy such as transportation. Bringing such stakeholders together is a form of participation, but it is also very political. Participatory processes used by health promoters frequently challenge established authorities (government or organizations) through encouraging collective action towards change, and such actions are limited by what is feasible in the context of certain government and organizational mandates. PAR can help bring legitimacy to such actions, but there may be limits on the 'purity' of the participation.

Future Directions

In summary, health promotion is a good fit with the basic principles and processes of PAR. Both focus on action and value participation and empowerment as well as giving voice to those with less voice in decision-making processes. Although the uptake in the formal literature is minimal, the use of PAR in undocumented health promotion practice is possibly more widespread. At the same time, there are a couple of factors driving health promoters to publish about their use of PAR—an increasing recognition of the need to adapt to a rapidly changing context and the pressures to focus on social justice, equity and the social determinants of health. PAR can provide a research process to assist the health promotion practitioner in developing and adjusting interventions to be more culturally and socially appropriate. Above all, PAR is a method that matches the working style and value base of health promotion.

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See also Community-Based Participatory Research; facilitation; health education; multi-stakeholder dialogue; Participatory Action Research; participatory evaluation; reflective practice; voice

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HEGEMONY

Hegemony is a broad movement towards domination of certain groups through means of coercion and other non-physical forms of control. A concept generated by a number of Marxist thinkers in the early twentieth century, hegemony represents a modern form of oppression in which the forces in power obtain the acquiescence of the oppressed through deception, assimilation and social reproduction. Hegemony is propagated through the fundamental structures of society in order for the very culture of certain groups to be laden with attitudes and beliefs that foster their exploitation. The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci developed the purest conception of hegemony, which subsequent scholars have expanded, at great length, into the current theory, which is now refined and applicable in numerous situations. Action researchers, drawing upon critical theory, can work with participants to uproot the ties of hegemony and construct a society less encumbered with ideological forms of dominance.

Marxian Theory's Precursory Formulations of Hegemony

Although the roots of understanding hegemony can be quite varied, Karl Marx laid the foundation of contemporary hegemony theory in numerous ways. As a critical theory that seeks to unveil capitalist exploitation, Marxism operates as a framework towards exposing imbalances of power, particularly among social classes. Most notably, Marx' theories regarding ideology serve as a crucial basis for hegemony. Ideology represents a system of thought that is transmitted among a group of people, and while there are several purposes and functions for ideology, one clear aim of capitalist ideology is to both control and pacify the working class. Marx

anticipated the concept of hegemony when he argued that the world view of the bourgeois would, through capitalism, become the dominant world view of society, and his theories regarding base and superstructure would serve as the clearest precursor to the hegemonic process, so clear, in fact, that Gramsci would utilize a variant of this paradigm in his own writing. In discussing the idea of base, Marx was referring to the material forces of society, especially the physical forces of production. These forces do not occur in isolation but instead are mediated by ideological and cultural superstructures. These superstructures refer to largely non-material forces, like ideology and hegemony, which inform the nature of production and steer the exploitative reins of capitalism.

Marx was not the only theorist who influenced Gramsci's powerful conception of hegemony. Vladimir Lenin and other Leninist theorists would prove to be among the first to offer an analysis of hegemony but would do so in a manner different from how hegemony is typically conceived. Drawing inspiration from Marx, Lenin and others would discuss hegemonic forces in an ideological fashion; however, these theorists were more fixated on how hegemony could be functionalized as a revolutionary force in discussing the 'hegemony of the proletariat'. Similar to the Bolshevik concept of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' as a governmental force, the hegemony of the proletariat would link to a system of ideas that would unite the peasant class under the leadership of the proletariat in order to combat the dominant ideology of the bourgeois class. Leon Trotsky, a notable contemporary of Lenin, also spoke of how the hegemony of the proletariat should serve as the epistemology to provide the government direction. These discussions of hegemony, while certainly valuable, would prove ultimately unfruitful in the actual practice of the Soviet government, and the radical reimagining of hegemony performed by Gramsci would, in some sense, demonstrate why the hegemony of the proletariat never came to fruition.

Gramsci's Expansion of Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony is among the most important contributions within the critical theory tradition and was largely composed in a prison in Rome. The canonical *Prison Notebooks* were crafted between 1929 and 1935, when Gramsci was imprisoned by the Italian Fascist government, and these stressful conditions undoubtedly influenced the nature of the texts, which Gramsci could not edit, refine and formally publish. Gramsci's theory of hegemony also suffers, in a sense, from the conditions in which it was engineered, proving to be somewhat fragmentary and less comprehensive than many are led to believe.

Nevertheless, the subsequent decades have witnessed numerous scholars interpreting Gramscian hegemony and establishing a necessary connectivity within his thought, which now exercises significant influence on many scholars in sociology and education and those working in critical theory.

What is immediately striking about Gramscian hegemony is the role of culture as both an oppressive and a liberating force. In contrast to the Marxian usages of hegemony, which were primarily fixated in the realms of economics and social class, Gramscian hegemony is a cultural hegemony that goes beyond economics and thus is far more pervasive. Gramsci was writing against the Italian Fascist regime that was in power prior to World War II, and in examining how this regime both came into power and maintained its control, Gramsci postulated that cultural hegemony served a crucial role. Although initially a cultural minority, groups like the Italian Fascists could gain power in pivotal centres of cultural capital within a society, like the government, the media and educational institutions; moreover, those groups could form alliances with other groups and exert a hegemonic force that could pervade an entire culture. Certainly, expressions of physical dominance were possible, but the true power of cultural hegemony lay within the ability, often through manipulation, to obtain the consent of the oppressed to further enforce oppression. Similar to Foucault's theories regarding forces of discipline, hegemonic forces operate with a cruel efficiency in which knowledge and culture become ideological weapons that hold legitimate material implications.

These material implications are most significant for the *subaltern* social class, a term first utilized by Gramsci and then appropriated by theorists working with hegemony as well as post-colonial scholars. In using the term *subaltern*, Gramsci once more expanded the critical framework to incorporate more groups of people instead of focusing primarily on the economically determined proletariat. Depending on its usage, the subaltern social class is the primary target of hegemonic forces, a dominated group whose epistemology, history and access to political and economic power are controlled by the dominant class. What proves striking about Gramsci's form of subalternity is how it is the product of hegemony. The subaltern class exists in a culture outside its choosing, and attempts to exist outside the hegemony are met with stricter control. While the subaltern class is victimized in hegemonic systems, the subaltern, in the Gramscian sense, still possesses potential as a revolutionary subject capable of transforming the system.

Gramscian hegemony is a difficult concept to grasp for many scholars and theorists, and some of its central ideas are often misunderstood. The primary reason for

this misunderstanding lies in the immaterial nature of hegemony, which lends itself to any number of interpretative lenses. However, a few stabilizing distinctions should be made clear. First, although Gramsci was examining hegemony to criticize a fascist regime, *hegemony* and *totalitarianism* are not interchangeable terms. This further complicates the perspective on hegemony, for instead of a static, totalitarian concept, hegemony is a rather fluid process that is continually changing to serve the needs of the dominant social group. One contemporary example of this hegemonic revision can be seen in the Internet, which was once an alternative space where no forms of advertising were permitted but gradually became a tool for capitalism and now serves as one of the primary means to enforce several hegemonic structures, particularly those of corporations. Nevertheless, the dynamic nature of hegemony should not be conceived as a comprehensive veil that covers an entire society. Instead, pockets of counter-hegemonic activity are a constant presence within hegemony. Simply because a group of individuals acquiesces to the hegemonic leadership of a dominant group does not necessarily mean that they do so happily. Indeed, Gramsci was aware of citizens' antagonistic attitude towards hegemonic groups and structures, which could stimulate action that could disrupt the processes of hegemony. Unfortunately, the constantly evolving nature of hegemony, its pervasiveness within a given culture and the fragmented nature of counter-hegemonic action usually enable the dominant social order to maintain hegemony and exert continual influence over the majority of individuals.

Contemporary Hegemony

The English translation of *Prison Notebooks* was published in 1970, and since that time, many have argued that theories regarding hegemony have lost relevance in contemporary society. Critics of Marxism, particularly those who align themselves with postmodern philosophy, argue that hegemony contributes to a false meta-narrative that no longer accurately describes the world. However, a strong contingent of critical scholars contends that hegemony, through globalization and technology, has increased substantially into numerous avenues. Most notably, the prevalence of a Western, specifically American, world view has acquired increasing dominance globally. The 'Americanization' of the world has manifested itself through the pervasiveness of the English language in much of the industrialized world, the increasing American corporate presence in other countries and the spread of American values and attitudes, typically centred upon consumption. While the oppressive nature of this changing landscape is open to debate, the notion that the cultures of

various countries are being supplanted by a dominant world view demonstrates the further need for studies in hegemony as hegemonic forces operate at both local and global scales.

Action Research and Hegemony

As a methodology that often ventures into critical theory, action research can serve as a counter-hegemonic process. A pivotal inspiration to action research, Paulo Freire expressed an educational philosophy firmly rooted in counter-hegemonic theory. First, Freire was critical of traditional modes of education that sought to broadly instill a knowledge constructed by the dominant social order that reproduced the unequal social hierarchy. Second, Freirean concepts like conscientization and communal knowledge construction worked to undo the hegemonic forces in education. Action research can further variations of Freire's work in any number of fields for many action researchers not only possess an understanding of hegemony due to their study and research but can also work with their participants to collectively dismantle hegemonic power in communities.

Indeed, Gramsci, among others, argued that intellectuals held a significant role in promoting both hegemony and counter-hegemony. Working at the vanguard of cultural exploration and creation, intellectuals have access to knowledge that can be utilized to either enforce hegemony or disrupt it. Once more, hegemony is perpetuated by cultural institutions like schools, universities and media outlets where the educated citizenry hold positions of power. While the majority of these intellectuals are mired in the processes of hegemony and further hegemonic principles, those who are versed in critical theory and seek to work towards a more egalitarian society can expose hegemony and mobilize individuals towards counter-hegemonic action. Gramsci advocated a Marxian concept known as praxis, in which theory and action blend together in order to better society. Action researchers, with their knowledge of theory and methodology and their commitment towards actualizing their research, perform their own version of praxis, which in turn can be linked to counter-hegemonic efforts, particularly in education but also in the community.

Finally, apart from operating as counter-hegemonic practice for marginalized populations, action research functions as an alternative to the hegemony within research methodologies. There is a dominant epistemology within research methodologies that could be labelled as hegemonic, that potentially limits the democratization of knowledge. With the majority of researchers consenting that their research operate within narrow constraints, traditional research methodologies

are informed by hegemonic structures, and these structures can lead traditional research away from the public good while restricting researchers from truly exploring their interests or those of the community. Action research provides a tenable alternative for researchers who wish to work outside the hegemony of the academy in order to access new methodological possibilities, perform research as a public good and effectively change their institutional culture.

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See also conscientization; Freire, Paulo; Marxism; praxis; subalternity

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HERMENEUTICS

Philosophical hermeneutics is concerned with interpretation and understanding. For many centuries in Western thought, hermeneutics was confined to the science of the exegesis of religious texts, but it broadened with the nineteenth-century efforts to formulate a theory and method of interpretation. In the twentieth century, Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) developed the philosophy of hermeneutics to challenge metaphysical certainty, finding it a powerful ontological mode of being-in-the-world-with-others.

As a philosophy that emphasizes the role of history, language and provocation in all human understanding, Gadamer's hermeneutics offers a philosophical underpinning to action research. He argues for the primacy of inquiry as an essential human trait and elucidates the elemental role of dialogue and iteration in inquiry. This entry outlines the origins and development of hermeneutics, focusing on Heidegger and most particularly Gadamer's contribution to its development. It elaborates

on four concepts central to a hermeneutic standpoint: (1) effective history, (2) prejudice, (3) provocation and (4) fusion of horizons. The part played by each of these concepts in action research is considered.

In Search of Method

It was the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher who in the early nineteenth century expanded hermeneutics beyond its role in interpreting religious texts. Observing that it is never possible for a reader to understand all that is said by a text that is posing difficult ideas, Schleiermacher developed a maxim that it is misunderstanding that naturally arises in encounter. He proposed the need for a theory and method of interpretation—hermeneutics. He sought and failed to find a hermeneutic method, unable to apply truth-rules that would overcome the divinatory nature of the dialogue that he had found at the foundation of human understanding.

Following his lead, Wilhelm Dilthey in the late nineteenth century also sought a method that would be specific to the art of interpretation—one that would permit an objective reading of symbolic structures in human life. Dilthey came up against the same problem as Schleiermacher—that the phenomenon of understanding exists before and is the ground for method. Understanding does not arise from method.

Ontology of Understanding

The problem was overcome in the mid twentieth century, when Heidegger proposed that understanding is ontological, a mode of existence. In *Being and Time*, published in 1927, he posits that human being-in-the-world is inescapably finite, and we see and learn from where we are positioned, where we have been thrown. Our knowledge is utterly insecure. We search for universal and comprehensive truths and methods, but these are chimeras. Instead, we are always struggling to build understandings. Our meanings are always greater than the logic of our words and propositions. When a carpenter makes a logical statement about a hammer being heavy, for example, the meaning is only partially that it has the property of heaviness. The meaning could also be 'I am tired', 'Please help me' and much more. Heidegger allows people to see an 'unending struggle to find words for all that should be said in order to understand themselves' and argues that they dwell in the world in language.

Gadamer took up the hermeneutics of being and language from his teacher Heidegger, and three decades later, in 1960, he published his masterwork *Truth and Method*. A pragmatic view of why an understanding of understanding is important, the work shows that people always seek to know something useful here and now.

But he also aims to overcome the hubris of assuming that people can accomplish objective knowledge of the phenomena that concern them, particularly those in social and human realms.

Scientific method is applicable to natural phenomena because it builds arguments based on norms and standards built in a particular tradition. Causal laws 'impervious to changes in vantage point' are discovered because the world of objects is conceived accordingly. The humanities, however, defy theoretical universality because they concern an infinite number of positioned and ever-developing perspectives. They defy the methodological certainties of the natural sciences. The hermeneutic phenomenon, Gadamer explains, is not a problem of method at all. It is a question of understanding how understanding happens.

Key Ideas

Essential to an appreciation of hermeneutics and to their use in action research are four key ideas: (1) effective history, (2) prejudice, (3) provocation and (4) fusion of horizons. These are elaborated in the following sections.

Effective History

Philosophical hermeneutics outlines the conditions of the possibility of understanding. These conditions are located in the traditions to which interpreters belong and in the authority of those traditions. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer sets out to show that understanding is never a subjective relation to a given object but to the history of its effect. For human beings in discussion with one another or with a text or work of art, the effect of history is always at work. The language we have learned and the context from which we come sets us in a horizon of meaning. The starting point for understanding is always the whole of the history that lies behind people and is effective in each one of them, in their language and collectivities. Tradition opens some perspectives and closes others, and language (in all its forms) always mediates their access to the world. Aware of this finitude, they become aware of how their tradition and language are ceaselessly open to new experience and interpretations. The starting point is expectations and assumptions: prejudices.

Prejudices

People in different cultures at different times proceed on the basis of what they have already understood, expressed in the language they have learnt, but are ready to expand their knowledge. To the extent that their understanding of the world is founded in this way, they are prejudiced in that they already possess

predispositions: orientations towards, and languages for, whatever it is they are seeking to understand. Therefore, prejudice is not negative or unproductive but a starting point for learning. That each consciousness has a different starting point is a basic ontological mode of being, being one among many, each one distant from the others yet endlessly bound in conversation with others. From a hermeneutic perspective, prejudice proves to be highly productive. Prejudices form a horizon from which each person may move outwards in encounter with the world. In dialogue, prejudices are foregrounded and brought into question—it is the mode by which individuals learn and change. Mostly, people do not notice how their prejudices are brought up short by the propositions and apparent meanings of others, but it is a constant occurrence. When they encounter people who are very different or stories from an alien past, they are noticing that they see or saw things differently, and they are asking why. And are they right?

Provocation

Understanding is an event. It is an encounter of prejudice (which has provisionally been concluded) and the propositions of interlocutors. How, then, does one interpret distant, different or subaltern voices in a way that one is able to hear their claims for or on one? It is not, as some have suggested, a case of putting oneself in their shoes, being neutral with respect to what is being said or extinguishing oneself—all of which are impossible. Instead, the person who understands something is the one who foregrounds her own foremeanings and prejudices and brings them up against that which she hears, sees or experiences. Provocation is the experience of understanding. When this happens, people are participating in meaning with the other.

When individuals are coming to an understanding with one another, they find themselves strengthening the other's argument. They attempt to make what they hear make sense in their realm. They try to see how the parts of what they say are aligned with the whole of what they seem to mean. This phenomenon is known as the hermeneutic circle. Georgia Warnke lists three elements to this event. First, they are prepared for a text or the person to tell them something that they did not already know; they accept alterity. Second, they align the part with the whole, projecting meanings in their attempt to understand on the basis of expectations they already have. Third, they give the speaker a chance to mean something to them by assuming that what is said is or could be true.

Fusion of Horizons

The horizons of understanding expand when people not only identify the way in which things from the past or from other people are different but also when they

ask how they can be combined with or otherwise affect their current understanding. Their horizons partially fuse with those of the other. In the process, even if they are disagreeing with what they are hearing, their perception of the world changes, as does their understanding of themselves. They accumulate, reject and amend, remember and forget meanings. Over time, language changes: Words, images and sensations change, as do linguistic structures and whole language systems. Consequently, they change as human beings, taking the ground of new understanding with them.

Critiques of Philosophical Hermeneutics

As the thinking of Gadamer and his school spread across the Western intellectual world, a number of critiques were levelled, many of which served to hone the hermeneutic argument. Jürgen Habermas accused hermeneutics of excessive reverence for tradition and failing to offer emancipation and critique of ideology. The hermeneutic school responded with scepticism, arguing that pure emancipation was a utopian, Enlightenment illusion not grounded in real experience. Emancipation, such as it is, is already implicit in the hermeneutic encounter.

A second criticism challenged ideas of openness and hermeneutic sensitivity as a relativistic lack of standards and unquestioning deference to understandings different from their own. Warnke is one hermeneuticist who refutes this, using Gadamer's point that while meaning making involves a fluid, ever-shifting multiplicity of possibilities, it is not without reservations. Making meaning is not a relativistic, wholly subjectivist process but one built on sense and prior understandings. The hermeneutical task is always a questioning of things.

Jacques Derrida criticized hermeneutics as assimilationist—always attending to the achievement of understanding and the continuity of tradition when, in fact, all phenomena are radically incompatible and, most of the time, aporias and assumptions gloss over gulfs and ruptures of difference. In the notion of fusion of horizons, there is indeed a tendency to ignore heterogeneities and abysses. Hermeneutics responds with the primacy of dialogue. Interpretation must draw on both sameness and difference, both radical incompatibility and radical connectivity. Interpretation involves an unending interplay between sameness and difference in the unavoidable participation of the one and the many.

Hermeneutics and Action Research

Hermeneutics is always at work in action research, as it helps us see the binding of understanding and action. The practical application of knowledge is inherent in the very understanding of something. Practical

application is not an external, after the fact, use of understanding that is somehow independent of it. All understanding is practical; all understanding is action.

Hermeneutics agrees with action research on the importance of reflexivity in inquiry. It observes that the texts we most need to understand, in one way or another, are our own narratives. A hermeneutic perspective illuminates the play between researchers' questions to and from the world and their narrative of themselves. Their movement from the horizons into encounters and on to their new horizons gives weight to their impulse to explore, learn and co-create with others.

In stressing the centrality of encounter, hermeneutics justifies action research as a form of inquiry into struggles between people and into struggles for human flourishing and consequence. Hermeneutics highlights the insistent and never-ceasing questioning of things, and the never-ending possibilities of human conversation in bringing human beings together.

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See also Frankfurt School; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; phenomenology; reflective practice; narrative; positionality

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HETEROGLOSSIA

Heteroglossia means different ‘speech-ness’ or differentiated speech. A given language is not unitary but stratified; heteroglossia is a mix of languages and world views. The idea of heteroglossia is associated with the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975), who saw everyday speech as a conglomerate of ‘sub-languages’, always used from a particular perspective and context and directed towards another. This draws attention to how we hear and speak.

Heteroglossia describes the stratification of language into different genres, dialects, generations or sociolects based on age group, gender, socio-grouping, discipline or profession and so on. There are languages that are tendentious and those that represent the voices of authorities, various circles and particular fashions. These different languages are appropriated in everyday speech.

Each stratification as a language within languages is historical, contextual and continually evolving. People do not remain within a given genre or other stratification. Rather, they are continually borrowing from different stratifications, each influencing the other. A group of professionals from a given discipline with their own particular jargon, for example, lawyers, engineers or doctors, will have their own technical language stratification. However, this is used in the context of everyday speech, which is made up of multiple stratifications. A particular professional or technical language mingles with everyday speech-ness so that it is not spoken as a separate entity but, rather, coalesces with other languages. Thus, professional jargon is itself influenced by values and norms across everyday languages.

These languages are socially unequal and therefore hierarchical. Each language has its own strategic intent, values and meaning. In heteroglossia, words or utterances are never neutral; their meanings are always context driven. Context in this sense refers not just to the speaker and the words used but also extends to the wider, more diffuse environment, for example, day of the week or time of day. Context in this wide sense colours the intended and created meanings of words.

Language is also ideological in the sense of advancing ideas. Every utterance reflects a separating out of a value from the past and is directed towards the future. Every utterance responds to that which was uttered previously and is coloured by the anticipated response. A response to an utterance comes from a myriad of possible responses reflecting particular values, weighting and an invitation to answer in that given moment.

Everyday speech is thus imbued with the speech of others as we interact with one another.

Heteroglossia and Monologism

It is conflict and inequity that distinguish the idea of heteroglossia from that of polyphony. Polyphony refers to multiple voices without reference to the nature of their interrelationship. In contrast, in heteroglossia, national languages and their subsets are imbued with historical and social conflict. Thus, from a Bakhtinian lens, language stratifications embody the conflict among social forces that results in particular representations and authoritative discourses. Everyday speech reflects conflicting social forces.

Bakhtinian scholars highlight the ethical undertones of his work; Bakhtin viewed heteroglossia as ethically superior to the notion of a singular authoritative language (monologic). Language that is stratified may become monologized by the emergence and dominance of a single authoritative voice.

In heteroglossia, there is a dialogic interaction in which dominant languages higher in the hierarchy will try to maintain their position, while those lower down the hierarchical chain will try to negotiate around or avoid control by the other. Within any utterance, there are stratifying forces that produce a complex mix of the appropriated speech of others to produce a view of the world. Centripetal forces seek to gravitate towards a dominant language and the status quo towards a unified authoritative view. Centrifugal forces seek to decentralize, differentiate from and pull away from a unified view. Tension is the central characteristic of heteroglossia. At the heart of this struggle are power and its distribution among the different views represented in languages and their subsets. The conflict between centripetal or official and centrifugal or unofficial discourses within a national language is one in which the dominant or the official seek not to destroy but rather to dominate or monologize.

Heteroglossia and Action Research

Where action research scholars place an emphasis on participation, power and voice, heteroglossia expands the debate by questioning the term *voice* in any singular or overarching sense, for example, representing the voice of an individual or stakeholder group. Such questioning can follow two interrelated strands:

1. Shifting the focus on participation to narratives
2. Attending to the multi-voiced language of our individual speech and inherent conflicts with the espoused values underpinning our action research efforts

Participation

Participation in action research is described by Peter Reason and others as being both epistemological and political. In the epistemological sense, participation is a joint meaning-making process. This requires full engagement with different experiences, views and understandings of the world. In the political sense, action research recognizes the ability and the right of individuals to have a say in how knowledge is generated about them and the decisions that might affect them. Participation in action research recognizes meaning making in everyday practice as an intensely political affair.

In heteroglossia terms, a joint meaning-making process which ensures that participants have a say in all aspects of the process may obfuscate the privileging of some narratives that reflect particular world views over others. Participation turns to our language stratifications and the forces around them that are implicit in our everyday speech even as we seek to give voice to participants. Forces may reflect institutional and professional values and norms that colour the context of our utterances and, importantly, how they are interpreted by 'recipients'. Concerns shift from who is speaking to also scrutinizing the nature of our speech and the different voices therein.

Multi-Voiced Speech

Attention to heteroglossia in a particular environment expands the focus of voice to the multi-vocal nature that is implicit in our speech. This opens up a focus on how people hear others and how they listen to their own utterances, and the narratives that are privileged therein. The temporal, spatial and social contexts of their utterances become important in how they interpret their interactions with both the action research process and the participant. By acknowledging heteroglossia in their interactions, they enter into a dialogic relationship in which dialogue relates to the context of words spoken and the forces behind them. Heteroglossia, thus, offers action researchers a way of conversing with the subtle competing values that lie below the surface of their speech.

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See also Bakhtinian dialogism

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HEUTAGOGY

The term *heutagogy* was first coined by Stewart Hase and Chris Kenyon in 2000 as an extension to andragogy and means self-determined learning. Its foundations are constructivism and humanism, along with capability, open-systems thinking and complexity theory. It came about because of the founders' dissatisfaction with education and training systems based on antiquated concepts of learning and teaching principles. It is clear that we are in a new age of learning emancipation, where there is instant access to copious information and easy communication with others. No longer is the guru standing at the head of the classroom necessary in order to learn. Since 2000, there have been a large number of papers written both by the originators of the concept and by educators around the globe. As discussed later, action research has both theoretical and practical ties with the concept.

Heutagogy is based on the fundamental assumption that people are capable learners and they learn when they are ready and not when the teacher thinks they should be. Thus, the focus is on learner-centred learning, where the learner has increased control over the content and the process of learning. This is compared with teacher-centred learning, where control of task and content is completely in the hands of the teacher. According to heutagogy, children are excellent learners before they go to school, where their skills are hampered by a system that relies heavily on the teacher, the curriculum and assessment rather than the experience of the learner. Heutagogy is concerned with great learning rather than good teaching.

Recent advances in neuroscience have increased our understanding of how the brain works and how people learn. On the basis of this, heutagogy seeks to redefine what we mean by learning. The most common definitions of learning have to do with knowing or knowledge acquisition, and the psychological definition has for a long time been that learning involves a change in behaviour.

Instead, heutagogy differentiates between acquiring knowledge and skills, which are otherwise known as competencies, and deeper learning. People often acquire knowledge or a skill that has no value beyond itself. For example, a person may repeat a skill in

familiar circumstances, but the real test is when the competence is required in an unfamiliar situation (what John Stephenson and colleagues call capability). However, sometimes and for reasons that are not altogether clear, we have an experience that leads to all sorts of new insights that clearly involve an interaction of many networks that became activated. In this case, one is able to use one's skills in a new, challenging situation, or new knowledge results in a new theory or way of seeing the world.

What is important here from a heutagogical point of view is that this may lead to a whole new set of questions, behaviours and needs on the part of the learner that go beyond the set curricula, lesson plan or workshop programme. The teacher will not be aware of this change in the motivation of the learner, this shift in interest. Thus, the curriculum, assessment and learning process need to be flexible in order to cope with the changing state of the learner.

Heutagogy in Relation to Action Research

Action research provides a methodology and a set of techniques that are well suited to heutagogical principles and comes from a similar philosophical stable. As an emergent process, action research provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on what they have learnt following the acquisition of new data and to rethink what needs to be done next. The identification of new questions and new ways of seeing the world is central to action research, as it is in heutagogy.

Action research also provides an opportunity to explore the new learning, usually in a participatory process. This is particularly valuable in dealing with complex situations. However, given that researching new ideas is so easy with the massive resource that is the Internet, other people do not necessarily have to be involved. There is also ample opportunity for participants to explore particular areas of interest.

Thus, action research can be used as a teaching method at any level of education and training as an alternative to teacher-centric approaches. The teacher becomes a facilitator of the process rather than guru, and learning is placed more in the hands of the learners.

Heutagogy claims that children are already competent learners before they go to school, where the capacity is dulled by inflexible curricula and the teacher-centric process. Action research provides a process to rekindle this ability to learn and for people to become effective lifelong learners and better reflective thinkers.

Stewart Hase

See also Action Learning; co-generative learning; constructivism; humanism; Lewin, Kurt

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HIGHER EDUCATION

Action research has long been engaged with the educational system at all levels: K–12, higher education and adult education, but the higher education dimension of action research is its least developed component. Action research is inherently contrary to the Fordist organization of higher education because that system is inimical to studying and solving complex real-world problems in their multifaceted complexity. Paradoxically, becoming an action researcher generally requires university training, and universities are reservoirs of key forms of expertise that can and must be used to solve humanity's growing global problems. Thus, higher education reforms to promote action research are necessary. This entry examines the current status of action research within higher education, discusses the ways in which the existing Fordist model of higher education works against both action research and the ability of higher education to effect positive social change and, finally, proposes a new structure for higher education based on an action research model as a more

engaged and democratic alternative to the current system of higher education.

Learning Action Research

Action research courses are taught at various university venues from anthropology, sociology, planning, education, nutrition and programme evaluation units but not as a fully realized curriculum or degree programme. Generally, individual courses are offered in unlinked departments, and students thus must find the courses and meet other like-minded students to network with in pursuit of their goals.

There are a few action research Ph.D. programmes worldwide. The Ph.D. programme in Industrial Economics and Technology Management at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) permits individualized courses of study in action research under the direction of Morten Levin. In Norway, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and in Australia, Southern Cross University, Deakin University and Curtin have all had action research curricula or formal programmes from time to time. Previously, an action research centre was run by Peter Reason at the University of Bath, but it ended with his retirement, and a new programme has recently been started at the University of Bristol by Patricia Gaya. The University of Cincinnati in the USA currently offers a doctoral concentration in educational and community-based action research within its educational studies programme. Despite these efforts, the lack of a clear undergraduate curriculum and the instability and short lifespan of action research postgraduate programmes show that higher education is generally a hostile environment for such work. Most students enter Ph.D. programmes in conventional fields such as anthropology, education, sociology or planning and then get part of their training in action research from individual faculty at their chosen university while they receive most of their training within conventional disciplinary structures. Faculty in action research often serve as second or third members of master's and Ph.D. committees, providing action research perspectives on work within the student's main discipline.

If students want to conduct an action research project for their thesis or dissertation, they face additional difficulties. Action research projects depend on the needs, wants and capacities of non-academic stakeholders. Developing and maintaining strong relationships with a stakeholder group while a full-time student on a university campus requires organizational ingenuity. Funding is often problematic since action research projects do not fit the guidelines for many of the typical research funders in graduate education. And getting permission from Human Subjects Review

Boards for action research projects often requires complex argumentation.

Writing up the results of action research projects in theses and dissertations presents additional issues. Conventional academic writing is not suited to action research projects. Rather than formal thesis statements, literature reviews and so on, action research writing is more ethnographic, narrative and contextual in developing ideas and arguments. The process of doing the research often is central to the narrative and necessary to the credibility of the results. But doing this runs afoul of the positivistic canon of thesis writing and subsequent publication. These issues, fortunately, are discussed by Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson in *The Action Research Dissertation* (2005)—a book on doing a dissertation in action research and an invaluable guidebook for action research thesis writers.

Action researchers also face intellectual property issues. Action research is the product of a collaborative learning group. The intellectual property created does not belong unilaterally to the professional researcher. In writing about the project, the researcher often speaks for others and feels compelled to check with those 'others' and have them review and approve the results of the writing. In some cases, the non-academic collaborators have written their own reactions to the thesis or dissertation, and in one case, namely, Michael Reynolds' dissertation on science education at Cornell University, the authorship of these writings was identified and included in the dissertation, and the co-authors participated in the defence.

A major venue for undergraduate training in action research is what is variously called service learning or civic engagement programmes, pioneered by Timothy Stanton, Dwight Giles and Nadine Cruz. A small proportion of undergraduate students seek service-learning placements that involve working in community organizations and service agencies. Often, these are internships and rarely involve much faculty oversight and advising to integrate the work into the students' curriculum. One exception is the work of Nimat Hafez Barazangi. Most academic institutions treat these as 'co-curricular' activities and as non-academic work, thereby undercutting the relationship between action and reflection central to action research.

Despite the above difficulties, scores of action researchers have been trained in higher education over the years, and more will be trained in the future. A modest literature on these processes now exists.

Action Research Within Higher Education Institutions

Public higher education, which, given public funding, might have been expected to support action research

projects for the benefit of the public, has generally failed to do so. Instead of engaging the stakeholders in collaborative problem identification and problem-solving, public universities adopted the academic expert and consultant model dominant at elite private institutions. While a modest number of action research projects have taken place in such institutions, focused mainly on community development, youth development, support for public schools, small-business development and so on, it is nowhere a dominant focus. Examples of this kind of action research work can be found in the writings of Scott Peters, but they are clearly minority practices.

Action Research and Higher Education Reform

Truly rare is the use of action research in projects to transform higher education institutions and higher education policymaking and implementation. A few dissertation projects have addressed this, such as those of Betsy Crane, Reynolds and Rebecca Moore, and one university was founded by using an action research process directed by Ogüz Babürüglü. These prove that such interventions are possible. But most of the publications on this subject are by Greenwood and Levin, who are repeatedly invited to provide the only chapter on higher education and action research in the last three editions of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* and the two editions of the *Handbook of Action Research*.

Given the state of crisis in higher education, what should disturb action researchers is that they have been incapable of launching sustainable reforms to reorient universities using action research. Instead, if anything, the 'new public management' has succeeded in recasting students and the public and private sectors as fee-for-service customers. Supporting that, they impose a narrow form of accountability on higher education, counting publications in variously ranked journals, the citations to those publications, the funds in research grants attracted, the students employed after graduation and the average salaries of those students.

What are better ways of organizing higher education that do not reduce students to customers, teachers to fee-for-service trainers, researchers to grant-getting entrepreneurs and academic administrators to mini-CEOs of what still are mainly not-for-profit institutions? Proposals that go beyond calling for the return of some mythical good old days are few.

The industrial democracy movement in Scandinavia provided a promising starting point for university reform there. Focused on work organization and the reorganization of work along democratic and solidarity lines, action researchers helped change working conditions in factories, social service agencies, health-care

institutions and so on. But these successes in organizational change have not been applied to the structures of higher education themselves, which remain largely as they were before this work began.

The conventional structures of most higher education institutions are the academic expression of Fordist organizational structures that the industrial democracy movement worked to alter, a point made by Christopher Newfield as well as Tony Becher and Paul Trowler. Nearly all higher education institutions are divided into sub-disciplines—disciplines which are departments and colleges and so on—and there is a clear division between the statuses of students, faculty, support staff and administrators. In this version of higher education, the disciplines together make a university in which all subjects are known and can be taught by experts. How to integrate this knowledge in actionable frameworks for societal benefit is rarely addressed. Students are given curricular requirements to meet, and after 4 years of moving from department to department taking courses from faculty, who are neither generally aware of nor particularly interested in each other, they are said to be 'educated' and given a degree.

Faculty are mainly rewarded for demonstrating expertise in their own particular subcategory of work, vis-à-vis not other colleagues at the institution but other colleagues in their disciplines, nationally and internationally. There are few incentives for them to co-operate with each other, particularly in the social sciences and humanities. Ranking and career success are based on extra-campus recognition.

Administrators are paid increasingly well for running these institutions in what many faculty and students falsely believe is the 'corporate' style. They are increasingly becoming administrative careerists whose trajectories are a series of upward moves to more senior positions and more highly ranked institutions. They are portrayed well ethnographically by Gaye Tuchman and Benjamin Ginsburg.

From the point of view of action research, this is wrong-headed. Since the world is made up of complex, multidimensional, dynamic systems that struggle to adapt to constantly changing conditions, to study these phenomena and to pretend to act on them by artificially dividing them up into spheres of academic disciplinary commodity and expertise production destroys any possibility of understanding or acting on them.

In various writings, Morten Levin and this author have articulated some of the reasons behind these organizational pathologies. One key cause is that action research requires a process based on iterative cycles of research, reflection and action in collaboration with non-academic stakeholders. To the extent that Fordist administrators want to control the boundaries of their institutions and academic actors enjoy their

freedom and isolation, both groups oppose free and fluid interchange over the boundaries of the university and society. They oppose interactions across departmental boundaries for similar reasons.

Faculty members and students brought up in this world have come to see themselves as experts and proto-experts climbing professional ladders. They react with fear and rejection to the idea that the ladders they are climbing are fundamentally meaningless to society at large. So they too enforce the narrow Fordist organizational structure.

Another reinforcing mechanism, visible from the vantage point of action research, is the intellectual property regime. By dividing knowledge into separate bits of expertise and rewarding individuals for creating and transmitting these bits, this model conceives knowledge as a commodity to be created by a producer and sold to a consumer (e.g. student, corporation and government) for a price. In some cases, the price is extracted in return for teaching.

Since a key premise of action research is that knowledge is socially constructed in learning arenas in which many collaborate and the condition for knowledge generation is the free and open exchange of ideas and information, action research views the current intellectual property regime of universities as completely false and extractive. By not recognizing and promoting the social basis of knowledge creation, Fordist universities actually curtail the development and transmission of knowledge.

And finally, political and economic powerholders view any kind of activist research, including action research, as a threat to the exploitative arrangements that support their dominant social, economic and political positions.

This brings us to a central contradiction in the current organizational environment of higher education worldwide. Increasingly, with the attempted marketization of all public sector institutions, everything public, including public higher education, has marginalized dimensions of higher education that do not lead directly to a productive, well-paid job. Most of the policymakers and administrators in higher education have joined a worldwide movement to make higher education institutions 'transparent', 'accountable', 'efficient' and employment relevant. These accountability schemes take the current Fordist structures of higher education for granted. Thus, they impose numerical competitions and prizes on individual students, faculty, departments, colleges and universities that treat each of their activities as a quantifiable one to be measured by experts. These quantified scores provide the basis for a pseudo-objective system of ranking that institutions of higher education struggle to rise in.

The effects of these systems are widely known already, as the British research on the subject by David Rhind showed. They result in narrower research and teaching, less collaborative work, shorter time horizons for research projects, more narrow publications to maximize the number of articles emerging from each project and so on. They cause a race to the bottom in quality and scope of research and punish anyone for doing more abstract, blue-sky, long-term or multidisciplinary work.

Action research, on the other hand, proceeds on the assumption that a great deal of relevant knowledge already exists but is not available for action until all the relevant stakeholders are engaged in a collaborative process of description, analysis and action design. All these different stakeholders have different criteria for what will be a valuable intervention and outcome, and given their relative positions, they are able to judge first-hand the effects of actions designed by an action research collaborative group. In action research, the organization of the collaborative learning community seeks to be coextensive with the scope and complexity of the problems under study.

Considering the kinds of problems that currently are major priorities globally—climate change, the mal-distribution of wealth, hunger, preventable illness, environmental destruction, sustainability and renewable energy—failure is guaranteed by trying to cope with such issues through a Fordist system. Action researchers believe that universities can be organized and reorganized to match these problems better and to begin a more effective process of providing actionable research and strategies to deal with them. But doing so would mean significant reorganization of the ways universities do business and of the ways they are held to account by policymakers and politicians and lots of internal shifts in power positions.

In this brief entry, it is not possible to develop a full alternative design for universities, but here is a sketch. The design conditions are as follows: High levels of expertise available at universities can be valuable, expertise must be deployed in collaborative learning communities including academics and non-academic stakeholders and the configuration of the knowledge and stakeholders must match the complex contours of the major systems problems the world faces.

Starting with an inventory of key large-scale system problems faced in the world, universities could configure themselves as matrix organizations with a variety of teams of academic and non-academic stakeholders integrated into collaborative learning communities around specific problems. These communities, seconded from disciplinary departments, would set the goals, conduct the research, design the actions and collaboratively examine the results and publish

them. Once such a team had accomplished the major work that energized the initiative in the first place, the faculty would return to their disciplinary departments awaiting the next opportunities.

Central leadership in such an organization would no longer be the distant authoritarian managers of the Fordist system. Leaders would be co-ordinators and facilitators of the work of the teams and would liaison with the external world in search of important problems for the action research teams to address and funding to support them. Faculty hiring and promotions would be guided and evaluated in view of their contributions to these problem-solving collaborative learning communities and not merely for their individualistic academic commodity production.

Student training would be as much by apprenticeship in these collaborative learning communities as by passive education in classroom settings. Students would learn to conduct meaningful research by participating with multidisciplinary teams of researchers and other stakeholders and would be, in effect, apprentices to both the faculty and the teams.

Funding and political support for these action research-centred institutions would arise from the demonstrated importance of their work and their ability to show clear results in the context of the application of their knowledge to solving real-world problems.

Could such institutions exist? Not until action researchers take a more focused and organized stance in opposition to the current Fordist model of higher education.

Davydd J. Greenwood

See also adult education; community-university research partnerships; Taylorism; teaching action researchers

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HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

See Highlander Research and Education Center

HIGHLANDER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

The Highlander Research and Education Center, located in New Market, Tennessee, in the southern Appalachian Mountains, serves grass-roots social change movements in the southern and Appalachian regions of the USA. Founded in 1932, in Summerfield, Grundy County, as Highlander Folk School during the Great Depression, it became an educational centre for labour organizing in the 1930s. Racial segregation was legal in all the southern states, and Highlander, as an integrated facility, became a centre for the Civil Rights Movement in the 1940s and 1950s. Threatened by Highlander's work for civil rights, the state of Tennessee closed the centre in 1961 and revoked the charter, and Highlander lost the Grundy County site. Highlander leaders quickly re-chartered as Highlander Research and Education Center, and educational efforts continued, first in Knoxville, Tennessee, and then, beginning in 1971, at the workshop centre in New Market, Tennessee. In the 1960s and 1970s, Highlander was involved with groups related to coal mining and poverty issues in central Appalachia. Since the 1980s, education

programmes have focused on economic justice, human rights, environmental sustainability and democratic governance. Research for organizing efforts has always been a part of Highlander's work but developed into a more overt strategy with community economic and environmental efforts in the late 1970s and 1980s. This entry covers the history of the Highlander Center, information about Highlander's educational process and the development of Participatory Action Research as part of that process, with examples of how those processes supported organizing efforts in the southern and Appalachian regions of the USA.

Education at the Highlander Center

Highlander developed an education philosophy and practice to support participants from marginalized communities who share and analyze their experiences in order to bring about social change. Myles Horton, one of Highlander's founders, was very influential in the development of Highlander's educational methods (which he called 'education for social change') until his death in 1990. Workshops develop relationships through which participants find commonalities and differences, analyze their situations and explore new ideas for strategies in order to return home stronger and better prepared to address issues and build long-lasting efforts with other groups. Highlander staff also visit and work in local communities and with larger networks and organizing efforts. Highlander supports people and groups to build their capacities to strengthen organizing, building networks and, hopefully, movements. Participants eat together, share sleeping space and interact also during breaks, campfires and free time. These times are as important as the planned workshop meetings for building connections.

Out of Highlander's workshops, new organizations, initiatives and movements sometimes form. The Citizenship School programme, led by Septima Clark in the 1950s, began in the African American community on John's Island, South Carolina, and became an outstanding programme that spread throughout the South. John's Island is one of the Sea Islands off the southern coast of the USA, where families of former slaves remained after the Civil War. Esau Jenkins, a leader from John's Island, attended a 1954 workshop on the United Nations at Highlander. During the workshop, Jenkins shared his experience that the problem they had was barriers to voting for African Americans. There was a literacy test for voter registration in South Carolina that required people to be able to read a section of the state constitution.

Over the next 2 years, Clark, a former teacher from Charleston, South Carolina, Highlander staff and Jenkins initiated efforts to deal with the situation. Bernice

Robinson became the first teacher. She developed lessons with John's Island residents around their need for voter registration and also other practical needs such as being able to fill out catalogue order forms. People from other Sea Islands began requesting similar classes. Clark and Robinson developed the curriculum out of the needs and experiences of local residents in the Sea Islands of South Carolina and went on to train teachers from across the South. By 1961, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a Civil Rights Movement organized by Martin Luther King Jr., took on this programme, continuing to train teachers to conduct citizenship schools. This programme laid a foundation that would help build political participation in many communities during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

Culture has been a key ingredient of Highlander's educational work. Incorporating music, drama, art and other forms of culture to strengthen organizing encourages people and communities to recognize and build upon cultural strengths. Zilphia Johnson Horton, who came to Highlander in 1935, collected songs written by workers, created song sheets and taught people to be song leaders, who then took the songs back to the labour union struggles. Other cultural staff built on her legacy to link cultural work to organizing and campaigns. Attention to language as a communication and cultural issue at Highlander came out of work with new immigrant communities in the South and Appalachia in the 1990s. Highlander held bilingual workshops to ensure democratic communication across language and developed educational materials to train interpreters, translators and organizations in the region.

As part of this educational and organizing process, access to information that informs strategy is critical and has always been part of the educational process for Highlander. As groups organize to address issues, they must find out information to help them determine the best strategy. They share vital information during and after Highlander workshops. An emerging community environmental health focus developed in the late 1970s, as well as an Appalachian effort to document land ownership, which created a need for more technical research and resulted in an enhanced Participatory Action Research programme at Highlander.

Participatory Action Research at Highlander Center

Working in Appalachia with communities developing health-care clinics, Highlander encountered problems of occupational and environmental health issues in the region. Communities needing to know why cancer rates were high or why miners and millworkers had breathing problems led them to look at environmental

and workplace conditions. Black lung from coal mines, brown lung from textile mills, toxic waste creation and disposal and air and water pollution from chemical plants all became major issues in the region. The need for research on health, chemicals, laws and regulations, permitting processes and corporate research—areas where ‘experts’ and ‘academics’ were seen as essential—became more critical for organizing. Practically, the Highlander research programme was not able to meet all the demands for research from community groups, so teaching people how to do their own research was needed.

This increased need for technical information led Helen Lewis, John Gaventa and Juliet Merrifield to develop an enhanced participatory research programme at Highlander. The Highlander library was expanded as a research library, and Participatory Action Research workshops and projects provided ways to push and test this work, always connecting to issues that were being addressed in the region. Education, organizing and research were intertwined with the goal of changing the situations of marginalized communities.

Over the years, Participatory Action Research has taken many forms. Highlander staff began to see their role as helping to train community researchers instead of being the researchers; the other prong of this effort was pushing ‘experts’ and academics to be aware of the knowledge and capabilities that community members bring to their fields and to work in respectful relationships to determine needs and support community participation in the creation and control of information. Merrifield laid out the importance of issues of control, ownership, use and accountability in ‘Putting Scientists in Their Place’ (1993).

Examples of Highlander Participatory Action Research Work

Appalachian Land Ownership Study

From 1979 to 1981, the Land Ownership Task Force of the Appalachian Alliance undertook a participatory research study to document land and mineral ownership in six states in Appalachia. Over 60 researchers co-ordinated by member groups gathered data from property records in 80 counties across six states, with Highlander Center and the Appalachian Center at Appalachia State University serving as institutional bases. After a massive compilation effort, these reports documented patterns of concentrated corporate and absentee ownership of land and minerals, such as 53 per cent of the land being held by 1 per cent of the owners, along with the low levels or lack of taxation of these resources, making links to the economic and social conditions of the counties. The report was

funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission, but this agency refused to publish the findings, so the Appalachian Alliance printed the results. Groups in the region used the results of the study in organizing efforts and influenced academics who desired to join their knowledge to community efforts.

The Community Environmental Health Programme

In the late 1970s, a growing, community-based environmental movement emerged out of community efforts to control toxic industries, resource development and waste disposal facilities that were affecting their homes and health, both in the South and in Appalachia.

In 1977, Highlander started working with a group of residents in Kingsport, Tennessee, to document the air and water pollution from the Eastman Kodak plant there and its potential health effects. Following from that work, Lewis secured funding from the National Science Foundation for the Science for the People project. One of the forums was at Bumpass Cove, where landfill owners were taking hazardous waste into the site and local residents began noticing health problems. When the river flooded, washing out toxic waste barrels, residents blocked the road to stop the trucks bringing in materials. They formed a group, the Bumpass Cove Concerned Citizens, and gathered files from the Tennessee Department of Health. Members brought stacks of information from the permitting files to Highlander, and the staff provided assistance and research manuals to help them determine what chemicals were being brought in and what health effects the chemicals would cause.

From the late 1980s until the late 1990s, the ability for communities to research environmental issues and share that information across communities empowered a wave of organizations fighting to stop local pollution, linking them to more technical resources available. Intermediaries like Highlander Center, the National Toxics Campaign and Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste provided support, and environmental justice networks growing out of the People of Color Environmental Summit of 1991 provided critical technical resources to support this movement, including workshops, meeting opportunities and field support. Highlander held a series of workshops from 1989 into the late 1990s, which brought together hundreds of community and union leaders and members to share information and strategies for confronting new and existing toxic production and disposal facilities. Education, research and organizing were all essential and intertwined in these efforts.

The growing environmental justice movement also linked globally with peoples’ struggles around the

world. In the 1980s, Gaventa and Merrifield met with and documented the shared struggles of communities living next to Union Carbide facilities in Bhopal, India; Institute, West Virginia; and Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Gaventa and Merrifield travelled to all these communities and made a video to send to Bhopal and produced a joint report on Union Carbide with activists in India.

For the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 1992, Highlander's Community Environmental Health Program gathered stories written by groups fighting toxic and environmental problems across the USA and compiled these into a report, which was distributed by a delegation from Highlander to participants from other countries at the Rio Conference.

Economic Education and Globalization Research

The 1980s saw a wave of deindustrialization as factories moved to other countries for lower wages, along with growing mechanization in mines and farms. Many struggling areas of the southern and Appalachian region were seeing new economic challenges. The Highlander Economics Education Project began in 1985 to develop an economic development curriculum for rural communities. This curriculum, carried out with community groups in Dungannon and Ivanhoe, Virginia, and Jellico, Tennessee, emphasized local knowledge and research on the local economies in order to develop strategies to strengthen them.

In 1989, Highlander supported a new community labour coalition, the Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network, to research and organize around deindustrialization in Tennessee.

Factory workers who were part of the Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network, and who had themselves dealt with factory closings, organized trainings and worked with Highlander staff and other people to create a handbook for displaced workers. Exchanges between factory workers from Tennessee and those in the maquiladora production zone of Mexico were organized into slide shows, presentations and videos to educate people in Tennessee about the North American Free Trade Agreement and the effect of this economic globalization on communities in the USA and Mexico.

A rapidly growing immigrant population in the South was a new reality in the 1990s, with the largest numbers of new immigrants coming from Mexico as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the resulting economic devastation in that country. Educational efforts at Highlander were directed at supporting new immigrants largely from Mexico and Latin America, while also linking these communities to Highlander's traditional constituencies of African American and marginalized White communities. As new issues emerged around immigrant rights, Highlander connected

research with educational and organizing needs at workshops and in new coalitional efforts.

Highlander continues to help communities find information, increasingly including information in multiple languages. With the Internet, the need for a research library has decreased, but assisting groups in strategically determining research needs and where to find information, and how to gauge the source and accuracy, is a critical function. Navigating vast realms of information, not a lack of information, is the challenge. Information literacy, the need to help people learn more about strategies and resources for finding and using research, is critical to helping them navigate the constantly changing information world.

Susan Williams

See also citizen participation; Horton, Myles; Participatory Action Research; social learning movement

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HIV PREVENTION AND SUPPORT

The global HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) response has increasingly become intertwined with

action research. Due to many unique historical factors, the global HIV movement is rooted in social justice, human rights and activist ethics. This has resulted in global health policies that advocate for the active participation and inclusion of people living with HIV, and those who are most affected, in research and policy development. As a result, action research has been widely employed to support the production of knowledge that is consciously informed and/or led by the lived experiences of those most affected by the virus. The varied methodologies within action research aim to ensure collaborative and participatory processes. These inclusive practices have become a vital component of HIV intervention development and evaluation, which have led directly to informing policy and calls for social change to mitigate the impacts of HIV around the world.

HIV is the virus that leads to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). The epidemic of HIV and AIDS is one of the largest global health crises that the world has ever known. To date, more than 30 million people have died from AIDS-related causes. At the end of 2010, there were 34 million people living with HIV around the world.

The spread of HIV follows paths of inequities and is exacerbated by social disparities. People who have long been marginalized in society often face the greatest impacts of HIV. The populations most affected by the global epidemic include women, young people, gay men, people of colour, people who use illicit drugs, people in prisons, sex workers, transgender people and people living on low incomes.

To adequately address the devastating impacts of HIV, the response aims to both prevent its further spread and treat, support and care for the people who have acquired the virus. In the past, these varied approaches could be seen independently or in tension with one another. But today, prevention, treatment, care and support interventions are primarily viewed as mutually complementary. As such, HIV prevention itself is defined as involving a combination of diverse interventions aimed at curbing infections, including those that are *behavioural* (promoting condom use and other harm reduction interventions), *biomedical* (increasing access to testing and antiretroviral treatments) and *structural* (facilitating supportive policy and legal environments and addressing economic inequity and cultural and social factors that lead to vulnerabilities for people affected by and living with HIV and AIDS).

HIV treatment involves ensuring consistent access, quantity and quality of antiretroviral therapies for people living with HIV and the treatment of opportunistic infections that arise from living with a compromised immune system.

HIV care and support often involve programming and interventions such as psychosocial and mental health services, nursing, home care, information and educational supports, training and capacity building.

Those first to respond to the crisis in the 1980s were a diverse range of HIV-infected people, their friends and activists in gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities in North America. In an environment of state inaction towards the devastating crisis, there was a lack of government or institutional recognition, support and funding. Despite this, a strong and vibrant activist and community self-care response evolved to counter the institutional AIDS stigma, homophobia and racism towards those most affected by the emerging virus. During this time, a wide range of community organizations evolved to respond to the crisis, and due to intense social movement organizing and activist pressure, some political leaders began to acknowledge their responsibility to respond.

Resulting from the enormity of the impact of HIV, today the socially organized response to this global epidemic is highly unique and consists of diverse actors from many sectors of society. While lack of political will to respond, stigma and discrimination still exist, the global HIV response today has expanded to comprise people living with HIV, activists, community and non-governmental organizations, multilateral and international funding institutions, governments, the private sector, doctors, scientists and researchers as well as public figures.

Due to its scale, complexity and impact, and the resulting resources and political commitment needed to attend to it, the HIV epidemic, and the response to it, has been noted as needing exceptional attention. This is what is called *HIV exceptionalism*. The exceptionalism of HIV has resulted in specified funding bodies; global, regional and country-specific strategic response plans and a massive global mobilization of resources to address the health crisis. Despite calls for an exceptional response from activists and intuitions, activists complain that the lack of political accountability from government leaders continues to result in many not being able to access the necessary drugs to treat the virus.

As a result of the widespread activist force that drives the HIV movement, responses to the epidemic are often now framed through a human rights lens. In the early days of the HIV epidemic, people living with HIV were often excluded from major policymaking forums, events and conferences focused on the response, as these platforms were often exclusive to members of the medical establishment and governments. Activist pressure calling for the human right to participation and inclusion led to the development of ethical principles intended to underpin the HIV responses.

The call for active and meaningful participation of people living with HIV in decision-making that would affect their lives and support the development of appropriate HIV responses was recognized in 1983 with the Denver Principles. These principles called for people with HIV to be recognized as people with expertise, who could contribute to the response, rather than being viewed as passive patients. In 1994, governments recognized these calls with the Paris Declaration. This declaration signed by 42 governments formalized and declared the *Greater Involvement of People Living with or Affected by HIV/AIDS* as a critical ethical approach to ensure effective national, regional and international responses to the epidemic. Today, this principle of participation has become known as the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV and AIDS, or GIPA.

There are now numerous international treaties and commitments that acknowledge and support the involvement of those living with and affected by HIV, including the 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS Declaration of Commitment and the United Nations High Level Meeting Political Declarations. Through these declarations, participation of people living with HIV is intended to address and inform the complexity of how the epidemic manifests differently in different contexts and communities. These documents also recognize that to be successful, all of the varied prevention, treatment, care and support interventions must be tailored to specific communities and must be culturally relevant, acceptable and accessible to the wide range of diverse people who are affected by HIV, which is only a viable undertaking when these communities are actively engaged.

Outside of government declarations, the GIPA has been integrated into government national AIDS plans, organizational policies in NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and research guidance documents. In some countries, HIV and health-specific action research networks, practitioners and institutions have included GIPA as an ethical principle that is to be operationalized in research protocols. This can be undertaken in a number of diverse and creative ways, including the creation of community advisory boards to oversee and inform research projects and through training people living with and affected by HIV to develop research expertise. In some countries, there are also community-based Ethics Review Boards for HIV-specific action research, which also include members who are living with and affected by HIV.

Within these approaches, it is recognized that practitioners of participatory methodologies, which promote collaboration with people from a variety of disparate backgrounds—such as action research—must seek to ensure reflexivity to continually address

and acknowledge how power is operating during the research practice. As many people living with HIV have faced social marginalization due to their lived experiences, addressing power within action research on HIV can help ensure that these people are not exploited, used instrumentally or further marginalized.

Action research itself has become increasingly recognized as a way to produce knowledge that can be owned by communities affected by HIV to help address their own needs. It is also well situated as a methodology to support the development of knowledge to address complex structural barriers and access disparities that the HIV movement seeks to change. Many community-based HIV organizations have now integrated forms of action research into their ongoing work. The development of prevention, treatment, care and support interventions regularly begins with an action research project developed collaboratively through community-based organizations and research institutions.

Alex McClelland

See also health care; health promotion

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HORTON, MYLES

Myles Horton was the co-founder of the Highlander Folk School in Summerfield, Tennessee, in 1932. It was a school to educate adults for social and political change in the South. The school became deeply involved in the major social movements of the region: labour union organizing, civil rights and Appalachian coal mining issues. Horton was the director until 1970

and an educator until his death in 1990. His educational philosophy and pedagogy were paramount in the development of Highlander's educational programme, which was based on the experiential knowledge of participants and included democratic, participatory education methods similar to what is now called action research.

Early Influences and Education

Horton developed his philosophy of education and method of operation from the social and economic situation which he had experienced. Growing up in a poor sharecropping family in Tennessee, he experienced the economic realities of the Great Depression and the exploitation of rural communities. An avid reader and inquiring student, he attended Cumberland University, a Presbyterian college in Tennessee. In college, he taught summer Bible school in the mountains. In Ozone, Tennessee, a small mountain community, he developed community discussions with the parents of the Bible school children. They discussed the problems of the communities, and he became interested in the possibilities of adult education and community participation to deal with the social and environmental problems of the region.

In college, he was active in the Young Men's Christian Association and participated in interracial conferences, and after graduation, he worked as secretary of Tennessee's Young Men's Christian Association. He continued his dream of developing a school for adults, and a congregational minister, Rev. Abram Nightingale, who had become a friend and mentor, encouraged him to learn more in order to do adult and community education. He gave him a book by Harry Ward, *On Economic Morality and the Ethic of Jesus* (1929), and urged him to go to New York to Union Theological Seminary to study with Ward. At Union, he also studied with Reinhold Niebuhr, who headed the Fellowship of Socialist Christians. Niebuhr became a lifetime friend and supported Horton's dream to develop a school in the mountains.

In New York amid the stock market crash, he saw first-hand the collapse of the industrial system, observed jobless bread lines and labour strikes and listened to the radical speeches of communists, socialists and activists of all sorts. Horton was also influenced by the New Deal programmes, populist politics (including Fabian socialists) and Karl Marx, whose work influenced him, he once said, not because of the conclusions but in his approach to understanding and analyzing society. While in New York, he also learned from the progressive educators John Dewey and George Counts. In order to further explore and develop his educational philosophy, he went to the University of Chicago to study with the sociologists Robert Park

and Lester F. Ward, and there he met Jane Addams of Hull House and learned about settlement houses.

Still seeking a model for his educational work, he was advised to visit and observe the Danish folk schools. He spent a year in Denmark and was influenced by the folk schools, where people learned from their own experiences and related their education to life problems. He also observed a number of practices which would become a part of the way Highlander operated, including peer learning, group singing, freedom from examinations and students and teachers living and working alongside one another.

The Founding of Highlander Folk School

When Horton returned from Denmark, he met Don West, a recent graduate from Vanderbilt, an activist and a social gospel preacher, who also wanted to start a school to change the South. They convinced Lillian Johnson, who had developed an education centre in Summerfield, Tennessee, to let them use the facility. In November 1932, the Highlander Folk School opened, and they were joined by a group of young men and women greatly influenced by social gospel theology, Christian socialism and the populist politics of the times. The young radicals included James Dombrowski and John Thompson, Horton's classmates from Union Theological Seminary, and Elizabeth Hawes from Brookwood Labor College. Zilphia Johnson from Arkansas joined the group in 1935 and married Horton. She added music and drama to the curriculum, and Mary Lawrence, who joined the staff in 1938, was a leader in the labour programme. Don West, the co-founder, left Highlander soon after the founding to work with unemployed workers in Georgia.

Highlander first became a school for the unemployed, striking workers and impoverished mountain workers and became involved in the labour movement and the education of labour union organizers and members. Horton and his young friends, who became the staff of the school, struggled to integrate their educational experiences into a way to educate adults and to deal with the problems of the South. They developed some residential educational programmes lasting from 6 weeks to 2 months. They continued somewhat formal courses but encouraged students to become involved in the community, attend union meetings and organize campaigns in industrial communities. They also had informal weekend conferences which were more discussion groups. Their practice of living, working and eating together broke down racial barriers.

Horton recalled how in the early days, despite their intellectual commitment to participatory educational practices, the young 'teachers' tended to follow the patterns learned from their educational experiences

and lecture the students. They found that this did not produce understanding, reflection or action, so they 'learned from the people' and developed a method which was participatory and transformational. Highlander's education methods evolved through working with people and communities marginalized and underserved by the mainstream economy. What emerged was an educational process that allowed people to analyze problems, test ideas and learn from their experience and the experience of others. Horton was convinced that education must be communal and democratic and must emanate from the people. Education should be a process of creating a forum where people solve their own problems. Horton called the Highlander pedagogy *Education for Social Change*—a method which influenced not only the labour movement but also the Civil Rights Movement and environmental activism in the South, Appalachia and throughout the country.

In order for the staff to understand the problems of the workers in the textile mills, Highlander staff worked as labour organizers and in outreach programmes, working with former students in their communities or organizations. They helped other schools organized by unions for the training of their members. In 1937, Horton worked with the Textile Workers' Organizing Committee as a labour organizer. In the process, he learned the difference between being an organizer and being an educator. He became very critical of the ways in which organizers sought limited goals to encourage and mobilize people to achieve short-term victories. He became convinced that Highlander should emphasize education over organizing. Organizing should occur with or after education, so that people would work for structural change rather than short-term goals.

Although illegal in Tennessee and throughout the South, all activities at Highlander were racially integrated. Highlander was a training centre during the Civil Rights Movement and was considered a 'communist training school' by southern segregationist governors. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks were among the many to attend Highlander workshops, and the southern governors worked to close the school, thinking that closing Highlander would stop the Civil Rights Movement. After being closed by the State of Tennessee in 1961, the school was renamed as Highlander Research and Education Center and moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, then relocated in 1971 to New Market.

In the Highlander education process, factual information, critical analysis and people's experiences were combined with dramatic skits and music, which included rewriting familiar gospel songs for the picket lines. Zilphia Horton added this to the core curriculum of the labour education programme. The same technique served the Civil Rights Movement, which included both the citizenship schools and the revision

of an old gospel song, which became the rallying song of the Civil Rights Movement: 'We Shall Overcome'.

The Role of Research in Highlander's Work

Highlander used research to involve people in the study of racial problems, in the farmers' union co-operatives in the 1950s and later in Appalachian land ownership studies. Horton insisted that research, like education, must grow from the problems of the people, not from problems in the researcher's head. It should be more than simply 'technical assistance' or 'back up'. He never saw research as a one-time, completed project but rather as an ongoing process, a way of understanding the situation and working on problems.

Highlander developed a region-wide participatory research effort in the 1980s to study the ownership of land and minerals in the coal mining regions of West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. Community people from throughout the region were the researchers, and they met together at Highlander to train, to share their findings, to develop strategies to use the research and take action to change tax structures and to discuss land reform needs and possibilities.

Horton's Later Work and Continuing Influence

When Horton retired from the Highlander staff, he had the time and freedom to visit places in the world with similar educational centres. He saw a role for Highlander to bring together people with shared backgrounds and concerns to work together on similar problems. Horton visited the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), and there were exchange visits between Highlander and PRIA staff, which resulted in collaboration and international sharing. Union Carbide had chemical plants in Bhopal, India, and in Institute, West Virginia. Bhopal had a big disaster, and the West Virginia plant was facing a similar problem. PRIA and Highlander shared information and worked together with community groups in both places.

Horton and Paulo Freire knew about each other and recognized the similarities of their ideas and their experiences of learning and developing their methodologies many years before they actually met and shared their stories and ideas. Freire suggested that they 'speak a book' together, and he came to visit Horton at Highlander in 1987, and their conversation became a book, *We Make the Road by Walking* (1990). They talked about their educational philosophies and strategies; Horton talked about using questions as intervention and leading students to consider or deal with particular ideas. While Horton stressed beginning with the knowledge of the people and helping them learn

how to analyze their experiences, he emphasized going beyond the knowledge of the people. Freire talked about starting from where people are, to go with them beyond these levels of knowledge without just transferring the knowledge. Freire agreed that Horton's way of asking questions was a way of teaching content.

Horton's philosophy and practice of education and his approach to community-based research have informed and inspired new generations of action researchers, and his influence continues to be felt in the ongoing work at the Highlander Research and Education Center, which maintains his home there as a space for reflection and learning.

Helen Matthews Lewis

See also Christian spirituality of action; Freire, Paulo; Highlander Research and Education Center; liberation theology; Society for Participatory Research in Asia

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HUMAN RIGHTS

The UN defines human rights as those rights that are inherent to all human beings, regardless of nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, religion, language or any other status. Human rights include civil and political rights, such as the right to life and liberty, as well as social, cultural and economic rights, such as the right to practice cultural traditions,

the right to work and the right to education. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, human rights law developed, which includes treaties, international legislation, general principles and other sources. These laws describe obligations of governments to act to promote and protect human rights and freedoms of individuals or groups and to refrain from acting in ways that are deleterious to the inhabitants of their countries and other nations.

Some of the most important precepts of human rights are that they are universal, inalienable, equal and non-discriminatory. Despite the precept of universality, only 80 per cent of states in the world have ratified more than one core human rights treaty which binds them legally to obligations of protecting human rights of people in the world. Human rights are also described as being inalienable, which posits that they cannot be taken away. Important to note, however, is that these rights can be limited in due process situations. The human right of liberty, for example, may be restricted if a person is found guilty of a crime in a court of law. Every human being is believed to have equal rights regardless of group membership, geographic location, citizenship status and so on.

Human rights scholarship and legislation refer to many different rights, and the list continues to expand into the twenty-first century. The breadth of rights categorized as human rights, and the changing nature of human rights in scholarship and practice, contributes to challenges faced by the human rights movement on the world stage, as well as by researchers who strive to implement action research and Participatory Action Research (PAR) in the name of human rights, as discussed below.

Civil and political rights, for example, have been grouped together as first generation rights, with the understanding that the existence of these rights in political doctrine and scholarship across disciplines predates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the UN General Assembly in 1948. Social, cultural and economic rights are referred to as second generation rights as their presence in the arena of human rights corresponds to the adoption of the UDHR. More recently, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, there are arguments for international human rights to consider an entirely new set of rights, labelled third generation rights. Third generation rights refer to the collective rights of societies, such as the right to sustainable development and to environmental health and safety. These rights are thought to be needed for societies in the majority world to be able to enjoy first- and second generation rights. The human rights scholar Burns Weston points out that human rights doctrine is changing as the ethos of human rights around the globe changes. Weston

explains, for example, that third generation rights were introduced as an increasing support was felt around the world for self-determination and the rights of minority and indigenous groups.

Historical Origins

Even though human rights scholarship and doctrine appear to be ever changing, most scholars and practitioners agree about the origins of the term *human rights* and about the philosophical origins of the human rights concept. It is widely accepted that the term itself came into being with the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 and the adoption of the UDHR in 1948. Scholars also largely agree that the general language of human rights came to replace *natural rights*, a concept introduced primarily by the seventeenth century philosopher John Locke. Scholars also point out that the concept of human rights is linked to philosophical questions about justice and morality, which can be traced to the writings and thought of ancient philosophers such as Aristotle and the Roman Stoics Cicero and Seneca. They also note that theoretical discussions of human rights are tied to more recent debates about moral reasoning and the capacity of human beings for moral reasoning, the focus of the eighteenth century German philosopher Immanuel Kant's work.

Contemporary Discussions of Human Rights as Natural Rights

Even though the influence of a great many philosophers on the development of a human rights concept is acknowledged, Locke and his *Two Treatises of Government* (1688) are commonly credited with laying the foundation for thinking about rights as a natural condition of being human and for the relationship of rights to political entities. For Locke, natural rights are the rights to life, liberty and property. Locke argued that these rights exist whether governments aim to secure them by contract or not. Since Locke, many contemporary debates that go beyond the confines of this entry have ensued about what natural rights mean for government and contemporary human life, as well as about the relationship between natural rights and human rights. Gary Herbert, a professor of philosophy, for example, has argued that while the concept of natural rights is linked to the concept of human rights, they differ significantly because natural rights do not impose obligations on others or encourage individuals to be concerned about the suffering of others, as the modern conception of human rights does. John Mahoney, a Jesuit priest and a human rights scholar, takes a different position, arguing that the right to protect one's liberty—a clear natural right—necessarily has implications for the

relations between human beings in a particular society and community. He notes that for certain liberties to be respected and protected, certain societal interventions are required. For Mahoney, natural rights include the involvement of other people as well as social, economic and cultural contexts in human life and are, thus, not so different from human rights.

Human Rights in the Twenty-First Century

Disagreement in the scholarly world about the exact nature of human rights, and their relationship to philosophical accounts of rights, persist. Scholars tend to agree, however, that since the passage of the UDHR in 1948, the ethos of human rights has shifted and human rights movements have gained in popularity throughout the world. This has occurred especially with regard to issues of economic justice and greater political freedom. According to Weston, there is now a deep concern for the promotion and protection of human rights across the globe. While 1948 may mark a decisive shift in global politics, additional contributions to human rights were made in the 1970s and 1980s. During these two decades, national foreign policies, and specifically that of the USA and President Jimmy Carter, began explicitly forwarding human rights agendas. Also during this time, international organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch flourished, which sought to spread concern for human rights on a global level. Additionally, faith-based and professional groups increased that were committed to the human rights movement, and large international human rights conferences addressing human rights issues—such as the rights of children, population concerns, reproductive and women's rights, among other issues—proliferated.

Despite the increase in public support and concern for human rights, contemporary approaches to human rights in scholarship and practice vary. Marie-Benedicte Dembour, a human rights scholar and professor of law and anthropology, suggests that there are four different orientations to human rights in scholarly and activist communities. These are (1) a *natural* view of human rights, (2) a *deliberate* view, (3) a *protest* orientation and/or (4) a focus on *discourse*. The definition of human rights provided by the UN and the human rights initiatives led by the UN over the past century could be classified as corresponding to both a natural understanding of human rights and a deliberate view. This is because they suggest not only that all human beings possess human rights as they are natural to being human but also that human rights can only be sustained through deliberate social agreements within a global polity. According to Dembour, scholars and practitioners with a deliberate orientation to human

rights try to address this seeming contradiction by maintaining the hope that human rights will take on a universal nature, but only in time, when all people recognize human rights as an ideal form of law that should dictate political and societal life.

The third school of thought identified by Dembour, the protest school, may be the one that is the most relevant to action research. This area utilizes human rights as a means for making claims on behalf of the poor, marginalized and oppressed to redress injustices in the world. Similarly, action research scholars often utilize research and academia, and the power they experience through both, to affect social change processes and advocate for human rights. On a more extreme plane, but not necessarily antithetical to protest scholars, are human rights researchers, practitioners and activists who view human rights arguments and human rights movements instrumentally. These discourse scholars use human rights to push for social justice without believing in human rights as a natural condition of being human. These scholars and practitioners, according to Dembour, are more likely to believe in other forms of liberty and equality that are not bounded by the complexities of human rights. This could include scholars who push a *cosmopolitan* agenda, such as Kwame Anthony Appiah, arguing for uniting different peoples and cultures of the world, but not necessarily on the basis of human rights. Included in this group of discourse scholars may also be researchers such as Mahmood Mamdani, who warn that human rights movements and interventions bring with them the threat of imperialism and a new form of colonialism in the twenty-first century.

Challenges at the Intersection of Human Rights and Action Research

Human rights researchers and activists have much in common with participatory and action researchers and are often one and the same. These scholars are referred to as activist-academics. M. Brinton Lykes, for example, is simultaneously a participatory and an action researcher, a community-cultural psychologist, a human rights scholar and an activist. At the intersection of all these things, Lykes serves as an associate director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice at Boston College, as well as a faculty member in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College.

It is no coincidence that participatory action researchers, like Lykes, are also often human rights activists. This is because PAR, as an alternative form of social science inquiry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, developed as a part of human rights and social justice movements in the twentieth century. While some trace the origins of action research to Kurt Lewin's work in the USA around organizational

behaviour, those involved in action research and PAR in the majority world see Latin American activists and researchers, such as Paulo Freire (1970) and Orlando Fals Borda (1985), as responsible for the creation of PAR. It is, therefore, not surprising that participatory and action researchers often confront some of the same challenges as human rights activists and scholars.

In PAR projects, a goal is often for members of the academic world to unite with members of a community with whom they are interested in working, as co-researchers in a project, and to collaboratively investigate social phenomena or problems affecting the community. Despite sharing the goals of social change and social justice, when different cultural groups come together on a PAR project, the fear of the protest- and/or discourse-oriented human rights scholar—that human rights agendas will be imposed on a particular community—comes to the fore.

In one such PAR project initiated by Lykes, titled 'Human Rights of Migrants: Transnational and Mixed-Status Families' (as described on the Center for Human Rights and International Justice website), these challenges were present. The goal of the project was to protect the human rights of Central American and Mayan immigrants in the USA who were experiencing threats of detention and deportation, yet other human rights issues arose during the project. These issues related to the participation of women as co-researchers in the PAR project. As occurred for members of this study, and as frequently occurs during participatory research that brings different cultural groups together, human rights issues of concern to some of the co-researchers on the project were not of concern to others.

A dilemma shared by action research and PAR, and the human rights world more generally, is, thus, whether human rights agendas should always be encouraged even when communities involved in a research project do not otherwise recognize or share the same human rights concerns. Put differently, the practical challenges of human rights-based action research that brings together culturally distinct communities reflect the debate in scholarship and practice on universal human rights and cultural relativism.

Human Rights and Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism asserts that human values emerge in particular social, cultural, religious, economic and political contexts and therefore differ from one community to the next. This perspective also posits that because human values vary a great deal according to the group to which one belongs, applying human rights as a global ethic or legislative system cannot be done without great difficulty and, in some cases, disregard for cultural freedoms.

Human rights scholars, such as John Mahoney, argue that despite respect for cultural diversity being at the heart of human rights legislation, cultures and states are not ethically sacrosanct and above ethical critique or challenge. Mahoney, referencing the words of the former US Secretary of State at the UN Vienna Conference on Human Rights in 1993, explains further that we must respect the religious, social and cultural characteristics that make each country unique without enabling claims of cultural relativism to become the last refuge of repression. He argues, for example, that even though clitorrectomy can be tied to tribal mores or cultural practice, it is still gross bodily mutilation that can be likened to other forms of punitive amputations. This case is one, according to Mahoney, wherein the protection of human rights must supersede the imperative of equally respecting all cultures.

A middle ground taken by some cultural relativists and human rights scholars in this debate is that scholars and practitioners should aim to strike a balance between respect for cultural freedoms and the protection of human rights. The human rights scholar Tom Zwart suggests that through collaboration between international legislative bodies and local sociocultural institutions, human rights protections can be put in place internationally and in a way that is culturally respectful and effective.

Similarly, as the human rights scholar Sally Merry has argued, much of the language in international human rights legislation in its current instantiation frames cultural practices in the Global South as if they are backward and, in some cases, oppressive, whereas cultural practices in the Global North are framed as if they reflect the highest ethical standards. Merry cautions that this subtle ‘othering’ may further alienate individuals and nations who engage in these practices from the language and legislation of human rights, rather than striking some balance between respect for traditions and universal ethical standards worldwide.

Nonetheless, Merry and others note that if cultural tradition alone governed how states did or did not comply with international human rights standards, there could be widespread abuse and violation of human rights in the name of cultural and other forms of freedom. They also note that defending punitive practices in the name of respect for cultural diversity could pose a dangerous threat to the effectiveness of international law and the international system of human rights that has been carefully constructed over the past several decades.

This debate is alive and well in both activist and scholarship arenas and highlights the complexities of participatory and action research collaborations throughout the world.

Even though activist-academics, human rights scholars and activists have different views on this

subject, these questions must be grappled with to prevent action research and PAR from becoming another instance of imperialism in the research world. This is essential for participatory research processes as imperialism in social science inquiry, and the world outside of it, is just the sort of injustice that these research processes seek to redress.

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See also Fals Borda, Orlando; Freire, Paulo; gender issues; Participatory Action Research; social justice

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HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

See Institutional Review Board

HUMANISM

Humanism refers both to a mindset and to a movement with invaluable significance to Western culture. The

term was created as the Latin translation, *humanitas*, of the Greek core concept for lifelong learning, *paideia*, probably by Cicero. Humanism is the programme of thinking which forms the urges and the modes through which we respect and seek knowledge in the other person. It is the core of relationally informed dialogue and hence the precondition of action research. This entry presents humanism as a mindset and as a movement and explains the changes in ontology, epistemology and politics to which it gives birth.

The Mindset

As a mindset, humanism, on the one hand, denotes a level of education through which the individual is empowered to take care of himself or herself, *cura sui*, and to act responsibly on behalf of the community, the *communitas*. Consequently, both the mastering of civil virtues and knowledge of history, language and law, and the martial arts too, were implied in this education, from which the concept of ‘the humanities’ as a branch of science was later formed. On the other hand, *humanitas* also meant a moral or ethical attitude, the core of which was generosity, the *generositas*. It was closely connected to Cicero’s concept of equity, *aequitas*, an attitude expected from judges under Roman law, through which they had to perform by the guidelines to consider the situation of the offender before and during the crime. Deduced from Aristotle’s concept of *epieikeia*, from *Nicomachean Ethics*, the ideal of equity might even surpass the claims of empathy and mean magnanimity.

The core of the mindset of humanism today could be expressed as the endeavour to seek liberation and empowerment for oneself and others through knowledge and to relate with understanding, care and generosity to every single human being. The right to autonomous expression of one’s emotions, values and interests is pertinent to humanist endeavours. In these attitudes, analogies can be found in the aspirations of action research to understand the view of the other person.

The Movement

The movement has its origins during the period of antiquity in Classical Athens, spreading during Hellenism to more cities and finally to Rome. To conceive and treat everyone as a human being, irrespective of ethnic, national or linguistic origin and regardless of world view, was anticipated by Stoicism but was transformed into a perspective virtually covering the whole world by Christianity—with a little help from Roman imperialism. However, the sense of humanism as a movement is bound to the Renaissance, the Baroque

and the Enlightenment. Historically, these periods are characterized by the power reduction of the Catholic Church, and hence of its ideologies, and by the forming of national states with civil rights. Political and social rights could also be seen as, among others, a consequence of a developed, differentiated and pervasive humanist attitude, but they belong to the past two centuries.

Humanism has often been seen as a process in which the individual becomes conscious of his powers and dares to pursue his talents and interests in spite of the ruling hegemonies of thought and the social hierarchies. One speaks about the typical ‘Renaissance man’, incorporating artistic talents, technical and scientific capacities, poetical skills, knowledge of languages and a profound philosophical attitude. Baldassare Castiglioni prescribed this ideal of the humanist gentleman in his 1528 book *Il Cortegiano*. Painters, sculptors and architects became the idols of humanist Renaissance in Italy. It was not until the Baroque, however, that humanism was identified with the ideal of accepting the other person, her culture, values and integrity, and with nurturing and emphasizing mutual understanding through dialogue.

The New Fabrics of the Three Essences: Nature, Humanity and Society

The transformation of the concept of cosmos from geocentric to heliocentric through Copernicus is closely related to humanism. Although many of the transformers in science were still devout Christians, the concept of the power of God was reduced by these discoveries, and the faith in human beings to master their own fate increased considerably. This, of course, could not help but influence the way humanity, and indeed human nature, was conceptualized. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola’s *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486) defined the core of Renaissance humanism by claiming that while everything else was subject to change, human beings, through their formation in the image of God, had the unalterable capacity to change themselves by will. The famous Renaissance concept of *virtù*, the force of action inherent in the prince according to Niccolò Machiavelli, developed in turbulent Catholic Italy and was not embraced by the Protestant movement, in which one relied alternatively on the mercy of God or on determinism. Humanism eventually came to represent the contrary attitude here: the belief in free will, as advocated by Erasmus against Luther, and the reservations towards determinism. However, a pre-democratic spirit of individual freedom could be found in Protestantism, which manifested itself in the belief that any man or woman is responsible for himself or herself towards God, without any mediation by religious institutions.

Pietism, conservative or utopian, shared one set of attitudes with humanism: care for others, mildness and pity. The belief so important to humanism that humans are by nature good probably began in such circles, as did the serious attempt to find an alter ego in any other human being beyond social class.

The Political Consequences of Humanism

Further, humanism had to incorporate itself in a concept of humans as political beings in order to establish itself. Hence, it was closely related to the grand theories of natural rights to life, liberty and property and the law of nature developed by Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes, Baruch de Spinoza, Samuel von Pufendorf and John Locke (the last three were born in the same year, 1623). This created the foundation for the core of humanist anthropology, the *lux naturalis* or *lux rationis*, the 'light of nature' or the 'light of reason', inhabiting every single sane human being. This capacity made individuals untouchable in principle, unless they betrayed their integrity by disobedience to the collective manifestation of the light of reason, the law. Humanism during the Renaissance and the Baroque was rather loyal to the establishment, although critical towards its mores and its institutions, but during the eighteenth century, it became deeply involved with three revolutionary projects.

Revolutionary Humanism

The aims of revolutionary humanists were the liberation of knowledge from religious and political dogmatism, the vindication of human rights and the destruction of feudal society through a republican constitution and new social institutions. Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu's book *De l'Esprit des Lois* (1748) presented the idea of the partition of powers, which was anticipated by Locke.

The work of Cesare's (the Marquis of Beccaria-Bonesana) treatise *On Crimes and Punishments* (1764), condemned torture and the death penalty and prepared the reformatory French Penal Code of 1791, adopted during the revolution.

During the Enlightenment, humanism became more generally involved with the idea of progress of the human mind, as advocated by the editors of the French Encyclopedia (1751–72).

Humanist Epistemology

Epistemology underwent its first formal and immensely important development in the opera of Plato and Aristotle. Linguistic philosophy and theory of language underwent a subtle development by

Stoicism almost at the same time. The distinction between theoretical and practical philosophy is the pivot of Greek epistemology, and consequently, ethics and politics become subjects in the very process of developing the concept of praxis. Neo-stoicism during the Baroque incorporated Stoic ethics as the core of humanist attitudes, among others in Justus Lipsius. An important concept in both Plato and Aristotle is *phronêsis*, often translated as 'practical wisdom' or 'practical knowing', the realization of the *sensus communis*. Since it has a normative core, combining values and experience, it is also of great influence to the humanists' ideal of wisdom. It has gained increasing significance in the field of action research, since it also advocates research guided by the sense of situation, by intuition and by the courage and capacity to practice the phenomenon which Charles Sanders Peirce called 'abduction' and Aristotle, the syllogism of rhetoric, the 'enthymeme'.

Humanism was formed by the rediscovery of first the Latin and then the Greek philosophical and rhetorical heritage. Language has more important functions here, but primarily, it prepared a hermeneutical mindset, the core of which is interpretation as an epistemic function, which has shaped the humanities and later on also was to be a driving force of action research through the influence from phenomenological philosophy. Even if language still had to serve logic and argumentation within a dogmatically closed framework, in which sense-experience did not rank highly, new sensitive and absorbing relations between the world of the senses and the world of words were prepared. Empirical studies could thus arise as a branch of humanism, already realized by anatomical studies through dissection in fourteenth century Bologna. The terminological creativity of Francis Bacon in his *Novum Organon* (1620), his programme for an empirical science, is a case in point.

In the humanist mindset, lifelong learning, and hence education, had priority. This was not just due to the tradition of rhetoric which dominated education far into the seventeenth century. Humanistic education, also named liberal education—the *studia humanitatis* and *artes liberales*—placed tremendous weight on the knowledge of classical languages and philosophy and strictly belonged to the ruling classes and the more wealthy sections of the bourgeois. A democratic ideal, related to humanist Protestantism, of educating the common man and woman emerged already during the Baroque in Johann Amos Comenius' revolutionary focus on early education but did not achieve real influence until 100 years later with the work *Émile* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762). Later, the work of John Dewey pursued the ideal of combining theory and practice in education and in philosophy, defining

experience as an aesthetic of character, and hence inherently practical.

In the religious field, humanism advocated tolerance, often deism, like Francois de Voltaire, or a universal God beyond the claims to truth by revelation, like Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.

The Forces of Dialogue

During the twentieth century, the humanist ideal of dialectical dialogue was revived in so-called dialogue-philosophy, in which the ideal of the capacity of interlocutors to create a deep mutual understanding was developed. The capacity to 'really' meet each other created new conceptual frameworks through a cooperative experiment in learning. Important philosophers were Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Emmanuel Lévinas and Jürgen Habermas and the psychologist Carl Rogers. Such dialogue is at the heart of action research's emphasis on participation and collaborative practices.

Beyond Humanism

Martin Heidegger's renowned essay *Brief über den 'Humanismus'* (2000), written during the post-war era, contains a rather radical criticism of humanism for not appreciating the essence of human beings sufficiently and for being too anthropocentric. He argued that what any man or woman might be is something which we cannot deduct from his or her practice and achievements so far: It is an ongoing, irreducible phenomenon. The respect towards other persons, towards other experiences, towards cultural settings and towards nature (ecological considerations) displayed by action research shares some of these concerns and thus

contributes to an understanding of the human and the world in which he or she participates, both as 'being' and as 'becoming'.

Ole Fogh Kirkeby

See also dialogue; hermeneutics; human rights; phenomenology; *phronêsis*; practical knowing

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IDENTITY

Identity is a term laden with a range of meanings by scholars and practitioners, but two understandings, both relevant to action research, regularly surface. Identity can refer to core aspects of an individual—that is, what we or others view as our essence or nucleus. It can also refer to particular, pre-existing (though socially constructed) categories, including societal groups, such as gender or race; professional and occupational affiliations, such as researcher or farmer, and roles, such as manager or father. Identity has been inherent in action research since its inception because it is based on the idea that research can be pursued by those who do not identify as scholars. By design, action research brings together people with different identities—researchers and practitioners or insiders and outsiders—as part of the research process. But identity may come up in other ways as well; for example, many action researchers document conflict related to divided organizational loyalties or their own struggle with issues related to class, gender or race.

The degree to which such issues are actually engaged with ranges across approaches, especially depending on whether the research is first, second or third person research. First person research involves researchers studying their own practice; second person research is undertaken by small groups exploring individual- and group-level practice; third person research is the most similar to traditional research in that a research team (which may include scholars and/or community members) studies a separate group of individuals. First person and second person researchers customarily grapple with the implications of identity—implicitly if not explicitly—while third person researchers vary in their take-up of these concerns. This entry reviews (a) how action researchers tend to characterize identity, (b) common questions and concerns related to identity faced by researchers and (c) methodological issues and approaches.

Characterizing Identity

Action research convenes researchers and practitioners because, in part, it is based on the idea that identity affects the standpoint, or one's perspective. That is, identities function as lenses or frames that help us see some things while they obscure others. All standpoints are partial; no one is omniscient. That is the rationale for bringing together scholars and laypeople or insiders and outsiders: They will bring different and complementary insights which can create a fuller—though never complete—picture.

Many action researchers also complicate the notion of identity as standpoint in several ways. First, identities are viewed as multiple and fragmentary. As researchers, we may simplistically assign people to a category but find that those ascribed reject the label. Second, identity is constructed. While we often think in terms of taken-for-granted categories—men and women, doctor and patient, marketing and engineering—in fact, those categories are created and sustained through social interaction and are, therefore, malleable. This means that the research process itself may contribute to the blurring or reinforcing of categories. Finally, identity, and therefore standpoint, is commonly seen as fully bound up with power. Standpoints are not neutral, nor do they vary idiosyncratically; they serve some interests and not others. Moreover, identities confer or diminish power, with consequences for the authority accorded their point of view.

These characterizations of identity come into play as action researchers face basic questions and decisions related to identity in their research.

Researching Identity: Key Questions and Decision Points

While every action research project is unique, certain questions pertaining to identity emerge across studies. These interrelated questions include the following: Whose identity? What identities are explored? Is

identity the named area of study, or does it come up as a by-product or side effect—as an ‘uninvited guest’?

Members of an action research team must begin with a basic choice about whose identity they are studying: their own or others’. First and second person action research is designed to explore the self (or multiple selves), while third person researchers focus their inquiry on others. Many scholars intertwine strands of first, second, and third person research.

While any number of identities could be studied, research tends to cluster on several particular ones. First, the identities of researcher/university member/scholar and practitioner/community member/layperson are, not surprisingly, the most common area of inquiry since they are immanent in action research itself. Studies inquire into frames or assumptions held by the two groups, the kinds of conflicts that arise between them and the conditions that enable productive resolution of disagreement. A closely related set of identities is insider and outsider. Most often, the outsider is the researcher and the insider is the practitioner or community member. Similar to scholar/layperson, these kinds of studies explore their different perspectives and the possibility of confluence. Some researchers explore these topics by looking at the complexities and contradictions of being both insider *and* outsider, both academic *and* layperson.

Another common arena is various social identities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, ability/disability, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered) and the like. Within this group, gender may be the most commonly explored, with the intertwined grouping of race, ethnicity and culture a close second. Some researchers study the intersectionality of identities, such as race and gender or gender and class. The foci of such studies vary broadly. Some researchers engaged in first person research study the impact of their own identity on the research process, such as the kinds of questions they asked and how they made sense of the data. One form of second person research is a group of people from a marginalized group, such as people of colour or the disabled, exploring how to overcome their disenfranchisement or feelings of disempowerment. Another kind of second person research investigates how people with two different and often conflicting identities, such as two cultural or religious groups, manage to bridge their differences—or fail to do so. In third person action research, a researcher might work with a group of people on an inquiry into their structural constraints or an intervention in their community. Unlike more traditional research, they might focus on how participants’ views and real-life conditions corroborate or contest popular discourse about their group, whether they are low-income African Americans, homeless men or teenage girls in rural Pakistan. Sometimes, researchers define a community in one way only to discover that

group members find other, intersecting identities to be more salient.

Finally, a connected issue is whether identity was a named focus of the original research or whether it came up as an unavoidable topic as the data collection or analysis got under way. Many studies are designed to, for example, explore a stymied policy change effort or the process by which organizational members conducted a self-evaluation, but then, they raise issues related to identity, which then becomes a theme in the write-up. This is identity as ‘uninvited guest’, meaning that it may have been seen as an intruder interfering with the ostensible focus of the study but ultimately was welcomed as an essential area to explore.

Methodological Concerns and Approaches

Action researchers studying identity face many of the methodological concerns facing those studying other topics, though the particular manifestation may vary. One common issue is voice, or the way the author or authors represent themselves in their writing. A second is validity, or how the quality of the research can be assessed. Further, those studying identity may also draw on particular approaches to data collection and analysis, especially approaches that emphasize community participation.

The authorial voice has many dimensions. One way it arises is the question of whether the voice should be univocal or multi-vocal—that is, whether the writing should include one or more distinct, differentiated perspectives. Given that identity creates standpoint, representing multiple points of view in the writing can feel truer to the basic ethos of action research. Including multiple views may also be a way to ensure that perspectives that are often marginalized—from community members, poor people or people of colour—are represented along with those of more powerful groups. However, some scholars have argued that authors should not privilege the voices of practitioners to the extent of occluding their own.

In first person research, the decision regarding one or multiple voices is usually straightforward since the author is writing about himself or herself and therefore uses his or her own voice. However, some first person research includes comments from others (taken from interviews, e-mails or other communication) that the author brings in as data and integrates into the narrative. Single authors conducting first person research can also present themselves as multi-voiced by, for example, quoting from journal entries written in the past and juxtaposing them against a more current stance or interpretation.

Second person research, by definition, raises more complexity. As research by a group on itself, it should

be written by the group, but this begs the question of whether the group should speak with a single voice or multiple voices. In some cases, authors choose to create a synthesized voice that speaks for all; in others, individual voices may be heard at various points. Usually, the individual authors are listed by name, but occasionally, a group chooses to publish under the name of the group itself.

Third person researchers must also deal with whose voice is represented. Some studies stress solidarity within groups, while others document within-group conflict and power dynamics with a multi-vocal analysis. Moreover, some research explores how the researchers' identity, however understood, influenced the dynamics between them and the group under study. The lead researchers must also identify which aspects of the study were co-shaped by others in the group. The voices of multiple group members may figure prominently, but the overarching analysis and final narrative is usually the researcher's.

Establishing validity in action research is an ongoing concern. While researchers mention a number of different assessment criteria, two stand out as particularly relevant to identity-connected inquiry. The first is visceral personal experience: Does the research feel true to those it describes, whether oneself or others? Unlike many other research topics, identity is ultimately rooted in the self, in authentic, lived knowledge. Therefore, personal reaction can play a greater role than it might under other circumstances. The second is whether the research speaks beyond just one person to multiple audiences with very different backgrounds and life experiences. Identity research can delve into one person's or one group's life experience but then radiate multiple stories that reach a disparate group of listeners.

Action research runs along a continuum from approaches that give virtually full control to university members to methods that emphasize full and equal participation by community members. Identity-related research tends towards the more participatory end of the axis, perhaps because distant, detached approaches are less able to fully document or comprehend something as personal and intimate as identity. First and second person approaches are, by definition, participatory: There is no distinction between the researcher and the researched. Third person research uses various ways to ensure participation by the study's subjects. The most common are participatory appraisals, journaling and mapping exercises and arts-based projects that call upon participants to draw upon traditional media (e.g. quilting) or photography to examine contemporary tensions. For example, the researcher might present data in non-technical, accessible ways, often via visual modes. Participants might then document their own

conditions and responses to the prompts, often using arts-based approaches.

Ultimately, identity is fundamental to the practice of action research; the question is how and how much scholars actually engage its impact and complexities.

Erica Gabrielle Foldy and Celina Su

See also autobiography; first person action research; gender issues; indigenist research; insider action research; LGBT; second person action research; third person action research

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INDIGENIST RESEARCH

Indigenist research is a form of social enquiry based on the principles and philosophies of indigenous peoples, adopted by indigenous people and designed to be conducted by indigenous people within their own communities. Its primary purpose is to allow indigenous people to represent their worlds in ways they can only do for themselves, using their own processes to express experiences, realities and understandings that are unique to indigenous society, history and culture. It achieves this purpose by drawing on indigenous philosophical understandings of the world and places itself against what is seen as an imposed (Western) view that does not acknowledge indigenous ontology and epistemology. It is an inherently political activity that critiques the assumptions of colonial constructions and understandings of indigenous society and culture.

Indigenist research comprises a range of methodologies for engaging individuals and communities in research, usually from an intra-society perspective

rather than for external interests. It presents a culturally specific way of empowering indigenous people as the creators and collectors of knowledge and information rather than as the providers of information to others. Furthermore, its core purpose is to allow indigenous communities to engage in creating their own history and understandings of culture in ways that are internally consistent with the ontologies and epistemologies of that culture and that deeply engage with their experience of events and social process, expressing them in language, narrative and styles that are culturally appropriate. It provides the intellectual context, language and rationale for research as a whole-of-life and fundamentally political engagement with the world. In this way, it reflects the principles of action research, allowing for context-specific communal self-development and empowerment amongst indigenous communities. This entry reviews the history and development of indigenist research and the epistemological foundations and principles of this form of research, emphasizing the importance of social relationships in indigenist research. It then examines the relationship between indigenist research and action research and the role of indigenist research in achieving positive change.

History and Development of Indigenist Research

Indigenist research has emerged as an alternative mode of engagement with knowledge to the dominant mode of Western research. It arose from a need to challenge outsider views of indigenous cultures, especially where these views sought to research culture for outsider purposes (e.g. in anthropological, ethnographic or scientific studies of indigenous people, communities and societies). The Māori indigenist researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith has observed that for indigenous people the term *research* is intimately linked to European imperialism and colonialism and that in a colonial context—in other words, societies within which all indigenous people now live—Western research remains a tool of power and domination, legitimating former colonial social relationships and intellectual traditions and the commodification of knowledge. For Smith, there is an urgent need to view the world through non-Western eyes (e.g. a ‘history of Western research through the eyes of the colonized’) and a need for an intellectual tradition in which the researcher undertakes a historical and critical analysis of the role of research in the indigenous world.

Foundations of Indigenist Research

Key indigenous writers include Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Norman Denzin, Lester Irabinna Rigney and Errol West. During the 1990s, these writers established and published

concepts of indigenist research as being culturally safe and culturally respectful, driven by three key principles: (1) resistance as an emancipatory imperative, (2) political integrity in indigenous research and (3) privileging indigenous voices. The Australian Aboriginal researcher Karen Martin describes indigenist research as research that is proactive, progressive and visionary, that

- recognizes indigenous world views, knowledges and realities as distinctive and vital to indigenous existence and survival;
- honours indigenous social mores as essential processes through which indigenous people live, learn and situate themselves as indigenous people in their own lands and when in the lands of other indigenous people;
- emphasizes social, historical and political contexts which shape indigenous experiences, lives, positions and futures and
- privileges the voices, experiences and lives of indigenous people and lands.

The Importance of Social Relationships in Indigenist Research

Underlying this approach is the core principle that indigenist research must reflect indigenous, rather than Western, ontologies and epistemologies. While there are practical elements that indigenist research shares with action research, it only maintains its internal logic through its intellectual framing within indigenous ontology, distinguishing it, as Martin has noted, from simply being Western research conducted by indigenous people. Indigenous ontologies, while specific to individual language and kinship groups, tend to be relational—that is, they are predicated on awareness and a sense of self, on belonging and on responsibilities and ways to relate to the self and to others. In short, they provide an intellectual basis for people’s attention on their interrelatedness and their interdependence with each other and their greater surroundings. There are two further important consequences of this world view, which distinguish indigenist research from Western research. First, authorship does not equate to authority but provides a medium for articulating cultural knowledge already expressed through story, dance, song and so on. Second, cultural tradition both informs and affirms or validates the findings and expression of the indigenist research.

In these terms, social processes and relationships are of utmost importance in the conduct of indigenist research. Indigenist research commences with the deliberate and explicit identification of the person engaging in the research as an indigenous person first and as a researcher second. In doing so, it defines the form of possible research and, importantly, provides context

for the relationships between the indigenist researcher and the people with whom he or she is engaging. This stance places the researcher in a position of empowerment rather than reactive resistance, while it represents an alternative perspective for understanding the world. Indigenist research is more about empowering communities than about opposing alternative ideologies.

Research Methodology

In common with action research, indigenist research must locate itself in its context, the researcher locating himself or herself in the community's country. Country is understood to be not only the land, waters and biotas of the place but also all entities and the spiritual and legal systems of that place; the researcher is the country, and the country is the researcher. Research is conducted with due respect for traditional customs, ceremonies and authorities. In establishing an indigenist research project, the researcher carefully defines these relations as a basis for articulating a research theory and the research problem. Martin describes this research activity through three main constructs and their processes: (1) establishing, through (indigenous) law, what is known about the entities; (2) establishing the relations amongst entities and (3) enacting ways for maintaining these relations. In Western terms, these may be known as ways of knowing, being and doing. Ways of knowing include methods of observation and engagement, and are context responsive and purposive; there are different types and levels of knowledge; they serve social group and network functions and provide a basis for ways of being. Ways of being define relationships, determining and defining rights to be earned as individuals conduct rites to country, self and others; they evolve as contexts and life stages evolve. Ways of doing provide a synthesis of ways of knowing and being, and are expressed through language, art, imagery, technology, traditions and ceremonies, land management practices, social organization and social control.

Each indigenist researcher structures his or her description of an indigenist methodology in different ways. These descriptions, however, always reflect the essence of indigenist research—that is, it is community based and addresses the research needs of that community in ways the community fully understands. Martin provides a framework comprising eight key methodological elements: (1) research assumptions, (2) research questions, (3) literature review, (4) research design, (5) conduct, (6) analysis, (7) interpretation and (8) reporting and dissemination. While these may appear familiar to non-indigenist researchers, reconceptualizing these in indigenist terms provides a framework for an indigenous research agenda aimed at achieving social revitalization and empowerment.

This agenda focuses on, in order, resetting, reclaiming, re-viewing, reframing, re-searching, revisiting, reconnecting and re-presenting through research. In practical terms, Smith closes her book with a list of 25 indigenous projects. The titles reflect the convergence of indigenous ontology, epistemology, social process and interrelationships that characterize indigenist research as it is harnessed to address indigenous research needs: claiming, testimonies, storytelling, celebrating survival, remembering, indigenizing, intervening, revitalizing, connecting; reading, writing, re-presenting, gendering, envisioning, reframing, restoring, returning, democratizing, networking, naming, protecting, creating, negotiating, discovering and sharing. These titles reflect the importance of indigenist research in addressing issues of importance to indigenous people using processes and methodologies that reflect the power and knowledge inherent in these communities.

Bill Boyd

See also Hawaiian epistemology; indigenous research ethics and practice; indigenous research methods; Māori epistemology

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INDIGENOUS RESEARCH ETHICS AND PRACTICE

The leadership and meaningful involvement of indigenous peoples engaged in research is rapidly evolving. This is occurring within the context of indigenous

peoples around the world continuing to thrive despite often long histories of colonial interference. Written by a First Nation community-based researcher, this entry offers an introductory discussion regarding indigenous research practice and ethics. Drawing upon the values that are further described below, a perspective is offered regarding the fundamentals of developing and sustaining good research relationships.

Introduction

Self-Location

As a basic principle, knowing who is engaging in research and where they are from is essential. In contrast to Western European sociocultural restrictions (where talking about oneself is often interpreted as a sign of arrogance), properly introducing oneself to others is a way of respectfully acknowledging the ancestors who have come before us. It opens the dialogue with others to identify possible family or clan ties and begins the process of creating a relationship. The importance of beginning in 'a good way', or in a manner that is respectful of the territory where work is to unfold, is essential for everyone engaging in a research project.

Self-location as a concept requires briefly sharing details about one's self. This offers context and clarifies the position of the person involved in a project from the outset of shared work or presentations. Is an Aboriginal person leading the project? What Nation and territory is he or she from? What might this knowledge tell the participant, the community, a reviewer or someone planning action based upon the findings? What insights might be drawn about the perspective, understanding and assumptions the person might bring to the research?

Knowing, for instance, that this entry is written from the perspective of a community-based First Nation researcher's perspective positions the following comments within a certain context. The fact that the author lives, works and engages in research from sea-to-sea-to-sea in Canada may offer further insight. Finally, knowing that the focus of the author's research lies in the field of health, specifically HIV/AIDS, may contribute towards further grounding the roots of the story being offered in the following pages.

A Word on Terminology

Definitions are also useful. As a people who have been labelled by others, many times in foreign languages, knowing how words are being used is important. In Canada, the term *Aboriginal* is used as an umbrella term for the three categories of First Peoples within the boundaries of what is now a nation state. First Nations (or Indians), Métis and Inuit populations reside across the country bordered by the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic

Oceans. Within each of these populations, there is great diversity: over 800 different communities, many different languages and unique customs and ceremonies.

Internationally, the term *indigenous* is used to respectfully refer to the First Peoples of a territory. As an inclusive term, *indigenous* is used in the language of the United Nations as a reference to the more than 370 million First Peoples throughout the world. The United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* specifically does not define who are indigenous peoples, in the interest of respecting the right of indigenous peoples to self-define themselves. In the interest of respectfully engaging in an international dialogue, the term *indigenous* will be used here.

The term *community* is also often referenced; therefore, some reflection upon the meaning of this word may be useful. Simply stated, communities evolve in a variety of ways with a variety of people. Indigenous communities may be described as a group of people who have lived in the same area/territory for a long time (e.g. precolonization) and have a shared history, a distinct language, family and clan ties, political structures and shared customs and traditions that are unique and different from those of the national/state population. *Community* may be defined by the specific Nation of indigenous people, such as the Mi'kmaq Nation; by membership within a grouping of indigenous populations, such as Australian Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders; by geographic boundaries, for instance, tribally controlled lands, or by reference to indigenous people who unite regarding a specific issue, such as HIV/AIDS. In urban settings, community may evolve as indigenous peoples from different territories come together through service organizations or meeting places. Nations exist within groupings of indigenous populations, and communities of interest exist within geographic communities, and this fuels the dynamic and complex web of communities within communities. More broadly, stepping back to consider the application of the term *indigenous community* in a global context, the definition becomes inclusive of all the groups of people living in different states who share a common world view of interconnected relationships and responsibility to the places where they are considered to be the first inhabitants.

Being Indigenous

Finally, there is the contentious issue of who is permitted to refer to themselves as indigenous. It is well beyond the immediate scope of this entry to answer the complex questions of identity. In Canada, and other countries in the world, official identity is based upon government regulations and lists. This is a colonial practice that negates the right to self-determination and strikes at the core of nation building by explicitly limiting

who does and does not belong as defined by powers external to the indigenous community. In simple terms, it is accepted that those who self-identify as indigenous, and are accepted by others who self-identify as indigenous, belong.

History

Researched to Death

Research is laden with tradition. Within the indigenous community, these traditions include the silencing of the indigenous voice, the disrespect of protocol and customs, the theft of traditional and/or community knowledge and the justification of colonial expansion into lands that were already inhabited by thriving civilizations. A long history of academic careers being built upon publications about indigenous people's lives and culture, whether accurate or not, has left a deep scar upon the international indigenous community. 'Helicopter researchers', who swoop down on a community, gather data and perhaps physical samples and then take off again without returning to discuss or share their findings have underpinned many of the relationships between indigenous communities and academic research. The appropriation of intellectual property and traditional knowledge about the medicinal properties of plants, for instance, has led to the exploitation of natural resources, with little or no benefit to the knowledge keepers themselves.

Leading indigenous health researchers including Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Māori, New Zealand) have written about research as a dirty word in the vocabulary of the indigenous community, and many indigenous people will speak about the feeling of being researched to death. This was literally so in the context of the introduction of foreign diseases and the destruction of traditional territories as eager researchers 'discovered' new indigenous Nations without considering the implications of contact and development—and figuratively so as streams of researchers documented and detailed daily life and death, the rise of poor health and the impacts of colonization (e.g. forced relocation, removal of children and policy- and law-limiting human rights) without lending support or discussing possible community-defined interventions. There is a sense that the research practices of the past have offered little other than attempts to disseminate sacred knowledge—(un)intentionally introducing and then documenting a community's struggle.

Researching Ourselves Back to Life

The times are changing. Research has always been a part of the lives of indigenous peoples and the sustainability of our communities. Western European-based

academic practices and doctrine are not the only way to undertake research, and moreover, they can be moulded and shaped to more accurately document different ways of seeing and relating to the world. The power of research to inform decision-making, to verify and validate a process or approach and to convince others of one's truth has not been underestimated by indigenous peoples.

The formal introduction of decolonizing research methodologies began to appear in literature in the 1990s. *Decolonizing Methodologies*, written by Smith and first published in 1999 (a second edition, published in 2012, is now available), became a foundational text for indigenous scholars. Increasing emphasis upon the ancient capacity of indigenous peoples to know the world around them is fuelling a new cadre of indigenous researchers who are grounded in two worlds—that of the indigenous community they are a part of and also the academic community of scientific and social scientific thinking. A new era of using research tools and approaches to retell history, rewrite the stereotypical story of the noble savage and forge a path that has yet to be explored by asking new questions is emerging. The picture of the indigenous person and the indigenous community is being interpreted and described increasingly from within the community as opposed to by someone from outside.

Responsibility

Given the damaging history of research within indigenous communities, a new research paradigm is required as we move forward. This is articulated in part in the context of the responsibility to stand up as indigenous and allied researchers and articulate the importance of research in meeting the needs of the community and answering questions of relevance to the community rather than those that fascinate the researcher. In this regard, there is a natural affinity with community-based research, Community-Based Participatory Research and action research, among other critical methodologies. The emphasis of these approaches, including the expectation that research must lead to change, resonates with indigenous community demands. Research for the sake of describing a situation, documenting the cultural practices of an indigenous population or developing an analysis of a community's context in isolation from community members/stakeholders and then publishing it is utterly and completely unacceptable.

Relationship Building

In 2005, Harris and Wasilewski wrote about the four Rs of research: (1) responsibility, (2) relationship,

(3) reciprocity and (4) redistribution. In the 2008 Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, Wise Practices II: Living Knowledge Aboriginal Community-Based HIV & AIDS Research & Capacity Building Conference, Jean-Paul Restoule introduced the five Rs of research: (1) respect, (2) reciprocity, (3) relevance, (4) responsibility and, in the Aboriginal context, (5) relationship. A researcher engaging with indigenous communities must fundamentally understand these concepts.

Without delving deeply into each of the Rs, the core message is that research with indigenous peoples and communities does not follow what might be understood as a more 'traditional' academic model. Controlling for bias by maintaining distance from the 'subjects' of the research and subject matter may compromise the quality of research when working within an indigenous context. Respectful research approaches demand that a researcher learn about the community, the history of the territory, the leadership, the needs of the community and the place(s) that the research might find to contribute towards meeting needs.

In parallel with community-based research, Community-Based Participatory Research and action research methodologies, the researcher must engage with the community. This occurs on the community's terms and within the community's time frame. Reciprocity dictates that something is exchanged when a request is made. This may mean volunteer work, attending community events, capacity building and/or participating in a ceremony. Research unfolds as the community is ready, and generally trying to dictate a strict timeline will result in incomplete or sub-optimal project results. Investing the time to build a relationship, to share oneself as a person who engages in research, will result in forging strong ties within a project team. The relationships will be long-standing, and as the relationships grow, there is greater opportunity to learn and develop respect for the traditions and customs of a specific community.

A New Way of Defining Research Relationships

Increasing interest and capacity related to the potential for research gained momentum in the Aboriginal community in Canada through the 1990s. This resulted in greater investment in defining the conditions for research which would serve to articulate a mechanism to implement the Rs and contribute to the implementation of meaningful research projects. The longitudinal First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS) implemented across Canada with regional direction became a vehicle to voice guidelines for a new research relationship.

The Oka Crisis

The summer of 1990 represents a turning point in the relationship between First Nations, more broadly Aboriginal peoples, and the government of Canada. What started as a dispute over plans to expand a golf course and luxury condominiums on land identified by the local Mohawk Nation as traditional territory, including a burial ground, escalated to a stand-off between the Mohawks and their allies and the provincial police, the national police force and the military. Referred to as the Oka Crisis, the dispute unfolded between the town of Oka and the Mohawk community of Kanasatake. While violence was discouraged by the Mohawk elders, shots were exchanged at one point and one person died. The larger land dispute regarding the Mohawk claim to the contested territory has not been fully resolved as of 2012; however, the golf course development did not proceed. The Oka Crisis has come to represent a political turning point in the context of relations between the Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian government. The stance to protect traditional territory highlighted the importance of the broader protection of tradition as a whole. This also fuelled the dialogue regarding self-determination in all aspects of the research process and the articulation of First Nation rights within the research project.

OCAPTTM: Ownership, Control, Access and Possession

OCAPTTM emerged as a political response to the history of bad research within First Nation communities in Canada and echoes the experience of defending inherent First Nation rights in Oka. As one of the first articulations of the indigenous voice in the research process, it has been influential well beyond the boundaries of the First Nation community and has fuelled significant progress in the development of indigenous research protocols. Evolving from leaders' discussion regarding the RHS in the late 1990s, the term was first expressed as *OCA*; the *P* was added later. Academic papers about the principles of OCAPTTM were first written by Brian Schnarch. The concept, however, rests more explicitly with those involved with the RHS, the Canadian National Aboriginal Health Organization and the First Nations Information Governance Centre. The First Nations Information Governance Centre trademarked OCAP in 2010.

Brief explanations of the OCAPTTM terms are offered below.

Ownership

This asserts the collective ownership of a community over knowledge and information. Cultural traditions,

for instance, belong to all, and an individual does not 'own' this information or have authority to share it without communal consent.

Control

This underlines the right to equal voice and to exercising control over what occurs throughout the research process. Nothing moves forward without community consent—in other words, through review—and ongoing engagement on a research team to ensure that protocol is followed and respectful research practices are in place.

Access

This speaks to the right to have access to information that is gathered about the community and to decide who else is able to see this information. The principle does not imply access to private individuals' personal information but rather to the data set.

Possession

Physical possession of data is one of the most direct means to maintain control, manage access and assert ownership. When possible, research data and materials remain in the possession of the community. When the community is unable to securely maintain data, another institution takes on a stewardship role, physically holding the data and materials on behalf of the community.

As a set of principles, OCAP™ offers a mechanism for engaging in research with integrity. The expectations articulated above apply to all researchers, regardless of cultural background or belonging within the community where the research unfolds. Various tools, such as research team agreements, can be useful to concretely write down and reinforce where ownership rests, how control will be exercised, expectations regarding access and where research data will be stored. An agreement can further clarify how disagreements will be resolved—the OCAP™ principles, for instance, are not meant to silence team members but rather to ensure that all voices will be heard. Furthermore, working within an OCAP™ framework helps leverage opportunities for capacity building and forming a strong team. Not every team member can or should contribute equally to the research work load or have the same skill set. Instead, there is shared authority, oversight, influence, and decision-making based upon developing clear agreements that act as a bridge between community and academic language and customs.

OCAP™ explicitly emphasizes the voice of First Nations from the conception till the completion of the research process. It is most relevant and applicable in the context of geographically defined tribal

lands where leadership and protocols are explicitly defined. In urban settings too, the spirit and principles of OCAP™ remain relevant.

Ethics and Self-Determination in Research

Ethical guidelines regarding research with indigenous peoples internationally predated the articulation of the First Nation principles of OCAP™. Building upon statements such as OCAP™ in more recent years, increasing numbers of Nation- or community-specific research ethical reviews are required for undertaking research. Reflecting the interconnectedness within the indigenous community, ethical review is grounded in the value that the good of the whole serves the good of the individual.

In ethics review, the fundamental principle is analysis of a research plan to ensure that harm or risk of harm is limited for research participants. Indigenous experiences with research may expand the understanding of harm beyond the individual to the collective. The review questions who and what will be protected not only in the context of individual participants but also in the context of the local community and perhaps the Nation.

One might also ask whether there will be any benefit from the research and not just the risk of harm. Research that contributes towards community healing, empowerment, strategic development and sustainability is essential. This does not imply that research will focus only on investigations that might result in 'making a community or population look good'. There are many serious and devastating realities that demand a response and must be further understood. The priority is to undertake research with a mindset that respects the story that will be told as the research evolves, research that is mindful of the meaning and impact it will have in the community and beyond, and sets out to contribute meaningful new knowledge in response to the reality to support the potential for positive change.

Conclusion

Respectfully approaching research within the indigenous community fundamentally demands attention to history, politics and the right to self-determination. This is realized differently by indigenous peoples around the world. In principle, however, there are shared values and principles that ring true and are more or less consistent in the context of research *with* indigenous peoples rather than *on* indigenous peoples. The proceeding materials are offered from the perspective of one community-based researcher actively engaged in research in Canada. There are many other stories filled with humour, weighed down with the devastation of bad research and also celebrating the increasingly positive impact

of community-centred research. Discussion with local community members interested in research is highly encouraged to respectfully learn about local protocols for engagement.

Action research methodologies fundamentally resonate with expectations for community engagement and undertaking research that will enhance the community of interest. The potential for positive change is tangible. As we make the road by walking, this is one story along the path of good or 'wise practices' in research with indigenous peoples.

Renée Masching

See also Community-Based Participatory Research; community-based research; community-university research partnerships; Hawaiian epistemology; indigenist research; indigenous research methods; Māori epistemology

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Websites

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- Kaupapa Māori research: <http://www.rangahau.co.nz>
- National Aboriginal Health Organization: <http://www.naho.ca> (Available until December 2017)

IRM has broadened its scope in recent years to include insights and principles borrowed from feminist, post-colonial and anti-racist research. In this respect, IRM is also a hybrid, a blend of existing research methodologies and methods that has been increasingly anchored within epistemologies, experiences, languages, cultures and spiritual traditions that are specifically indigenous (e.g. First Nations, Inuit and Metis in Canada; Māori in New Zealand; Aborigines in Australia, etc.). It is therefore important to realize that IRM is not, as some authors would have it, a methodology and methods for studying populations that are native or indigenous to a particular region but rather a heterogeneous set of methodologies and methods in the service of indigenous peoples aimed at comprehending, explicating and analyzing the contemporary world from their standpoint within it. Indigenous research methodologies and methods, therefore, invert the accepted or received social organization of the research process by allowing indigenous epistemologies and world views to define how and in what ways social research should be conducted according to protocols established by Aboriginal communities.

As IRM is a new and emerging methodology, it is also a contested conceptual and theoretical terrain. One effect of this is that IRM is used interchangeably, and often loosely, with terms such as *decolonizing methodologies* to denote any one of a range of disparate research approaches that focus on Aboriginal communities, issues and themes. This conceptual slippage is also applicable to the terms *indigenous*, *Aboriginal*, *First Nations* and so on, where there is no agreed-upon terminology. As such, therefore, there is no definitive or ideal model of IRM. Rather, there are versions of IRM across a broad spectrum of the research process. In this sense, IRM is probably best conceptualized as a continuum that encapsulates a wide range of research methodologies and methods that are concerned with indigenous epistemologies, ontology, voice and identity. This entry should, therefore, be read with these caveats in mind. This entry on IRM is organized into three sections: (1) history, themes and issues; (2) methodological considerations and (3) contemporary trajectories and critique.

History, Themes and Issues

IRM has its origins in the late 1990s and so represents a new and emerging field of inquiry within the social sciences that is still being defined. While it is widely considered that Linda Tuhiwai Smith's groundbreaking text, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), marked the beginnings of a nascent IRM with its roots and inspiration in a Māori-centred cosmology, it is also clear that it has also drawn on (Western) intellectual

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODS

Indigenous research methods (IRM) have only emerged within the Western academy in the early twenty-first century. Drawing initially, though not exclusively, on Participatory Action Research (PAR), Freirian critical pedagogy and non-positivist forms of qualitative research methodology for its impetus,

traditions for its inspiration and development. These have included feminism, PAR, forms of neo-Marxism, Freirian adult education theory and, particularly, critical pedagogy, as well as post-positivist approaches in qualitative research.

However, while Western intellectual traditions have been influential on IRM in its current form, particularly as increasing numbers of young Aboriginal people enter graduate school to conduct doctoral work, IRM can also be understood as emerging from at least three other developments over the past 10–15 years. First, as the title of Smith's book suggests, IRM has been closely allied with indigenous social and political struggles focusing on decolonizing the institutions imposed by colonial powers over the past 200 years (e.g. residential schools), as well as resisting contemporary neocolonial/neo-liberal forces aimed at commodifying their traditional lands through, for example, mining and forestry. Second, arising out of these struggles have been concerted efforts aimed at self-determination, ranging from asserting individual and collective rights and self-governance to creating public spaces in mainstream society for indigenous issues, concerns and rights to be addressed (e.g. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions). Third, and perhaps most important, has been the recognition that indigenous knowledge, customs, spirituality, traditional medicine and healing practices are deep reservoirs for constructing indigenous research methodologies that are autonomous of, and distinct from, existing Western research traditions.

Combined, these factors have contributed to an emerging self-awareness on the part of indigenous peoples that their ways of knowing and being are either neglected or marginalized within mainstream society and the academy. While some progress has been made over the past 10–15 years in establishing indigenous research programmes in universities and related post-16 institutions, it is nevertheless still the case that the core disciplines (medicine, science, engineering, humanities, social sciences, etc.) have made very little progress in acknowledging or incorporating Aboriginal world views into what they teach and research. Indeed, it is still probably the case that Aboriginal people are considered the 'objects' of research. One notable exception to this has been in the field of educational studies (and to some extent, social work), where academic programmes on indigenous education and research do appear to have made substantial advances in both admitting Aboriginal students and incorporating their experience and perspectives within curricular and research agendas. In 2010, for example, the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) signed an Accord on Indigenous Education that had as its basis the following four principles: (1) to actively foster

a socially just society for indigenous peoples; (2) to acknowledge a respectful, collaborative and consultative process between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples; (3) to promote partnerships between educational institutions and indigenous communities and (4) to value the diversity of indigenous knowledges and learning. Recognizing the need for transformative educational change within the educational system, the accord goes on to outline the following goals: (a) creating respectful and welcoming learning environments, inclusive of curricula and culturally responsive pedagogies; (b) promoting and valuing indigenous identities; (c) conducting culturally sensitive assessments; (d) revitalizing indigenous languages; (e) asserting indigenous education leadership and (f) promoting indigenous research. It should be noted that the accord reflects a global trend in other countries too, particularly Australia and New Zealand, where faculties and colleges of education have been leaders in creating institutional spaces for indigenous educational programmes in research to develop and thrive. In New Zealand, for instance, Māori Wananga have established institutions (since 1989) of higher education operated on Māori language, curricula, teaching and learning practices. Canada's First Nations University (1976) is another example of this, where policy reform has created institutional space for Aboriginal scholars to explore, elaborate and apply research methodologies and methods founded on indigenous epistemologies. Similar policy and institutional reforms have also been implemented in Australia and the Nordic countries (e.g. concerning the Australian Aborigines and the Sami, respectively).

Principles and Practices

As noted earlier, although IRM has developed within the shadow of the mainstream social sciences and has been informed by their disciplinary thinking, it is also nevertheless the case that the ontological and epistemological foundations of indigenous everyday life, experience and history have generated the development of significantly different principles and practices regarding social research. The overarching consideration against which all IRM has to be contextualized is the history of colonization that most indigenous people have been subjected to over the past 500-plus years in North America and around the rest of the globe. Understood against this backdrop, IRM cannot be viewed as simply another technical contribution to the vast toolbox of qualitative methods that has emerged in the past four decades but as a determined political and ethical challenge to the continued marginalization of indigenous peoples within post-16 educational institutions. First and foremost, therefore, the principles and

practices that constitute IRM have to be understood as emerging from the essentially political nexus between decolonization and self-determination.

Flowing from this nexus, several principles and practices have come to shape and define IRM in recent years. All of these can be broadly understood as arising from an indigenous world view that emphasizes respect, relationship, reciprocity and the central place of the spiritual world in everyday life (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal). First, contemporary social theory and conceptual apparatuses have to be re-conceptualized through an indigenous lens. While this does not imply the outright dismissal of Western social theory as a product of colonial history, it does require researchers adopting IRM to systematically and critically engage with the underlying assumptions of Western social science from an indigenous standpoint. This is achieved not only at the level of method, where, for instance, emphasis is placed on collective knowledge-producing practices (e.g. conversation circles and storytelling) as opposed to the structured individual interview, but also through the recognition that the spiritual realm is expressed through the physical world (through dreams, rituals, elders) and needs to be valued and appreciated accordingly. In brief, everything has a life force and should be understood relationally. Second, the research process must be inclusive of indigenous communities and individuals. Ideally, this would include key elements such as design, implementation and report back, but it would also include training in research methods, such as data gathering, analysis and communicating of findings. Third, attention must be given to protecting specific aspects of indigenous knowledge, especially those connected with spirituality, traditional medicines and healing practices that are deemed to be sacred to a particular culture or people. In recent years, indigenous communities have established elaborate protocols on how research is to be conducted within their communities for this purpose. Fourth, indigenous voices, epistemologies and ways of being should be privileged. Fifth, within non-Aboriginal contexts, IRM can perform an activist function in allowing indigenous people and their collaborators to push for and open up spaces for dialogue, debate and education on issues of concern to indigenous people.

Overall, these principles and practices can be understood as defining the emerging field of IRM. It needs to be emphasized, however, that this is a new field of research and is in a state of flux and change, so some or all of the themes identified above may evolve and transform as the field develops over the coming decade.

Future Directions and Critique

As suggested above, IRM has a very short history within the academy, emerging only over the past 10–15

years, and it is still evolving. Also, apart from the field of educational studies, where it has a relatively strong and increasing profile, IRM has had relatively little or no impact on mainstream social science research in disciplines such as sociology or anthropology. While there is some evidence that this may be changing, it is nevertheless the case that some of the core principles on which IRM is grounded, such as the notion that the social/physical world is fundamentally shaped by the spiritual realm, are so antithetical to Western conceptions of science that any progress in this respect will likely be cautious, slow and tentative.

This is not to argue, however, that IRM will dwindle and fade in the coming years. On the contrary, there are signs that it may be embraced by researchers (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) involved in professional and private consulting on issues connected with health, education and social services programming in Aboriginal communities. That said, the adoption and integration of IRM within research organized around this kind of research—usually in the form of programme evaluation—will not necessarily signal an advance for IRM or indigenous research *per se*. Rather, it is possible that it will mark the co-option of IRM by both private and state-organized interests for the purposes of opening up Aboriginal communities for the kinds of neocolonial (i.e. neo-liberal) development that IRM was originally created to critique, challenge and oppose. In this respect, IRM may suffer the same fate as forms of PAR that have been effectively de-radicalized and neutered by institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other international agencies through their poverty reduction programmes in the Global South. Notwithstanding, there are also equally strong contrary indications that IRM may also stay true to its anti-colonial roots and continue to be inspired by radical indigenous movements such as the Adivasi movement in India or the ‘Idle No More’ movement in Canada. The future of IRM will, therefore, hinge as much on the work of indigenous scholars and sympathetic colleagues within the academy as on the outcome of political struggles engaged in by indigenous communities and their allies for self-determination.

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See also feminism; Hawaiian epistemology; indigenist research; Māori epistemology; Participatory Action Research

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

The effective introduction of modern information and communications technology (ICT) systems requires a highly co-ordinated and integrated approach to the management of both technological and organizational change. While much has been written about the need to attend to this challenge, it remains that a rather small proportion of change initiatives appears to address it in a manner that delivers successful business outcomes. Success is grounded in a well-honed ability to seamlessly co-ordinate and integrate multiple domains of organizational practice while simultaneously attending to organizational practitioners and their embedded practice orientations. In taking a close look at the need for effective co-ordination and integration, this entry illuminates the need to focus on the process of changing, with particular emphasis on the role of organizational practices and organizational practitioners in fostering integrated change.

Extant research over the past five decades unambiguously asserts that organizations intent on maximizing the business value of ICT can do so by attending to the challenge of change in a co-ordinated and integrated manner. While modern ICT systems offer unprecedented opportunities to transform both core and support business functions, such transformation is best progressed in an environment where both technological

change and organizational change are advanced simultaneously. The absence of such an environment contributes to the dominance of technological change at the expense of organizational change. Once dominant, a narrow agenda for technological change will marginalize and ignore the human and organizational aspects of change which are central to enhancing organizational performance. While the field of organization development can make a unique contribution in terms of addressing the human and organizational aspects of change, it is sobering to see how the ICT domain is replete with narratives of failure due to the dominance of narrow technological change agendas.

To advance a highly co-ordinated and integrated approach to both technological and organizational change, one must become immersed in the process of changing, with particular emphasis on organizational practice and organizational practitioners. While it is technically correct to draw attention to the need for co-ordination and integration and equally correct to note the propensity for marginalizing the human and organizational aspects of change, such correctness offers little by way of rich insight into the need to both inform and transform organizational practice and organizational practitioners if the process of changing is to effectively address the integration challenge. If co-ordination and integration are not advanced as part of the process of changing, they are unlikely to be attended to at all.

The Process of Changing

It is in the process of changing that one encounters the messy world of organizational practice as shaped by a myriad of organizational practitioners. Indeed, it is here that multiple and often competing theories of change are surfaced and expressed in the here-and-now actions of organizational practitioners. It is in following the process that one can establish how organizational practitioners co-ordinate and integrate both technological and organizational facets of change across multiple domains of organizational practice. In the event that technological change reigns supreme, an in-depth critique of the process of changing will undoubtedly reveal the hegemony of certain organizational practitioners and organizational practices. In essence, the process of changing always reveals the keys to effective co-ordination and integration if they are present.

Organizational Practices

While it is fitting to speak to the need for a highly co-ordinated and integrated approach to the management of both technological and organizational change, such co-ordination and integration are the fruit of well-honed organizational practices across multiple organizational

domains, including strategic diagnosis, planning change, intervention and evaluation. Each of these domains benefits from well-honed organizational practices that address both technological and organizational change in a highly co-ordinated and integrated manner. *Strategic diagnosis* addresses the integration of technology and organization when adapting to a changing business environment. *Planning change* deliberately attends to both technological and organizational change in pursuit of clear strategic outcomes. Effective *intervention* intentionally advances both social and technical interventions in a seamless manner. Effective *evaluation* assesses both social and technical outcomes in the full knowledge that integration is a product of multiple domains of organizational practice.

In essence then, the integration of ICT and organizational change warrants a keen eye on multiple domains of organizational practice. While each domain makes a unique contribution to the process of changing, it remains that integration must be addressed both within and across domains. Invariably, this places a high premium on integrating the different forms of knowledge, skill and expertise which underpin the respective domains. This challenge can become all the more exacting when one recognizes that each practice domain has its own organizational practitioners, with few having the requisite depth to navigate all domains.

Organizational Practitioners

Notwithstanding the challenges associated with multiple domains of organizational practice, the integration challenge with ICT becomes all the more demanding when one explores the range of organizational practitioners involved in the process of changing. *Strategic diagnosis* regularly involves executive management, professional staff and outside strategic advisors. *Planning change* frequently involves middle management and professional staff. *Intervention* involves organization development professionals and ICT professionals. *Evaluation* involves a range of internal and external audit and evaluation professionals. With so many groups of organizational practitioners involved in the process of changing, it is important to recognize that these groups do not naturally have a shared understanding of either the process of changing or the distinctive challenges involved in integrating ICT and organizational change. Effective collaboration within and across these groups in pursuit of integrated change regularly requires its own intervention strategy in the first instance.

The Appeal of Action Research

Fostering an environment that favours a co-ordinated and integrated approach to the management of change

regularly requires a multi-tiered intervention strategy. Action research has a central role to play in this regard. With its emancipatory and re-educative emphases, action research focuses on the myriad of organizational practitioners and their embedded practice routines with a view to uncovering dysfunctional patterns of practice that impede change while simultaneously nurturing functional patterns of practice that promote change. The effective use of action research here favours transforming practice which is essential to the realization of effective change outcomes.

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See also communities of practice; information systems; organization development; praxis

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INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Since the 1950s, the process of introducing information systems (IS) in large organizations has been marred by reports of persistent underperformance and failure. While it emerges that this is due, in no small part, to an inability to foster an integrated approach to change, it is unfortunate that much IS-related inquiry has failed to adequately address this dilemma. Acknowledging the weaknesses of dominant positivist research approaches, this entry outlines the case for action research as a legitimate and important post-positivist family of research approaches relevant to investigating this enduring dilemma with IS.

The Plight With IS

Empirical studies over the past five decades provide strong evidence to support the assertion that underperformance and failure frequently mar the introduction of IS in large organizations. Unfortunately, the number

of IS initiatives that actually deliver promised business value is in the order of 10 per cent, while the number of initiatives that fail or are abandoned completely is in the order of 50 per cent. The remaining 40 per cent of initiatives tend to be delivered late, over the budget and with significantly reduced functionality. The impermeable and enduring nature of this dilemma is of concern to organizational researchers and practitioners alike.

Such underperformance and failure are rarely explained by way of attending to economic and technical considerations alone, yet such criteria appear to dominate the introduction of IS in organizations. Executive management tend to view the introduction of IS as an economic imperative, while IS management tend to view it as a technical imperative. Alas, this narrow techno-economic bias, sustained over time by the coalescent behavioural patterns of the executive and IS communities, results in the human and organizational aspects of IS initiatives being marginalized and ignored.

Such an outcome is rarely inconsequential since failing to attend to the human and organizational aspects of change is said to be responsible for the high incidence of underperformance and failure. Indeed, researchers are increasingly of the opinion that the economic and technical aspects of IS account for less than 10 per cent of the underperformance and failure, while human and organizational factors account for more than 90 per cent. The nature of this dilemma is both obstinate and enduring.

This predicament is further compounded by an inability to effect integrated change due to the requisite knowledge, skill and expertise being widely dispersed in organizational settings. Organizational researchers and practitioners who understand the technology tend to have little appreciation for the human and organizational aspects of IS. Similarly, organizational researchers and practitioners who understand the human and organizational aspects of IS tend to have little appreciation for the range of increasingly complex technologies that underpin modern IS initiatives. Addressing this plight inevitably places a high premium on integrating different forms of knowledge, skill and expertise.

The Appeal of Action Research

Reflecting on the weaknesses in the dominant approaches to IS-related research and the associated enduring plight with IS, it appears that action research offers an unrivalled opportunity to develop a more holistic approach to inquiry. This assertion is based upon a number of important postulates.

Action research provides a legitimate basis for embracing the concerns of researchers and practitioners alike. Both the practitioner and the researcher are

concerned with the immediacy of a particular problematic or challenging situation and are equally focused and committed to effective social action with a view to effecting change. By wholeheartedly embracing the world of the practitioner, the researcher develops deep insights that provide a sound basis for the development of robust social theory. Action research, therefore, redresses the perceived lack of relevance in much extant research. When investigating the role of executive management in IS-related initiatives, action research facilitates the integration of the organization's need to foster an integrated approach to change and the researcher's need to establish how executive management shape IS initiatives.

Action research is capable of embracing the dynamic and developmental nature of IS initiatives. This is of particular importance since much extant research is excessively static, with some authors noting that static, one-shot, cross-sectional studies are clearly the predominant form of research in the IS field. Cross-sectional studies fail to capture the dynamic and developmental nature of change and also fail to account for the actions, reactions and interactions of key social actors that shape the processes of change. Action research's collaborative approach to inquiry and change redresses this plight by attending to both the developmental nature of change and its sociopolitical context. When investigating the role of executive management in IS-related initiatives, action research fosters a longitudinal perspective on change wherein the dynamic and developmental processes of change remain central themes of concern to the researcher.

With its processual focus, action research is capable of facilitating the integration of the diverse forms of knowledge and expertise that executive management use to shape the introduction of IS in organizations. Action researchers proactively embrace the distinctive perspectives on IS as embraced by executive management. Action researchers' knowledge of strategy, change and IS enables them to embrace the multifaceted nature of executive behaviour in the context of IS initiatives. When investigating the role of executive management in IS-related business change, action research facilitates the integration of diverse forms of knowledge and expertise, which underpin the diverse roles of executive management in large-scale change programmes.

Action research is capable of facilitating the integration of the diverse requirements and demands that executive management place on the process of introducing IS. In particular, action researchers are capable of crafting a more integrated approach to the introduction of IS that accommodates the diverse demands of executive management, which result in the need to concurrently embrace strategic, technical, social and

political perspectives on IS initiatives. The action research process enables the development of a shared dialogue among executive management. When investigating the role of executive management in IS-related business change, action research facilitates the integration of the diverse requirements and demands embedded in the diverse roles of executive management in large-scale change programmes.

Action research is capable of reconciling the diverse bases of power and influences that executive management use to shape the introduction of IS. Action researchers embrace the role of negotiator when addressing this distinctive challenge. Inevitably, this may involve a significant compromise since addressing the collective requirements and demands of executive management may not be feasible when all known constraints on change are accounted for. Action researchers rightfully recognize the diverse bases of power and influence and seek to negotiate a way forward that is acceptable to all executives. Action researchers do not take sides between conflicting groups; rather, they build a trusting relationship with all parties so that they can act as brokers of inquiry, co-operation and compromise. When investigating the role of executive management in IS-related business change, action research reconciles reward and coercive power, technical expert power, affiliative power and referent power.

Action research is capable of uncovering, challenging and changing the polarized patterns of cognition and action with respect to IS embodied in the executive and IS communities. The importance of explicating the implicit theories which guide informed human action with respect to IS is of the utmost importance when one considers the unintended consequence of the economic and technical mindsets of the executive and IS communities, respectively. As has been previously argued, the coalescent nature of these mindsets is such that the human and organizational aspects of IS are frequently marginalized and ignored. Considering the embedded nature of the executive and IS mindsets with respect to IS, the effective introduction of IS necessitates real-time re-education for both communities. Action research wholeheartedly embraces this re-educative agenda as part of the investigative process, as demonstrated in multiple studies of executive management and IS-related business change.

Action research is capable of nurturing a collaborative approach to change based on the principles of partnership and participation. Recognizing the rightful place of diverse forms of knowledge and expertise along with diverse requirements and demands, action researchers proactively cultivate a collaborative approach to change that accommodates the political realities of organizational life. Indeed, this is accomplished in a manner that attends to the introduction of

IS in an integrated manner, concurrently attending to strategic, technical, social and political considerations. It has been well established that when investigating the role of executive management in shaping IS-related business change, action research nurtures a collaborative approach to change, particularly within the executive suite.

A Paucity of Action

Notwithstanding the increased advocacy for and significant appeal of action research, how prevalent is this research strategy in the IS literature? Unfortunately, while there is strong evidence that action research is growing in importance within the IS academic literature, it remains a peripheral rather than a mainstream research strategy. In so far as growth is discernible, it is being facilitated by a range of academic journals that see action research as a legitimate and valuable research strategy within the IS domain.

In a recent review of the top 10 IS academic journals between the period 1982 and 2005, Mike Chiasson and his colleagues found that only 63 published papers utilized action research as part of the research strategy. That accounts for 1.57 per cent of all published papers. Of the 63 papers identified, only 25 used action research as the dominant research strategy, while the remaining 38 used it as a complementary research strategy considered helpful for additional examination and explanation of the research phenomenon as the research programme unfolded. That accounts for 0.62 and 0.94 per cent of all published papers, respectively.

Most academic papers utilizing an action research strategy are published in only a handful of academic journals. Of the 63 papers noted above, 51 have been published in *Information Systems and People*, *Information Systems Journal*, *MIS Quarterly*, *European Journal of Information Systems* and *Information and Organization*. The remaining 12 papers are scattered across a range of IS journals, including *Database*, *Information and Management*, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Information Systems Research* and *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*.

While the paucity of action research may be attributable to the dominance of positivist approaches to inquiry in academic research, there may well be a number of other caveats which limit the viability of action research as a preferred approach to inquiry and change. A quick perusal of extant research published in the IS academic literature suggests that action research has been associated with what might be best considered as limited interventions or small-scale change initiatives. Considering that the deployment of modern IS initiatives is frequently associated with the management of

large-scale organizational and technological change, it seems that the inherent value of action research in this regard is yet to be established. Moreover, as such large-scale change initiatives regularly make extensive use of multidisciplinary teams that span multiple domains of organizational practice, the strengths and limitations of an action research paradigm in this context are yet to be made explicit.

Conclusion

This increased emphasis on the appropriateness of action research for the study of IS in organizations is discernible. Notwithstanding such advocacy, unfortunately, despite its overwhelming acceptance in organization development, it is virtually non-existent in North American IS research. While action research is generally viewed in a more favourable light in Europe and Australia, it remains a peripheral research strategy even in these regions.

How is it that a family of research approaches which holds such promise is embraced by so few? Action research can address complex real-life problems and the immediate concerns of organizational practitioners. Yet, paradoxically, the academic IS community has almost totally ignored action research.

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See also information and communications technology and organizational change; organization development

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or community system in order to change something in it, they can be understood as undertaking insider action research. Complete membership is contrasted with those who enter a system temporarily for the sake of conducting research. It may be defined in terms of wanting to remain a member within a desired career path when the research is completed. Insider action research offers a unique perspective on systems, precisely because it is from the inside. The context of insider action research is the strategic and operational setting that organizational members confront in their working lives. Issues of organizational concern such as systems improvement, organizational learning, the management of change and so on are suitable subjects for insider action research since (a) they are real events which must be managed in real time, (b) they provide opportunities for both effective action and learning and (c) they can contribute to the development of theory for what really goes on in organizations. Insider action research is commonly undertaken by practitioners who are enrolled in practitioner programmes, such as executive masters or doctorates, M.B.A.s and part-time master's or undergraduate programmes. What is common across such programmes is that participants undertake some sort of project in their own organizational or community system, write it up and submit it as an extended essay or dissertation. When this project involves taking action or leading change, then insider action research is an appropriate way of framing it and writing about it. This entry identifies the main challenges for insider action researchers, (a) access, (b) pre-understanding, (c) role duality and (d) organizational politics, and discusses the key elements of these challenges.

Traditionally, there has been a general neglect of insider action research because it is typically based on two traditional assumptions: (1) that being native is inimical to good research and (2) that researching in action does not provide sufficient methodological rigour for generating valid knowledge. Being native in itself is not a barrier to good research. The development of approaches that are grounded in insider perspectives and of specific approaches such as autoethnography and self-ethnography provides evidence that the pejorative 'native' tag can no longer be sustained as inimical to good research.

The Challenges of Insider Action Research

Insider action research can be seen to involve the managing of four interlocking challenges. Firstly, insider action researchers need to gain *access* to be allowed to conduct the action research project. Secondly, they need to build on the closeness that they have with the setting while, at the same time, creating distance from

INSIDER ACTION RESEARCH

When complete members of an organization seek to inquire into the working of their own organizational

it in order to see things critically and enable change to happen. This is referred to as *pre-understanding*. Thirdly, they have to hold *dual roles*, their organizational member role(s) and the action researcher role, and deal with the consequent ambiguities and conflicts that can arise between them. Finally, they also have to manage *organizational politics* and balance the requirements of their future career plans with the requirements for the success and quality of their action research. Each of these four challenges makes demands on the processes of action and inquiry, and accordingly, attention to them and skill in managing them are integral to the inquiry and action practices of the insider action researcher. Action research is a dynamic process where the situation changes as a consequence of deliberate action. Action researchers have to deal with emergent processes, not as distractions but as central to the research process. Kurt Lewin's often cited maxim that one only understands a system when one tries to change it is illustrative of the development of pre-understanding that occurs in the course of an insider action research project. Similarly, in the emergent nature of the shifting situation in a system's change process, how the insider action researchers hold their dual roles and survive and thrive politically are challenges that need constant renegotiation.

Access

As insider action researchers are already members of the organization, they have primary access. While they have primary access, they may or may not have secondary access—that is, they may or may not have access to specific parts of the organization which are relevant to their research. By parts of the organization is meant not only functional areas such as departments but also hierarchical areas whereby there is restricted access to specific privileged information, which may not be available otherwise. Insider researchers may find, however, that membership of the organization means that some avenues are closed to them because of their position in the organization. Any researcher's status in the organization has an impact on access. Access at one level may automatically lead to limits or access at other levels. The higher the status of insider action researchers, the more access they have or the more networks they can access, particularly downwards through the hierarchy. Being in a high hierarchical position, however, may exclude access to many informal and grapevine networks. Fundamentally, secondary access means access to documentation, data, people and meetings.

An important aspect of negotiating the insider action research project is to assess the degree of secondary access which one is allowed. Of course, what is espoused at the outset and what is actually allowed

may be different once the project is under way and at a critical stage. There may be a significant gap between the aspiration towards 'purity' of research and the reality. How access is realized may depend on the type of research being undertaken and the way information is disseminated.

Negotiating access with superiors is a tricky business, particularly if the research project aims at good work and not something bland. It raises questions about the different needs which must be satisfied through the project. Insider action researchers have needs around doing a solid piece of research which will contribute to their own career and development and needs around doing a piece of research in the organization which will be of benefit to the organization and contribute to general theory for the broader academic community. Balancing these three audiences is difficult. In general, researchers' superiors have needs around confidentiality, sensitivity to others and organizational politics.

For insider action researchers who are undertaking the action research as part of a degree programme or who seek to publish, a particular issue relating to access is the fact that what is researched will be going outside the organization. Theses and dissertations are read by people external to the organization and are filed in libraries, with their abstracts disseminated to a wider audience. Articles may be published, and there are challenges in hiding the identity of the organization if the organization does not wish to be identified. These issues of access are embedded in the challenges of role duality and organizational politics.

Pre-Understanding

Pre-understanding refers to things such as people's knowledge, insights and experience before they engage in a research programme. The knowledge, insights and experience of insider researchers apply not only to a theoretical understanding of organizational dynamics but also to the lived experience of their own organization. Personal experience and knowledge of their own system and job are a distinctive pre-understanding for insider researchers. Insider researchers are part of their organizational culture, and therefore, there is much that they don't see, and they may find it difficult to stand back from it in order to assess and critique it. Their perspective may be partial as their experience may be based in one functional area of the system, and so they lack understanding of other areas. Their professional background may give them membership of one occupational community, and so they may lack understanding of other occupational communities. They need to be in tune with their own feelings as an organizational member—where their feelings of goodwill are directed, where their frustrations are and so on.

Closeness or familiarity has a tendency to inhibit inquiry. When action researchers are in new situations, they are conscious of what they do not know, and they work hard at figuring out what's going on and how to respond. In insider situations, action researchers are meeting the same people whom they meet every day. They engage in the same organizational rituals where they attend meetings with the same people and discuss the same topics that they had discussed previously. Accordingly, the key task of pre-understanding is to develop a spirit of inquiry in familiar situations where things are likely to be taken for granted, and the skills required are those of introspection, whereby the insider researcher's own assumptions are exposed to questioning and self-awareness and reflection skills are built. In short, pre-understanding for insider action researchers involves building on closeness and achieving distance.

Role Duality: Organizational and Researcher Roles

Augmenting one's normal organizational membership roles with the research enterprise can be difficult and awkward for insider action researchers. Within their organizational roles, they are managing within the boundaries of formal hierarchical and functional roles and the informal roles of collegiality and possible friendship and having a desire to influence and change the organization. Insider action researchers have to deal with the role expectations and 'sent-role' (the role they have been assigned) of the members of the system in which they are working. The system may not have unified expectations of the action research project, and so there may be ambiguities and conflicts as different members or factions hold different expectations of what role the action researchers are to play. At the same time, action researchers may have expectations of what their role is or what they want it to be, which may or may not accord with the role as understood in the system and its constituent factions.

As a result, insider action researchers are likely to encounter role conflict in trying to sustain a full organizational membership role and the research perspective simultaneously. Their organizational role may demand total involvement and active commitment, while the research role may demand a more detached, reflective and theoretical position. This conflict may lead to an experience of role detachment, where insider action researchers begin to feel as outsiders in both roles.

Organizational Politics

Organizations are social systems. As such, political dynamics are an integral part of organizational life. Any form of action and clearly any form of research in organization has its political dynamics. Political forces

can undermine research endeavours and block planned change. Gaining access, using data and disseminating and publishing reports are intensely political acts. Insider action researchers need to be politically astute. The term *political entrepreneur* is useful in this regard as it implies a behavioural repertoire of political strategies and tactics and a reflective, self-critical perspective on how those political behaviours may be deployed. Political entrepreneurship requires the ability to achieve congruence with one's value set and the value set of action research and to find ways to exploit learning opportunities within the organization. Insiders have a pre-understanding of the organization's power structures and politics and are able to work in ways that are in keeping with the political conditions without compromising the project or their own career. Learning to act politically in a mode within the values of action research is a core skill for insider action researchers. Working through the issues of value congruence is a challenging but required task. The process allows the individual to develop new personal capabilities that are critical for his or her own role and performance as an organization member and as an insider action researcher.

Many of the action modalities or forms of action research may be used in insider action research. Insider action researchers may frame their projects in terms of Action Learning, Appreciative Inquiry, Clinical Inquiry or Learning History, for example. They may utilize Action Learning sets or Co-Operative Inquiry groups as a structure for collaborative inquiry and action with their team or project group. They may draw on Action Science and Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry as modes of reflective practice.

David Coghlan

See also Action Learning; Action Science; Appreciative Inquiry; Clinical Inquiry; Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry; reflective practice; symbolic interactionism

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INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) is an independent research charity that is based at the University of Sussex in the UK. Created in 1965, it was one of the first global centres for work on international development. IDS positions itself as neither an academic organization nor a think tank but a multi-stranded organization that lies at the interface between scholarly thinking, practice and policy development, teaching and knowledge production.

Action research within IDS has its roots in the work of Robert Chambers, who continues to work on the Participation Power and Social Change team. Chambers was one of the pioneers of participatory international development, developing methodologies such as rapid rural appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal—approaches which have much in common with action research. His more recent work on community-led total sanitation has used Action Learning as an underpinning.

Over the years, IDS has built innovative action research programmes using a range of different methods. Examples include reflective practice and power analysis with NGOs (Jethro Pettit); action research programmes with young pastoralists (Patta Scott Villiers); action research using visual methods, including both Digital Storytelling and participatory video (Joanna Wheeler and Tessa Lewin); systemic action research (Danny Burns) and action research on climate change with community radio stations (Blane Harvey).

Another major foundation stone of action research at IDS was the ‘capacity collective’. Initiated in 2007 by Peter Taylor and developed by Peter Clarke and Katy Oswald, it brought together a group of practitioners to develop five action research initiatives in Nicaragua, Ecuador and Peru. These explored how Participatory Action Research could support processes of organizational and community capacity development and led to a series of publications, including ‘Reflecting Collectively on Capacities for Change’, in the *IDS Bulletin* in 2010. The lessons from the capacity collective have since been used in work with several other organizations that are undertaking action research to support processes of capacity development and learning. This has included work with SNV (The Netherlands Development Organisation) on systemic change, Care on Governance, the World Food Programme on gender mainstreaming and VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) on the impact of volunteering on poverty.

Long-term links to influential thinkers and practitioners such as Rajesh Tandon, the director of PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia) and a board member

of IDS, illustrate the network connections between the wider participatory research movement and the action research process.

IDS runs a master’s programme in participation, power and social change. This is structured around a core piece of action research and is underpinned by training on research methods in action research. Action research offers a way of looking at the world and a set of tools which are congruent with a participatory world view, thus the imperative to embed it into the methodological fabric of the pedagogy. IDS also supports a growing number of action research Ph.D.s.

Danny Burns

See also Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry; Community-Based Participatory Research; systemic action research

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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

The charge of an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to ensure that the rights and welfare of human research participants are protected. IRBs in the USA adhere to the federal human subjects regulations, known as 45CFR46, subpart A, or the Common Rule. These regulations include key definitions, rules and specific requirements regarding committee composition and authority. The Common Rule builds off the Belmont Report, which articulated the three guiding ethical principles of conducting research with human participants: respect for persons, beneficence and justice.

Action-oriented researchers must submit their research materials to an IRB if their project meets the Common Rule’s definition of research involving human participants and if anyone on the research team is affiliated with an institution or organization that requires an IRB review (e.g. an university). Additionally, certain funding sources and journal editors require IRB approval. Some action-oriented researchers critique the IRB process for its biomedical orientation and emphasis on individual-level considerations. This entry provides a brief historical overview of the human

subjects regulations and the IRB process, an overview of frequently cited critiques of the IRB process and recommendations on how to address these critiques.

Historical Overview of Research Regulations

Due to space limitations, this overview touches upon only the Nuremberg Trials, the Public Health Service (PHS) policy for extramural projects, the Belmont Report and the Common Rule. For a more comprehensive historical review, the reader is directed to the list of further readings at the end of this section.

Nuremberg Trials 1947

The first formalized international code of ethics was written after World War II during the Nuremberg Trials of 23 Nazi investigators. The trials focused on the Nazi ‘research’ atrocities conducted in the concentration camps, such as the infamous hypothermia experiments. The charge of the prosecutors was to distinguish between the Nazi activities and US wartime research. An established code of ethics was not available to guide the prosecutors. In fact, the American Medical Association produced a code of ethics only during the trial, partly in response to the trial proceedings.

The Nuremberg Code was initially drafted by physicians and later revised by the US Counsel for War Crimes. The Nuremberg Code was designed to regulate medical experiments. The code consisted of 10 ‘basic principles’, which addressed issues such as informed voluntary consent, risk assessment and the need for scientifically qualified experimenters. Although there was stringency in the language used, the Nuremberg Code did not mention the need for external review boards.

PHS 1966

Prior to the 1960s, the general public had high levels of trust in the efficacy of biomedical research. This trust, however, began to disintegrate, in part as a result of foetal abnormalities caused by thalidomide. In response, Congress passed the US Food and Drug Administration’s Kefauver-Harris amendments to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, which looked at issues such as the safety and efficacy of medical trials and informed consent. At this time the National Institutes of Health (NIH) also commissioned a study that found that few institutions had human participants review the policies in place, while other institutions that had policies were not adhering to them.

The PHS policy for extramural projects (PHS 1966) attempted to increase institutional accountability for the conduct of research with human participants. PHS 1966 required independent review of research protocols, although it offered minimal guidance on how a

review should occur. If researchers failed to comply, NIH could withhold funds. At this time, the NIH Division of Research Grants became the NIH Office for Protection From Research Risks (which has since moved out of NIH to the Department of Health and Human Services, becoming the Office for Human Research Protections).

National Research Act 1974

Recommendations from the Tuskegee Syphilis Ad Hoc Panel and public outcry contributed to the passage of the National Research Act in 1974. For readers unfamiliar with the Public Health–sponsored syphilis study, this 40-year study failed to demonstrate respect, caused significant harm to individuals and the broader community and was an injustice. Two key outcomes of the National Research Act were the requirement that all research receiving federal dollars undergo an IRB review, and the Belmont Report (1979). The Belmont Report named three guiding ethical principles and outlined how these were to be applied in an ethics review. The Belmont Report authors acknowledged that other ethical considerations may be relevant but that these three principles were ‘comprehensive’. The three principles, their meaning (verbatim from the Belmont Report) and their application are listed below:

- *Respect for persons*: ‘Respect for Persons requires that subjects, to the degree that they are capable, be given the opportunity to choose what shall or shall not happen to them’. This principle informs the requirements pertaining to informed consent.
- *Beneficence*: ‘Do not harm and maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harms’. This principle informs how the IRB conducts its risk/benefit analysis.
- *Justice*: ‘Who ought to receive the benefits of research and bear its burdens?’ This principle informs the assessment of sample selection.

The Belmont Report’s stated purpose was the development of an ‘analytical framework that will guide the resolution of ethical problems arising from research involving human subjects’.

The Common Rule of 1991

As part of the recommendations from the Presidential Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical Research, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects was published in 1991. This federal policy, referred to as 45CFR46, subpart A, or the Common Rule, was informed by the Belmont Report. Critiques of the

Common Rule, however, suggest that the Belmont Report's framework is overshadowed by its emphasis on procedural considerations.

The Common Rule provides key definitions, including what constitutes 'research' and 'human subjects', as well as rules and procedures governing the ethics review process. The Common Rule includes sections on committee composition and criteria for IRB approval. More specifically, the Common Rule, with regard to membership, states,

The IRB shall be sufficiently qualified through the experience and expertise of its members, and the diversity of the members, including consideration of race, gender, and cultural backgrounds and sensitivity to such issues as community attitudes, to promote respect for its advice and counsel in safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects.

Additionally, the Common Rule requires a membership composed of at least five individuals, including one non-affiliated person, one non-scientific person and one scientific person. These committee members should not be of the same gender or profession. The Common Rule further suggests that the committee consider inviting an additional non-voting member in instances where the committee does not have the requisite expertise.

At an IRB review meeting, a quorum of reviewers must be present to determine whether the proposed research is to be rejected, accepted or accepted with contingencies. An exception to this requirement is when the proposed research meets the criteria for an expedited review, which involves no more than minimal risk. An expedited review does not require a full-committee review, and it may be assigned to select reviewers based upon areas of expertise.

With regard to criteria for approval, the Common Rule lists seven requirements. These criteria focus on issues of informed consent, risk assessment, sample selection, privacy and data monitoring. An example of a requirement that might pose concerns for action researchers is listed below.

Risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits, if any, to subjects, and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result. In evaluating risks and benefits, the IRB should consider only those risks and benefits that may result from the research (as distinguished from risks and benefits of therapies subjects would receive even if not participating in the research). The IRB should not consider the possible long-range effects of applying the knowledge gained in the research (e.g. the possible effects of the research on public policy) as among those research risks that fall within the purview of its responsibility.

Another section of the Common Rule provides information related to the suspension and termination of IRB approval when researchers violate IRB requirements or their study results in significant harm. Other subparts contain information related to IRB registration and research involving 'vulnerable groups' (i.e. pregnant women, human fetuses, neonates, prisoners and children).

Critiques of the IRB Process

Some action-oriented researchers have expressed concerns with the IRB process, which includes concerns related to the regulations as well as how IRB reviewers implement the requirements. Critiques include the fact that the IRB process and the guiding regulations have an overly biomedical orientation and focus on individual-level considerations. This may result in problematic assumptions regarding how research is conducted. More specifically, due to a lack of familiarity with the methodology, reviewers may question action researchers' designs due to their applying research assumptions more applicable to clinical research.

Other concerns voiced in the literature touch on whether the guiding Belmont principles are adequate in scope, or conceptualized in a manner consistent with the values of action researchers. For example, does the Belmont Report's conceptualization of justice account for the social change commitments of action research? Rather than the distributive justice orientation of the Belmont Report, action researchers may speak more in terms of relational or social justice. Challenges may also surface with how the Belmont Report suggests that the IRB apply these principles. For example, with regard to the conduct of the risk/benefit assessment, the Belmont Report states, 'For the investigator, it is a means to examine whether the proposed research is properly designed. For a review committee, it is a method for determining whether risks that will be presented to subjects are justified. For prospective subjects, the assessment will assist the determination whether or not to participate'. Action researchers may see their role extend beyond a focus on the research design, to include considerations of the short- and long-term risks at both the community and the individual level. Further hindering the ability to conduct a thorough risk/benefit analysis, action researchers may question the Common Rule's position regarding the extent to which 'possible long-range effects' may be considered by the IRB. Typically, action researchers are committed to translating findings into action steps that help address the issue being researched.

Action researchers may also challenge the idea that the IRB alone is capable of understanding what constitutes a risk, particularly when there are concerns related

to the composition of the committee. The regulations specify that there must be at least one non-affiliated member. Questions arise as to what extent the non-affiliated individual and others on the IRB adequately understand community-level questions and concerns. Without an understanding of the community and the cultural context, the question emerges as to whether the IRB can adequately consider the overall ethics of a proposed project.

Additional concerns regarding the IRB process are discussed in some of the listed further readings at the end of this section.

Recommendations

Recommendations to address the concerns outlined above include the following: (a) adding a fourth guiding ethical principle focused on community, (b) developing additional questions for IRB applications that demonstrate the value of thinking about community considerations, (c) examining committee composition to increase the likelihood that some of the reviewers are familiar with action-oriented research as well as being attuned to the community context, (d) partnering with community-based research ethics review processes and (e) working with your IRB. The first two recommendations could help prompt IRB reviewers to broaden their scope of ethical analysis by examining issues such as community impact. More specifically, how might the proposed research benefit as well as harm the community? What strategies exist to ensure that research findings are shared within the community, and what steps have been identified to help translate the findings into action? With regard to the fourth suggestion, community review processes can provide invaluable insight into ethical considerations relevant to the involved community, which oftentimes are not routinely assessed by institution-based IRBs. The structure of these community review processes varies, to include some federally recognized IRBs and some community research advisory boards. The final recommendation points to the importance of working with one's IRB to develop a mutual understanding of the requirements and concerns in order to best move forward in achieving the shared goal of ensuring ethical research.

Nancy Shore

See also covenantal ethics; ethics and moral decision-making; rigour

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INTEGRATING GROUNDED THEORY

Although Grounded Theory and action research are distinct approaches, they have been effectively integrated by action researchers, who recognized their compatibility and their respective strengths and limitations. This entry explains the logic for integrating Grounded Theory and action research, highlights the benefits and challenges of this integration and describes three main approaches for bringing them together. The first approach uses Grounded Theory in action research to add rigour to the data analysis and theory construction, the second approach integrates Grounded Theory and action research sequentially to maximize the benefits associated with their exclusive use and the third approach calls for flexible reciprocal borrowing of methods, techniques and skills between action research and Grounded Theory.

The Logic for Integrating Grounded Theory and Action Research and Potential Challenges

Steinar Kvale's distinction between craftsmanship, communicative and pragmatic validity captures the benefits of integrating action research and Grounded

Theory. Communicative validity refers to testing the validity of knowledge through a dialogue, pragmatic validity considers the relevance of the knowledge for action and change and craftsmanship validity focuses on the quality of the research. While action research claims that the first two types of validity are strong, it has been criticized for lacking rigour. Thus, Grounded Theory's main attraction for action researchers is the credibility that comes with its well-regarded data analysis and theory development processes. Similarly, action research has well-developed participatory processes, and its orientation towards developing relevant knowledge can complement the relatively weak communicative and pragmatic validity of Grounded Theory.

This integration is possible as both approaches view theory development as an emergent process and rely on deductive and inductive thinking. In Grounded Theory, this thinking is the responsibility of the researcher, and while the process may include checking the interpretation of data with participants, it is not as participatory as in action research. Participatory processes, as well as practical requirements and local considerations, may constrain the scope of theory development in action research and limit it to the substantive level. However, as the work of Latha Poonamallee demonstrates, the integration of Grounded Theory and action research can facilitate the development of both substantive and formal theories. Similarly, although Grounded Theory is not essentially about action, the substantive theories generated by Grounded Theory can have practical utility and can provide direction for action and change.

With these considerations in mind, three main ways for integrating Grounded Theory and action research have been developed.

Applications

Integrating Grounded Theory Into Action Research to Enhance the Rigour of Theory Development

Using Grounded Theory to enhance the rigour of data analysis and theory development is the most common integration of Grounded Theory with action research. Richard Baskerville and Jan Pries-Heje refer to this approach as 'grounded action research' and provide a detailed account of its use in action research related to the practicality of a user interface management system tool. While highlighting the selective use of particular Grounded Theory coding strategies, memos and diagrams to structure the data analysis and theory formation, these researchers note that it is not possible to use Grounded Theory within action research as a comprehensive research method.

For example, it is difficult to adhere to Grounded Theory's principle of grounding theory in data as some categories in action research may be predefined when the study is initiated. In this form of integration, Grounded Theory can be used at any stage of action research.

Sequential Integration of Grounded Theory and Action Research

In sequential integration, Grounded Theory and action research are applied one at a time in a multiphase study. This separation facilitates the materialization of the full potential of each approach, without the constraints and requirements of the other. Adhering exclusively to the philosophy, principles and procedures of both approaches is particularly important when participation, credibility and action are equally important and when the subject matter is controversial. Candice Schachter, Carol Stalker and Eli Teram followed this logic in a project designed to develop sensitive practice guidelines for health professionals working with survivors of childhood sexual abuse. In the first phase of the study, they used interviews to develop Grounded Theory about the experiences of survivors in the health-care system and the survivors' perception of sensitive practice. This knowledge was used in two subsequent action research phases to develop a *Handbook for Sensitive Practice*.

Flexible Borrowing Between Grounded Theory and Action Research

Following the logic of the constant comparative method, Bob Dick integrated Grounded Theory thinking in action research without the tedious process of coding. In this approach, the constant comparison is made in structured discussions with individuals or small groups. The theory of action emerges by comparing and discussing agreements and disagreements, with constant probing for exceptions to agreements, and seeking explanations to disagreements. This approach was used effectively with *convergent interviews*, and its application is expanding to group processes. Combined with other action research methods, this dialectic process provides an efficient and flexible way for integrating theory and action. As such, it may also appeal to some grounded theorists.

The above three approaches are driven by the belief that the integration of Grounded Theory and action research can strengthen the craftsmanship and communicative and pragmatic validity of research. With this shared assumption, they offer a wide range of options for balancing rigour, participation, action and practical considerations. Considering the purpose of the

contemplated integration, researchers can decide which approach can most effectively address their need.

Eli Teram

See also convergent interviewing; data analysis; Grounded Theory; multi-stakeholder dialogue; rigour; validity

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INTERACTIVE RESEARCH

Interactive Research is a term used for action research in Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden. Just as action research takes many forms, so does Interactive Research; and often, the terms *Interactive Research* and *action research* are used interchangeably. The term was originally coined by Professor Lenart Svensson, an academic with a particular interest in workplace learning and a former research leader at the now defunct Swedish Institute for Working Life. The use of this terminology in part derives from the history of action research within each of the Scandinavian countries, particularly its positioning vis-à-vis the universities within each of the countries. It also reflects the uneasy nature of the power relationships between labour and capital in the workplace in which action research was originally introduced and encouraged. However, the terminology also reflects an attempt to put learning and dialogue at the centre of the research process. Thus, Interactive Research is seen as a research process characterized by joint learning by participants through their involvement in that process from the start. In this, therefore, it has much in common with Participatory Action Research.

The Context of Interactive Research: A Brief History of Action Research in Scandinavia

Norway has been a dominating influence on the development of action research in Scandinavia, where the ideas of Kurt Lewin were used to underpin what came to be known as the Industrial Democracy Project. In the 1950s and 1960s, socio-technical experiments in industrial development were taken up across Denmark, Sweden and Finland, supported in some cases by government funding. Intimately tied up with consensus within the workplace, these experiments foundered as neo-liberal ideas took hold to a greater or lesser extent within the respective countries. Criticism of action research in the 1970s came from a number of directions, and that criticism has led to a different emphasis in each of the Scandinavian countries. For some, the approach had become appropriated by capital and the state as a mechanism for imposing the neo-liberal agenda. Conversely, government and industry were concerned that the promise of action research had not been realized, particularly in the area of innovation. Many of the experiments had failed to move beyond short-term change in individual factories and workplaces. For those working in the social fields, action research was seen as having failed in its task of achieving social change. The strongest critique, however, came from university-based social scientists in Denmark and Sweden who argued that action research was not proper research but rather a form of consultancy. This view still prevails in Denmark and to a lesser extent in Finland and Sweden despite the call in the latter countries for universities to engage in co-operating with society on issues of social change. By contrast, in Norway, action research has become mainstreamed and embedded in the governmental system, largely due to the efforts of Bjørn Gustavsen and Morten Levin, leading academics in that country who also have a strong international presence in action research. In Denmark, the University of Roskilde has been prominent in maintaining action research.

In Sweden, action research was promoted largely outside the university system, particularly through the activities of the National Institute for Working Life, which grew to include several research establishments in Stockholm, Umeå, Östersund, Norrköping, Göteborg, Malmö and Visby, with a staff of roughly 400 researchers, auxiliary staff and management/administration and an annual state budget of €40 million, as well as research grants of about €6 million to €8 million from diverse funding agencies. In 2007, the newly elected government closed the institute. The action research torch was also taken up by the Association of Local Authorities. Many local authorities have set up research and development units to compensate for

the lack of applied research in universities. Building on the tradition of the study circle, these research units developed programmes of research and development to support education, health care and other activities of the local authorities, using action research methodology to support learning and practice development. Individuals working in these research units often had links with local universities. The use of the term *Interactive Research* allowed action research as currently practiced to distance itself from the failures of the 1960s and 1970s and to reposition itself within the academic discourse. There is now a Swedish Interactive Research Association hosted by Jonkoping University College.

Interactive Research as Learning and Dialogue for Change

The focus on interaction terminology highlights the importance placed in this type of research on the role of dialogue and interactive learning through participation in the research process. A variety of techniques have been used to encourage this communicative praxis. Three forms have become popular: the Dialogue Conference, the Search Conference and the Future-Creating Workshops. The Dialogue Conference, originally systematized by Gustavsen and John Shotter, is a structured process of dialogue which encourages reflection and learning. It is the most popular form of democratic dialogue used in Interactive Research. The Search Conference, which is more recognized outside Sweden, is not dissimilar but focuses on future planning and tends to stress systems thinking and the emergence of ideas from interaction. Future creating is a form of interactive dialogue, which has adopted a critical theory approach to action research by encouraging participants to explore a utopian vision and then to compare it against reality. Notwithstanding the popularity of these three forms of dialogue, the key emphasis in Interactive Research is that the participants are directly involved in the analytical process and the role of the researcher is one of providing and creating a supportive joint learning process where there is enough time to develop a reflexive trust between the participants, rather than unreflective confidence.

Jane Springett

See also Dialogue Conferences; Norwegian Industrial Democracy Movement; Search Conference; Work Research Institute, The

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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION

The International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) played a key role in the development of participatory research in adult education. The ICAE was founded in 1973, following the third UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education in Tokyo in 1972, to give a voice to practitioners and academics. A range of initiatives had developed in the early 1970s in adult education and social movements in different parts of the world to develop alternatives to classical social science research, in order to involve the active participation of the people, overwhelmingly in marginalized social groups, whose experiences were the subject of study in identifying their needs and determining how learning might help fulfil them. Common themes in these initiatives, which included a variety of community-based approaches to the creation of knowledge, were first identified as 'participatory research' in Tanzania. ICAE recognized the value of these approaches and developed a global network of participatory research to promote strategies for engaging people in articulating the learning needed to help transform their lives.

A key role in the development of participatory research was played by ICAE's first research officer, Budd Hall. Whilst working in Tanzania, Hall, like many others, became dissatisfied with the way the supposedly neutral disciplines of mainstream social science served to reinforce the dominant social order rather than to empower communities without access to power and agency. He acted as a catalyst in bringing together Julius Nyerere's holistic ideas on education for development, the pedagogy of Paulo Freire and in particular his approach to 'thematic investigations' and Maria Liisa Swantz's experience in participant engagement in women's development in coastal Tanzania to identify alternative approaches grounded in the active engagement of the communities affected. This work was paralleled in Colombia, where Orlando Fals Borda had developed Participatory Action Research; in the engagement of landless rural farm workers in agrarian reform in Chile and in community

engagement strategies in communities driven by sectarianism in Northern Ireland.

On his appointment as ICAE's first research officer, Hall brought a number of these initiatives together in a themed issue of ICAE's journal *Convergence*, which had an immediate impact. An invitation in the journal for engaged readers to exchange experience produced a flood of responses and led ICAE to develop a Participatory Research Project, which rapidly developed into the International Participatory Research Network. During the late 1970s, ICAE hosted the expanding network and played a vital role in linking academics and practitioners. By 1978, there were nodes of the network in Canada, India, Tanzania, Venezuela and the Netherlands.

The networks identified four principal objections to traditional social science survey methodologies, as summarized by Rajesh Tandon in 2005. First, a focus on knowledge generation as the key purpose of social science research, in a world where there is a wide gap between available knowledge and its utilization, leads to research that fails to be used to improve social, economic and political systems. Second, the supposed neutrality of the scientific research method reinforces existing power paradigms, as the pursuit of rigour leaves the academic researcher firmly in control of the process, thereby reinforcing the marginality of the people studied. Third, traditional methods rely excessively on thinking, observing and conceptualizing and, as a result, oversimplify the complexity of communities' lived reality and sit uncomfortably with adult education's concern for engagement in pursuit of justice and equality. Lastly, institutionalized knowledge centres (universities, institutes and colleges) delegitimize traditional forms of knowledge.

By contrast, Hall suggests that participatory research principles include the following: (a) research methods have, inevitably, ideological implications; (b) the research process needs to directly benefit the communities involved and (c) the communities affected need to be involved from the shaping of the problem to be addressed to agreement on the methods to study the problem and identify solutions, to the interpretation of findings. The research process is characteristically dialogic and aims to have a lasting impact on the skills and engagement of the community. Above all, it is research focused on effecting change to secure the rights of marginalized communities, especially their right to be heard in an enlarged democratic discourse.

In 1978, in a further clarification of the process, the international network argued that the political impetus for participatory research originates in the community or workplace itself. The work needs to be grounded in the lived reality of the affected communities in all their complexity. To that end, there must be an emphasis on

qualitative inquiry, to offset the limitations of survey data. Interpretation needs to be a collective process involving all the actors, and it needs to be complemented by active networking within the marginalized communities.

Over time, the network became a self-reliant group of activist researchers, maintaining a close relationship with the ICAE Secretariat. Whilst continuing to foster new initiatives, ICAE's own contribution to the development of participatory research then shifted to its regional associations and its thematic networks. Perhaps most notable among these has been the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, co-ordinated by Rajesh Tandon in India, which has maintained an active influence on the Asia South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education, ICAE's regional association.

ICAE has also fostered action research activity through its International Academy for Lifelong Learning Advocacy, which embeds participatory research skills in the practice of adult educators and social movement activists, and in co-ordinating national and local monitoring of the extent to which governments honoured the international agreements affecting the right to education that they had entered into through the UN process. Its members have also fostered the growth of the adult learners' movement, which contributed powerfully to the most recent UNESCO World Conference for Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) in Brazil in 2009.

Alan Tuckett

See also adult education; Freire, Paulo; International Participatory Research Network; Participatory Action Research; Society for Participatory Research in Asia

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INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH NETWORK

The International Participatory Research Network (IPRN) was responsible for the creation and dissemination of the early theories and practices of the concept of participatory research. *Participatory research* is a term that was first articulated in Tanzania in the early 1970s

to describe a variety of community-based approaches to the creation of knowledge by community-based researchers influenced by the philosophy of Julius Nyerere, the practices of Marja Liisa Swantz (1975) and the political epistemologies of Paulo Freire (1971). Participatory research combines the three activities of social investigation, education and action in an inter-related process.

The IPRN, associated with the International Council for Adult Education, was begun in 1976. Budd Hall was the founding co-ordinator of the IPRN from 1977 to 1980. From 1980 to 1992, Rajesh Tandon of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia led the network and helped extend and deepen the ideas. The IPRN was an active global network in the early 1990s, when the decision was made that the concepts and values were widely known and did not need the kind of promotion required in the early days.

Founding of the Network

The idea for a network arose from the response to the publication of the special issue of *Convergence* on the subject (1975). The adult education community and related community development activists bought out all the copies of the journal. It was clear that many people in the majority world and people working with or for marginalized persons in the rich countries were actively engaged in research projects which were very different from the standards of the day in most of the universities of the world.

The next impetus came from the First World Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 1976. A recommendation was made to the world adult education community that adult educators should be given the opportunity to learn about and share their experiences in participatory research. Edward Jackson, an activist adult educator from Canada, was a participant at the Dar es Salaam conference, and he, dian marino and Deborah Barndt helped found the Toronto group, which ultimately gave birth to the IPRN.

The 1977 international conference on Participatory Action Research organized by Orlando Fals Borda, a Colombian sociologist, and a group of Latin American and other activist-intellectuals was further inspiration. Participatory research arose in part from a re-examination of the role of intellectuals in the struggle for social justice. There were debates between those who felt that it was the role of intellectuals to lead the social and political movements on behalf of the people and those who said that it was time to build the democratic struggle from the ideas of the poor and excluded themselves. Participatory research emerged as a process of politically engaged co-construction of knowledge.

Upon Hall's return from the Cartagena conference and a visit to Francisco Vio Grossi, a Chilean sociologist in exile in Venezuela, in 1977, the Toronto Participatory Research Group organized an event where the decision to start the IPRN was made. Among the most important political principles of the network was the insistence that each node or networking group working in the various parts of the world would be autonomous and self-directing. They would each be committed to building an international network, but the Toronto group would not be in charge. The initial principles were the following:

1. Participatory research involves a whole range of powerless groups of people—the exploited, the poor, the oppressed and the marginal.
2. It involves the full and active participation of the community in the entire research process.
3. The subject of the research originates in the community itself, and the problem is defined, analyzed and solved by the community.
4. The ultimate goal is the radical transformation of social reality and the improvement of the lives of the people themselves. The beneficiaries of the research are the members of the community.
5. The process of participatory research can create a greater awareness in the people of their own resources and mobilize them for self-reliant development.
6. It is a more scientific method or research in that the participation of the community in the research process facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality.
7. The researcher is a committed participant and learner in the process of research—in other words, a militant rather than a detached observer.

In 1978, Francisco Vio Grossi hosted a meeting of the IPRN at Simon Rodrigues University in Venezuela. Rajesh Tandon joined the group, and five nodes in the network were created: North America, Asia (Rajesh Tandon), Africa (Yusuf Kassam), Europe (Jan de Vries) and Latin America (Francisco Vio Grossi). The IPRN organized a series of meetings around the world and published many reports and books to increase awareness of ideas, deepen understanding of the work, build support for others who were trying such work and show people in various locations that these ideas had world resonance and relevance. The IPRN consistently honoured the fact that the majority world had been the intellectual source for these exciting new ways of working and continued to inspire us. While the IPRN is

no longer a formal network, the ideas and values behind it can be seen in the emergence of the Global Alliance on Community-Engaged Research in 2008.

Budd Hall

See also community development; community-based research; Participatory Action Research; social justice; Society for Participatory Research in Asia

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INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH

Inter-organizational action research (IOAR) is a particular articulation of action research which identifies distinctive features and experiences, whereas action research focuses on the shared issues and relationships across two or more organizations. This entry provides an outline of IOAR's origins, traditions and key ideas. Examples of applications are illustrated before considering the particular distinctiveness of IOAR in relation to action research.

Origins, Traditions and Key Ideas

Ideas for IOAR are particularly associated with Rupert Chisholm in his work on developing networks. IOAR has a number of distinguishing features, including its emphasis on engaging multiple participants from many diverse organizations in complex systems of change.

Key ideas in IOAR are inter-organizing insight, insider-outsider, inter-organizational partnerships or networks, boundary spanner and institutional entrepreneur.

Traditional Action Research

Action research works on the epistemological assumption that the purpose of academic research is not just

to describe, understand and explore but to change something. Therefore, there is an opportunity that through action research, an inter-organizational group may question and improve their own thinking and acting about how they work together, be it networking, co-operation or collaboration. The origins of action research lie with system change and improvement simultaneously with generating knowledge about that system, as traced to Kurt Lewin's concern with minority social issues and to developing world applications of Participatory Action Research for social change. These traditions implicitly engage action research across organizational boundaries, as does the tradition of whole industry sector change action research associated with Norway. However, in recent years, greater attention has been accorded to action research within a single organization (intra-organizational action research) and first person action research, focused on the individual's practice development. IOAR has distinctive challenges deriving from the complexity and multiplicity of the actors and groups involved.

Core Components of the Action Research Cycle

IOAR follows the typical action research cycle of pre-step, preparing study, planning, taking action, questioning, reflecting, searching and capturing learning. As with any action research, important elements are who initiates the action research for the cycle to commence and how people are drawn into the processes of inquiry and action. Somebody, somewhere within the inter-organizational system needs to trigger action in the form of a pre-step, meaning that a problem needs to be raised; there needs to be a challenge of taken-for-granted ways of doing things. This catalyst could be a member of one of the organizations, perhaps the lead organization or indeed a person working with the inter-organization arrangement. The initiator, whether individual, group or organization, is described as reflecting qualities of institutional entrepreneurship, in the sense of expressing a vision of divergent change and acting to leverage resources, mobilize allies, develop alliances, create co-operation and bridge political stakeholders across organizational boundaries to push for particular arrangements with regard to a policy interpretation.

Distinguishing Features of Inter-Organizational Action Research

IOAR has been categorized by Chisholm along five dimensions:

1. Level of system change
2. Organization of the research setting

3. Openness of the action research process
4. Intended outcomes
5. Role of the researcher

Level of System Change

The level of system change may vary. It could entail a specific multi-agency team, drawn, for instance, from health, education and criminal justice bodies, collaborating to improve their effectiveness as a children’s services committee in maximizing life chances for children in their locality. Other examples include development and implementation of a community strategy for a region, through the participation of community representatives and members of multiple public and voluntary sector organizations. At the other end of the scale, the level of system change could be the whole society.

Organization of the Research Setting

When members from distinct organizations come together collaboratively, the ways in which they interrelate, self-regulate and communicate becomes the pattern of organizing. A key contextual factor is the nature of the pre-existing collaborative working arrangement. This can be categorized across the continuum (as shown in Table 1), which increases in integration and formality from left to right.

Collaborative organizing typically combines loose-tight coupling. To a large extent, the arrangement is loosely self-organizing, with all members recognizing each other as equal peers, sharing power and responsibility for designing and directing their shared activity. This coincides with an element of tighter organization, for example, through a steering group or project board and a series of organized whole-system and subgroup events that provide an infrastructure for inquiring conversations, collective reflection and generation of systemic information. For example, stakeholder

conferences might engage and consult with hundreds of participants through formats such as café society, facilitated workshops and exhibitions.

To embark on a journey of action research, the inter-organizational arrangement requires the following:

- There should be a collective understanding of the problem or issue to be resolved.
- *The art of boundary spanning*: Individual behaviours mobilize relationships and facilitate networking, empathy and interdependence.
- *Collaborative leadership*: This entails bringing persons together and breaking down barriers to enable cross-boundary work to happen. In this sense, collaborative leadership provides a supporting architecture, whereby a process of new learning occurs and new ways of behaving emerge, so that the whole group can self-govern and all members can participate in joint decision-making, including the decision to partake in an action research process.

Openness of Action Research Process

As with traditional action research, IOAR also traverses a spectrum of openness from the contribution by all members to an initial decision to engage in action research for change and data collection through to full participation at all stages, characteristic of Co-Operative Inquiry or Participatory Action Research.

However, if the intention of IOAR is to develop more effective patterns of organizing, an inter-organizational arrangement needs to take full ownership of each stage of the action research cycle, from identification of the issues to planning action from analysis of the context and the problem, to taking action and reviewing the outcomes of action, both intended and unintended.

Openness in the action research process requires participants to be open to working together, open to reflecting together and open to learning and change.

	<i>Networking</i>	<i>Co-Ordinating</i>	<i>Co-Operating</i>	<i>Collaborating</i>
Prime purpose	Information exchange	Greater integration in services delivery/ production	Exchanging knowledge, people + resources for common purpose	Mutual enhancement + transformation for achievement of common purpose
Resource sharing	None	Minimal	Moderate	Full sharing of risks and rewards
Motive	Economic	Economic	+Learning	+Change

Table 1 *Typology of Inter-Organizational Collaborative Arrangement*

SOURCE: Adapted from Himmelman, A. T. (1996). On the theory and practice of transformational collaboration: From social service to social justice. In C. Huxham (Ed.), *Creating collaborative advantage* (chap. 2, pp. 19–43). London, England: Sage.

Participants need to engage with an orientation that is open to the potential recognition of 'We need to change and I need to do X'.

Intended Outcomes

A shared purpose and some commonly understood goals by members is fundamental, as a framework within which participants engage in cycles of inquiry, action, reflection and further planning. This might be framed, for example, as a central action research question: What needs to occur to improve inter-organizational collaboration at our local level? Or it might focus on specific problems: How do we improve our rate of new product development?

A useful categorization of the purpose for engaging in IOAR is Paul Coughlan and David Coghlan's distinction between primarily strategic, learning and transformational networks. Strategic networks have economic goals, such as to reduce costs or increase market share. Learning networks have the intention of using experience and exchange to increase capability and knowledge. Transformational networks, such as the full 'collaborating' arrangement in Table 1, expect iterative changes both within the relationships and processes of inter-organizational working as well as within each individual member organization.

Role of Researcher

IOAR raises the questions as to who is or are the researchers. Do they also take action? Are they external experts, or are they co-researchers? In practice, IOAR researchers may be insiders working within one or several member organizations, or they may comprise outsiders invited into the world of the inter-organizational system.

Their research role is to design processes for generating information and to frame analysis and sense making. Their action role is to create ways for surfacing learning about the system, to frame questions and to create opportunities for network members to learn. The more complex and multi-agency the collaboration, the more the role of action researchers is likely to encompass boundary spanning, in the sense of identifying and surfacing problems, facilitating relationship building and mobilizing action and learning across professional and organizational boundaries. An external co-ordinator with organization development skills has often been used to help cultivate such relationship building.

Key to achieving systemic change through IOAR is the emphasis on collective reflection and the role of inter-organizing insights. This may mean enacting new ways of network organizing, learning from recognizing, discussing and potentially transforming

the social power relations central to organizing. In this sense, the research and action can be both about aspects of the collaboration's work activity and about the wider organizational or systemic life of which its members are a part. IOAR can be employed for organization or systemic change by connecting subgroups in dialogue with each other. Not only can this lead them to identify what might need to change, but the action research collectivity can also be a place for action, in that it is itself a social community in which people can examine the politics that surround and inform the choices and decisions which constitute organizing and begin to organize differently.

Distinctive Challenges of Inter-Organizational Action Research

Compared with first person action research or insider organization action research, IOAR has distinctive challenges arising from the requirement for engagement and co-ordination of multiple actions by multiple actors, connecting to multiple groups and organizations.

Barriers to effective collaboration include personal agendas, individual politicking, power inequity amongst participants, low trust, contradictory goals, poor managerial relationships, geographical distances, cultural differences and *collaborative thuggery*, Chris Huxham and Siv Vangen's term to categorize leadership that does not empower, involve or mobilize but manipulates the collaborative agenda.

Management or leadership within and across inter-organizational working requires distinctive capabilities in order to handle the paradoxical demands for both unity and diversity.

Organization Embeddedness

The inquiry basis of action research can be quite threatening in an inter-organizational context, particularly when the organization cultural norms of members do not encourage activities such as questioning taken-for-granted rules and norms, fostering courage and inciting action. Boundary spanning requires that those involved can divest themselves of their organizational embeddedness, prioritizing their own individual or agency objectives without the spirit of openness and social bonding required for collaborative practice.

Insider-Outsidership of Researcher(s)

Action researchers in IOAR are put in a distinctive position of being simultaneously insider and outsider. They may be insiders in the sense of belonging to one of the network organizations but outsiders in relation to other member organizations. Or they may

be 'insiders' of the inter-organizational collaboration, in the sense of allying themselves with the network objectives, whilst being outsiders in relation to each individual organization. As such, they need a distinct set of capabilities that includes political skills to manage their superiors, the ability to boundary span and a capacity to simultaneously hold demands for both unity and diversity.

Clare Rigg and Noreen O'Mahony

See also collaborative action research; Co-Operative Inquiry; large-group action research; Participatory Action Research; Participatory Learning and Action; systemic action research

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INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY

See Listening Guide

INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Intersubjectivity emerges through the active engagement of individuals who mutually construct actions, interactions and meanings together. This active engagement may be the result of the conscious and unconscious responses of individuals to each other. Intersubjectivity is defined as the sum of interactions mediated by and through the larger external environment that results in the production of shared meaning, norms and values, which, in turn, lead to social, cultural, political and economic structures. The extent to which a group of individuals establishes an effective basis for intersubjective agreement is an important focus for action researchers. The implications for understanding how and to what extent intersubjectivity effectively leads to

group identity, shared meanings and collective action is a critical feature of successful action research.

Intersubjectivity is a transdisciplinary concept with roots in the phenomenological philosophy of Edward Husserl. The term may be found in literature spanning all the major social sciences and generally is used to describe the experiential nature of socially constructed phenomena. Social scientists have increasingly relied on the concept of intersubjectivity to draw analytical insights from empirical observation. Social science studies of collective behaviour routinely note that the division of labour within groups can lead to disagreement about the nature of a problem, the parameters of a decision to be made and so on.

Those who draw on the concept of intersubjectivity to describe social phenomena understand that the sense of 'self' cannot be extracted from the rule-bound contexts that shape human interaction. G. H. Mead referred to the symbiotic relationship existing between the self and the 'generalized other'. Intersubjectivity is constructed from the complex integration of the selves of a finite number of individuals, their generalized others and the symbiosis of them. As a construct of human consciousness, intersubjectivity is fuelled through the perceptions of individuals. Individual human perception is framed through a dialectical exchange between the individual and the wider environment.

Intersubjectivity as a feature of human perception and collective social reproduction has been featured within the philosophy of science literature in relation to objectivism and subjectivism. Those adhering to an objectivist (often referred to as positivist) orientation tend to view reality as existing independently of any individual observer and describable through the ascription of natural laws and testable hypothesis. A central assumption of objectivism is that the observer can be extracted from that which is being observed. Applied to Mead's theory of the self, objectivists approach the generalized other as something that persists independently from the self.

Those scholars adhering to a purely subjectivist lens give primacy to the perceptions of the individual. Taken to its most extreme, reality is nothing but individual perception. Continuities found within social institutions and other social structures are mere 'accidents'. In a purely subjectivist approach, perceptions mediated through the self are, in actuality, all that exist. The generalized other appears as a figment of the imagination.

To avoid falling into the trap of absolute relativism, those adopting an interpretivist social science orientation have gravitated towards the socially constructed features of intersubjectivity, to the extent to which much of mainstream sociology, anthropology and social psychology have adopted its central premise: that social reality is predicated on social interactions

between individuals and between groups of individuals and their wider external environments.

Communicative Rationality and Collective Practice

According to Husserl, and later reinforced by Jürgen Habermas, intersubjectivity emerges from decidedly rational processes. Husserl's view of rationality has been critiqued for being too simplistic, in part because he (and many of his Enlightenment predecessors) failed to draw distinctions between different forms of rationality. Some forms of rationality are predicated on objectivist preconditions. Habermas refers to this as 'instrumental rationality'. However, the varying capacities of individuals to construct and reconstruct a rationale for their actions may be labelled as being 'rational', 'non-rational' or 'irrational', depending on who is doing the labelling. Habermas is attracted to the concept of intersubjectivity (and the wider phenomenology project that anchors it) because of its explanatory power for describing the mediation of social reality (what he deems the 'lifeworld') through the lens of social interaction. Intersubjectivity becomes a necessary precondition of 'communicative rationality'. According to Habermas, the establishment of a communicative rationality between social actors is needed to ground mutual agreements about collective action.

Although intersubjectivity can be used in the social psychological sense as a means to abstractly describe how individual identity is formed through collective action, action researchers are more likely to be focused on understanding how professional, community or civic identity is formed through collective practice and how, in turn, practice is informed by and through individual identity. In this context, intersubjectivity can be used by action researchers to bridge the individual with the collective in substantive ways.

It has been noted earlier how intersubjectivity is formed through conscious and unconscious responses. As Alfred Schutz has suggested, intersubjectivity is more often than not mediated through taken-for-granted assumptions that individuals possess about themselves, other selves and the generalized others who populate their lifeworlds. Effective action research can aid individuals and groups in translating tacit, taken-for-granted knowledge into explicit knowledge. In other words, action research can lead to the development of conscious responses of individuals to their intersubjective lifeworlds. Action research processes can facilitate intersubjective negotiation predicated on communicative rationality. Action researchers can help surface the norms of communicative rationality that exist within a group or provide a consultative role in helping to

establish new communicative norms. How this is done is the subject of the next section.

Intersubjectivity in Action Research

Action researchers are, by definition, active participants in the lifeworlds of the subjects and objects being studied. Action research cannot be undertaken exclusively through an objectivist orientation. Action researchers cannot, by definition, distance themselves from their objects of study. In other words, action researchers enter into the intersubjective realities of those who are participating in the study. In some instances, action researchers, themselves, may be active practitioners with histories of prior engagement with those other people, events and objects implicated in action research projects.

When structured well, both action research processes and results will inform the negotiated meaning that unfolds between individuals. Action research designs can play a role in bringing tacit knowledge into consciousness. Chris Argyris and Donald Schön's classic use of action research to inform organizational learning provides an excellent example of this process. In their work, action research facilitates the double-loop learning of participants. Double-loop learning occurs when the underlying governing rules, norms and shared meanings are brought to the surface, critically examined and modified if and when needed. Double-loop learning is fostered when the intersubjectivity of a group is brought to consciousness.

There are any number of techniques and methods that action researchers can use to bring intersubjectivity to consciousness. Virtually, all forms of qualitative methods that follow the interpretivist tradition are capable of doing this. Action researchers who draw on informants' narratives are pressed to represent what they believe to be the intersubjective realities of a group. A standard technique to draw out this intersubjectivity is the triangulation of individual perceptions. For example, individuals are asked about their perceptions of an event or activity. The perceptions of each individual are recorded. The action researcher then constructs an intersubjective picture of the project by triangulating the perceptions of the stakeholders who were interviewed. A nuanced, multifaceted picture of the event or activity is presented. Action researchers close the loop by feeding this multifaceted representation of the event or activity back to the group of stakeholders. In doing so, the action researcher presents a picture of the group's intersubjective interpretation of the event or activity.

The result of this kind of action research process becomes, unto itself, a generalized other that the group must encounter and respond to. This process may end up reifying what stakeholders report to be already

known, or it may draw out new insights or ways of perceiving that can have a profound effect on the future direction or course of a group's collective actions.

Other social research methods may be employed to bring intersubjectivity to the surface of the collective consciousness. Surveys and polls are often used to bring clarity to the collective will or intersubjective perceptions of large groups. Bayesian statistics and Boolean networks can be used to render probability distributions of aggregations of individuals' perceptions. Within an action research context, statistical models of this sort are used by stakeholders to inform future individual and collective actions. More recently, computer models have been devised to simulate group intersubjectivity using system dynamics and agent-based modelling approaches. When these models are undertaken using participatory or mediate modelling approaches, groups may carry out collective scenario planning and may use the act of jointly constructing models and engaging with models to better understand the relationship between individual perception and identity, and collective action.

In sum, the concept of intersubjectivity is a critical feature within almost any successful action research project. A diversity of research and modelling approaches may be employed to reconstruct the intersubjective frameworks that guide virtually all social groups—ranging from small teams, committees and task forces to large institutions such as bureaucracies. By tapping into the social science and philosophical literatures that have drawn on intersubjectivity as a central construct, action researchers may ground their empirical observations and partnerships with stakeholders in theories of phenomenology: of the self and the generalized other. In this manner, they may better position themselves as agents within an intersubjectively constructed reality and use action research approaches to foster learning, more effective practice and desirable outcomes.

Christopher Koliba

See also Action Science; double-loop learning; philosophy of science; postmodernism; social constructionism

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INTERVENTION RESEARCH IN MANAGEMENT

Intervention Research in management (IRM) shares a field-oriented methodology and an experimental logic with action research, but it differs from it by its basic assumptions about the essence and history of management research. IRM supposes the close combination of (a) the theoretical perspective that management situations with the most important research potential are the ones that allow major revisions of established management theories-in-use and (b) a research protocol that implies close collaboration between a pioneering organization and a skilled academic intervening research team. This entry describes the theoretical foundations of IRM.

IRM and the Foundations of Management: Building on Follett's and Barnard's Legacy

IRM combines a theoretical perspective and an intervention protocol in order to revise existing management theories-in-use and co-invent new models of collective action, in a management research and development (R&D) logic. Hence, the epistemology of IRM has deep common roots with the foundations of management as defined by Mary Parker Follett and Chester Barnard, who both introduced general grammars of action and postulated a science of management that would result from immersive interactions between the observer and the observed. Barnard formalized the general principles of a new epistemology, a science of management that would consider organization as a subjective process which can only be known organically and formalized accurately (i.e. consistent with experience) by the individual. Therefore, an organic applied social science, in contrast to the professional science abstracted from the interactions and interdependencies of living and acting, would have unprecedented explanatory power. Rejecting an epistemology

that separates theory from practice, Follett and Barnard pursued an integrative science that exploited the creative possibilities of conscious organization, beginning with organizing oneself. For them, it was a scientific, creative and ethical relation at one and the same time. It meant theorizing formal organizations as an experimental condition and method. This way of conceiving the dynamics of collective action is very close to IRM principles and logic: IRM could well be the research programme consistent with Follett's and Barnard's legacy.

Essence of Management Research: Models of Collective Action

IRM assumes that there is no universal protocol to study action but research can study models of collective action through which action is made visible. Therefore, its programme is to understand how models of action are discovered or invented, how they are tested, discussed or validated. For instance, accounting, which is a model of action, makes business observable and simultaneously shapes and orients it. Management models are both a subset of all models of action (all action is not managerial action) and exemplars of models of action. The business world has long been a relevant place to study the invention of models of action. Companies are social entities that regularly have to redesign themselves in order to survive: They are under a permanent change-oriented process through self-intervention. More generally, organizations are also places where innovative models of action may emerge.

If management research is the discovery and study of models of action, it is not the privilege of the academy only. Major management innovations were made by managers or through collaborations between managers and academics. For example, Kurt Lewin and Alfred Marrow at Harwood conducted an 8-year collaboration that contributed to the establishment of action research and new theories and applications of change management. Therefore, the role of management research is not limited to non-participatory observation of what managers do. The essence of management research is understanding, inventing and criticizing models of collective action. Inventing means being a pioneer in designing alternatives to existing management theories-in-use.

IRM: An R&D in Management Approach

IRM emerged progressively from numerous collaborative research programmes with companies and state agencies at Paris School of Mines. Its issues are problems that suggest management breakthroughs. It aims

at improving models of action, not action, and the intervention of IRM researchers on the field can be understood as collaborative R&D in management. Like any field research, IRM has to follow specific methodological precautions. The practice of IRM requires five basic preconditions:

1. A partner with a pioneering logic
2. An open management issue
3. An assessed research potential
4. A contractual commitment to a research issue
5. A laboratory with a legitimate research potential in management

Two main principles monitor IRM:

1. *The principle of free academic investigation:* The first principle means a combination of free interviewing (the researchers have full access to the organizational perimeter), warranted isonomy (a priori equal attention to each actor on the field), confidentiality of all individual interviews (a basic rule, to ensure freedom of expression), a capacity to create new empirical material (beyond the interviews: enhanced exploratory power, thanks to the IRM collaborative protocol), the principle of controlled design (the emergence of new management models is a design process that requires some form of invention) and management innovations evaluated as rational myths (the role of the research team is to help clearly distinguish between the two components of management innovations: a rational response to a management problem and a mobilizing myth that creates trust, energy and commitment).

2. *The principle of joint and continuous monitoring:* The research team and the partnering organization together define, implement and steer the IRM process. Together, they generate the main outputs, theoretical and practical: local contributions to management breakthroughs, publishable case studies, revision or invention of management models.

Table 1 summarizes the preconditions, monitoring principles and main outputs of IRM.

Research Potential of Management Situations: Established and Contextual Theories-In-Use

IRM aims at improving models of action. Yet revising a model of action becomes interesting for research only if some well-established assumptions are rigorously revised. But how can researchers establish the research potential of an empirical management situation? The notion of theory-in-use (versus espoused theory) can

Management Situation		Existence of a CTU		
		Yes		No
Existence of an ETU	Yes	ETUs and CTUs are identical and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • efficient: <i>very limited research potential</i> (illustrative case study) • not efficient: a <i>potential revision of existing ETUs</i> (cf. 'No-no' case) 	ETUs and CTUs are different: <i>moderate research potential</i> : explain the discrepancy, and revise either CTU (if not efficient) or ETU (if efficient CTU)	Existing ETU would be efficient, but actors do not know about it (lack of expertise, lack of organizational maturation): <i>moderate research potential</i> (contribution to the validation of an existing ETU in a given context). Or higher research potential if the empirical situation proves to be a counter-example for the ETU (ETU proves to be inefficient): <i>potential revision of existing ETUs</i>
	No	Existing or revised CTU as a new model? (labeling 'as is' or improving + labeling): <i>high research potential</i> (make the theory that gives to the model its general value as a model of collective action) <i>Limited research potential</i> if CTU proves to be already referenced or finally close to existing ETUs <i>Chandler, labeling the 'M-form' from Du Pont and GM's invention of multi-divisional structures</i>		Open exploration for a new model (invention/labeling): <i>maximum research potential</i> (invent a new management model and make the theory that gives to the model its general value as a model of collective action) <i>Limited research potential</i> if CTU appears easy to invent from existing ETUs or through a combination of CTUs in similar, well-documented situations <i>Ohno, inventing and labeling the 'just-in-time' organization of production</i>

Table 1 A Typology of Research Potential Defined by Joint Analysis of Existing CTUs and ETUs

NOTE: CTU = contextual theory-in-use; ETU = established theory-in-use.

be extended to note that a management theory-in-use can be either established or contextual. A contextual management theory-in-use (CTU) is a set of management assumptions, rules and schemes that are common to members of an organization. An established theory-in-use (ETU) describes the same kind of material as CTUs when this material is actually legitimized and validated outside the organization by a widely referenced set of academic and professional supports. For instance, a variety of quality insurance techniques and behaviours exist in organizations (CTU), and ISO 9000 norms are the corresponding ETU; many managers take balanced decisions relying on multi-criteria evaluations (CTUs) and multi-criteria decision-aiding methods.

With such categories in mind, researchers may face four different empirical situations (Table 2): (1) actors know how to deal with the situation (they have a CTU), and there is also an ETU for that situation; (2) an ETU exists, but actors in the organization do not know about it and have no CTU; (3) actors have a CTU, but no ETU is referenced in the academic literature or professional established practices and (4) actors do not know

how to cope with the situation (no CTU), and no ETU is referenced.

Clearly, the more open the situation with respect to the revision of existing ETUs, the higher is its research potential. Local tensions between ETUs and CTUs are also major signals of research potential for IRM. The knowledge with the highest value is not everyday knowledge produced to solve routine problems. It is the knowledge produced when a pioneering company invents, consciously or not, a new management model. At this moment, the same set of new knowledge used by managers to radically transform the situation can be interpreted by researchers as a potential scientific discovery.

Albert David and Armand Hatchuel

See also Action Science; Lewin, Kurt

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Warranting a pioneering logic and a credible research potential: five preconditions for IRM

- A partner with a pioneering logic
- An open management issue
- A phase of exploratory collaboration in order to assess research potential
- A minimum duration for contractual commitment to a research issue
- An academic team with a legitimate research potential in management

Supporting an investigating process for the academic team and protecting participants from the organization: monitoring principles for IRM

- Principles of free academic investigation
 - Free interviewing of concerned members of the organization
 - Confidentiality of all individual interviews
 - Principle of isonomy between members of the organization
 - Capacity to create research-oriented material
 - Principle of joint and continuous monitoring
 - Management innovation evaluated as rational myths
- Principle of controlled design processes

Outputs of IRM

- Revision or discovery of management models and theories
 - Local contribution to potential management breakthroughs
 - Publishable case studies
-

Table 2 *IRM Collaborative Protocols: A Synthesis*

NOTE: IRM = intervention Research in management.

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By way of an introduction, it is important to note that in action research, interviews often become a kind of dance or informal conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee. The idea of a dance suggests the highly reflective way in which participants discuss, share information and co-create a narrative about a particular experience, event or set of issues. Unlike traditional research, the roles between the two participants may blur and shift, and the creation of a narrative is always local and specific to those involved. It is meant to legitimate the experiential knowledge of the person/people being interviewed as well as enhance the skills of the interviewer/listener. It may shock, sadden, galvanize or bore, but it will always generate data or information about the question in focus.

INTERVIEWS

Interviewing is the most common way of collecting data in action research and is used in both quantitative survey research and qualitative inquiry. If action research involves observation, analysis and then doing, interviews are central to the first two steps. This short overview focuses on qualitative interviews in particular, outlining their history, their various forms and configurations and their preparation, process and analysis.

Types of Interviews

Interviews have been used in the social sciences since the nineteenth century, with the closed-ended question survey proving to be the most popular until the 1970s. After that, less structured and more open forms of interviews started capturing the attention of researchers less concerned with emulating the scientific method and more interested in the lived experience of people as told by those people. With the advent of action research and its goal of local, social, political, organizational or

community change, open-ended and more creative collection methods became even more important.

Indeed, at this point, just as there are many ways to collect data, in action research, there are many kinds of interviews. These include individual structured, semi-structured and narrative approaches as well as group interviews or focus groups. In addition, interviews may be formally or casually conducted, face-to-face, over the telephone or online. The interview data may be captured through field notes, flip charts, audio tapes or using video cameras, to name just a few methods. The team's choice of which type of interview to do will depend on the community of interest and their cultural, political and ideological approaches; the theoretical orientation of the project; the research questions; ethics; the length of time they have to do the work; their access to equipment for recording and transcribing data; how many people need to be interviewed and compensated and, of course, resources for all of the above.

Roles and Relationships

As with other types of action research and ways of collecting data (e.g. questionnaires, observation or visual methods such as Photovoice), the interview experience will hinge on how much work has gone into establishing roles and relationships beforehand. For instance, those doing the interviews should ideally be people who have stepped forward from the community of interest doing the action research; who have been helped to prepare for, practice and carry out 'test' interviews and who genuinely want to do this kind of data collection. Ideally, they will have been involved in the research project from the beginning, deciding on the research questions, thinking through the ethics of the work and planning how best to collect the kind of data needed to 'act' in the ways and means the group needs most. It is important that the interviewers on the team are comfortable with their role, have co-created the questions on the interview guide and have the support they need both before and after the interview takes place. This could include one-to-one or group debriefings where interviewers can discuss and support each other, sharing tips and insights on the process.

Then, there is the relationship with the person being interviewed, which, however brief, is also central to the process. The worst thing an interviewer can do is rush in, turn on a tape recorder and start asking questions. Instead, the action research team will have already discussed and planned for the safety and comfort of both interviewee and interviewer. During the recruitment stage of the work, they will have asked people where

they would feel most comfortable being interviewed, by whom (i.e. a self-identified woman perhaps), at what time and what they need ahead of time (i.e. a copy of the interview guide, a contact number and, if necessary, a consent form). The team will have allocated resources for transportation to and from the interview site, for refreshments and/or meals and for recognition of the time, effort and knowledge shared. The interviewer will know that time spent at the start just chatting, drinking coffee, going through the consent form and explaining the research project is invaluable. For instance, in some forms of Afrocentric interviewing, the interviewer may bring a variety of foods to the interview and may experience an extended 'greeting' of an hour or more before she can 'begin' the interview. When the interview has come to its conclusion, she may also participate in an extended 'leaving', which is absolutely necessary in this local context. Vital to the success of any interview encounter is learning about the appropriate cultural protocol and respectful engagement.

Interview Schedules and Guides

An interview schedule guides a structured interview where the focus is on consistency and efficiency or when people want to speak to a large number of folks about a particular issue. It includes both instructions for how to use it (and handle any issues that arise) as well as a set of very specific questions designed to be asked exactly as they appear. Increasingly, these kinds of schedules are being used by those who use computers in their data collection, as answers can be entered quickly (or numerically).

An interview guide is a list of questions (usually between 5 and 15), prompts or topics used in a semi-structured interview. Based on the research questions developed by the action research team, the guide is meant to help the interviewer cover areas that speak back to those questions, creating research data in the process. However, these kinds of guides will be flexible, allowing their users to change the wording, change the sequencing of topics as well as raise issues and surprises that the interviewer never planned. Although often piloted beforehand, in many projects, interview guides may change through the interviews as participants raise new issues and questions. They may also shorten or lengthen the time of an interview (from within 15 minutes to several hours) depending on how (un)comfortable, (un)safe and vocal a person is. The kinds of questions asked will also shift during an interview. Some like to begin with very general questions, such as 'How are you doing today?'. Following this, interviewers may use 'grand tour questions', such as

‘Tell me about this building’. Specific questions focus on particular events such as ‘the residents’ meeting’, and typical questions will explore general everyday events. Other questions may extend conversations, such as ‘Tell me more about the meeting this morning’ or ‘Can you give me an example of that?’. Some interviewers may bring paper and pencils or other art supplies so that they can ask questions like ‘Can you draw me a map of the community?’.

Transcriptions and Coding

Researchers have different tactics for creating interview transcripts. Some transcribe the complete interview word for word; frequently using techniques that allow for coding of pauses, silences, awkward moments and laughter, in addition to dialogue. Others, however, only transcribe what seems applicable to their own study. Transcribing interviews can be a very time-consuming process; some argue that this is best done by the researcher as it is a helpful step in familiarizing oneself with the data, while others incorporate the help of professional transcriptionists. To this end, intimate familiarity with data is not the only reason to listen to the data. Since the transcriptionist was not present during the interview, subtle meanings that the interviewer picked up might be missed. In addition, listening to the interview again provides a great opportunity to reflect on the interview process, recall details that might have been missed and potentially revise the interview guide for the next interview. Finally, listening to the interview allows the researcher to reflect on her or his strengths and weaknesses, which is especially important for novice interviewers.

Coding is a process used to organize data into smaller manageable chunks. Coding is frequently based on the theoretical underpinnings of the study, as well as the researcher’s personal assumptions about the social world. Nevertheless, it frequently follows a three-stage process. In the first phase, researchers conduct a preliminary review of the data, making notes of any ‘key moments’ where statements might be explored. The goal here is to capture simple descriptions and classifications of the phenomenon under investigation for the first set of broad themes. In the second phase, these broad themes are collapsed into descriptive codes. Following this process, a more substantive review of the data will be performed. Finally, if researchers work in a team, all descriptive codes are frequently discussed, debated and reviewed with other members of the research team before being collapsed into analytical categories that take up issues around the phenomenon under investigation.

Reflexivity

Much of conventional interviewing adheres to a language of scientific neutrality and the various techniques to accomplish this. However, in action research, the interview is never a neutral process and is always situated historically, politically and culturally as well as mediated by race, gender, sexuality, disability and a host of other identities. It follows that the interview is not merely a process of asking questions and receiving answers but a co-construction on which researchers must constantly reflect. For instance, action researchers need to ask themselves how their own positionality will affect the interviews, their analysis and the action that can result. They need to think about how their gender may affect comfort and safety, for instance, or how their privilege will shape the findings and how the context of those findings will always affect their translation. The point here is that research (work) is based on the understanding that human interpretations are the starting point to develop knowledge about the social world. How we order, classify, structure and interpret our world, and then act upon these interpretations, is always paramount to knowledge production and social change.

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See also focus groups; Photovoice

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ISHIKAWA DIAGRAMS

See Fishbone Diagram

ISLAMIC PRACTICE

This entry explores possible connections between Islamic principles and practices and the three approaches to action research (first, second and third person inquiry and practice). There are multiple

approaches to Islam, as reflected by the variety of sects and schools of thought/jurisprudence. As such, understandings of even the broadest principles and approaches can vary.

There are many examples of the connections between Islamic thought and practice and modes of action research. This entry looks at three such examples. The focus of and practice involved in the annual observance of the month of fasting, Ramadhan, offers an example of first person inquiry and practice in Islam. Traditional approaches to the development of local sharia, or 'Islamic law', stand as an example of second person inquiry and practice. Finally, the development of an open letter from Muslim scholars to leaders and followers of the Christian faith, titled 'A Common Word Between Us and You', presents a contemporary example of third person inquiry and practice.

Islamic Practice and First Person Action Research

First person action research involves fostering an inquiring approach to one's own life, acting deliberately and with awareness of one's actions and assessing the effects of these actions on others. Various aspects of Islamic practice can be understood to actively encourage and support first person action research among observant Muslims, including the traditions and rituals surrounding the month of fasting, Ramadhan.

During Ramadhan, practicing Muslims refrain from food, drink and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset. Those who are able to also strive to spend additional time focused on reading the Qur'an, with its guidance on matters both spiritual and practical, and engaging in additional voluntary prayers at home and/or in congregation. This month is generally seen as a time of personal purification, with a focus on reflecting on one's own spiritual state and improvement.

Numerous exhortations in the Qur'an describe people who are ultimately successful as those who 'believe and do good works' (*mun amana wa 'amila salihan*). A time of heightened spiritual awareness demands critical awareness aimed at improving oneself and one's actions. Many Muslims consider Ramadhan a month in which good deeds hold even greater value; this encourages believers to translate reflection and internal inquiry into action.

At the end of Ramadhan, all financially able Muslims are required to give a small amount of staple food items in charity (*zakat ul-fitr*), thus ensuring that all members of the community have enough food to celebrate the holiday of Eid ul-Fitr without worry.

In this way, the month of fasting ends in personal action focused on caring for one's community.

Islamic Practice and Second Person Action Research

Second person inquiry and practice revolves around working directly with others on issues of mutual concern. A thought-provoking example of this in Islamic governance is the traditional practice and development of sharia. There are various definitions of sharia; this entry will present two more common explanations.

The most common definition of sharia is typically 'Islamic law'. Sharia literally translates as 'a way'. It can also be understood as 'that which is legislated'. Muslims have some texts which legislate, most notably the Qur'an; however, the question of what each text means then arises. The Qur'an itself is the subject of many interpretive or explanatory studies under the sciences of *tafseer* (roughly translated as 'exegesis') and *fiqh* ('Islamic jurisprudence'). Understanding the texts can result in multiple voices and perspectives; most traditionally trained scholars recognize the possibility of multiple interpretations as well as their own fallibility in developing an interpretation. This plurality directly controverts the common (mis)understanding of Islamic law as a single set of rigid rules.

Sharia can also be understood as something that exists in God's mind. There are fallible ways of discerning sharia (*fiqh*), but none of the tools we have can be called sharia: They are scholars' best guesses at what sharia might be. A common problem is therefore conflating sharia with efforts to approximate sharia. The heart of Islamic law is thus a process of contestations and disputation rather than a rigid set of laws. It is a dynamic tradition of jurisprudence, including within it the recognition of the fallibility of the people and the processes involved.

Historically, the development of sharia was typically understood as a process involving both the assessment of traditional scholarly adjudications and a critical assessment of the local context. Laws were thus developed through interactions between experts in law and experts in the context. As such, Islamic laws were context specific, answering to the needs of the people and the time for which they were developed. Sharia was generally polycentric in nature, informed by overriding principles such as valuing life and protecting people from oppression. The *fatwa* literature of Islamic jurisprudence is called the *responsa* ('responses') literature because it is made up of answers to questions. These questions arise from people engaged in the context who are seeking clarification on legal issues.

Over the course of history, there have been a variety of traditions of sharia. For example, the *akhlaq* position

focuses primarily on good governance. There are also some instances of attempts to standardize laws across a larger region in Islamic history; for example, in the Ottoman context, there was a movement to ‘modernize’, making laws more standardized in line with Western polities. These laws, however, were not necessarily construed as Islamic laws or sharia.

The modern-day concept of sharia as a set of rigid rules is arguably an artefact of the colonial era. For example, in India, British colonial powers required that locally developed *hanafi* laws be standardized across the South Asian subcontinent. These sweeping changes resulted in a code of law that did not speak to each local community’s needs but was still described by the governing powers as sharia. Contemporary Islamic movements that demand a one-size-fits-all absolute ‘sharia’ rule typically ignore this pluralistic, polycentric tradition, relying on the examples of standardization that are associated with colonialism.

The traditional approach to sharia can still be found at the local level in some Islamic states where the central government is weak and power can devolve to the local level. It should be noted, however, that while the principles of sharia as context specific and responsive may still be operative, the practice of developing and enforcing local laws can be unjust or unresponsive dependent on the understanding of Islam and Islamic law held by both the scholars and the lawmakers involved.

Islamic Practice and Third Person Action Research

Third person inquiry and practice in action research involves a wider community of inquiry, focusing on processes between people who do not have direct contact with each other. Key to third person action research is both the participation of potential users in knowledge generation and the linking of concepts to observable behaviour. A recent example of this in Islamic practice is the interfaith initiative that has its foundation in a 2008 open letter from Muslim scholars to followers of the Christian faith, titled ‘A Common Word Between Us and You’ (hereafter ACW).

The ACW effort focuses on building interfaith relations and promoting peace between the two largest faith followings in the world. Although not developed as an action research effort, the processes and principles around developing and disseminating the message of ACW are generally aligned with those of third person action research. Originally signed by 138 scholars from across all major (and many smaller) sects and schools of thought, ACW presents the most extensive attempt at developing a consensus on an issue among Islamic scholars. These scholars, as representatives of their communities, met to discuss a pressing social issue:

the need to build a platform for understanding between the two biggest faith groups in the world, Muslims and Christians. Since then, over 400 scholars and leaders have added their signatures to the document.

The document makes the argument that both Islam and Christianity are based on two foundational principles: love of God and love of one’s neighbour. These principles serve as the common ground between the faiths, tying them together and offering the single most powerful argument for peace between them. The theory of the clash of civilizations makes the argument of a zero-sum game: The gain of one faith group has to be the loss of the other. The ACW directly controverts that argument, saying that both the faith groups either win together or lose together—mutual gain or mutual destruction—which is dependent on whether a framework for mutual understanding can be developed both globally and at the local level.

Over the ensuing 5 years, ACW has continued to support the development of a social movement for interfaith understanding, utilizing a variety of methods to engage local communities around the world on the principles of love and peace that lie at the foundation of these two faiths. Many communities engaging in interfaith dialogue have used ACW as a starting point for building interfaith bridges. Some of the best theological schools in the world have incorporated ACW into how they approach teaching and how they engage in interfaith studies, including Cambridge, Yale and Humboldt University in Berlin. And in 2010, the United Nations established World Interfaith Harmony Week after advocacy and diplomatic efforts by supporters of ACW from a variety of countries; the language of the resolution further reflects the principles set forward in ACW.

The 2008 open letter acted as a statement of general principles. It required local communities to determine the actual meaning of the principles in context, as well as how to facilitate them in practice. In this way, the transformation of principles into practice, while moving from a global to a local level, is an example of third person action research. Every local community must develop its own understanding of what loving one’s neighbour means. For example, in some communities, it may mean making sure that a Christian (or a Muslim) is not accused of a crime without recourse to adequate legal defence. Or it may mean ensuring that no one in the community, regardless of their faith background, goes hungry when the community as a whole has food. Thus, the final practice is dependent on the local context, while the original development of the social movement was created through expert consultation of scholars from communities around the world.

This entry has introduced possible ways of relating first, second and third person action research with

elements in the diverse Islamic tradition. Case studies and examples of contemporary action research projects taking place in Islamic/Muslim contexts have been provided in the Further Readings; these projects were not necessarily conceived with relation to understandings of Islam.

Intisar Khanani

See also Christian spirituality of action; first person action research; Grameen Bank; Jewish belief, thought and practice; local self-governance; second person action research; third person action research

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JEWISH BELIEF, THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

Understanding Jewish connections to action research requires a return to the roots of both Judaism and action research. Thus, this entry looks at both the legacy of Kurt Lewin, a key architect of action research, as well as ancient Jewish texts (e.g. the Torah and Talmud). It explores Jewish conceptions of text study, *tikkunolam* ('repairing the world') and *na'asehv'nishma* ('we will practice and understand'). In addition, examples of action research in scholarship on Jewish life and culture are offered.

Kurt Lewin, Jewish Life and Action Research

The connections between Jewish religion, culture and history and action research have their historical origins in the work of Lewin, social psychologist, theoretician, activist and practitioner. Martin Gold, an anthologizer of Lewin's work described Lewin's roots as a Jewish young man in early-twentieth-century Germany, where he experienced anti-Semitism and marginalization. These forces contributed to Lewin's first-hand understanding of social problems and helped drive his passion to alleviate human suffering. Lewin attended to questions of Jewish life in his scholarship, such as writing about Jewish education. In addition, in 1947, he helped establish the Commission on Community Interrelations of the American Jewish Congress, which Frances Cherry and Catherine Borshuk have described as one of the first action research organizations to be created with the express purpose of implementing community-based research to fight discrimination. The commitment that Lewin dedicated to this organization is reflected by his frequent reference to the quote by Rabbi Hillel (first century): 'If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?' (*Ethics of the Fathers* 1:14). Lewin's

reference to traditional Jewish texts alerts us to the possibility that the connections between Jewish culture and action research may have other textual sources.

Jewish Conceptions of Text Study and Action Research

A primary aspect of Jewish life is that of communal text study. Traditional Jewish text study is rooted in a tradition of multiple interpretations, oral and written discussion and debate. This is most evident in the Talmud (a homiletic compilation produced by rabbis and sages during the Premodern Era). In this tradition, multiple interpretations from across time and space are invited to debate and discuss the meaning of Jewish law. The physical page of the Talmud reveals this hermeneutic orientation in that the focus of discussion is printed in the middle of the page, while different rabbinic interpretations surround the central text. This hermeneutic stance assumes that one interpretation is not sufficient to build a deep understanding, but rather, it is in deep discussion, debate, challenging and questioning that the learner constructs knowledge. The traditional physical space of Jewish learning, the *beitmidrash* ('house of study'), is distinctive for the pairs of learners spread throughout, studying a central text, under the guidance of a teacher. While libraries are defined by their silence, the *beitmidrash* is noted for its din of discussion and learning. In contemporary Jewish life the *beitmidrash* is still alive across the denominations of Jewish culture and across continents and age groups. In addition, debates and questions of Jewish law and ethics are still published today in the form of *response*—rabbinic responses to contemporary ritual, ethical and spiritual concerns, which are then codified.

It is such a critical stance on text, the necessity of multiple interpretations and the tradition of communal study that connect this aspect of Jewish culture with action research. As action research invites the communal construction of meaning, so too does Jewish text study.

Two Core Jewish Concepts Connected to Action Research

Na'asehv'nishma

This biblical phrase, meaning 'we will do, and we will listen/understand' (Exodus 24:7) was the Israelites' response to receiving the Decalogue and is often referred to as the root of Jewish commitment to and celebration of ritual and the primacy of ritual in Jewish life. Many interpretations of this phrase suggest that, in Jewish tradition, engaging in ritual often leads to understanding. It is action that can lead to spiritual connection, community building and deep learning. This Jewish call to action is a direct link to action research and reminds the community that while study is a fundamental aspect of Jewish life, action is also necessary.

Tikkunolam

This idea, which means 'repairing the world', of biblical and mystical origins, teaches that the world is broken and must be repaired. Strongly linked with *na'asehv'nishma*, *tikkunolam* teaches about a specific form of action—that of social change. *Tikkunolam* stresses the importance of taking positive social steps to improve the lives of people in one's community and/or the larger world. In contemporary Jewish culture, *tikkunolam* projects are ubiquitous as part of the coming-of-age ritual of bar/bat mitzvah, synagogue/temple programmes and school missions and programmes. A well-known publication, *Tikkun (Repair)*, dedicated to the mission of social change, has been part of the Jewish periodical world for over two decades. Additionally, many Jewish service-oriented organizations and high school and college programmes have been created in North America to galvanize youth towards community service.

Action Research and Contemporary Jewish Scholarship

In considering the historical and textual connections between Jewish culture and action research, we conclude with a brief comment on the place of action research in contemporary Jewish scholarship. Practitioner action research (also called teacher research, educational action research or design research) has had a strong presence in the scholarship on Jewish education and Jewish communal service, including organizational life, social work and pastoral care. Recently, scholarship on Jewish identity, Jewish issues connected to community psychology and rabbinic education has engaged in practitioner and community-based action research. Similarly, service learning has also become a centrepiece in Jewish educational contexts—from

elementary, supplementary and high school settings to rabbinical seminaries. Perhaps, it is from these settings that we may see the next generation of Jewish action research emerge.

Miriam Raider-Roth

See also identity; Lewin, Kurt; practical knowing; practitioner inquiry; social justice

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JIPEMOYO PROJECT

Jipemoyo was a Participatory Action Research project carried out in the Western Bagamoyo District in Tanzania in 1975–9 as a co-operative endeavour between Tanzanian and Finnish scholars as part of the programme of the Research and Planning Department of the Ministry of National Culture and Youth and the Academy of Finland's Department of Humanities. Two Tanzanian and four Finnish doctoral candidates formed the interdisciplinary core of researchers representing sociology, anthropology/ethnology, ethnomusicology and geography. Marja-Liisa Swantz, a lecturer in the University of Helsinki, and Odhiambo Anacleto, Director of Research in the Ministry of National Culture and Youth, shared the leadership of the project under the general theme 'The Role of Culture in the Restructuring Process of Rural Tanzania'. The aim was to enable the villagers to realize the development potential within their cultural context while utilizing the available resources.

The participatory approach was in line with the community-based *Ujamaa* politics of the nation, in which development of people by the people was spelt out. The concepts development, *maendeleo*, and culture, *utamaduni*, were being worked out in the country under

the direction of the ruling party, Tanganyika National Union, and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania. Jipemoyo encouraged villagers to take the initiative in solving their own problems by using their own resources (*jipemoyo*, meaning literally 'give yourself heart', in contrast to the 'trembling hearts' in the name of the town of Bagamoyo, which may have been a reference to the local slave trade).

The time was opportune for the researchers to join the villagers in common pursuit of solutions to problems as the government's nationwide programme of 'villagization' was in progress, with the aim of facilitating social, health and school services for all and using the sense of togetherness. The moving of people from scattered settlements to bigger villages on roadsides had been largely implemented in the study area while the building of houses was still in process. One issue that became central to the project was the participation of the pastoralist Parakuyo Maasai, who were being ostracized by the government staff and accused by their farming neighbours of allowing their cattle to feed in the farmers' fields, resulting in cases in the local courts. The obligatory education became another entrance point to the pastoralists who clashed with the education officers.

In terms of research, the project had tangible effects on Tanzanian development conceptions. The project aimed at making cultural knowledge an asset in the restructuring process. The research team organized a training course for cultural officers and a number of seminars, workshops and discussions in which the co-operating villagers from different sectors brought out their strengths and strains. In meeting together with local, regional and national leaders and administrators, people could experience the usefulness of the interactive and dialogical approach. Especially significant was the seminar the Parakuyo organized with the researchers for dialogue with officers of animal husbandry and political leaders from different levels. The Maasai prime minister initiated one encounter in Dar es Salaam for concerned government officers to meet with a group of pastoralists and farmers from the study area to discuss ways of overcoming the disagreements over land use. Another significant encounter was the locally organized women's seminar in interaction with village women and women officers from the district and national levels.

More important than agreeing on a theory of historical materialism or materialist phenomenology was engaging the farmers and pastoralists, men and women, in the research process, paying special attention to the women's situation and their rights within the different social groups. It was beneficial for the co-operation that the research group was interdisciplinary, as the social, cultural and political background of the people participating was central. The ethnic traditions

were identified as a product of colonial rule, seeing them as kinship-based societies in the process of gaining a national identity.

While having an impact on the formulation of culture study in the Ministry of National Culture and Youth, the project also produced a detailed collection of village-based recordings, pictures and oral and written material. All the research notes were produced in three copies (including the handwritten research notes). The total material was preserved in the archives of the ministry, in the Institute of Development Studies in Helsinki and as researchers' personal copies. Being primarily produced by the research staff and preprocessed by the archive assistants, the material is of high technical quality. Apart from describing the local setting of villagization, with its many problems, the archive is a rich collection of ethnographic material on pastoralism, music and dance, traditional handicrafts and gender issues.

While innovating Participatory Action Research methodology and pioneering in social and development studies in close co-operation with the villagers as research partners, Jipemoyo produced academically and methodologically impressive results: five doctoral theses (Kemal Mustafa, Ulla Vuorela, Helena Jerman, Taimi Sitari and Arvi Hurskainen), a licentiate thesis (Bernard Kiyenze), rich ethno-musical literary and recorded material (Philip Donner) and numerous other literary products.

Some of the concrete achievements of the Jipemoyo project were as follows:

- Bringing together administrators and struggling pastoralists into dialogue, producing concrete solutions and procedures for reconciling conflicting interests
- Making Tanzanian cultural officers aware of participation as a tool of development and cultural promotion and the significance of empirical data gathering
- Producing direct research feedback to villagers in the form of booklets, exhibitions, films and radio programmes evidencing people's participation in producing them
- Making the village-based musician-dancer Juma Nasoro an active agent of the process of his own music and dance tradition even in Finland
- Helping the government with the geographer's drawings of the new settlements

Jipemoyo has been seminal in introducing a participatory approach in development programmes, as a similar methodology using the participatory paradigm was applied later by other development research projects. The project allowed researchers opportunities for

reflection within the university circles and for contribution to international discussions on Participatory Action Research. These internal and international connections kept the politically coloured theoretical discussions going.

Marja-Liisa Swantz

See also Fals Borda, Orlando; local self-governance; Participatory Action Research

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include details of external physical surroundings combined with an interior monologue of thoughts, feeling and perceptions. A political journal, however, is usually written with publication in mind and seeks to promote personal viewpoints and explain one’s actions. This entry maps out some of the key features of, and overlaps and differences between, various forms of journaling and points to emerging presentational formats. The entry emphasizes the role of journaling as a form of reflective practice in various contexts, arguing that its significance and value for action research lie in its potential to enable heightened reflexivity, through both the writing and the reading process, whether as the original author or as an interested, inquiring reader.

Journaling is closely linked to professional development practices in many fields of work: Teachers, doctors, nurses and social workers are encouraged to participate in reflective practice as a means of personal or staff development. Students are encouraged to maintain learning journals, the content of which might form a discussion with teachers or supervisors, forming part of a portfolio or dissertation to demonstrate development of knowledge acquisition, attitudinal change and academic engagement.

Most journals, and the techniques employed within them, are aimed at engendering some form of self-development, and in this way they vary from logs and diaries. Although the terms are often used synonymously, they have different purposes and formats.

Logs tend to be precise recordings of facts pertaining to daily operations on a regular basis. In some professions, such as aircraft piloting, the armed forces and shipping, they are a compulsory requirement, used to report on activities over a period of time. Accuracy is a paramount feature of the log as it not only provides a historical account but may also be used as evidence in disputes. Logs are also used to chart other forms of progress—for example, a student’s reading log or a research log, documenting findings at any given point.

Diaries have a more personal and intimate purpose and tone, tending to be less structured in form and internalized in their writing. Diaries often provide vital historical and social information: Sei Shonagon’s *The Pillow Book* documents life as a courtesan in eleventh-century Japan, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* offers eyewitness accounts of the Great Plague and Great Fire of London in the seventeenth century while *Anne Frank’s Diary* has become one of the most influential documents of the Nazi occupation in the Netherlands and the effects of the Holocaust.

Types of Journaling

The journal is more purposeful than a diary, yet less formal than a log book, and is usually related to a

JOURNALING

Journaling is the practice of recording events, ideas and thoughts over a period of time, often with a particular purpose or project in mind. There are various forms of journaling using specific techniques for different purposes. For example, a travel journal might be structured around experiences in particular locations and

practice or interest. Ira Progoff, an American psychologist, developed an Intensive Journal Process, offering a system of interrelated journal processes to be followed at an individual's own pace to work through blocks and difficult situations. Progoff stresses that the process is not analytical or diagnostic but that the writing activity itself enables significant self-development and problem-solving capabilities.

Journaling in this way is based upon the idea that by putting ideas and thoughts into writing, the mind is not only freed of their recurrence, and thus the potential blocking of other ideas or activities, but the process of writing through them enables perceptive thinking and the momentum for working on them.

Reflective journals are the most common form of journaling used in professional and educational practice. The ability to critically reflect upon issues arising from one's practice, conversation or readings often generates a new understanding. Reflective practitioners and trainers such as Adams and Bolton use specific techniques such as dialoguing and clustering to aid problem-solving and decision-making, thus making reflective journaling a relevant working tool.

Research and learning journals are compiled from notes accumulated throughout a research project or study. Here, the journal acts as a record of ideas and experiences and is often reflective. It may serve as an aide-memoir, a prompt for further exploration and to record responses to readings and lectures. It is an effective means of charting the personal and practical changes and developments experienced throughout a project.

Journal Formats

Journaling implies a writing process, and for some, such as the psychologist James Pennebaker, the act of writing is central to its effectiveness as a developmental or therapeutic tool, but effective use of audio and video to record ideas for subsequent reflection offers the potential of widespread online sharing.

Artists' journals allow an especially creative way of capturing ideas and experiences that may be difficult to formulate in writing. These might include personal artwork or serve as a scrapbook of postcards, photographs or pictures from magazines or newspapers of significance supplemented with written notes or text, pertaining to the project.

Portfolio journaling further extends the capacity of the journal presentation as a source of reference for all forms of information, such as maps, films, videos, notes and observations and papers accumulated

throughout the information gathering. The format also informs the research process, enabling one to broaden the approach and remove the emphasis on the mechanics of writing where this might be problematic.

Journaling as a Reflective Process

The value of journaling in action research lies in the reflective process that encourages a deeper self-awareness and confidence in oneself through extending personal and professional insights. Ideas can be 'debated' and new approaches trialled on the page. Ultimately, journaling's value is judged on the extent to which the new awareness might be beneficial, and for this, a reflexive approach takes on importance in driving forward ideas. This circularity of action, fundamental to action research processes, makes use of the journal as a working tool and of the process of journaling as a stimulus for personal development and social action.

While journaling is considered an individualized activity, it may be effectively shared with others or collaboratively produced. Blogging, as an online journaling practice that can also be presented through visuals, broadens the scope for interaction. Electronic media and recent developments in social communications and social networking can be used to establish, share and develop new ideas and to work in globally collaborative ways.

Jane Reece

See also autobiography; narrative; narrative inquiry; Photovoice; two-column technique

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K

KARMA THEORY

Researchers studying human actions in whatever context can either ignore or include the experiences they encounter in the context of their research. If they include them, and thus depart from a participatory research inquiry, they are required to become aware of the beliefs of the other respondents, be conscious of the given context and know how this shapes them. In this context, the focus is on karma theory. A researcher using a positivistic view will ignore karma theory because it is not objectively known (epistemology) and will use third person approaches to get knowledge, and when this approach does not verify karma theory, he or she will claim that karma does not exist (ontology). However, a researcher departing from a participatory view of research will acknowledge the epistemology that knowledge is self-reflexive; the researcher will then give room to a first person approach and, therefore, will be open to experiential knowledge which will contribute towards articulating and accepting karma theory as a part of nature, of reality, and thus given (ontology). Thus, researchers believing in karma theory and those who do not may apply different sets of assumptions and use different types of experiences, perception, interpretation and knowledge in approaching their main research concern when studying human behaviour.

There are three approaches of action research as described by the editors of this encyclopedia:

- First person research and practice skills and methods address the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act deliberately and with awareness and to assess effects in the outside world while acting.
- Second person action research and practice address the ability to inquire face-to-face with

others into issues of mutual concern—for example, in the service of improving personal and professional practice, both individually and separately.

- Third person strategies aim to create a wider community of inquiry involving persons who, because they cannot be known to each other face-to-face (e.g. in a large, geographically dispersed corporation), have an impersonal relationship.

This entry proposes that all these approaches can be preceded by encountering experiential knowledge as exemplified in karma theory—an application of a participatory world view. Such a world view is fundamentally experiential, stating that the world—here as experienced and articulated through karma theory—is the basis of ontology and epistemology. Therefore, consider the following questions: What is this Law of Karma? How does it work? How can it be applied in the context of a first person approach?

Karma Theory: What It Is and How It Works

The notion of karma has received a lot of attention in the East, mainly in Hinduism and Buddhism. It can be treated as a main ontology in Indian philosophy. The common person tends to see it as a law of ethics or a mechanism of punishment and reward governed by past actions. However, karma is not some passive mechanism but a law of action that guides the evolutionary process of individuals, families and communities. Though based on past actions, it gives full opportunities to shape the future. This requires the belief in rebirth and that past actions result in consequences in the present and influences on the near and far future. Karma means that all existence is the working of a universal energy which covers a process, an action and the ingredients of that action. The Law of Karma thus contains three parts: (1) a connection

between births, (2) a result of action and experience and (3) an evolutionary consequence related to the future. The Law of Karma has often been misunderstood. Karma is not quite the same thing as a material or substantial law of cause and effect that can be understood in the mental context of a single life. It does not work as a mechanical chain of action and consequence. It is action, and it requires a phenomenon, a doer and an active consequence. These three are all tied together so that there is an association of cause and effect, a present action following past actions and future actions following present actions.

This means that for understanding our actions and research phenomena, researchers need to relate to this energy. Humans are made of this energy; they use this energy in their actions, and thus, the effect will also contain this energy. If this is their ontology, they cannot escape this governance law, and thus, the main lesson in life is to cope with this law. How does a past karma lead to a consequence in the future? It is believed that the main mechanism here is the energy that is released when acting. Individuals release negative energy or positive energy by focusing on the ethical views of something (intellectual consciousness), how they feel about things and others (vital consciousness) and how it uplifts them (spiritual consciousness). This means that they have the power to determine their future, and thus, it is not a passive law that guides them.

For individuals, it requires a spiritual world view with a focus on two processes: first, the process of travelling through the layers of consciousness to reach subtle levels and ultimately the universal energy or oneness (that from which everything comes into existence) and, second, the process of seeking for the spirit in everything and everywhere (the spirit in which everything is involved). This requires a transformation of the inner self (inner development) and aligning it to the outer world (outer development). Both processes result in transcending interest, time and distance. It requires answering the question of who one is by seeking harmony with the inner self and harmony with the outer environment, with the result of transcending personal interest towards a broader interest (e.g. organizational or community interest), transcending time (bringing in the longer term into one's decision-making process, e.g. the new generation or all stakeholders in our research question) and transcending distance by including places that are geographically far away, which means a concern for the environment. Thus, a spiritual world view is about enlarging one's views of interest, time frame and space while constantly being in touch with one's subtle core—also in the context of doing research.

There are various concrete secular and non-secular paths to follow such a world view to deal with karma. One such path, Integral Yoga, deals with this energy in

such a way that it has evolutionary power not only for the individual involved but also for the surroundings and community he or she lives in.

A First Person Spiritual Approach to Release Positive Karmic Energy

Integral Yoga does not prescribe a clear set of practices to follow because different people have different paths based on their past karma, and even within a person, different stages in his or her life may require different tools. From the philosophy on Integral Yoga, the following principles can be applied for a first person inquiry.

Step-by-step principle: Clear out a place and time for concentrated yogic inquiry.

- Create a space in your research environment for sitting quietly to concentrate on the yogic practice.
- Place a few things to create an atmosphere that enhances concentration and sitting comfort (a cushion, a certain smell or an object for concentration).
- Keep the place set up at all times for concentration or meditation.

Regularity principle: Choose a particular time and period to concentrate on the yogic inquiry.

- Concentrate for a fixed number of minutes (5, 10, 15 or 30), preferably every day.
- If a session is missed, make up the time as soon as possible.
- Get into a routine, and stay with the routine as punctuality is needed by physical nature.

Design own path purification principle: Select any activity that helps purify energy levels.

- Read spiritual books to get in close touch with your inner consciousness. Reading is good preparation for meditation or concentration.
- Design a series of physical and breathing exercises that fit your condition.
- Talk to your inner self, or use prayers.
- Repeat specific prayers and mantras. Repeating a mantra helps quiet and control restless thoughts and enables the mind to concentrate on a simple activity. A mantra is an expression of the divine; repeating a mantra creates vibrations that are expressions of the divine.
- Contemplate planned activities and consider how to do them in a way that will help get the

most complete answer for the main concern of the research. This can be done by focusing upon the how questions (process) rather than the gains of the research actions.

- Contemplate the activities that have been completed, and consider how well they fit the research ideals and our spiritual growth, what led us away from acting up to our highest standards and how we should prevent this in the future.
- Observe your thoughts silently by listening to all the sounds around you, and as the quietness deepens, begin to hear your thoughts.

Contemplation on the karma principle: Seek unity with the cosmic law.

- Meditate on the idea of a cosmos, on you as a doer and on the active consequence of your actions in the cosmos.
- Treat material things, others, animals and everything around us well, with respect; see and feel yourself in them. This is a yogic way of looking at nature and at the world.

Conclusion

Adding experiential knowledge, grounded in karma theory, to action research approaches brings an understanding of the effect of the actions of the researcher, it creates awareness of one's self and the impact of one's actions and it provides an understanding of which elements one should focus on to release positive energy when studying a situation or context with other participants. Several principles and examples of paths have been presented. Integral philosophy states that all these principles and paths will progressively expand the practice of yoga into the normal activities of life (walking, driving, waiting in line, exercising, cooking, cleaning the house) and in professional contexts (surrendering to what happens, perceiving, listening and adapting in the research context). A personal effort is required but is not sufficient to achieve the experiential knowledge of the workings of the Law of Karma. A combination of personal effort, receptivity to the grace and action of karmic law and faith in karmic power is needed. There must be a belief that openness towards this law will create a deeper and more holistic understanding of phenomena.

Sharda Nandram

See also Christian spirituality of action; experiential knowing; first person action research; reflective practice; theological action research

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KINCHELOE, JOE

Joe Lyons Kincheloe was born in Kingsport, Tennessee, in 1950. Growing up in the Deep South, he witnessed forms of social injustices based on class and race, which fuelled him to fight these injustices with powerful words and actions as a prolific yet unpretentious scholar. Influenced by blues and rock and roll, Kincheloe had a natural talent as a musician and songwriter, which led him to form a band of academics called Tony and the Hegemonies, who played at many conferences and venues between 1998 and 2008. He was a Canada Research Chair of Critical Pedagogy at McGill University; he taught in the City University of New York Graduate School Urban Education Program and was the Belle Zeller Chair in Public Policy and Administration at Brooklyn College. He also taught at Pennsylvania State University, Florida International University, Louisiana State University at Shreveport and Sinte Gleska College in the Sioux Community of South Dakota. Kincheloe played a formative role in the development of critical pedagogy. His work contributed to teacher education, critical theory, cultural studies, critical constructivism, research bricolage, critical multicultural education, critical cognitive theory and critical post-formal cognition. He was the author of more than 45 books, countless book chapters, and hundreds of journal articles. He passed away suddenly in Kingston, Jamaica, on 19 December 2008 while on vacation with his partner, Shirley Steinberg, and three graduate students.

Kincheloe loved storytelling. More than anything, with the exception of football, he loved to entertain and tell stories. And stories he told. These were the most incredible life experiences told as 'Joe' stories. Those who knew him understood what a 'Joe' story was—long, detailed and somehow always filled with humour. These stories were based on the real-life experiences of Kincheloe growing up in the South and climbing the academic ladder as a White boy

with a quirky Tennessee accent. Funny, yet strange, and almost surreal stories based on a myriad of events from his young days becoming best friends with some local Italians who saved him from a street fight to the time he was stuck in a hotel elevator with a group of friends. The only consistency in his stories was the length and the incredible details; Kincheloe's stories were unforgettable—stories that a stranger would consider fictional, almost impossible.

Kincheloe's love for storytelling was a key aspect of his action research approach. He viewed his research as an ongoing conversation and created an open and safe space for everyone around to contribute and push forward ideas, theories and praxis. Most of all, he centred dialogue and discussion in his approach and facilitated the space and place for all those involved in the inquiry to contribute. His respect for indigenous ways and knowledges was the foundation of his action research, bringing forward exciting, yet challenging, questions for the researcher engaged with participatory methods. Kincheloe taught his students to always approach research with the desire to create change, to disrupt patterns and challenge environments, with a passion for transformation and social justice.

The transformative and emancipatory tenets of action research are what make it difficult and demanding. Action research is open in approach and fluid, yet demanding rigour, passion and motivation from its researcher and participants. Understood as a social process that involves participation and a collaborative effort from all the participants in the study, Kincheloe's approach involved critical and transformative efforts underlined by praxis. Due to the interwoven relationship between the researcher and the participants, too often, researchers forget or ignore their collaborators' understanding of the world and the role it plays in the research process. Kincheloe's writings with his partner Shirley Steinberg exposed the dangers of such socially constructed knowledge and emphasized the importance of participants' social backgrounds, knowledge and life experiences in the research process.

Critical Complexity in Kincheloe's Work

In an effort to bring to the forefront the diverse background of research participants and the researcher, Kincheloe's notion of action research places critical complexity as an entry point to the research method. His approach is underpinned by the performance of power which is inherent in the research process. Power is exemplified by issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, geographic location, physical ability/disability, social actors and cultural capital. Kincheloe believed that to critically engage with research, the researcher must acknowledge the relationships among

the researcher, the inquiry and the participants, as well as the dynamics and variants that underline and surround each of these factors. If the interactions and complexity of the agents are ignored, then the researcher has failed to comprehend the reality of the participant. Kincheloe's critical action research is grounded in complexity theory and critical constructivism.

Critical complexity avoids essentialism and reductionism in action research; it encourages two-way exchanges between the researchers and the participants with whom they are working to understand the role of agency and actions/re-actions. Critical complexity also encourages new ways to understand the complications of social, cultural, psychological, and educational life and favours a holistic, inclusive and eclectic method of critical action research. His interdisciplinary ways drew from critical pedagogy, education, urban studies, indigenous knowledge, cognition, curriculum studies, cultural studies and psychology. His later work was deeply influenced by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's work on enactivism, which argues that cognition and environment are inseparable and that systems learn by enacting with each other. Enactivism is centred on the notion of *double-embodiment*—things have no meaning independent of the consciousness of the agent determining meaning and are bound within a complexity system that must be acknowledged and unpacked.

During lectures, Kincheloe would often use the concept of nodes when he explained his understanding of critical complexity, drawing small, circle-like figures on a blackboard. Each node would represent a distinct 'thing', ranging from people to environmental aspects, community setting, history, geographical variants, race, class, status and so on. These nodes represent everything and anything that can alter perspectives, knowledge and relationships in research. Kincheloe explained that nodes are understood in relation to other nodes and their surrounding factors and fragments. He would always point out that what is missing is more important than what is obvious. In this context, Kincheloe explained that some nodes are so deeply embedded in environments and power structures that they can become invisible to the researcher; therefore, dialogue and reflexivity with participants are crucial to identify them and make them apparent. Thus, critical complexity facilitates this space and allows action researchers to study a phenomenon through multilogicality, which offers an observer diverse frames of reference.

Critical Participatory Action Research

Critical complexity within action research incorporates both a reflexive and a self-reflexive component in order to keep the research 'real' and 'grounded'. Self-reflexivity and group reflexivity require that

each participant and researcher address the power and social processes that are at play through the duration of the research. By engaging in a series of self- and group reflexivity processes, the researcher can truly push forward knowledge on a specific subject. This, in turn, creates an ongoing conversation between the participants and the researcher, which can change existing constructions of self and relationships with others. Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) helps shape the research process and outcome to allow all participants to bring forward their knowledge and opinions. Kincheloe's CPAR clarifies that it is not enough for researchers to engage in a critical complexity approach; both researchers and the participants with whom they are working must understand the complexity of praxis and how it enables a deeper understanding of possibility and a consciousness of complexity within action research. To engage in critical complexity theory means to think about the ethical, civic and socio-moral responsibilities of engaging in research.

CPAR works against notions of fixed knowledge and passive participants; in fact, it questions power dynamics and the geopolitical aspects of knowledge production, and it promotes social justice. This approach lends itself to specific attention to various dimensions of inclusion and community building for social justice. Researchers engaged in CPAR are aware of their sociocultural context and their relationships with others participating in the research.

Kincheloe's contribution to criticalizing action research highlights the importance of research that allows us to understand, acknowledge, act, react and converse—all while paying close attention to the surrounding and grounding factors of the inquiry.

Kincheloe's critical vision of PAR is devoted to a mode of sociopolitical or educational research that is aware of the assumptions that shape its purposes and designs, devoted to the ending of human suffering, focused on the consequences of its implementation and conscious of the ideological and epistemological tenets that inform it. The identification of power (political, authoritative, etc.) adds a dimension of clarity in action research that is often overlooked. Research approached in this manner facilitates authentic inquiries and allows researchers to find new levels of achievement and change previously deemed impossible.

Giuliana Cucinelli

See also critical constructivism; Critical Participatory Action Research; critical pedagogy

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KNOWLEDGE DEMOCRACY

It is evident throughout this encyclopedia that for a significant portion of persons using action research, the purpose of knowledge creation is as a contribution to taking on issues of injustice, inequality and oppression. This can be seen, for example, in entries such as those on participatory research, indigenous knowledge and feminist approaches. Knowledge democracy is a concept that provides a broader conceptual framework to understand the role of knowledge in the context of inclusion, social, cultural, economic and environmental justice. Knowledge democracy puts an emphasis on the links between the struggle for global social justice and the struggle for global cognitive justice.

Knowledge Democracy and Ecologies of Knowledge

Knowledge democracy is understood to mean at least three things. First, it recognizes that knowledge is relational and is represented in diverse forms, which include music, song, storytelling, sculpture, murals, theatre, puppetry, community meetings and so much more, as well as the academic forms of text, statistics and graphic representations. Second, knowledge democracy recognizes the diversity, complexity and holistic nature of often excluded or marginalized epistemologies. It recognizes the specificity of the knowledge of women farmers in Africa, of indigenous

peoples in all parts of the world, of the homeless on issues of place or those differently abled on issues of inclusion and of social movement activists of the shack dwellers movements in southern Africa. And third, it recognizes the critical role of knowledge in action to make a difference in our lives and of knowledge creation and use as a strategy for social change.

Knowledge democracy differs from similar sounding concepts of either knowledge economy or knowledge society. Knowledge economy, as it was originally intended, has been taken up by the market and the state to mean the production of highly skilled workers to fit into the global economic system of production. As evidence now shows, this is a system that is increasing rather than decreasing inequalities within our nations and amongst our nations. Knowledge society is a broader and more interesting concept that relates knowledge to issues of the state, to citizenship, and to inclusion. The literature on knowledge societies, however, largely assumes that the 'body' of knowledge that we are to work with is essentially the Western canon. The challenge in a knowledge society framework is how to make better use of already existing knowledges and processes.

Knowledge democracy is experienced at the micro and local levels, but it has aspects of global movement visibility as well. Spaces where one can see knowledge democracy at work are broad indeed. They can be seen in the recovery and revitalization of indigenous ways of knowing in Canada and in many other parts of the world. They can be seen in aspects of the 'open-access' movement for information. They can be seen in community-based organizations such as the Community Council or the Kool-Aid Society in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, which do community-based research linked to social action. They can be seen in the work of CanAssist at the University of Victoria, where the knowledge of a person's differently abled ability is combined with technological models to create breakthroughs in adaptation for better community living. They can be seen around the world in places like Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity and the Society for Participatory Research in Asia and in hundreds of community economic development initiatives across Canada. But an additional space where knowledge democracy can be seen to be working is within the movement of community university research and engagement—a movement of the co-construction of knowledge.

In the pursuit of democratization of our societies, governments and other institutions (including universities), it is important to remember that hegemony of knowledge ('the dominant ideas of our times are the ideas of the dominant elites') is the single most powerful instrument of the status quo, since it perpetuates political authority, dominance and control. This is most critically

manifest today as corporate power and resources are financing and propagating 'new' knowledge from their vantage point; this 'corporate capture' of knowledge systems has now entered the arenas of poverty eradication and social development. Democratizing access to and control over such knowledge in the hands of ordinary citizens is becoming even more difficult in the new digital era; 'gigabytes' of knowledge stored in 'nanochips' can be manipulated by those who have the 'password' to authority—political, military and economic. It is in this scenario that the movement of knowledge democracy acquires both criticality and urgency.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos begins with his observation that in the realm of knowledge, abyssal thinking consists in granting to modern science the monopoly of the universal distinction between true and false. A way forward lies in the concept of 'ecologies of knowledge'. An ecology of knowledge framework is centred on excluded or marginalized knowledges and is based on the idea that the diversity of the world is inexhaustible. Influenced by the work of intellectuals and activists linked to the World Social Forum, de Sousa Santos feels that the global movement of indigenous knowledge has the most hope as a form of new and transformative thinking.

Knowledge Democracy in Action

Building on de Sousa Santos' recognition of ecologies of knowledge, we turn towards thinking about the use of knowledge in a strategic, organizational, intentional and active way. John Gaventa, a theoretician on power and citizenship and a pioneering participatory research leader, was the first person in our experience to speak of social movements using a 'knowledge strategy' as their core political organizing strategy. His early work at Highlander Research and Education Center in the Appalachian Mountain region of the USA involved, among other things, the support of citizen-researchers to go to local courthouses to find out the ownership of local coal mines. Absentee landlords owned all of the mines in question from as far away as New York or London. And while profits were good, taxes were very low for these absentee landlords, so that resources were not sufficient to cover the costs of good schools, health services or other social services to allow the mine-workers and their families to flourish. These citizen-researchers, using what Gaventa called a knowledge strategy for organizing, pooled their knowledge across six or seven Appalachian states and produced an important study on mine ownership, which had an impact on changing tax structures in some of the states in question. Highlander Research and Education Center and Gaventa were later to move into a campaign for environmental justice using many of the same principles.

A knowledge democracy movement is an action-oriented formation that recognizes, gives visibility to and strengthens the knowledge that is created in the context of people trying to ‘change the world’. A knowledge democracy movement would recognize value and support the recovery and deepening of indigenous ways of knowing. A knowledge democracy movement would recognize the epistemic privilege of the homeless themselves as a key to taking action on issues of homelessness. It would celebrate the intellectual contributions of young people who are differently abled. It would honour the early work of Friedrich Engels gathering the insights of workers in the nineteenth century factories of Manchester, England, or Karl Marx’ work in the Moselle River valley of Germany learning from workers in the vineyards. It would recognize that the gay and lesbian movement and the HIV/AIDS movements have been built fundamentally on the knowledge of gay and lesbian citizens themselves.

A knowledge democracy movement or a movement that uses knowledge as a key mobilizing and organizing strategy is centred on the lives and places of those who are seeking recognition of their rights, their land claims, their access to jobs, ecological justice and recovery or retention of their languages. Knowledge itself within such a movement formation is most likely place based and rooted in the daily lives of people, who increase their knowledge of their own contexts and, by sharing what they are learning with allies and others like themselves, move, as Paulo Freire says, towards being agents in the naming of the world. The proliferation of discourse and practices within the world of community-university knowledge partnerships, in this conceptualization, would be a contributor to the broader knowledge movement. The extensive and important access to information developments would also be supportive of and a contributor to a variety of knowledge movements. Neither the access to information developments nor the community-university engagement advancements form a knowledge democracy movement by themselves, but they would be part of the necessary conditions for knowledge movements to gain footholds and flourish.

Budd Hall

See also Freire, Paulo; Highlander Research and Education Center; indigenous research methods; knowledge mobilization

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KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

Knowledge mobilization emerges from the long tradition of ‘extension’ work of universities and colleges into community settings beyond the boundaries of the campus. Knowledge mobilization is an umbrella concept that includes and builds on the practices described by an assortment of associated terms: dissemination, diffusion, technology transfer, knowledge translation, knowledge management, and other practices focused on spreading the results of research findings to multiple audiences and enhancing the usability of knowledge products, such as reports, papers, books, and lectures, emerging from research and assessed practice. While the term can be found in the adult education literature as early as the mid-1990s, it gained much wider use when adopted by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in 2002, following the evaluation of the Community-University Research Alliance research-funding programme. Subsequent documents at this agency defined knowledge mobilization as a complex set of activities, whose overall objective is to enable those who stand to benefit from research results in the humanities and social sciences—academics, students, policy-makers, business leaders, community groups, educators and the media, among others—to have access to knowledge at a level they can use to advance social, economic, environmental and cultural development. This long definition is often shortened to getting the right information, to the right people, at the right time, in the right format, to influence their decision-making and to create new value.

The context out of which the concept of knowledge mobilization arose has meaning for the world of action research. The Canadian federal government's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council created a unique funding window that stipulated joint community and university engagement as a requirement for applying for funds. These Community-University Research Alliance grants were an extraordinary innovation and opportunity at the time for action researchers, for community-based researchers and for engaged scholars whose work with communities consistently involved using knowledge to achieve practical and/or sociopolitical objectives. Action research calls for knowledge not only to be co-created within partnerships but also to be 'mobilized'—made active in support of the goals of the community partners.

While originally focused on extending and enhancing the value of academic research in the social sciences and humanities, knowledge mobilization has gained wider use in a range of professional practice settings—government departments, hospitals, professional associations and public service agencies seeking to gain greater value from the data and information created, at ever-accelerating rates, within their organizations. Knowledge mobilization is often referred to as a method of coping with the ever-expanding availability of data and information produced in an ever-connected world, by creating enhanced social relationships between available sources of data and information and the needs of users and decision-makers, who require it in more accessible and meaningful formats.

Socialization of Data and Information Into Knowledge

The former chief scientist of the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center, John Seely Brown, stated that data/information is really for machines; it can exist on its own and tells us something but does not recognize context and need. It becomes knowledge when it has a social life—when there is an exchange between parties to create understanding and meaning. To mobilize something is to make it mobile or capable of movement—to make it ready to do something. When an army mobilizes for a battle, it is not the battle per se but the process that readies the people, tools, machines and other resources required to engage. The same is true of public health, social justice initiatives, community projects and a wide range of value-creating activities that need to mobilize resources in order to engage in creating the positive future state at the foundation of the proposed activities.

Knowledge mobilization is not the data/information itself, nor is it the desired outcome anticipated. Rather,

it is the intermediary process that enhances and enables access to data and information to support the proposed value-creating activities. In this context, access refers to gaining both physical access to literature, databases, electronic files and other artefacts of data and information production as well as the conceptual access of understanding the utility, meaning and possible functions of the data and information in question. While physical access can often be reduced to transactional relationships—I give this to you, you give this to me—conceptual access includes more engaged social processes that require building understanding of culture, intention, benefits and possible outcomes. While some of this appears to happen 'naturally', the engagement in an explicit and managed knowledge mobilization process appears to accelerate the outcomes and produces higher quality relationships, more accessible products and increased utilization of the results of research.

Modes of Knowledge Mobilization

Large-scale studies of practice in a variety of organizational settings have shown that knowledge mobilization practice tends to fit into four modes: push, pull, linkage and exchange.

Examples of push include sending out e-mail; publishing articles, books, pamphlets and other printed materials; speaking at a conference or workshop with no opportunity for discussion or interaction; creating libraries and other repositories, either physical or electronic; creating a video for online or television viewing or creating a podcast or radio broadcast. Knowledge mobilization in a push mode makes an assumption that the intended audience will receive the message contained in the artefact. It is also referred to as the broadcast mode. It provides very little feedback on reception or understanding.

Examples of pull include creating a paper or electronic newsletter that individuals can subscribe to; syndicating a blog with an RSS (real simple syndication) feed that electronic readers can collect; following a Twitter account or advertising an event using direct phone calls. The pull mode makes an assumption that once the intended audience receive the message contained in the artefact, they will know what action should follow. The pull mode often has a feedback loop that provides data on whether that artefact has been received, but very little with regard to conceptual understanding.

Linkage and exchange tend to be tied together—it is difficult to be linked and not engage in some exchange; however, the examples below demonstrate differences of intensity and purposefulness. Examples of linkage include creating working groups,

membership in a professional association or online forum, network building and facilitation, facilitated introductions of potential research or business partners, production of a systematic review or meta-analysis that assesses multiple research and grey literature sources or any meeting, event or conference that supports potential face-to-face interaction. The assumption with linkage is that the probability of value creation increases if there is a relationship created between people. The challenge is that proximity does not necessarily lead to the creation of new knowledge and understanding.

Examples of exchange include moderating online forums, facilitating communities of practices or interactive discussions such as 'World Cafés' and moderated panels with audience participation, brokered access to customized plain-language summaries, on-call librarian assistants to answer questions in real time, multiple iterations of documents that address feedback from the audience or any number of social media platforms that allow for dialogue and deliberation. The assumption with exchange is that the complex nature of creating meaning and understanding requires ongoing feedback and adjustment. The challenge is that it favours

iterative processes that are often more expensive and time-consuming.

Peter Levesque

See also co-generative learning; community-university research partnerships; complexity theory; Dialogue Conferences; social learning; World Café, the

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LABOUR-MANAGED FIRMS

All market economies are marked by the coming together of people into enterprises in order to undertake work for reward. Rewards may take the form of profits or a paying job. These organizations or ‘firms’ are marked by particular and heterogeneous cultures and socio-economic relationships. This entry first describes the classic capitalist firm and details some of the problems that they can give rise to. This is followed by an explanation of alternative forms of work organizations and some consideration as to why these are not more prevalent.

The Classic Capitalist Firm

In capitalist economies, the dominant form for the organization of firms is one where investors buy shares (or stock) and appoint managers who, in turn, hire labour in order to do the work necessary to make a profit. After paying the wages of the workers, the salaries of the managers and the other costs, the residual profit is returned to the investors as a dividend. Two important issues arise from this. First, Marxian theorists would argue that the investors are benefiting by exploiting the surplus value of the workers’ efforts. They would also argue that, under such regimes, workers become alienated from their labour. Because the firm belongs to the investors, not the people who work in it, the owners might, and frequently do, decide to transfer their capital to other cities, regions or even countries where they could get a more profitable return. Such capitalist firms can therefore have a very detrimental effect on local communities and economies. The counterargument is that investors deserve a reward for risking the capital in the first place and that they should be able to move their capital to maximize their own personal financial position because this makes markets efficient.

A second consideration is that a conflict arises in such firms between stockholders/shareholders (the principals) and the managers who are their agents. Investors appoint managers to look after their business affairs, as seen in the work of Adolf Berle and Gardiner Means. But managers are subject to a moral hazard—if they maximize the profit position of the investor, this might mean a lesser reward for their own work. Thus, they might be tempted to maximize their own financial positions at the expense of the investors. This division between ownership by stockholders and control by managers is fraught with dangers of economic inefficiency and has been the subject of much work on corporate governance (see, e.g., the work of Martin Conyon), dating back to Adam Smith.

These common types of firms engender particular socio-economic relationships marked by the expropriation of the surplus value of labour, the alienation of labour and a propensity towards the flight of capital which denies jobs to local communities. Moreover, the separation of ownership and control, and the intergroup power struggles that gives rise to, can seriously reduce the economic efficiency of firms. These firms are legitimized by supposedly objective neoclassical economic theories.

Alternatives Forms of Work Organizations

Perhaps in response to the difficulties generated by this traditional form of the firm, a significant variety of alternative types of work organization have evolved which are controlled and managed by those who contribute their labour to them. The most familiar of these are workers’ co-operatives—organizations where ownership, control and labour are at unity. Typically, all co-operative workers own a share of the enterprise and participate more or less democratically in decision-making (see, e.g., www.suma.coop). But there are other forms too. For instance, in the John Lewis Partnership in the UK, the stock of a conventional

incorporated capitalist enterprise was vested, in 1929, in a non-revocable trust, the beneficiaries of which are the current employees ('partners') and pensioners of the firm. The partners and pensioners do not own the firm—rather, it is held for their benefit in trust. They do, however, control the firm through a complex system of internal democracy (www.johnlewispartnership.co.uk). Both typical co-operatives and firms such as John Lewis have formal and transparent rules for determining members' or partners' remuneration.

These markedly different organizations, often called labour-managed firms, eschew corporate capitalist ownership structures determined by the need to access capital from stock markets. Rather, in their heterogeneity they tend to reflect the reality of the social relationships which gave rise to them. For instance, Molly Scott Cato shows that at Tower Colliery in South Wales in the UK, a group of miners made redundant when their pit closed down decided to pool their payouts in order to buy the mine and keep it running, thereby preserving their jobs. The co-op that they formed successfully sustained their local community and their families financially until the mine was physically exhausted. Because work organizations such as Tower are directly shaped by their social circumstances, they can present extremely fertile ground for the action researcher. In particular, the action researcher is afforded good opportunities to collaborate with the people who work in, and indeed constitute, the organization, rather than having to undertake research through the mediating power of management.

These labour-managed firms make complex decisions about their strategic direction. For instance, members of these organizations have to decide on the relative balance of pay levels as against numbers of jobs alongside more conventional investment choices. They also have to make decisions about the extent to which they regard the sustainability of the enterprise in local communities as important. For instance, some co-operatives have statutes that permit the hiring of staff on regular employment contracts, thereby expropriating the surplus value of their labour. Likewise, they might decide to outsource some of their functions to other countries and/or traditionally run capitalist enterprises. These organizations often go through very complex processes in order to make these decisions. Whilst there is no uniformity of outcome, it is the case that social considerations will stand alongside and perhaps even dominate neoclassical economic ones in these circumstances.

Labour-managed firms offer the prospect (but not the certainty) of improving the quality of jobs, of anchoring capital in local communities and of avoiding inefficient expropriation of organizational wealth. This raises the question as to why they remain a fairly marginal form of enterprise, with some notable exceptions such as the

Mondragón co-operatives in Spain and, indeed, the John Lewis Partnership. The answer to this question may lie in the fact that, in most market economies, capital is fairly well concentrated in the hands of a few, thereby inhibiting the start-up and development of these alternative types of firm. Beyond that, and perhaps more fundamentally, the neoclassical economic notion of the capitalist firm is hegemonic, and there may be little understanding of or skill in running these different types of enterprises. In terms of action research, they can be seen as economic manifestations of complex and varied social relationships and as having an infinite capacity for transformative adaptation and change because they embody the capacities and interests of the local stakeholders.

Rebecca Boden

See also Grameen Bank; Mondragón Co-operatives; organization development; organizational culture

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LADDER OF INFERENCE

The ladder of inference is a key tool of Action Science—one approach to action research. The ladder is a model of our reasoning steps as we assess a situation and decide what action to take (Figure 1). This entry describes the features of the ladder and how it can be used to help people reflect on their behaviour and the reasoning behind it.

At the bottom of the ladder are the available data: numbers on a spreadsheet, the content of a memo,

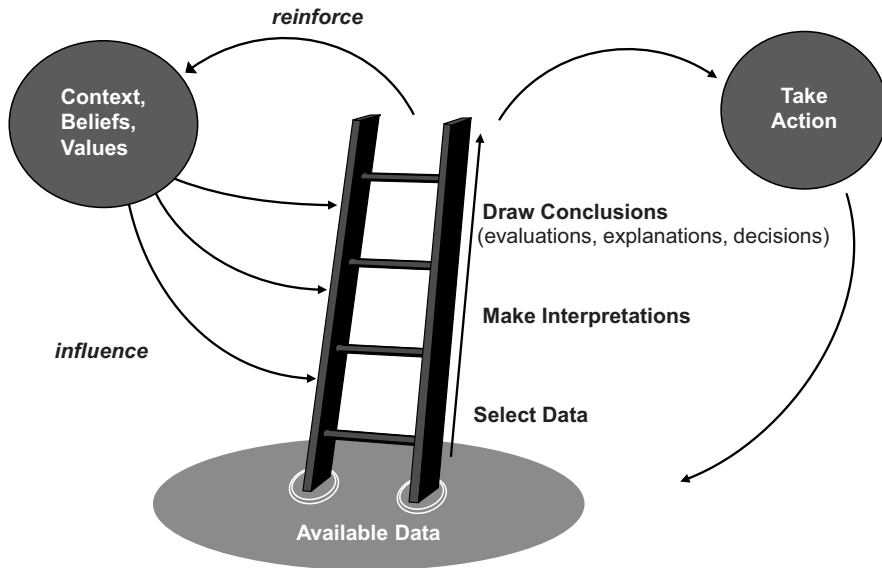


Figure 1 *Ladder of Inference: How We Think*

SOURCE: Adapted from Chris Argyris. © Action Design, 1994.

what others say, their non-verbal behaviour and so on. Given the limits of the mind, humans cannot pay attention to everything. They select, often without being aware of it, the information that is most salient and ignore the rest (first rung). Next, they interpret what that data means (second rung), and from these meanings, they draw conclusions: They evaluate, explain, make predictions and decide what to do (third rung). Based on the decisions they make, they then take action, and these actions become part of the data pool from which they draw further inferences. This is particularly important in interpersonal interaction. While they are typically aware of how others' actions affect them, individuals are often not aware of their own actions and their impact on others. Yet the actions they take become data that others use to make inferences, attributions and evaluations about them, which may be different from what those individuals hope for or intend.

Chris Argyris developed the ladder of inference as a tool for double-loop learning—learning that produces change in values and assumptions, not simply behaviour change. Initially developed for research and intervention, it is useful for anyone engaged in a difficult conversation where the quality of the conversation is critical for effective action. While there are alternative versions of the ladder of inference in the literature, all of them have a common focus and purpose: how people make inferences and the need to make inferences explicit so that errors in reasoning can be discovered and corrected.

A premise of Action Science is that any action with an intended consequence is informed by reasoning, and the effectiveness of action depends on the quality of reasoning. The difficulty with improving reasoning is that it is often invisible. Individuals 'go up our ladder' so quickly—at the speed of thought—that they are not aware of their interpretations and inferences. Their conclusions feel obvious; therefore, they see no need to check the validity of the conclusions.

How individuals move up their ladders of inference—from data to interpretations, to conclusions—is not random or accidental. Their inferences are influenced by past experience, current context, emotional state, values and assumptions. For example, in some cultures, arriving at a meeting after the scheduled start time is considered late and is reprimanded. In others, it goes unnoticed. If a subordinate says, 'We need to do X to solve Y', it is a request for resources. If the boss says the same, she is giving orders.

Much of the time, humans' ability to see larger patterns from limited data works to their advantage. It is efficient and enables them to act quickly and effectively. In routine situations, reflecting on the reasoning steps and underlying beliefs and assumptions is unnecessary. In a crisis situation, it may be impractical or dangerous. However, for novel, complex or ambiguous situations, the speed at which conclusions are drawn, assumptions are believed and only data-confirming beliefs are noticed can be a problem. While scientists are trained to test their assumptions and disconfirm their hypotheses, for most people, this

is unnatural. Failure to do so, however, can create unintended consequences. For example, a professor in a course on cross-cultural business implemented a strict 'no cell phone' rule in his class, which students frequently ignored. One day, he saw a student at the back of the class using her phone. At the limit of his patience, he strongly scolded the student for breaking his rule. The student (not a native English speaker) held up her device and said, 'I'm sorry, it's my translator'.

The ladder of inference can be used for different purposes: to reflect on emotional reactions, to facilitate discussion of substantive issues and to give people feedback. It provides a guide for effective advocacy and inquiry. The key points for using the ladder of inference to promote productive conversation and effective action are as follows: (1) be aware of reasoning steps, publicly check inferences and encourage others to do the same; (2) look for information that challenges assumptions and beliefs and (3) be aware of how actions become information that others use to make inferences.

The value of any tool depends on the attitude and skill of the person using it. Staying at the top of the ladder of inference, and stating only conclusions, is a form of self-protection. To use the ladder of inference skillfully, researchers must be open to learning—genuinely curious about others' views, willing to subject their reasoning to scrutiny and interested in discovering and correcting their errors.

Philip W. McArthur

See also Action Science; advocacy and inquiry; cycles of action and reflection; double-loop learning; learning pathways grid; reflective practice; theories of action

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LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

Community participation came into the lexicon of urban planning in the 1960s, when local governments, in collaboration with the federal government and private developers, decimated entire neighbourhoods

for the construction of freeways, hospitals and office buildings. As neighbourhoods threatened with such destruction began fighting back, academics also began criticizing the urban development models and theories that justified such top-down forms of development.

Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation was just one of the pieces critical of non-participatory forms of development, but her use of the ladder metaphor made her model easy to popularize. Her original article is reproduced in multiple locations on the Internet, and it has spawned many adaptations. This entry will review the historical context within which Arnstein's work was developed, describe the model itself and discuss issues related to the model and its influence within many different fields of practice.

The Historical Context

In the 1960s, the US economy was strong, and large cities were transforming themselves into dispersed metropolitan areas with multiple rings of suburbs. Federal urban policy supported this population dispersal by creating the infrastructure to propel the process, including the construction of freeways and suburban housing. These policies put into motion a process of uneven urban development, as higher income residents and jobs moved outside the city and the neighbourhoods were bulldozed for the construction of freeways to move suburbanites into and out of central city downtowns each workday. Governments made promises to redevelop disinvested urban neighbourhoods, but in practice, those promises often only went so far as to tear down deteriorated houses and commercial buildings. Local governments, sometimes by requirement of the federal government, also established forms of community input where residents could supposedly review and influence urban redevelopment plans. But the processes were actually organized to allow very little influence. Plans were often created in secret and then released through a public hearing process where residents could complain but could otherwise exert little influence to change the plans. While officially termed *urban renewal*, it was increasingly known by neighbourhood residents and social activists as 'urban removal' or 'Negro removal' as the neighbourhoods targeted by the process were primarily poor and African American.

As neighbourhoods across the country, populated by residents trained in civil rights and anti-war activism, organized to resist this urban removal process, academics began building a literature critiquing the top-down biases of these urban development processes. Among these critics was Arnstein, whose background included work in the health field, a non-profit research centre and the federal Departments of

Housing and Urban Development and Health, Education and Welfare.

The Ladder of Participation

Arnstein's article 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' was published in the July 1969 issue of the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*. The essay was part cutting critique of the accepted citizen participation models and part an elaboration of a model of true participation. Arnstein set out a high standard for citizen participation. For her, true citizen participation involved a redistribution of power, not simply having representation in the existing power structure. Too many attempts at citizen participation, in her judgement, were ritualistic and provided nothing to the participating citizens.

This takes us to her ladder of participation. On her ladder are three sections of rungs. The lowest and most cynical rungs—therapy and manipulation—she terms *non-participation*. These are designed to get citizens to support elites' existing plans through trying to convince citizens that they, and not the powerful, are the problem. The next rungs—placation, consultation and informing—are barely better, and Arnstein categorizes these rungs as *tokenism*. In tokenism, citizens are able to get good information on the plans and are able to voice their reactions to them, but there is no mechanism to ensure that their reactions are taken into account. The highest rungs on the ladder—partnership, delegated power and citizen control—are processes by which citizens can have real influence over the actual plans and their implementation. That influence can range from a kind of joint control with government and corporate elites to full control by the people themselves.

The remainder of Arnstein's article is devoted to real-life examples of each rung on the ladder. It is important to understand that her metaphorical ladder is not meant as something to be climbed. In other words, one should not start on the bottom rung of participation and then ascend to higher levels of participation. For her, participation should begin and remain at the top. Her analysis of citizen control was prescient, promoting models that would later be found in the community-based development movement that grew across the country as successful neighbourhood resistance movements gave way to neighbourhood-controlled redevelopment planning.

Issues in Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

Looking back on it today, Arnstein's model is remarkable for its bluntly honest analysis and its willingness to make the concept of power a pivot point. Its

weaknesses—pointed out by Arnstein herself—are also important. She, of course, recognizes that resistance by elites is a problem. But she is most insightful in noting that the have-nots, if they are going to fully and powerfully participate in society, need to build their own knowledge and participation skills. Her thinking provides one of the most powerful foundations for Community-Based Participatory Research and its associated practices. These participatory knowledge practices provide some of the greatest hope for building knowledge power in excluded and oppressed communities.

It is also important to consider whether Arnstein would use the word *citizen* in her model if she were with us today. In her historical context, African American civil rights was at the centre of attention, even though there were also important Latino civil rights and farmworker organizing occurring. But the politicization of the undocumented immigrant had not yet taken hold in the American psyche the way it has today. It is possible to surmise, given the overall tone of her argument, that Arnstein would not limit participation to official nation state citizens but would advocate for a more global citizenship definition that included all those with a personal stake in a society.

The Ladder's Influence

'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' is reputed to have been translated into many languages and continues to be heavily accessed on the Internet. It is cited across disciplines and has been adapted to numerous fields of practice.

Her model has also been subjected to empirical analysis and critique. In many of those analyses, the concept of power has been taken out of the analysis, and her three distinct categories of rungs have been replaced with a continuum of participation that re-legitimizes both non-participation and tokenism processes. In contrast, Arnstein's ladder of participation made qualitative rather than quantitative distinctions between the sections of rungs on the ladder. Such qualitative distinctions lead us to think not about what power holders should do more of or less of to involve people but what they should do *differently*.

Randy Stoecker

See also Asset-Based Community Development; community development; local self-governance; participatory urban planning

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LARGE-GROUP ACTION RESEARCH

Action research is generally aimed at enabling people to address their shared concerns in a collaborative and learningful manner. Shared concerns or challenges are, however, not always confined within organizational boundaries or small groups. Ambitions to achieve impact on a larger scale than the single organization and the very nature of the shared concerns of people both lead us to address action research in large groups.

Firstly, it is futile to achieve large-scale change by changing the smaller units one after the other, due to the sheer magnitude of the task. For instance, the need to improve the innovative capacities of a region's companies may not be achieved by changing the single companies one by one. There is also no direct diffusion of learning and change from one or a few cases to many cases, neither directly between practitioners without mediating processes nor via general theory. Hence, we cannot rely on theory production alone or on word of mouth to create a societal or large-system impact. Action research therefore needs to encompass learning mechanisms, change and knowledge production that reflect the whole system that needs changing.

Secondly, the shared concerns and the problems or challenges facing people and communities are often of such a complex nature that they call for participation of a larger stakeholder set in order to be improved upon. Such issues may often be perceived as part of community or regional development, such as youth crime, unemployment, environmental issues, racial conflict, urban regeneration, industrial development, the tourist attractiveness of a location and so on.

In this entry, addressing 'large groups' is taken to imply efforts that reach beyond the single organization or the small group with its face-to-face relationships. The entry will emphasize the challenges of doing action

research in large groups, including the importance of understanding the system and who is in it, establishing a legitimate position for the researchers and organizing dialogical processes that lead to joint action.

Characteristics of Action Research in Large Groups

Issues and challenges in doing action research take on a new dimension as scale and complexity increase. The wide range of constituents creates an increased diversity of interest, perspectives and knowledge, and the number of potential participants itself makes it more demanding to bring people together in dialogical processes. In dealing with complex issues that cross organizational boundaries, power and systems of interest move to the foreground. Action research must therefore understand the power play and systems of interests *sufficiently* in order to engage all relevant actors in ways that encourage joint learning and action. In doing so, the action researchers need to establish a legitimate platform for engaging with the system; this is often an act of balance. In order to handle the magnitude of the task, building an action research team becomes part of doing large-scale action research. These issues are explored further below.

Challenge 1: Understanding the System

As the action researchers approach a new large-scale research field with a rudimentary understanding of the problem complex, the first issue to address is to establish an understanding of the system at hand. Initially, a preliminary stakeholder mapping is warranted in order to identify who the key actors are, who are potentially affected and who can potentially affect the outcome, and, hence, who should be involved in the action research process. As the understanding of the complex issue at hand matures, this question has to be readdressed, often several times.

Because large-scale projects most often cross organizational boundaries and involve a larger stakeholder set with different interests, competencies, perspectives and relationships, the next crucial issue to understand is the nature of power relationships and systems of interests. Collaborative change inevitably challenges power and formal decision-making systems. For action to happen, the action researchers need to know who the final decision-makers are, how they relate and what constitutes legitimacy in this particular field. Not a full, but a sufficient, understanding of these power relationships is needed in order to assess the potential for action, negotiate openings for collaborative approaches where power is balanced as well as address the issue of the powerless or unorganized and how to give them an adequate voice in the process.

This mapping phase, which should be prior to bringing people together in dialogues, may well be approached by interviewing key stakeholders to understand their perspectives, interests and relationships. In sum, this provides a richer understanding of the issue and its actors than each of them has, often to their surprise. This knowledge needs to be shared and validated and may lead to an increased recognition of the legitimate right of the others to participate, a better understanding of the complexity of the issue and a recognition of the need for collaborative processes and legitimate joint actions.

Challenge 2: Establishing a Legitimate Position for the Researchers

The role, mandate and legitimacy of the action researchers in a large, multi-stakeholder research field need to be addressed consciously, from the outset and throughout the project.

The first important question to address is who the client or partner is. Who the client or partner is influences how the researcher's role is perceived, the room for manoeuvring one may get and the legitimacy base for engaging with the system. If the client is only one of the stakeholders, the researchers may be taken to represent only one view or set of interests and may be taken 'hostage' in the ongoing power play. This will severely hamper the possibilities for moving the field forward in a collaborative manner.

To provide the necessary legitimacy to move between the actors and take initiatives, the client construction should reflect the main stakeholder set of the system to provide a legitimate, power-balanced platform. Frequently, the main stakeholders have formed a Development Coalition or other form of collaborative unit reflecting how the problem complex is perceived. In other instances, it may be possible to influence or negotiate the client construction, for instance, by forming steering committees or other collaborative bodies.

When a sufficiently broad client structure has been established, the action researchers need to manage the typical expectations that they are (a) experts and hence should provide the answers and solutions, (b) useless in practical terms and not really needed or (c) given only fact-finding functions and not brought in to address the whole system.

In order to overcome these expectations, the action researchers often have to earn the trust of the stakeholders, which may not be given to them at the outset. Trust develops through experience and may be achieved by demonstrating over time how they handle sensitive information, how they demonstrate understanding of the issues and the system, how they

manage processes and how they are able to balance different perspectives.

Challenge 3: Design and Implement Participative Processes

Action research in large groups will seek to develop participative processes based on dialogue where inquiry, learning and joint action are integrated.

A key role to play for the action researchers is to pay close attention to who are included and excluded in the development processes and to find ways to include all the affected actor groups. Marginalized or ignored groups may need assistance to organize their ability to voice their perspectives. Depending on the problem complex, groups that may easily be overlooked could include workers, youth, women, elderly people and the handicapped, but more powerful actors may be left out initially because the issue at stake has been poorly conceptualized.

The action researchers will attempt at co-designing the processes with the stakeholders in order to create learning and ownership and to develop sensitivity to the specific context and its politics. This may be tricky when the stakeholders expect an expert role. Differentiating between being experts in co-design and being an expert in expert design is the pivotal point.

The challenge of constructing and reconstructing arenas for dialogue between a large number of people has led to the development of two distinct forms of conferences—the Dialogue Conference and the Search Conference. These may be used with 20–80 participants, each built around a specific logic, alternating between dialogues in small groups and a plenary session. In larger systems, it may be necessary to link several dialogue or Search Conferences, both in parallel and in sequence, with workshops and other meetings in order to bring forward different voices and arrive at an agreed-upon set of actions.

For the dialogic learning process to lead to action, the stakeholders need to create a referent organization to carry out whatever plans and decisions the participants have made. Preferably, the referent organization emerges out of the conferences or the process, or it is designed earlier as a legitimate body to take on action on behalf of the constituencies. The referent organization may have the form of a secretariat, an agency, a working group or the like.

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See also Development Coalitions; Dialogue Conferences; inter-organizational action research; regional development; Search Conference; third person action research

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LEARNING HISTORY

Learning History is an action research approach to capturing the learning from a project, initiative or event in a way that emphasizes the human experience of those involved and via a participative process that is devised to stimulate wider learning from those experiences. A Learning History is therefore both a product and a process. The product is the story—told through the voices of those involved and mediated via the reflective thoughts, questions and analysis of the researcher. It is co-produced between outsider researcher and insider protagonists. Typically, a Learning History takes the form of a written document, often divided into two columns, whereby original, verbatim quotes from the protagonists are woven together with researcher reflections and narration. Together, this counterpoint is often termed a *jointly told tale*—a term borrowed from ethnographer John van Maanen—that charts a reflective history that in its presentation is intended to stimulate further reflection and inquiry.

The history product then forms the centrepiece of a learning process that splits into two parts. During the co-creation of the history, the attention is on the learning that those involved in the original initiative derive from voicing and reflecting on their story. Post-production, the attention moves to consider the learning that can be derived more broadly from the history itself. As a quick shorthand, a Learning History is sometimes described as the action research version of a case study. This is a helpful analogy but can also be misleading. It is true that the production of a written Learning History draws on standard qualitative research approaches—for example, semi-structured interviewing and Grounded Theory—more than other action research approaches. However, the emphasis of a Learning History on story and in particular on the vivid detail and personal voice of those involved is fundamentally different from a case study approach, which emphasizes a more generalized, abstracted description. Similarly, the tighter relationship between the history and the process of learning in which it is embedded differs considerably from case study approaches.

Origins of Learning History

Learning History was developed first in the early nineties at MIT's research centre for organizational learning (which later went on to become the Society for Organizational Learning). The idea of the 'learning organization' as an entity with the capacity to learn effectively and hence to flourish had been popularized through the work of Peter Senge and others at MIT. Their text *The Fifth Discipline*, and its associated field book, had a wide appeal to management practitioners and academics alike. However, the link between learning and business success remained tenuous. Could learning be claimed if it wasn't clear what lay behind good or bad practice, successes or failure? It was in an attempt both to clarify how learning occurred and to stimulate it more widely that Learning History was conceived. It was, in part, a response to an imperative for evaluation and also for a different kind of experience-based learning.

Though working in the management learning field and situating themselves clearly within the Action Science tradition of Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, the originators of Learning History, Art Kleiner and George Roth, took wider inspiration from the age-old practice of oral history. Looking to this and recent works of social history (e.g. Studs Terkel's oral history-based stories of America), they set the ideas of oral history—listening, voice and story—at the heart of a research process. The emphasis on personal story is crucial to Learning History. It brings specificity,

detail and feeling and so surfaces that which is tacit. As the cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner writes, narrative deals with the ‘vicissitudes of intention’. An oral history will describe the ups and downs of experience, the changing fortunes and moments of doubt and reasons for action caught in a moment of time. These are unique but also universal in their way. It is by staying close to these specifics of experience that Learning History is attempting to get past what Roth and Kleiner called a mere listing of ‘best practices’ and into ‘the thinking, experimentation and arguments of those who have experienced the same situation’.

Early Application

The first Learning History was conducted by the MIT team in the mid nineties at an automobile manufacturing company with the pseudonym ‘AutoCo’. This followed the experiences of a team leading up to the launch of a new product. An edited version of the resulting Learning History was published in 1999 in Roth and Kleiner’s book *Car Launch: The Human Side of Managing Change*. Through the nineties, a number of learning histories were reported by the MIT team to have been conducted in a range of corporate settings. Two histories charting successful business transformation at the consumer products company Unilever and at an anonymized oil company were published as books. Further histories were created at telephony and electronics companies. By the late nineties, Learning History was being taken beyond corporate settings to the not-for-profit and educational sectors. In 1998, for example, Hilary Bradbury co-created a Learning History with the Swedish environmental charity, the Natural Step. And in 2001, Rupesh Shah developed an inter-organizational Learning History with Shell Oil and the international environmental non-governmental organization Living Earth to explore the contentious issue of environmental damage in the Niger delta. Shah’s work brought Learning History to the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP; see also the entry ‘Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice’) in the UK.

Drawing on the AutoCo and other early Learning History projects at MIT, the *Learning History Field Manual* was developed and first published in 1996. This set out in detail the recommended form for a Learning History as well as the steps involved in producing one. The principles and methodological steps set out by this early work established a trajectory for Learning History that sustained over time. Over the subsequent decade, Learning History started to emerge as a genre where each instance, though situated and context dependent, shared a number of recurring characteristics and methodological principles.

Learning History Characteristics, Method and Form

Characteristics

The following are five key characteristics of the Learning History process:

1. *Tangibility—the Learning History centres on tangible events*: A Learning History charts that something tangible, past or present, has occurred. This provides the storyline that ideally is situated within an agreed time frame. Some Learning History projects explicitly start with tangible outcomes or success and chart how these came about. Others track a particular project initiative as it unfolds. Focusing on a tangible achievement or a time-bounded event means that the participants are better placed to ground the history in their personal experience.

2. *Co-production between insider and outsider researchers*: The collaboration between the insider and outsider research team to co-produce the history—often called the ‘jointly told tale’—and guide the associated learning process is a key characteristic of Learning History. Throughout the process, the insider protagonist and the outsider researcher have distinct and differentiated roles bringing different skills into play.

3. *Multi-stakeholder involvement—participation at all stages of the process*: The production of a Learning History is embedded in a participative process that explicitly seeks to draw out multiple perspectives so that hidden assumptions and taken-for-granted storylines can, through the process, be challenged. From design to dissemination, stakeholder involvement is actively sought.

4. *Polyvocal story centring on the voices of those involved*: The Learning History reproduces the words of the insider protagonists and thus places primacy on their original voice, style and idiom. In this way, it centres on subjective experience and further seeks a polyvocal account whereby multiple voices are represented. It is in the contradictory fault lines between individual stories that often the rich learning opportunities lie.

5. *Parallel research process*: Learning History production generally includes a rigorous research process whereby the interview data set is distilled for key themes, storylines and illustrative quotes. Thematic work often follows more standard qualitative research approaches—for example, Strauss and Corbin’s approach to Grounded Theory. These themes are then woven into the resulting Learning History either

explicitly or implicitly. Roth and Kleiner highlight the importance of cycling between the data and the story (they call it the ‘research’ and ‘mythic’ imperatives) in order to keep the resulting Learning History ‘honest’.

Method

There are a series of distinct stages in the design of a Learning History project. In the literature, these have variously been combined to suggest between four and six stages. Table 1 outlines five stages, where the first four stages relate to the front-end production of the Learning History and the fifth relates to the back-end, post-production learning stage.

There are many choices and varying degrees of freedom in each of the above stages. For example, the way research projects are commissioned might mean that the planning stage cannot involve as many stakeholders as might be desired. Similarly, during distillation, the question of whose purposes are being served will drive how the Learning History is produced. For example, a Learning History for an academic thesis will have different exigencies during distillation than a

history that is explicitly commissioned for the purpose of organizational learning. At each stage, learning historians must balance pragmatic considerations of budget, resource and politics with the participative and pluralist principles underlying the approach.

Researchers have themselves variously interpreted the degree of co-production and participation in a Learning History process. Learning histories often can end up being crafted or written by outsider researchers. Similarly, validation can sometimes be interpreted as a stage of checking and ‘sign-off’. In contrast, it can be a key stage of collaborative learning where different stakeholders are brought together to share their different reactions and perspectives on the history that has been created.

Open System Method

It is worth noting that the final post-production stage, ‘wider learning’, has until recently been underplayed in the Learning History literature. This stage is often referred to as ‘dissemination’, suggesting that once the history is written, the model

<i>Number</i>	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Planning	Insiders and outsiders come together to co-design the project. Multiple stakeholders are invited to negotiate the storyline and the range and scope of the history. An insider/outsider ‘learning historian’ team is set up. This stage culminates in the identification of insider protagonists, and an invitation to interview is issued to them.
2	Data gathering	The main data-gathering stage. Learning historians conduct reflective one-on-one interviews or sometimes group interviews that are recorded to provide verbatim quotes. Additional material from company documents and websites may also be gathered at this stage.
3	Distillation and production	Recorded data is usually transcribed and distilled for key (a) storylines, (b) themes and (c) illustrative quotes. These, together with any background data, are crafted into the chosen Learning History form where thematic, narrative and insider voices are placed side by side.
4	Validation	A draft of the Learning History is shared with those who contributed. Validation can occur on an individual or group basis.
5	Wider learning	The back-end stage, where the agreed Learning History is now taken more widely to support wider learning—either within the originating organization or further afield. Sometimes termed <i>dissemination</i> , this stage has more recently been interpreted as having significant potential for system-wide learning by taking a more participative approach to it.

Table 1 *The Five Stages of a Learning History Project*

for propagating the learning from it reverts to more conventional and non-participative styles of learning—for instance, presentations and circulation of the ‘document’. In recent years, questions of deriving broader, future-focused and actionable learning from learning histories have come to the fore, and this has led to more interpretations of Stage 5 that are proactive and focused on learning beyond the originating organization.

One key example of this is the Lowcarbonworks action research project at CARPP, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council (UK Research Council), which applied a Learning History methodology to the inter-organizational and sectoral level, with a view to understanding better the complex systemic issue of low-carbon change. On this project, over a dozen learning histories were created across the private and public sectors. Focusing on UK local authorities and successful low-carbon initiatives that had occurred there, Margaret Gearty’s doctoral work articulated a new form of Learning History—the Open-System Learning History, where multiple learning histories fed a series of varied ‘learning events’. Far from being passive, then, Stage 5 was conceived as proactive and engaged, bringing multiple stakeholders together in different learning communities.

Form

In the decade following the first Learning History at AutoCo, a distinctive Learning History form has become established. At its heart is a written, two-column format whereby insider protagonists’ interview quotes on one side converse with researcher reflections and narration on the other. The two-column format was not a Learning History invention but drew inspiration from the earlier work of Argyris and Orlando Fals Borda, both of whom had experimented with the two-column format much earlier as a means of supporting reflective learning. Fals Borda reports using the format in his community development work in Colombia as far back as the seventies. The two-column format creates a dialogical text whereby the reader is invited via the experiences of the protagonists, and the reflections of the researcher, to reflect the history and relate any learning to his or her own context.

The two-columned format then sits within an overall presentational form that has varied from project to project. The AutoCo Learning History, for instance, was a 90-page document that was structured into six themes, with each theme illustrated with a two-column presentation. The right-hand column told the story in the words of the participants. This material was drawn from the primary research data. The left-hand

column contained the voice of the researcher, providing interpretive material and drawing attention to questions, analysis, implications and so on that came out of this material. Further framing, explanation boxes and background information rounded out the document.

In his analysis of the Learning History genre in 2007, Steve Amidon noted the appearance of more standard reporting devices such as abstracts, executive summaries and conclusions in a number of Learning History documents and points to the prevalent managerial need for summaries and outcomes as potentially being at odds with the goals of creating dialogue and reflective inquiry.

Emerging New Forms

By 2009 and in the context of the Lowcarbonworks programme, the distinctive, two-columned written form was itself called into question. In her doctoral work, Gearty suggested that the dialogical quality of Learning History could be achieved in a number of ways, and indeed, these were not confined to written media. Her set of written learning histories interspersed quotes, photos, themes and theoretical links in bubbles and boxes around a core, time-bound narrative. She proposed that digital and dramatic forms of Learning History might be equally valid and indeed more appropriate in certain settings and therefore worthy of consideration. Dramatic and artistic forms of Learning History were then further explored in the context of Lowcarbonworks, and these experiments in turn inspired further research projects at CARPP and elsewhere that had lighter and often more flexible forms of Learning History at their heart.

Learning History and Action Research

Learning History is a particular form of action research. The centrality of the research output—the Learning History—distinguishes it from other, more process-driven kinds of action research. Though still fundamentally participative, the process is also more differentiated in terms of ‘insider/outsider’ skills and roles. The ‘outsider’ researcher(s) draws on standard research methods—interviewing and thematic analysis—more so than other forms of action research, where outputs are often more provisional and emergent. The structuring of the collaborative inquiry differs also from other forms of second person action research. In Learning History, inquiry occurs in relation to the story that is being created or that has been told. This contrasts with Co-Operative Inquiry, for example, where inquiry evolves in relation to the practical issues and concerns of the participants.

Recent developments in Learning History research discussed above have recognized the catalytic nature of Learning History within the wider system and so open it up as a piece of third person action research. The open system Learning History places the 'artefact' at the heart of a learning process that extends outwards to include face-to-face inquiry, but that can also, in its way, speak for itself in a third person context.

Trends in Learning History Research

Learning History continues to appeal to researchers and organizations as an approach, though it does not appear to have been widely applied. Amidon's survey of Learning History in 2007 turned up just 12 published instantiations. However, there may be many more. Learning History practice is often located on the boundary between research and consulting. Given their often proprietary and sensitive nature, many learning histories are not in the public domain or documented in the academic literature. This makes the extent of Learning History application hard to assess and the methodology itself hard to progress, but it is fair to assume that it has not been widely adopted. Learning History requires time and resources. It asks for the space to be made for reflection where fast-paced organizational life is generally set up in the countervailing direction. The resource-intensive and rigorous nature of early Learning History forms has no doubt contributed to this, and recent trends to work with lighter, flexible forms might to some extent counteract this, though not entirely.

Going forward, there are many interesting trends in Learning History. With the loosening of form, links to the emerging field of arts-based action research are starting to be made. Systemic work with Learning History is also an emerging area, and Lowcarbonworks is but one possible interpretation. In her unpublished work with a global religious community, Paula Downey has combined Learning History with a living systems perspective in an exciting way. In this work, a small 'insider' group was facilitated over an extended period to harvest and distil conversations and experiences from across the community into thematically based learning histories. By 'listening' closely to the many different voices and experiences of others, and reflecting together on these, the 'insider' team found that they gained deep insights into the nature of life in their organization and its development needs at that time. The process was experienced as profoundly transformational on a personal level for some members of this team, simultaneously contributing to their leadership development and greatly enhancing the

capacity of the small group as influencers in the wider system.

This suggests that sustained, actionable learning from Learning History can be derived in many different ways as the dance between product and process continues to be explored.

Margaret Gearty

See also arts-based action research; case study; Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice; second person action research; storytelling; third person action research; two-column technique

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LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

See Organization Development

LEARNING PATHWAYS GRID

The Learning Pathways Grid (LPG) is a visual template (see Figure 1) for a particular kind of conversation analysis. LPG analysis helps professionals discover links from cognition to action, to the effects of action and makes those links explicit; it then supports a pragmatic redesign of action. LPG analysis is a powerful action research tool. It allows professionals to develop reflective practice skills in a rigorous, structured and collaborative way. While 'reflective practice' may appear mysterious and unattainable, the LPG allows practitioners at any level to identify ways in which their espoused beliefs and actual actions conflict or are in sync, a key reflective practice skill.

An LPG analysis is a stepwise process of reflection which guides inquiry into past conversational behaviour that has yielded undesirable results. It is done in a group. At each step in the LPG mapping and redesign, respectful inquiry and suggestions from group members can help an individual see past her or his inevitable biases and blind spots and empower the individual to adopt a new, more effective approach to a challenging situation. At the root of LPG analysis is the *frame*, a term applied loosely to encompass related concepts such as assumptions, cognitive schemas and mental models. The simple LPG conceptual model is that frames lead to behaviours, which in

turn have consequences, as depicted by the left-to-right sequences in Figure 1. Frames both inform and limit actions; however, the individual has the power to imagine and adopt different frames that will lead him or her to more effective behaviours. LPG analysis supports this reframing. The LPG emerged from the interrelated traditions of Action Science, organizational learning, action inquiry and family systems therapy. It was developed initially by Diana McLain Smith and colleagues in the early 1990s for use in organizational development consulting. This entry explains the LPG and describes its application.

LPG Analysis Overview

LPG analysis begins with a case written by an individual whose actions failed to yield the desired outcomes. The focal behaviour is excerpted from an interpersonal interaction, which might be a meeting, a teaching or training session or a professional team effort, such as surgery or the work of a flight crew. LPG analysis is conducted 'offline' with trusted peers. The remainder of this entry refers to those conducting the analysis as 'the group' and to the focal individual who experienced the dilemma as the 'case writer'.

LPG analysis follows the flow of the arrow in Figure 1. The case writer prepares a case about a conversation with problematic results. The case is presented to the group. The group and the case writer then use the LPG to map specific thoughts and actions that appear to have led to the undesired results. Group and case writer then use the LPG to craft alternative ways of thinking and acting, which hold the potential to bring about the desired results in the future. The steps are described below.

Case History

The history is typically brief. It includes specific examples of what was said and done, how others responded and what the focal individual was thinking and feeling. The case also includes a brief introduction with some background and ends with lingering concerns or questions.

Mapping Problematic Thoughts and Actions

A blank LPG (Figure 1) provides a sequence for and visual record of the analysis. A highly simplified case is used in the following example to illustrate the six steps of the LPG analysis. In this case, the case writer had grown frustrated and quit a project team when the team appeared to be mired in old habits and when the team members appeared unwilling to listen to the case writer's suggestions.

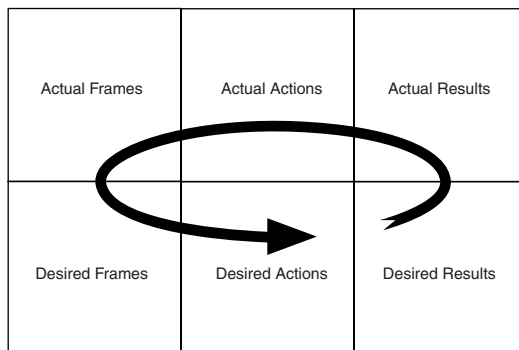


Figure 1 *The Learning Pathways Grid*

SOURCE: Adapted from Smith, D. M., McArthur, P., & Putnam, R. (1993). *Organizational learning in action*. Weston, MA: Action Design. Available at <http://www.actiondesign.com>.

1. In dialogue with the group, the case writer first enters one or more items in the Desired Results LPG cell to document his aims for the interaction described in the case. Two desired results in the sample case might be 'Team learns of problems with current methods' and 'I help team envision new methods.'
2. Next, the group documents Actual Results—in other words, the problematic outcomes. For the sample case, this would be 'Team maintains current methods' and 'I quit the team'. Comparison of actual with desired results yields an outcome gap—that is, important ways in which the results differed from the aims.
3. The group identifies Actual Actions, for example, what was said or left unsaid, which led to the Actual Results and, in particular, to the outcome gap. For the sample case, this would be 'I explained why their approach is wrong', 'I said they seemed unwilling to listen to my ideas' and 'I quit'.
4. In the next step, the group helps the case writer uncover the subjective experience leading to the actions and to the outcome gap. Typically, this centres on the case writer's thoughts and feelings leading to the actual actions and, more specifically, on the case writer's often tacit assumptions or patterns of beliefs, called 'frames' in this context. For the sample case, this would be 'The team is stuck in habitual practices' and 'The team will never listen to a new employee like me'. While a wealth of accurate frames often can be generated at this stage, the analysis should be parsimonious: What are the most essential and powerful frames that can explain the Actual Actions?

Crafting Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting

With the problematic thoughts, actions and results mapped, attention turns to reframing and the situation.

1. The overarching inquiry here is what plausible new perspectives and/or assumptions might the case writer adopt which could lead to more effective actions and desired results? The aim is pragmatic: What are the simplest, subtlest cognitive shifts that can trigger more effective actions? These are entered in the Desired Frames LPG cell. Continuing our sample case, this would be 'The team's current methods may actually be logical; the better I understand the team's current methods, the better I can suggest improvements that members will accept'.

2. Finally, the group helps the case writer generate some potential Desired Actions consistent with these frames, which may help the case writer achieve the desired results in the future. To conclude our example, 'Inquire about the logic of the team's approach', 'Avoid attacking their approach', and 'Suggest improvements that build on what they are already doing'.

LPG analysis is most useful when the type of situation analyzed is likely to recur and where the case writer's actions are likely to affect the outcomes in meaningful ways. It can be used anywhere when individuals wish to learn from interpersonal experience in order to improve their professional or personal practice and where they have a trusted group of colleagues or peers to work with.

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and Jenny W. Rudolph*

See also community of inquiry; cycles of action and reflection; reflective practice; two-column technique

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LEARNING WINDOW

Action research involves practices of living inquiry intended to generate conditions for change in systems with others. Curiosity, engagement and question posing are brought to bear on shared concerns with the intent of learning to make change over time. The methods of learning within an action research project are numerous, including engaging with cycles of reflection and action, explorations of systemic conditions for change as well as individual and interpersonal capabilities to collaborate and diagnose the systems readiness for change. One such method for a better understanding of what is going on within a system in relationship to

a perceived organizational concern is the learning window. The learning window is a learning tool that directs inquiry from four specific perspectives to look into a system for deeper understanding. This tool directs the attention of individuals to diagnose both what they presently understand about an organizational concern as well as what remains to be discovered.

Lyle Yorks developed the learning window as an adaptation of the Johari window, a technique created by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham in 1955. It was used to help people better understand their relationship to self and others. Like other feedback mechanisms, the Johari window has been a useful tool for giving and receiving feedback about individuals' and groups' actions within a system. Four windows bring attention to self-awareness and other awareness. Two of the four windows pose questions that increase self-awareness of themselves as actors in systems and the impacts of their behaviours. The other two windows increase awareness of unconscious impacts of the self on the system. Used as a heuristic exercise to increase self-awareness and group awareness, this tool has been adapted into what has come to be known in action research methodologies as the learning window.

As a tool for inquiry and learning, Yorks specifically developed the learning window as a structure to focus attention on simultaneous awareness of individual and collective knowledge of a system. A system refers to what David Bohm described as a set of connected things or parts. The way people use the word now, it means an entity all of whose parts are mutually interdependent—not only for mutual action but also for their meaning and existence. A system is constantly engaged in a process of development, change, evolution and structure changes. Understanding a system as complex and interconnected requires an equally complex learning method. The learning window initiates a process of better understanding the interconnections among systems through four distinct perspectives.

The learning window asks four critical questions regarding knowledge and discovery:

1. What do we know?
2. What do we think we know?
3. What do we know that we don't know?
4. What might be outside our conscious awareness? What are we currently blind to that might have an impact on this issue?

The fourth window is an invitation to discover from the unexpected, emergent and spontaneous. In service of practical knowing, the learning window

provides a structure for participatory processes concerned with developing knowledge in pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. Such a learning structure emphasizes the skilful means required to bring together action and reflection, knowledge and discovery, in the pursuit of practical solutions to pressing issues in communities and organizations.

Each of the perspectives provides insight into the system's current reality and a common ground from which to launch the activities of action research. The first window invites the first person subjective perspective of the researchers—for example, what 'I' know to be true about a perceived shared concern. The second window inquires into the collective intersubjective knowledge of the group—for example, what 'we' know about each other and how we understand the presenting concern. The third window is a line of inquiry to identify and describe the objective artefacts of the organizational concern—for example, illustrations of how decisions affect the intended outcomes, processes, protocols and policies that signal a misalignment between intention, action and outcomes. The final and fourth window opens space for possibility by welcoming what is unknown and what could emerge if conditions were ripe and ready—for example, an awareness of what remains unseen and unknown that makes way for discovery, transformation and innovation to emerge.

The learning window is often utilized early as a learning strategy during action research cycles of reflection and action. It is a tool for exploring how to learn together about possibilities that catalyze change. In addition to helping understand a shared concern from multiple perspectives, the learning window also makes visible what at times is unseen, in the shadows and blind spot of individuals, groups and systems.

Action research is an evolutionary process, emerging developmentally over time as individuals develop the skills of inquiry, and communities of practice develop within systems to produce practical knowledge. Though learning structures such as the learning window provide a framework for engaging in inquiry and reflection, action research is an emergent process that lets change come in the doing of it. In this sense, the learning window allows for practical (usable, timely insights) knowledge to be validated and/or put into question. This in turn allows shared awareness to emerge in the action of inquiry.

Aliki Nicolaidis

See also Action Learning; Appreciative Inquiry; collaborative action research; collaborative developmental action inquiry

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LEWIN, KURT

At the time of his death in 1947, Kurt Lewin was considered one of the most important figures in modern psychology. He was the first to coin the term *action research* and specify its major components. According to his definition, action research is comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action. In Lewin's view, this is the kind of research needed for social practice. The idea of action research was the last topic that engaged Lewin's attention prior to his untimely death.

In this entry, some highlights of Lewin's biography will be presented, followed by a discussion of Lewin's 'field theory'. Emphasis will be placed on explaining the meta-theoretical principles and values underlying field theory, which are the cornerstones of action research. Lewin's theory of social change and the components of action research will also be explained and discussed.

Biographical Highlights

Kurt Lewin was born in 1890 to a Jewish family in Mogilno, a small town in Prussia (presently Poland). His father owned a small store, and Kurt received an Orthodox Jewish education at home. He fought and was wounded in the First World War. He completed his doctoral degree in philosophy and psychology at Berlin University, where he also served as a professor from 1926 to 1932. During this period, he conducted experimental research in the following areas: needs, motivation, learning and tension states. Following Hitler's rise to power in 1933, Lewin and his family left Germany and emigrated to the United States, where he was employed on a research grant at Cornell University. While working there, he negotiated with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem regarding the establishment

of a research institute there. During that period, Lewin published two books in English: *A Dynamic Theory of Personality* and *Principles of Topological Psychology*. However, the move to the Hebrew University and the establishment of the research institute there never materialized. After teaching for 1 year at Harvard University, Lewin moved to the University of Iowa, where he headed a research institute on child welfare from 1935 to 1944. At the research institute, he conducted experiments on leadership styles and their impact on the performance of groups as well as on their social emotional atmosphere.

In addition to his academic and research activities, Lewin was involved in projects on organizational change. The term *action research* was first used in regard to a project implemented at the Harwood Manufacturing Corporation in Virginia. Eight years later, in two of his last papers, Lewin used the term in the context of a research methodology that aimed to improve inter-group relations and to reduce discrimination.

In 1945, Lewin moved to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he founded the Research Center for Group Dynamics. The centre combined basic research on group processes and on attitude formation and change with efforts to solve social problems.

In his experimental and laboratory work, Lewin focused on the study of group atmosphere, as well as on leadership styles (autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire) and on the patterns of aggressive behaviour that developed in those settings. Later, he dealt with processes of decision-making and change in small groups. As for the topic of solving social problems, the Research Center for Group Dynamics at MIT conducted numerous action research projects. During one of these projects, which focused on training community leaders to work towards promoting better inter-group relations, the T-Group technology was developed. This technology later became the principal means of promoting change in organizational development.

Meta-Theory and Values

The term *field theory* indicates that the intellectual roots of Lewin's theoretical approach lie in both physics and psychology. According to field theory, behaviour needs to be evaluated in the right context, taking into account all the relevant forces that affect it. The psychological source of this theoretical perspective emanated from the Gestalt school.

According to the Gestalt school, every behaviour of individuals, groups or organizations is the result of the total situation in which it occurs. For Lewin, the total situation was the life space, or the field in which interdependent forces play a role. The life space has been defined as

the totality of fact which determines the behaviour (B) of an individual, group or organization at a certain moment. The life space (L) represents the totality of possible events. The life space includes the person (P) and the environment (E). Therefore, behaviour will amount to the following: $B = f(L) = (P \times E)$.

Lewin proposed six meta-theoretical principles that underlie field theory. Five of the six principles will be elaborated on here: (1) the psychological approach, (2) emphasis on the total situation, (3) the constructive versus the classificatory approach, (4) present time versus historical causation and (5) the dynamic approach.

The Psychological Approach. Lewin assumed that all psychological phenomena should be explained in psychological terms, even though he borrowed terms like *tension*, *vector* and *field* from physics. Consistent with the constructivist tradition, Lewin asserted that psychological phenomena are real. Therefore, the field that influences an individual should not be explained in the objective terms of physics. Rather, it should be explained in terms of the way it exists for that person at a given time.

Emphasis on the Total Situation. According to Lewin, researchers should always focus on the relationship between the specific group under investigation and its interaction with different internal and external forces. This leads researchers and agents of change to focus on the immediate situation in which the behaviour takes place.

The Constructive Versus the Classificatory Approach. The classificatory approach focuses on generalization from a specific object to an ideal one, which is an abstraction of the particular object. By contrast, the constructive approach stresses relational concepts.

Present Time Versus Historical Concepts of Causation. According to Lewin, derivation of behaviour from past experience to the present state is not valid. Rather, the past experience of a person or group counts only in terms of its manifestations in the present field.

The Dynamic Approach. According to Lewin, the behaviour of an individual or group is analyzed in the context of forces that enhance efforts to achieve goals when inhibiting forces obstruct those efforts. Reality is perceived as an ever-changing process of achieving equilibrium, which is continuously disrupted by the field of forces.

Democratic Values

Lewin was an admirer of the democratic system and its values. Many of his writings are imbued with his

deep conviction and high respect for democracy. He highlighted the merits and advantages of democracy in comparison with autocratic or laissez-faire regimes. He also believed that it takes generations for nations to learn the democratic way of living.

The components of action research are deeply rooted in the values of co-operation among researchers, practitioners and clients. These values are based on rational, transparent decision-making procedures and high regard for humanistic values. Lewin perceived democratic society as a pluralistic entity and insisted on granting freedom of expression and respect for the diversity of groups. He asserted that the parallel to democratic freedom for the individual is cultural pluralism for groups. However, he was sufficiently realistic to express his views about restricting freedom of expression for extreme groups in society. In that connection, he argued that a democratic society has the right to defend itself against destructive, intolerant cultures.

Theory of Change

Lewin referred to the topic of social change in his last article, 'Frontiers in Group Dynamics'. He described social change as a change of the force field and proposed that the change agent thinks in terms of how the present level is turned into the desired state. A planned change means that the equilibrium of the field force at level L_1 is replaced by a new equilibrium at the desired level, L_2 . Following the aforementioned meta-theoretical principle, the total social field of forces should be taken into account.

In this regard, changing people's attitudes or behaviour is tantamount to trying to break a well-established custom or social habit. Thus, Lewin termed social habits, which play a major part in preventing change, as *inner resistance to change*. In order to overcome inner resistance to change, it is necessary to apply an additional force which is sufficient to break the habit or to 'unfreeze' the custom.

Lewin defined the change process as consisting of three stages. The first stage is 'unfreezing' of the present level or habit. To achieve this, Lewin argued that it is necessary to break open the shell of complacency and self-righteousness. Thus, in order to change attitudes and behaviour, an individual needs to be stirred up emotionally. Gordon Allport referred to this process as catharsis. The second stage is 'moving', when the change actually occurs; and the third stage is 'refreezing', when the new habit or norm has been adopted and institutionalized.

Lewin believed that the best and most effective means of bringing about change in individuals is through group encounters. Hence, the group became

one of the major vehicles in action research and in organizational development.

Components of Action Research

Lewin did not succeed in systematically characterizing the components of action research before his untimely death. He had used the term *action research* as early as the beginning of the 1940s. In his last three papers, he offered a slightly more detailed definition of action research: 'The research needed for social practice . . . is a type of action research, comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action'.

The following components of action research derive from Lewin's last three papers:

1. Action research is a planned problem-solving process that may extend over a period of time. It aims to examine and solve social and organizational issues. Lewin conceived of action research as a problem-solving process that occurs in a constantly changing environment. It consists of a spiral process of data collection aimed at determining intervention goals, followed by action aimed at implementing the goals and assessment of the results of the intervention. In principle, the intervention is continuous because problems that demand solutions arise all the time. In contrast to the normal scientific model, in which the researcher's main task is to investigate a problem or to test a hypothesis, the action researcher is expected to propose solutions to organizational and social issues. The first component of action research reflects several of Lewin's meta-theoretical principles. The action research paradigm deals with the interdependence between systematic examination of a social problem and efforts to solve the problem. This is an example of the Gestalt school perspective, which emphasizes life space and the need for researchers to take into account the concrete group or organizational situation. The spiral process of data collection that aims to determine goals followed by implementation and assessment of the goals reflects an additional meta-theoretical principle of field theory: the dynamic nature of the forces in the field where action research takes place. The action research paradigm also embodies the meta-theoretical principle of the constructive approach, namely, the need to construct a concrete unit of intervention (i.e. the idiographic, Galilean approach) rather than rely on a mechanical act of classifying the situation as a type of behaviour in accordance with a certain nomenclature.

2. Action research is a process in which the relationships between researchers and all other parties

involved in that process are managed in a democratic, co-operative and egalitarian mode. Among the parties involved, there is open communication and feedback regarding the effects of the intervention. Lewin's profound belief in and commitment to the principles of democracy are reflected in the action research paradigm. In this regard, he argued that believing in reason means believing in democracy, because the reasoning partners are granted a status of equality. According to the conventional scientific research model, the researcher directs the operation and is sometimes the only one familiar with the objectives or hypotheses of the study. In action research, by contrast, all parties involved in the process are responsible for the decisions that affect their lives. Equal partnership in the research project and knowledge of the context and rationale for the decisions that are made enable the parties involved to maintain high motivation and commitment. This component of action research also reflects Lewin's pluralistic perspective, which accords equal weight to the opinions and ideology of all parties involved in the action research project. Because each party has its own set of priorities and values, the only way for the action research project to succeed is to deal openly with the conflicts that arise. An ongoing process of managing and solving these power and value conflicts guarantees that the research will proceed as planned. This is in contrast to the conventional research design, where the principal investigator usually has the sole power to make decisions and solve conflicts unilaterally.

3. The small group serves as the principal means for achieving social change. Lewin perceived the small group as the most important vehicle for making democratic decisions and achieving change in people. He maintained that society consists of numerous and diverse groups and that the parallel to democratic freedom for the individual is cultural pluralism for groups. This speaks to the need to create harmonious inter-group relations in a heterogeneous, democratic society. However, the small group is also the cornerstone for reaching decisions in politics, in the family, in the community and in organizations. The dynamics created within the group make it possible for the individual to grow, to be socialized, to reach effective decisions and to plan the activities of the group.

4. Action research is a process that utilizes scientific knowledge drawn from the social and behavioural sciences and is carefully adapted to the context in which the intervention takes place. It creates and implements relevant methods of intervention and measures their effects.

Epilogue

Lewin's intellectual and theoretical legacy is as lively and relevant today as it was during his lifetime 70 years ago. A testimony to this is the intensive revival of research and theory regarding action research, as reflected in the present encyclopedia.

Apart from the important contribution of Lewin's field theory to action research and Action Science, Lewin's legacy to group dynamics and social and cognitive psychology is also vital. His theory regarding the phases of change in groups also relates to the concept of group atmosphere, which is now referred to as 'group culture'.

As for the relevance of Lewin's theories and constructs, it should be mentioned that he foresaw the gap between theory and practice in all the professions that the action research paradigm was applied to. Had he lived today, he probably would have reformulated his famous dictum from 'There is nothing as practical as a good theory' to 'Theory and practice should coexist in interdependent dialogical relationships'.

David Bargal

See also constructivism; force field analysis; organization development; phenomenology; social constructionism

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LGBT

LGBT is the acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. It is an umbrella term used to refer to people whose affectation or romantic orientations differ from opposite sex attraction, or heterosexuality. LGBT people are called sexual minorities since they represent a subset of the general population. Estimates of the LGBT population are estimated to be between 4 and 10 per cent of the general population, and there is debate and even contestation over the precise numbers. However, it is accepted that LGBT people constitute a minority. *Lesbians* are women who are romantically or sexually attracted to women. *Gay* typically refers to men who are romantically or sexually attracted to men, although the term *gay* can also be used to characterize lesbians. In this case, the term *gay woman* has the same meaning as *lesbian*. *Bisexual*, which can represent males or females, means that the person is romantically or sexually attracted to people of both genders. *Transgender* is a term that represents people whose internal sense of gender does not match their biological sex. Transgender refers to males and females and includes those who cross-dress (i.e. wear the clothing of the opposite sex), those who adopt the affects or other demonstrable actions or accoutrements of the opposite sex and those who proactively elect to alter their physical sex through hormones and surgery. Gender identity represents the sense of maleness or femaleness that one experiences, and sex represents the biological maleness or femaleness. Sexual orientation refers to the romantic attraction that a person feels towards males or females. Sexual orientation can be heterosexual (opposite sex), homosexual (same sex) or asexual (the person is attracted to neither sex).

Stigmatization

LGBT people have experienced stigma because they transgress the generally accepted identities and practices of social activities such as dating and institutions such as marriage. LGBT people have historically experienced discrimination in covert and overt ways.

They have also experienced outright hatred and violence from those who believe that they are sinners, criminals or mentally ill. LGBT people have historically had challenges negotiating a variety of environments, including the workplace, the educational setting, health care, politics, religion and family of origin. Each one of these contexts—work, education, health care, religion and politics—represents an area in which action research—carried out for, with and by the LGBT population or subsets of the population—could offer insights and awareness around sexual minority issues. In the workplace, LGBT people have negotiated heterosexist environments in which sexual minority identity and sexual minority issues have been invisible and unaddressed. In educational settings, from K–12 to higher education, LGBT people have faced discrimination and marginalization that have ranged from covert discrimination to outright hostility and violence. In health care, there is a range of issues related to LGBT people. For example, gay men have experienced the devastation of the AIDS crisis that decimated their community during the 1980s. Lesbians have experienced challenges negotiating the health-care system, despite the fact that they are just as much at risk for certain types of diseases, such as breast cancer, ovarian cancer and cervical cancer, as the general female population. Bisexual people experience a unique kind of stigma, because they are often seen as ‘fence sitters’—that is, people who cannot make up their minds about their sexuality. As such, they face challenges related to stigmatization and marginalization not only among heterosexuals but also within the LGBT community itself. Transgender people face a constellation of challenges with respect to the workplace. When transgender persons decide to *transition*, which is a term that means that the person has decided to undergo the process of changing to his or her true sense of gender, they face the possibility of suffering discrimination, lack of support and understanding and may even risk losing their employment. The transition from one gender to the other involves a rather lengthy, complex and expensive process of hormone therapy, psychoanalysis and then surgery.

Identity Development, ‘The Closet’ and Coming Out

In addition to issues related to discrimination and marginalization, LGBT people face issues related to identity. There are models of identity development, notably Cass (1979), that offer suggestions about the process of realizing that one is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. These models depict the stages of awareness, acknowledgement and acceptance of one’s sexual minority status that LGBT people experience.

Not all LGBT people experience these stages at the same time in their lives. For example, one person may realize at a very young age, even childhood, that he or she is an LGBT, whereas another person may come to this realization much later in life. In general, the integration of one’s identity with all parts of one’s life is associated with greater mental health. The term *closet* is used to refer to the act of concealing information about one’s sexual minority status. The phrase *coming out* signifies the act of disclosing such information.

Challenges and Opportunities Associated With Conducting Research on LGBT Issues

Research that raises awareness around issues related to LGBT people has the potential to help LGBT people experience greater freedom from societal stigma, and it also has the potential to help sensitize those who are not sexual minorities around these issues. For example, heterosexual persons would not second-guess the wisdom of placing a picture of their spouse and children in their workspace (e.g. cube or office space) and are not likely to feel uncomfortable answering questions about their family structure (e.g. husband or wife or children). The expectation, generally speaking, is that people are heterosexual. Those who are not face an ongoing series of challenges related to personal disclosure of their identity. Although it is worthwhile studying LGBT people as a population, it also bears noting that research is needed on each subset of this population because each subset has its own challenges and opportunities. For example, lesbians are homosexual females, and they face gender discrimination as well as sexual orientation discrimination. Gay men are homosexual males, and they face the challenge of having to negotiate expectations for masculinity. Bisexual people face the stigma related to being attracted to members of either sex, and they arguably are misunderstood and seen as particularly odd for their ostensible lack of commitment to a particular sexual orientation. Transgender people face challenges related to their gender expression, which does not align with their sex. They also face challenges if they determine that they want to transition. These challenges include negotiating the health-care system, the insurance system, the workplace, the family of origin and other family issues. For example, if a transgender person has a spouse, then the couple will have to make a decision about whether or not they will, during and after the transition, remain married to each other. There are other issues, such as child custody and child-rearing. These family-related issues can present themselves when gay, lesbian or bisexual persons come out after they have already established a

family life with an opposite-sex spouse and have children, but the issues are arguably more complex when someone transitions.

Issues related to conducting research with LGBT people also include confidentiality and access. Because the workplace laws that protect LGBT people from discrimination are uneven, nationally as well as internationally, LGBT people in the main continue to face challenges related to disclosure. Because of these challenges, action researchers committed to researching LGBT issues need to be sensitive to the safety and security—physical, mental, emotional and political—of their research participants. Because the closet continues to represent a very real way of life for LGBT people in a variety of contexts, identifying research participants can present a challenge for researchers, and asking them to self-identify and possibly even ‘out’ themselves in the process of co-initiating or co-facilitating an action research process is particularly contentious. Simultaneously, as with any subset of the population or any specific community or interest group, it is important that research is as self-led and self-determined as possible: hence the possibilities of action research for the empowerment and emancipation of often silenced or marginalized minority groups, such as this one. Action researchers, therefore, need to be sensitive to the potential pressures and unintended consequences which might arise from an invitation to participate or from an expectation of explicit engagement and open participation from fellow participants in the research process, and these expectations and any boundaries or safety mechanisms need to be carefully negotiated and protected. It is important when designing an action research project that the initiating researcher carefully attends to issues of the recruitment of research participants, the treatment of research participants and how they will protect the identities of their research participants. Granted, these are considerations for any researcher conducting research with any population. However, when LGBT people engage in an action research study, there is a possibility that they face a more complex set of considerations, particularly for those who are closeted.

Julie Gedro

See also anti-oppression research; community-based research; community-university research partnerships; empowerment; experiential knowing; health promotion; human rights; tacit knowledge

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LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY

Liberation psychology is a framework that conceives oppressive social, economic, political and cultural conditions as root causes of psychological suffering. It focuses on understanding the manifestations and impact of hierarchical power relations of domination and subordination in psychological functioning. Unlike traditional psychology, liberation psychology explicitly presents a value system that guides the praxis. Liberation psychology addresses oppression, inequality and social issues through interventions aiming at collective social transformation. The assumption is that social issues such as warfare, poverty, class domination, racism, sexism, homophobia and others affect individuals and groups requiring individual and collective healing. In addition, it is necessary to change structures in order to eradicate the source of suffering and control over historically marginalized populations. Under this framework, people are conceived as active participants in their own process of liberation and healing by critically reflecting and collectively acting to change oppressive conditions. The role of the psychologist is conceived as accompanying and collaborating with the marginalized in their journey of liberation and transformation. This entry covers the background of

liberation psychology, its core ideas and its relationship with action research.

Background

Liberation psychology emerged from criticism of traditional psychology during the 1970s. Assumptions about universality and assertions of a values-free psychology were irrelevant for understanding the effects of oppressive power relations and unequal access to resources. Critics contended that valuing the individual over the collective, autonomy over interdependency, and individual change over societal transformation made the discipline complicit with the status quo, which aimed at defending the interests of a few at the expense of the majority.

In contrast, liberation psychology emphasizes a theory and practice concerned with social justice, equality and dignity. It has a preferential option for the oppressed majority as the subject of study; conceives an epistemology or nature of knowledge as grounded in history, social conditions, power relations and cultural norms and is a practice engaged in individual change and societal transformation. Its framework focuses on the understanding of people's situated experiences in their sociocultural and economic contexts. It also acknowledges that people's experiences of social issues vary, as well as their resistance to oppression. Consequently, liberation psychology attests that there are many psychologies rather than a single universal discipline. This is more appropriate for understanding how structures affect and connect people's varying experiences in different social relations. Examples include feminist liberation psychology, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) liberation psychology, Black liberation psychology and so on.

One of the major proponents of liberation psychology in Latin America was Ignacio Martín-Baró, a Jesuit priest, a social psychologist and an educator, who worked for the oppressed majority in El Salvador and was consequently assassinated there. Martín-Baró partially based the liberation psychology framework on Gustavo Gutiérrez's liberation theology, a preferential option for the poor, and on Paulo Freire's emancipatory education based on critical discernment. Martín-Baró thought that social justice must be the major concern of the social sciences. He contended that oppression impedes seeing reality. Under this premise, peoples' liberation is attained through a process of conscientization and transformation by critically decoding socially oppressive conditions and engaging in liberatory actions which bring hope for new possibilities.

He viewed the researchers' contribution as co-creating new research questions aimed at understanding as well as articulating solutions to social problems.

In so doing, the researcher is a contributor who exposes structural inequities and facilitates an awareness of distorted views of reality. Martín-Baró discussed the internalized view of fatalism of the rural population in El Salvador as an example of the psychological effects of a system of oppression which convinces people that their conditions are natural, normal and inevitable. The researcher then is of service to the people in their exploration of their reality and in co-defining a research agenda. Therefore, Martín-Baró proposed a methodology for generating knowledge based on a ground-up approach or critical realism in which the communities build theory from their everyday life experiences. This contrasts with the methodological idealism approach in traditional psychology, where the research project is defined by theoretical preconceptions of individuals' experiences.

Currently, Maritza Montero, a Venezuelan social psychologist, is considered a leading scholar in the field. The liberation psychology framework has also been applied in the USA, Europe and other parts of the world. An example is the feminist liberation psychology framework used to critically reflect on psychological theory that devalued and excluded the experiences and voices of women. Feminists coined the idea that the personal is political. In the field of psychology, this idea challenged notions that psychological patterns have their foundation at the level of the individual, ignoring the roots of psychological suffering residing in social conditions and differential power relations. The feminist view, like liberation psychology in Latin America, conceives liberation as a praxis of action-reflection towards personal, interpersonal and political transformations.

Liberation Psychology and Action Research

With an emphasis on empowerment, inclusiveness, diversity, equality of participation and solidarity, action research combined with a liberation psychology framework can promote a grounded process for democratizing knowledge. Action research provides a methodology for respecting, validating and listening to peoples' experiences and views; building theory through a ground-up collaborative process; bringing together knowledge and actions to redress inequities; documenting critical and liberating dialogues about power relations in each step of the research process and articulating findings that inform individuals, communities and policymakers to change oppressive social conditions. The framework of liberation psychology focuses the research on transformation at both individual and societal levels.

Action research addresses research challenges through an action-reflection praxis. A reoccurring

challenge is a tendency to separate research from action. The relation between these two areas implies that transformation requires not only understanding the roots of inequities at the personal, interpersonal and political levels but also articulating a plan of action to change them.

Action research fieldwork using a liberation psychology framework is a resource for communities to know and understand the world by discerning together about who they are, what their strengths and limitations are and what and how they want to change patterns of oppression and restore relationships, leading towards a more humane globalizing world.

Amelia Mallona

See also conscientization; critical realism; empowerment; Feminist Participatory Action Research; Freire, Paulo; LGBT; liberation theology; Martín-Baró, Ignacio; praxis

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LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Liberation theology is commonly understood as a form of theology that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in response to changes in Catholic doctrine and ecclesiology. These changes combined with the determination of lay and ordained Christians from a wide range of ecumenical backgrounds to challenge structural oppression and economic disparities in the contexts in which they operated.

Though liberation theology is often thought to relate to Latin America, from where many of its chief exponents operate, it can also be seen to have emerged from the civil rights era in the USA and in various political liberation struggles in both Africa and Asia. Though it has emerged in predominantly Catholic nations, it is now a global and ecumenical movement comprising grass-roots efforts and organizations in both Protestant and Catholic communities.

Liberation Theology and Action Research

Its main contribution to the action research paradigm was the formation of the action/reflection model

(sometimes referred to in this context as the pastoral cycle) which encourages people of faith to constantly monitor their discipleship in terms of participation in activism and social involvement and, then, reflect on that activity with reference to scriptural understanding and the doctrine of the Church. That analysis should then inform the next stage of activism, ensuring that faithful thinking is rooted in praxis (acts) and vice versa.

Liberation theology is centred upon the notion that God wishes to liberate all those who suffer from oppression and that the biblical notion of the 'kingdom of Heaven', a place of peace, justice and fairness, is to be strived for as an active part of Christian discipleship. The theology is clearly influenced by the social sciences and is concerned with notions of power, social justice and equality. Among its many international exponents are Gustavo Gutiérrez (Peru), Leonardo Boff (Brazil), Juan Segundo (Uruguay), Elsa Tamez (Mexico), James Cone (USA), Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza (Germany), Desmond Tutu (South Africa), Jon Sobrino (Spain), Naim Ateek (Palestine) and Ernesto Cardenal (Nicaragua).

Oppression of Liberation Theology

Liberation theologians have themselves often been victims of oppression due to their public 'prophetic resistance', and during the period of National Security States in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s, many thousands were exiled, imprisoned or killed.

Some theological commentators predicted that the end of Soviet-style communism, heralded by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the election of more conservative senior clergy in the Catholic Church at the end of the twentieth century, would signal the demise of this revolutionary form of theology. Liberation theologians, however, had little connection with East European Marxism and even less so with the decisions being made in Rome, so it continued to have an impact on theological development in Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia. In fact, the uncertainties in global capitalism following the financial crash in 2007 and the growing disparities between the rich and the poor in many nations have led to a resurgence of interest in the subject, even in the more affluent Western nations. Significantly, since the rise of Venezuela as a regional power in Latin America following the election of the Chavez administration in 1998, and the significant shift to the left throughout the region, many advocates of liberation theology have been elected into senior political posts throughout the continent.

The movement has influenced several significant political theorists such as the Brazilian educational

activist Paulo Freire and radical thinkers such as the Catholic priest Ivan Illich. It has also given rise to the development of 'contextual' theologies such as, among others, Hispanic, feminist, Black, disabled and queer theologies. The connection to these contextualized theologies can be understood by recognizing that for liberation theologians the starting point for faith is the concrete reality of the present time and that one's objective historical situation is an essential component in one's theological perspective. Liberation theology has also affected the development of practical theology, as people of faith are encouraged to examine the signs of the times and work out their responses to the political and historical positions they are immersed in.

The roots of liberation theology are often said to be in the developments of the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965. This was initiated by Pope John XXIII and was continued after his death in 1963 by Pope Paul VI. It was widely interpreted as a period when the Catholic Church moved away from more traditionalist doctrines and attempted to modernize itself institutionally. Certainly, Vatican II gave permission for those who were advocating change in regard to the teaching and praxis of the Church to press ahead with reforms. Specifically, this resulted in the important influence of the Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (Latin American Episcopal Conference), also known as CELAM. This is a conference of the Roman Catholic bishops of Latin America, created in 1955. CELAM had pushed for the changes made during Vatican II and subsequently organized the 1968 Medellín Conference in Colombia, officially supporting 'base ecclesial communities' and the type of liberation theology later propounded by Gutiérrez in his 1972 essay 'A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation'.

CELAM itself was a response to the growing radicalization of clergy and lay members following the success of the Cuban revolution in 1959 and a growing recognition of the horrific conditions of the poor throughout Latin America. CELAM's support of liberation theology was disliked by the Vatican, with Pope Paul VI trying to slow the movement after the 1962–5 Council.

With Alfonso López Trujillo's election in 1972 as general secretary of CELAM, conservatives regained control of the direction of the organization. Trujillo remained CELAM's general secretary until 1984.

However, at the 1979 CELAM Conference in Puebla, conservative elements within CELAM met with strong opposition from progressive elements of the clergy, who helped define the concept of a 'preferential option for the poor'. But with the election of Pope John Paul II, the conservatives took control of both the Roman Curia and the CELAM. Cardinal

Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) was charged with bringing back the Vatican's authority in the Third World. Under his guidance, in 1984 and 1986, the Catholic Church publicly condemned elements of liberation theology.

Wider international awareness of the liberation theological movement came to the fore with the execution of the El Salvadoran archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980. Following Romero's appointment in February 1977, progressive priests feared that his conservative reputation would negatively affect liberation theology's commitment to the poor.

Following the assassination of the progressive priest Fr Rutilio Grande in March 1977, Romero revealed a radicalism that had not been evident earlier. Throughout Latin America, Church hierarchies had often colluded with the state and the military to preserve the privileged position of the wealthy and the powerful. Romero, much to the annoyance of the Salvadorian elites, suddenly began to speak out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations and torture.

On 24 March 1980, one day after a sermon in which Romero had called on Salvadoran soldiers to obey God's higher order and stop carrying out the government's repression and violations of basic human rights, he was shot while celebrating Mass in a local hospital. Romero's story of resistance and persecution typifies the situations in which liberation theology was to develop throughout the 1980s.

Biblical Texts of Interest

Liberation theology is underpinned with the belief that the Bible gives a clear lead for the processes of liberation. Among its key texts of interest are the following:

- Exodus, which recounts the political and religious liberation of a group of oppressed slaves who, through the power of the covenant with God, become the people of God
- The Prophets, which gives a vigorous denunciation of injustices and argues for the rights of the poor alongside a proclamation of a new world to come
- The Gospels, which are full of dramatic pronouncements on the side of the poor and consist of numerous examples of Jesus' radical support for those who have been marginalized, disabled people, those in poverty, women, those of other faiths and sexual minorities
- The Acts of the Apostles, which demonstrates communitarianism and inclusive forms of community existing alongside the dominant idolatrous society

- Revelation, which offers symbolic language and resistance to the collective oppressions faced by God's people by the powers of this world

Themes of Liberation Theology

From these key texts emerge a number of themes important to liberation theology. The first concept is 'solidarity with the poor'. There is a common rejection of the ideas of charity and aid, primarily because those concepts can often be associated with the conservative notion of why people are poor in the first place. These concepts often regard the poor as objects of pity, which can exacerbate inequalities and power differentials between the oppressed and the oppressors. Liberation theology often rejects developmental or reformist responses to poverty, seeking instead approaches which challenge the fundamental problems at the root of social inequalities. Liberation theology demands solidarity alongside the poor, seeking solutions that are based on the struggles of those faced with real poverty and disadvantage. For this reason, it can often be a voice found alongside those calling for revolutionary changes within how the political, educational and cultural worlds operate.

Second, for liberation theologians, God is at work exposing and challenging the 'pharaohs' and 'powers that be' of any age. This leads liberation theologians to publicly condemn political, social and economic leadership which legitimates oppression. Liberation theologians therefore are often parts of movements calling for environmental, gender and economic justice.

Third, the project of the coming of the kingdom of God is an ongoing and ever-present reality. According to a liberation perspective, Christ's crucifixion and resurrection mean that victory over oppressive regimes and situations is assured. The religious journey, then, is to accompany the resurrected Christ in continually overcoming individual and structural sin, opposing actions which result in individuals or communities suffering from discrimination and persecution.

Fourth, the Church is a sign and an instrument of liberation. The Church needs to witness to a greater community of co-operation and love and needs to act to provide an alternative model of society based on equality and compassion. Gathered communities known as Base Ecclesial Communities, common in Latin America, are an essential component of this. These consist of groups of people who wrestle with the meaning of scripture and make it relevant to the struggles they face in their everyday lives.

For liberation theologians, the Church is a constant place of struggle. Church institutions can themselves often be instruments of oppressive structures,

harbouring sexist, racist, homophobic, disablist and other forms of discriminatory practice. However, the Church is also where God can be at work, and when the poor and the marginalized are able to 'evangelize the Church', there can be 'irruptions of the poor' within the ecclesial communities. When this happens, religious institutions can become instruments of liberation instead of oppression.

Conclusion

Liberation theology has come a long way from its initial stirrings in Latin America and the civil rights struggles of North America. The meeting of theologians in Petropolis, Brazil, in March 1964, in which Gutiérrez initially described theology as a 'critical reflection on praxis', has given rise to an enormous worldwide struggle to develop human and environmental rights. Since that time, many have been killed for espousing this theology of liberation; some have had the indignity of being silenced by their own Church institutions and forbidden to teach.

Despite all this, the influence of liberation theology is still evident in models of Church life and current forms of educational practice. Freire, a Brazilian educationalist who had a key influence on liberation theology, transformed models of teaching with his dialogical approach, which sought to challenge the way power was exercised in the learning process. South Africa may never have been released from apartheid in a predominantly non-violent manner had it not been for the work of liberationists such as the former archbishop Desmond Tutu. The Theatre of the Oppressed, developed in the 1960s by the Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal, has seen liberation theology having a significant effect on culture and the arts. Boal was influenced by the work of Freire, and his techniques use theatre as a means of promoting social and political change. In *The Theatre of the Oppressed* (1993), the audience become 'spect-actors', enabling them to explore, analyze and transform the reality in which they live.

Despite its critics, who accuse it of being too Marxist and too idealistic, liberation theology has shown itself to be an enduring phenomenon since its inception in the 1960s. It has proven itself to be an adaptable movement, responding to continual changes in the nature of oppressions and able to ally itself to indigenous and culturally specific liberation movements. From Dalit theology in India to Minjung theology in Korea and from Black, feminist, womanist and queer liberation movements to human rights struggles and peace organizations, liberation theology has clearly had a significant influence in the Modern Era. Its proponents converge with the action/research model by

seeking to use social scientific theory and methodology to continually adapt and inform the practice of both academics and activists.

Chris Howson

See also Boal, Augusto; Freire, Paulo; liberation psychology

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LISTENING GUIDE

The Listening Guide is a feminist, voice-centred, relational and psychological methodology for narrative data analysis. Originally titled ‘The Reader’s Guide’, the Listening Guide was created by Carol Gilligan and a team of graduate students (including Diane Argyris, Lyn Mikel Brown, Elizabeth Debold, Judy Dorney, Barb Miller, Richard Osborne, Annie Rogers, Steve Sherblom, Mark Tappan and Janie Ward) in the 1980s at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. This team of researchers developed the Reader’s Guide to render systematic the method Gilligan used in *In a Different Voice* and to address some significant shortcomings in psychological research methods at the time—that is, acknowledging the significance of the researcher’s subjectivity and the researcher-participant relationship.

The Listening Guide, as a feminist method, was originally designed to amplify voices that have been marginalized or silenced by dominant cultural frameworks. In the feminist methodological tradition, the Listening Guide intentionally acknowledges and attends to the positionalities of the researcher and the participant. Knowledge, as viewed by the Listening Guide, is relationally located in the participant’s relationship to self, culture and the researcher. It is represented by the

voices of the participant and given an opportunity to be heard in the relationship that evolves between the participant and the researcher. The Listening Guide invites psychological association and interdisciplinary knowledge—such as music and literature—into the research relationship and into the construction of new ideas. As such, this methodology is creative, unpredictable and generative.

This entry discusses the structure and process of the Listening Guide, the role of the interpretive community in the analytic process and educational action research applications.

The Structure of the Listening Guide

The Listening Guide is a polyphonic analytic methodology in that it seeks to pick up the many voices in which people speak of their lived experience. Its theory and practice are shaped by interdisciplinary theories stemming from the fields of psychology, literary analysis and music. In order to render such a complex understanding of a given narrative, the Listening Guide requires at least four separate listenings. The first listening, sometimes referred to as the ‘plot’ listening, asks the listener to construct a landscape of the interview. What stories are told? What are the major landmarks of the narrative (e.g. repeated phrases, words, contradictions, etc.)? What are the major themes? What are the silences, the stories left untold? In listening for the silences, the researcher becomes a ‘resisting’ listener, drawn from Judith Fetterley’s notion of the ‘resisting reader’. The first listening also requires a ‘listener’s response’ drawn from the notion of reader response theory. During this listening, the researcher attends to her own emotions, associations, reactions, questions and confusions. In this way, she can be sure to be alert to the issues that she brings to the analytic process and make every effort not to project her own voice onto that of the participant.

The second listening, sometimes referred to as the ‘listening for self’ is the core of this methodology. In this phase, the researcher is tuning in closely to the way the participants ‘speak of themselves’. The researcher must remain conscious of the fact that since it is a relational process, participants speak of themselves in relationship to the researcher in response to the questions asked and influenced by the place and time of the interview. In other words, this is a humble stance of listening for a self-in-relation. In order to hear the aspects of self that the participant shares in the interview, the researcher extracts ‘I phrases’ (the word ‘I’ plus the immediate following verb, e.g. ‘I want’, ‘I need’, ‘I think’, ‘I know’, ‘I don’t know’, etc.) in strict order as these phrases appear in the text. This ‘I’ is one representation of the participant’s self-in-relation, one

expression of how the participant expresses her lived experience. In extracting these phrases, Debold discovered that they fall in line poetically, forming what is often called the 'I poem', a way to listen for the ways the 'I' speaks. This 'I voice' is often in dialogue with other internal voices—sometimes a more removed 'you' voice, a collective 'we' voice or a distant 'she' or 'he' voice. When listening to the dialogue between these voices, the researcher can hear the internal dialogues that are often articulated as people reflect on the relational contexts of their lives. In describing the second listening, Gilligan often recounts that it is a way of magnifying the participants' voices or of making their voices more 'magnificent'. By drawing out the 'I voice', the researcher can temporarily quieten the surrounding voices, narratives and competing stories to hear the desires, confusions, questions and needs of the participants.

The third and fourth listenings, often referred to as the 'contrapuntal' listenings, help elicit the multiple voices spoken through the interview. The notion of voice here is distinguished from the notion of 'theme' in that voice is a more textured, nuanced and embodied articulation of a lived experience. In addition, the goal of this phase of the method is to hear the voices in relation to one another. Are they harmonic, dissonant, a marathon of solos or a clear duet? In listening for the tension between and among the voices, this set of listenings seeks to unearth the complexity of a narrative, rather than flattening it into a series of codes or themes.

The final step in the Listening Guide process is to create an analytic synthesis, bringing together the four listenings in an attempt to create an interpretive narrative. The standard for validity in this process answers the question that Gilligan often poses in relation to this step in the Listening Guide analysis: 'If I followed your footsteps, saw what you saw and heard what you heard, would I understand how you reached this interpretation?' Once an analytic synthesis is rendered, the researcher returns to the participant to explicitly inquire how the participant views the synthesis and to surface areas of interpretive agreement and disagreement.

The Role of the Interpretive Community

The Listening Guide requires that the researcher construct or join an interpretive community in which his emerging interpretations can be articulated, confirmed and challenged. The centrality of the interpretive community, clearly described by Stanley Fish in 1980 and later by Mark Tappan in relation to the Listening Guide, stems from the importance of helping the researcher to see his blind spots that may be hidden because of his own cultural, relational, professional and/or personal experiences. In one particularly vivid example, Jill

Taylor, Carol Gilligan and Amy Sullivan describe the centrality of the interpretive community in their use of the Listening Guide in order to understand girls' experience of race and relationship. In their study, they discovered that in order to hear the nuances, silences, resistances and hints in discussions of race and relationship, they needed to continually expand and grow their interpretive community to include women of different ethnicities, races and socio-economic classes. They found that this evolving community became so central to the work that they created retreats for the researchers to process their own experiences of race and relationship.

The interpretive community is also a key aspect of the validity/trustworthiness process of the Listening Guide. It can help the researcher construct, challenge and evaluate the trail of evidence that supports a given interpretation. Within this forum, interpretations can also be corroborated, deconstructed or augmented by co-researchers.

Applications of the Listening Guide

The Listening Guide has been used in many educational action research and action-oriented studies. Originally designed for studies of self and moral voices, it was used to listen for voices of resistance and capitulation in the Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development's (Harvard University Graduate School of Education) landmark study of girls' development at the Laurel School (Cleveland, Ohio) in the mid-1980s. The results, reported by Brown and Gilligan in *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development* (1992), were deeply influential in understanding the experiences of both students and faculty at the school and, more generally, in thinking about girls' education. Similarly, Gilligan's study at the Emma Willard School in Troy, New York, led to changes in practice at the school and the collaborative publication of the volume *Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School*.

While the Listening Guide was originally used in psychological research, it has since been used to understand relational experiences in the fields of education, history and women's studies. Raider-Roth has used the methodology to examine how children and teachers understand the ways their relationships with one another shape student learning and teacher practice. In an effort to understand the relational world of boys in school, at home and in their friendship worlds, Niobe Way and Judy Chu utilized the Listening Guide to hear the multiple voices and tensions expressed by the boys they interviewed. Similarly, the Listening Guide has been a core methodology in Lyn Mikel Brown's work

in understanding the relational worlds of working-class girls. Internationally, Tova Hartman has applied the Listening Guide in listening closely to the voices of modern women in orthodox religions, while Natasha Mauthner in the UK and Andrea Doucet in Canada have theorized the ways in which the Listening Guide offers a unique stance for accessing the methodological, epistemological and ontological subjectivities of the researcher and participant. Numerous doctoral students have used the Listening Guide as a core methodology in their action research dissertations, such as Eric Gidseg's investigation of teachers' relationships with the self and others in the face of the US Federal education policies; Christina Cruz' research on female coaches' relationships to the self, others and their profession in university athletics; Vicki Stieha's study of teachers' understandings of the relational web of school life; Billy Hensley's examination of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning) university students' understanding of the notion of 'safety' on their college campuses and Angie Woods' study of college students' relationships to language, culture and community when engaging in service learning courses, among many others.

While the Listening Guide's application to the field of educational action research is relatively recent, it offers a unique opportunity to understand the psychological and relational dimensions of educational experiences. Such understandings can help practitioners and researchers shape educational experiences to be more relationally aware, in tune and caring, thereby fostering healthy resistance and resilience. In such a climate, genuine and robust knowledge grows and flourishes.

Miriam Raider-Roth

See also data analysis; discourse analysis; educational action research; feminist ethics; intersubjectivity; narrative inquiry; positionality

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LIVING LIFE AS INQUIRY

Action inquiry is the process of bringing a fierce curiosity to every aspect of one's life. It is an ongoing process of questioning one's experience, paying attention to what one finds and making appropriate adjustments as one goes along. For an action inquirer, every moment of every day can become a subject of curiosity and investigation, every part of life grist to the inquiry mill. 'Living life as inquiry', a phrase coined by Judi Marshall, captures this pervasive nature beautifully. Individuals' beliefs, values, aspirations, feelings and behaviours are all interconnected aspects of their experience, and action research involves opening all of that up for questioning and dealing with what is discovered through thoughtful processing and appropriate action. It involves being curious as to whether and how what one actually does is congruent with what one espouses and engaging with any discrepancies between one's values and one's actions. Living life as inquiry means paying attention to the stories individuals tell themselves about their world and about themselves within it and being mindful that they are all constructions, influenced by their perspective and by their purpose. Social constructionist paradigms point out that the social context shapes discourse and influences the values held and that any descriptions given of the world, or any account given of personal experience, are culturally situated and subjective. Action researchers need to work with the challenging implication that their view is not the truth and that others may have very different versions of reality.

Inner and Outer Arcs of Attention

Action inquiry involves what Marshall calls 'inner and outer arcs of attention'. Inner arcs refer to developing self-awareness, noticing meaning-making processes, patterns, themes and repetitions, while in the midst of action. This can be hard work, because this discipline is not part of any personal, organizational or scientific

culture. What one notices and how one makes sense of it will be edited by consciously and unconsciously held purpose and assumptions, which in turn will be coloured by one's age, class, gender and so on. Unresolved distress from earlier experiences may well distort one's perception of the situation and the way one conducts oneself in it. Reaching out to others can help individuals avoid becoming solipsistic and caught up in their unaware projections. Marshall calls this process of engaging with others in testing our own sense making and perceptions 'outer arcs of attention'. On occasions, individuals may engage with others to inquire collaboratively into a topic of common interest; sometimes they may seek affirmation of their meaning making; at other times, they may purposefully engage with differences of views and perspectives. Note taking and journaling and reviewing one's notes for emerging themes, regarding both inner and outer attention, are an important part of this self-reflective process. Some researchers develop other strategies to track their reflections, using voice recordings, imagery or other channels that suit their reflective process better. This highlights another important characteristic of life as a process of inquiry: the multiplicity of ways of knowing.

Multiple Ways of Knowing

Self-reflective inquiry processes require researchers to pay attention to the different ways in which we engage and come to know our life world. Intellectual, thought-based sense making is rather privileged in Western cultures, but it is only one of the myriad of ways in which humans develop a sense of their world. Propositional statements and intellectual knowing cannot do justice to the richness and challenges of the human condition. Action research argues for a multidimensional account of knowledge and research outcomes. Feelings, sensory information, intuition and imagery are all sources of knowing, as is the practical knowing of how to do something. Rigorous inquiry requires researchers to attend to and engage with those different ways of knowing and their interconnection.

Cycles of Action and Reflection

The classic action research process is often described as 'a plan, act, reflect' sequence: I may prepare for an engagement, planning how I want to proceed, paying attention as I am immersed in the encounter, reflecting in the moment and afterwards on my experience and then planning some more for the next encounter, based on the results of my effort.

The cycle of action and reflection is rarely this neat, and many action researchers have written about

the somewhat unexpected tendency of their inquiry to develop a life of its own. What the researcher had assumed was figural becomes peripheral, and what was not even on the radar yesterday has become utterly figural today. Nor does the notion of 'cycles' do justice to many researchers' sense of a developing depth in their inquiries. Hence, they talk of experiencing their research as evolving in a spiral, an image that also allows for the sense of sometimes honing in, going deeper, and at other times zooming out, coming up for perspective. Whatever the image, this movement back and forth between action and reflection tends to generate its own momentum, often triggering different forms of attention and sparking further experimentation. The process of tracking this movement is a key aspect of living life as inquiry.

Connecting Theory and Practice

Whilst action researchers may have a different emphasis or way of framing their work, there is broad agreement about an overarching purpose centring on the flourishing of life, human persons, communities and the wider ecologies of which we are part. Action researchers are not alone in these aspirations. One important outer arc of attention consists of reaching out to those fellow travellers and engaging with their inquiries. For the longest of times, published writing—books, articles in academic and practitioner journals—was the main avenue to share knowledge. Increasingly, there are other, web-based avenues available for that purpose. It behoves researchers to engage with others' contribution to knowledge as a source of challenge or support to their thinking and their practice. At the same time, they can make their own contribution by critically questioning others' thinking from the ground of their own practice. Thus, in an iterative process, they weave practical and theoretical strands as they deepen their understanding and develop their practice.

When they do this cycling, deepening and interweaving well, the process becomes more of an attitude, a way of life, than a contained process: hence the aptness of the term *living life as inquiry*. The following incident in the life of an action researcher illustrates these qualities of curiosity, inquiry and reflexivity as they are embodied and manifested in even seemingly mundane aspects of daily practice:

I decide to take a taxi to my client meeting. The initial pleasure of avoiding a packed underground train quickly dissipates as the driver becomes increasingly irate with the heavy traffic and, at the top of her voice, starts a running commentary on other drivers, cyclists, traffic lights and the state of the world. I had hoped for some quiet thinking time, and I only just manage to contain my irritation. I pay attention to my inner

dialogue and realize with some embarrassment that I am in the process of forming some fast judgements of this young driver (e.g. impatient, inexperienced, lacking in social skills). As I interrupt my stream of thoughts, I become curious about this person, her distress, her choice of job and her circumstances. Rather than sit in silent but brooding judgement, I strike up a conversation with her. No, she really doesn't like her work, she doesn't actually like driving and she hates rush hour traffic, but it's her only way to provide for her two children and work around their school hours. Once they're big enough, she'll go back to university; she wants to study international business, so she's learning French at night. It's tough. Thoroughly cured of my prejudgements, I am glad I asked, and when I get out of the taxi, she smiles when she says, 'Have a nice day'.

Light and Dark

However much discipline it may require, living life as inquiry need not be a chore. It can be compelling and joyful. Being curious about mundane, scary or downright boring activities can bring a playful quality to them that can make them fun and interesting. And yet it is important to acknowledge the potential shadow sides of seeking to live life as an ongoing inquiry process. It can be quite unsettling. The introspection it involves can swamp individuals, and they can become too self-absorbed, unable simultaneously to move outwards. Moreover, recognizing multiple perspectives and engaging in framing and reframing can leave them discombobulated, as their taken-for-granted frames, which used to anchor them, no longer provide a safe hold. As one person, 3 months into an action research endeavour, put it, 'I find myself utterly disconcerted about the fact that everything I have taken for granted about my practice for all those years, now seems to be up for grabs'.

Living life as inquiry is rewarding and demanding, enlightening and unsettling and utterly worthwhile. As Socrates said, 'The unexamined life is not worth living'.

Kathleen J. L. King

See also cycles of action and reflection; extended epistemology; first person action research; mindful inquiry; second person action research; social constructionism; third person action research

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LIVING THEORIES

Living theories is a term coined by the educational action researcher Jack Whitehead to describe contributions to action research emerging from enquiries of the kind 'How do I improve what I am doing?' in the context of a professional working life in education, most particularly between 1967 and 2012. Perhaps the most significant contribution is in the original idea that individual action researchers can create their own living educational theories as explanations for their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which they live and work.

The idea of living educational theory was developed from a question asked by the logician Eward Ilyenkov: If an object exists as a living contradiction, what must the thought (statement about the object) be that expresses it? This question emerged from a 2,500-year-old battle between propositional and dialectical thinkers. Using Aristotelean logic, propositional thinkers eliminate contradictions between statements in 'correct thought', through a process that conceals as much, or indeed more, than it reveals. This entry focuses on the origins and development of a living theories approach to educational action research, originating in the work of Whitehead and colleagues at the University of Bath but spreading far and wide in more recent times. The reach and influence of living theories in various contexts worldwide is exemplified.

The recognition of existing as a living contradiction came to Whitehead in 1972, on viewing videotapes of his own classroom practice at a comprehensive school in London. While he believed that he had established

inquiry-based learning with his students, in which he responded to the questions they asked, the videotapes actually showed that he was giving students the questions rather than enabling them to formulate their own. This was an embarrassing revelation and an example of the power and value of visual data on one's own practice to reveal one's existence as a living contradiction.

Further perceived contradictions within the field of educational theory contributed to the development of the living theories approaches to action research. In particular, the validity of the disciplines approach to educational theory, which holds that educational theory is constituted by the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education, is questionable. A number of educational theorists, including Paul Hirst, one of the proponents of the disciplines approach, along with Richard Peters and other philosophers of education, acknowledged that the weakness of the disciplines approach was its focus on the replacement and displacement of the practical principles which teacher-practitioners could use in explaining their educational influence on their own learning and on the learning of their pupils. Hirst acknowledged this error when he wrote that such practical principles were regarded in the disciplines approach as at best pragmatic maxims, representing an initial crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical justification. Having articulated this weakness, he sought to rectify it with the suggestion that rationally defensible principles must in essence stand up to such practical tests and are necessarily inadequate without this.

The living theories approach to educational action research emerged from endeavours to rectify the weaknesses and blind spots of the disciplines approach and to contribute to the creation of a valid approach to educational theory. Whitehead's involvement in the mid-1970s in an early school council local curriculum development project led to the production of two evaluation reports. The first explained the project in terms of contemporary models of changes in teaching and learning and models of curriculum innovation and was praised by academic colleagues. However, the teachers involved criticized the report on the grounds that they could not see themselves in it. Returning to the data provided by videotaped conversations with pupils and teachers, they reconstructed the report into a form that the teachers agreed was a valid explanation of the project. This had the form of expressing concerns and problems; imagining ways forward; acting on a chosen action plan and gathering data on which to make a judgement on the effectiveness of the actions; evaluating the effectiveness of the actions; modifying the concerns, plans and actions in the light of the evaluations

and producing a validated explanation of the teachers' and researchers' own learning as they worked collaboratively to help the pupils improve their learning.

This experience culminated in a refined, explicit understanding of (a) the place of action-reflection cycles in improving one's practice and (b) the role of the individual, the inclusion of 'I', as a living contradiction, as one whose enacted values and actual behaviours are not always in line with those one espoused. From this, Whitehead originated the idea of individuals capable of generating their own educational theory as an explanation of their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations.

The focus thereafter was on supporting practitioner-researchers to generate their own living educational theories, most notably through their engagement in postgraduate study. The fruits of these endeavours are evident in a significant number of M.Ed., M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees awarded by the University of Bath in the period from the mid-1980s onwards, in which practitioner-researchers sought to develop and embody their own living theories. Between 1996 and 2012, some 32 living theory doctoral theses were successfully completed, and these can be accessed from the living theory section of <http://www.actionresearch.net>.

The most significant transformation in the nature of the living theories produced between 1996 and 2012 has been in the use of multimedia narratives with digital video. Until 2004, the regulations of the University of Bath for the submission of research degrees did not explicitly permit the submission of e-media. The regulations were changed in 2004 to permit such submissions, and Mary Hartog's thesis (see above web link) was the first to be submitted with e-media. This change of regulation permitting the submission of e-media occurred at the same time as an extension and transformation in epistemologies for the educational action researchers involved in postgraduate supervision and study at the University of Bath's Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice. This epistemological extension and transformation involved—through the influence of Alan Rayner, a colleague at the University of Bath—a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries within explanations of educational influence. Whilst insights from propositional and dialectical researchers continue to be valued, a living theories approach increasingly encourages the creation of living educational theories that are informed by an inclusional awareness of space and boundaries. Videoclips that show oneself in an educational space with others are particularly valuable in developing such a dynamic awareness. The awareness of natural inclusionality does not deny the existence of oneself as a living contradiction, nor does it deny the value of

insights from propositional theories. Instead, it overcomes some of the limitations in propositional and dialectical theories, especially in so far as it communicates the embodied expressions of energy-flowing values within educational influences in learning.

The growing influence of the living theories produced by action researchers can be seen in many different contexts throughout the world. In China, with the support of Dean Tian Fenjun and Professor Moira Laidlaw, the Chinese government agreed to the establishment of the Experimental Centre for Educational Action Research in Foreign Languages Teaching at Ningxia Teachers' University. In Japan, Je Kan Adler-Collins successfully completed his doctoral inquiry into bringing a curriculum for the healing nurse into a Japanese University through action research and living theory. In Canada, Dr Jacqueline Delong is continuing with her postdoctoral enquiries and in supervising action research dissertations whilst responding to moves to support scholarly enquiries beyond written text in journals such as *Teacher and Teacher Education*. In South Africa, the Transformative Educational Studies project, funded from 2011 to 2014 by the National Research Foundation of South Africa, has the overarching research question 'How do I transform my educational practice?' A number of living theories of South African educational action researchers have been successfully completed as dissertations for higher degrees, and some have been published under the guidance of Professor Lesley Wood.

In terms of the contributions of living theories to transforming understandings of educational knowledge and theory, the first issue of the multimedia journal *Educational Journal of Living Theories* was published in 2008. This journal is dedicated to the publication of living educational theories with action research. The 2011 special issue 'Digital Creativity and Video in the Workplace', edited by Yvonne Crotty, highlights the advances made in the use of multimedia narratives in the creation and publication of living educational theories with action research at Dublin City University in Ireland. The Collaborative Action Research Network Study Day in the Centre of e-Innovation, Pedagogy and Workplace Learning at Dublin City University, in October 2012, focused on 'Multimedia Forms of Representation in Living Educational Theories in Relation to Improving Practice'.

At the time of writing this entry, the latest living theory doctorates with action research to be successfully completed are those of Marie Huxtable, Yvonne Crotty, Keith Kinsella and Mark Potts. At the heart of a living educational theory is individuals' responsibility for accounting for their influence in terms of the values they believe carry hope for the future of humanity. Potts has analyzed his learning in the exercise of his responsibility in terms of the value of living citizenship

within educational contexts in schools in the UK and in South Africa. Huxtable has accounted for her learning in living as fully as possible her values of loving recognition, respectful connectedness, educational responsibility, inclusion, emancipation and equality. Kinsella has accounted for his learning in presencing developmental opportunities for his students and in presencing empathetic responsiveness in relation to their learning. Crotty has brought an educationally entrepreneurial spirit into the academy as a living standard of judgement. Her explanation includes a responsibility for students and her values of passion, care, safety, creativity and excellence within her practice.

By accepting responsibility for accounting for their own lives and learning in enquiries of the kind 'How do I improve what I am doing?', living theory action researchers continue to make original contributions to knowledge whilst providing evidence that they are fulfilling both halves of the mission of the American Educational Research Association. This mission is to advance knowledge about education and to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education and, simultaneously, to improve practice and serve the public good.

Each of these living theories is unique in the sense that the contributions to knowledge are formed from the unique constellation of values and understandings that have emerged from each autobiography in enquiries of the kind 'How do I improve what I am doing?' Their relatability, rather than generalizability, can be seen in the evidence that the living theories of action researchers are inspiring others around the world to create and share their own living theories, in a pooling of the life-affirming energy with values that carry hope for the future of humanity.

Jack Whitehead

See also adult education; autobiography; Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice; classroom-based action research; critical pedagogy; educational action research; extended epistemology

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LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE

The literal meaning of self-governance is governing oneself rather than being governed by others. Local self-governance thus connotes a process of collective discussions, collaborative learning and collaborative actions by the local community and its leadership on the basis of their collective knowledge. Here, citizens are not just subjects but also the actors and the decision-makers. The process of local self-governance includes interesting examples of action research approaches and methods.

Historically, many communities and societies have had experiences of practicing self-governance. Ancient literatures from India, China, Japan, Australia, northern America and Europe mention different forms of local self-governments. From Plato to Gandhi, many philosophers have eloquently explained the concepts in governance and local self-governance at different periods of time in history. Historical Indian literatures mention that local self-governments were popular in different republics in India around 600 BC. Gandhi, in fact, saw self-government of the village community, called the *panchayat*, as the basis of Indian democracy. Barangays in Philippines and communes in Italy are two examples of modern forms of local self-governments.

Local Self-Governance and Action Research

The case of local self-governments in India demonstrates how the principles and practices of action research are applied to local self-governance. The term *Panchayati Raj*, local self-government in rural India, refers to a system of governance which includes a *gram sabha*, an elected panchayat and support officials. A *gram sabha*, or a village council, is a permanent constitutional body comprising all the adult residents of a village. All members of the *gram sabha* have equal opportunities and rights to interact, identify and discuss the problems and together find out solutions. The *gram sabha* promotes collaborations and co-operation among actors for inquiry, knowledge and action. The *gram sabha* elects the body called the village panchayat, which is the elected executive. Village panchayats (or simply panchayats) are constitutional local governments mandated to work for economic development and social justice in their villages. In doing so, the elected panchayat seeks guidance and support from the *gram sabha* in identification and prioritization of problems, mapping of possible resources and planning for future collaborative actions to achieve agreed solutions for the collaboratively prioritized problems in economic and social development of the village. The whole process provides a good example of an action research process or interactive inquiry process that balances problem-solving actions implemented in a collaborative context with data-driven collaborative analysis of underlying causes and realistically possible solutions.

While the concept of local self-government is as old as the history of humanity, it did evolve slowly till very recently. As most countries experiment with democratization and decentralization in terms of planning, decision-making and public service delivery, new forms of local self-governments are emerging across the world. But despite varying forms and mandates, local self-governments more or less promote the practices of action research in their governance and development approaches.

Differences Between Local Self-Governance and a Democratically Decentralized Government

Local self-government in modern literatures is sometimes treated as synonymous with the *democratically decentralized* government, but the two are in fact different, though related, concepts. Since the type of governance is closely associated with a form of government in all political literatures, local self-governance is often identified with the structures and systems of government at the local level. The very notion of

local self-governance, many thinkers and practitioners believe, logically accepts the existence of government at non-local (central or provincial) levels. So the existence of modern local self-government is in relation to its counterpart at the central and province levels: the central government and provincial governments.

Decentralization of government may lead to the formation of local government, but the governance there may not necessarily be self-governance. However, *democratic decentralization* of government provides greater opportunities for self-governance. So the word *self* in the term *local self-governance* seems to be emphasizing the democratic form of decentralized governance. Thus, the concept of democracy is integrated with the concept of local self-governance in current contexts. So, wherever used, the word *decentralization* often refers to democratic decentralization—not any other form of decentralization.

It is interesting to note that two polar concepts—globalization and democratic decentralization—are being experienced and experimented with in the world at the same time. While globalization connotes a sort of centralized global order, democratic decentralization in many countries connotes the establishment and practice of local self-governance. Many African, Asia-Pacific, American and European countries initiated the process of decentralization to provide their citizens ample opportunities to participate in the governance process at the local level by establishing legal local governments. Accordingly, different countries introduced legal structures and systems of local governments by legislatively incorporating the local self-government acts. European Charter of Local Self Government, for example, was adopted in 1985 by Congress of Council of Europe. The charter asked all member states to guarantee political, administrative and financial independence to their local self-governments on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity. Similarly, Local Self-Governance (or Government) Acts have been enacted in many countries across the continents since the early nineties. These acts or orders help evolve and strengthen decentralized governance at the local level.

Many authors have typified local governments in different types on the basis of the relatively recent experiences of different countries in decentralization.

As the terms *local self-governance* and *decentralization* have become almost synonymous in modern political practices, it is important to understand the concept of decentralization. Though different countries have different experiences in decentralization, decentralization across the world quite often refers to the transfer of powers from a central government to lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy.

Local self-governments in most countries are an outcome of democratic decentralization. The levels of politico-administrative decentralization of powers and authorities from their central governments to these local governments differ from country to country. One can accordingly observe varying strands, methods and processes of action research in different local self-governments.

Manoj Rai

See also collaborative action research; community-based research; empowerment; Jipemoyo project

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M

MĀORI EPISTEMOLOGY

The people of Aotearoa/New Zealand live in a group of islands located in the remote South-West Pacific. The indigenous Māori migrated from Polynesia and settled there about 1000 AD. European contact began in 1642, with a rapid increase in migration in the early years of the nineteenth century. In 1840, a treaty, *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (The Treaty of Waitangi), was signed between Māori and the British government, establishing Aotearoa/New Zealand as a British colony. It is now an independent country with a democratic government and a capitalist economy. Māori constitute a substantial minority population, while *Pākehā* (the term now used for descendants of European migrants) are the majority. There are also other migrant groups, including substantial numbers from the Pacific islands, Asia and India. English and Māori are the principal languages of the country, with English being the lingua franca. The treaty guaranteed certain rights to Māori but, despite this, Māori suffered grievously from the process and impact of colonization. Adversities included disease, warfare, alienation, confiscation of their land, loss of their language and disruption of their culture. Among the many legacies of this today are relative poverty, educational underachievement and physical and mental health problems. From the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, the treaty was extensively dishonoured, but since 1975, legislation has increasingly enshrined the treaty in modern national law, established a tribunal to adjudicate on claims by Māori against the government for treaty breaches and marked the ushering in of a 'bicultural' perspective that now infuses all national life, although to varying degrees depending on place and context. Although still argued about, two central principles of this bicultural perspective are those of 'partnership' (between the government and Māori) and *rangatiratanga* ('authority over one's own

things', 'self-determination'). It is from this sense of there being two equal treaty partners that the 'bi' in 'bicultural' comes. Arguably, the treaty has enabled two cultures—Māori and Pākehā—with distinctive histories the opportunity to embrace mutual understanding and power sharing and to provide a functional framework for culturally inclusive epistemologies.

Traditional Māori society, not unlike other indigenous societies, values high-level thinking and analytical skills, exemplified in compellingly clear understandings of cosmology, geography and technology. For Māori and other indigenous groups, these skills might be exemplified in quite different ways. For example, the Māori practice of producing resources made from flax requires a precise knowledge of the physical properties of raw materials, their source, the details regarding *tikanga* ('customary practices') surrounding the collection and processing, their sustainability and so on.

A second example shows that as a result of successive generations of purposeful voyaging across the oceans, an extensive knowledge of navigation was accurately acquired. Such knowledge was acquired through active participation within culturally responsive and authentic learning contexts. As is the case with other indigenous groups, Māori had to systematically research, trial and experiment with the qualities, properties and habits of birds, plants and other natural resources. Their scientific endeavours were recorded and transmitted through song, symbol, story, dance and everyday practices.

It is clear, however, that the scientific endeavours and knowledge of Māori and other indigenous people, as well as their ways of transmitting this knowledge, are seldom evidenced in the curriculum and the pedagogical practices imposed on them from 'outside' systems. These anomalies continue to be perpetuated in education by way of successive policies of assimilation, integration, multiculturalism and biculturalism. During the past 25 years, however, there has been

considerable indigenization of the sector, whereby cultural epistemology is a salient rather than an obscure phenomenon. There has been a revitalization of the Māori language, indigenous schools are on the rise and greater numbers of Māori scholars are completing doctoral qualifications in either mainstream or indigenous universities. What began as a cathartic and liberating epistemological revolution might now be described as an embedded and rightful entitlement. Māori epistemology is ubiquitous. The impact on the field of action research is growing, led by indigenous scholars in places like Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Action Research Based Upon Māori Epistemology

Given the assertions that indigenous groups have always had their own distinctive epistemologies, and that these were often given minimal credence by the dominant group, there is an argument that it would seem to reposition the emphases. If alienation from the land and the language negatively affects one's cultural identity, then there has to be a constructive repositioning to attain proximity to the land and the language. If the struggle to retain identity while battling to participate in the wider society presents challenges, then the repositioning has to be around reclaiming a strong identity and enabling a voice in the wider society.

A recent (2012–14) action research study in Aotearoa/New Zealand is looking to enhance the ways education communities respond to issues of inequity. The study seeks to describe indicators of the educational success of young Māori students identified as high achievers by their peers, teachers and family members. There are strong tribal affiliations in terms of geographical location and by virtue of the fact that participants and researchers are all from the tribe under study. The research activities have been validated by tribal leaders as well as a conventional university. Eight indicators of success form the basis of the investigation: identity, diligence, relationships, creativity, well-being, scholarship, humility and values. *Identity* is about knowing one's world and language. *Diligence* is about the ability to focus on and complete tasks. *Relationship* factors determine the kind of interactions that make for camaraderie at all levels of the community. *Creativity* draws from the deeds of past heroes who were prepared to 'have a go' at things. *Well-being* considers the focus on a healthy body, mind and spirit. *Scholarship* looks at an emphasis on valuing education in all its forms—traditional and contemporary. *Humility* measures an appreciation of service to others and putting the needs of others ahead of the self, as well as ways to deal with criticism. *Values* refer to the core ideals from indigenous cultures based on a kinship

with nature, caring and spirituality. The lenses through which these eight qualities are defined are located from within indigenous epistemologies.

A Braided River Discourse

One of the advantages that the concept of discourse affords is a view of the relationship between competing discourses. While there are a range of discourses specific to knowledge and epistemology, they are seldom competing on a level playing field. Conventional discourse refers to those epistemological ideas that are perceived to have a privileged or superior orientation. Indigenous discourse refutes this stance. It is timely to consider a braided river discourse (or framework), where a convergence of both streams of epistemology is likely to be more powerful than either one on its own.

In an effort to explore both the structural and the symbolic forces at work in culturally inclusive action research, it is important to acknowledge the relationship between scientific and indigenous typologies. The braided river framework proposes that culture is materially, socially and ideologically constructed and embedded in the lives we live. It is not a stand-alone framework that can simply be applied regardless of context. It is a framework that is cognisant of particular trials and tribulations, is insistent on the specificity of the community ties, is mindful of the availability or lack thereof of resources and is intent on wishing to enable rather than subvert the potential of a blending of streams of consciousness in the planning and design of action research.

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See also Hawaiian epistemology; indigenist research; indigenous research ethics and practice; indigenous research methods

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MAP-MAKING

Map-making is a voluntary representation, from Latin *re-* ('again') and *praesens* ('make present', 'visible', 'understandable'), aimed at bringing to attention again 'things' that are past and/or far away. Compared with other forms of representation, map-making aims at representing how things are related to each other within a certain 'space' that can be abstract (conceptual maps, mathematical maps, etc.) or can refer to physical reality. The most common type of map is the geographical one: a *graphic* representation, at various scales, of a certain portion of *gea* ('earth' in ancient Greek), such as a block, a neighbourhood, a city, a region, a river basin, a continent and so on. Maps can be made by one person or can be the collective product of many individuals who agree upon a set of representational conventions (what has to be represented and how). Maps can be sculptured on stones or sketched on papers. Today, map-making is increasingly going digital via specific vectorial drawing software or, more often, via software packages classified as geographic information systems (GIS), which emerged in the sixties from the merging of cartography, statistical analysis and database technology. This entry discusses different approaches to map-making, characterized by different assumptions and goals, with the aim of identifying the important role that map-making can play within an action research process.

Euclidian, Phenomenological and Relational Maps

Two major paradigms can be identified in the history of map-making that are still very much present today. The *Euclidian-Newtonian paradigm*, which sees maps as objective representations of the past, present or future geographical spaces, has been developed by expert map-makers and has converged into the development of the GIS technology. Almost all map experts and GIS technicians would agree with the unavoidable truth that 'the map is not the territory'; however, in pronouncing this famous line, the Polish American scientist and philosopher Alfred Korzybski wanted to warn his audience that many do confuse representation with reality. GIS, with its ability to store and overlap a theoretically infinite amount of data, has in many ways reinforced the idea of the possibility of objective representation and even the hope that the map can be objectively enriched ad libitum until it borders reality.

A parallel *phenomenological* tradition sees maps as *subjective* representations of physical *relative* spaces. Within this perspective, 'facts' or 'data' are not self-selective or self-validating; map-makers choose what to

map and why depending on their goals, value systems, cultural background and so on. This tradition has mostly developed outside scientific disciplines and is very much embedded in the way 'non-expert map-makers' deal with maps. However, beginning in the twentieth century, researchers have explored the subjective meaning of maps, drawing from continental phenomenology to study the relationship between people and places. Within this perspective, the concept of 'place' is often used in lieu of 'space' to indicate a geographic extension with a *genius locus*, acknowledging the interconnection between its physical and non-physical (emotional, symbolic, cultural, etc.) dimensions.

For centuries, *Euclidian* and *place-oriented* map-makers have had very little in common and also very little exchange. However, recent theoretical shifts, postmodernism in the philosophical realm and complexity theory in the scientific debate, together with the 'cultural' and popular diffusion of web-based GIS technologies, are pushing towards a convergence of the two traditions, deepening researchers' understanding of the transformative power of every map. In his 1970 memorial lecture on Korzybski, Gregory Bateson addressed the question 'What is it in the territory that gets onto the map?'. He noticed that, no matter how objective one tries to be, what gets onto the map are not 'objects' but the 'differences between objects'. Those differences (what Bateson calls information) have also the capacity of connecting the map-maker's mind (which could be intended as either an individual or a collective 'mind', indicating a social 'system') with the mapped outside. The information, going back and forth, modifies both the map-maker and the surrounding environment. In other words, map-making can affect both the mapping subject and the mapped space.

Map-Making and Action Research

From a Foucauldian perspective (i.e. 'power is knowledge', power affects the way knowledge is shaped), maps are shaped by powers to influence the way the world is perceived and, consequently, how it is changed or managed. For centuries, 'official' thematic maps have been used in support of powerful political visions and of top-down decision-making: Maps of 'blighted areas' are, for instance, used by policymakers all around the world to justify programmes for forced relocation of powerless communities in order to allow profitable urban redevelopments just like maps of 'environmental hazards' are used to justify programmes for deep alteration of natural topography and ecosystems.

Vice versa, from an emancipatory perspective (knowledge is power), map-making can 'make the invisible visible'. This is not just because 'new things appear in a new map' and can communicate to the

outside a 'different message'. The empowering effect is mostly connected to the process of map-making: A mapper can learn to see things in a different way and feel empowered to act in order to change them (as confirmed by the frequent therapeutic use of map-making by psychologists). This is even more true when map-making is carried out as a collaborative endeavour (e.g. community mapping, participatory mapping, community-based mapping, etc.): The act of locating and sizing issues and hopes on a map implies a process of value sharing among individuals that then can strengthen their sense of community and/or their awareness of the interdependence between humans, other living species and natural resources (e.g. bioregional maps). In an action research perspective, map-making can help individuals become a 'political collective subject', who are then more likely to rise and stand behind political initiatives and processes of social change while acquiring the critical technical knowledge that might allow them to self-manage the change.

Laura Saija

See also asset mapping; cognitive mapping; community mapping; concept mapping; Digital Storytelling; geographic information systems

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MARINO, DIAN

'Be passionately aware that you could be completely wrong'—a favourite saying of the educator, scholar and artist dian marino (b. 1941), if an odd sentiment for a scholar. But marino was a unique scholar who combined her teaching, research, theorizing and art practice in a seamless, if often messy, praxis. Her playful approach to this praxis (hinted at by her choice of

using lower-case letters for the initial letters of her name and surname—inspired by a love of e. e. cummings' poetry) was one deeply informed by her understanding of the ways in which power and hegemony structured and regulated the regimes of knowledge making in which she found herself participating. Her practical and theoretical contributions to fields of environmental and popular education, participatory research and community art have inspired generations of students and activists—first, over the 30-plus years of her own teaching (the last 10 years of which were based at York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies in Toronto, Ontario, Canada) and then in the 20 years since her untimely death in 1993 (after living with cancer for many years). Her influence was also spread around the world through her participation in the international adult education community from Finland (teaching factory workers) to Indonesia (working with people who lived in slums and scavenged for a living), to inner-city Toronto (working in literacy with immigrant women) and more.

Born and raised as dian coblentz in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she reflected on her formation as artist and educator, acknowledging that having a mother who was university educated and a father who was not left her feeling not wholly of the working class and with her sense of herself as not like everyone else, and ill at ease as a result.

This feeling of being 'ill at ease' reveals a critical and self-reflexive consciousness that marino applied equally to herself as educator and artist and to the world at large in which she participated—often as a disruptive force both at the level of both playful resistance to and dissident theorizing of dominant/hegemonic power. marino's capacity to critique the ways in which dominant notions were trained into people, while informed strongly by her understanding of the concept of hegemony as developed by the Italian Marxist and journalist Antonio Gramsci, is one that she developed by first applying these theories to her understanding of herself. For example, one of the questions she urged her students to ask was 'Where did I learn that (attitude, behaviour, idea), and whose interests are served by this?', marino applied this thinking to her understanding of her own formation as an artist. She remembered that as a young girl, she gave her brother a birthday present of a large sheet of white drawing paper—something that was of great value for her and that she naturally thought would be deeply appreciated as a gift. But when her brother used the gift by drawing nothing but a small spider hanging in the upper-left corner of the paper, marino was incensed. Her initial impulse of indignation that a page that could be a canvas to abundant drawing (which is what she would have done) was used so sparingly was re:framed

(a visual metaphor, of course, and one that is troubled by the insertion of the colon, which is a punctuational politics) in later life with her lenses of artist and counter-hegemonic theorist as an act of brilliance—her brother, regardless of deliberateness, reframing the ‘unused’ white space of the page to lend tremendous power to the austere and singular image of a small spider.

This critical self-reflection, practised throughout her career, from studying at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, California—where she was a student of the famed American artist and teacher Corita Kent—to teaching at a primary school in inner-city Los Angeles, to her work in Toronto and at York, is one that she developed into powerful tools for education and participatory research rooted in an analysis of hegemony. marino understood hegemony as having several aspects, beginning with a complex structure and process of coercion and consent—coercion exercised by a coalition of ruling-class interests to win consent from a population—and including the acceptance of the naturalness of a society structured to benefit the few at the expense of the many, and that, given this common-sense belief that such a structure and process is natural, persuasion by these hegemonic interests is almost always all that is needed to win consent.

marino developed, adapted and applied numerous visual art techniques in her teaching and participatory research. Many of these are documented in her posthumous collection *Wild Garden: Art, Education, and the Culture of Resistance*, which remains a popular resource and teaching tool.

marino’s praxis included theorizing the ‘cracks in consent’ through which a language of resistance could be spoken and enacted. Domination, as she would say, is never 100 per cent. There is always resistance as well as the possibility of expanding that resistance in the interests of people and communities resisting oppression of all forms. A key piece of her praxis was the notion of ‘re:framing’, echoing e. e. cummings, which signifies the tricky and playful aspects of resistance.

Chris Cavanagh

See also arts-based action research; hegemony

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MARTÍN-BARÓ, IGNACIO

To many, Ignacio Martín-Baró was a personal friend, a colleague, a mentor, a peer and lots of fun. Perhaps,

in large part, because he was a Jesuit priest as well as a social psychologist at the time of his murder, he has been described by many as a martyr. He has also been acknowledged by the psychological establishment—some of whom shunned him and his work when he was alive—as the ‘father’ or ‘founder’ of liberation psychology. Yet the danger of putting someone on a pedestal, honouring him for his life and work, is that one loses sight of the ‘human side’—and, even more important, of the challenges his life and how he was killed—present to those who survive him. This biographical sketch seeks to reflect on his legacy for the critical praxis of psychology and action research today.

Ignacio—or Nacho to many of his friends and colleagues—the fourth of six children born to Francisco J. Martín Abril and Alicia Baró, was born on 7 November 1942, in Valladolid in northwestern Spain. He entered the religious order of the Society of Jesus on 28 September 1959, having completed his high school education at the Colegio San Jose in Valladolid. In addition to excelling at his studies, his talents as a magician were often sought to entertain local children. His ‘lighter side’ would be noted by Salvadoran peasants and psychologists alike who recognized and celebrated his humour, his guitar and his voice; he was the life of many late-night and weekend gatherings in El Salvador and beyond.

Martín-Baró completed his early training as a member of the Society of Jesus in El Salvador and then studied philosophy in Bogota, Colombia, and theology in Belgium before completing a psychology degree at the University of Central America, José Simeón Cañas in San Salvador in 1975 followed by a master’s and doctorate in social and organizational psychology in 1979 at the University of Chicago.

He then returned to the University of Central America in San Salvador, where he taught and did research while also holding various administrative posts, including Dean of Students, chair of the Psychology Department and Vice Rector for Academic Affairs. He also served on a variety of administrative committees and boards within the university, was the founder and director of the University Institute of Public Opinion (known by its Spanish acronym, IUDOP) and was an editor of the university’s publishing press. Beyond El Salvador, he served on the editorial board of a number of professional journals and was a member of the American Psychological Association and the Interamerican Society of Psychology, where he served a term as vice president for Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America. In addition to his academic work, Martín-Baró served as a weekend pastor to several small villages, including that of Jayaque.

Martín-Baró adopted Salvadoran citizenship and lived and worked among the Salvadoran people from 1966 until his death, accompanying them in their

struggle for self-determination. In addition to his critical analyses of Euro-American psychology, he passionately challenged US psychologists to analyze their government's role in El Salvador, writing and speaking about US economic and military aid to the Salvadoran government's war against its own people and emphasizing the importance of dialogue between the government and the guerrillas towards a negotiated settlement to this ongoing armed conflict. He spoke within and beyond El Salvador of the importance of economic justice and of the need for structural changes within his adopted country.

On 16 November 1989, Martín-Baró, five of his Jesuit colleagues, their housekeeper and her child were brutally assassinated by the US-trained Salvadoran Atlacatl Battalion, an elite unit of the Salvadoran Army. They were 8 of the more than 75,000 people murdered—and countless others who 'disappeared' or were displaced—between 1979 and 1992, the years of El Salvador's bloody armed conflict. A United Nations Truth Commission estimated that the right-wing, military-led government committed approximately 85 per cent of these gross violations of human rights, while left-leaning guerrilla groups (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front), including farmers, teachers, former priests, women and union activists, were responsible for about 5 per cent of them, with responsibility for the remaining 10 per cent unable to be determined. The US government sent approximately \$6 billion to this tiny Central American country during the course of this civil war, making El Salvador second only to Israel as the highest recipient of US aid during that period.

Author and Advocate

Martín-Baró was a prolific public speaker, editor and author, publishing close to a dozen books and over 100 articles and book chapters. Most of his work is available only in his native Spanish, with the exception of the excellent volume edited by Adrienne Aron and Shawn Corne, *Ignacio Martín-Baró: Writings for a Liberation Psychology* (and published in 1994 by Harvard University Press), which includes 12 of his articles translated into English. Among his most widely known and used books are two college texts on social psychology whose English-language titles are *Action and Ideology* (1983) and *System, Group, and Power* (1989). In these texts, Martín-Baró critically engaged US and European social psychology, describing parameters for a psychology based on the Salvadoran majority's experiences and understandings. Rather than apply theories derived from the North, he sought to subvert this thinking, arguing that it failed to explain or respond to the lived experiences of the majority world. Despite these important contributions, which are frequently interpreted as part of

his effort to 'liberate psychology', he was not focused solely or even primarily on critique but rather on developing a praxis, that is, a set of reflexive action-reflection processes, which would contribute to a more just and equitable El Salvador.

The survey was one professional resource with which Martín-Baró was familiar. He sought to subvert the institutional lies propagated by the Salvadoran and US governments by documenting Salvadorans' opinions 'from the bottom up'. Themes incorporated in the surveys he designed ranged from health and housing to the highly charged problems of democracy, structural economic inequalities, war and peace. To sustain and institutionalize this work, he developed the independent public opinion polling organization, University Institute of Public Opinion, an effort all the more extraordinary given the prevailing political-military conditions in El Salvador in 1986. Concerned about the abuses of surveys by governments and some commercial enterprises, he forged ties with colleagues in the region to form the Central American Program of Public Opinion, developing a professional ethical code for the conduct of survey research in Central America.

Martín-Baró's work as a surveyor of public opinion, that is, of the people's rendering of their own experiences, was central to his struggle to know, to speak about and to preserve reality as experienced by the Salvadoran people. He noted that one of the objectives of psychological warfare was to systematically attack survivors' ability to distinguish what is true from what is not true, their own account of their lived experiences from the government and economic elite's 'official story'. Profoundly abnormal experiences such as 'disappearances' had become everyday occurrences, experienced by the majority of Salvadorans but denied by those in power. Ignacio coined the phrase *normal abnormality* to describe the polarized realities of everyday life, wherein murders, disappearances, extreme poverty, rape and so on were either openly denied by the government and the media or enshrouded in an institutionalized lie redefining them as, for example, part of a 'process of democratization'. In public talks and personal interviews within and beyond El Salvador, Martín-Baró countered this dominant discourse, arguing that the evidence he was gathering through his survey research and his own lived experiences—including having survived multiple death squad attacks—confirmed that El Salvador was indeed a country at war—a war supported by US tax dollars. Further, Martín-Baró asserted the importance of understanding the root causes as well as the effects of war on the people of El Salvador within their historical and social contexts. He challenged a growing tendency among psychologists working with a growing number of war veterans and civilian survivors to reduce war's psychological effects

to individual pathology or stress, that is, post-traumatic stress. Without negating the particular ways in which war marked individual lives, he focused psychology's attention on human sociality, describing the deterioration and rupture of social relationships during armed conflict and war's erosion of our collective capacity to tell the social history of a people. He described war as generative of 'psychosocial trauma', a construction which he was among the first to use in characterizing war's psychological and sociological effects.

Shortly before his assassination, Martín-Baró had turned his attention to the children and youth of El Salvador, particularly to those hundreds of thousands who had been directly affected by the war during the previous 9 years. He wrote that the polarization of El Salvador's ongoing conflict was socializing the next generation into adopting violence as the only possible response to disagreements or conflicts, constraining youth's life choices to opting for one of two opposing militarized forces, that is, the Salvadoran military or the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front). As he analyzed these realities, Ignacio also secured funds to open a clinic to work with children and their families and initiated a four-country action research project, which sought both to understand more fully the impact of the war on Salvadoran and Guatemalan children and youth in Chile and Argentina and to develop specific psychosocial resources that drew on the creative arts for accompanying children and their families in zones of armed conflict and under dictatorships.

One Among Many: A Challenge for Twenty-First-Century Psychology

Many have sought to extend the work cut short by Martín-Baró's murder. There are innumerable institutes and courses of liberation psychology within Latin American universities and a biannual meeting of liberation social psychologists who also host a large listserv. There is a growing interest in his work in the English-speaking world, facilitated by the writing and applied work of the feminist psychologists Simone Linderfor (Germany), Geraldine Moane (Ireland) and Michele Fine and Mary Watkins (USA), among others, and by the work of Mark Burton (UK) and the English-language network www.libpsy.org. A small group of Martín-Baró's colleagues formed the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights (www.martinbarofund.org) to further the goals to which he dedicated his life. Small grants support progressive, grass-roots groups throughout the world who are challenging institutional repression and confronting the psychosocial consequences of gross violations of human rights and other structural injustices and inequalities in their communities.

During his 9 years as a psychologist, university professor and administrator and parish priest in El Salvador, Ignacio wrote and spoke regularly about the profound challenges to the practice of psychology in the context of armed conflict. He acknowledged that most Salvadoran psychologists (approximately 700 in 1987) passively supported the government; some, including former students, actively participated in the armed forces, designing and carrying out psychological warfare. He spoke of himself as one among a very small number who challenged the status quo, arguing that such psychologists were forced to seek new models, to find different approaches to their work. His life and death challenge all psychologists to be among those with whom he numbered himself. US-based psychologists working in his wake are challenged to extend the reflexive, action-reflection model he initiated towards (a) de-ideologizing the official stories perpetrated by their governments and economic elites, (b) denouncing the economic chasms separating rich and poor and the hyper-wealthy, (c) undoing institutionalized racism, whereby brown and black bodies are more likely to be deported, incarcerated or killed than to gain entry into higher education and (4) deconstructing the militarization of everyday life, its anti-terrorist rhetoric and the erosion of previously cherished civil liberties. Martín-Baró's legacy challenges researchers to practise a psychology that subverts the established lies of the times through research, teaching and praxis that accompany the majority population as they develop a *people's psychosocial praxis*, that is, a psychology of, with and for the twenty-first century.

M. Brinton Lykes

See also Fals Borda, Orlando; Freire, Paulo; liberation psychology; liberation theology; praxis

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MARXISM

Marxism is a critical theory primarily concerned with how the problems of a capitalist economic system encompass the social relations of the working class. Marxists identify these problems as pervasive and diverse, influencing not only general labour relations and issues regarding the means of production but also a wide variety of environments and interactions. Serving as one of the first critical theories, Marxism is both a theoretical framework and a political movement with substantial applicative possibilities and has become well established in numerous academic disciplines, including history, philosophy, economics, sociology and education. Action research also possesses its own connection to Marxist theory, actualizing many of Marxism's central tenets while transporting it into new methodological directions.

History

Marxism's namesake famously claimed that he was not a Marxist, yet Karl Marx' contributions to the framework are integral, and scholars continually return to his texts in order to uncover new perspectives on a movement that began in the 1840s. Marx' initial foray into theory was largely a philosophical one, typically characterized as a melding of G. W. F. Hegel's dialectics and Ludwig Feuerbach's materialism. The synthesis of these two frameworks generated a cornerstone of Marxism, dialectical materialism, which can be defined as a progressive tendency of the physical world to work through internal contradictions and to achieve a state of maximum efficiency. Marx applied dialectical materialism to history and economics in order to explain how the social and political order came into being, primarily through the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (the worker and the capitalist). Evolving from antiquated feudalism, Marx charted capitalism's development with a keen critical eye, arguing that concentrations of capital would fall into the hands of an elite class who would exploit a

much larger population of workers in order to maximize profits and expand industry throughout the world. While capitalism would deliver an abundance of goods ripe for consumption, its unstable, exploitive nature would also create a series of substantial drawbacks for the worker, including increasing economic inequality, periods of unemployment and alienation from one's labour and fellow workers. For Marx, the most effective way to end this oppressive exploitation was for the working class to take back the means of production through revolution. With public ownership of property and capital, capitalism would be usurped by a communist economic system, allowing for greater economic equality and the possibility for human beings to realize their potential.

After Marx death in 1883, Marxism would fracture into several different strands and factions, each emphasizing different elements of Marx' thought while supplementing it with other theoretical frameworks. Most notably, Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky would employ Marxist theory to power the 1917 Russian Revolution. Appropriating Marxism's revolutionary potential and proletariat-centred philosophy, Leninism and Trotskyism stand as the strongest applications of Marxism on a global scale. Unfortunately, the Soviet Union's transition from capitalism to socialism required a form of governmental dictatorship to act as an intermediary, which instead of passing power to the worker, only became more oppressive. This reality, coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union, stigmatized Marxism for many people, even if Soviet Marxism strayed from many of Marxism's central tenets.

Despite this stigmatization, many theoretical variants of Marxism represented novel representations of Marx' critique. The Frankfurt School theorists worked closely with Marxist theory to forge new critiques of capitalism that ventured outside purely economic realms into those of culture, technology and communication. Other Marxist theorists, like György Lukács, directed Marxist theory inward, writing focused critiques of class consciousness, which relates to Antonio Gramsci's Marxist-inspired theories regarding hegemony. These theorists worked to fill in important gaps in classical Marxism and further explain how capitalism's influence exists not only in the factories, but also in government, the media and the mind of the worker. Finally, Marxism also was profoundly influential in the formulation of postmodern and post-structuralist philosophy. Many of these theorists, like Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard, held close initial ties to Marxism that are still prevalent in their later work. Granted, much of postmodern theory proves somewhat adversarial to Marxism due to its status as a grand meta-narrative overly concerned with notions of class. Nevertheless, theorists such as Frederic Jameson and Slavoj Žižek have employed

Marxism in social, cultural and literary fashions that rival postmodernism. These new formulations of Marxism transport the theory into new directions, ensuring its continued relevance in scholarly discourse.

Characteristics

The critique of capitalism is at the heart of Marxism and holds numerous theoretical implications pertinent to any number of disciplines. From a Marxist economic perspective, capitalism is an unstable system rife with contradictions such as capitalism's lauding of competition while often giving way to monopoly. Another contradiction is that to maximize profits, capitalists must limit workers' wages while having these same workers consume the commodities produced in order for the company to make a profit. Moreover, there is a measure of anarchy inherent in capitalism that compels industry and corporations to grow and produce despite societal conditions that do not allow such growth to be economically feasible, which leads to stagnation, recession and unemployment. Marx' analysis was the product of intensive decades-long research through which he continually refined his theory. The culmination of these efforts is most fully realized in his three-volume, unfinished treatise *Capital*, which many scholars regard as one of the most important analyses of capitalism ever composed. Within this text, the interworking of capitalism is exposed as theories regarding the labour process unfold from numerous vantage points, creating a critical account of how the worker is exploited for the sake of maximizing profit.

The work performed in *Capital* has served as both a uniting force as well as a point of contention for many Marxists. Many Marxists or Marxist-oriented theorists have taken Marx' critique into different directions, modernizing it or applying its theories to other forms of capitalist oppression. Henry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* serves as a powerful example of employing Marxist theory to analyze the labour process, particularly in the field of management, which was only beginning to develop in Marx' time. Within Braverman's work, the gradual process of deskilling reduces workers' autonomy until they are rendered obsolete by the labour system. Other such macrolevel critiques of capitalism, such as those offered by Lenin, link imperialism and war to political and economic acts fixated on expansion, placing roots in new markets and harvesting resources.

As previously mentioned, a critique of capitalism pertains not only to large factories and corporations but also lies within the consciousness of individuals. This is where correlating discussions of ideology, false consciousness and alienation operate as pivotal themes in Marxist thought. Marx wrote about the

nature of ideology as a superstructure that influences the material base of the political economy. Capitalists' interests dictate the ideological character of a population, such as a stalwart belief that by merely working hard, a worker can advance in capitalist society. Such ideology becomes embedded into the worker's mind as false consciousness, a means of inward control that enables capitalists to exploit workers with little coercion. Alienation also operates as a disciplinary mechanism in which workers cannot band together in order to combat this oppression. Separated from the product of labour and from one another, the alienated workers embody the divisive and dehumanizing tendencies of capitalism. Certainly, the individuals often possess a consciousness that is keenly aware of capitalist ideology and employ, through education and collaborative action, means to upset this form of control. However, the degree to which ideology is entrenched into the fabric of contemporary existence hinders revolutionary consciousness and action as the dialectical relations between base and superstructure, the physical world and ideology, inhibit movements that disrupt the mode of social reproduction.

However, despite this weakened position in capitalism, the proletariat acts as the true subject of history and the primary lever of social change. For Marx, history is dominated by class struggle. Capitalism's evolution and dynamic growth come at the continual cost of the proletariat; yet as capitalism grows more unstable and the numbers of the working class increase along with its unrest, the formerly marginalized population will usher in capitalism's demise. Therefore, the working class becomes history's true focus, representing a grand reversal of narratives revolving around the rich and the powerful. The proletariat has power, but must choose to use it. This reality nullifies characterizations of Marxism as overly ridden in economic determinism and dialectical materialism as negligent of people's autonomy. True, Marx afforded substantial emphasis to social structures that often prevent people from realizing their true potential. Nevertheless, the individual and collective choices regarding how people participate within a social or economic system will lie in their own hands.

Ultimately, it is through the proletariat that the Marxist endgame to capitalism unfurls: revolution and communism. These two fundamental characteristics of classical Marxism are often misunderstood primarily due to their application in the 1917 Russian revolution and the rise and fall of communism in the USSR. Undoubtedly, Marx perceived revolution as a possible conveyor to capitalism's end, yet the violence seemingly inherent within the revolutionary process was a secondary and perhaps even unnecessary element. Instead, the crucial aspect to revolution, for Marx, was

that it would represent the ultimate manifestation of proletarian will, and due to the immense power produced when the workers banded together, there would be no other recourse for the oppressive social order but to collapse. Historical portrayals of revolutions emphasize war and bloodshed, and while violence may not have been excluded from Marx' revolutionary framework, Marx also contended that revolutions could occur peacefully supplemented by a series of social reforms.

After revolution, communism would serve as both a new economic and a governmental system, and like revolution, Marx' conception of communism is more complicated than most are led to believe. True, communism shares fundamental elements with the popular conception: public ownership of property and the means of production along with the equal distribution of economic and political power; however, like Marxist revolutions, there is a crucial philosophical undercurrent to communism as both a historical and an ontological process. Communism is as much a historical transformation as it is a political one, representing the abolishment of the old order in favour of one that reflects the will of the people. Communism also represents a system where human beings can truly flourish, for when the fetters of capitalism are removed, individuals from all walks of life can pursue their own interests and realize their potential. The final important aspect of communism is its democratic nature. By instilling economic equality, communism transcends democracy rooted solely in politics to truly reflect the will of the people. Unlike Soviet communism, Marx' theory of communism is a profoundly participatory one where citizen power is maximized and the general populace holds a great stake in the country's decision-making process.

Marxism and Action Research

Marx argued that philosophers should not only interpret the world but also change it. This sentiment holds just as true for action researchers. Indeed, the Marxist concept of praxis serves as a fundamental precursor to many action research initiatives. Praxis is a concept linking the crucial areas of theory and practice. For many Marxists, to simply advance a theory regarding a social or economic situation is not sufficient. Ideally, every theory has an applicative functionality that can be as large as igniting revolutionary activity or as small as improving working conditions for a singular group of people. Praxis is linked to Marxist materialism, where concepts such as culture and economics do not occur in a vacuum but are influenced by the material conditions of their environment. The same holds true of theory, and as action researchers, generating research merely

for descriptive or speculative purposes is fundamentally lacking. Action researchers are thus empowered by their own form of praxis, melding together their expertise with a desire to change the world at either a large or a small scale.

From a philosophical standpoint, action research holds possibilities regarding dialectics and historical materialism. Action research is, in many senses, a dialectical process. First, the action research cycle is an open one tilted towards perpetual incompleteness. Like dialectics, where the dialectical synthesis is continually reconfigured, action research ideally does not stop when the study is over and the researcher has collected the data. Instead, the process continues, so participants are empowered to such a degree that they can carry the research on their own shoulders in the directions of their choosing. Moreover, just like Marxist dialectics, action research is embedded in the social, cultural and political environment where the study takes place. Action research is a political methodology; it does not occur in a laboratory, but it is dependent on the material conditions of the research location. This links back to the historical materialism inherent in Marx' thought, where theories were reflective of material conditions and possessed historical or contemporary implications. Indeed, action research's conception of history shares a number of similarities with a Marxist one in terms of materialism, being critical of the dominant social order and being concerned with the narrative of the oppressed. Through these crucial linkages, action research proves indicative of Marxist traditions.

Furthermore, more so than any other research methodology, action research also possesses a great deal in common with Marx' conception of communism. As previously mentioned, Marx saw communism as a participatory process where everyone would have an equal voice in the process. Naturally, this correlates highly with Participatory Action Research, where a similar theory regarding meaningful political participation serves as the primary engine driving the research process. Communism and action research are not only non-hierarchical structures, but both progress a step beyond and act as political and research approaches that actually increase the power of those populations who would be neglected otherwise. Concerning this point, it is important to recognize that the democratic, collaborative approach indicative of both concepts is applied not only for the sake of reversing the status quo but also because these approaches are intensely pragmatic, despite popular contrary claims. Incorporating as many people as possible in the political or research discussion holds legitimate and profoundly beneficial implications in forging a better society.

In realizing the numerous connections between Marxism and action research, many action research

projects are directed towards explicitly Marxist aims. Participatory action researchers often perform projects with workers to improve some facet of their working life, including reducing stress or strengthening their voice. Another form of Marxist-inspired action research consists of projects situated from a social class perspective, which again can be focused towards empowering the working class. Certainly, action research's tendency to work with marginalized populations reflects a Marxist world view. Capitalist exploitation is not limited to problems concerning labour but rather comes in many forms that action researchers can seek to resolve. Problems as diverse as exploring the corporatized nature of schools, analyzing violence in an urban community and assisting people in developing countries where capitalist oppression is at its most hostile can all be included in a Marxist framework. Thus, Marxism allows for profound inclusivity in terms of potential action research studies that researchers can perform.

There is also revolutionary potential in action research, and this potential harkens back to a similar revolution that Marx so hopefully described. Changing the world one study at a time, action research fulfils a variety of revolutionary prescriptions related to Marxist theory. Action researchers' continual work with oppressed populations has been well emphasized, but the critical current running through action research echoes Marxist initiatives. In an action research context, research operates as a critical tool against capitalist exploitation and oppression. The researcher's familiarity with theory and methodology enables that researcher to critique capitalism from a credible position that is subsequently adopted by participants. It is important to recognize that a Marxist revolution is not purely a physical one but an epistemological one as well. Through their efforts, action researchers build a critical body of knowledge accessible to others interested in similar work. Moreover, action research can be employed to deconstruct capitalist ideology, hegemony and false consciousness, thus serving as a pivotal starting point in the revolutionary process.

Finally, like action research, Marxism has strong ties to critical education and pedagogy. As an educator and an exemplar for many action researchers, Paulo Freire worked primarily in a Marxist tradition. His efforts regarding consciousness-raising and employing education as a critical force represent endeavours to eliminate false consciousness. Other Marxist education scholars have performed similar work in schools across the world, producing theory and research regarding capitalist oppression rooted in education. Classroom-based action research holds a similar stake in this critical agenda. Embedded in the classroom and working with their students, classroom-based action researchers

can perform a variety of studies that work to raise the social consciousness of their students or reduce corporatized or commercial agendas in schools, so that their students do not fulfil the capitalist destiny of becoming uncritical consumers and alienated workers.

With these numerous initiatives, the connection between Marxism and action research is strong. Appropriate in the community, the factory and the school, Marxist-inspired action research serves as a powerful research process capable of accomplishing empowering and even revolutionary aims. Despite the rapid progression of capitalism since Marx' time, his theories still hold a relevance that compels researchers to return to them in order to launch new critiques of capitalism. In doing so, the final similarity shared by Marxism and action research reveals itself: that of hope. Although many focus on the prevalent Marxist rhetoric of capitalist domination, Marxism is an optimistic philosophy that continues to envision a better future for all people, and action research represents a crucial process through which this better future can be realized.

Joseph Cunningham

See also Frankfurt School; Freire, Paulo; hegemony; praxis; social justice

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MAYA WOMEN OF CHAJUL

Mayan *ixil* and *k'iche'* women participated in a series of Participatory Action Research (PAR) processes in the wake of more than 36 years of armed conflict in Guatemala. Specifically, creative techniques—including

drawing, storytelling and dramatic play—were combined with Mayan beliefs and practices and more traditional participatory research strategies including interviews, oral histories and photo documentation and elicitation to tell the story of the gross violations of human rights in a remote corner of Guatemala in the 1980s. Feminist-infused PAR and PhotoPAR were deployed as resources for narrating survival and resistance and re-threading community towards creating a better life for survivors and their families. Selected processes are discussed towards exemplifying action research as a resource for those who seek to accompany survivors of humanitarian crises, including armed conflict.

Historical Background and Contemporary Challenges

San Gaspar Chajul is one of three municipalities in the northern province of El Quiché, Guatemala, a country where 43–60 per cent of the 14–15 million inhabitants are indigenous, mostly Maya. The median age is 20 years, with a life expectancy of 71 years. Approximately 54 per cent live on about \$3 per day; some suggest that in rural areas such as Chajul, that figure rises to over 80 per cent. Despite recent increases in educational levels among today's youth, a large percentage of adults are illiterate, with estimates of only 39 per cent literacy among indigenous women between 15 and 64 years of age, many of whom are monolingual, speaking one of the country's 21 indigenous languages but not the country's official language, Spanish.

Indigenous people were evangelized and forced into servitude under Spanish colonization, which endured until the country achieved independence in 1821. Liberal reforms in the 1870s introduced coffee on a large scale, plantation agriculture became the norm and inequalities in wealth escalated. A democratic revolution in 1944 brought a reformist government to power that was overthrown in 1954, with the US Central Intelligence Agency playing a major role and installing military dictators supported by a powerful oligarchy.

In the 1970s, the military unleashed widespread counter-insurgency violence against a confluence of revolutionary guerrillas and social movements who threatened their power. After nearly four decades of armed conflict, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity and the Guatemalan government signed Peace Accords in 1996. The Catholic Archdiocesan report *Guatemala Never Again* (REMHI) and the report of the UN-brokered Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) estimated the death toll of those years to be between 130,000 and 200,000, with an additional 50,000 'disappearances', at least 1 million internally displaced persons, 100,000 officially recognized refugees and 200,000 orphaned children. The

CEH concluded that the acts of the Guatemalan state against the indigenous people constituted genocide.

Over one third of the approximately 600 documented massacres during the armed conflict occurred in the Quiché region. The military and their forcibly conscripted civilian patrollers occupied the town of Chajul, terrorizing the local community, raping young girls and women and, among many other atrocities, hanging a woman in the town square whom they accused of having lured the army into a guerrilla attack. The REMHI report identified at least five massacres in the vicinity of San Gaspar Chajul in the early 1980s—four in the village of Chel and the fifth at the La Perla Plantation.

Despite regularly held elections since 1985, democracy has continued to erode driven by a re-functionalized plantation agricultural system, persistent concentrations of wealth and a government that is corrupt and unaccountable. Drug and human trafficking as well as organized crime are widespread, with women bearing the brunt of such violence in a context described by human rights activists and feminist scholars as femicide. The police are ineffectual, and a former military general accused of human rights abuses during the war now serves as president. Despite this, many, including the Maya women of Chajul, are engaged in ongoing efforts to seek truth and to bring human rights abusers to justice.

Thirty Years of Community-Based Collaboration and Solidarity

A small group of surviving Maya ixil and k'iche' women sought to create a better future for themselves, their families and Chajul and its villages in the 1990s. Their initial impulse was to gather 'as women', within and across ethnic, linguistic, political and religious differences. They sought resources to build a corn mill, thereby reducing the 4- to 6-hour/day task of hand-grinding corn for tortillas, the staple of daily meals, and generating time and surplus income to develop educational programmes for their children, whose monolingualism and extreme poverty prevented their access to the local Spanish-language public education. Over time, a small group of six grew to an organization of more than 100, the Association of Maya Ixil Women—New Dawn (ADMI). Projects included ongoing creative workshops for women survivors, a corn mill, an ixil-language educational programme for children, a community store, a community library and, eventually, a small revolving loan fund that supported local economic development initiatives.

Despite their multiple and varied experiences of the war's atrocities, many women in ADMI hesitated to give their testimonies to REMHI and the CEH.

Yet, in the summer of 1997, they embraced the idea of developing a local testimonial process, building on Caroline Wang's Photovoice processes from rural China. Through participatory photography, interviews and storytelling, they sought to document Chajul's 'community story' of the armed conflict, their survival and ADMI's emergence.

PhotoPAR as a Resource for Re-Membering and Re-Threading Community

Twenty k'iche' and ixil women joined 'outsider researchers' and collaborated for nearly 3 years to create a PhotoPAR process chronicled in *Voices and Images: Mayan Ixil Women of Chajul*. They broke silences and stereotypes, becoming some of the first k'iche' and ixil women photographers and activist researchers. They developed skills as interviewers through telling personal stories to each other, learning of guerrilla and military violations and then travelling to distant villages of returning refugees who chronicled massacres and the extreme poverty of years of hiding in the mountains. The horrific story of *The Hanged Woman* was chronicled by the mother of the woman who was hanged—and then analyzed and reanalyzed through the participatory research process. Women who had sought refuge in Mexico, the capital city or the mountains listened to those who had remained in Chajul, alongside whom they now travelled to pull water from the well, never imagining the horrors their neighbours had survived. In focus groups with participants 5 years after the final book was presented to the Guatemalan and international communities, some women acknowledged that picture taking, interviewing and collaborating with each other in analyzing the phototexts had given them the courage to ask about a father's disappearance or a sibling's assassination. Thus, the processes of re-membering and of generating individual and collective stories—and sharing them with the local community—contributed to reducing tensions in Chajul and to enhancing some participants' understanding of the root causes of the armed conflict, and the challenges of post-conflict transitions.

Separation and Survival: Extending Women's Community

Despite the multiple successes identified and celebrated through the PhotoPAR processes, the Women of ADMI were unable to sustain their organization in the midst of internal conflicts that mirrored many of the political tensions in the post-war period. Within 2 years of the book's publication, they separated into two organizations, committed to sustaining work with women and children. A second organization, the

Center for Mayan Ixil Education and Development, responded to the threats represented by gang violence by shifting their organizing and educational efforts to include young men alongside their work with women. As important, they responded to the requests of those village women who had generously told their stories in the PhotoPAR process. The Center for Mayan Ixil Education and Development has facilitated monthly meetings in approximately 20 rural villages where indigenous women gather to tell stories of survival and learn about their rights. A process evaluation of these village interventions using the creative techniques that characterized the early work of ADMI suggests that despite ongoing and persistent poverty and violence, rural indigenous women celebrate opportunities to gather, to learn about their rights and to share their stories with each other. Their artwork and theatre productions reflect their enhanced self-understandings, self-esteem and agency. A small cadre from among the 20 women who participated in the PhotoPAR project facilitate these workshops through which Maya ixil and k'iche' women of Chajul and its surrounding villages embody and perform a transformed Maya womanhood.

Thus, PAR and the creative arts have been embraced by rural, non-formally educated Maya women alongside their traditional beliefs and practices towards re-threading community in the wake of horrific violations of human rights. Analyses of pictures in small groups offered teaching-learning experiences through which to narrate individual and collective losses. Through dramatic play and theatre, women embodied long-silenced fears and anger and performed imagined future actions that shaped concrete actions that they carried out through their organizations in Chajul and its villages. The knowledge generated from this local praxis now informs others seeking to respond to psychosocial trauma and human suffering in the wake of humanitarian crises.

M. Brinton Lykes

See also arts-based action research; feminism; indigenous research methods; Participatory Action Research; Photovoice; storytelling

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META-METHODOLOGY

Action research is becoming increasingly recognized as a meta-methodology by which the researcher learns the way into the details and complexity of the situation of interest. As an extension of natural approaches to problem-solving which involve cycles of intention, action and review, Bob Dick has described the essential enhancements gained from an action research approach. These include enhancement of review as critical reflection, greater attention to rigour and theory, care in identifying who else to involve and flexibility to borrow and develop processes as a result of these reflective concerns. Action research as a meta-methodology requires a critical appreciation of methodological underpinnings and implications, and it can enable a more systemic and multilayered inquiry into real-world situations and issues. How different methodologies can be complementary or conflicting in their underlying ideologies is a critical issue which is both long-standing and of continuing contemporary importance. An outline is provided in the following sections regarding questions of pluralism and complementarity and the generative dimension of action research. This is followed by a brief description of some recent applications of action research as meta-methodology from psychological, environmental and educational domains of practice.

Pluralism and Complementarity

Concerns regarding the potential for methodological complementarity have an extensive history of debate. Debate regarding research paradigms and methodological implications has ranged across many disciplinary traditions. All methodological perspectives come with fundamental underpinnings relating to the nature of inquiry and philosophical ideals. A focus on pluralism and meta-methodology seeks to develop conversations around frameworks on interpretation which reflect and respect multiple viewpoints on these underpinnings. Rather than putting up a trivial ‘straw man’ of an opposing position to be knocked down triumphantly, a meta-methodological view enables critical development of a preferred position while maintaining a respect and

recognition of the strengths of other approaches for particular aspects of the situation of interest. A meta-methodological perspective can assist those seeking to overcome differences in methodology and underlying values and keep conversations going across ideological and disciplinary boundaries. Frameworks of interpretation are themselves highly contestable, and so the descriptions below draw upon frameworks associated with action research and systemic literature which have been debated robustly and applied broadly—interpretations that build upon critical systems and David Kolb’s learning competencies. These are presented as examples of potential meta-methodological frameworks that can aid in critical comparison and exposition.

A useful beginning point is to start from a position common to many practitioners of action research. Action research is defined by its intention as a pluralist practice underpinned by a participative world view, seeking to co-construct the process of inquiry and the understanding generated. This is a strong epistemological position, that is, a perspective on the nature of inquiry, and aligns strongly with a constructivist epistemology. A constructivist perspective addresses subjective and intersubjective concerns through seeking authentic representation of participant’s perspectives, through open and honest documentation and cycles of hermeneutic interpretation (i.e. a process of interpreting meaning and context). With an explicit aim of improvement, constructivist scholars such as Yvonna Lincoln identified the criteria of ‘trustworthiness’ as the following: Has a heightened awareness of one’s own constructions been achieved (ontological authenticity)? Has an increased awareness of other stakeholders’ assumptions been achieved (educative authenticity)—or the capacity for prompt action (catalytic authenticity) or the ability to engage the political arena on behalf of stakeholders (empowerment criteria)—or of the extent to which external readers can infer relevance to their own situation (transferability criteria)? These criteria reinforce the importance of a strong epistemological position regarding the role of the researcher and his or her inquiry.

Similarly, within the evolving discourses of systems literature, a key evolving theme has been an increasing need for epistemological awareness, as recently outlined by Ray Ison in his review of systems thinking and practice for action research. Developments in critical system literature since the early 1980s have reflected the emergence of critical systems practice and systemic intervention, which reflect core values of methodological pluralism, improvement and critical awareness. A proposed schema developed early in this debate was the ‘system of systems methodologies’ as a meta-theoretical framework of interpretation to underpin methodological pluralism. Hard systems,

soft systems (or practical action research) and critical systems thinking (or critical action research) were defined in relation to the Aristotelian concepts of *téchne* (making action) and *praxis* (doing action), and Jürgen Habermas' knowledge-constitutive interests as being technical, practical or emancipatory.

Developing upon this spectrum of interests, epistemological positions range from positivist to post-positivist, interpretivist, constructivist and critical theorist. For each epistemological position, there is a range of philosophical underpinnings, for example, an interpretivist who quotes John Dewey as a champion is likely to hold a pragmatist philosophy, a normative ethic of seeking adaptive problem-solving, an axiology (or theory of value) in problem-solving and an ontology (or view of the world) as a humanist or normative construction. Similarly, a particular epistemological position and associated underpinnings inform the methodological implications consistent with this view, such as their systems view, primary logic used, methodological objective and ideal, criteria of validation and toolkit of methods supported. This type of meta-methodological framework can be used as a modelling space to compare and contrast different disciplinary traditions, as outlined by Roger Attwater (2000).

Action research is sometimes viewed as a subset of social research and has obvious strong methodological precursors that resonate with the epistemological positions of interpretivist and constructivist inquiry. However, similar to the evolving area of critical systems, it is becoming common to view action research as a meta-methodology in its own right. In addressing a social context of inquiry, additional richness may be gained by incorporating analytical and post-positivist perspectives. Alternatively, the social context of the inquiry may have contextual dimensions such as those associated with physiological, ecological or design processes, for which a realist ontology and methodological traditions of falsificationism, hypothesis testing and science are appropriate. Rather than limiting the bounds of inquiry to social dimensions, judicious incorporation of broader traditions can enable a more systemic inquiry.

The Generative Dimension

By taking a meta-methodological stance, action research can seek to assist in the dynamic co-ordination of the insights gained from the application of different methods, tools and logics. The process of inquiry has of itself a generative nature, and it is by this dynamic that engagement in the process hopes to achieve the constitutive elements of action research. As the inquiry engages participants and models of improvement reflecting different world views, a potential is enabled

for a new context-specific framework of understanding to emerge from both the first person perspective of the researchers and the second person perspectives of participants in the inquiry. In this way, action research can facilitate the synthesis and the generation of trans-disciplinary practice, whereby conversations across disciplinary boundaries generate an emergent broader perspective which is inclusive and respectful of the individual disciplinary frameworks. This is not just the realm of synthesis across academic disciplines, as different methods of logic and tools of inquiry are common to any communities of practice, with practices reflecting alternate epistemic foundations.

A relevant foundation for this dynamic view of meta-methodology derives from experiential learning. John Dewey identified that in our adaptive search for diagnosing and addressing social concerns, there are two general ways of grasping knowledge: (1) comprehending as a reflective recognition and (2) apprehending through experimentation with the outside world. David Kolb further developed this into a schema of interpretation and action, adding a dimension relating to how we use this knowledge: Do we apply it to concrete experience or use it to develop more sophisticated models of how things seem to work? This robust schema has been applied in a number of ways to inform our practice of inquiry and critical awareness of competency development. The common dynamic of plan, act and reflect used to describe action research enables a richness of generative development which can be considered as a methodological cascade, with the form and type of methodology used in subsequent steps of an inquiry emerging from previous steps of inquiry, consistent with critical reflection and subsequent adaptive application. Multiple lines of inquiry can separate, build and coalesce as the inquiry gains momentum.

Examples From Psychological, Environmental and Educational Domains

There is a broad and distributed variety of studies that utilize variants of action research in a meta-methodological manner and reflect increasing epistemological awareness. Provided below are examples of the application of different meta-methodological perspectives. The sources are listed in the Further Readings.

A very accessible description of issues of complementary methods has been provided by Mark Burton and Carolyn Kagan in relation to psychological research. Building upon the history of paradigm debates, the authors draw upon critical systems approaches to tease out the substantive ideological and philosophical debate behind the scenes of debates regarding qualitative versus quantitative research. The

authors discuss differences of epistemology (the nature of knowledge) and ontology (the nature of things) and conclude that pluralist practice requires a meta-methodological construct to help navigate between the methodologies on offer.

Comparing and contrasting approaches to natural resource management, Kathleen Wilson and George Morren integrated the two meta-methodological frameworks described here, mapping hard, soft and critical inquiries onto an interpretation of David Kolb's experiential learning cycle. For example, for soft systems inquiry (practical action research), a cycle of inquiry was described in relation to the competencies of diverging (perceiving the problem situation, organization and issues), assimilating (developing logically consistent models with each community of practice), converging (testing models against situation) and accommodating (implementing within management systems).

Drawing upon the work of Wilson and Morren, Roger Attwater and Chris Derry have outlined a methodological cascade in relation to an example of environmental risk communication. A pluralist methodological toolkit is described, with action research focusing on risk perception, behaviour and opportunities for co-management and agricultural and ecological research and design. The conclusions drawn from this study included the role of action research in engaging issues at a number of complementary levels: processes to assist the identification and communication of co-constructed strategies within and between communities of practice, the use of experiential frameworks to assist as a structured meta-methodological guide, the role of these processes and frameworks as parts of larger systems of adaptive urban and landscape management and the practical outcomes emerging which can contribute as exemplars for similar complex issues of sustainability in different situations.

Another recent and engaging example is the work of Renata Phelps and Anne Graham in addressing the complementarities of action research and complexity theory. The application described is the important contemporary area of professional development in relation to information and communication technology. This mix of critical reflection on pedagogy, technology and complexity is an obviously fertile ground for issues of pluralism. The authors extend the impact of the shaping of research according to the epistemology and assumptions of the researcher to include the key aspect of the sociopolitical context of the inquiry.

Roger C. Attwater

See also constructivism; Dewey, John; epistemology; experiential learning; ontology; philosophy of science; pragmatism

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METAPHOR

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche famously called truth a 'mobile army of metaphors'. This statement speaks to the influence metaphor wields in human experience. Simply put, metaphor is thinking, speaking or writing about one thing in terms of another; however, this definition does little justice to the prevalence of metaphor in thought and communication. Deeper studies into linguistics, psychology and neuroscience have yielded similar conclusions that human beings naturally think in a metaphorical way. The brain's tendency towards categorization is substantially aided by metaphor as it instils both connectivity and distance among our thoughts. Not only do people discover similarities among concepts and objects by metaphoric linkages (often characterized as conceptual metaphor), but they also uncover wider flexibility within our world views as they metaphorically connect seemingly disparate concepts (typically labelled as linguistic metaphor). In this intricate relational process, metaphors serve as the symbolic currency within our discourse, generating considerable power in writing and reflection as well as serving as a catalyst for action.

Metaphor in Writing

As a mode of figurative language, metaphor is often connected with writing. Perhaps most commonly, analysis of metaphor is pervasive in literary fields where novels, plays and poems employing language rife with metaphor are subjected to intensive study. However, limiting metaphor to merely fictional or poetic realms neglects a wide variety of metaphorical usages. Ultimately, metaphor in writing serves as an encapsulation of the triangular relationship among the author, the reader and the text. In terms of the author, employing a metaphor is a compositional choice, one that reflects the author's style and intention. Moreover, the author also recognizes that the text does not exist within a vacuum, and thus, metaphorical choices will inform the reader's understanding of the sentence and text. Finally, metaphor is a gesture towards intertextuality, or the concept that texts interact and inform one another. As a writing convention, a stylistic choice or a means of reference to another text or concept, metaphor functions as a symbolic linkage to other writings, thus completing the reciprocal rapport between the three integral concepts of the compositional process.

Metaphor and Culture

While metaphor is most commonly situated in compositional environments, metaphor also has a powerful influence in several facets of society. True, the connection between the author and metaphor can prove deeply personal, yet in larger sociological and anthropological lenses, metaphor unveils itself as a cultural conception. Some metaphors, such as money as a means of exchange, hold near universality, but even in these instances, such metaphors hold differing cultural nuances. This is even more prevalent in metaphors unique to certain cultures. In a now canonical work of anthropology, Clifford Geertz wrote on what he perceived as the symbolic functionality of cockfighting for the Balinese, linking the practice to a number of cultural elements. Indeed, a culture's symbols and metaphors can speak volumes, helping in understanding that particular culture, yet at the same time, it is important to recognize that every metaphor is both an intensely interpretative and a highly dynamic act. Rarely static in its scope and varying richly from culture to culture, metaphors hold possibility for illumination and misinterpretation; therefore, researchers must work with metaphors carefully.

Metaphor and Action Research

The metaphors for action research are numerous and diverse. Action research has been compared with popular concepts like jazz music and esoteric ideas like

Giles Deleuze's rhizome. The wide variety of metaphorical applications within action research speaks of its complexity and fluidity. More so than any other methodology, action research possesses an undeniable multiplicity. Due to its participant-focused research agenda, every action research study is different, and the vast number of metaphors applicable to action research communicate this reality. Furthermore, scholars practising action research should investigate and explore metaphor in their writing since action research actively resists standardized formality. With every study, new metaphors expand the textual power of action research, further distancing it from the status quo. This is especially appropriate in arts-based action research, where research appropriates similar metaphoric elements found in literature to better describe and serve the needs of participants.

In performing action research, researchers should also possess awareness of the relevant metaphors to their participants. Largely, problem-based forms of action research, like Participatory Action Research, often engage with the basic metaphoric creation of problems and solutions. Once these metaphors are identified, researchers and participants can work together towards generating action. Additionally, given the participant-focused methodology, action researchers often work with the personal and cultural metaphors of participants, and the researcher must balance a variety of interpretive lenses from numerous stakeholders who have different understandings of the issue. Frequently, the participants in an action research study have a stronger grasp on the issues and the relevant metaphors than the researcher. This is particularly true when the researcher is working with participants of different cultures where metaphors and concepts hold multiple explicit and implicit meanings. Therefore, the researcher should take this opportunity to uncover, with the participants, the meaning of metaphors in order to better grasp the nature of the research situation.

More importantly, the interpretation of these personal and cultural metaphors is the result of the collaboration between the researcher and participants. For instance, Photovoice, an action research methodology in which participants take photographs of a particular problem, is a methodology that utilizes the power of collaborative metaphor. The photographs serve as emotionally charged metaphors for the participants' perspective on the issue, and the researcher engages the participants in a dialogue to unveil the meaning of the photographs. This example serves as but one model of metaphor's prevalence in action research. As a co-operative meaning-making methodology, action research resonates with a highly metaphorical character. In writing and practice, action research's approach is a plethora of metaphorical patterns, each holding a

unique place within the researcher's understanding of the issue. However, the most pivotal translation of metaphor for many action researchers is that translation of thought into action as researchers and participants mobilizes their constructed metaphors into realms of actuality, ushering true social change.

Joseph Cunningham

See also arts-based action research; cognitive mapping; narrative; Photovoice

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MICROPLANNING

Microplanning is a methodological innovation in the field of action research. Microplanning may be defined as a planning and implementing process which is people centred, relying on their decisions.

Some refer to it as 'bottom-up planning' because the planning starts from lower levels, unlike more traditional top-down planning processes. It is also known as 'participatory planning' as the community is involved at every stage of the planning. Sometimes, it is also referred to as 'local planning' as the unit of planning is a local predefined area.

The Need for Microplanning

The need for microplanning arose as central planning alienated local people from local assets and resources. In general, when people are alienated, they will use the services as long as they are available but will not invest time, labour or resources to maintain the system or services. To fill this gap, planning at the local level with the participation of people was tried out. The microplanning recognizes the need to involve people in the process of development through a microlevel planning process.

Focus of Microplanning

Microplanning can be used in the following circumstances, to name a few:

- To build the capacity of people
- To increase the information base of the area and its people
- To use available resources
- To identify the root causes when problem-solving
- To increase decision-making capacity
- To improve the socio-economic and legal environment of the predefined local area
- To enhance negotiation abilities of the community

The Process of Microplanning

The microplanning process empowers a community to arrive at their action agenda by engaging all stakeholders such as government functionaries, elected representatives or other key resource providers of the predefined local area. Microplanning processes essentially build the capacity of a community to analyze their own situation and to work on it. The duration and timing of each process differ as the common goal for each practising microplanning community is different.

The Phases of Microplanning

The three phases are pre-planning, planning and post-planning.

In the pre-planning phase, the central theme is to lay the foundation for the microplanning process. It begins by identifying the parameters of the area for which the community wants to find a solution. An orientation workshop or face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders are useful to clarify doubts, generate curiosity and build consensus.

The planning phase starts by collecting data from each of the smallest units of the identified area. This is followed by prioritizing of the problems of the area. The community analyze the data and strategies for resource mobilization and prepare the microplan, including the budget.

The post-planning phase consists of the implementation of the microplan and the review of the implementation from time to time.

Microplanning and Community Development

The three phases will help with community development. The phases organize the community and local key members to go through the stages of mapping resources in the area. Together, the community analyze the cause and effect of the problems and motivate all to think of workable solutions. They prepare the microplan and the budget together. The microplan is then

formalized and sanctioned by the appropriate authority or relevant departments.

Microplanning and Organizational Development

As success depends on participation by the local community at every stage, they have to be drawn into the processes of environment building, awareness generation, mapping, planning and implementing. The immediate objective is to change the present trend to locally available resource use towards greater sustainability and better equitable economic growth.

The community organizational efforts are more vital than mere technical inputs. Self-reliant voluntary efforts and the community's knowledge and experience enhance organizational development at the local level. To generate enthusiasm and self-reliance, some innovative local actions or projects like providing simple drains near water points, cleaning up the local area and installing a garbage disposal system may be initiated. These processes are more effective than lecturing and dialogues and consequently strengthen organizational efforts.

Microplanning and Action Research

Microplanning is closely related to action research. Firstly, generating awareness through inquiry forms the core of microplanning. Secondly, both aim to build the capacity of the community to analyze their own situation and work on it. The community members are treated with genuine deference and respect for their knowledge, experience and perceptions. Thirdly, both generate changes in the body of knowledge which lead to changed perceptions and boosted ability. Collective confidence forms the core of microplanning. It leads to the creation of a standing, trained volunteer force besides truly representative development committees and societies. In the long run, these systems provide excellent support to local elected bodies. Fourthly, the process ensures that the collaborative mode is adopted so that a problem is considered from all possible angles. This needs attitudinal changes too. The solution which arises out of it is acceptable to all stakeholders. Lastly, microplanning enables a community to arrive at their action agenda by engaging all stakeholders. Ensuring implementation of a microplan by the community completes the cycle of action research.

Thus, microplanning changes ordinary citizens into researchers who decide for themselves what kind of development they want.

See also capacity building; community development; empowerment; local self-governance

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MINDFUL INQUIRY

Mainstream science embraces the idea that the universe and human decision-making operate according to causal laws which can be objectively known. Understanding human behaviour requires an understanding of the mind. A great part of the workings of our mind, however, is based on subjective data, which is complex, detailed and often not replicable. Therefore, this view tends not to get a dominant place in mainstream science. The action research approach, however, leaves room for such subjective data. Mindful inquiry is a means of studying the mind. This entry focuses on the origin and the practice of mindful inquiry, an age-old technique that is recently being adapted for use in mainstream management. Mindful inquiry—as a means of understanding human behaviour and natural or social phenomena—has been applied by Western, Indian and Buddhist philosophers and saints. Mindful inquiry is a sort of foundational philosophy and easily adapts to different forms from intellectual first person inquiry, dialogues, reflexive individual thinking and contemplation to meditation. In this entry, mindful inquiry is discussed in the context of research. First, the mind is defined in its process of generating knowledge, then mindful inquiry is described and then an integral yogic view is proposed on knowledge and its impact on our attitude of inquiry followed by its application in the context of action research.

Mind and Knowledge

The mind gives us thought, observation, reasoning and cognition through separation and analysis of information. What the mind actually does is to process information about our lives and our environment. Psychological research has shown us that the thought process is prone to errors due to the mind's tendency towards preferences, desires and preconceived notions. These biases

stem from our senses. The mind sees things in parts and uses the process of reasoning and synthesis to put things in appropriate relation to each other. So the mind gives us partial knowledge. Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950) said that this process results in incomplete and inaccurate knowledge, which he terms *knowledge ignorance*. Because the mind cannot see the true wholeness or essence of that which it seeks to know, man developed an ego to help organize and develop effective capacities. This resulted in identifying with the ego and separating from the oneness or spiritual knowledge that is our highest truth and potential. Based on this perspective, Sri Aurobindo distinguished four different types of knowledge present in our outer mind.

Objective, Scientific Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo calls this *indirect knowledge* as it is mediated by our senses. He points out that this form of knowledge is inherently separate from a person's inner self because he or she experiences, here, a difference between the self as knower and the world as known. In this mode of knowing, individuals partly identify with the world but also dis-identify with it when they perceive the world as 'out there'. Ordinary science only recognizes this first type of knowledge. In the context of research, usually this is labelled as the third person approach. Information is gathered by listening to others, reading or conducting objective experiments and measurements. Usually, the affect of the person is not involved unless the topic of study is related to emotions. Mindful inquiry does not deal with this type of knowledge.

The Knowledge of Inner Processes

This covers emotions, moods, desires and thoughts. According to Sri Aurobindo, this knowledge is direct but *still separate*. In this mode of knowing, a person partly identifies with the mind and uses it to view another part of the mind. The cognitive process separates the knower from the known. This type of knowledge is thus based on experience; it becomes the person's knowledge; while it is internal and subjective, it can be talked about and shared. In research, we can ask about these experiences from a third person approach. Mindful inquiry can be applied to gain this type of knowledge, but it is not necessary. Self-reports through questionnaires can be adequate as well.

Knowledge of Inner Processes and Identification With Them

This occurs, for example, when individuals are completely consumed by a feeling such as happiness or anger and this feeling drives their action. This

mode of knowing is more or less preconscious and pre-reflective. In this type of knowledge, the person is directly involved in the experience. It refers to a state of realization. The thoughts, basic attitudes and perspective on reality are changed, but one's nature remains largely unchanged. This can happen through practice of mindfulness. It is experiential knowledge of inner processes, for example, if someone says, 'I am really happy' or 'God is so kind to me'. In this stage, the person is the thought. This is uncommon in research but can occur under the label of experiential knowledge and can be expressed in techniques such as participatory inquiry, mindful inquiry and action inquiry.

The Knowledge Where There Is No Separation Between Self and Knowledge

This type of knowledge has no foundation in the senses. But humans can train their inner instruments of knowledge to become as reliable and unambiguous as their outer senses. This stage is totally beyond the mind and can be labelled as pure consciousness. In the fourth type of knowledge, the whole nature of a person has undergone transformation. The first person approach of research is relevant in the second and third types of knowledge as they go beyond the mental mind, but they still can be traced through experiences. The second type can be approached by objective introspection of inner processes—by looking objectively at what is happening inside oneself. One can say, for example, 'My hands feel cold'. It is the person himself who is observing. The second (realization) and third (experience) types of knowledge can occur spontaneously or through lots of effort. They happen suddenly, and those who experience it can remember the exact date and time they occur. Transformation, the fourth type of knowledge, however, is a gradual process that comes as a result of gaining the other types of knowledge. It is not something that can be achieved through direct effort. The fourth stage is not accessible by means of 'mainstream scientific' research as it goes beyond the mind. Mindful inquiry often focuses on the second and third types of knowledge.

What Is Mindful Inquiry

Mindful inquiry can be defined as empowering the researcher both psychologically and philosophically by putting the researcher—rather than the research techniques—at the centre of the process. It is about awareness and observation through the inner processes of the researcher and the research subjects (second type of knowledge) and even about identifying with these processes (third type of knowledge). It originates from the Buddhist concept of mindfulness in combination

with phenomenology, critical theory and hermeneutics, leading to the following 13 assumptions:

1. Awareness of self and reality and their interaction is positive and present in the research processes.
2. Multiple perspectives are tolerated and integrated.
3. The deep layers of consciousness and unconsciousness underlying assumptions are considered.
4. The process of interpreting both self and others is ongoing.
5. All mindful inquiry involves accepting the bias of one's situation and context and trying to transcend it.
6. Mindful inquiry is immersed in and shaped by historical, social, economic, political and cultural structures and constraints.
7. Knowledge implies that researchers care for the world and the human life that they study.
8. Inquiry should eliminate suffering.
9. Existing values, social and personal illusions and harmful practices and institutions should be critiqued.
10. Mindful inquiry should contribute to the development of awareness and self-reflection in the inquirer and may contribute to the development of spirituality.
11. Mindful inquiry requires giving up ego.
12. Mindful inquiry may contribute to social action and be part of social action.
13. The development of awareness is not a purely intellectual or cognitive process but part of a person's total way of living her or his life.

These assumptions can be applied when studying several types of phenomena, such as understanding a culture and one's behaviour, communication and performance in the context of action research.

An Integral Yogic Attitude to Mindful Inquiry

Mindful inquiry focuses on the second and third types of knowledge. Are there approaches to reach out to the fourth type of knowledge or even to all four types of knowledge? Interestingly, we know—based on descriptions of spiritual paths—that we can grasp the meaning of the fourth type of knowledge by seeking the realm that is beyond the mind through techniques of silencing the mind, such as Vipassana, or by travelling to the ocean beyond the mind through using a meaningless sound, such as in transcendental meditation. It requires an integral yogic attitude to inquiry, which is

about understanding both the inner and the outer self where the researcher observes both himself and the research subjects.

Sri Aurobindo talks about an integral yogic approach to understanding all types of human behaviour by inquiring into the four types of knowledge. We borrow insights from integral yoga and formulate three principles:

1. *Aspiration*, a deep call to focus on the process rather than on the results (this requires an in-depth analysis and not a superficial observation of what a researcher thinks, feels and experiences when studying a phenomenon)
2. *Rejection*, or becoming aware of and withdrawing from all wrong habits and the false identification with the ego when giving meaning to observations and feelings
3. *Dedication* to the phenomena of study

These can be added to the research design where the researcher asks himself whether or not these principles are present and notes his findings prior to beginning the research. This can be done as a standard part each day or for each phase of the research.

Willis Harman developed such an integral approach in research. He referred to the inward-looking East and indigenous peoples and their intimate relationship with nature as examples of world views that can become part of the provisional epistemology while including the objectivist-positivist-reductionist epistemologies. Ken Wilber is also known for his integral theory of phenomenon, stating that everything can be studied by applying his four-quadrant model. This model focuses on two dimensions, first the I-We perspective and second, both the objective and the subjective perspectives, resulting in four quadrants.

Although he did not label his approach as integral, Harman gives a more detailed research approach where he incorporates both outer objectivity and inner subjectivity. The attributes of this alternative are as follows:

1. It should be radically empirical, which means that it will be phenomenological or experiential in a broad sense. This implies that it will include subjective experience as primary data and not only physical sense data. It includes the full range of human experience. For example, if consciousness is studied, then the study becomes an interaction of the observer and the observed or the experience of observing.
2. It takes objectivity and attempts at being free from hidden bias in dealing with data from external as well as internal experiences.

3. It insists on intersubjective validation of knowledge even if this can only be done incompletely, especially when dealing with deep, inner experiences.
4. It places emphasis upon the unity of all human experience (even religious experience). This provides a holistic view in which the parts are to be understood through the whole and not through the opposite reductionist reasoning.
5. It may deal with models and metaphors that not only seem to conflict with other models but which are also useful as they represent certain aspects of experienced reality.
6. It should recognize the partial nature of all scientific concepts of causality. This implies that making use of scientific laws can, in the end, also deal with causality.
7. It recognizes the role of personal characteristics of the observer and thus the processes and contents of the unconscious mind.
8. It is participatory, which means that it will not only deal with being detached, objective, analytical and coldly clinical but also co-operate with or identify with the observed and experience it subjectively.
9. It has a potential to transform observers, and therefore, it might lead to new criteria.

Mindful Inquiry in Action Research

Mindful inquiry can be applied in the context of action research with an integral yogic attitude of inquiry by focusing on both outer and inner perspectives of knowledge. The reflection phase of an action research cycle is often considered as a weak spot in action research. Mindful inquiry could be useful to action researchers by bringing a first person inquiry into the action research. First person action research, practice skills and methods address the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act with awareness and deliberate choice and to assess effects in the outside world while acting. It is believed that deeper levels of consciousness are a source of our actions (the fourth type of knowledge). Therefore, for understanding actions for analyzing a phenomenon and bringing change in perspectives of those involved, which is the core in action research, these deeper levels could be included in the research design by a mindful inquiry and integral yogic attitude of inquiry. What does it require in practice? The research designs such as those discussed above can be helpful but can also be an attitude of inquiry.

An attitude of inquiry from the outer perspective requires the following characteristics of the researcher

which can be found in first person approaches: curiosity, willingness to articulate and explore purposes, humility, paying attention to framing and its pliability, participation to generate high quality of knowing, developing capacities for working with multiple ways of knowing and engaging in and explicating research as an emergent process.

An attitude of inquiry from the inner perspective can be achieved through silencing the mind and listening to the voice within the heart. This means that during action research, such practices and exercises should be built in for the researcher to elicit from the four sources of knowledge, and if suitable, these can be integrated/implemented for all those involved in the research process. Future research on subjective knowledge in action research can benefit from this integral yogic attitude to inquiry and mindful inquiry approach.

Sharda Nandram

See also Christian spirituality of action; cycles of action and reflection; experiential knowing; first person action research; Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production; third person action research

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MODE 1 AND MODE 2 KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

In 1994, Michael Gibbons, Camille Limoges, Helga Nowotny, Simon Scharzman, Peter Scott and Martin Trow introduced the terms *Mode 1* and *Mode 2* into the research literature, referring to Mode 2 as the 'new production of knowledge'. This entry describes the characteristics of Mode 1 and Mode 2 and relates Mode 2 to action research.

Mode 1

Mode 1 research is characterized by the explanatory knowledge that is generated in a disciplinary context. It is research that arises from the academic agenda, and that agenda usually takes place within a singular discipline and is accountable to that discipline. In many respects, Mode 1 captures the normal meaning of the term *science*. By this is meant that the aim of the research is to produce universal knowledge and to build and test theory within a disciplinary field. The type of knowledge acquired is universal covering law. The data is context-free and validated by logic, measurement and consistency of prediction and control. The role of the researcher is that of an observer, and relationship to the setting is detached and neutral.

Mode 2

In contrast to Mode 1, Mode 2 research has the following characteristics:

- It is produced in the *context of a particular application*. This means that it has a practical focus, perhaps a problem-solving one. It is relevant and useful to practitioners.
- It is characterized by *trans-disciplinarity*, in that it integrates different skills, multi- or interdisciplinary depending on the application.
- It is characterized by *heterogeneity and organizational diversity*, in that multidisciplinary teams may be temporary and that members come and go as the situation unfolds and as different skills are required at different stages of the project.
- It is characterized by *social accountability and reflexivity* where there is accountability to outcomes and to the participants. This involves reflexivity and a sensitivity to the process of the research itself and to, for example, the dynamics of trans-disciplinarity.
- It is characterized by a *diverse range of quality controls*, in that unlike Mode 1 where the question of knowledge production is judged from the stance of the discipline, Mode 2 draws on a broader range of interests, such as its application, and from the perspective of different stakeholders.

In short, Mode 2 is a completely different approach to research from Mode 1 (see Table 1).

Mode 2 challenges the established model of doctoral studies programmes in social science where typically isolated individuals engage in research within their field of expertise. In contrast, Mode 2 research is a network activity, and if applied to doctoral programmes,

<i>Mode 1</i>	<i>Mode 2</i>
Set by academic interests	Formed in context of application
Disciplinarity	Trans-disciplinarity
Homogeneity	Heterogeneity and organizational diversity
Hierarchical and preserves its form	Heterarchical and transient

Table 1 Contrast Between Mode 1 and Mode 2

it would involve teams of researchers working together with some form of collective assessment and examination possible.

Mode 2 Research and Action Research

There are rich parallels between Mode 2 and action research. Indeed, it is argued that action research has been engaging in Mode 2 research since the first action research experiments in the 1940s and 1950s. Table 2 illustrates how Mode 1, Mode 2 and action research may be juxtaposed. Mode 1 represents traditional organizational research, while Mode 2 and action research share features of trans-disciplinary collaboration, reflexivity and an orientation to co-generating actionable knowledge. Mode 2 and action research both produce knowledge in the context of application, that is, both seek to generate actionable knowledge. Both work in contextually embedded settings working with particular, situational data. Both work in an experiential and collaborative mode with the trans-disciplinarity that the situation demands. The researchers are actors and agents of change who are immersed in the setting and are, thereby, socially accountable to those with whom they work. Both engage in reflexivity as they pay attention to the process of action and reflection as they unfold.

David Coghlan

See also collaborative action research; Collaborative Management Research; communities of practice; community of inquiry

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	<i>Mode 1</i>	<i>Mode 2</i>	<i>Action Research</i>
Aim of research	Universal knowledge, theory building and testing within a discipline	Knowledge produced in the context of application	Co-generated actionable knowledge
Type of knowledge acquired	Universal covering law, primarily cognitive	Particular, situational	Particular, situational
Nature of data	Context free	Contextually embedded	Contextually embedded
Validation	Logic, measurement; consistency of prediction and control	Experiential, collaborative trans-disciplinary	Experiential, collaborative trans-disciplinary
Researcher's role	Observer	Actor, agent of change, socially accountable	Actor, agent of change, socially accountable
Researcher's relationship to setting	Detached, neutral	Immersed, reflexive	Immersed, reflexive

Table 2 *Mode 1, Mode 2 and Action Research*

MacLean, D., MacIntosh, R., & Grant, S. (2002). Model 2 management research. *British Journal of Management*, 13, 189–207.

MONDRAGÓN CO-OPERATIVES

The official name of this world famous co-operative group now is the Mondragón: Humanity at Work, and its extensive website details its structure and operations: <http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/ENG.aspx>. It is the most successful and largest labour-owned and labour-managed co-operative group in the world, currently employing nearly 84,000 worker-owners in over 200 co-operatives in Spain and in 18 other countries.

These co-operatives are a mould-breaking exemplar of participatory management within capitalist enterprises. Composed principally of member-owners who work at and co-manage their own co-operatives within the larger collective structure, they are membership organizations. All members join by paying the equivalent of a year's salary into an account to their co-operative. That account remains theirs and rises and falls according to the business results of their organization, thus giving them a direct stake in the organization's success. All members have a voice and vote in the management of their own co-operative and in the general assembly of the co-operative system as a whole. They are consulted about the annual business plan and vote on it, including the relative allocation of profits between investment in the future development of the co-operative and distribution in terms of salary. The co-operatives have a narrow salary range, the lowest

salaries being set at a level comparable to decent entry wages within the region and the highest salaries restricted to between 9 and 12 times the amount of the lowest salaries.

They are divided into a set of central service co-operatives including a health-care system, a retirement system, a co-operative bank and central financial and human resource services. They are further divided into sectors: consumer goods, industrial production goods, retailing, finance, research and development and education.

The co-operatives were founded in 1957 by a small group of students led and taught by a local Catholic priest, José María Arizmendiarréta. This took place in the depths of the isolation and recession that followed Franco's imposition of a fascist dictatorship on Spain and the systematic punishment the fascists inflicted on the Basque Country, among other regions of Spain that had tried to preserve the Republic.

Mondragón itself was a small industrial town almost completely abandoned by its upper middle and upper classes because of the amount of labour strife and social tension existing within it. There was little employment, and in the few factories that were operating, the working conditions and salaries were poor.

Arizmendiarréta had been given responsibility in the parish for youth education, and he gradually tutored a group of students up through completing a university engineering degree, a significant accomplishment since the public Basque universities had been closed by the fascists and the students had to go to take their university examinations in another region.

When this group of young men found that their engineering competence and the San Simonian principles of collaborative work could not be respected in the

existing workplaces in Mondragón, the priest helped them create the first manufacturing co-operative and, soon after, others, then a co-operative bank, health-care system and pension system. This effort grew quickly to become a major manufacturing force in Europe with an annual doubling and tripling of the workforce. Those without resources could combine education and work, working part of the day to finance their education during the rest of the day. The early education efforts resulted in the founding of co-operative schools and, much more recently, the founding of a co-operative university with four campuses and over 4,000 students.

The Mondragón co-operatives have an important link to action research. Not surprisingly, they have long been a focus of attention for those interested in one form or another of industrial democracy and co-operation, a key thread in action research, particularly in the industrial 'North'. Their combined social structure and immense economic success stand in stark contrast to the doctrines of competitive, Tayloristic capitalism based on worker exploitation and managerial privilege. Those organizations in which all members have a say, members' knowledge is valued and used and the distance between the top and bottom is managed in favour of those at the bottom are successful, which clearly means that such organizations are possible.

The well-known sociologist and professor of industrial and labour relations, William Foote Whyte and his wife, Kathleen King Whyte, visited the co-operatives while Arizmendiarrreta was still alive and then later determined to do a major book on the co-operatives. In the process of this work, they involved the author because of his anthropological research in the Basque Country that began in 1968.

Whyte, Greenwood and José Luis González Santos (then Director of Human Resources for the central service group of the co-operatives) acquired a grant to conduct collaborative research, and Greenwood and González ran a 3-year action research project on the co-operatives which trained about 45 co-operative members in action research processes. This project resulted in the alteration of some of the key processes in human resource management to bring them more into agreement with co-operative principles. It also resulted in two books co-authored with co-operative members, one in Spanish and one in English. The Spanish edition served as an orientation manual for new co-operative members for at least a decade after the work was done.

Some key action research lessons emerged from this work. The co-operatives and their ability to conduct action research processes leading to organizational change in democratic directions on an ongoing basis are not based on equality among the members but rather on the principle of solidarity and mutual support within a framework of acknowledged differences in skill,

gender, age and ethnicity. Another is the importance of their commitment to the ongoing perfectibility of the system through constant reassessment and change. The co-operatives view themselves as always at risk and always in need of improvement and development, a clear example of Mode 2 knowledge production in a world-class set of learning organizations.

There is an extensive literature on the co-operatives, most of which is cited in Whyte and Whyte (1991), and one particularly negative study of the co-operatives and their social impact by Sharryn Kasmir (1996).

Davydd J. Greenwood

See also Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production; Tavistock Institute; Taylorism; Whyte, William Foote

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MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

Stakeholders are those people who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or representatives of a group. This includes people who can influence decisions as well as those who become affected by the decisions.

The key objective of multi-stakeholder dialogue is to enhance levels of trust between the different actors, share information and institutional knowledge, create new knowledge and generate solutions and relevant good practices.

It is a flexible tool and can be adapted to a number of different contexts. It can be used at local, national, regional or international level. It can involve a small group of individuals representing different experiences and areas of expertise or can involve many different

stakeholder groups representing global constituencies and communities, such as trade unions, women, businesses, governments, youth and non-governmental organizations. Similarly, a multi-stakeholder dialogue can also be used to explore a given issue or topic as it can be used to directly affect the shape or content of a policy document or to discuss an implementation plan or strategy where each group puts forward desired outcomes and best practices.

Purpose

- A multi-stakeholder dialogue is a process to build a shared understanding on a particular issue, create a common platform among different stakeholders through dialogue, discussion and debate and initiate joint action planning.
- It is used when issues cannot be addressed or resolved by a single set of actors but require co-operation between many different stakeholders or interest groups.
- It is often initiated to bring together various stakeholders with diverse agendas but with some underlying common interest.
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue helps analysis of a particular issue or situation and comes up with new knowledge; thus, newly emerged knowledge helps increase ownership and agreement for new actions.
- More often, it leads to common and agreed-upon actions to be conducted. However, joint action does not imply doing the same thing together; it involves assuming respective roles by different stakeholders for enhancing the overall purpose.
- This interaction and sharing of ideas and perspectives leads to a process of decision-making or finding out solutions or having direction emerge that is broad based and finds support amongst important actors whose interests are strongly affected by the issue.
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue is based on principles of promoting mutual accountability and equity in communication amongst stakeholders.
- This method is of great importance in the arena of development because most development problems demand multifaceted and multilayered solutions that involve a range of actors and stakeholders.

Pre-Requisites

Multi-stakeholder dialogue is not a tool for all kinds of problems or situations. It is possible only where there is a common concern, where dialogue amongst the

different stakeholders is possible and/or where listening, reconciling interests or joint solution strategies seem appropriate and within reach. Only under certain circumstances can multi-stakeholder dialogue be used for conflict resolution.

The organization or individual convening the multi-stakeholder dialogue should have credibility in the eyes of other stakeholders. Therefore, the selection of the convener can greatly ensure or influence the outcome of a multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Steps for Organizing Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues

Select Theme(s)

The issues to be addressed—those which require active deliberation by the different stakeholders—will determine which theme is selected. Clear themes, questions and topics for discussion need to be formulated depending on the desired outcome, the relevance to stakeholders and the context of specific needs.

Select Stakeholders

The next step is to identify the key stakeholders from the large array of institutions and individuals that could potentially affect or be affected by the issues. Two factors that need to be considered are influence and importance. Influence refers to the degree of power which stakeholders have to set the direction of the decisions to be made during or after the dialogue process. Importance relates to the degree to which the issue demands the active involvement of a given stakeholder group.

Select Place and Material

Selection of place must be such that it is convenient for all stakeholders to reach. Neutrality of the venue is also another concern as the use of certain premises might be viewed as taking the side of a particular stakeholder. Hence, the choice of premises is of significant importance to ensure equitable participation of all relevant stakeholders.

Relevant material, such as reports, studies or handouts, which simplify the process and make it easy to understand, should be collected or developed to provide a starting point for discussion.

Conduct Pre-Dialogue Consultations

Pre-dialogue consultations help outline the subject up for discussion, clarify the organizer's expectations from participants and define clear terms of engagement. It also helps to avoid any kind of misunderstanding, and it helps focus the dialogue and prevents side topics diverting attention from the main issue.

These consultations also help create awareness and interest in a new theme that can subsequently be taken up for action by some of the participants in the long term. Pre-dialogue consultations with individual stakeholders also reduce the gap of understanding and ensure that all participants have information up to a certain level.

Consultative meetings must be conducted with all stakeholders prior to the actual dialogue; it helps all stakeholders achieve their objectives and facilitates better dialogue.

Design the Event

The structure of the dialogue needs to be planned out in as much detail as possible. Besides following the above steps for preparation and having all logistic requirements in place, it should include details such as the following:

- Structure and flow of the multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Role of various participants
- Length of the multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Process to be followed during dialogue
- Contents
- Materials to be used
- Deciding the convener and her or his role

Implement

Implementation refers to the actual multi-stakeholder dialogue event. In general, the multi-stakeholder dialogue process involves a four-stage process: (1) inputs, (2) group discussion, (3) plenary and (4) discussion of plan of action. The length of a multi-stakeholder dialogue can range from 2–3 hours (involving high-level government officials) to 1–2 days (especially if the community is involved), depending on the purpose of the multi-stakeholder dialogue, number of participants, levels of multi-stakeholder dialogue and so on.

Input Session

The input session is the opening session where the background to the theme and its current relevance are presented. Input sessions usually involve presentations of study findings, cases, surveys and data on the theme and create a backdrop for the event to follow.

It is also appropriate to lay down ground rules for the dialogue at this stage. Seating arrangements during the actual multi-stakeholder dialogue have the ability to influence the direction of the dialogue and reinforce existing power equations. Therefore, it is important to consciously plan the seating arrangements.

Group Discussion

Once the stage is set, it is time to elicit participants' views on the subject through a discussion. Group discussions are used to identify issues and come up with action points for the future.

During this session, participants' knowledge level, perspectives and comfort level in discussing the issue with other stakeholders must be taken into consideration when dividing participants into groups.

Plenary Session

During the plenary session, the outputs from various small group discussions are consolidated and presented in a large group. The plenary can either consist of representatives from all the groups or a combination of such representatives and resource persons or experts who can provide further inputs or suggestions for further action. The facilitator plays a crucial role in consolidating the inputs so that a fair picture is presented and suggestions can be taken up in the future.

Discussion of Plan of Action

As part of the plenary, a plan of action is prepared, roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders are worked out and decisions are taken regarding how to proceed in the future.

This session plan can be altered and modified depending on the nature and objective of a particular multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Write Up the Report

It is always effective to allocate the responsibility of documenting the proceedings in detail to a specific documenter. The documenter should take the sole responsibility of recording all the deliberations and processes, which could be consolidated in consultation with the facilitator. Such documentation forms a guide for future initiatives that may result from the dialogue. Further, the report must be shared with all the participants.

Role of the Facilitator

The facilitator of the dialogue plays a key role during the event; therefore, it is important to have a person with sufficient experience and familiarity with the theme and a broad development vision to facilitate the event. The facilitator must be acceptable to the different stakeholders and their varying perspectives. Excellent facilitation and management skills along with the ability to manage conflict are other key characteristics that are required of the facilitator.

In fact, it is useful to plan the dialogue design in conjunction with the convener. It is also the facilitator's

responsibility to monitor the direction of the dialogue and make necessary changes in the process along the way to correct the process.

Challenges in Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

- Selection of themes of a common interest and ensuring participation of all stakeholders
- Selection of participants with non-bias
- Effective pre-dialogue consultation and preparation by participants who will be involved in the dialogue
- Dialogue design (some participants can be reluctant to speak up in certain circumstances)
- Capacity of facilitator
- Effective documentation

- Effective follow-up of dialogue output and its use
- Garnering resources

Ashok Singh

See also citizen participation; community dialogue; democratic dialogue; facilitation; large-group action research

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N

NARRATIVE

Narrative is a broad term describing the form of discourse generally known as a story. It may be presented in a number of different ways—through writing and its various forms, such as fiction, autobiography, and poetry; visually, through photographs, paintings or film, using images to document or represent events, or orally, through storytelling, conversation, interview and drama. All narratives tell of experiences and are commonly constructed to highlight a particular aspect or event, offering a powerful means of acknowledging and remembering them. This entry first outlines the key features and history of narrative and then focuses on approaches to narrative within research. The entry ends by summarizing and emphasizing the links between narrative and action research.

A feature of narrative is that it conventionally contains a beginning, a middle and an end and develops through its telling. As the story unfolds, characters, or players, are introduced, and often a character takes on the role of the narrator in a first person story. The unfolding might also take the form of a third person account or dialogue, as in a dramatic presentation or interview. Temporality is central to narrative, as a means of allowing the unfolding sequence of events and of organizing experiences within a time frame.

Aristotle's *Poetics* is considered one of the earliest writings to have defined the narrative plot, though Walter Ong's discourse on orality demonstrates the widespread use of non-linear narratives in oral cultures for transmission of information before written cultures developed. Religious texts such as the Sutras, Qur'an, Torah, Bhagavad Gita and Bible, having their basis in early oral narratives, all use recognized narrative structures to transmit philosophical, humanistic and behavioural guidance.

Narratives can be derived from personal (individual or collective), institutional, cultural or social sources and allow the narrator the capacity for extension and

for change. Such changes might come about through framing the story over a longer period, during which further events develop that change the story's conclusion, or through psychoanalytic intervention, where individuals might seek to perceive themselves differently or to elicit behavioural changes that might change their personal story or their perception of it.

Narratives are often framed within a broader meta-narrative or grand narrative which serves as a defining theory into which the local or personal narrative may not fit. Since society itself is storied and, when presented historically or reflectively, frequently biased in favour of those in positions of power, areas of friction emerge between the meta-narrative and the individual narrative. This allows counter-narratives and new social and cultural knowledges and acceptabilities to be produced. Thus, a narrative is also created through the agency of the cultural actors or storytellers who make known these 'new' stories.

Action research uses narratives through actively listening to stories of personal experience. This process can affect both the direction of the research and the narratives of other participants within the dynamic, emergent quality of effective action research. As narratives emerge organically, individuals express their own experiences and understandings to give access to deeper and richer knowing than is commonly available in more conventional research modes. The participants or co-researchers gain an awareness of how their ideas have developed, their reactions to specific events and the ways in which they might be dealt with differently. When that process is repeated throughout the participant group, and as the stories gather detail and input from others, additional interpretations emerge to give multi-vocal and multilayered insights to issues.

Approaches to Narratives in Research

Narrative research is the term given to a form of qualitative research that produces rich, detailed and descriptive

results. It comprises a number of methods that can be used singularly or in combination with each other. The use of narratives in research expands the capacity of any work to develop an in-depth understanding of a problem, and for this reason, it lends itself for use in conjunction with other research methods.

Narrative can be used with other qualitative methods such as focus groups, case studies or surveys to gather richer, denser material. Alongside quantitative studies, it can illuminate research findings, for example, by adding resonance and memorability to statistical data.

Narrative Inquiry

As with other forms of inquiry, narrative inquiry centres on a research question or issue to be investigated. It differs from other forms of research in that rather than seeking to clarify a specific and static question from which the inquiry may start, the inquiry constantly changes shape as the research progresses. D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly describe this as a process of searching and re-searching, of continual reformulation of the problem as compared with the problem definition and solution focus of conventional research.

Narrative inquiry uses the experiences of participants or co-researchers to explore a problem and may include the initiating researcher's own experiences. The inclusion of such autobiographical details and individual responses to the problem acknowledges the presence of the researcher and, arguably, demonstrates the researcher's real engagement with the research issue.

A narrative approach necessitates negotiation skills in managing the evolution of the research problem and the relationships between researchers and co-researchers. As the research proceeds and information gathering takes place (usually in the form of notes or recordings), it is transformed into a research product using an analysis of the narrative. A frequent marker of narrative research is a referral back to all those involved in the production of the research and inclusion of their responses as integral sections of the research text. The purpose of this might be to acknowledge the different voices and validate responses to the production or to deliberately mix the researcher and the participant voices in the production of a 'messy text'.

Narrative Analysis

The analysis of a narrative research will be determined by the context and values contextualizing the research problem: Political, feminist, post-colonial, economic, therapeutic or other frameworks might provide that context.

Any narrative might be also analyzed by its structure using the methods developed by Vladimir Propp,

who classified Russian folk tales into five themes with 31 elements (narratemes) that he considered applicable to all tales.

This structuralist analysis was further developed by William Labov, a sociolinguist who defined six elements of narrative as essential to making an experience (or controlling idea) 'tellable' and worth being heard. These were (1) an abstract (short summary), (2) orientation (time, place and characters involved that often direct the reader/listener's leaning towards the situation and characters), (3) a complicating action (a series of events that affect the story development and provide its plot), (4) evaluation (narrator commentary to indicate the significance of the story), (5) resolution (the final action and second part of the plot that solves the complicating action) and (6) the coda (the satisfactory ending of the story that offers a sense of completion).

A simplification of this is known as Freytag's Pyramid (originally developed by Gustav Freytag in 1863 as a means of explaining dramatic action). The pyramid structure serves to illustrate where action in a story is built up, as in the steep side of a pyramid, reaches a climatic event and then proceeds to decrease tension, as on the opposite side of the pyramid, until it reaches a conclusion and resolution.

The psychologist Jerome Bruner (along with Paul Ricoeur) argues that narrative is the only means of describing 'lived time'. Bruner takes a functional approach to narrative analysis by asking how the stories serve a purpose in individuals' lives and how they assist in making sense of life events and their potential for transformation.

Others, such as Norman Denzin and Ken Plummer, take their narratives from, and analyze them through, an experiential lens against the social, political and cultural context. This kind of analysis produces a dense, subjective reading that can give rise to counter-narratives and a representation of marginalized individual or group experiences.

Analyzing a narrative in this way offers a means of understanding how the story has been constructed rather than the content of the story. It becomes possible to understand the social positioning in which the narrator places himself or herself, what is important in the narrator's view, who the main perpetrators were and how they affected the outcome of the story. It also offers a perspective from which to re-examine the wider social, political or cultural backdrop against which it is framed.

Collective Narrative

Collective narrative, including collective biography, gives a complexity to the process of gathering narrative, its facilitation and analysis. The aim is to produce

a multi-voiced, multilayered narrative account. This begins with skilled facilitation which invites each participant to contribute input and establishes an emotionally safe environment in which that might take place. Drawing on Frigga Haug's memory work, a project arising out of the apparent disparity between female experience and prevailing political ideologies, Bronwyn Davies and Suzanne Gannon offer a framework upon which to perform the practice known as collective biography.

The knowledge from collective narratives gathered in this way is necessarily diverse and thus problematic in serving as a resolution to a research question. Its strength instead lies in the sense of agency participant or narrators gain through having their stories heard, the reflective questioning of narrators about their stories (as opposed to opinion gathering) and the production of complex, embodied, insightful research. That these might be then re-examined and used reflexively supports the practice of action research with its emphasis on redefining and extending research boundaries.

Issues Associated With Narrative

Issues that confront narrative research frequently centre on the ethics of the relationship between the initiating researcher and the co-researcher or the participant. The degree of familiarity and involvement might change throughout the process and may be an expected, possibly desired, effect of such research. That this is acknowledged and included in the research product is paramount in demonstrating authenticity of account. Narrative practitioners regard these windows to complex human interactions, including failed attempts and mistakes, as marks of validity in narrative research.

Objectivity is seen as desirable in conventional research based upon the view that there is an objective reality that is unaffected by researchers, participants or its social, cultural or political milieu. Narrative research refutes this, arguing instead for impartiality as the vital factor, with personal interest and involvement in the research issue indicative of engagement and commitment to the work.

Ownership too presents questions in narrative work. In a situation where co-researching takes place and where the details of participants' lives are presented in detail, in their own words, questions of ownership can arise. The work of both Patti Lather and Chris Smithies and that of Donna West take the opportunity to include these frictions as part of the narrative, adding to its impact as a co-production.

The aspiration for narrative work is to move beyond the current recognition of the value it adds to more conventional accounts in an economy-driven research environment to a wider acknowledgement of its significance in its own right. While narratives contribute a degree

of complexity and subtlety to any investigation, its emancipatory, transformative potential need also to be acknowledged. Social benefits in the form of therapeutic encounters, group support, community development or civil action might emerge during the course of narrative inquiry. It is precisely at these junctures that action research approaches combine with narrative in virtuous cycles: The transformative, action-oriented ambitions of action research are supported and enhanced by narratives; and at the same time, the practical and social developments made possible through an action orientation add further wealth and depth to the original narratives. The value of narrative lies in this reflexive action that becomes the driver for positive and effective research outcomes.

Jane Reece

See also autobiography; journaling; narrative inquiry; organizational storytelling; storytelling

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NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Stories are ubiquitous. Narrative thinking pervades almost every aspect of human culture, communication and discourse and has the potential to be the great

discovery for the human sciences. Narrative is fundamental to the social and cultural processes that organize and structure human behaviour and experience. Its relevance to action research is that narrative, as a primary mode of human knowing, offers an apparently effortless way for the mind to intrinsically code human action. If we view action research as involving the production of practical knowledge useful to people in their everyday lives, then narrative inquiry can be seen as a focus on how people are already doing this for themselves.

The study of narrative is a broad, multidisciplinary field, ranging across philosophy, literary theory, poetics, cinema, cognitive narratology, anthropology, sociology, organizational studies, psychology, psychotherapy, education and even medicine. Such a wide field leads inevitably to a range of methods of study, and this entry must, of necessity, limit its focus to narrative research that is concerned largely with the collection and analysis of personal narratives and the social, cultural and organizational contexts in which these arise. Some important pioneers associated with such an approach include Vladimir Propp, Paul Ricoeur, Jerome Bruner, Donald Polkinghorne, Elliot Mishler, Barbara Czarniawska, Catherine Riessman and Arthur Frank.

Listening for Peoples' Stories

Narrative inquiry involves listening (or looking) for peoples' stories. Whether this is in casual or formal conversation; in a group meeting or in a focus group; in a structured, semi-structured or 'narrative' interview; in biographical research or drawn from diaries, letters or other kinds of documentation, it seems clear that people are constantly immersed in narrative. Narrative is a portal to human thinking. People use stories to explain their own and others' past actions, provide a commentary on current activities and anticipate the possibilities of future events. Stories are imaginative and *world making*, bringing order and meaning to everyday experience and can be unsettling and disrupting as well. Stories need to be told. People tell their stories to reveal their feelings and concerns, to make a point, to entertain, to fulfil social demands, to fit in with what is expected and/or to challenge the status quo. In stories, people become engaged in creating a sense of identity both in the stories that they choose to tell as well as in the way they tell these stories. Frank has suggested, 'The capacity of stories is to allow us humans to be'.

Narrative Thinking

Narrative inquiry is much more than simply collecting stories. To appreciate its full scope, it is necessary to

appreciate that people are not merely telling stories but are actively participating in narrative thinking to make sense of their world. This narrative thinking organizes material events and human actions into sequential structures coded spatially and temporally, and at the same time, it adds colour, perspective and emphasis that effectively code human concern. The spoken and written narratives that stem from this thinking provide an efficient basis for the sharing of human knowledge and experience, as well as for establishing human self-identity. The philosopher Paul Ricoeur has remarked that in a society where narrative has died, its people would no longer be able to exchange their experiences.

One crucial feature of narrative thinking is that it has its own type of *logic*. The American philosopher Charles Peirce (pronounced 'Purse') has proposed a third mode of logical inference, which he calls *abduction*, running alongside deductive and inductive inference. Peirce's idea is that there is a mode of everyday thinking and human meaning making that works along the following lines. An unexpected or unpredicted event is first observed. But if it is hypothesized that *if* a certain notion is true, *then* this event could be regarded as a matter of course, then there are grounds to believe that this notion can explain the observed event. This kind of reasoning, which has come to be known as *inference to the best explanation*, fits precisely with how narrative thinking seems to work. What is most striking is the ease with which people seem to use a *narrative circumspection* in making sense of their experiences. People, when confronted with something that requires being made sense of, quickly and efficiently seize upon a story that puts the event into a plausible context. People are unwitting natural 'abductors'.

Narrative-Oriented Inquiry

Narrative inquiry, as opposed to the general study of narrative, does not entail simply following a basic set of steps or rules. It is better approached by carefully designing a specific narrative project, then considering appropriate ways of collecting the data, followed by making choices in analyzing the data. To this end, a dynamic framework for good practice, called Narrative-Oriented Inquiry (NOI), has been outlined by David Hiles and Ivo Čermák. The NOI model emphasizes transparency, inclusivity and a distinctive, pluralistic, critical approach to data analysis. An adapted version of this NOI model is presented in Figure 1.

NOI stresses the importance of starting the design process with *research questions*, formulated in the light of the focus of the study and the participants involved. Then, with the research question in mind, an *interview guide* is set up, outlining possible topics for an unstructured interview. A *narrative interview* follows

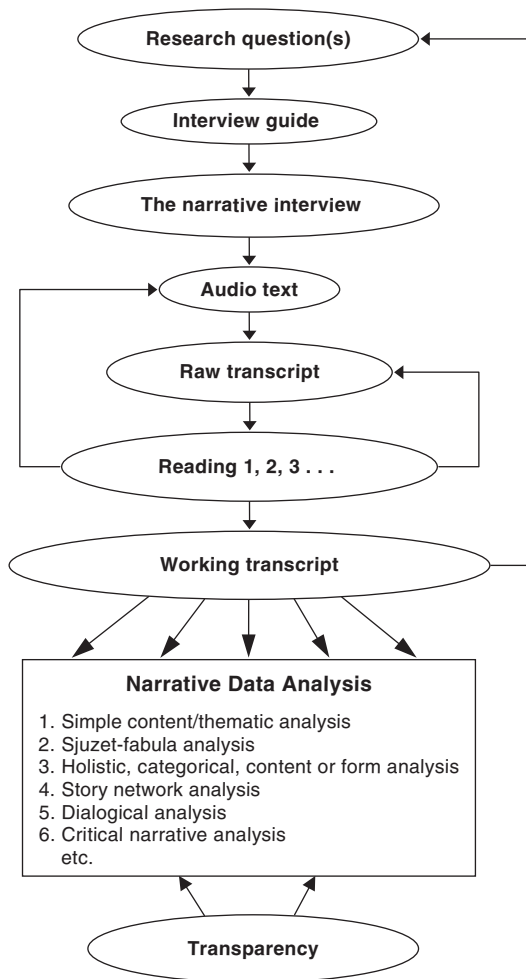


Figure 1 A Generalized Model of Narrative Inquiry

SOURCE: Adapted from Hiles, D. R., & Čermák, I. (2007). Narrative psychology. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds.), *SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (pp. 147–164). London, England: Sage.

the recommendations of Mishler, who sees such an interview as necessarily involving a joint construction of meaning. This interview normally requires digital audio recording to generate an *audio text*, which will be closely transcribed using transcription software. Of course, as an alternative to the audio text, written responses or other documents may be used. In whatever way the data is collected, the aim is to produce a *raw transcript* for the data analysis to begin.

This transcript is then read through several times (*Reading 1, 2, 3 . . .*) to build up a picture of the story as a whole. Some preliminary coding can then be employed. The only rule that needs to be followed at this stage is that the transcript should not be tidied up. Narratives are basically a sequence of episodes, or

events, and it is useful to produce a *working transcript* that uses a numbered sequence of self-contained episodes, or *moves*, in the telling of the story. Indeed, any transparent separation into specific units of analysis determined by the data-analytic strategy being planned might be used.

Choosing Approaches to Narrative Data Analysis

The final feature of the NOI model is the choosing of one or more approaches to narrative data analysis. Six strategies are considered here, but many more are possible. The important consideration is that, in choosing any analytic strategy, the research question is kept foremost in mind.

Simple Content or Thematic Analysis

This is the most basic approach to narrative analysis, covering a range of possibilities. These have been widely used in the field of qualitative inquiry, but in themselves, they are superficial and are not able to do justice to the narrative form being studied. It is generally accepted that it is a fallacy that a story can be reduced merely to a set of themes. Nevertheless, depending upon the original research question, this basic approach can sometimes be useful.

Sjuzet-Fabula Analysis

This approach to analysis provides the groundwork for further narrative analysis to be taken up. It involves breaking down the text into its two basic, underlying and interrelated components: into *sjuzet* (i.e. how the story is being told) and *fabula* (i.e. the sequence of events being related in the story). The *fabula*, if it is read through, ignoring the *sjuzet*, reads as a coherent but rather dull story. By contrast, it is the *sjuzet* that provides drama, emphasis, commentary, reflections as well as the subtle codes of the situated, occasioned action of the telling of the story.

Holistic, Categorical, Content or Form Analysis

Amia Lieblich, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach and Tamar Zilber have proposed an approach that uses four basic perspectives to analyzing narrative. Its strength is that it is probably more comprehensive than some other approaches and provides a broader context within which the two approaches above can be placed.

Story Network Analysis

David Boje has focused upon a range of analytical tools for organizational narrative research. His approach focuses on the *social architecture* within

which stories reside and circulate and how these stories are dynamic, assembling and disassembling as self-organizing systems. Towards this end, he offers a visual way of story mapping that is designed to code this complexity.

Dialogical Analysis

Frank has developed a socio-narratological approach to the study of narrative. In line with the basic premise of NOI, he advocates a view of 'method' as a heuristic rather than a prescriptive guide. Narrative analysis is by necessity dialogical, but Frank, in his approach, stresses how in the interpretation of stories there is a need to respect the underlying layers of imagination and realism that are reflected in the storyteller's struggle in a search for meaning.

Critical Narrative Analysis

An explicitly critical approach to narrative analysis is best exemplified in the work of Peter Emerson and Stephen Frosh. They characterize their approach as psychosocial, embracing the critical approaches of discourse analysis combined with sensitivity to individuals' active construction of meaning in their lives. It is possible to extend their work by considering the importance of undertaking a microanalysis of both *sjuzet* and *fabula*. Indeed, it is usually found that the subtleties of the *sjuzet* are especially important in understanding the ways in which individuals make and remake their *identity positioning* with respect to the story they are telling. These identity positions seem to point to an underlying fundamental narrative intelligence at work, active in the contestation between identity positions versus subject positions, and in the taking account of social and institutional contexts, power issues, the discursive context and so on. Throughout any critical analysis, interpretation is sustained by the continual refrain 'Why is this story told this way?'

Further Issues in Narrative Research

Finally, it is worth stressing that using the general approach to analyzing narrative data that is outlined here is something that can turn out to be surprisingly satisfying. The experience is that with the hard task of transcription over, one might first stare at the text slightly bewildered, wondering how to make sense of it. Then, using one or more of the approaches covered here, everything begins to fall into place. Gradually, insight into the core themes of the narrative, the active construction of meaning and the subtleties of the telling become clearer, and deeper critical issues begin to emerge.

Narrative inquiry also raises a critical ethical issue. Narratives can be highly personal, and research

participants may be easily identified from their stories. Extreme care needs to be taken in action research, especially where an 'institutional' context is involved, with respect to anonymity and confidentiality.

David R. Hiles and Ivo Čermák

See also interviews; narrative; organizational storytelling; practical knowing; storytelling; tacit knowledge

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NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The practice of product development is focused on the development of new engineered, manufactured products. Here, reducing both the product development interval and production cost while increasing product functionality and sustainability is a critical concern of managers. This concern is not unfounded. The rate of introduction and success of new products rely on the way in which managers structure, run, evaluate and improve their product development practice. Lateness to market can lead to major loss of market share and of income, while pre-production problems, unresolved due to time pressure, can lead to high costs, product recalls and liability claims. What is to be managed includes the product development process, the organizational interfaces (both within and outside the firm), the incorporation of functional perspectives such as industrial design and design for manufacture and the evaluation of the performance. In looking to improve

practice and performance, managers investigate the practice of product development and examine how to (re)gain competitive advantage through improvements arising from

- learning from success and failure and
- developing and maintaining a fit between the firm strategy and product development task environment and a fit within the task environment between the development task, individuals and the formal and informal management systems.

Perspectives on Product Development Practice

Three related but different perspectives on product development practice may be taken:

1. Product development as a linear conversion process
2. Product development as a recursive system
3. Product development as a complex adaptive system (CAS)

Product Development as a Linear Conversion Process

The first perspective sees product development as a (relatively) simple transformation process, converting inputs to outputs. The inputs are in two forms: (1) *transformed resources* and (2) *transforming resources*. The transforming resources (e.g. staff and design equipment) act on transformed resources (technical, market and time information) to convert an idea into a finished product, ready for release into the market. For example, the task of converting ideas into specifications, prototypes and finished products requires the flow of people, information and materials. The information and materials may be held in storage in raw or semi-processed states as the process evolves.

This perspective on product development as a linear conversion process is based upon relatively fixed, discrete and sequential stages where the flows and outcomes are relatively deterministic. It provides a simple and effective representation of the structural logic and flows associated with a stable product development situation. However, it leaves undeveloped the dynamic behaviours and relationships associated with the notion of product development as a process of discovery and translation into tangible and marketable outputs.

Product Development as a Recursive System

The second perspective sees product development as a process with concurrent and multiple feedback

loops that generate iterative behaviour and outcomes that are more difficult to predict. This process encompasses the activities, decisions and responses required to take a product from concept to market. The core process consists of five areas: (1) product development, (2) teamwork and organization, (3) process development, (4) market focus and (5) transfer to manufacturing. Leadership, resourcing and the use of appropriate systems and tools enable the core process of product development. A successful product development process leads to improved development performance, which is evaluated in relation to goals set for product launch and measured in terms of both product performance and customer satisfaction.

From this perspective, product development is a dynamic and fluid process, and radical innovations are possible. However, even though the perspective allows for two-way flows of communication, it does not allow explicitly for structural or behavioural instabilities in the process as the development activity proceeds.

Product Development as a CAS

The third perspective sees product development as a CAS. From this perspective, product development is non-linear, self-organizing and emergent. The feedback loops in the process produce sensitivity and potentially disproportionate outcomes seen in terms such as development time, product quality, product cost, manufacturing dependability or manufacturing flexibility. The process as a whole self-organizes, independently adapting and developing new configurations. Correspondingly, emergence occurs because the process allows experimentation, rule breaking and exploratory actions. The benefits of such a perspective are that it assumes that overall process configurations and behaviours are malleable.

Action Research in New Product Development: The Strategic Opportunity

The dynamic nature of product development practice, especially as viewed from a CAS perspective, underpins the usefulness and usability of action research as a means of enquiring into, learning from and improving practice. The practice of new product development is amenable to the application of action research to enable a process-based and learning mechanism-based approach to organizational transformation. Such transformation is especially relevant for organizations faced with developing new capabilities to address emerging market and technology-based demands and opportunities. However, in this respect, the practice of new product development is similar to that in many other areas of managerial responsibility.

It is in the development and application of platform thinking and product family planning that there is a specific opportunity, particular to product development. From this strategic perspective, individual products are based upon product platforms which encompass the design and components shared by a set of products, enhanced over time and from experience. In turn, product families and their related platforms represent the application of the firm's core and emerging capabilities. So a disciplined approach to developing and extending product families forms a strategic basis for achieving short-time intervals in the development of new products. A firm may use a core capability assessment to improve a product family. Such core capabilities are inherently dynamic and vulnerable to lack of patience, failure to adopt innovations, breaking up design teams and coasting on success.

Summary and Conclusion

At its core, product development is about problem-solving and decision-making under conditions of market and technological uncertainty. The choices open to managers challenge their capabilities to anticipate and to react to new information or experience. A strategic focus carries with it a requirement for discipline in understanding and improving practice, together with the various contributors from different functions.

Paul Coughlan

See also operations management

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NIELSEN, KURT AAGAARD

Kurt Aagaard Nielsen (1948–2012) was born and spent his childhood in northern Jutland in Denmark, where he grew up on a small farm as the youngest of four children. As a young man, he went to Copenhagen in order to study sociology at the university, and at an early age, he became a professor in the Department of Sociology. In the nineties, the department was shut down and reorganized—due to a critique of being too leftist in its academic production and too radical in its experiments with new forms of democratic decision-making as initiated by former students from the students' movement in the seventies, among them Nielsen. He went to Roskilde University (at the time Roskilde University Center) as a professor, with working life as his primary field of study, and here, his work with action research was developed. He was an inspiring and beloved teacher and supervisor, characterized by a 'social orientation' in his personal conduct that corresponded with his theoretical position and the spirit characteristic of his action research. Privately, in his younger days, he lived in different communes and later on in a nuclear family. He had four children, all boys, and at the time of his death, he lived with his second wife and his two youngest sons. He died from cancer in 2012 at the age of 63.

Intellectual Horizon

Nielsen's intellectual orientations were shaped in the late sixties and seventies through his participation in the students' movement as part of the 'new left'. He became one of the central figures in developing a sociological self-critique, questioning the established (and mostly undebated) ways of thinking and doing sociology, which in the Danish context at the time were strongly positivistic. The critical students wanted to reflect and question sociology in its societal relations and functions and in its historical-epistemological logics as well. Different forms of rereading of Karl Marx here played a crucial role. Among these different readings of Marx, a structural reading inspired by Louis Althusser was highly influential, but Nielsen instead turned to the tradition from critical theory (Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno) based, in the

first place, on the German sociologist and philosopher Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's book *Public Sphere and Experience*, published in 1972. This is a tradition that is not well known to a primarily English reading public; to have an impression of this way of theoretical approach, therefore, one might look to a work such as Moishe Postone's 1993 book *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, which could be said to take a similar stance to Negt's.

Negt in his writings focused on modern work seen in a societal and subjective, experience-based perspective, and he especially elaborated the constellation of 'work and human dignity' as a concrete utopian horizon within which all analyses of modern work should be elaborated. Nielsen grasped this thematic analysis, and in his doctoral thesis, he developed his theory of a (potential) *social orientation* as something inherent to modern work. Later on, he connected this critical theoretical way of analysis to a pragmatist approach as developed by Richard Sennett. In its empirical dimensions, this core area of his academic work was elaborated in close relation to his work with action research that took form through the 1980s and onwards, which also transcended the pure critical stance of his early work. The problematic nature of modern work thus remained a central interest of his, but his action research had a larger span.

Critical Utopian Action Research

From the mid eighties until his death, Nielsen co-created a specific kind of action research which eventually was called Critical Utopian Action Research, primarily together with Birger Steen Nielsen, but especially in the first, initial period, they both also worked closely together with Peter Olsén and Kirsten Paaby. (Nielsen and Olsén also became professors at Roskilde University, while Paaby went to Oslo, Norway, where she was the co-founder of the independent institution *Idebanken* [The Bank of Ideas].) They brought various disciplines and traditions together, such as sociology, social psychology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, social learning theory, people's enlightenment, drama and critical theory, and setting out from this constellation, they developed Critical Utopian Action Research.

The inspiration from Negt's ideas of experiential learning and efforts trying to build up 'counter public areas' was important, and so was his idea of democracy as a way of living, which could easily be combined with a more general inspiration from the work of Paulo Freire. Studying the work of Kurt Lewin, with its basic democratic tenor, led to the conceptualization of these aspirations as a kind of action research. But the strongest

impulse came from the Austrian German publicist and grass-roots activist Robert Jungk and his idea of Future-Creating Workshops.

Practically developed through a series of major action research projects, they formed Critical Utopian Action Research. It was conceptualized and practised as committed to the democratization of societal life in all its common dimensions. Compared with many other forms of action research as they are practised today (especially in the different forms of fusion with managerial strategies), this basic and radical democratic commitment could be said to mark a specific profile of Critical Utopian Action Research. Today, it is still primarily based in Denmark, but with ramifications for Norway and Sweden as well, and its influence is growing internationally.

The democratic endeavour is intimately related to putting a critical dimension at a central place in action research, but inextricably, it is bound to a utopian dimension—as the two poles of a relation—giving the practical, experimental work its direction and dynamics. Experience shows that this kind of action research furthers the emergence of social imagination understood as a transformation of the participating citizens' everyday life experiences. And social imagination, for its part, could be understood as pivotal to action research that seeks to further citizens' courage and ability to develop and take over responsibility for their 'common affairs'. This takes place not in isolated autonomy within bounded communities or interest groups but in broader co-operations within different kinds of public spheres and, thus, also transcends everyday life experiences, among other things, by getting into mutual dialogues with experts of different kinds. Thus, Critical Utopian Action Research still adheres to a classical action dimension interpreted in a basic political sense as related to autonomy and emancipation. This could be said to mark a difference with broad tendencies in today's participatory research, most obvious perhaps in Interactive Research, explicitly leaving the *action* term behind.

Thus, Critical Utopian Action Research tries to emphasize a societal dimension as crucial if you want to be true to the legacy of the work of Lewin and Freire while at the same time emphasizing the necessity for a strict localization of the concrete action research projects, staying close to people's everyday life. In line with this, it also seeks answers to the current crisis (understood as an erosion of sustainability, welfare and democracy), which includes problematizing modernization agendas as such with their instrumental and strategic, but nevertheless illusory, proposals of solutions. As an alternative to this, the concept of commons has increasingly been put at the centre of Critical Utopian Action Research.

This horizon also implies a rejection of the notion of purely local knowledge in favour of an idea of the general or the universal dimension within the local or particular. This has impacts for the interpretation of the research dimension of action research that is linked to this dialectical unity of local and universal or particular and general, and therefore, the role of the researchers also widely transcends the dimension of being a facilitator. This also marks a distance to the paradigm of Mode 2, with its strictly pragmatic idea of so-called robust, local or contextual knowledge as the criterion of relevance and of the quality of knowledge creation.

Major action research projects in which Kurt Aagaard Nielsen played a decisive part concerned (a) the transformation of urban everyday life, working together with unemployed, mostly younger citizens from Copenhagen along with his colleagues Paaby and Nielsen; (b) the democratization of industrial work, working together with unskilled female workers within the Danish fishing industry ('Industry and Happiness') and with Olsén and Nielsen; (c) the development of alternatives to volatile, fluid and limitless relations in work, working together with bus drivers and caretakers and with colleagues Lise Drewes Nielsen, Eva Munk Madsen, Katrine Hartmann-Petersen and Susan Mahler, and (d) two major projects on democratic nature management and local community development, based at two different rural locations in Denmark, working together with local citizens and with Nielsen. His publications on action research include a long list of books and articles, most of them in Danish and a few in English (and German) too.

Action Research as a Reflexive and Co-Operative Community

In the last decade of his life, Nielsen dedicated part of his work to building up connections between different parts of the relatively weak and dispersed action research community in Denmark and Scandinavia in the first place and also at an international scale. Thus, he was co-initiator in establishing a Danish Action Research Network, holding regular conferences, and he made significant efforts to bring Scandinavian action research milieus into dialogical relations. Likewise, he was co-initiator of the international network Action Research Action Learning Interest Group, arranging yearly Ph.D. seminars with participants from all over the world, and of the Center for Action Research and Democratic Societal Development at Roskilde University. Together with Lennart Svensson, he edited the volume *Action Research and Interactive Research: Beyond Practice and Theory*, which presents a broad picture of Scandinavian action research. Together with Ewa Gunnarsson and Nielsen, he was

working on a new book on Scandinavian Action Research, *Action Research for Democracy*, which is now being released with Gunnarsson, Nielsen and Hans Peter Hansen as editors. He was part of the editors' board of the journal *Action Research*. In the last text to be published by him alone, recalling the legacy from Wilhelm von Humboldt, he advocated the necessity of establishing action research as a critical, reflexive and co-operative academic community open and transparent to society in order to protect and preserve action research in its unique quality as a societally committed, free science. His own efforts within action research, indeed, might very well be regarded and valued in this perspective.

Birger Steen Nielsen

See also Critical Utopian Action Research; Interactive Research; Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production

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NOFFKE, SUSAN

Susan (Sue) Noffke often reminded people that her hometown of Appleton, Wisconsin, was also the home of the infamous Senator Joe McCarthy, the disgraceful ‘anti-communist’ pursuer of independent thinkers and activists. With her father, a unionist, working in the local mill, Sue’s frame of reference was always shaped by the need to resist the thugery of institutionalized violence and the imbalance of power it represented. As a middle school teacher (1972–82) in the Tomah and Monona public schools in Wisconsin, she was an active unionist (as well as local softball player) and took on the task of union bargaining, building her understanding of both her sister and brother teachers and district education politics.

From school teaching, Noffke went into academic work. In this world, Noffke is best known for her focus on educational action research: writing, teaching, doctoral supervision and projects with teachers and communities. From the mid eighties to June 2013, she worked in university settings, part-time as a teaching assistant in the teacher education programme of the University of Wisconsin–Madison while she worked towards her doctoral degree, then at the State University of New York at Buffalo (1989–93) in their teacher education programme and from 1993 to 2013 at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. A key focus for her teacher education work was in social studies teaching, which she was able to use as a platform for facilitating student teachers’ work in urban schools and their communities and working with local district teachers on social studies curriculum over a number of years. She had a lifelong passion for children’s books, using them to raise explorations of social and economic injustice through attention to social issues covered in her collection of books (now donated to the Urbana Free Library). Anti-racist education was a particular focus for thinking, reading, teaching and action on schooling, teacher education, social studies and curriculum theory; action research was a vehicle for following that concern through in multiple projects—with students, teachers, parents and communities.

Often, only those directly involved knew of such projects, although some reached formal publication in journals. She wrote with teachers to critique the cultural bias of standardized tests, lobbied with teachers whose children had to put up with blocked sewers at their school and helped organize the essay competitions which encouraged elementary students to write about (in)justice in their daily lives for Martin Luther King Day. Nine years of dialogue, co-research and

hard work in a school district showed up in classroom materials in schools and materials for teaching social studies in teacher education. The long-term social studies curriculum themes chosen by these local teachers reflect their concern for students as knowledge makers, alongside their teacher-researchers: historical thinking, problem-solving, citizenship and social justice. Such service to teachers and their students was a hallmark of Noffke’s commitment to teachers: helping to support them to become critical practitioners through curriculum development, working with communities and engaging in action research projects on current issues. There are many more untold tales of such commitment.

Working in a university thus gave Noffke an important base for her informed activism, working with local school districts and their communities as well as her classes, both undergraduate and graduate. She loved working with colleagues, including former students, building a large network across the globe, from Korea to Colombia, Mexico to Seattle, Liverpool to Cambridge and Cape Town to Melbourne. Her graduate class in action research was a place for local teachers and international scholars to find one another and their own projects. These students were welcomed into her family home regularly. She loved teachers and teaching—a job that was, in her view, a site for intellectual and daily practical challenges. It is this focus on teachers and their work that underpinned her interest in action research that makes a difference in terms of human dignity and justice.

Noffke wrote about educational action research using a framework that insisted on the links between personal, professional and political domains—not as separate domains but as necessary dimensions of knowing and acting. Her 1990 doctorate thesis considered action research historically, treating its emergence as a ‘family’ of related movements in the USA, UK, Australia and Germany. Here, she unpacked the labelling of different kinds of action research, being interested in the complex understandings that could arise from her historical studies and seeing the problems of calling one country or period ‘traditional’ or ‘technical’, another practical and yet another ‘critical’. In her view, such labels obscured the relationships between the different forms of action research and the inherent contradictions that each approach embodied, such as the tension between democracy and the social engineering impulses of USA’s efforts in the mid twentieth century. While she had her own preferences, she was not interested in pursuing the ‘definition wars’ of whose version of action research was more accurate, more empowering or more ‘pure’. Rather, she wanted to understand better how the local was connected to the broader social context,

history and power relations, in order to help change the present.

Noffke's major literature overview of educational action research, in the prestigious *Review of Research in Education*, started by reference to Martin Luther King's 1966 challenge to social scientists, namely, 'We ask you to make society's problems your laboratory. We ask you to translate your data into direction—direction for action'. Invoking this work, Noffke argued for action research as contributing to knowledge making for and by the teaching profession, in the service of justice, by making the argument that there are always links between forms of action research and politics and showing the personal and professional dimensions alongside those political dimensions. She argued that personal transformation is necessary but insufficient in action research for social change: The political is always in operation and can only artificially be separated from the personal or professional. To deny this political aspect is to support the agenda of the status quo, whether consciously or not. By pointing to the different purposes and benefits of different kinds of action research, Noffke gave signposts to help her readers unpack what is at stake in those differences and provided resources to address the tensions she saw as productive and generative in action research efforts.

In revisiting this argument in her chapter in the *Handbook of Educational Action Research* she co-edited with Bridget Somekh, Noffke pointed out how the stakes for educational change have altered around the globe, making action research both more necessary and more difficult in the policy climate that favours narrow forms of accountability, high stakes testing and research as measurement. Connecting the necessarily local activity of action research with global contexts and issues, she drew on the work of Arjun Appadurai, who argues for the right to research. For Noffke, this right meant commitment to action research that linked knowledge and practice, encouraging knowledge production among those usually marginalized from it, with personal, professional and political benefits in both knowledge and practice, redressing injustice.

Noffke died before her next book on action research for practitioners could come to fruition and while her projects were still under way. Educational action researchers will miss her tough mind and generous collaborations.

Marie Brennan

See also classroom-based action research; educational action research; practitioner inquiry; teaching action researchers

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NON-INDIGENOUS ALLY

According to Ann Bishop, allies are people who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society's patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns. Becoming an ally means learning about systems of oppression, figuring out our own (conscious or unconscious) roles in maintaining those systems and then working alongside those most affected to try and address the inequity.

The concept of 'allyship' is a work in progress: Its research roots can be traced to a variety of communities, including the lesbian, gay, transgendered, bisexual, queer and two-spirited communities and their efforts to create safer and more meaningful engagement with researchers who desired to work with them. Much of the continued effort to understand authentic, genuine and honest 'allyship' has emerged from within indigenous and non-indigenous partnerships in community-based research. This entry examines the roles non-indigenous allies can play within action research environments by exploring the concepts of 'allyship', positionality and reflexive practice in relation to working with indigenous communities.

Each community may have a different and evolving definition of what it means to be an ally, but generally, the concept is imbued with the notion of cultivating, building and strengthening relationships between two differing individuals, groups or communities based on respectful, meaningful and beneficial interactions. Often underlying these alliances is a common goal to achieve some sort of collaborative change.

The context of research with indigenous communities globally is often rooted in traumatic experiences of research *on* rather than *in partnership with* indigenous

peoples. Indigenous communities experienced—and, in some cases, continue to experience—‘helicopter-style’ research where researchers enter communities, take the knowledge that they feel they need and then leave, with very little or no follow-up. A cycle of injustice and hurt has developed over time. In response, many indigenous communities have demanded models of better practice in research. These models relate not just to researchers who approach communities from a different racial or cultural background but also to those who may share cultural roots but enter a community with some piece of their identity or history positioning them as an ‘outsider’. This outsider experience may reflect being away from their community for years, being of a different socio-economic status than the majority of the community members, lacking the ability to speak the language of the community or various other differing characteristics.

Many of the best practice models that have been developed focus on the need for researchers themselves to engage with their own assumptions, beliefs and experiences prior to and during their work within a community. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a well-respected author on the topic of research with indigenous communities, argues that the central teaching for non-indigenous researchers working with indigenous communities ought to focus on humility as a foundation for research. She encourages researchers to ask themselves, ‘What can I do? Can I actually do anything?’. She asks researchers to critically think through what it means to do research ‘in a good way’ with indigenous communities.

Many indigenous and non-indigenous researchers are thinking through the process of how to be involved in community-based action research in a way that respects the communities they are working within. Some non-indigenous researchers have described their experiences working with indigenous communities as journeys which challenge them to examine their own assumptions about indigenous peoples and about research more broadly. In addition to ‘unlearning’ assumptions about research, it is also imperative to learn about one’s own position within the many communities with which one lives, works and plays. A good place to start is by learning about one’s own cultural and family histories. Knowing about oneself and where one comes from creates a stronger ability to be honest with oneself about privilege and power and the ways these interact to create systems of oppression.

Positionality

Positionality can be defined as a self-understanding of the historical and contemporary identities each researcher brings into research relationships. In Peggy McIntosh’s famous article ‘White Privilege: Unpacking

the Invisible Knapsack’, she writes about how racial markers often afford some groups particular privileges that they may not even be consciously aware of (e.g. the privilege to go about daily activities free of racial discrimination or sexism). Her work has been drawn on by many indigenous and non-indigenous academics and activists who have challenged researchers to think about their positionality and ‘identity backpacks’. These metaphorical invisible (but sometimes very visible) backpacks, and their many compartments, need to be unpacked and examined in order to explore how they may affect our ability to engage in mutually respectful and humbling research.

Some non-indigenous researchers, who have been raised and educated within a societal system that has benefitted from and promoted colonization, may feel that their own positionality as non-indigenous people places them within the realm of ‘cultural outsiders’. Their recognition of both the historical and the contemporary aspects of their own identities—and how those identities relate to the violence and suffering of the communities they work within—is a key example of their own efforts to unpack their identity backpacks.

When working with indigenous communities (and other communities that experience structural oppression), it is common for students and researchers to find themselves questioning what can actually be done to be of service to the communities in which they work. This questioning can lead to a line of challenging personal inquiry around acknowledging and accepting personal limitations as researchers and as human beings. Some researchers learn to refer to this feeling as being humble(d). In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith contends that embracing humility—through humour, self-reflection and experience—is a central component of finding mutually respectful spaces between indigenous and non-indigenous researchers.

For some students and researchers, defining one’s own positionality can be a challenging process. While a Western world view often privileges individualism, an indigenous world view sees everyone as interconnected with others in their social and natural worlds. As a result, knowing who we are, and where we come from, becomes a central part of formal introductions. Unpacking an identity backpack can help new researchers better articulate their history, and intentions, and can open the door for more fruitful and honest collaborations.

Exploring many parts of one’s own history and identity, including family history, cultural and sexual identity and past personal experiences, can be rewarding. For some, the journey of identity discovery is prompted through conversations with community members, research colleagues or fellow students. At their best, these conversations emphasize, in a gentle way, what pieces of one’s own identity puzzle may be missing or

yet to be discovered. These conversations may emphasize that it is crucial to know where one comes from and why one may be drawn to working as an ally with indigenous (or other) communities. Having this knowledge not only grounds us in the past but also allows us to walk a better path in the present and future.

Research, Practice and Reflexivity: A Proposed Model for Self-Engagement

Smith encourages researchers who are interested in decolonizing the research process (allies as well as indigenous researchers) to ask themselves a series of probing questions: Whose research is it? Who owns it? Who will benefit from this research? How will the results be shared and disseminated? Whose voices will be heard through the research? In thinking through (and negotiating) answers to these questions, researchers may need to engage in lengthy and fruitful discussions with their potential partners and come to a consensus about the ways in which a project will be approached and implemented. Developing a shared understanding of the purpose, goals and outcomes of the research, as well as how researchers intend to be/live within the community, can lay the solid foundations for a strong partnership.

Becoming an ally means learning to listen and engaging with these questions or conversations with humility and respect. It may mean becoming comfortable with uncomfortable moments and having assumptions and intentions challenged over and over again. Becoming an ally means being willing to make mistakes and to reflect deeply on those experiences. It means becoming conscious of what we don't know and taking the time and energy to pause, listen and learn.

Central to beginning this process is the notion of reflexivity. Reflexivity can be defined as making time to dialogue with one's self and with others. It is crucial to creating authentic and honest relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous researchers, and therefore to 'allyship'. The constant and evolving questioning of one's own assumptions and experiences challenges us to acknowledge and perhaps attempt to 'unlearn' those assumptions and experiences. In addition, it encourages discovery of one's own positionality through internal and external conversations. This process humbles; it asks for a critical examination of identity and place within the communities that students and researchers serve.

Model: The Relationship Between Research&Practice and Reflexivity

For some, it is helpful to imagine what a visual representation and reminder of this process may look like.

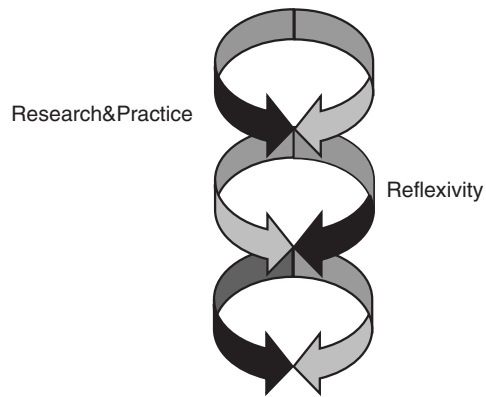


Figure 1 Visual Representation of Research&Practice and Reflexivity

One possibility of such a representation is a continuous double helix, with research&practice on one side and reflexivity on the other (Figure 1).

Because research and practice are so closely intertwined, particularly within action research, they are depicted here as 'research&practice'. The reflexivity side of the model represents continuous dialogue, whether it is dialogue with one's self, with others or both. In order to promote action research that aims to be genuine, respectful and humble in its actions, both sides need each other to exist. As can be seen in the model, the two sides of the helix balance each other; one cannot move forward without the other.

The arrows imply that the process relies upon constantly moving and evolving relationships. The need for this interconnectedness is even more pronounced when working as an outsider within a particular community or culture. Respectful research practice cannot take place between non-indigenous researchers and Aboriginal communities without a constant emphasis on critical self-reflexivity in terms of beliefs, values and positionality. It is imperative that this reflexivity is grounded in the continuous development of knowledge relating to the historical and contemporary experiences of the communities one is working within.

As part of unlearning one's own assumptions and embracing being humble(d), it is critical to also acknowledge that there are many aspects of the community in which one works that remain off limits in terms of access or understanding because of the position one may take as an outsider based on one's own identity.

Conclusion

The concept of 'allyship' is ever evolving. Indigenous communities are expanding the agenda of allyship

through concepts such as cultural safety and through policies such as ownership, control, access and possession, developed by and for First Nations communities within Canada. The roots of allyship are grounded in cultivating partnerships based on respect and humility. In order to attempt cultivating such partnerships, it is important to engage one's self in a constant practice of reflexivity and positionality: Where do you come from? Why do you do the things you do? What are your motivations? What are you gaining? Where is your heart at? Is your soul clear?

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See also critical reflection; indigenous research methods; post-colonial theory; reflective practice

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power and steering automatically improve on the conditions for participation?

By the 1950s, a growing body of research suggested that there was a need for a reasonable degree of freedom, or autonomy, in the work role for individual participation to be possible. Even more important was the recognition that making the notion of autonomy real created a need for active, constructive efforts, performed jointly by all concerned, and that this kind of constructivism did not follow automatically from any of the competing world views. Economic liberalism as well as socialism seemed to be associated with a continuously growing degree of division of work. This was the terrain entered by the Industrial Democracy Program in Norway when it appeared in the 1960s.

Initiated by researchers from the Tavistock Institute in the UK in association with the forerunners of the Work Research Institute in Norway, the programme implied generating new forms of workplace development processes that could halt the trend towards increased division of work and replace it with a trend towards increased autonomy for all employees. Even though the programme was developed in co-operation with the Confederation of Trade Unions and the corresponding employer association, it could not reach all workplaces even in a small country in one sweeping move. The initial focus was, consequently, on a limited number of field sites that could be provided with intensive research support. The expectation was that these projects could function as nodes in networks for diffusion throughout the working life.

The role undertaken by research in the projects drew inspiration from Kurt Lewin and his idea of action research. In advance of the projects, research had developed perspectives on the notion of autonomy and on the conditions needed for autonomy in work to become possible. Being run, although with modifications, as experiments, research was in charge of most of the organizational tasks emerging within the context of the projects, such as the establishment of steering and project groups and the initiation of meetings, conferences and other encounters.

The projects were successful and attracted much interest, even internationally. Most widely recognized was a project in a process plant belonging to the major industrial group in Norway, Hydro, where the pattern of hierarchically structured departments for the running of the factory, the control room and maintenance was replaced by shift groups where each group was responsible for all functions. This demanded new forms of integration between the operators and new mechanisms for deciding who was to do what at each and every time. Management was reoriented towards boundary conditions, experience-supporting training systems were introduced and salary systems were

NORWEGIAN INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT

Along with the process of industrialization, there emerged debates about the effects of this process on democracy. Initially being structured around the two major world views—(1) economic liberalism and (2) Marxist-inspired socialism—the early debates came to centre on ownership, worker representation in the steering bodies of companies, the relationships between employers and unions and other similar issues. Stepwise, however, the issue of the participation of the individual worker entered the scene as well. Would new patterns of

changed from performance premium to competence premium. Productivity as well as quality was high, and the plant could be run by much fewer people than originally planned.

With this, the benefits of autonomy in work had been subject to a powerful demonstration. This notwithstanding, the experiments created discussion rather than a broad wave of concrete change. It is possible to see this as 'resistance to change', but it is also possible to see it in the light of the complexity involved in creating the kind of local constructivism needed to establish and sustain autonomy-based work. Ultimately, it is not only principles of job design that are at stake but also issues like labour-management relations in general, the role of experience in competence development, the extent to which society-level reforms support worker participation and local solutions and more. Instead of a direct replication of the patterns of the experimental projects, the situation in Norway became characterized by a development of the constructivist capacity of society, involving issues such as the co-operation between the labour market parties, the emphasis on participation in workplace health and safety, the establishment of more permanent systems for support to local development processes and the merger of workplace development with the development of networks, clusters and 'learning regions'.

Since the challenge of breaking the drift towards more and more division of work was universal, the Norwegian programme acted as a trigger for initiatives in many parts of the world. Specific projects resembling the Norwegian ones emerged in a number of countries, such as Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Canada and the USA, but there appeared many other initiatives as well, such as in education and training.

As far as research is concerned, there were, in particular, three lines emanating from the early projects: first, a continued development of the socio-technical systems perspective to provide a better foundation for the generation of autonomy and participation under variable technological conditions; second, a line of research providing a continuous examination of measures and methods in workplace development, in particular the turn towards more horizontal, or participative, relationships between research and its project partners, as reflected in notions like participative design and various forms of conferences reflecting the principle of equality between all participants, and, third, a line that came to focus on the constructive capacity of society's institutions, focusing on the role of the labour market parties, the characteristics of public reforms and other similar issues. Although these lines overlap, they also came to constitute somewhat different traditions as far as research is concerned.

The Industrial Democracy Program appeared at a time when the shadows from early industrialization, with great social distance between workers and managers, and associated class-based struggles and conflicts, were still strongly present. Today, autonomy and participation are mostly discussed purely with reference to issues like learning, innovation and the knowledge economy. The events that have occurred in several countries in the wake of the recent crises demonstrate, however, that learning, knowledge and innovation are not enough. There is a need for innovations to be socially responsible and for learning and knowledge to benefit all members of society and not only small groups of investors and owners. Although nobody would argue a return to the industrial democracy debates of the previous century, there is clearly a need to reintroduce the issue of broad participation as a challenge on the level of society.

Bjørn Gustavsen and Thoralf Qvale

See also Emery, Fred; regional development; Search Conference; Tavistock Institute

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NURSING

Nursing is the largest profession in the health-care sector. Modern-day nursing takes place in a range of settings and draws from diverse disciplines and foundations, including the health sciences, social sciences, humanities and human sciences, to inform its practice. In lay language, the term *nurse* is used to denote different but related practitioners, such as registered nurses, nursing assistants, nurses' aides and licensed practical nurses. The focus of this entry is on registered nurses (RNs). RNs have distinct scopes of practice and often oversee the work of the preceding health service providers. Furthermore, nursing developments that have taken place in the West have informed this entry. It is acknowledged that nursing has been in existence across

the globe and throughout history, and with the advent of technology and the professionalization of nursing, the differences in education and research approaches are diminishing.

History

Nursing has a long history of existence. Promoting healing among the ill and caring for the sick and dying were roles taken on by relatives, hired labour, religious sectors and volunteers across time and place. With the roots of modern-day nursing dating to Florence Nightingale's seminal and methodological approach to practice and research during the nineteenth century, the twentieth century saw the professionalization and *scientification* of nursing. Current-day nursing practice takes place within and across settings such as, but not limited to, communities, hospitals, primary health care, mental health care, public health, schools and policy sectors.

Education

Nursing education has seen rapid changes over the course of the past century. Specifically, with the expansion of the scientific paradigm across health disciplines, in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, nursing knowledge acquisition moved from informal to semiformal training, which often took place in hospitals and religiously affiliated hospitals. Beginning in the mid twentieth century, the education of nurses was further formalized as colleges and universities developed and offered programmes in nursing education. Currently, to become an RN, a minimum of 3 years of college education is required. In some countries, such as Canada, entry to practice requires a minimum of a university-based baccalaureate degree (except in the province of Quebec). Graduate nursing education has extended, with universities offering masters-level, and in some cases doctoral-level, nursing degrees. To enter academic positions, prior postdoctoral training is increasingly becoming a requirement. Higher levels of nursing education have had a reciprocal relationship with the rapidly growing research basis in nursing and recognition of the complexity of health promotion and health-care delivery.

Research

Current nursing research is influenced by scientific and naturalistic paradigms. As a result, nurse researchers can have expertise in quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods approaches. Ontologic and axiologic differences are overtly recognized as nursing students, beginning at the undergraduate level, are asked to reflect on the implications of paradigms on research

approaches and methods. Depending on the research topic and the particular epistemological orientation of the nursing researcher, nursing studies can address a range of health questions and are very different from each other. For example, randomized clinical trials can be utilized to examine the efficacy of nursing interventions. Qualitative research traditions (e.g. ethnography, phenomenology, Grounded Theory or discourse analysis) can be applied to examine the health-related experiences of individuals, families or communities. As nursing researchers are gaining recognition across disciplines, they are increasingly leading multidisciplinary teams of researchers inquiring into nursing or health-related phenomena.

Practice

Nursing practice is informed by, and in turn informs, nursing research and education. Earlier, theoretical focus was on the person, the health-care system and the social/physical environments. Later, systems-oriented perspectives also played a role, as did recognition of the fluid and interactive nature of relationships across systems. More recently, notions of power, privilege and emancipation were also considered. As a result, nursing is an evolving profession that embeds diverse perspectives and ways of knowing. Nursing education exposes students to basic sciences (e.g. anatomy, physiology, pharmacology), health sciences (e.g. clinical nursing practice) as well as social sciences (e.g. sociology of health and illness) and humanities (e.g. cultural aspects of nursing practice). To become an RN, following completion of undergraduate or college education, graduates must successfully pass licensing exams. To maintain one's status as an RN, the annual renewal of a state or provincial professional nursing college registration is required.

Nursing Identity: An Evolution

The nursing profession's identity has gone through transitions, as its leaders have advocated for and established it as a distinct, autonomous profession and disciplinary field. Nursing's struggle for identity has been related to a number of intersections, including its (a) historical origins, (b) distribution of power within the health-care sector and (c) gendered labour force. Each point is further considered below.

Historical Origins

The historical origins of nursing draw from across time and place. The modernization of nursing practice has been an ongoing process and is informed by its scholarly and empirical evolution. It has also been influenced by nursing knowledge accumulated over the

centuries. The emergence and proliferation of multiple nursing theories in the twentieth century were among the efforts to establish its modern identity. Continuing debates about what constitutes nursing knowledge and what its paradigmatic orientation is, or should be, are a reflection of its establishment as a scholarly field. For example, *Nursing Philosophy*, a peer-reviewed journal, provides a forum for inquiring into the nature of nursing. The rapidly growing body of evidence (knowledge)-based nursing has brought its discipline into the scholarly fields.

Distribution of Power

To this day, the distribution of professional power and decision-making within the health-care sector remains unequal. Within the hospital sector, nurses have the responsibility to carry out medical decisions but not the power to make them. Yet in certain other health sectors, nurses have had higher levels of autonomy, such as public health nursing, mental health nursing and maternal-child nursing.

Gendered Labour Force

Nursing continues to be a gendered profession, with a predominant proportion of its labour force consisting of women. While the predominance of women is recognized as a strength of nursing in the eyes of the public (with notions of caring often being linked to women), the persisting gendered inequalities across societies (e.g. gendered income disparities and concurrent child-rearing and eldercare) continue to affect nursing in sustaining a consistently educated labour force at the full-time practice level.

Action Research in Nursing

Action research (and related approaches) has a particular relevance for nursing because both aim to link theory, research and practice. A growing number of nursing studies are applying action research, participatory research and Participatory Action Research approaches to examining health disparities with marginalized populations or within nursing practice. To date, most of this research, and in particular those studies drawing upon participatory research and Participatory Action Research approaches, have taken place in community settings. For example, the Community-Based Participatory Research study by Foster, Chiang, Hillard, Hall, and Heath (2010) focused on perceptions of maternity care in the Dominican Republic. Judith Burgess and Mary Ellen Purkis (2010) engaged nurse practitioners in British Columbia (Canada) and examined the power and politics of collaboration in their role development. Through MacDonnell's (2007) case study of community

nurses, which applied a feminist bioethics framework, public health nurses in Ontario (Canada) developed a policy resolution for ethical sexual diversity nursing research. In other examples, nurse researchers have looked at health-related phenomenon in community settings, applying Participatory Action Research with immigrant populations, such as mental health promotion with newcomer female youth, with newcomer male and female youth and with immigrant women.

Summary

In summary, modern nursing has experienced significant advancements over the past century and established itself as a scholarly and disciplinary field. Although nursing draws from different disciplines and foundations, it articulates its phenomena of interest in a uniquely nursing ontological position. Specifically, in the practice of nursing, differences between constructivist and positivist paradigms are strategically reconciled, recognizing that good nursing practice is both an art and a science. The twenty-first century will see continued expansion of nursing research and education, and its practice delivery will continue to be influenced by the gendered disparities persistent across societies. Action research (and related approaches) will continue to have a particular relevance for nursing.

Nazilla Khanlou

See also health care; health promotion; Participatory Action Research

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OBJECTIVITY

See Philosophy of Science

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

The Office of Community-Based Research (OCBR), University of Victoria, British Columbia, was established in 2007 in response to the desire of students and academics to pursue a community-based approach to their research and by community and campus members wanting to form mutually supportive research partnerships which lead to action on societal issues. A scan of the university in 2005 found that the practice of community-based research was fairly widespread but that many felt that little support was available to those wishing to pursue a career that included community-based research. The scan was followed by a university-wide symposium to see what kinds of energy existed for networking at the university itself. When nearly 20 per cent of the entire academic staff showed up for the symposium, the senior university administration felt that it was time to find a way to better institutionalize the evolving interests. In 2006, the administration then supported a six-month-long consultation and planning process with international and national advisors, multi-sector community members, funders, First Nations and campus members. When it was launched in 2007, OCBR became the first university-wide and community-university co-governed entity of its kind in English-speaking Canada.

The OCBR has worked to build capacity for community-university research partnerships that could enhance the quality of life and the economic, environmental and social well-being of communities. Its

founding director, Dr Budd Hall, established a working motto necessitated by both the small size of the unit and its philosophy of collaboration: 'It will do nothing that someone else is already doing and it will do nothing on its own'. Importantly, the OCBR was designed in function and form to be a joint project of the community and the university. A steering committee was formed to govern the work, with the head of a region-serving community organization and the vice president of research appointed as co-chairs. This steering committee, along with an external advisory group of internationally renowned experts in community-university engagement, was weighted equally between community-based and academic champions of community-based research (CBR) and campus-community partnerships. The steering committee has been fully involved in strategic planning and evaluation, and as public representatives and spokespersons for this Canadian and global pilot. The OCBR situated itself as a regional and Canadian incubator and hub for other Canadian and global efforts such as CBR Canada and the GACER (Global Alliance for Community Engaged Research), the latter supporting the European campus-community engagement and research/science shop movement. The shared vision between OCBR and the other national and global entities has been increasing the accessibility, relevance and responsibility of higher education in the broader society and the world.

While acknowledging that CBR involves community groups but not necessarily the university, for the purposes of the OCBR, it was defined as a collaborative enterprise between academic and community members that seeks to democratize knowledge creation by validating multiple sources of knowledge and promoting the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination. The goal of CBR, adapted from Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, and Donohue's (2003) discussion of best practice for CBR, is social action (broadly defined) for the purpose of achieving (directly or indirectly) healthy and sustainable communities.

Indeed, as the work of the OCBR evolved in parallel with other initiatives at the university such as knowledge mobilization, service learning and civic engagement strategies, the terms *community engagement* and *community-engaged research* became more reflective of the work of the OCBR. Community-engaged research refers to scholarly activity that requires partnership development, co-operation and negotiation and commitment to addressing community issues. For the practices of the OCBR, it further meant supporting *mutually beneficial* community-university research partnerships.

The OCBR immediately attracted the interest and funding of academic and community foundations and granting, and donor bodies that wanted to access and develop new practices, partnerships and policies to create change and movement. They were interested in critical issues in the community where multi-sectoral collaboration on the community side had already emerged but multidisciplinary approaches on the academic side were needed. Housing affordability, community planning, indigenous language and culture revitalization and local food production were some of the key issues that were at the core of OCBR activity. Woven through the attention to critical issues for action were CBR capacity-building forums, including institutes, seminar series for teachers of CBR, work on criteria for merit review and promotion as well as involvement in building Canadian and global networks. OCBR grew very fast over the first 5 years, mainly due to its attractiveness as a concept-in-practice, and interestingly, much of the director's time included helping develop similar entities across Canada.

As John McKnight once observed, 'Institutions do not build community, citizens do.' OCBR endeavoured to remain as a 'space between' the desires and needs of both a societal institution and a constantly changing community and society. What has been widely acknowledged is that there is a creative but real tension between community and university interests and needs. In the consultation that led to the founding of OCBR in 2007, it was indigenous leaders who spoke most eloquently from their own experience of being affected negatively by research and educational institutions over the past 100+ years in Canada. In their work with the OCBR's steering committee and partnership projects, it is they who have had the greatest impact and the most compelling vision for a new way to work as responsible and responsive citizens in a democracy. Their struggles and stories have inspired the OCBR by recognizing that the world needs multiple knowledges and respectful partnerships between multitudes of knowledge holders in order to strive for a vision of a better world.

In 2013, building on the success of the OCBR, the University of Victoria made a further commitment to community engagement and community-engaged research. As part of the establishment of new structures to enhance the university's capacity in this regard, the OCBR was reimagined into two new units, a support services unit and a scholarly research and practice centre. The Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization unit offers a suite of practical services in support of community-university research partnerships and knowledge mobilization. The Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community-University Engagement provides a space for the study and practice of engaged scholarship. It is a *reflective* space to enable, learn from, theorize and support community engagement practices and is an *enabling* space for community-university research. Focused on engagement, the institute harvests new knowledge that will contribute to solutions of community issues, public policy development and improved theory and practice.

Leslie Brown and Maeve Lydon

See also community-based research; community-campus partnerships for health; community-university partnership programme; community-university research partnerships; knowledge democracy; knowledge mobilization

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Websites

- Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community-University Engagement: www.uvic.ca/cue
- Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization: www.uvic.ca/research/partner

ONLINE ACTION RESEARCH

Online action research is research that is initiated, conducted and concluded *online* through the use of the Internet and web-based technology. Action research serves as both the vehicle for change and a method of analysis of change through an interactive inquiry process that engages individuals in solving problems through thoughtful actions and research. Traditionally,

this cyclical process happens through collaboration and in a community where participants are connected in a tangible way. Lack of face-to-face interactions and relationships built upon physical and real-time social contact may be considered barriers to Participatory Action Research (PAR) from a traditional action research perspective. However, online action research offers opportunities to expand how action researchers conceptualize PAR communities and research.

The idea of conducting action research *virtually* is an emergent practice. The Internet and the tools used with the Internet, such as the World Wide Web and e-mail, expand the boundaries of communities to outside their villages, towns, cities, states, provinces, countries and even global hemispheres. As more connections between people are made possible by the Internet, individuals and communities are challenged to reassess their concept of 'Who is part of my community?' and 'Where is my community?' This increased availability of connections to people, governments, educational institutions, community groups and more through an online connection fosters the evolution of the method of engaging in action research. Online action research offers potential for expanding action research collaboration, planning for action, data collection, reflection and analysis to communities connected through their shared ideas or identities rather than their geography or even time zone.

Web-based communities, social media sites, blogs, wikis and other online networking sites designed to facilitate communication between people offer an opportunity to connect individuals, allow them to share information and allow discussions and relationships that could not otherwise occur due to constraints caused by time or location. Like traditionally conducted action research, online action research also provides opportunities for empowerment of individuals who have been marginalized, democratic social change and community development, but potential exists for the participants in action research to increase in number and diversity as a result of the removal of time and geographic barriers.

Online action research can occur in a synchronous or asynchronous environment. Educational institutions have used an asynchronous, online learning environment increasingly, with some institutions offering entire degree programmes online. Much of the emergent research about online action research comes from action research studies based in the field of education and online professional development and certification and degree programmes. An initial benefit seen in online education that translates to online action research is the opportunity for participants to reflect on and evaluate both their own contributions to the online community and the contributions of other participants.

In a face-to-face interview, panel or town hall meeting, participants must process information and react immediately. Online action research participants can take time to reflect on words, ideas and their own experiences as they construct their own contributions to the virtual research, often yielding richer discourse as a result.

Online action research offers opportunities for reaching out to participants, fostering development and change and disseminating information in faster and more far-reaching ways than ever before. Online action research allows information to be shared immediately and globally and offers many potential benefits. However, many of the impetuses for action research, such as disparity, marginalization, discrimination, isolation from the community and lack of voice, remain prominent. Care must be taken to remember that access to technology does not eliminate these ills; online action research does, however, offer additional opportunities to reach those individuals who need and desire to create change.

In one Canadian study, Sarah Flicker, along with a team of action researchers composed of youth, community partners and university researchers, worked to develop a model (e-PAR) for using technology and PAR to address a problem specific to their context: engaging youth in community health promotion. These action researchers model what the combination of PAR and the Internet can offer: widespread accessibility to empowerment. Stakeholders came together using Photovoice to engage youth along with youth media and online tools such as electronic music and video production. Participants used some traditional tools of PAR as well as e-mail, websites, online surveys, online 'zines, and web exhibits in their collection of data and dissemination of ideas and results. The potential for change and empowerment to individuals and groups continues to increase as individuals become more accessible and connected to one another through online resources such as social media and networking sites, blogs and rapidly developing virtual communities.

Dusty Columbia Embury

See also community-campus partnerships for health; computer-based instruction; Digital Storytelling; geographic information systems; Photovoice; World Café, the

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ONTOLOGY

Within analytic philosophy, ontology refers to a branch of metaphysics that aims to dissect the underlying structure of reality. Ontology may also be concerned with the meaning of being or used to demarcate distinct positions towards the underlying nature of reality. It is this latter concept that is used here, with the aim to show how different positions towards reality may inform action research. An examination of ontology in action research is important because ontological positions inform the nature of the relationship between the subject and the object or between the knower and the known. How these relationships are conceived has a bearing on approaches and outcomes in conducting research.

Broadly speaking, ontological positions may be placed along a continuum. At one end lies an objectivist position, and at the other lies subjectivism. These positions differ most drastically from one another in their adherence to the assumption that reality exists

independent of human input. Various ontological positions may be used to approach action research. However, two fundamental aims of action research influence the discussion of ontology: (1) the participatory role of the action researcher and (2) the quest of the action researcher to change the underlying structure of reality in an effort to promote justice, equality or democracy. These aims will be addressed in turn, and their methodological implications will be examined.

Realism is an ontological position which posits that reality exists independent of the human mind and is governed by causal laws and mechanisms. Under this view, inquiry aims to objectively describe entities in the actual world, whether observable or unobservable. There are many strands of realism, which can be distinguished from one another in terms of the extent to which reality is presumed to be directly observable. This position naturally aligns with objectivism, which generally aims to ascertain a singular truth about a given reality.

A relative ontological position assumes that reality is essentially constructed. These realities are characteristically social or individual and, as Émile Durkheim held, depend on social factors for their existence. This ontological position is widely embraced by constructivists. In this view, elements like thoughts, emotions or social structures like family or social groups are assumed to be as real as the meanings we associate with them. Therefore, entities in the world are mind dependent and relative to particular contexts. More radical relative views deny the existence of reality apart from human constructions. As such, the aim of inquiry under these views often entails underscoring how constructed realities act to shape human consciousness.

Scientific realism is a hybrid of realist and relative ontologies in that it treats physical and constructed entities as equally real. This position departs from realism in the extent to which reality is accessible via inquiry (i.e. epistemology). Within the social sciences, scientific realism is manifested as critical realism, as espoused by Roy Bhaskar (1986) in his work *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*. In *A Realist Approach for Qualitative Research*, Joseph Maxwell (2012) characterized this approach as retaining a realist position ontologically while embracing epistemological constructivism or relativism. For example, scientific or critical realism proclaims that the aim of inquiry should be to describe reality independent of human input while also recognizing that this effort is at best an approximated ideal. In other words, critical realism contends that human input indeed matters and contributes to the fallibility of knowledge about reality.

Historical realism views reality as a product of historical processes. When conceived thus, reality is constructed and reified through social interaction.

Virtual, constructed realities acquire a 'real' objective and sometimes immutable quality through time and historical existence. This ontological position is widely embraced in critical theory and its related ideological positions. For example, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels advocated for a form of dialectical materialism, wherein historical forces grounded in economic modes of production act to shape individual consciousness.

Finally, subjectivist ontology illustrates the most radical departure from realism in that this position assumes that reality is a property of the mind. For example, the social constructionist may argue that there is a reality beyond the mind, though the meaning derived from this reality is inherently social. The subjectivist on the other hand rejects this view by arguing that the mind itself completely imposes meaning upon reality. Philosophical positions like postmodernism, idealism and transcendentalism are rooted in subjective ontologies. Broadly speaking, the aim of inquiry under this ontological position entails deconstructing individual or social reality.

The Participatory Role of the Action Researcher

Framing the discussion on ontology in action research is the juxtaposition of the knower and the known, and the subsequent collapse of the ontological and epistemological distinctions, through research engagement. As a methodological approach, action research values deep engagement between the subject and object. This is because popular areas for application of action research include business and organization studies, nursing, health care, education, development studies and social and community work. These areas of application are characteristically social and dynamic in nature. Action researchers argue that in order to study social contexts, it is required that the researcher's role is that of a participant in reality rather than a detached observer. Consequently, this places the researcher in the same ontological position as the reality being examined. Put differently, by virtue of direct participation, the researcher becomes both the knower and the known, and this problematizes the traditionally established distinction between subject and object.

The participatory nature of action research also facilitates the collapse of ontological and epistemological distinctions. While ontology deals with the nature of reality, epistemology is concerned with the nature, limits and justification of human knowledge. Maintaining clear lines of distinction between ontology and epistemology is largely seen as essential for maintaining objectivity in research. The collapse of ontological and epistemological distinctions raises questions about the objectivity of findings when using action research methodology.

The Aim of the Action Researcher to Change Reality

Ontologically, action research is concerned with states of reality that are dynamic and changeable by human agency. Additionally, the action researcher, through reification, actively aims to bring new realities into being. Therefore, one can conclude that reality in action research is necessarily mutable as an immutable reality is inconsistent with the aims of action research.

This aim of the action researcher to change reality is value laden. Reality, as seen through the eyes of the researcher, can be assumed to be 'good' or 'bad', 'just' or 'unjust'. Thus, the action researcher can attempt to maintain the status quo, deconstruct or demolish structures of power and authority, solve problems or democratize social structures through participative interaction. While the methods used to change reality may vary depending on the philosophical position (e.g. Marxian, Freirian or Gandhian), action researchers are united in the aim to change reality. This ontological position stands in direct contrast to objectivist inquiry that aims to examine reality unimpeded by human input.

Methodological Implications

As implied earlier, action research is concerned with the particular, as opposed to the universal, and this contrasts with the dominant scientific discourse aiming to discover deterministic laws governing reality. Therefore, action researchers naturally align with ontological positions like social constructionism, historical realism or critical realism as they provide a framework to challenge dominant practices framing the study of reality. Consequently, action research legitimizes realities created through means like transcendentalism or even mysticism as having substantive ontological implications.

While blurring the lines between object and subject reflects a growing skepticism and discontent with Enlightenment ideals, this stance has also implicitly separated the action researcher from the dominant discourse. It opened action research to critique. The critique is directed both at the core of the established ontology of action research as well as its epistemological application as a valid methodological approach.

The critique is that given the inseparable juxtaposition of the knower and the known via researcher engagement, there are no viable pathways to objective findings using action research. Some proponents of action research even admit that it is not possible to start out with a subjective or relative ontology and emerge with objective research findings. Without a pathway to objective findings, action research has been critiqued as a mode of individual expression rather than a serious methodological approach.

One response to the critique is the argument that the subject-object divide is not necessarily incompatible with action research. For example, it is conceivable for critical realism to guide action research, and there is a growing movement to defend realism as a viable ontology for qualitative research. However, the exploration of realist or critical realist ontologies is not without critique from some action researchers. The argument is that critical realism does not provide those bound by subjective ontologies with a pathway to objective epistemologies.

Other action researchers respond by rejecting the subject-object dualities denoting a separation between the knower and the known. Their approaches see reality as holistic rather than divided. Poonamallee, for example, argued that in Eastern philosophies like *Advaita*, reality is viewed holistically. Hence, the object can simultaneously be the subject and vice versa without compromising the integrity of the research. She offered a model for developing Grounded Theory in action research that originated in subjective ontology and despite blurring the lines between subject and object emerged with findings that, she argued, were aligned with objective epistemology. This approach claims that objectivity in action research emerges from the authenticity and trustworthiness of the researcher and the knowledge creation process rather than from a detachment between subject and object.

Summary

An action researcher can engage varied ontological positions depending on the nature of the research being conducted. For instance, when examining inequalities in the distribution of economic wealth, a social constructionist may focus on the negotiation of cultural meanings associated with being wealthy or successful. The critical theorist, on the other hand, may give ontological supremacy to sociopolitical realities like education or trade agreements that have created and sustained economic inequality. While one may approach action research through varying ontological lenses, action researchers remain united in their efforts to change the content of reality.

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See also critical realism; philosophy of science; postmodernism

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OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

Operations management focuses on achieving customer service and productivity now and in the future. Performance goals may be defined in terms of quality, speed, dependability, flexibility and cost. Operations management thinking applies to any working unit within an organization which converts inputs (materials, information, people) into outputs (products, services) and which aims to satisfy a customer or client need efficiently and effectively, to succeed in a market, to increase profitability or to grow. In a competitive or resource-constrained environment, such growth and development are enabled ultimately by getting more from less through running and improving operations. The sustainability of this performance requires questioning and improving operations practices and performance in anticipation of or in response to changing resource availability and customer or client need.

Yet the working of an operation is an enigma. On the one hand, the operation is a visible part of the organization where people or equipment can be seen to be working and where something happens. On the other hand, the operation will neither come right nor stay right of its own accord. The improvement imperative permeates the routine, and the challenge for managers includes the exploration and exploitation of the learning emerging from practice and from the changing body of programmed knowledge. It is in this learning opportunity that the critical role for action research resides.

The Strategic Role of Operations

Operations play a strategic role for the organization, ranging from neutral to supportive, internally or externally. Learning needs and opportunities permeate the development of this strategic role as managers exploit their insights into practice and explore new opportunities emerging from experience.

Operations strategy thinking and action involve reconciling the requirements of the market with the

capabilities of operations resources. Problems and opportunities in operations strategy revolve around fit, sustainability and the risks attached to differing configurations of product or service offerings, process technology, capacity, supply networks and organization. The content and process of reconciliation involve improvement within the firm and between firms—the locus of improvement. The focus of this improvement can be operational or strategic. *Operational* improvement is evident in the change to operational performance. *Strategic* improvement is evident in the changed fit or the reconciliation of market requirements and operations resources beyond the time frame of the improvement initiative. In every improvement with an operational focus, there is a latent strategic focus.

Action Research in Operations: See the Layout, Hunt the System

The operations improvement process may be visualized as a cycle with three elements:

1. *Directing* (or co-directing in the supply network) improvement through comparing targets with performance
2. *Developing* (or co-developing in the supply network) operations capabilities through process control and process knowledge
3. *Deploying* (or co-deploying in the supply network) operations capabilities to create market potential

Action research fits with the improvement process and with the associated ambition to capture learning from practice. As such, action research is recognized as a valid methodology for research in operations management.

Through action research, managers and researchers collaborate around conceptually and managerially relevant operational problems. Enacting in a disciplined way a set of iterative action research cycles yields unique insights that deepen understanding, improve practice and extend theory. When working together, both the operations manager and the researcher need to take action—to experiment systematically—and to observe the workability of the operation. From this shared experience, they infer the manageability of the operation and evaluate its viability as run in this way. The outcome is a shared sense of areas for improvement and a process by which the improvements may be realized. In effect, the operations management and improvement challenge is condensed down to a single action-oriented statement: See the layout, hunt the system.

In seeing the layout and hunting the system, the manager and the researcher together are looking to understand where trade-offs have been made (and can be made if the operation is to improve) in the specification of needs, co-ordination of inputs, pacing of processes, rationing of resources, inspection of outcomes and change of control systems. Enquiring collaboratively, the manager and researcher together can identify operational performance data (on quality, speed, dependability, flexibility and cost) and financial performance data (profit, sales and cost trends). They can examine the significance of the operational data in relation to the financial data before attributing the financial outcomes to the way in which the operations resources (capacity, supply network, process technology, development and organization) are configured and run. Then, the manager and the researcher can consider the impact of changes in the operations resources on operational performance and attempt to predict how these changes might show up in revenues and costs.

Summary and Conclusion

In operations, something happens. A key focus of operations management is improving operations on an ongoing basis from a basis of experience. Such improvement activity is not once-off. It is a means of ongoing reconciliation of market requirements and operations resources within organizations and shared between them.

Paul Coughlan

See also new product development; organization development

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ORAL HISTORY

Oral history research is a method in which personal stories are elicited from people over their life course. It is a specific method of interviewing that requires the researcher and participants to spend a long time together in a process of telling and listening to life stories. Storytelling is a fundamental aspect of human experience; meaning is conveyed through storytelling. This way of passing on knowledge has allowed researchers to develop research techniques that provide an opportunity for people to make their voices heard.

An oral history often emphasizes a particular part of an individual's life—for example, work life or a specific function in some aspect of community life. The emphasis of oral history is on a specific historical juncture, event, period or location which is memorized by individuals. Oral history relies heavily on individual and collective memory and the testimony of participants. This will ensure that a fuller or different understanding of past experiences can be achieved. Importantly, oral histories have permitted the voices of groups who are usually marginalized in historical research to emerge.

Oral history affords researchers a way of inviting their participants to tell their stories of their past. But the individual story is often tied to historical existences and therefore goes beyond the person's experience. Oral history is especially crucial for studying how individuals experience social changes as well as the social and personal problems emerging from these changes. Oral history interviews allow participants to tell their stories on their own terms, so they are able to speak in the way they choose. Thus, oral history interviews function as ideal vehicles for understanding how people perceive their lived experiences and how they connect with others in society.

During an oral history project, researchers spend a lot of time with research participants in order to gain a comprehensive knowledge about their experiences or about specific aspects of their lives. Oral history methods allow researchers to obtain in-depth information about the lives of participants from their own perspective. Researchers learn how participants feel about things, what they consider important in their lives, how they see the relationship between different life experiences, about their difficult times, and the meanings they have constructed as members of society.

Oral history methods are popular among feminist scholars. Based on a feminist framework and a predominantly feminist method, oral history allows researchers to access the invaluable knowledge and rich life experiences of marginalized individuals and groups, which would otherwise remain hidden.

In particular, the methods afford a means of reaching marginalized voices. Oral histories allow the participant and the researcher to collaborate and generate knowledge, and this can be an empowering experience for the researched as they are able to gain insight into important moments in their own lives.

History of Oral History Research

The oral collection of historical documents can be traced back to ancient times. Three thousand years ago, the sayings of the people for the use of court historians were collected by historiographers of the Zhou dynasty in China. But the first official record of an oral historian is of the Greek historian Thucydides, who, centuries later, looked for people he could interview and used the interviewed information to write his history of the Peloponnesian War. Although personal stories have been collected since the fifth century BC, it was only after the Second World War, when portable recording machines were invented, that a more systematic record of oral history began, such as we see nowadays.

The formal organization of oral history research occurred in 1948, when Allan Nevins commenced the Oral History Project at Columbia University. Nevins' aim was to develop a record of the lives of important individuals in American society. His recording of the oral memories of White male elites became the first organized oral history project. Only after the 1960s did we begin to see more interest in the memories of non-elite people. William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki are among the pioneers of the narrative approach because they used it in their work with Polish emigrants to the USA. However, despite the endorsement of Thomas and Znaniecki, oral history did not become a popular method until much later when it became widely used in the feminist movement.

An important development in oral history is an attempt to collect the oral histories of oppressed groups in order to provide profound and telling stories that have been suppressed. In the past, only elite people could record their lives, not only because they were literate and believed that they were important but also because they had the time and the people to help them write. Because of their power in society, only their narratives are the ones we learn of from the official records.

Oral History and Action Research

Oral history research offers a valuable means for collecting information from local communities in action research, particularly Participatory Action Research (PAR). The essence of PAR is that the research begins with the problems that people face, and then they participate

in the research process as fully as possible. The research participants are full partners in the research process and are treated as co-researchers. Together with the researchers, they became involved in the research cycle to find solutions for their problems. Researchers adopting this methodological approach clearly aim to work collaboratively with people who have traditionally been oppressed and exploited. Collectively, fundamental social changes can be achieved through PAR. This is particularly so for Community-Based Participatory Research, which is a research approach which equally involves the community, such as community members, agency representatives and organizations, and the researchers in all facets of the research process. Community-Based Participatory Research empowers different groups to collaborate in research in order to appreciate and address the complex social, cultural, political and structural factors affecting the lives of individuals and their communities.

Pranee Liamputtong

See also Community-Based Participatory Research; Feminist Participatory Action Research; interviews; organizational storytelling; Participatory Action Research

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research. Definitions of OD vary, but they tend to comprise the following elements in one form or other: that OD is a long-term effort whose aim is to improve an organization's processes of renewing itself through envisioning its future, structuring itself appropriately and being able to solve problems. OD places special emphasis on an ongoing management of organizational culture, particularly in work teams and interdepartmental configurations. It may utilize an external OD consultant, who works in a facilitator role rather than an expert advisor role. This entry discusses the history and characteristics of OD, as well as interventions and OD's core feature, action research.

History

OD does not comprise a single theory, and so its origins lie in many different strands of applied behavioural science—individual psychology, group dynamics, leadership, organization theory, human resource management and elements from sociology and anthropology. In some respects, OD builds on all the major developments of organization theory and the interface of organizations with the people who work in them. Some of the experiments and research which are more directly related to the emergence of OD as a distinctive approach to managing planned change are as follows: (a) the work of Kurt Lewin on re-education, planned change, field theory, the stages of change and action research and his seminal work on group dynamics, and, in particular, the emergence of T-groups; (b) the work of Eric Trist and his associates in the Tavistock Institute in the UK on coal mining in Durham, which led to an understanding of how technology and people are interdependent and how organizations are socio-technical systems; (c) the client-centred approach to helping individuals make their own personal change pioneered by Carl Rogers and (d) the approaches to surveying organizations developed by Rensis Likert and his colleagues in Michigan.

Much of the development of OD came out of Lewin's discovery that attention to 'here-and-now' processes in a group provides a powerful vehicle for learning about groups. This insight was formalized in the T-group ('T' stands for training), which is an unstructured group led by a trainer who works in a non-directive manner. T-groups were organized by the National Training Laboratories (later the NTL Institute), which was founded by Lewin's associates. NTL and T-groups are the most significant sources of origin of OD because (a) of the philosophy of the T-group, namely, the trainer works in a non-directive manner, and learning takes place out of what is happening in the group (a paradigm of action research) and (b) the pioneers and significant developers of OD were T-group trainers in the NTL

ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

The term *organization development* (commonly referred to as OD) refers to an approach to organizational change that is a philosophy, a professional field of social action, a mode of scientific inquiry and an array of techniques to enable change to take place in organizations. It is understood to be different from *organizational development*, the latter referring to the general development of organizations and paralleling terms like *personal development* and *community development*. OD is understood to refer to a specific values-based approach that has its roots in the work of Kurt Lewin and which is deeply imbedded in action

Institute. It was when the T-group was being applied to working teams that the focus and term *organization development* emerged. In Britain, the Tavistock Institute developed its own form of the T-group in the Tavistock Conference, and its work on socio-technical systems paralleled OD.

In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the leaders of OD were those who had come through the T-group learning system and who shaped the emergence of this distinct approach to change. The early pioneers of OD, the colleagues of Lewin, recruited a next generation, who in turn educated and trained a third and a fourth generation. In 1969, the publication of the Addison-Wesley OD series marked the formal emergence of the field. The initial six books in the series, edited by Richard Beckhard, Warren Bennis and Edgar Schein, demonstrated the variety and range of approaches within this field. By the late 1990s, there were over 30 books in the now defunct series. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* was the primary outlet for research and theory development, while *The OD Practitioner* addressed the needs of practitioners. Universities and colleges offered postgraduate programmes in OD; college textbooks and other books and articles followed. OD became a field of study and practice. Associations such as the OD Network and the OD Institute provided fora for practitioners to discuss their practice and the Organization and Change division of the Academy of Management, for scholars to present their research. While there were attempts to make it a profession through establishing a registration and a code of ethics, these efforts were not successful; and OD remains a broad field to which anyone can designate themselves.

The early approaches placed a great deal of emphasis on individual and group development. The task-focused nature of working teams in organizations and the hierarchical relationships within an organization's structure challenged the T-group trainers to redefine their work beyond the personal learning in an egalitarian setting. The emerging field of OD was working with large, complex systems and engaging with issues of strategy, leadership, organizational design, technology, human resource development, organizational learning and latterly sustainability.

What was distinctive about OD in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s was that it followed a cyclical process of consciously and deliberately (a) diagnosing the situation, (b) planning action, (c) taking action and (d) evaluating the action, leading to further diagnosing, planning and so on. The second dimension is that OD was collaborative, in that, with the help of a consultant/facilitator, the members of the system participated actively in the cyclical process. It engaged people as participants in seeking ideas, planning, taking action, reviewing outcomes and learning what worked and did

not work and why. This approach was in stark contrast with programmed approaches that mandated following pre-designed steps and which tended not to be open to alteration. These latter approaches were based on the assumption that the system should adopt the entire package as designed. OD was based on the assumptions that each system is unique and that a change process has to be designed with that uniqueness in mind and adapted in the light of ongoing experience and emergent learning.

The emergence of a more general field of change management, which grew out of OD, spawned approaches to studying and engaging with organizational change that sought to differentiate themselves from OD by challenging participative approaches and focusing on top-down imposed change and bottom-line outcomes. Change management approaches became identified with a more prescriptive approach as consulting firms, acting in an expert model, perform a diagnosis of an organization and submit a report that prescribes actions. The popularity and predominance of these firms and the emergence of programmes in change management in university curricula led to a debate as to whether OD had lost its purpose, and indeed whether or not OD was dead. From an OD perspective, OD is different from change management as it has a discomfort with some of the contemporary change management approaches, such as re-engineering. In short, OD's humanistic values base focuses on process, while change management focuses on outcomes.

While OD's origins lie mainly in change in business organizations, it has developed to become applicable in education, health care, non-profits and government organizations, and there is an extensive literature on OD in each of these sectors. In parallel, OD has developed beyond its original Anglo-Saxon roots to be applicable in all cultures.

Characteristics

While there are many characteristics of OD, the central ones emphasize employee participation in discussing and analyzing critical issues for change and in finding and implementing solutions and evaluating the results. OD is normative in that it advocates that those in the organization who are affected by the change should have the opportunity to contribute to the continuous-improvement process. It is based on the assumption that everyone implements change in organizations.

The following characteristics mark the distinctiveness of OD as an approach to managing change. These characteristics distinguish OD from a more general change management approach. OD is a process for building healthy, high-performance organizations and

improving and realizing the full potential and self-renewing capabilities of organizations, groups and individuals. It is also an education-based strategy that uses a positive and constructive approach to successfully leading and managing change. It is an interdisciplinary approach that draws primarily from the applied behavioural sciences (e.g. psychology, sociology) and uses understanding of business and the influence of technology on organizations. It is values driven and seeks to instil values and build cultures that bring out the best in organizations and people and to encourage open, straightforward, helpful, ethical and increasingly self-directing behaviour. It is a facilitative process that helps others discover and find solutions to their own issues. It relies on a systems perspective of organizations that considers all aspects of an organization and its interrelated parts. It is a data-driven, action research-oriented approach that includes assessing reality and involving key stakeholders in evaluating results, exploring what is possible and planning further action. It is a collaborative top-down, bottom-up process that recognizes the importance of building the commitment and leadership of top-level decision-makers and involving all stakeholders in the change process. It focuses on both process (how things are done) and content (what is done), recognizing the importance of both. It is often guided and facilitated by professionally trained change agents, both external and internal. It is committed to the transfer of knowledge and skills and to creating learning organizations where organizations and their members are continuously learning, sharing knowledge and improving the organization. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of planned, lasting and sustained change, rather than the quick fix, while at the same time developing the organization's ability to adapt to changing times.

New forms of OD have emerged in the late twentieth century, influenced by the new sciences and postmodern thought and philosophy and views of organizations as meaning-making systems. Accordingly, contemporary OD views reality as socially constructed, with multiple realities which are socially negotiated rather than a single objective reality that may be diagnosed. Data collection is less about applying objective problem-solving methods and more about raising collective awareness and generating new possibilities which lead to change. Contemporary OD emphasizes changing the conversation in organizations by surfacing, legitimating and learning from multiple perspectives and generating new images and narratives on which people can act. Accordingly, the focus of OD is to create the space for changing the conversation. A feature of the newer forms of OD is the large-group intervention. While these large-group interventions have different names—Search Conferences, future search, open space, among

several terms—what they have in common is the notion of bringing the whole system into the room and engaging in conversation about present realities and how to create future realities. While large-group interventions have had their origins and expressions in traditional OD, they have flourished in the way they provide a setting for multiple perspectives to be shared and how they aim to develop a new shared vision and agenda for change. In a similar vein, Appreciative Inquiry has developed as a constructivist approach that aims at large-system change through an appreciative focus on what already works in a system, rather than what is deficient, and has an underlying capacity to leverage the generative capacity of metaphors and conversation in order to facilitate transformational action.

OD Interventions

An intervention is understood to mean an action or a series of changes aimed at changing the status quo. Within the complexity of organizations, there are multiple interventions that could be made. Accordingly, efforts to group or cluster interventions are important, especially in the education and training of OD scholars and practitioners. Three basic clustering frameworks are established. One is to cluster OD interventions into three main groupings that identify three clusters based on the focus of intervention (i.e. limited, focused and holistic). Another approach clusters four processes: (1) human processes, (2) socio-technical approaches, (3) human resources and (4) strategic approaches. A parallel framework emphasizes the focus of intervention: individual, group, inter-group and organizational. A wide range of specific interventions may be located within these two frameworks: for example, career work and coaching on the individual level, team building and maintenance on the group level, workflow processes and inter-group relations on the interdepartmental group level and strategic issues on the organizational level. These two frameworks may be merged as some individual interventions may be classified as human processes, others as human resource interventions.

OD and Action Research

Action research is one of the distinctive features of OD and one of its core origins. For Lewin, it was not enough to try to explain things; one also had to try to change them. This insight led to the development of action research and the powerful notion that human systems could only be understood and changed if one involved the members of the system in the inquiry process itself. So the tradition of involving the members of an organization in the change process, which is the hallmark of OD, originated in a scientific premise that this

is the way to (a) get better data and (b) effect change. Action research is based on two assumptions which are the cornerstones of OD. One is that involving the clients or learners in their own learning produces not only better learning but also more valid data about how the system really works. The other is that one only understands a system when one tries to change it, as changing human systems often involves variables which cannot be controlled by traditional research methods. Accordingly, a central element of the OD approach is a reflective approach, which goes with the story as it evolves rather than imposing defined programmes as discussed above.

Action research used with OD is based on collaboration between the behavioural-scientist-researcher and the client on exploring issues and generating data on the development of the organization (the research activity) and on jointly examining the data to understand the issues. They then develop action plans to address the issues and implement them. Together they evaluate the outcomes of the actions, both intended and unintended. This evaluation may then lead to further cycles of examining issues, planning action, taking action and evaluation. Cyclical-sequential phases may be identified that capture the movements of collaboration from the initial entry through planning and action to evaluation. These activities may serve also to generate new behavioural science knowledge, which is fed into the depository of information for other behavioural scientists as general laws, types of issues or the process of consultant-client collaboration, thus addressing issues beyond the specific case.

Through the nature of action research in OD as a collaborative, interventionist form of research, grounded in its Lewinian roots in the scholarship of practice, OD has the capacity to bridge the rigour/relevance, theory/practice divides that beset contemporary organization studies. This demands that the OD scholars attend explicitly to their own learning in action, to the dynamics and quality of their engagement of OD with a client system and to the generation of actionable knowledge. While the academic world has struggled traditionally to accept such forms of inquiry and action as 'scientific', in the postmodern world this is increasingly less so. In today's context, there are increasing demands for organizational research to be rigorous, reflective and relevant. OD through action research continues to provide such rich possibilities.

OD through action research is continuously evolving as it has the ability to adapt and respond to the variety of emerging challenges experienced by individuals, groups, organizations, communities and societies. It is reflexive and continues to be self-aware, and to be open to its own learning and development, in the light of emerging economic, social and business

trends and learning how to be relevant in each generation. It involves collaborative research in that it has always espoused research *with* people rather than *on* or *for* them. At the core of most OD work, there is commitment to the generation of scientific knowledge that can guide practice. OD work is embedded in relationships—between OD practitioners and clients, between OD scholars and clients, between members of the system who are involved in an OD project, between OD practitioners who work together and between OD scholars and OD practitioners—the quality of which has a direct impact on both the process and the outcomes of any OD project. OD continues to focus on the sustainable development of human, social, economic and ecological resources. OD through action research is relevant in any context. While each context has its own particular characteristics and challenges, the core values and processes of OD and action research have remained relevant.

David Coghlan

See also Appreciative Inquiry; Clinical Inquiry; information and communications technology and organizational change; Lewin, Kurt; process consultation; Search Conference; Tavistock Institute

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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The term *organizational culture* refers to the unique character of an organization that provides the context for action in it; it places an emphasis on the traditions, structure of authority, behaviours, espoused values, language, mission, paradigms, symbols, standards, traditions, customs and group norms. Edgar Schein describes organizational culture as a phenomenon that surrounds all within the organization and refers to the pattern of shared basic

assumptions learned by all in an organization that are passed on over time.

With time, this pattern can become deeply entrenched and, with that, very difficult to change. Where organizational culture is deeply entrenched and rooted, it affects the people within the organizational system. While this is so, the people within an organization are not passive victims of an organizational culture; they also bring their agency and in turn shape the organizational culture.

From the description of Schein, it is evident that culture is fundamental to the understanding of organizational life. However, there needs to be a recognition that there are different orientations to understanding culture in organizations. One of the orientations, according to Schein, is the structural-functionalist view. In line with this orientation, culture is the created and transmitted content and patterns of values, ideas and other symbolic meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behaviours.

Flowing from this orientation, organizations are viewed as mechanistic structures, and individuals learn or are socialized into the culture of an organization. This makes culture a static phenomenon within which is embedded the system of expectations that individuals have to conform to. Viewed from such an orientation, culture becomes a social fact that bears an ideological message, and individuals have to be integrated into the organizational structure.

The culture of an organization is more acutely experienced by individuals who are new—it may happen that they are coerced or socialized into it. Commonly, the coercion or socialization is not obvious; it is subtle. For example, in an organizational system where a particular language is used, the new people often pick it up without realizing what is happening to them. Within no time, it becomes second nature, and they start sounding like those individuals who have been there much longer. Whether they are coerced or socialized into it, those who are new in an organization respond differently to the organizational culture; while some are able to embrace the new culture with ease, others find it difficult, and their resistance manifests in inappropriate behaviours.

Another orientation is one which recognizes and acknowledges the agency of individuals and makes them active shapers of culture in organizations. Concomitant with this orientation, culture becomes a dynamic phenomenon which arises out of the individual's interaction with the organizational system—the connection between the individual and the collective is central. This orientation requires that organizations be viewed as dynamic systems that hold a space for culture to be created by change and process—linked to this, the processes through which individuals and

the collective negotiate meaning are therefore critical. One such process has to do with the creation of subcultures in organizations. Subcultures stem from situations where individuals or groups dissociate themselves from the dominant culture. While generally not appreciated in organizations, subcultures can provide an impetus for change in organizations.

Sue Soal suggests that organizational culture is the very expression of the character of the organization and, together with the vision, mission and strategy, constitutes the identity of the organization—the identity expresses the outer purpose of the organization. The organizational culture expresses its inner character and work—it defines the way in which its work is pursued.

The 'Organizational Invisible'

Organizational culture is often referred to as the 'organizational invisible'; it becomes visible through observable forms such as language, rituals, symbols, ways of dressing, behaviours, shared meanings, shared knowledge and practices. Though invisible, the underlying culture can be viewed as an explicit product that arises from social interactions between people that can shape the way things are done in an organization in a very powerful way. For example, the way people dress in an organization is one aspect that can reflect the power of its culture. In a context where the culture dictates an 'informal' dress style, this is picked up remarkably quickly by new people, who prefer a much more relaxed atmosphere. They embrace the dress style dictated by the organizational culture without question.

It is the 'invisible' aspect that makes it difficult to work with organizational culture. When attempting to change organizational culture, it is important not only to focus on the visible dimensions but also to pay attention to the underlying processes at work. For example, in a situation where there is no trust, it can become pointless to try and understand the learning practices without trying to understand and grasp what the underlying processes and issues are that contribute to a culture of mistrust. Often, when trying to understand the factors that inhibit learning in an organization, one has to dig deeper and try and understand what the underlying culture is—the factors that inhibit learning are often rooted in the culture.

One of the characteristic features of organizational culture is that it is holistic and manifests in all aspects of organizational life—the mission, values, practices, relationships, rituals, customs and way of thinking. It is common though for such manifestation to be experienced more acutely at the level of interpersonal relationships. In fact, organizational culture can manifest often as fraught with interpersonal relationships that,

when attempting to address them, take the focus away from the essential and critical aspects. For this reason, it is important that organizational culture is understood as multilayered and to acknowledge that it encompasses both the formal/informal and light/shadow attributes of the organization.

The Experience of Organizational Culture

It is for this reason that culture is experienced differently by different people in the organization. While some people may be comfortable with the formal aspects of the culture, others may relish its informal aspects. In addition, while there is a tendency for an organization to focus on the light (positive) aspects of its culture, the shadow (negative) aspects of its culture often make individuals uncomfortable—shining a light on the shadow aspects of the organizational culture can lead to denial, defensiveness and avoidance. For many organizations it is often difficult to face and engage with the shadow aspects of the culture with honesty.

Although organizational culture cannot be described as bad or good, it can be conscious and healthy or dysfunctional. To prevent the organizational culture from becoming dysfunctional, it has to be supported by relevant systems. When this is the case, it can help individuals cope with challenges pertaining to the broader social environment. Where no such organizational systems and processes are in place, people can end up frustrated by the organizational culture. Where mistrust characterizes the organizational culture, the presence of regular meetings can be a helpful support for creating a space for honest engagement. In the absence of such systems, the mistrust can fester.

Sue Soal suggests that culture changes slowly and in incremental moves. For some individuals, the process of experiencing the culture of the organization can be painful and hard, but not in the same way that the process of attempting to change the culture is. This is so because it is not possible to work on the organizational culture directly. In fact, understanding organizational culture is not easy; the multilayered nature of culture makes it difficult to single out or name, let alone change. In many instances, it takes comprehensive knowledge, well-developed skills, a deep understanding and insights to change the culture of an organization—without these it is easy to get lost.

Organizational Culture and Action Research

It is in this regard that action research as an exploratory inquiry into shifting and changing organizational culture becomes important. An action research approach,

structured fundamentally around inquiry, enables organizations to surface the presence and intensity of the organizational cultural attributes that enable or inhibit organizational renewal—it lends itself to dealing with the complex nuances of culture in organizations. Given the invisible, elusive and multilayered nature of culture in organizations, an action research approach allows for organizational culture attributes to be surfaced and interrogated through a structured process—it enables cultural attributes to be surfaced in a way that allows for organizations to negotiate the meaning of such attributes in a systematic way.

Given that culture changes slowly, an action research approach allows for exploration of organizational culture through the use of questions, stories, reflection and dialogue. These are powerful tools because they allow for meaning making at the individual and collective levels. Action research as an approach to exploring organizational culture as a complex phenomenon allows individuals and the organizational system to engage with it in a way that helps with the identification of learning edges—it enables change and process.

Nomvula Dlamini

See also organization development; organizational storytelling

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ORGANIZATIONAL STORYTELLING

While there has never been a time when stories have not been told in organizations, the formalization of the phrase is of recent origin. It now involves a broad range of practices from academic research to workshop facilitation and management consultancy. As such, there is no single agreed-on definition or even definitions. The range of theory and practice can be mapped between three basic functions:

1. The common use of storytelling is to communicate a message. With that, but rarely mentioned by practitioners, is the associated meaning of 'telling stories', namely, to lie, deceive or persuade, which in popular use includes propaganda. A focus on teaching leaders to tell a better story was one of the early drivers of the organizational storytelling movement, and it remains a feature, although the field is now more diverse.
2. Organizational stories are used to understand the nature of organizations and why people do what they do. In the main, this is a research agenda but can include a range of facilitation and consultancy techniques, such as Appreciative Inquiry, to facilitate self-understanding and interpretation.
3. Finally, and most recently, stories are used as a means of knowledge storage and transfer. Modern-day approaches draw on a broad range of subjects including cultural anthropology, communication theory and sense making. Some early experiments have taken journalism as a metaphor and as practice. These include journaling and other services within social computing that allow people to create family and community stories online.

These three functions of storytelling may play a central role in action research as experiences are explored and knowledge generated from both the stories themselves and the act of telling them. In practice, most of the tools and techniques include aspects of two or more of these dimensions, and the field resists rigid categorization. Organizational storytelling is now a broad field, with consultancy practice interacting with more academic research. Its origins lie with work in government and industry associated with the development of knowledge management during the 1990s. Both the World Bank and the IBM Institute for Knowledge Management (IKM) determined that stories told in the field had higher utility for capturing and distributing knowledge than best practice documents. This is equally valid in military doctrine. The US military started to capture stories in the field in their early knowledge management programmes. Intel and Jet Propulsion Laboratory (Part of NASA) brought in journalists to capture the key stories of employees who were due to retire and created libraries of that material which could be accessed by future generations. The IKM built some of the early experimental narrative databases, and a range of consultants both large and small started to add storytelling and capture into their methodologies.

In parallel with this, the BBC, in their Capture Wales project, and others were experimenting with what has

come to be known as Digital Storytelling, the origin of which is often traced to Ken Burns' pioneering history of the American Civil War. This approach brings together people from a community, who with the support of journalists and production staff, create short visual stories that explain and record a key aspect of their lives. These are stored and accessed digitally. Partly in consequence of this, a range of open source and commercial social computing sites were created to allow communities and families to record their stories as a living oral history. Workshop techniques such as Appreciative Inquiry, with their focus on narrative as an agent of change, also gained currency during this period.

From the early use in knowledge management, the commercial use of stories gained interest from the long-standing communities interested in storytelling for its own sake. The Jonesborough National Storytelling festival in the USA created a forum for those interested in storytelling from community-based and commercial perspectives to exchange information and knowledge. In turn, the Golden Fleece Movement in Washington integrated work with that of the IKM and the World Bank. This integration of traditional storytellers (and those who studied them) together with technology-oriented knowledge management was a large part of the growing popularity of the associated techniques. The IKM further extended this work into techniques to derive archetypes from stories, to match work done by Joseph Campbell on the role of archetypes in *The Hero's Journey* and other traditional stories.

Within the academic community, the use of story in research is well established, and in the main, preceded the organizational form. It engaged with the wider issue of observer independence within social science. Barbara Czarniawska challenged the *Homo economicus* assumptions of organizational science, arguing that the narrator and the listener must assume a shared context when inferring meaning from narrative statements, and further that as stories carry with them ambiguity, the meaning can be interpreted in different ways in different contexts. David Boje coined the term *antinarrative* to describe the process of linking retrospective narrative to a living story. The publication of *Storytelling in Organizations* by Yiannis Gabriel provided a bridge between the new communities in the work of the IKM and others. This was augmented by the use of narrative in the sense-making literature, in particular the work of Karl Weick and Brenda Dervin, both of whom in different ways see narrative as a fundamental aspect of the way people make sense of the world.

The growth of social computing created a new medium, both as a mechanism for the recording and distribution of stories and with whole new forms such as blogs and microblogging (Twitter). The US Army, one of the pioneers in the use of field narrative to create

doctrine, discovered that company commanders' blogging and stories captured through a West Point programme had more impact on field operations than doctrine.

With increasing use, issues of ownership (or power), authenticity and scaling of programmes, including the use and potential control or abuse of social computing, have come to the fore. This has resulted in approaches that focus on self-interpreted micro-narrative, linked to complex adaptive systems theory, which challenge the qualitative nature of most narrative work with a quantitative approach through either self-signification or the use of various algorithmic and other search and consolidation techniques, including the extensive use of visualization.

David Snowden

See also Appreciative Inquiry; Digital Storytelling; journaling; narrative; narrative inquiry; storytelling

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PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a research paradigm within the social sciences which emphasizes collaborative participation of trained researchers as well as local communities in producing knowledge directly relevant to the stakeholder community. The knowledge produced through PAR does not just intend to contribute to the theoretical corpus of the social sciences, but it also inherently contains an agenda of social change. As such, the ends of PAR include (a) developing and fostering a participatory model in social science field research, (b) preferring a practical form of knowledge-in-action to an empirical form of knowledge-as-statistic, (c) mobilizing local communities to have a concrete role in solving their own problems in an effective and systematic manner, (d) making development policy interventions, (e) advocating for inclusion of local stakeholders—their experiences and forms of understanding—in socio-economic theory and policy and (f) attempting to correct power imbalances in knowledge and information flows.

This entry outlines the historical emergence, principles, processes, methodology, challenges and ethics of PAR, with a discussion of some of its interventions.

History

The origins of the PAR paradigm can be traced to Europe, to a climate of critique of mainstream social science research, popular education models and social movements in general.

In 1940, the German social psychologist Kurt Lewin held that social science research must reject the positivist outlook of science, which prefers that researchers study an ‘objective’ world separate from the ‘subjective’ meanings understood by agents as they act in the world. He coined the term *action research* to describe

a process in which social scientists worked collaboratively with a group, organization or community that had stakes in the issue at hand. Action research emphasized a problem-solving approach to research and rational decision-making by a group aided by an external facilitator. The underlying principles of action research—self-reflection and critique through dialogue, collaboration, mutual learning and action—formed the basis of PAR. Somewhat conservatively, Lewin’s work placed relatively less emphasis on active community participation and did not challenge existing power relationships. Yet it provided a useful way of combining theory and practice to facilitate organizational change.

Another significant influence on PAR was the Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), which evolved from his experience with adult literacy in Brazil and highlighted the power of education as a political tool for stimulating the consciousness of oppressed people. Freire’s notion of ‘conscientization’ reinforced the idea that socially marginalized people, through dialogue, can critically analyze their own situation as well as organize action to improve it.

His *thematic investigation*, employed in 1973, first in Brazil and later in Chile, inspired scholars and activists to collaborate with community residents to bring about community-controlled social change projects whose central principle was learning through investigation.

International adult education movements, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, also set the stage for PAR. The philosophy of adult education focused on a learner-centric approach, yet adult educators had to adopt a research-centric approach in understanding the programme content and educational methods. This precipitated a crisis of identity, with adult educators questioning the dichotomy between their two distinct roles as in-field practitioners and off-site researchers. An alternative research paradigm was sought, which was learner-centric and required popular community mobilization.

During the early 1970s, Marja Liisa Swantz and her team of social scientists working as aid specialists in Tanzania found that students and village workers were far more effective than trained adult educators in eliciting the required information from people. Attributing this success to data collection methods that relied on communal sharing of locally specific knowledge, Swantz proposed that both the researcher and the researched could become agents of development and change. The new practice among adult educators of relying on local knowledge for technical solutions of local problems began to be known as 'participant research'.

The term *participatory research* (PR) was first coined in the 1975 special issue of the journal *Convergence*, featuring many grass-roots research projects. The group of featured practitioners, scholars and activists subsequently formed the 'Participatory Research Network'. The five geographical nodes of this network, and their respective chairpersons and centres, were as follows:

1. North America (Budd Hall in Toronto, Canada)
2. Asia (Rajesh Tandon in New Delhi, India)
3. Africa (Yusuf Kassam in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania)
4. Europe (Jan de Vries in the Netherlands)
5. Latin America (Francisco Vio Grossi in Caracas, Venezuela)

The network became a channel through which PR would gain wide visibility. A series of meetings were organized to increase awareness, deepen understanding, support users and highlight the universal resonance and relevance of PR.

The specific phrase *Participatory Action Research* was coined by the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda upon his interaction with the Latin American network of participatory researchers. The term described a variety of community-based approaches to knowledge creation which combined social investigation, education and action in an interrelated manner. Fals Borda gave PAR its worldwide recognition in the Cartagena Conference on Action Research in Cartagena, Colombia (1977).

The emergence of PR in the developing world and the political activism accompanying the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s sparked off a variety of PR projects by North American social scientists. John Gaventa, for instance, investigated political and economic oppression in Appalachian communities and grass-roots efforts to challenge the status quo. Peter Park engaged in the dialogue and uses of PAR in social movement contexts. Patricia Maguire articulated the need of feminist PAR.

By the 1980s, PAR was linked to alternative ideas about 'development'. Its central tenet was that if development was for the people, then as primary stakeholders in the development processes, people themselves should represent their case in the stage of knowledge generation as well as of its use. It drew strength from debates around participation in development programmes, questioning the top-down design of development policy.

Principles

Empowered Participation

Participation is the primary core principle of PAR. Unlike conventional social science research, PAR actively engages participants in all aspects of the research process, from design to dissemination. The participation moves from phases of passive participation to more interactive participation and finally to self-mobilization. A lower degree of participation, designated as 'non-participation', takes place when participants are only superficially involved in decision-making, the actual influencing power remaining in the hands of one powerful group or person. Participation is 'tokenistic' or 'symbolic' when potential participants are just informed about the objectives of research, but the project as such is still designed and led by more experienced researchers. Real participation or power sharing takes place when the decision-making processes are structured to incorporate negotiation between participants and those in power, with consensus as the eventual aim. Neither participants nor researchers can unilaterally enforce their point of view on each other. The participants have a role as well as a voice in the decision-making processes. They initiate, organize and lead defined research activities. In the self-mobilization stage, participants have full sovereignty and responsibility for organization, execution and monitoring of the entire research.

Commitment to Action and Social Change

The goal of PAR is to fundamentally transform social relations—helping those with less power and fewer resources get more of the same. Marginalized communities often lack relevant information to improve their conditions. The kind of information that PAR produces can clarify the issues and challenges facing them, create awareness of the need for action, focus attention on specific areas of concern, identify resources, design strategies for change and assess the impact of those strategies.

Its agenda for social change orients the PAR process towards solving problems rather than conducting research for the sake of advancing knowledge. The

process begins by equalizing the relations of power between the professional researcher and the members of the community being studied. The key belief of PAR is that change happens when the subjects of research learn to use new knowledge to reflect upon their own situation and then participate systematically and critically to overcome challenges and difficulties.

Collaborative and Equitable Research

In conventional research, the existing power relations between the researcher and the subjects of research are often taken for granted, and the impact they may have on the research goes unexamined. Such research tends to serve the objectives of those in power simply because they are economically, politically and socially better positioned to determine what questions are asked as well as how the findings of the research are to be utilized. In PAR, however, every participant contributes his or her expertise and shares in responsibility. This collaboration goes a long way in increasing trust and in bridging cultural gaps between partners.

Process

PAR begins with issues emerging from the day-to-day problems of living. Ideally, the actors-cum-researchers in a particular social setting conduct their own research geared towards changing their own situation. But often, a community may be unable to clearly articulate its felt problems. Here, the participatory process incorporates researchers from the 'outside', who work with the community to help convert its nebulous problems into a coherent and identifiable topic for collective investigation.

Researchers develop an informed and critical view of the daily realities surrounding issues before starting the research project. The context so identified is important as it explains the gravity of the problematic situation from the community's point of view. During this phase, the researcher explains the purpose of the project and begins to solicit help from key individuals in the community who would play an active role in the execution of the project. The researcher acts as a discussion organizer and facilitator and as a technical resource person. Together with a collaborating organization—such as a community development agency, social service agency or community health clinic—the researcher contacts members of the community, activates their interest in the problem to be dealt with by action-driven research and helps organize community meetings for discussion of relevant issues. This situation is heavily contingent on the interpersonal and political skills of the researcher as an organizer. Unlike traditional field research, PAR puts community

members in the role of active researchers—not merely passive information providers—even in the pre-data-gathering phase.

A dialogic approach requires that both the researcher and the participants maintain healthy mutual relationships. This manner of partnership is not easily forged, especially with people who have been victims of a dominating structure. Entrenched submissive attitudes and negative self-images reinforce subordination to outside researchers. Researchers too may find it difficult to relinquish the role of experts and may end up consciously or subconsciously imposing their own ideas. To counter these tendencies, all research stakeholders must actively engage in self-reflection. They consciously need to examine the sources of social power in their lives and how these sources could end up biasing their research. In the PAR world view, the characteristics of participants' position are relevant constituents of their knowledge.

Methodology

PAR combines research and action through a cyclic or spiral process which alternates between action and critical reflection. It lays emphasis on authenticity rather than on the scientific validity of the information. Therefore, statistically significant and generalizable conclusions are generally avoided.

PAR involves a flexible set of techniques. It combines popular education methods—such as diagrams and visual aids—which must be creative, expressive and culturally relevant. The use of 'problem-posing' dialogues encourages critical analysis through group discussion. Diagramming and visual techniques, used extensively in Participatory Rural Appraisal, aim to understand and cross-check a community's lived experience to assess, identify, prioritize and evaluate projects. PAR excludes all techniques of experimental studies in which experimental subjects are kept ignorant of the purpose of the study. Field observation; archival and library research; historical investigations using personal history documents, narratives and storytelling and questionnaires and interviews are the most extensively used field techniques.

PAR's methodology is distinctive in that it encourages researchers to ignore discipline-bound methodologies and to be flexible. They try multiple data collection methods and instruments, develop unconventional methods and apply unconventional criteria for determining the appropriateness of those methods. Methods are chosen or developed because they can potentially draw out useful knowledge and because they invite the involvement of all stakeholders. Since PAR places a premium on the experiential knowledge of community members, approaches like informal interviews or

open-ended questions might be chosen over more structured researcher-controlled data collection methods.

PAR often requires innovative, user-friendly approaches to the dissemination of knowledge as well. Community organizations expect tangible results that they can put to use. It follows that research findings need to be presented in a form accessible to the community, organizations, politicians, agency personnel and any others who might make use of the research findings. This requires that researchers demystify the language used in research reports. It also calls for the use of innovative, creative methods of describing and reporting results that may not involve writing at all, for instance, video, art, community theatre or quilting.

As advocacy for change is an important objective of PAR, it also needs to garner support for local issues at the highest decision-making level. To create such a multiplier effect, PAR involves visits, workshops, seminars, multi-stakeholder meetings and academic journals in which microlevel experiences and insights are shared with a view to sensitize those monopolizing authority and knowledge resources.

PAR in Mobilizing Community Knowledge: A Case Study

Jamtara, a district in the Indian state of Jharkhand, has a high incidence of child labour engaged in hazardous occupations such as bidi (indigenous cigar) rolling, brick kilns and rag picking. The parents are mostly tribal, illiterate and poor and themselves face severe livelihood constraints. As a step towards eliminating child labour, the government in 1996 established schools to provide non-formal education (NFE) to working children. The NFE schools aimed to educate working children up to Class 3 and then to transfer them into mainstream, government-run primary schools. The NFE schools gradually became defunct due to the apathy of government functionaries and the high dropout rates.

Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), along with a Jharkhand-based NGO, Lok Jagriti Kendra, initiated community monitoring of a service delivery project run by the state government in 2000 which sought to provide NFE to working children in Jamtara. This action-oriented development-monitoring process was based on the assumption that engaging the community to monitor the functioning of NFE schools would establish accountability, responsiveness and transparency in the governance of social development projects, while giving the community a measure of control over their immediate situation.

An exploratory study of NFE schools helped gain insight into the actual working of the schools and in understanding the concerns of various stakeholders,

such as parents, local civil society activists and school teachers. Consultations with different stakeholders revealed that participation of parents as stakeholders was practically non-existent as they were unaware even of the project's basic provisions.

Meetings with many parents followed at the village level. Through a sustained process of reflection, articulation and action, the parents of working children from three schools in Jamtara came forward to form parents' committees that would monitor the quality of education in NFE schools. PRIA facilitated workshops to build the capacity of the parents' committee. The committee members eventually decided on three indicators upon which they would measure the school's functioning: (1) the presence or absence of the school teacher, (2) the serving of the midday meal and (3) routine health check-ups for the children.

Since the parents were illiterate, they devised worksheets to record the data using pictures, drawings and graphics to depict the three indicators. They decided the modalities of monitoring and the roles and responsibilities of the monitors. Data was collected three to four times a month. The committee monitored the first two indicators for 4–5 days a month and the health check-ups once a month. Armed with reliable data that they themselves had collected, the parents' committee organized structured meetings with concerned government authorities, circle officers and medical officers to apprise them of the facts and petition them for redress or corrective action. For instance, slackness on the part of doctors in conducting routine medical check-ups of students, vacancies in teachers' posts, need for repair in schools and lack of sports equipment in the schools were some of the issues highlighted. The community also put up a number of demands which they felt had a bearing on the larger goal of eliminating child labour, such as extending the benefits of various government schemes, including small-income opportunities, to parents; ensuring timely disbursement of stipends and salaries and timely supply of school uniforms, books, writing material, sports goods and other inputs and compliance on regular health check-ups of children.

After a series of meetings and workshops, the government authorities initiated several actions to revive the schools and encouraged the parents to apply for loans under programmes which supported poor and asset-less people so that their economic condition could improve, potentially freeing their children from the need to earn.

The community stakeholders were involved in the multivalent processes of knowledge (research), reflection, learning and action. The process of research gave them self-confidence and control in decision-making. Capacity building enhanced their knowledge base. Participatory community monitoring enhanced their practice of citizenship. Community monitoring eventually

made government agencies considerably more accountable and transparent. This small step went a long way in widening and deepening the democratic process at the most basic level.

Though external agencies such as PRIA and Lok Jagriti Kendra were responsible for mobilizing at the initial stages, over a period of time, this control gradually moved entirely into the hands of the parents committee and the local community.

Challenges

Lack of clarity over the rationale of participation in the research process presents challenges in conducting PAR. Participation is overly emphasized in the data collection or analysis. PAR is used to manipulate community participation to fulfil the predetermined agenda of research. The community collaborate in data gathering, while setting the agenda of research, control and ownership of results through joint analysis and development of action plans and decision-making are out of bounds.

PAR requires time and sensitivity on the part of the researcher to understand community needs. With divergent perspectives, values and abilities among community members, consensus for determining the agenda of action for change and the time frame anticipated for the change might be difficult. Competing, contested and changing versions of community needs or values often influence agendas and provide means for enacting solutions for some while blocking others. A community may become sceptical about investing its time and energy, particularly when little is offered in terms of direct benefits.

PAR involves community members in the research not only as subjects but also as co-researchers. Community organizing appears to be a necessary step prior to the PAR process. This raises questions about the extent to which the external professional researcher should engage in community organizing to develop the community's capacity to define its own research question or take the lead in developing research questions. Researchers may not be trained for community-organizing strategies to jointly develop research questions with the communities. Involving community members in developing the research questions may risk having to work indefinitely on community organizing. Some communities may never reach the point at which they are comfortable defining a research question.

PAR Ethics in Mobilizing Community Knowledge

Given the principles, processes and challenges of PAR, the ethics of PAR can be classified within the following criteria.

The element of active citizenship should be woven into PAR projects. Simply providing space for dialogue is not sufficient. There must be an opportunity for local communities to have some control over their immediate situation and to participate in making changes at the ground level and in the governance process.

PAR should be used for conscientization—it should aim at bridging the gaps between different forms of knowledge, such as the popular and the technical. Multidisciplinary and mixed-methods approaches to issues should be supported.

Commodification of PAR as a rhetoric or method for knowledge generation should be resisted. PAR needs to appreciate and recognize the ideas and expectations of the community at hand. Collaborations between community members, practitioners, policy institutions and other stakeholders, such as the academic and corporate sectors, should be promoted for the purpose of mobilizing community knowledge. Networks between these institutions should be revitalized and sustained through constant dialogue, action and research.

If empowerment of the community through knowledge is to be pursued, then the proponents of PAR should emphasize that transparency and accountability of research are important issues in the generation and use of knowledge.

Mandakini Pant

See also collaborative action research; community development; community dialogue; Community-Based Participatory Research; conscientization; critical reflection; Fals Borda, Orlando; Freire, Paulo

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PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Budget preparation takes place in every household, organization, development programme and government to provide for identified needs with the available resources for a specific period. Resources generated from tax payers or grants received from a donor are allocated in different ways, called budget lines or budget items, to be spent in a particular manner. The conventional budget preparation is done by those who are in control of the resources, though the impact of the spending will be on the citizens or beneficiaries. When the citizens or those who will be affected by the spending of the budget are involved in the process of budget making, it becomes participatory. In conventional budgeting, the citizens, who may be affected by the budget, are not expected to provide suggestions, or their feedback is not heard.

Effective participatory budgeting is the process where the citizens can exercise control over the resources, know and demand their rights, explore opportunities and work towards equity and justice. Participatory budgeting is a step towards making governance more democratic, accountable and transparent. Participatory budget-making processes are also empowering to citizens for political and social transformation by bringing in the voice of the unheard into centrality and developing collective leadership for planning, implementation and monitoring.

Prerequisites of Participation in Budgets

The language of budgeting is highly technical and professional. Therefore, one of the conditions is that

the budget-making agencies make it simple so that ordinary citizens can understand the processes, available resources and technical terms clearly. The second important condition is that the information should be disseminated in the language spoken and understood by the local people. The third condition is that the process of budget planning should have built-in components of participation so that participation in budget making gets institutionalized. A vibrant civil society and the media also add value in determining new ways of participation and demonstrating models of empowered citizenry.

Stages of Participation in Budget Process

In the pre-budget and budget formulation stage, the key policymakers engage with the communities or different stakeholder groups so that the appropriate needs and priorities can be articulated and considered. Civil society organizations often bring forth assessments of the previous budget to inform the parliamentarians or relevant policymakers of the mismatch of expenditure and budgets based on the articulated needs or guidelines. The media also play an important role in highlighting the relevant issues and generating debate.

During the budget implementation stage, parliament or policymaking institutions through mechanisms like committees or commissions provide oversight function. Civil society organizations support the implementation of budgets as well as provide a grass-roots perspective on the implementation process of the budget. The budget monitoring and evaluation highlight whether the resources spent are in line with the budget. They also highlight whether the expenditure is for the intended purposes.

Experiences of Participatory Budgeting

There are many countries where participatory budgeting has been institutionalized, such as South Africa and Uganda, where it is enshrined in the constitution. Porto Alegre, a town in Brazil, is a good example of participatory planning and budgeting. The municipality organizes a sustained, year-long mobilization of participants and elected representatives through meetings and deliberations on budgets. The resources are clearly allocated for different zones. There is a principle of positive discrimination based on the quality-of-life index. The priorities, policies and resources are negotiated in open meetings. The elected representatives vote on the final projects, and the council approves the budget. Neighbourhood committees are set up to monitor the performance.

In Kenya, pre-budget hearings are organized. In Kerala, one of the states in India, people planning is

exercised at the local elected government, called a village panchayat. Each panchayat is given a flexible budget to plan according to key guiding principles. In a large-scale programme on the right to employment implemented by the Government of India, every village prepares a labour budget to determine the number of days of employment required in a year by families demanding employment. This becomes a basis for planning the budget for the activities to be initiated for providing labour employment by construction of civil structures in the village. The budget is planned and approved by the village council.

Knowledge Production and Action Research

A participatory budget encourages ownership by those most affected by the budget allocations. Therefore, the citizens, who are affected by the service or as taxpayers, decide to generate data on the problems and analyze their own situation. Local solutions are identified, and technical experts adapt solutions to the best interests of the people and for efficient use of the available resources. This negotiation between the community and the experts generates new knowledge and promotes action research. It also promotes participatory governance and strengthens democracy as citizens demand accountability from their elected leaders and policymakers. Active engagement of citizens in planning and budgeting, based on local knowledge generation, leads to action research to identify solutions for effective implementation and further planning. Repeated cycles of participatory budgeting lead to dynamic knowledge production and action that is controlled by the people as responsible citizens.

The process of getting the participation of the poor or the marginalized in the budget process is time, resource and skill intensive. Often, the authorities do not have the luxury of time, and therefore, the quality of participation is compromised. Sometimes, even after participation, the planned budget or its implementation does not happen according to expectation. Without serious commitment from policymakers, this becomes a frustrating experience for the participants.

Yogesh Kumar

See also knowledge mobilization; local self-governance; participatory governance

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PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PROGRAMMING

Participatory design is an attitude about a force for change in the creation and management of environments for people. Its strength lies in being a movement that cuts across traditional professional boundaries and cultures. Its roots lie in the ideals of a participatory democracy where collective decision-making is highly decentralized throughout all sectors of society, so that all individuals learn participatory skills and can effectively participate in various ways in the making of all decisions that affect them. Often, the term *participation* is modified with different descriptors, resulting in terms such as *community participation*, *citizen participation* and *public participation*.

Today, participatory design processes are being applied to urban design, planning and geography as well as to the fields of industrial and information technology. Research findings suggest that positive outcomes are associated with solutions being informed by users' tacit knowledge. More recently, another factor has been suggested as being partly responsible for favourable participatory design outcomes, which is described as collective intelligence. Tom Atlee, in his book *The Tao of Democracy*, describes collective intelligence as a shared insight that comes about through the process of group interaction, particularly where the outcome is more insightful and powerful than the sum of individual perspectives. When people align their individual intelligences in shared undertakings, instead of using their intelligence to undermine each other in pursuit of individual status, they are much more able to generate collective intelligence.

Three main issues have dominated the discourse in participatory design literature: (1) the politics of design, (2) the nature of participation and (3) the tools, techniques and methods for carrying out design and planning projects.

Public participation builds on classic democratic theory that those citizens who are affected by decisions should have a say in decisions that affect their lives because they will become better citizens. Participation is effective when the task is conceptualized in terms of what is to be accomplished when the need is acknowledged to involve citizens. And it is often the physical and environmental projects that citizens see directly affecting their lives. To create a condition in which

people can act on their own environmental needs, in which they can make the distinction between the experts' technical and aesthetic judgement, requires a change in the consciousness of both community members and professionals.

Citizen participation in community decision-making can be traced as far back as Plato's *Republic*. Plato's concepts of freedom of speech, assembly, voting and equal representation have evolved through the years to form the basis upon which the USA was established. Some historians support the notion that Americans have always wanted to be part of decisions affecting their lives. Freedom and the right to make decisions on the early American frontier was the shaping force in grass-roots democracy—in other words, people's right to participate. As many frontier villages grew in population, it became increasingly difficult for every citizen to actively participate in all community decisions. To fill the void in the decision-making process, people began to delegate their involvement to a representative, which grew into the system of selecting officials by public elections and increased the number of volunteer associations and organizations. Although public participation can be approached and defined in many different ways, this discussion is concerned with participation aimed at issues involving community decision-making.

In 1915, Patrick Geddes wrote *Cities in Evolution*, an essay on the growth of cities, in which he emphasized the preservation of historical traditions, the involvement of the people in their own betterment and the rediscovery of past traditions of city building. His legacy includes a tried and tested method—that of a regional report or survey—which was intended to gain an overall perspective of an area's social ecology. This approach identified and assessed the physical and social factors that may be considered to contribute to human health—such as housing, employment, air quality, water supply, the availability of gardens or natural areas and the nature of cultural identity. Geddes stressed the need to identify the links between the different factors, and where deficiencies exist, he would search for appropriate solutions. These would often require political, social and physical intervention. The current emphasis on evidence-based policy appears to reflect this strategic, interdisciplinary and integrative approach to planning.

Participatory design is commonly associated with the idea of involving local people in social development. The most important influences came from the Third World community development movement of the 1950s and 1960s, Western social work and community radicalism. The plans of many developing countries emphasized co-operative and communitarian forms of social and economic organization, stressing the values

of self-help and self-sufficiency, advocating that the poor and the oppressed should be mobilized to promote social and economic progress. Current community participation theory suggests that politicians and bureaucrats have exploited ordinary people and that they have been excluded from the community development process. The leading community participation proponents are found in international agencies such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization and UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund). The emergence of community participation theory as an approach to social development is an outgrowth of the United Nations' popular participation programme that required the creation of opportunities for all people to be politically involved and share in the development process.

In her 1969 article 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', Sherry Arnstein contends that citizen participation is citizen power but that there is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process. The fundamental point is that participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. In order to assess the types of participation and non-participation, Arnstein suggested a typology of eight levels of participation using a ladder technique.

The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) manipulation and (2) therapy. These two rungs describe levels of 'non-participation' that have been contrived by some to substitute for genuine participation. The next three rungs, (3) informing, (4) consultation and (5) placation, progress to levels of 'tokenism' that allow citizens to hear and to have a voice but continue to retain for the power holders the right to decide. Citizens can then enter into a (6) partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. At the topmost rungs, (7) delegated power and (8) citizen control, citizens obtain the majority of decision-making power. This categorization of the various types of people's involvement clarifies the distinction between non-participation and citizen power and a method to identify the motivation behind participatory projects.

The activity of community participation is based on the principle that the environment works better if citizens are active and involved in its creation and management instead of being treated as passive consumers. The development of a community's potential through collaborative problem-solving is described by social scientists as Participatory Action Research, where citizens are empowered to effect social change by controlling the knowledge produced by participation. Community participation has a broad value to community life. For example, it does the following:

- *Engages the public:* In a general sense, the purpose of citizen participation is to inform the public, get the public's reactions regarding the proposed actions or policies and engage in problem-solving to come up with the best solutions for everyone.
- *Builds trust:* What adds legitimacy to a decision is not only the substance of the decision but also the perception that the process by which the decision was made was fair, open and democratic. This is true, even if some individuals or groups do not agree with the final decision.
- *Makes better decisions:* History shows that better public decisions happen when the public is involved in the decision-making process. People have more ownership for the programme's success if they have had a part in creating it. They also hold a key element that only comes from their experience. Decision-makers need the voice of experience to line up with the facts and figures produced by studies.

Participation means different things to different people depending on the issue, its timing and the political setting in which it takes place. The planning that accompanies the development of any participation programme should first include a determination of objectives, such as deciding whether it is to generate ideas, identify attitudes, disseminate information or review a proposal. Planning for participation requires that participation methods be matched to the objectives and the appropriate method selected.

The list of possible participation objectives will differ from time to time and from issue to issue. Once the objectives of community participation are stated, it becomes clear that participation is perceived according to the type of issue and the people involved. If differences in perception and expectations are not identified at the outset, and realistic objectives are not made clear, the expectations of those involved in the participation programme will not have been met, and they will become disenchanted. Integral to the concept of participatory design is that of participatory programming, which is a process of identifying people's specific needs through a variety of engagement techniques.

Although it is critical to examine goals and objectives in planning for participation, there are various techniques that are available, each of which performs different functions. In the past several decades, there have been numerous efforts to accumulate knowledge about various participation techniques, as well as the function that these techniques perform. Community surveys, review boards, advisory boards, task forces, neighbourhood and community meetings, public hearings,

public information programmes and interactive cable TV have all been used with varying degrees of success, depending on the effectiveness of the participation plan. Because community participation is a complex concept, it requires considerable thought to prepare an effective participation programme. At the same time, designers and planners to acquire information have effectively used field techniques such as questionnaires, interviewing, focus groups and group mapping. In general, many of the techniques facilitate citizens' awareness to environmental situations and help activate their creative thinking. Some of these techniques have become standard methods used in participatory processes, such as the use of interactive group decision-making techniques in workshops. Face-to-face interaction, often referred to as a workshop, characterizes all group methods.

Although there are numerous interaction methods, including focus groups and simulation gaming, the *charrette* process is the most common. Focus groups usually consist of 6–10 carefully selected people, with a facilitator who guides the discussion to relevant issues. Gaming is a participatory approach to problem-solving that engages a real-life situation compressed in time so that the essential characteristics of the problem are open to examination. This technique permits learning about the process of change in a dynamic environment requiring periodic decisions. Essentially, a complex problem is identified, its essence is abstracted and the end result is a process referred to as simulation. A charrette, however, is an intensive participatory process lasting several days or longer, depending on the complexity of the problem. This is a process that convenes interest groups in a series of interactive meetings aimed at solving particular problems. Phases of the charrette process may include workshops or working sessions that engage participants in the development of ideas, recommendations and decisions. This is a hands-on approach whereby professionals and citizens work together with plans, photographs and/or models to explore alternatives. *Charrette* is the French word for 'cart' or 'chariot', whereby architecture students would be working on projects until a deadline, when a charrette would be wheeled among the students to pick up their work for review while they were still working *en charrette*, in the cart.

The development of a single participatory method has not been the aim of researchers and practitioners in design and planning. However, some groups have organized their practice into an ensemble of tools and techniques characterized by the charrette process.

When faced with complex problems and diverse interests, collaborative decision-making embraces face-to-face interaction and encourages creativity, open communication, broad participation and agreement. Designing a clear, well-managed collaborative

process can lead to agreement where all participants are likely to receive wide community support during implementation. This involvement should give the participants full inclusion in designing, organizing and implementing activities and workshops in order to create consensus, ownership and action in support of environmental change in specific areas. It should include people and groups rather than exclude any individuals.

Henry Sanoff

See also Asset-Based Community Development; citizen participation; ladder of participation

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PARTICIPATORY DISASTER MANAGEMENT

All civilizations, ancient and current, have known natural disasters, be it in the form of earthquakes, floods, landslides, cyclones, wildfires, avalanches or tsunamis, to name a few. Country after country suffers loss of human lives and damage to property, leading to many adverse effects on the economy and society. Between 1994 and 2003, over 3,000 disasters were recorded, affecting on an average 255 million people and claiming an average 58,000 lives each year. Current statistical trends and scientific evidence of climate change assert that these events can only increase in both frequency and intensity in the coming years. Furthermore, the United Nations estimates that by 2025 half of the world's population will live in areas subject to major storms and excessive flooding. If the trend continues, it is estimated that by 2050 natural disasters will have a global cost of over 300 billion dollars a year.

Types of Disasters

Natural Disasters

These disasters include floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and volcano eruptions that can have immediate impacts on human health, as well as secondary impacts causing further death and suffering from floods causing landslides, earthquakes resulting in fires, tsunamis causing widespread flooding and typhoons sinking ferries.

Environmental Emergencies

These emergencies include technological or industrial accidents, usually involving hazardous material, and they occur where these materials are produced, used or transported. Large forest fires are generally included in this definition because they tend to be caused by humans.

Complex Emergencies

These emergencies involve a breakdown of authority, looting and attacks on strategic installations. Complex emergencies include conflict situations and war.

Pandemic Emergencies

These emergencies involve a sudden onset of a contagious disease that not only affects health but also disrupt services and businesses, bringing economic and social costs.

Disaster Mitigation

Disasters have the potential to interrupt essential services, such as the provision of health care, electricity, water, sewage or garbage removal, transportation and communications. The interruption can seriously affect the health and social and economic networks of local communities and countries. Disasters have a major and long-lasting impact on people, long after the immediate effect has been mitigated. Poorly planned relief activities can have a significant negative impact on the disaster victims in terms of exclusion, appropriateness of materials with reference to needs and timeliness of the support. Disasters contribute in entrenching poverty in already impoverished countries. In the absence of risk transfer mechanisms and social protection, it is usually the poor and the underprivileged who are the worst affected. It is understood that development cannot be sustainable unless disaster mitigation is built into the development process. Investments in disaster mitigation are more cost-effective than expenditure on relief and rehabilitation. Actions on disaster prevention and mitigation contribute to lasting improvement in the creation of safety standards and are essential for sustainable development.

Disaster Response

Disaster response in the form of early warning, evacuation, search and rescue, relief and rehabilitation is a component of disaster management. These are response-related actions in a post-disaster situation. Prevention, mitigation and preparedness are part of development interventions which help achieve vulnerability reduction and build capacity for effective response.

A hazard, leading to widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses, disrupts the functioning of a community when people are not able to withstand the impact because of a vulnerability. Vulnerabilities can be categorized into physical and socio-economic vulnerabilities. Physical vulnerability includes notions of elements that may be damaged or destroyed by natural hazards. It is based on the physical conditions, such as buildings and infrastructure, and their proximity to the hazard. It also relates to the technical capability of buildings and structures to resist the forces acting upon them during a hazard event. In disaster response with regard to shelter reconstruction, 'owner-driven reconstruction' is the first step to make reconstruction participatory. Shelter reconstruction approaches are often driven by outside agencies, materials and technology which people are not familiar with. When the people are enabled to make their own choices in terms of design and material, along with additional knowledge of the quality of material and safety standards, the communities feel empowered.

Socio-economic vulnerability refers to the degree to which a population is affected by a hazard in relation to socio-economic conditions. For example, people who are poor and live in at-risk regions do not have the resources to construct strong, secure houses. They are generally vulnerable, and their shelters are damaged or destroyed whenever there is a strong wind or cyclone. Because of their poverty, they are also not able to rebuild their houses. It is often seen that in a post-disaster situation the support to rebuild houses is determined in terms of replacement cost. The support for reconstruction needs to be at such a level that the community improves socio-economic conditions, which means improving habitats, working conditions and infrastructure to cope with future disaster situations.

Capacity Building and Action Research

Disaster management in the post-disaster situation can fall to the community, or more often, an external disaster response is required when the local community is unable to respond. However, it is important to build capacity in terms of resources, skills, technology and management at household and community levels to enable people to cope with, withstand, prepare for, prevent, mitigate or quickly recover from a disaster. Capacity building to reduce the impact of the hazard can be in terms of structural mitigation measures like the construction of safe houses, growing mangroves as wind breaks or building water channels, or it can be in terms of non-structural measures such as mock evacuation drills, improved safety standards and building by-laws and mason training.

People's capacity is often addressed in a techno-managerial manner. Offering only a few rounds of training or bringing in external consultants to implement universal safety standards will not necessarily build disaster resilience. However, when the community is involved in assessing needs, deciding on themes for training and planning the process for the implementation of standards, the community is empowered, which leads to sustainable capacity development. For example, outside consultants may think that planning and safety standards are too technical for the community to comprehend. However, whereas engineers may only consider standard materials, the community can suggest diverse local material in diverse contexts. Or most communities are against the idea of relocation and will continue to build and rebuild in disaster-affected areas. Planners can contribute technical knowledge to improve on the community's traditional and in situ planning. Therefore, community-based Participatory Action Research opens up diverse opportunities for disaster management.

It is increasingly being realized that communities have local knowledge to address hazard events. Mary B. Andersson and Peter J. Woodrow argue that the post-emergency aid assistance has to be designed so that it supports local development and does not create external dependency. In different post-disaster scenarios, it has been observed that where people are organized, they recover from the disasters through their own efforts better than those who are not organized. For example, in a post-earthquake scenario where the houses were fully damaged, the community had two options for housing recovery: (1) residents were provided with prefabricated materials like tents for transit shelter or (2) they were mobilized to salvage the housing material and rebuild their transit shelters with minimum external support. With the second option, people recovered better post-disaster without any adverse impact on their health and social relationships.

Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment

While relying on the community's capacity is a key principle of participatory disaster management, the role of external support should not be negated. Disaster risk reduction cannot be effective if it is the sole responsibility of disaster managers; it needs to strengthen local capacity and action as well. Participatory disaster management is ultimately aimed at building resilient communities. As part of capacity building, local organizations must analyze, plan and implement activities related to disaster risk reduction.

In order to roll out an effective post-disaster response, the community needs to train up several task forces that address early-warning systems, evacuation,

search and rescue, first aid, management of camps in the evacuation spots, water and sanitation, temporary shelter, damage assessment and so on. These task forces need to initiate and complete participatory disaster risk assessments under normal circumstances. During these assessments, the nature and behaviour of different hazards witnessed by the community in the previous several years are analyzed. The assessment looks at the warning signs, frequency, magnitude and force of the hazard. It also looks at the different elements that were affected by the hazard.

In the risk analysis process, the community examines the local capacity for prevention, response and mitigation. Communities have many capacities which they need to be aware of. Based on the hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessment, the community can map out 'elements at risk' to different hazard events in different intensities. The community will find it liberating and empowering if the exercise is conducted in a truly participatory fashion using appropriate tools and techniques.

After the disaster risk analysis has been completed, the community needs to develop a disaster management action plan. For example, development programmes can be used to build raised mud platforms as rescue places for people and cattle in the event of a flood. To reduce the impact of a cyclone, the community can plant mangroves in partnership with the forestry department. In some places, the poor communities make contingency plans to sell their poultry, goats and sheep before the onset of flooding as the animals are too difficult to take care of during a crisis and so they can avoid distress sales.

Conclusion

In the past decade, there has been a major shift in the approach to disaster management. Instead of just responding to hazard events, the approach has been risk reduction through hazard prevention, mitigation and vulnerability reduction by building individual and community capacity. The new approach espouses the building of community resilience. The Hyogo Framework of Action declared at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, 2005, and the Hyogo Framework of Action-II, Geneva, put emphasis on capacity building in the local community. It has been globally acknowledged that until the community is empowered to address disaster risk reduction measures, the national policy and institutions cannot make much contribution.

Binoy Acharya

See also capacity building; comprehensive district planning; empowerment; Participatory Rural Appraisal

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PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

Participatory evaluation (PE) encompasses evaluation approaches actively involving stakeholders in planning and implementing evaluation studies, as well as using evaluation results. PE approaches are characterized by their underlying motivations: (a) a pragmatic interest in making evaluation meaningful and useful, (b) a social constructivist epistemology and/or (c) a political interest in social justice and fairness.

All evaluation approaches involve stakeholders; this is a sine qua non of evaluation. Stakeholder involvement takes a particular form in PE—it must be broad and fundamental to decisions made in the evaluation process, including defining evaluation questions, deciding what methods best answer those questions, deciding from whom to collect data, analyzing data and disseminating and using the evaluation results. Additionally, PE employs many methodological approaches even though qualitative methodologies are common.

Action research, especially Participatory Action Research (PAR), and PE share many attributes and have some common roots. Both seek involvement of less powerful stakeholders in the inquiry process, emphasize the process of participation, acknowledge the validity of popular knowledge and are committed to action as a result of the inquiry. PAR has its roots in community and international development and, more recently, feminist studies. Some PE shares these roots, but others respond to the evaluation research literature of the late 1970s and early 1980s, showing that evaluation results do not speak for themselves and more engaged stakeholders will increase the likelihood that evaluation findings are meaningful and actionable. The similarities between PAR and PE are most obvious in transformative PE, which will be described in more detail below.

What follows is a description of the primary types of PE with illustrative examples, and the entry concludes with a description of the advantages and challenges of PE.

Defining PE

PE is an umbrella term covering a range of notions of participation. In general, all PE involves a broad

and diverse range of programme stakeholders (staff, service recipients, donors and communities), but typically, it emphasizes the participation of those stakeholders less likely to have decision-making authority (e.g. service recipients and staff). PE assumes that these stakeholders will be actively involved in planning, executing and using the evaluation. While evaluators play different roles (methodological expert, coach, mentor or facilitator), ultimately responsibility for the evaluation devolves to the programme stakeholders.

The US Agency for International Development in 2011 summarized PE's guiding principles as follows:

- *Stakeholder ownership*: Create structures and processes to include those most frequently powerless or voiceless in programme design and implementation. Participation honours human contributions and cultural knowledge.
- *Negotiation*: Participants collaboratively decide on the evaluation focus, how it should be conducted, how findings will be used and what action will result. Often the process requires addressing different points of view and conflicts.
- *Diversity of views*: Perspectives of a broad range of stakeholders are sought, and those with the most power allow the participation of those with the least power.
- *Learning*: Stakeholders learn together to take corrective actions and improve programmes.
- *Flexible of design*: Uses diverse methodologies that capitalize on the resources, needs and skills of participants and generate empirical findings.
- *Facilitation*: Stakeholders conduct the evaluation; however, one or more outside experts may serve as facilitators in supporting roles, such as mentor, trainer, group processor, negotiator and/or methodologist.

PE can be a collaboration between an evaluator and programme stakeholders, or programme stakeholders might assume responsibility for the evaluation. In the collaborative scenario, evaluators and stakeholders work together in identifying the evaluation focus, questions and data collection, but the evaluator has responsibility for the execution and quality control of the evaluation process. When programme stakeholders assume responsibility for the evaluation, they call on evaluators to lend technical expertise if and as needed. PE falls within one of three types. J. Bradley Cousins and Jill Anne Whitmore categorized PE as practical PE (P-PE) or transformative PE (T-PE), and within international development agencies, participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) has emerged. These distinctions are explored in more detail below.

Practical PE

P-PE reflects evaluators' dissatisfaction with the lack of use of evaluation findings and is a decidedly North American development. It is a pragmatic response. The increased emphasis on stakeholder engagement in evaluation processes is a theme in much of the evaluation literature from the mid-1980s well into the 1990s. Increasing stakeholder involvement and creating more person-to-person connections in the evaluation process is key to increasing the relevance and ownership of the evaluation and, in turn, increasing evaluation's utility.

P-PE reflects significant stakeholder engagement in focusing the evaluation, but typically, evaluators retain control of the evaluation process and have the technical and methodological expertise to conduct the evaluation. P-PE makes sense when organizational contexts neither allow nor encourage stakeholders to make decisions and when the context does not include deeply disenfranchised or oppressed stakeholder groups. The success of P-PE is enhanced when there is relatively high agreement on issues (and lack of conflict) and when there is a core of organizational practitioners willing to commit to the process.

Illustrating P-PE

Imagine an evaluation of a school within a school—one that focuses on students talented in math and science. The director of the school hires an evaluator to facilitate a PE since she wants all of the school's constituents to be involved. There are relatively few conflicts surrounding the school—the community agrees that it is a good programme, students like it and parents seem happy, but there is still a desire to improve the school if possible. A committee with representatives of stakeholder groups (school administrators, teachers, students and parents) works with the evaluator in identifying issues to explore (should the programme focus on enrichment or acceleration), how data should be collected (surveys are familiar to the stakeholders) and from whom (teachers who are not in the programme; former students—current students are interested in knowing what they think) and how the results will be used (curriculum changes, recruitment, etc.). With limited resources, high motivation on the part of the director and teachers and stakeholders' willingness to participate, this is a reasonable scenario for P-PE, contributing to specific programme improvements.

Transformative PE

In contrast, T-PE is informed by different issues, especially the empowerment of programme stakeholders and the potential for any inquiry, including evaluation, to be a democratizing force. T-PE, like

PAR, is rooted more in Latin American and developing countries around the world, and the work of Paulo Freire is key to its foundational orientation. T-PE fosters empowerment, especially of those least likely to have a voice, through participation in the evaluation process and using evaluation for influencing social change.

The historical antecedents for T-PE suggest that attention to power issues is a key feature. T-PE assumes that within any organizational, community or programmatic context, power is differentially distributed and some stakeholders have less voice and control over actions and circumstances that make a difference to the quality of their lives. This is a concern with social justice and fairness. T-PE may rely on a democratizing framework in the vein of John Dewey, one that sees participation as key to emancipation, or on a revolutionary framework in the vein of Paulo Freire or Karl Marx, one that sees resistance as key.

Illustrating T-PE

Imagine an evaluation of an after-school programme for inner-city teens sponsored by a local museum. The programme and museum staff are mostly White; all of the teens are African American. The staff and the programme intentions are good—they want to give the teens a safe, rewarding place to be and to provide support to learn job skills. The teens' experiences are, however, not so rewarding—they are assigned menial tasks and are required to participate in group-counselling sessions. The evaluators work with all stakeholders to illuminate different perceptions and experiences within the programme, confronting defensiveness from the staff and frustration from the teens. In the process, the voice of the teens is highlighted, and opportunities for greater teen input in choosing helpful and meaningful work tasks and activities are created. The evaluation results in better communication among stakeholders, an overall stronger voice for teens and programme experiences that empower rather than patronize the teens.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

P-PE and T-PE are usually episodic, evaluating a given programme, initiative or policy, and are time delimited. PME, however, conceptualizes evaluation as ongoing, an evolving process of question asking, data collection and action. Formal evaluations do arise as a result of PME, but it is first and foremost attentive to the ongoing monitoring of programme activities. A key feature of PME is the use of rapid appraisal techniques to identify when quick corrective action is required. Rapid appraisal techniques allow for quick, systematic collection of data and might include mini surveys, exit

polling, community mapping, focus groups, participant observation and walkabouts.

Illustrating PME

Imagine a school in Kenya that educates local Masai in tourism and prepares them to work as wild-life guides in the burgeoning ecotourism industry. The foundation funding the school is committed to its success and decides on PME that relies on local stakeholders to provide feedback for continuous improvement of the school and its initiatives. Those teaching at the school, Masai currently and previously enrolled at the school and local volunteers participate in a 2-day workshop orienting them to evaluation and building a team approach to evaluation. Monthly meetings provide an opportunity to identify questions and data to answer those questions. For example, graduates of the school feel that they did not learn enough about native flora and preservation of the grasslands, and a quick survey of current students illustrates that this remains a curricular shortcoming. A curriculum module can be added to provide better preparation on this topic.

Advantages and Challenges in Using PE

PE has advantages, but PE also faces challenges to be successful. Many of the potential advantages have been alluded to in the previous description of PE types. In summary, the potential positive outcomes include (a) increased stakeholder ownership of evaluation processes and outcomes; (b) increased likelihood that evaluation findings will be used; (c) opportunity for change, whether in a community, professional practice or policy; (d) learning of evaluation skills and (e) cost-effective evaluation when there are modest evaluation resources. In addition to these evaluation-specific advantages, PE may also create stronger communities, improve relationships within organizational and work contexts and build infrastructure for future inquiry.

Successful PE faces some challenges as well. Finding the time and generating commitment within the organization or programme are key. Recruiting, co-ordinating, educating and sustaining the interest of diverse stakeholder groups require both. This commitment may increase exponentially with greater programmatic or organizational complexity. Resource allocation may also be a challenge. Even though PE can be done with fewer real funds, it is the in-kind resources (e.g. time) that often must be reallocated to foster the participation required, in addition to the cost of employing external evaluators to facilitate the PE. And not insignificant is the probability that PE will create or surface conflict because of cultural, language, power and class differences. Having a conflict

resolution plan foreshadows and prepares for this likelihood, but conflict nonetheless will be challenging.

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See also empowerment; evaluation; Participatory Action Research; Participatory Rapid Appraisal

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PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

Participatory governance (sometimes called participatory democracy) refers to forms of governance in which citizens, and other non-state actors, are empowered to influence and share control in processes of public decision-making that affect their lives. In traditional systems of representative democracy, citizens frequently lack access to information, have inadequate opportunities for meaningful dialogue and negotiation with public actors and are excluded from processes of public deliberation and decision-making. Participatory governance practices seek to address these ‘democratic deficits’ by promoting citizen information, rights awareness, participation and influence. Since the early 1990s, a large number of participatory governance innovations have been introduced, in both ‘mature’ and ‘emerging democracies’ around the world. The value of participatory governance both as a means to enhanced governance and development results and as an end in itself, due to the intrinsic value of citizen participation, is now broadly acknowledged. While participatory governance promises significant potential political, social and economic benefits, experience shows that there are also important obstacles to achieving inclusive and effective citizen participation. Despite these challenges, participatory governance is a rapidly expanding phenomenon, in terms of both the

scale and coverage of participatory governance initiatives and the range of practices and approaches that continue to be developed by both civil society and state actors across the globe.

History and Development

Citizen and civil society participation has long been considered a cornerstone of good governance. Principles of participatory governance date as far back as ancient Athens and have been manifested in various forms throughout history, for example, in the systems of direct democracy that have functioned in the Swiss Cantons from the late Middle Ages.

Participatory governance re-emerged as a key theme in the early 1990s due to a number of trends. For many citizens and civil society organizations, demands for participatory governance are rooted in dissatisfaction with traditional systems of representative democracy and represent an attempt to address perceived deficits (e.g. lack of transparency, responsiveness and accountability) by applying the principles of popular participation, already well developed in social development spheres, to the governance domain. Participatory governance approaches are based on the premise that citizens have both the *right* and the *responsibility* to participate in the processes of public decision-making. The renewed interest in participatory governance approaches is also linked to developments in public administration—such as the emergence of public-private partnerships and the acknowledged need for multi-stakeholder approaches to deal with the complexities of globalizing economies and environmental challenges. Moreover, calls for participatory governance have emerged from the development aid and anti-corruption fields, where participatory governance approaches, in particular those involving citizen monitoring and oversight roles, are viewed as an important strategy for enhancing government transparency, effectiveness and accountability. Finally, the field of action research has made important contributions to the development of participatory governance practices and innovations. Participatory governance approaches emphasize the importance of ‘evidence-based’ interactions between citizens and the state. Many participatory governance practices are based on empowering citizens to use action research techniques to generate the information and data they need to engage in informed dialogue with state actors, undertake evidence-based advocacy, seek accountability from public officials and service providers, propose alternatives and negotiate change.

Key Features

While *participation* is a general term used to refer to an extremely wide range of practices, some level of

influence and *shared control*, not only *information sharing* or *consultation*, is typically required for an initiative to be considered an example of participatory governance. The goal of participatory governance is not to have every citizen participate in every decision but rather to ensure an equitable representation of different interests and societal groups, especially of disadvantaged or traditionally excluded groups, in those decisions and processes that most directly affect peoples' lives.

Participatory governance practices are typically evidence based, solution oriented and centred on direct dialogue and interaction between citizens and public authorities. The purpose is not to replace but rather to improve and complement existing democratic institutions. In many countries, civil society organizations have played a key role in enhancing citizen access to public information, supporting citizen-led research and monitoring, advocating for citizen rights and creating spaces and mechanisms for participatory governance. Participatory governance frequently involves strengthening the linkages and relationships between civil society and state actors.

The potential for participatory governance is arguably greatest at the local level, where citizens can directly engage with local authorities on issues of direct relevance to their daily lives, such as the provision of essential public services. However, as decision-making powers and resources are often concentrated at the central level, efforts to enhance citizen participation in national-level governance processes are also important.

Participatory governance practices can be initiated by citizens, civil society organizations or government actors; can be informal or institutionalized; can be undertaken independently or jointly and can occur at any and all stages throughout the governance cycle. A range of participatory practices with regard to public policies, plans, budgets, expenditures, services and oversight at the local through to national and even international levels have been tried and tested since the 1990s, many of them originating in the 'emerging' democracies of the Global South.

Examples

Policymaking

Participation in policymaking processes can occur through mechanisms such as public hearings, policy networks, legislative committees or multi-stakeholder bodies, such as the National Economic and Social Councils introduced in Ireland in the mid-1980s. Alternatively, citizens and civil society organizations independently undertake to monitor and evaluate decisions

and actions of the state, raise public awareness of priority concerns, critique government proposals or advocate for new policies or programmes. Such activities frequently involve action research. At the local level, community meetings, multi-stakeholder round tables and joint planning committees are just a few mechanisms used to involve citizen in policymaking and planning.

Public Budgets

Based on the pioneering example of Porto Alegre (Brazil), participatory budgeting is now practised in thousands of municipalities around the world. At the national level, more common examples of budget-related participatory governance practices include action research efforts to independently analyze the impact of budget allocations and expose the discrepancies between stated government policy priorities and resource allocations. South Africa has been a leader in both independent and institutionalized citizen participation in budgeting and fiscal policy processes. The International Budget Partnership plays an important role in promoting such practices worldwide.

Public Expenditures

An important element of participatory governance is for citizens to be able to hold officials accountable for how they manage public resources. Social movements in India have been innovators in using action research techniques such as social audits to track public spending and outputs at the local level, a practice that has now spread around the globe. At the national level, the Philippines was an early leader in establishing both independent and government-mandated vigilance committees to oversee processes of public procurement and spending. Public expenditure tracking surveys are another example of a specific form of action research aimed at monitoring the flow of public resources.

Public Services

Many participatory governance practices aim to enhance the accessibility and quality of public services. At the local level, these typically involve citizen participation in the development, management, monitoring or evaluation of priority services using a variety of methods, such as public feedback sessions and community-led monitoring and evaluation. At the national level, other action research methods, such as public opinion polls or citizens' report cards, are used to solicit citizen feedback, exact accountability and lobby for change. Information and communications technologies can be useful tools of participation both in sharing information and in collecting citizen feedback on service delivery. Countries like Korea, Brazil

and Mexico have introduced a variety of e-governance practices that can serve to streamline services and facilitate citizen access and participation.

Oversight

Local and national citizen oversight committees, the inclusion of citizen or civil society representatives on public boards and regulatory bodies and social contracts or municipal ordinances that require public officials to regularly report to and account to citizens are examples of participatory practices aimed at enhancing public oversight and accountability.

Key Benefits

As participatory governance practices evolve and expand, there is growing evidence of benefits in terms of *improved governance, enhanced development results* and *citizen empowerment*. Participatory practices can lead to improvements in governance by helping to make public processes more transparent, responsive and accountable. They can improve the quality and quantity of information fed into public decision-making, generate stronger awareness of citizens' needs (particularly of traditionally excluded groups) and create pressure for necessary reforms. Citizen monitoring and oversight can identify inefficiencies and bottlenecks, safeguard against corruption and ensure the rational use of resources, thus contributing to improvements in public services and enhanced outcomes in terms of development and well-being. Participation has an empowering effect on those who are involved, building their confidence and helping them speak up and take action towards fulfilling their needs. Participatory governance practices can encourage citizens to become more active in the public sphere and provide for civil society to engage more constructively and effectively with the state.

Experience shows that participatory governance can also bring direct benefits to state actors, including enhanced *legitimacy, popularity* and *stability*. Citizens' trust in public authorities grows when the government listens and responds to their concerns and when they feel that they have a say in processes of deliberation and decision-making. Enhanced legitimacy and responsiveness can, in turn, lead to greater public support for state actors. The risk of political instability and conflict is increased when citizens lack trust in public officials, when the government is perceived as unresponsive or when it fails to deliver essential services. By introducing opportunities for constructive dialogue and negotiation between citizens and the state, participatory governance can break patterns of unproductive confrontation and contribute to political stability and peace.

Key Challenges and Lessons

In addition to important benefits, there are significant challenges associated with achieving effective participatory governance. These include the following.

Nurturing Political Will

Initially, public authorities can feel threatened by participatory governance approaches, fearing a loss of power or privilege. If genuine political will is lacking, public authorities may only pay lip service to participatory approaches, and no meaningful results will be achieved. Political will can be nurtured by introducing incentives and sanctions, demonstrating the benefits of participatory governance and mobilizing public support.

Understanding and Addressing Power Relations

Participatory governance processes run the risk of being dominated by more powerful or influential stakeholders. To be meaningful, participatory governance processes must engage with and change power relationships. Explicit and constant efforts are required to guard against elite capture and to empower disadvantaged, less organized or traditionally excluded groups such as poor people, women and ethnic minorities.

Affirming Human and Civil Rights

For citizens to participate effectively in governance processes, their basic human and civil rights, such as the rights to information, association, free expression and rule of law, must be respected. In contexts where this is not the case, initial efforts must frequently focus on advocating for these rights. Participatory approaches are more likely to have an impact if they are backed up by legal guarantees of participation as a right. Some countries, such as the Philippines, Brazil and Bolivia, have adopted laws and policies acknowledging citizen participation as a democratic right.

Negotiating Mutually Agreed Terms of Engagement

While participatory governance practices are frequently initiated by either civil society actors or government actors, the impact is greatest when state and non-state actors succeed in developing joint initiatives based on a process of negotiation and mutual agreement. New forms of participatory governance challenge the status quo and can create uncertainty about how to get things done. For participatory governance to be effective, old rules and procedures need to be replaced by new, mutually agreed terms of engagement that clearly define the roles, rights and responsibilities

of the various parties and outline processes for collective deliberation and decision-making.

Developing New Capacities and Skills

Participatory governance requires new attitudes, skills and relationships on the part of both state and non-state actors. Attention must be given to strengthening the capacity of citizens, community representatives and civil society organizations, on the one hand, and public authorities, civil servants and service providers, on the other. Bringing these different actors together in joint learning events can be an excellent way to build both the skills and the relationships required for successful participatory governance.

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See also citizen participation; Citizen Report Card; Citizens' Juries; empowerment; ladder of participation; participatory budgeting; social accountability; voice

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of participatory approaches and methods which are rooted in the participation of people in the processes of sharing and learning about the issues that concern them, and in the action required to address them. PLA is a reflective practice which provides space for dialogue and for the sharing of knowledge and engages local people in joint analysis and action in a creative way. It is a facilitated process that focuses on the learning and personal transformation of participants, which often leads to broader community empowerment and mobilization. The local people involved are often those who have been marginalized and disempowered, and PLA approaches recognize the importance of analyzing and challenging the power differentials that have excluded them. PLA also aims to challenge biases, assumptions and preconceptions about knowledge, by recognizing and validating the plurality of knowledge and the different perspectives and world views.

PLA tools and approaches bring together different disciplines and contexts, such as agriculture, health, urban planning and community development. PLA methods can be used at each stage of programme and project cycles: in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and for ongoing support, coaching and analysis. Continuous joint learning and critical reflection are embedded in PLA interventions. There is a diverse range of innovative PLA tools and methods which have been developed and are designed to be used in a flexible manner. This entry reviews the origins of PLA and its basic principles and methods and concludes with a discussion of some of the challenges of this form of action research.

Origins

PLA has its roots in many ancient traditions and indigenous rights movements.

Community-Based Systems of Governance

Local informal community forums, such as the Gotti, were operating in India 2,000 years ago. Community members met as equals to debate, to celebrate and to work together, and there was strong women's leadership. These forums have been revived by the indigenous communities, largely by the youth—for example, the *Adivasis* in Andhra Pradesh in 1990—as a reaction to domination by powerful elitist groups, as well as due to dissatisfaction with outside development interventions.

Indigenous Management of Common Resources

Be it pastoralists making arrangements for grazing on common rangeland, bird trappers transforming paddy fields into man-made wetlands during the non-farming

PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND ACTION

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is a form of action research and an overarching term for a range

season or lines of villages from upstream to downstream constructing traditional *qanats* for transferring water underground, local people and communities have always demonstrated their innovativeness and resourcefulness in designing and managing livelihood systems appropriate to their environment, needs and resources in an equitable and sustainable way.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The indigenous communities, such as the Māori and Aborigine, worked together to build their collective capacity to enhance their spiritual connection to the earth and land and share their knowledge of biodiversity, food and farming systems and agroecology.

Oral History Traditions

These traditions from Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia have been revived through participatory storytelling, Theatre for Development, community radio and participatory video.

PLA also evolved out of more recent development approaches which link theory with action, such as the following.

Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal. Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) emerged in the late 1970s as a reaction to conventional development practices such as surveys, which often portrayed an inaccurate picture of poor people's reality and were time-consuming and costly. RRA brought about a rapid growth in the development of innovative and alternative tools and methods, for example, semi-structured interviewing and mapping. RRA changed development practice and its ways of working with local people. It enabled researchers to 'extract' information from rural communities in a more interactive and effective way. RRA later became known as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as the processes of joint analysis became more intrinsic. As Robert Chambers has noted, dominant behaviour by outsiders might explain why PRA did not emerge and spread until the 1990s. It then became known more widely as PLA, as it extended its focus beyond rural development and embraced a change from appraisal to learning which moved participatory methods from an extractive process by outsiders to a sustainable-learning process involving different stakeholders as equal partners, where poor and marginalized communities examined their own issues, set their own goals and monitored their own achievements. It also emphasized the relationship linking learning to action, where programme and policy improvement which affects people's lives becomes a part of the process. So vital is the practice of reflection in this learning process that PRA has also become known as 'participatory reflection and action'.

Activist Participatory Research. Inspired by Paulo Freire and his theories of critical pedagogy, this philosophy was grounded in the empowerment of the underprivileged and oppressed and led to their political activism. This approach uses dialogue and joint research to enhance people's awareness (conscientization) and to empower them to take action, with outsiders acting as catalysts and facilitators. It recognizes and, subsequently, facilitates the emergence of the creativity and capability of poor people.

Applied Anthropology. Conventional social anthropology is mainly concerned with understanding rather than engaging. Applied anthropology recognizes and validates the diversity and richness of local people's knowledge. It also emphasizes and values the importance of attitudes, behaviour and relationships and how these change throughout a process.

Agroecosystem Analysis. Drawing on the traditions of agroecology, this holistic approach combines the analysis of systems with pattern analysis of space, time, flows and relationships, relative values and decisions.

Farmer-Led Agricultural Research. In the 1990s, farmers' participation, experimentation and innovation in agricultural research demonstrated improved outcomes and became recognized as valid and necessary.

Learning Process Approaches to Development. Korten's approach, developed in the 1980s, embraces mistakes, plans with people and links knowledge and action. It uses organizational learning to improve the effectiveness of organizations.

Principles

Despite the development of many different methods and tools, PLA approaches share some key principles which are crucial for their success:

- *Co-learning and co-analysis:* PLA is a process of co-learning and co-analysis by all the participants, including the facilitators, which also guides the development of different methods.
- *Good facilitation:* PLA processes are usually guided by facilitators who are not members of the community with whom they are interacting. The facilitator's role is to show participants how to use the tools and ensure that everyone is able to participate equitably. The tools are not participatory in themselves. The right attitudes and behaviours are key, and there should be no external or hidden agenda. The facilitator can also act as a catalyst for the local people to take action on the findings they generate.

- *Valuing multiple perspectives:* PLA is not about simplifying complexity—it seeks diversity, drawing on multiple world views, which lead to different evaluations and different actions in different contexts. Trust, rapport and mutual respect are essential for a PLA approach and, when present, can lead to productive exchanges where everyone's views and knowledge become explicit and are valued.
- *Group interaction and joint analysis:* Using PLA tools in group learning processes unravels complexities and enables us to recognize that communities are not homogeneous.
- *Context specific:* PLA approaches are flexible and can be adapted to different contexts and actors, encouraging innovation and diversity as well as creativity and spontaneity. This often enhances the sense of community ownership.
- *Leading to change:* PLA processes involve dialogues about change, which in turn change the perceptions of the participants, particularly their sense and feelings of powerlessness, and motivate them to carry out action, building their capacity to act on their own initiative. This may lead to and/or include processes of organizational change through, for example, local institution building or strengthening.
- *Ethical considerations:* Managing expectations in any participatory process is critical, as well as negotiating, and renegotiating at all stages, the prior informed consent of all participants, ensuring transparency throughout and the sharing of outcomes and benefits.

Methods

The involvement of many people in participatory processes has led to the development or adaptation of innovative and diverse tools and approaches. Methodologies have been developed which use PRA/PLA tools and methods throughout the process. These include the following:

- *Participatory geographic information systems (PGIS)* combine PLA techniques and spatial information technologies to empower and facilitate groups excluded from geographical decision-making processes to carry out participatory mapping.
- *Participatory technology/innovation development (PTD/PID)* aims to move from the conventional transfer of technology to an interactive, multiple-player process of analysis, experimentation and reflection among researchers, local people and facilitators, the product of which could be

innovations that qualify as context-specific technologies. The source of new, credible ideas can also be local innovators.

- *Community-led total sanitation (CLTS)* offers communities the opportunity to understand and analyze their own defecation practices in order to improve local sanitation services.
- *REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowering Community Techniques)* is an approach to learning and social change that started as a fusion of the political philosophy of Freire with the practical methodologies of PRA. It applies these approaches to literacy and empowerment processes as well as gender analysis. REFLECT circles develop their own learning materials based on PLA exercises.
- *Citizens' Juries* and other methods of co-inquiry involve multi-stakeholder dialogues, usually aiming at a process of participatory learning and advocacy.

Challenges

As mentioned above, in order to be effective, PLA tools and methods need to be well facilitated in a non-patronizing way. They are time-intensive, and this has to be factored into planning and budgeting. They also do not necessarily result in the production of the type of quantitative data that is often needed by decision-makers, but rather they can produce qualitative information to complement and back up, and deepen and challenge understanding of conventional findings.

Nicole Kenton

See also Citizens' Juries; indigenous research methods; Participatory Action Research; Participatory Rapid Appraisal; Participatory Rural Appraisal; quantitative methods

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PARTICIPATORY MONITORING

Monitoring of tasks and activities is a crucial aspect of project planning and management, which helps in keeping track of the progress of the project and brings to light the emerging challenges and loopholes. Systematized monitoring at regular intervals not only reflects the status of the project but also hugely informs the future course of action in terms of the changes or modifications required. It creates opportunities for learning, especially from the perspective of Action Learning and research as timely monitoring creates greater opportunities for introspection and self-criticism. Monitoring can be done in numerous ways with different sets of people associated with a particular programme. However, the best way to monitor an ongoing initiative is to involve as many people who are engaged in it at different levels so that it becomes a truly participatory and inclusive process. This method of monitoring activities and tasks where multiple stakeholders, especially the direct beneficiaries, are involved in assessing the development and progress of the project is called participatory monitoring. In recent years, participatory monitoring is increasingly being adopted by civil society organizations, donor agencies and governments to deliver and implement projects and programmes more effectively.

Participatory monitoring, as the name suggests, is a process of monitoring which encourages people's participation in assessing the extent to which an initiative has been successful. It encourages dialogues with the real owners of the process of change, who provide first-hand inputs as insiders, and hence helps in developing a greater sense of ownership and commitment towards the entire process. The other advantage of participatory monitoring is that it blends the best of the indigenous knowledge of the local people (as insiders) with the

acquired and empirical knowledge of those who are facilitating the process (as outsiders), thus bringing to the table a unique combination of shared knowledge and learnings. It also helps in checking that standards are maintained and resources are used in the best possible manner.

For participatory monitoring to function effectively, it is important to understand the following:

- Why monitor
- What to monitor
- How to monitor
- How to incorporate the learnings into future action plans

All of the above-mentioned aspects need to be viewed from the perspective of participatory monitoring and action research, in other words, how far the concerned stakeholders are engaged in monitoring and how far the learnings are being incorporated in the action plans.

Why Monitor

As one of the basic prerequisites of participatory monitoring is the engagement of stakeholders in the monitoring process, it is extremely crucial to have a common understanding of the process of monitoring and why it needs to be conducted. Demystification of the concept of monitoring and its benefits in the long run needs to be done at the onset with the various stakeholder groups, so that when they are involved in monitoring at a later stage they are well aware of the process and also feel committed to it.

What to Monitor

The most important thing to understand before starting the process of monitoring is to define and arrive at a consensus of what is to be monitored. As monitoring is an ongoing activity conducted during the life of the project, the short-term objectives and outputs of a particular phase need to be taken into consideration, and specific activities that are planned towards achieving those outputs need to be monitored in a participatory manner. For example, in a project where one of the objectives is to raise community awareness about different government schemes and the corresponding activity is to conduct community meetings and awareness campaigns, what needs to be monitored is whether the meetings were conducted in a timely manner and what kind of information was disseminated.

How to Monitor

The next step towards monitoring is to do an intensive planning on how to conduct the monitoring exercise.

When talking about the process, the very first step is to develop certain guiding questions based on the objectives and corresponding activities that have been identified for monitoring. Against each question, specific indicators have to be developed to gain relevant information regarding the progress of the same. Once the questions and respective indicators are finalized, a monitoring tool or framework should be prepared. This tool can be in the form of a survey questionnaire, chart or table and so on, which can be easily interpreted by all stakeholders.

For instance, to continue with the above example, the guiding questions that can be generated against the stated activities are whether meetings and campaigns were conducted as stated in the project proposal, whether they proved helpful to the beneficiaries and so on. As far as the indicators for these questions are concerned, they would range from the number of meetings conducted and number of participants in the meetings to the issues discussed and number of participants who started availing themselves of certain schemes. To keep a record of all this information, it needs to be put together in one place in the form of handy formats so that it can be used for future reference.

How to Incorporate the Learnings Into Future Action Plans

Once the results or 'learnings' of monitoring are out, the next step is to collectively reflect on the findings, find out the reasons for the loopholes, identify the limitations and challenges and subsequently alter or modify the course of future actions as per the emerging need. This completes the cycle of action research or learning and provides the project team an opportunity to amend and accordingly replan their actions for the best results.

In all the above-mentioned steps, for participatory monitoring to be delivered in its true sense, it is extremely important to give due consideration and space to the different stakeholders and value the notion of shared decision-making.

Bhavita Vaishnava

See also Action Learning; multi-stakeholder dialogue

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PARTICIPATORY RAPID APPRAISAL

Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) is an interactive data collection process conducted at a community level or with a specific community group of interest. PRA is applied at the design, early implementation and evaluation phases of a project cycle or used for environmental and socio-economic research.

Overview

PRA applied to resource management and conservation initiatives puts communities at the centre of the process. PRA recognizes and captures a community's diversity—often with competing interests for the same resource or space. PRA brings stakeholders together to listen to each other to clarify how to tackle the real issues and find a common ground for concerted solutions.

Often, local communities and key persons within the group are the only ones who have information or data on the topic. But this information is scattered and fragmentary; PRA helps to capture and structure local knowledge.

After defining the PRA objectives, the facilitator undertakes a stakeholder analysis to identify who has information and the vested interests. The wider the representation, the stronger will be the ownership by the community and the easier the implementation of actions identified during the PRA.

The PRA Process

PRAs are intensive rather than extensive and are generally conducted in various groups for logistic and socio-dynamic reasons. Organizing the information gathering in different sessions contributes to cross-validation of the information (referred to as triangulation).

The group or organization conducting the PRA works with a facilitator, with whom the objectives of the PRA and a core question are defined. The core question is discussed with the participants and is clearly visible during the process. Examples of core questions are as follows:

- How can sustainable use of shrimp fisheries in the river estuary be planned?
- How can shark overfishing in West Africa be addressed?

PRA field sessions bring the different stakeholders together in a neutral venue to address the core question. PRA targets illiterate groups; hence, facilitators generally use qualitative tools as explained below. The facilitators proceed with the participants in two phases:

(1) drafting of their knowledge and then (2) reorganizing the information interactively.

Plenary sessions consolidate the information obtained from the different focus group meetings and have four functions: (1) explaining, (2) reporting, (3) exchanging and (4) common decision-making. During plenary sessions, a facilitator explains the process objectives and methods, focus groups report their outcomes and participants exchange, debate and reorganize or prioritize issues and make common decisions.

Focus Groups

Focus group sessions aim to facilitate participants' expression and diversity. They take no more than 1 hour and consist of no more than 15 people.

Focus groups should have a facilitator chosen among themselves to maintain focus, keep the discussion flowing and balanced and record the group outputs. For each idea, a short sentence of eight words, grading tables or graphs should be presented. To facilitate interaction among participants, it is advisable to diversify the focus groups in various ways:

- Grouping by homogeneous community members in the early sessions, such as men in one group and women in another or fishers with gill nets versus surrounding nets
- Mixed grouping for common topic analysis
- Voluntary grouping for in-depth analyses and planning of recognized relevant issues
- Specialist groups (as necessary)

Prioritization

PRA is a transparent and progressive prioritization process from group work to the plenary session. In most cases, after an exchange of views, a voting system is organized to strengthen the sense of communal-ity and linkage among the stakeholders.

Tools

PRA frequently targets non-formally educated people and is meant to gather the maximum information in a minimum amount of time. The information is sourced from ancillary data, semi-structured interviews or focus groups. Focus groups are the most frequently used tool. Descriptive statistics and qualitative information-gathering methods that utilize matrices, tables, signs, maps and figures are also used.

Tables and matrices are usually used in all phases and for different groups. Tables usually capture one idea, while matrices collect many aspects of a process. Scaling and descriptive words or signs are filled in tables and matrices. Graphs and drawings such as

a seasonal calendar, maps, diagrams and transects are another set of tools used. The seasonal calendar captures the annual seasonality of an activity or event and is used to capture changes over time by comparing different dates. Maps capture the spatial distribution of features. These two tools are usually filled by specialists and a restricted group. Diagrams and transects can be utilized by all types of people.

Synthesis

The synthesis phase conducted by the organization conducting the PRA often combines PRA information with a review of secondary documents collected during and after the PRA exercises to produce a draft report. The synthesis report usually contains climate, demographic, economic and ecological data.

Content of the Report

The draft report includes background, description, analysis and recommendations. The descriptive component of the report is a synthesis of the questions and answers from different sessions. The analysis component integrates responses and identifies relational causes and hidden trends for better decision-making. Stakeholders' priorities must be included clearly in the draft.

Validation

A draft report should be circulated and, in a meeting, presented to stakeholders for review and validation. While PRA sessions are open to the community at large, validation meetings target key stakeholders.

A validation meeting can be conducted in three phases: (1) amendment and validation, (2) prioritization and planning and (3) expectation and commitment.

The survey time is not adequate to fully address the planning stage, though the validation meeting will have a planning session where priorities are revisited and objectives are defined.

Implementation

A PRA session shall have a follow-up programme to make the process reliable; it is a form of action research conducted to solve a local issue. The process raises the stakes and often finds clear solutions that are planned to be progressively implemented, or constraints are discussed at the validation session.

Conclusion

PRA is a bottom-up and inclusive problem-solving, project planning and implementation, community mobilization and research process. The process is

designed and led by local people. It is an intensive approach to community engagement.

Ibrahima Mat Dia

See also Community-Based Participatory Research; development action research; focus groups; Participatory Action Research; stakeholder analysis

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PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a methodology used for interactive processes of social development: It is a way of learning from people, with the people and by the people. It is, therefore, a methodology for analyses, planning, monitoring and evaluation. Subsequently, PRA came to be known as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), a name promoted during the latter half of the 1990s by the journal *Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)*. Originally called *RRA* (Rapid Rural Appraisal) *Notes*, then *PLA Notes*, this journal is published by the International Institute for Environment and Development (see www.iied.org/pla).

PRA or PLA combines the strengths of the constructivist paradigm and critical realism. From the former, PRA/PLA seeks to understand in an interdisciplinary framework human experience as it is lived and felt; from the latter, PRA/PLA seeks help to evaluate such analysis and correct errors and biases through multiple sources, methods, locations and other means.

Origins and Evolution

The origin of PRA/PLA and other such approaches can be traced back to a multitude of approaches which gradually emerged since the 1970s mainly due to the sub-optimal results from the applications of conventional methodology of understanding rural development. The conventional questionnaire survey and its final outputs are time-consuming, long and tedious, involving people (respondents) playing only a passive role

in answering the structured questionnaire designed by specialists based on their own world view, where analysis by the people themselves did not occupy a central place. The disillusionment with the conventional questionnaire surveys and their outputs surfaced, and alternatives to the questionnaire survey were explored. A host of other field methods were also evolving during this time that were relatively more efficient in yielding the same quantity of information, or even more, in a short period of time vis-à-vis the survey method. Such methods from various sources were put together as RRA. RRA can be described as a way of organizing people for collecting and analyzing information within a short span of time, involving direct interaction with the people in a limited manner to draw inferences, conclusions, hypotheses and assessments, which includes acquisition of new information within a limited period of time. A host of other methods which appeared during the time include Sondeo, agroecosystem analysis, diagnosis and design, and exploratory survey.

As a methodology, however, RRA remained 'extractive' in that the outsiders (e.g. the researchers) observed, analyzed and wrote, though it was a great approach in terms of making people's participation an integral part of it. Thus, one of the essential elements of the new paradigm of development, that local people make their own analysis, was still missing, and the need for a quicker method of collecting data and also making the process less extractive emerged. In essence, the need was to have a tacit shift from 'extractive' to 'participatory', from 'narrow-based' to 'broad-based' approaches in terms of more participation and a greater range of applications. It was a shift of emphasis from 'rapid' to 'participatory' that was called for, which was in consonance with the paradigm of participatory development. That became the starting point of PRA, the development of an interactive process of social development extensively used throughout the world.

Principles of PRA

The guiding principles of PRA are as follows:

1. PRA is based on the principle of listening to, and learning from, people through participatory interactions and learning rapidly and progressively.
2. PRA learns from, rather than lectures to, people.
3. PRA should be free of biases (e.g. professional, roadside, time, seasonal, gender, people and beneficiary bias).
4. PRA optimizes trade-offs: relating the costs of learning to the useful truth of information, with trade-offs between the quantity, relevance, accuracy and timeliness of information.

5. PRA adopts the principle of optimal ignorance: not knowing what is not worth knowing and knowing things with appropriate imprecision, not measuring more than what is needed.
6. PRA follows the principle of cross-checking and triangulation: cross-checking the reliability and validity of information by putting it to different tests, changing the methods for collecting information, changing the locations, timings, groups of participants and teams conducting PRA and so on.
7. PRA seeks diversity: deliberately looking for, noticing and investigating contradictions, anomalies and differences.
8. PRA encourages the principle of 'people doing it', or 'they do it'. The people themselves facilitate, investigate, analyze, present findings and learn. This has also been called 'handing over the stick' or 'handing over the pen'.
9. PRA embraces error and self-criticality and responsibility, meaning that those who facilitate the PRA process are continuously examining their behaviour and trying to improve, recognizing errors if any as an opportunity to learn to improve.
10. PRA shares information: between people, between the people and outsiders (facilitators), between different facilitators and between organizations.

Clearly, the principles are both operational, such as cross-checking and triangulation, and behavioural, such as embracing error, seeking diversity and 'handing over the stick'.

Methods of PRA

As noted earlier, PRA is a methodology used for interactive processes of social development and for analyses, planning, monitoring and evaluation. This methodology, like any other methodology, has various tools. Some of the key tools are secondary data review, direct observation, observation indicator checklists, semi-structured interviews and sequences or chains of interviews, focus group discussion, preference ranking and scoring, pairwise ranking and scoring, direct matrix ranking, ranking by voting, wealth ranking and well-being ranking, innovation assessment, diagramming, mapping and modelling, participatory mapping, historical and future vision mapping, mobility diagramming, social network mapping, transect walk, historical transect, seasonal calendar, timelines and trend analysis, historical profiles, livelihood analysis, Venn/institutional diagrams, systems diagram, causal

diagram, force field analysis, empowerment circle, pie charts, histograms, health analysis, oral histories, group walks, storytelling, case studies and portraits, taxonomy and ethno-classification and participatory analysis of aerial photographs.

Pillars of PRA

From the principles and methods one can infer that PRA has four pillars: (1) attitudes, (2) beliefs and behaviour, (3) process and (4) methods and sharing. Application of PRA methods is not a random exercise. There is a process involved in applying the methods. Further, a researcher cannot properly apply the methods unless she or he believes in the wisdom of the people and is willing to learn for them, 'hand over the stick' and listen and learn. Finally, the outcome of PRA exercises must be shared (the 10th principle); it should not be merely extracting information and data.

Uses of PRA

PRA has been used extensively in many parts of the world. PRA approaches and methods have been used for appraisal, analysis and research as well as planning and evaluation in many subject areas, which include agroecosystems; natural resources, forestry, fisheries and environment; irrigation; technology and innovation; food security; health and nutrition; farming systems research and extension; pastoralism; marketing; disaster relief; organizational assessment and design; social cultural and economic conditions and many special topics such as general elections and evaluation of poverty reduction strategies of countries seeking World Bank assistance.

Amitava Mukherjee

See also agriculture and ecological integrity; Participatory Learning and Action; Participatory Rapid Appraisal; quantitative methods

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PARTICIPATORY THEATRE

This entry defines Participatory Theatre (PT), situating it amongst other practices belonging to the larger term *Applied Theatre*. Five different forms of PT are highlighted and described, with the intent to give the reader an idea of how they can be used in action research. Connections are made between action research as a methodology and PT as a practice, and how one can augment the other.

PT is a term given to theatre practice that generally plays an educational or interventionist role, that involves its audience in discussion and dialogue about the performed piece and in which the audience and the performers or presenters interact during and/or after the performance. Applied Theatre is the umbrella term for the great variety of theatre practices that are participatory and is an inclusive term to describe theatre presentations that fall outside the bounds of mainstream theatre performances. Applied Theatre is the practice of theatre that has been adapted, shaped, morphed and re-deployed by practitioners, educators and facilitators to bring about, for both participants and audiences, a heightened awareness of human and social issues through a focus on a particular topic. The goals of this form of theatre challenge societal norms and encourage reflection in order to bring greater understanding with a view to empowerment of its participants. Some important characteristics of Applied Theatre are that it can be practised outside of conventional theatre spaces, in classrooms, community halls, work spaces or village settings, or out on the streets; that the project may involve a performance or it may not; that it may include trained actors but often does not and that the spoken text generally emerges as a result of an improvisatory process rather than reliance on a script pre-written by a playwright.

Since the 1960s, more and more theorists of Applied Theatre have defined and made distinctions between its various practices. Now there are over 30 different titles for practices that fall under the umbrella term *Applied Theatre*. Theatre in education (TIE), drama in education, theatre for health education (THE), museum theatre, reminiscence theatre, popular theatre, community-based theatre, prison theatre, playback theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed and theatre for development (TfD) may be identified as the more prevalent and can be found in many parts of the world. At the heart of any of these practices is the element of participation, which

brings together through collective creation individuals concerned or passionate about a particular topic.

The following five types of theatre are strongly associated with Participatory Theatre: (1) forum theatre, (2) playback theatre, (3) TIE, (4) popular theatre and (5) TfD.

Forum Theatre

Forum theatre was first developed by the Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal, originating out of his research on creating a theatre form that is liberating and empowering for marginalized and disadvantaged people. This practice he called 'Theatre of the Oppressed'. Forum theatre consists of performing a play or a series of scenes and is created with the purpose of highlighting a situation where an individual or a group is oppressed by another individual or group. The performance is taken to the community whose issue is being investigated and played in its entirety once. The performance is then replayed, and the audience is invited to stop the performance at moments when they see an act of oppression taking place. The audience member who stopped the performance is then asked to make suggestions to the actor playing the character of the oppressed individual as a means for that character to resist the oppression. Sometimes, the 'spect-actor' will perform his or her own suggestions within the scene. It is quite common for suggestions that are then played out to meet with obstacles or negative repercussions as the other characters respond to this new input as they think might happen in real life. Someone from the theatre group, called the 'Joker', is assigned the task of 'liaising' between the audience and the performers. The role of the Joker is very important in keeping the dialogue alive and current and within the bounds of what the drama is exploring. At times, the audience feels the need to change the actions of the oppressor, but that goes against the rules of forum theatre, which focuses on creating change instigated by those who are oppressed, because it is they who need to find their voice. Forum theatre is widely used internationally in developed and developing countries, where oppression is in some cases overt and in others, less obvious. As a result, it is a form of theatre that demands careful attention to subtleties and nuances in the performance. Although extremely challenging for everyone involved, when forum theatre is carried out in the way for which it was initially designed, the results can initiate a process of social change.

Playback Theatre

Playback theatre originated in improvisational theatre and was developed by Jonathan Fox and Jo Salas

in 1975 in New York State. The practice consists of a company of performers trained extensively in the methods of improvisational theatre replaying stories and experiences that usually revolve around a particular theme or topic. A facilitator, part of the playback company, invites audience members to tell their story, all the while listening intently and only asking questions that illuminate a particular part of the story that is otherwise unclear. The performers then proceed to replay the story that the teller told, infusing it with dramatic movements, gestures and sounds that bring the events to life. The result is often moving for the person telling the story, and also for those listening as it brings to life similar experiences they may have had or experiences they may not have known about. Playback offers an example of the scaffolded learning that community participants offer to each other when they are able to share their stories, and it has a history of therapeutic use.

Theatre in Education

TIE originated in England in the 1950s, when local theatre companies went to schools and worked with teachers to create plays about topics explored in the curriculum. The performances were staged in the classroom, in the gymnasium or in the study hall of a school and so broke the convention of staging a performance in a conventional theatre space. Initially, the British government generously supported this kind of community outreach, and theatre companies thrived, solidifying and codifying the practice so that it became known and practised in other parts of the world (e.g. Australia, North America and other parts of Europe). In the 1980s, government funding cuts meant that a number of companies could no longer continue to practice. Other companies, although no longer able to collaborate with teachers, continued to work with topics that they felt would be pertinent to the educational curriculum, and today bullying, discrimination against gays and lesbians and the alienation of immigrant and refugee youth from the mainstream school system are current issues that engage TIE companies and their audiences. The audiences are often asked to participate in the performance in various ways (e.g. through the taking on of roles, making decisions, giving advice, etc.), and the performance is always followed by some sort of discussion around the topics explored; the purpose is to create a space for sharing, reflection, possibly action and, hopefully, awareness and ultimately changes in understanding.

Popular Theatre and TfD

Popular theatre and TfD are practices that are similar in context in that they are both aimed at empowering

marginalized or disenfranchised communities by facilitating ways for social change through theatre; both practices are 'community based', which means that the drama is created by the actual community members and not by trained performers, who are generally outsiders to the community (as in forum theatre, TIE and playback theatre). The difference between popular theatre and TfD is that the former is solely conceived and realized by the community, with no external influence on the group's agenda or execution of the practice, whilst the latter is typically funded by an outside agency (not-for-profit organization) that controls the agenda and the focus of the topics to be explored in the workshops and performances (if part of the process). There is not an agreed-upon origin for the practice of popular theatre, except that it began to emerge in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s and in North America the 1970s and 1980s as when people sought to use creative ways to challenge the status quo and to involve communities in questioning political and social norms. Driven by the need to reclaim the dignity and rights of people, theatre facilitated the creative environment in which to unite people in achieving a common goal through an invigorating and uplifting practice.

TfD originated in post-colonial Africa in the 1960s as a means to disseminate messages from governments and organizations to communities to create social awareness. Over the years, practitioners of TfD noticed that communities felt misrepresented in the performances and, hence, the messages had little impact on their actions. In the 1970s, TfD practitioners began to involve communities in the dramas by having them participate in conceiving the issues to be represented in them. This method, although it brought the content closer to the community's issues, still needed improvement. By involving communities in creating and performing the dramas, in the 1990s, Michael Etherton created groundbreaking TfD where young children in Bangladesh expressed what they knew to be their rights and not just their needs. It is of particular importance to mention that the evolution of TfD mirrors elements at the core of action research, such as (a) using research to solve real problems, (b) understanding social challenges through the eyes of community members, (c) collaboration between research team and community members, (d) inclusiveness of participants, (e) research agenda and goals driven by participants.

Using Participatory Theatre in Action Research and Vice Versa

The above-described theatre practices are strong choices for individuals interested in doing research firmly based in participants' lived experiences. For each type of theatre practice, there are dynamics

of power and ethics that must be considered and acknowledged in the research plan. The dynamics of power can become complex when the research team is collaborating with theatre facilitators to conduct the participatory project, as there will be a number of agendas to navigate and negotiate. It is common for Applied Theatre practitioners pursuing academic research through their practice to struggle initially because they find the existing qualitative research methods to be rigid and heavily based on data collection and analysis. What is useful for these practitioners to know is that inherent in any Applied Theatre participatory practice are the fundamental constructs of action research, particularly in the way it is carried out through the spiral nature of the methodology in three stages: (1) careful planning of the action or intervention (planning of workshop sessions or rehearsals); (2) implementation of the plan (intervention), all the while carefully documenting the results (carrying out the workshop, rehearsals or performance), and (3) re-planning by adjusting interventions based on the findings from the first stage (planning for a second workshop, rehearsal or performance) of the spiral. The three stages follow each other recursively whether conducting short-term theatre workshops or long-term projects that span over several years. Working in this manner enables theatre practitioners not only to document their work but also to base their evaluations and plans on the evidence collected in workshops/rehearsals. Also, it is a clear means of keeping track of the challenges, successes and advancement of (and, at times, changes to or alteration of) their project goals. Such evidence-based practice can be extremely helpful documentation when applying to funding bodies or finalizing the funding report at the conclusion of the project.

Yasmine Kandil

See also adult education; advocacy and inquiry; agency; anti-oppression research; arts-based action research; Community-Based Participatory Research; dialogic inquiry; facilitation; social justice; voice

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PARTICIPATORY URBAN PLANNING

Traditional urban planning methods have witnessed a top-down approach, with limited or no grass-roots-level involvement. For developing countries, where cities tend to expand in an organic manner, the traditional approach has proved to be rigid, and its result has been adverse, reflecting little understanding of local-level issues. Community involvement is an effective tool that ensures the sustainability of an urban development project by addressing the needs of stakeholders in a diverse beneficiary set. By definition, participatory urban planning is an urban planning paradigm that emphasizes the involvement of the entire community in the strategic and management process of urban planning, thereby giving rise to community-level processes. It thus shares the Participatory Action Research elements of recognizing the importance of marginalized citizens' active participation in knowledge creation and subsequent collective actions, leading to their empowerment.

Purpose

Participatory urban planning is a planning approach that bases planning solutions on the requirements of the end user, as opposed to a blind top-down approach by planning experts to base planning solutions purely on statistical data. In addition to bringing forth local issues and the felt needs of a community that require attention, participatory urban planning works as an empowerment tool. It brings forth consensus where there is a multiplicity of interests, gives voice to marginalized groups within a community, allows for the inclusion of local knowledge and know-how into established design methods and brings about accountability in local governance.

Difference From Conventional Urban Planning Approaches

Conventional urban planning approaches are dominating, treating the community as ‘beneficiaries’ of solutions provided by planning experts, and the resolution for planning problems is carried out through a normative project methodology. It projects reliance on statistical data and, owing to its top-down approach, entails minor, local-level involvement. In contrast, participatory urban planning allows local knowledge to form the basis of planning solutions. The direct involvement of the community takes place at all stages of planning, allowing them to become contributors and decision-makers instead of being treated like an audience that is provided information once decisions have been made. Additionally, participatory planning provides inclusion of the diverse interests and focus areas (often a result of social constructs) within a community.

Achieving Community Participation

The process of incorporating community-level involvement consists of a series of actions that ensure that community members are providing input at every stage of the planning process. As a result, the community’s involvement begins at a microlevel with their participation at the neighbourhood level and goes up to the macrolevel with their participation at city-level meetings.

At the onset of a project, an exhaustive reconnaissance survey of the area of interest needs to be carried out so that existing resources can be noted. When juxtaposed against the voiced needs of the community, the results of this survey help create a realistic image of the requirements of the project. Subsequently, the stakeholders are encouraged to voice their needs and concerns. At the onset, there may exist an apathy to the planning process within the community owing to unpleasant past experiences in urban development projects where the community’s needs may have been overlooked or the community may have been coerced into accepting the planning solutions provided to them. The presence of community-based organizations and an increased level of awareness relating to participation create a more enabling environment for the community to participate. It is important at this stage to note and encourage the involvement of the marginalized groups in the community (e.g. women, senior citizens, youth and minority groups) in order to create a holistic set of requirements for the project. This step is especially challenging as it requires overlooking the social hierarchies existing in the community based on age, gender and economic status and urging representation from all groups within the community.

In the next step, a database needs to be created that contains the basic information regarding the community, including (but not limited to) the physical characteristics of the settlement, socio-economic characteristics of the community, condition of services and amenities provided in the area and so on. The involvement of the community at this stage ensures that an authentic and complete data set is created. Simultaneously, a continuous dialogue needs to be maintained with local officials and the departments concerned with the planning process. Building of partnerships at this stage ensures that there is co-operation from the power holders at the time of decision-making and that there exists empathy for the community at the governance level.

In the next stage, ward-level stakeholder consultations are carried out, which should involve representation from the community as well as important groups pertaining to the community—market organizations, informal-sector representatives, religious groups as well as members of the local government. Through focus group discussions and small workshops, exchanges with the community can take place to augment the process of identification of issues.

Subsequently, a city-level meeting is organized where all the collected data is placed before representatives of the community and strategies for development are discussed. These inputs then lead to the preparation of the draft plan for the project. This is again placed before the community in workshops and meetings conducted at various points during the revision of the plan. The inputs garnered are then translated to create the final plan, which is then presented to higher authorities for approval.

Achieving Community Empowerment

Specific steps taken during the planning process can ensure that the community feels more connected to the project in terms of data collected and decisions taken. This can be done through the creation of data ownership by involving the community in the collection of data for the physical limits of the settlement (e.g. slum profiling using global positioning systems) and socio-economic data (settlement profiles and primary household surveys). This process not only uses the local knowledge available within the community but also helps create an authentic database.

To summarize, an inclusive planning process is one that treats members of the community as more than just passive data providers and ensures their involvement at all decision-making levels while valuing multiplicity of interests.

See also empowerment; microplanning; Participatory Action Research; participatory governance

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PERFORMED ETHNOGRAPHY

Performed ethnography involves turning ethnographic research findings into play scripts that are read aloud by a group of participants or performed for audiences. The richness of performed ethnography comes from three sources: (1) the ethnographic research from which a play script is created, (2) the reading or performance of the play and (3) the conversations that take place after the reading or performance. In these follow-up conversations, research participants and other readers or audience members have input about the conclusions of the research. This allows for ongoing analysis of the research findings. The incorporation of audience input into ongoing revisions of the play provides an opportunity for mutual analysis and, in so doing, can help create more ethical and participatory relationships between researchers, their research participants and the communities to which the research participants belong. Post-reading/performance conversations about a play also allow researchers to share their findings in classrooms and other public forums. Performed ethnography, then, offers action research a compelling way for research participants to comment on the researchers’ understandings and analysis. It also offers action researchers a way to engage a wide variety of audiences in the discussion of their findings.

Defining Performed Ethnography

Performed ethnography is also known as performance ethnography and ethnodrama. Norman Denzin uses the term *performance ethnography* to refer to performances that ethnographers stage from their interviews

and observation field notes. Johnny Saldaña describes an ethnodrama as a dramatic script that consists of significant selections of narrative that have been collected through interviews, observation field notes, journal entries, diaries, media articles and court proceedings. For Saldaña, ethnodrama is different from ethnotheatre, which uses the traditional craft and artistic techniques of theatre production to mount a live performance event of research participants’ experiences and/or a researcher’s interpretation of data. In ethnotheatre, the fieldwork conducted by a researcher is preparation for a theatrical production.

Like Saldaña, Jim Mienczakowski and Teresa Moore believe that ethnodrama is different from traditional theatrical work. They describe it as a new aesthetic that values the accurate interpretation of research findings over the style, mode and traditions of theatrical presentation. For Mienczakowski, the audiences for ethnodrama work are often composed of those with a close relationship to or lived experience of the themes of the piece, and their anticipation of performance and entertainment are secondary to their expectations of theatrical engagement. The performance is a shared context that actors and audience members co-construct and relate to because of their own emotional links to the topic of the research and/or performance.

Dramatizing Research Findings: Monologue and Dialogue

Performed ethnographers dramatize research findings in a variety of ways. A monologue is an extended, one-person dramatic narrative that provides a portrait of a character based on an actual research participant or set of research participants. Autoethnographic monologues are narratives that are generated by the researchers themselves. Saldaña explains that monologues are composed of particular dramatic elements and structural forms. Knowledge of these enables a researcher to craft a more aesthetically shaped work for the stage. Dialogue consists of two or more characters who engage in verbal action, reaction and interaction and is embedded in a dramatic story. As not every ethnographic study provides the necessary detail for the replication of authentic or verbatim dialogue, performed ethnographers sometimes imaginatively reconstruct dialogue that represents the cultural moments, conflicts and events documented in their studies. Such writing is often called creative non-fiction or ‘faction’ (a blended word from fact and fiction) and raises questions about representation and truth in performed ethnography. Action researchers working with the approach of performed ethnography need to work with research epistemologies and ontologies (theories

of knowledge and reality) that are compatible with the creation of creative non-fiction.

The Multiple Commitments of Performed Ethnography

As a hybrid writing method that links ethnographic analysis to dramatic writing, theatrical performance and critical discussion, performed ethnography demands multiple commitments from the researcher. These commitments sometimes compete and lie in tension with each other and present the researcher with a set of dilemmas. For example, performed ethnographers may find themselves privileging particular dramatic and storytelling techniques over the words and ideas put forth by their participants. The imperative to begin a play with an exciting dramatic moment and to introduce the main character to the audience raises the question of which stories and findings from a research study get told and which do not. Performed ethnographers need to articulate the ways in which they have identified the multiple commitments underlying their work and the ways in which they have responded when one or more of these commitments have come into competition with another. This requires self-conscious reflection on the various roles performed ethnographers play: ethnographer, playwright, educator and activist. Important aspects of a researcher's reflection can be made available to the readers and audience of a performed ethnography through the convention of 'playwright's notes'. Playwright's notes, which often appear in programmes of theatre performances, are a place for playwrights to discuss aspects of their plays that they think are important for the audience to know about. For example, some playwrights discuss the historical period and/or geographic location of their plays; others discuss the prominent themes that are embedded in the play or the actions of a particular character. Playwright notes are often reflections on aspects of a play that may not be immediately evident or visible to the audience. Similarly, 'performed ethnographer's notes' can contain reflections on the tensions and dilemmas of writing and performing an ethnographic play script that may not be immediately visible to the reader, performer or audience.

The reading or performance of a performed ethnography provides an opportunity for researcher-participants, readers and audiences to come together to hear and discuss important stories about the human condition. It has much to offer to action researchers who are interested in socially engaged and participatory research practices.

Tara Goldstein

See also arts-based action research; ethnography; storytelling; Theatre of the Oppressed

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PHENOMENOLOGY

In its broadest sense, phenomenology is a philosophical movement which arose as a reaction against the predominance of an approach to science epitomized by objectivity, abstraction and rationality. Phenomenology's recognized founder, the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), argued for a return to 'the things themselves' rather than abstract ideas of them as a valid and important means of achieving knowledge. Husserl recognized that a central aspect of 'the things' is their significance to human beings and our lived experience of them. Through reclaiming day-to-day, subjective experience as a means through which knowing is created, phenomenology repositions the knower in his or her own world as central to that which is known. This stance indicates an important link between phenomenology and action research: As an approach to undertaking research located within as well as valuing the day-to-day contexts of the researcher and the researched, action research is clearly aligned with phenomenology's philosophical intentions. This entry provides a brief historical account of how this approach emerged, before it identifies and elaborates on four of its key concepts: (1) the lifeworld, (2) intentionality, (3) the difference between ready-at-hand and present-to-hand knowing and (4) the phenomenological method. Explicit links between phenomenology and action research are then offered.

Historic Groundings

In order to understand phenomenology, it is critical to consider the landscape of ideas from which it arose. Since the time of René Descartes (1596–1650), science had been developing in a way characterized by an increasing disregard for lived experience and the body

as a source of ‘truthful knowing’. Rather than relying on faulty bodily senses, ‘truth’ was seen to be achievable through abstractions and the application of formal rules of logic. Rather than relying on experience, ‘ideals’ were the touchstones for determining knowledge.

The importance of subjective experience was not totally lost, however, and the term *phenomenology* was used by philosophers as early as the eighteenth century to signify the role played by human experience as a source of knowing. The two German philosophers credited with introducing the term in the way taken up by Husserl, however, are Franz Brentano and Ernst Mach. Most famously, Mach suggested that electricity should be described in a way that embraces our ‘experiences’ of it. This indicates the importance phenomenology places on ‘human experience’ rather than just the physical properties of a phenomenon. In his *Introduction to Phenomenology* (2000), Dermot Moran suggests that in this way phenomenology recaptures the richness of human experience and makes it a valid field for knowing.

Husserl outlined his phenomenological project in two volumes, *Logical Investigations 1 and 2*, published in 1901 and 1902, respectively. However, a lecture presented rather late in his life in Vienna in 1935, titled *Crisis of the European Sciences*, sets out the need for a phenomenological approach most clearly. In it, he argues that the kinds of questions which positivist science is equipped to answer are not those of crucial import for human beings in the living of their lives. For instance, natural science cannot begin to answer questions such as ‘What is it to live a good life?’, ‘How should I demonstrate my care for other human beings?’ or even ‘Who am I?’. In other words, although positivist science can be helpfully applied to understanding the world ‘as it is’ from a physical standpoint, it cannot answer questions such as ‘How should the world be?’ or, more important, ‘How do I experience the world?’. Such vital questions require an approach which affords human experience a central role.

Husserl’s ideas were developed by a number of other philosophers, most notably by his student Martin Heidegger, whose work transformed many of the ideas Husserl first introduced. Others focused on particular aspects of the approach; for instance, Hans Georg Gadamer developed phenomenological hermeneutics, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty elaborated the phenomenology of perception. It must be noted that there was a great deal of discord amongst those who took up the phenomenological banner, so much so that in his *Briefwechsel IX* of 1931, Husserl declared himself the ‘greatest enemy of the so-called phenomenological movement’. This points to a challenge for researchers trying to define phenomenology precisely—those most closely associated with the movement cannot

themselves agree on its exact terms. However, some general characteristics which would be agreed on by most of those who align themselves with this movement include the following:

- It began as a reaction against the predominance of a science dedicated to abstraction, ideals and objectivity and reasserted the importance of human experience in knowing.
- It attends to the day-to-day world of experience (the ‘lifeworld’, which will be explained in greater detail below) as a source and means of knowing.
- Research methods aligned with it (including one known as ‘the phenomenological method’) delve deeply into the ‘felt experience’ of a phenomenon or situation. Deep dive subjectivity, rather than the possibility of objectivity, is what these methods seek to achieve.

Key Ideas

Although, as has been indicated above, there is not one precise definition of phenomenology, there are a number of concepts which are generally recognized as central to its understanding. Four of the most important ones, the lifeworld, intentionality, the distinction between present-to-hand and ready-at-hand knowing and the phenomenological method, are elaborated in the following sections.

The Lifeworld

The ‘lifeworld’, or *Lebenswelt* as Husserl called it, is the ordinary world in which we live and act. Although this may seem unimportant to identify as a sphere of action or being, it has to be seen in relation to the ‘scientific’ view about how truth is developed—within the laboratory or through abstract thought experiments rather than within the breathing, living world that we inhabit on a day-to-day basis. Phenomenology reclaimed the ordinary, quotidian aspects of living as a valid context within which knowledge can be developed.

In its recognition of the lifeworld as an important venue for learning and knowing, phenomenology can be seen to be especially linked to action research. Through a phenomenological perspective, the environments in which we actually live and work and play are seen as valid locations for conducting research. The phenomenologists purported that there is distinct and important knowing that comes through engagement with the lifeworld, especially in relation to practical knowing. After all, knowing the laws of physics which hold a table together may have importance to a

physicist, but they are of little consequence to a family gathered together around one to celebrate births or grieve after deaths. Although the meanings attributed to such a table and its significance in social discourse cannot be ‘measured’ by laboratory instruments, its role as a signifier in our social worlds is no less important in our day-to-day engagement with it. In failing to understand and give value to the social role things, concepts and other humans play in our lives from this meaning point of view, we miss out on an essential form of knowing. Action research draws from this commitment to the lifeworld as an appropriate sphere of study through its insistence on attending to the practical issues of the communities within which we are located.

Intentionality

The notion of ‘intentionality’ is central to phenomenological understanding and similarly has important implications for action research. Most significantly, it has a very different meaning in phenomenology from its meaning in more common usage. From a phenomenological perspective, intentionality refers to an essential aspect of consciousness; that consciousness is always a consciousness *of*. Rather than being a quality of ‘action’ then, intentionality becomes a quality of consciousness within the phenomenological context.

In proposing this stance, phenomenology blows open the ‘black box’ of consciousnesses associated with Cartesian views of the world. From a Cartesian perspective, consciousness happens within human beings in isolation from the external world. Our consciousness operates separately from the things of the world and alights on them as it chooses to. However, the term *intentionality* implies that without the things of the world to be conscious of, there would be no consciousness. In this way, phenomenology offers an ecological system of consciousness, one which is in constant and dynamic association with the world beyond it.

The notion of intentionality reinforces the validity of attending to those things in our everyday experience which snag our attention as important topics of research interest. Instead of basing inquiries on abstract conceptual problems, both action research and phenomenology encourage us to attend to what we are conscious *of*, in the outer world as an originating site for research.

Ready-at-Hand and Present-to-Hand Knowing

This is a distinction elaborated by Heidegger in his text *Being and Time*, which was originally published in 1927. Heidegger suggests that there are two prime modes of relation to the things of the world. ‘Ready-at-hand’ constitutes the everyday, almost unconscious

way in which we engage with the world. In an oft-cited example, he describes the experience of working with a hammer. When you pick up a hammer to nail a tack into the wall, you don’t think about the hammer itself, but you think primarily of the job it helps you accomplish. It is an instrument by which you can achieve the goal of hanging a picture on the wall. In such an instance, it is natural to engage with the hammer without really thinking of it, its dimensions, the materials it is made of or, in fact, many of the things that natural science would find as key ways of describing the hammer. Your primary interest is in accomplishing the job the hammer enables you to do. In this way, you are engaging with the hammer in a ready-at-hand mode.

However, should the hammer break—its head falls off or perhaps its handle splits—and you are not able to pound the nail into the wall, you might stand back and engage with the hammer in a different way. You would look at it carefully to try to determine what has gone wrong with it. You would notice, perhaps, that the fitting for the hammer head has become a bit loose or that there is a small crack in the hammer’s head itself which prevents it from working with the required force. In this process of stepping back and assessing the hammer in this way, you are engaging with it in a ‘present-to-hand’ mode. The hammer is no longer doing what it is meant to be doing. Instead, you are regarding it from an abstract point of view, in a way that is very different from your ready-at-hand interaction with it.

Phenomenology brings our attention to the fact that things are known differently depending on whether we are engaging with them in a ‘present-to-hand’ or ‘ready-at-hand’ manner. Things are perhaps ‘more themselves’ when they are in the ‘ready-at-hand’ mode—when we are working with them without thinking about them, when they are just ‘doing their job’. However, the minute we want to study them and distance ourselves from them, they become curiously ‘different’—they take on an altered mode of being in the world. In a way, they have momentarily stepped out of our lifeworld. It is not to say that one is right and the other is wrong, but each form of engagement yields different ways of knowing the thing in question.

This distinction is helpful to action researchers because in its quest to improve practical situations, action research often attempts to work in a ready-at-hand rather than a present-to-hand mode. Through methods such as Participatory Action Research, action researchers engage with issues of real consequence as they unfold, with the people for whom that unfolding is most significant rather than in simulations or experiments. They turn their focus on here-and-now engagements in methods such as Co-Operative Inquiry, and they experiment with the impact of new behaviours through cycles of action and reflection in Action

Learning sets. Although it could be argued that any time researchers step back to reflect on a phenomenon or interaction they are moving from the ready-at-hand to the present-to-hand mode, there is a difference of degree, and in its choice of research contexts and the means of examining them, action research leans towards the ready-at-hand mode of operating.

The Phenomenological Method

Husserl initially offered the possibility of a 'phenomenological method'—a 'reduction' which would enable the inquirer to engage with the 'essence' of things themselves. Although subsequent phenomenologists disagreed with the specifics of how this reduction could be achieved, its basic idea, that it is helpful to peel away our own preconceptions of 'things' in order to encounter them, was a starting point for its development. This phenomenological method was perhaps best elaborated in the work of Goethe, particularly through his attention to colour analysis. The nub of the method is to engage with a thing in such a way that all of your own preconceptions of what the thing is peel away. The goal is to 'bracket', that is, set aside, everything that you know about the thing in order to encounter its very essence. Of course, it is impossible to do this completely. However, concentrating on a particular thing in this way fosters a particular kind of attention through which the quality of consciousness itself shifts, and one is more readily able to distinguish one's conceptions of the thing from the 'thing' itself.

Whereas phenomenology refers to bracketing as a way of accomplishing this, action research encourages a parallel practice of 'critical subjectivity'. When exercising critical subjectivity, the researcher strives to bring to more conscious awareness the assumptions and perspectives which colour situations in order to better comprehend the role their subjectivity plays in creating and interpreting them. In using both the phenomenological method and critical subjectivity, the goal is not necessarily to arrive at a place in which there is no subjectivity but to be able to loosen the binds between the things or situations and our interpretations of them.

Links to Action Research

One of the first similarities between phenomenology and action research is that neither is a set prescription for doing research or engaging with the world. Both are 'orientations' through which knowledge is created. Phenomenology reawakens people to the wealth of knowing available through their experience of phenomena in their everyday circumstances.

Similarly, action research embraces a number of different research methods which at their heart are pragmatic and grounded in our experience of the world, rather than abstract thoughts about it. For both, the lifeworld is where research happens, and the subjects for research are practical and relevant to human beings as we live our lives.

Both approaches place the researchers themselves at the centre of the endeavour to develop knowing. Meanings are absolutely essential and proper aspects of the research process. Both also recognize the interplay of subjectivity and objectivity in the way in which we come to know. In a later, published version of his lecture 'The Crisis of European Science' (1970), Husserl famously wrote of the 'enigma of subjectivity' and suggested that our knowing of the world is only possible because there is a world to know, once again indicating the central role intentionality plays in consciousness. Similarly, the commitment which action research makes to first, second and third person knowing is indicative of its recognition of the interplay of subjective and objective modes as being necessary for knowledge to be of the most value.

Within a world dominated by a scientific paradigm that places its primary value on objectivity and abstraction, action research stands bereft of a philosophical footing without phenomenology. In turn, action research provides phenomenology with a sympathetic mode of research through which knowledge developed from the lifeworld can be rigorously achieved.

Donna Ladkin

See also experiential knowing; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; philosophy of science

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PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

As the name suggests, the philosophy of science is the branch of philosophy that focuses on the sciences. It asks questions such as ‘What is the nature of scientific knowledge?’, ‘What does it mean to know science?’ and ‘What are the theoretical bases for the methodologies of science?’. Philosophers of science raise questions about the ontological nature of science (e.g. What is reality?), the epistemology of science (e.g. What counts as knowledge?), the methodology of science (e.g. How is knowledge generated and acquired?) and the values of science (e.g. How do beliefs about what is worthy affect our conceptions about knowledge?). Given the breadth of this field, it is necessary to restrict this entry to those aspects of the philosophy of science that are most pertinent to action research—the epistemology and methodology of science. To narrow it further, this entry will focus on the dominant contemporary theoretical framework for the practice of science, post-positivism.

Post-Positivism

Post-positivism is best understood by comparing it with positivism, which was the dominant paradigm in the sciences through much of the twentieth century. Inherent in positivist thought is the assumption that there is a knowable real world independent of human observation. As such, positivism is a foundational epistemology. That is, it seeks to base all knowledge claims ultimately on unquestionable facts. These facts can be either logical or empirical in nature. While facts based on logical arguments may at first seem attractive, even the most carefully argued logical system is open to challenge in several ways. For example, although the facts of Euclidean geometry are based on intuitive axioms that appear to be reasonable and unquestionable, it turns out that other highly logical and reasonable geometrical systems can be developed from different axioms. In addition, Kurt Gödel, in his incompleteness theorem, demonstrated that any one logical system fails at some point because it can generate new ideas that go beyond the realm of that system. Possibly, most important is the fact that what may seem reasonable to some people may not seem so to others.

To positivists, the foundation of scientific knowledge can also be empirical. According to this view, scientific knowledge is derived only from observations of the natural world that can be measured in some way. As it turns out, there are practical and theoretical reasons why this is not possible. First, it has been demonstrated that perception is theory-laden. Humans observe the world through the lenses of how they already understand

the world. For example, as Donna Haraway has pointed out, after women entered the field of primatology, they saw co-operation and kinship in primate behaviours where male primatologists had seen conflict. Second, the development of truth statements from observations can only be done through induction. However, it has been shown that induction can be fallible. Simply put, what has been is not always what will be. A simple example of this is that until Europeans saw black swans in Australia, they believed, based on their observations of swans in Europe and North America, that all swans were white. What this shows is that it cannot be proven to be true from the countless observations of only white swans—in other words, through induction—that swans are always white. Tied to the problem with induction is that multiple theories can be used to explain any set of observations. This fallibility of induction is what led Karl Popper to reject the idea that hypotheses can be proved and instead to argue that researchers ought to seek ways to disprove their theories. Third, scientific knowledge is a web-like structure of many beliefs. A belief that is shown to be untrue empirically can be modified by adjusting other beliefs and, therefore, retained. This aspect of science is an integral part of what Thomas Kuhn has called ‘normal science’, which is done within paradigms. While there are times when new evidence causes the rejection of an existing paradigm and leads to the acceptance of a new one (e.g. the move from a geocentric to a heliocentric model of the solar system), it is more common to find ways to adjust the existing network of scientific beliefs than to jettison it. This is similar to Jean Piaget’s notion of assimilation. Finally, science, like any other human activity, is social. Individual scientists do not have their own paradigms; paradigms are part of the beliefs of a community of scientists. It is that community that decides through formal and informal epistemic authorities, such as journal review boards, whether the research findings ought to be accepted as scientific knowledge. In addition, it has been shown in numerous sociological studies that the practice of science is affected by political and economic factors, as well as gender and ethnicity. D. C. Phillips and Nicholas Burbules in their book *Postpositivism and Educational Research* (2000) provide a thorough discussion of the problematic nature of the foundational epistemologies discussed above.

Post-Positivist Epistemology

Post-positivism as an epistemology came about in response to the shortcomings of positivism. One of its most important characteristics is its rejection of foundationalism. To the post-positivist, neither experience nor reason can serve as a fundamental basis for

knowledge. As a result, all knowledge is conjectural. This conclusion was arrived at by the work of scholars such as Popper, Kuhn and Sandra Harding. Popper argued that because scientific knowledge cannot be established via induction, the best that we can do is to try to develop tests that try to disprove theories. Kuhn in his seminal work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1996) demonstrated that scientific theories are the products of the times in which they are developed. As such, scientific knowledge claims are evaluated by people, who do so from various standpoints, as was demonstrated by Harding and other scholars.

The conjectural nature of scientific knowledge has led some to conclude that because truth is not absolute, all knowledge is relative and there are multiple realities. Post-positivism rejects both of these conclusions, seeking a third place between absolute truth and ‘anything goes’ relativism by asking whether a knowledge claim is *likely* to be true rather than whether it *is* true. This conception of truth can be found in John Dewey’s idea of ‘warranted assertability’. In it, he replaces the idea of knowledge with that of knowing and merges truth with inquiry. That is, it is the engagement in inquiry that provides us with the warrants that allow us to assert that a knowledge claim is likely to be true. It is important to note that Dewey suggested that there is little or no difference between the warranting of scientific knowledge claims and other types, such as those that are more aesthetic. What inquiry entails is dependent on the norms of the discipline or practice within which the knowledge claim is to be made. Modern science has developed norms of inquiry that are expected to be followed by the epistemic authorities of its different fields.

Post-Positivist Scientific Practice

To post-positivist scientists, the norms of practice that lead to warranted assertability are obvious. Scientific knowledge claims are evaluated based on the evidence made available and the arguments that are based on that evidence. For the natural sciences, the evidence is produced by observations and measurements that often are the result of controlled experiments but may also come from careful observations and measurements of the naturally occurring world. The latter is most often seen in the field sciences, such as geology, ecology and astronomy, in which controlled experiments are impractical or even impossible. It is also important to note that scientific inquiry can be deductive in nature, often referred to as theoretical science, which argues from and may question existing theories. A community of peers that makes up the epistemic authority evaluates both the evidence and the arguments. The evidence is evaluated primarily by critiquing the ways

in which it was developed. Did the researcher follow careful laboratory procedures? Were the samples kept isolated? Were the instruments adequately calibrated? Were the standard methods of the field followed? It is also evaluated by determining whether it makes sense relative to existing, already published evidence. In the sciences, the argument is often developed using mathematical methods including statistical analysis and by developing mathematical models. Is the mathematics appropriate for the analysis? Are the proper variables selected and isolated? Does the model include all relevant factors? In all cases, the quality of the evidence and the arguments are checked against the existing literature in the field. When all of this is done, including the consideration of counterarguments and negative analyses, we can answer the questions ‘Are the scientists’ assertions sufficiently warranted?’ and ‘Are the assertions likely to be true?’. Inherent in all of this is the role of professional judgement. Scientists employ it when deciding what to investigate and how and what warrants should be employed to support their arguments. The community of peers also uses professional judgement in determining whether the warrants sufficiently support the knowledge claims.

Post-Positivism and Action Research

Action research as used in this volume refers to a family of approaches that has as its goal to address organizational, community and social issues while paying close attention to who experiences them. In addition, the ‘action’ in action research is seen to be liberating. Therefore, it could be said that action research seeks to improve what Hannah Arendt called the human condition. This goal is highly dependent on the values of the researchers and the stakeholders associated with the research. Therefore, when we turn to the application of the philosophy of science to action research, it is necessary to raise the issue of the place of values in science. Again, researchers look at post-positivism to understand the relationship between values and the warranting of knowledge claims. They begin by noting that science is not value-free. The practice of science is a human endeavour, and scientists, as human beings, are influenced by the norms and practices of their communities. Therefore, their personal political and social belief structures, those shared by the members of their scientific community and those of their wider community all influence their practice. That said, post-positivist thought distinguishes between epistemologically relevant and irrelevant values.

Epistemologically relevant values are those that are appropriate for the way in which knowledge is warranted in the field. In post-positivist views of science, these include the valuing of well-thought-out and

well-planned studies, the replicability of investigations and the use of standard instruments and validated methods. When these values are not adhered to, the epistemic authorities of science, such as peer-review panels, eventually recognize that the science was done poorly and that the knowledge claims are insufficiently warranted.

Epistemologically irrelevant values are those that ought to have no role in the warranting of knowledge and may lead to what would be recognized in the field as ‘bad’ science. Within the scientific community, there are what have become standard stories that illustrate this, such as Paul Broca’s brain studies and Trofim Lysenko’s genetics. In both of these examples, values tied to ideologies external to the scientific community were negative influences—in the first, racism and sexism and, in the second, Soviet Marxism.

Unfortunately, the distinction between epistemologically relevant and irrelevant values fails to take into account those human values that shape the scientific enterprise but are not tightly connected to the warranting of knowledge claims. These values are exposed when we attempt to answer the question ‘What is the value of the research?’ While there are those who believe that scientific research can be done solely for the sake of generating new knowledge, the mythic nature of this belief becomes obvious, for example, when one considers that the US National Science Foundation requires all grant proposals to address the ‘broader implications’ of the research. Not only does this make it explicit that the purpose of science is more than knowledge generation, it also implicitly calls attention to the fact that the evaluation of proposals, which is, of course, a decision about funding, is done in relation to American values. Post-positivism recognizes this way in which values are a part of science and suggests that decisions such as which projects should be funded should be made by as broadly representative a group as possible, to the extent of accepting and encouraging the type of representation that can result in what Harding calls ‘strong objectivity’. This suggests that from a post-positivist view of science, action research can respond to the purpose of the improvement of the human condition as long as the values inherent in what counts as improvement are subjected to review by a diverse body and as long as researchers pay attention to epistemologically relevant values while ignoring those that are irrelevant.

Post-Positivism and the Practice of Action Research

Any discussion of the relevance of a post-positivist view of science to the practice of action research must first acknowledge that action research is a wide and

varied field. While some engage in action research from a post-positivist perspective, it is practised in many fields using different methodologies based on diverse conceptual frameworks. Therefore, it is impertinent to suggest that all action research ought to be scientific as defined by post-positivist philosophers. Although some, if not many, action researchers would be put off by the idea of making their methods more scientific, few would argue with the notions that observations are theory-laden, that facts underdetermine conclusions, that values affect the choice of which problems to address and which methods to use and that a broad group of researchers and other stakeholders need to participate in the process of evaluating these choices and the arguments and conclusions of the inquiry. Given that these are the basic tenets of a post-positivist view of science, post-positivism could be used as a basis for suggestions as to how to increase the warranted assertability of the outcomes of action research.

This would be done primarily by action researchers making explicit in their reports what they actually did. While this may seem obvious, it is often omitted in discussions of the quality of action research. For example, Hilary Bradbury and Peter Reason suggest that an action research study can be evaluated by examining the involvement of participants in the research, its practical outcomes, how theory is connected to participants’ experiences and whether it increases ways of knowing, whether its purposes are significant and, finally, how it helps build new infrastructure. While all of these criteria are important, there is no call for the action research reports to detail what was actually done. Action researchers could also provide clear and detailed descriptions of how they construct their representations of their research from their data, which are in some respects their arguments in support of the outcomes of their action research.

In post-positivist views of science, it has been acknowledged that theories are connected to other theories through a relational network of ideas. That is, any possible explanation does not stand alone. When action researchers consider how they understand or explain their results, they could see how their understandings and explanations relate to and connect with what others have found in their field. Scientific arguments are also evaluated on how well they take into account a variety of data sources and whether alternative explanations are considered. In action research, we see this being done through the use of triangulation, the exploration of multiple ways to represent their data and a critique of all possible representations, including the ones that are favoured.

The ways in which values are looked upon in post-positivism also has implications for the practice

of action research. Action researchers can be aware of the relevant and irrelevant values that may affect their work. Some of these would be epistemological and would depend on the features of the theoretical framework that guides the research. However, there are others that go beyond epistemology and relate to the improvements in the human condition that the action researchers seek. Therefore, the warrant of the outcomes of action research could also be asserted by demonstrating how they lead to those improvements, whether they are in the individual, in the organization or in the community. It is important to note that the post-positivist would not be satisfied with the claim that 'it is true because it works'. The warrant would instead be in an explanation or theory of why it works. In addition, that theory would need to be useful for understanding other situations and be subjected to critique. This last suggestion reminds us that action research, like other research according to post-positivism, needs to be responsive to some type of implicit or explicit procedural authority. For the most part, it is explicitly in guidelines for research and publication and more implicitly in the review process for practitioner, professional and research peer-reviewed journals; conference papers and funding proposals and criteria for the awarding of degrees. As noted above, there is a role for professional judgement in both warranting one's results and the evaluation of these warrants by others.

In summary, much of the recent work in the philosophy of science has led to the rejection of the tenets of positivism. The result is a post-positivist view that acknowledges that science is an enterprise that cannot produce infallible truth. This conclusion has been reached both because of logical inconsistencies in a positivist framework and extensive work in the sociology of science that has demonstrated science to be a very human endeavour that is influenced by all aspects of the social world. That said, post-positivists reject the conclusion that because science is fallible, the search for truth ought to be abandoned. Instead, they have suggested methods that can be used to help distinguish between more and less likely explanations. It is these methods, discussed above among others, that could be used by action researchers to similarly support the outcomes of their work.

Allan Feldman

See also Dewey, John; epistemology; ontology; rigour; validity

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PHOTOVOICE

Photography has become one of the most ubiquitous forms of communication in the twenty-first century, given the predominance of the visual in Western culture, the proliferation of visual media (e.g. ads, TV and the Internet) and the increasing accessibility and globalization of digital visual technologies. It is thus understandable that photographic tools would become central to participatory processes of action research. In particular, for projects that aim to engage marginalized populations in challenging oppression and developing both the personal and the collective capacity to act for social change, photography can offer an alternative form of representation, an active process of participation and a powerful expression of experience and social issues. Two photographic practices have emerged as popular tools in participatory research projects: Photovoice and Digital Storytelling. The latter is discussed in a separate entry.

Photovoice puts cameras in the hands of those who traditionally might have been identified as the 'research subjects', offering them an opportunity to be active participants in the research process, inviting them to 'voice' their experiences, perspectives and analyses through the photographs that they take. By 'shooting

back', ordinary people democratize the visual media and challenge the role of 'experts' and 'professionals' in the arts, research and education.

Historical and Epistemological Roots

The context within which photography was invented in the mid nineteenth century shaped its early use and impact. Developed by wealthy Europeans in the midst of the colonial period, cameras were initially used to document privileged lives and foreign travels to exotic lands, focusing on 'the spectacle of the other'. They became tools in the racialized classification of humans under European imperialism, reinforcing notions of scientific racism. Photographs also soon replaced drawing in the rising role of advertising to promote industrial capitalism and the consumer culture. The technology of early cameras made them awkward, expensive and inaccessible to ordinary people; they were clearly the domain of the elite and the professionals.

The capacity of photographs to show actual traces of reality also fed dominant epistemologies of positivism and the elevation of the 'objective' nature of reality promoted by Western science. Photographs were used as evidence, and there was little awareness of who was behind the camera, the photographer's perspective or interests. In the early twentieth century, reformist photographers such as Jacob Riis capitalized on this objective power of images to document the horrific living and working conditions of new immigrants to the USA; his aim was to raise public consciousness about poverty and catalyze social and political action. The Farm Security Administration photographers in the 1930s and 1940s had a similar mission: to document the real conditions of poor communities in the midst of the Depression; these classic social documentary images became emblematic of social inequities and were used to press for social reform. But the cameras remained in the hands of the professionals, the practice required considerable financial support and training and the subjects did not benefit from their images.

Photographers' claim to objectivity was debunked in the latter part of the twentieth century by postmodern thinkers and artists, who vigorously challenged the 'objectivity' of positivist Western science and any notion of 'truth' that photographs could portray. Rather, they framed photos as frozen moments reflecting the subjective 'point of view' of the photographer and particular regimes of truth. While for some, this recognition spelled the death of documentary photography, for others—in both the art world and the world of social action—the acknowledgement only expanded the scope of the practice; *Mirrors and Windows*, a pivotal 1978 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, embraced both the artist's sensibility (mirror) and the

world she explores (window), or the subjective and the objective power of photographs.

Within the world of social research, there was also a developing sense of the self-reflexivity of the post-positivist researcher. Early developments of participatory research, influenced by the popular education pedagogy of the Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire, encouraged researchers to acknowledge their non-neutrality and their own power in terms of social identity, organizational identity and political identity. The recognition that all research is ideological and reflects power dynamics led to new tools that attempted to address the inequities between the researcher and the researched. An international network of participatory research within adult education, techniques developed by development practitioners in Participatory Rural Appraisal projects and the global emergence of Participatory Action Research (PAR) all aimed to democratize the research process while also integrating research, education and action.

The democratization of research tools drew naturally on community-engaged artistic practices such as popular theatre, music and the spoken word and, in multiple forms, the use of photographs and video. The early Participatory Research Network of the International Council for Adult Education, for example, involved literacy teachers in Nicaragua and English as a Second Language (ESL) students in Canada in producing photo-stories, based on the daily lives and struggles of the students and appropriating a popular cultural form more common in Latin America and the Mediterranean countries, the *foto-novella* (a kind of soap opera in comic book form). This process built explicitly on Freire's codification of 'themes' of the students' or research subjects' lives, but the photographic production process was still in the hands of the researcher/educator.

The social upheavals of the 1960s also gave rise to experimentation with participatory photography and filmmaking. Appalshop in the USA and the Challenge for Change programme of the National Film Board not only produced socially critical films but also involved grass-roots communities in their production; marginalized youth were taught to produce their own visual statements. Committed social photographers such as Wendy Ewald gave cameras to Appalachian youth to document their daily lives and counter the negative stereotypes perpetuated by the dominant media and social welfare programmes.

Within the academy, in the later twentieth century, there was also a critical rethinking of both research practices and the use of photographs. Subfields of visual anthropology, responding to anti-colonial critiques, and visual sociology, influenced by post-structuralism, organized associations and conferences focusing on visual research practices. For activist scholars, influenced

by feminist, anti-racist and indigenous methodologies, the participatory use of photographs and video offered a new way of honouring the voice of the research subject, troubling historical power dynamics and promoting collaborative knowledge production. They depended less on verbal or literacy skills and led to other ways of knowing; arts-informed research was slowly recognized in an academic context that has historically privileged text-based learning.

The other major influence on the democratization of photo-based research has been the accelerating development of digital visual technologies. Not only are cameras more accessible, more affordable and of higher technical quality, but the evermore ubiquitous cell phone takes pictures. Cameras are thus at almost everyone's fingertips, facility with digital media is equated with citizen participation and the possibilities seem endless. The Internet and other social media are overflowing with creative visual productions coming from the ground up. The ease with which images can be shared on the Internet broadens both the scope and the impact of these tools; local stories can be shared across the globe, linking people, projects and political actions.

The Practice of Photovoice

Origins and Influences

Though participatory photography in research has a long history, the origin of an explicit practice called Photovoice is most often associated with the work of Caroline Wang and her colleagues in health research, starting with a pioneering study in China in the 1990s and now widely adapted for projects with marginalized populations addressing all kinds of social inequities. Wang identifies as theoretical and practical influences Freire's use of 'codes' in processes of conscientization, feminist theory's acknowledging the subjective (the personal is political) and making visible the invisible and the participatory practices of early community photographers such as Jo Spence in the UK and Wendy Ewald and Jim Hubbard in the USA. Wang associates Photovoice with PAR, emphasizing the empowering process of community people documenting and reflecting on their communities and the power of these images to influence individual and community action. She suggests that the technique can be used for different purposes—from specific processes such as participatory needs assessment, asset mapping and participatory evaluation to the deeper goals of developing community capacity to act and to influence policymakers.

Phases

Photovoice projects usually follow three major phases: preparation, production and use. The first

phase includes recruiting a target audience of policymakers and/or community leaders; selecting Photovoice participants, facilitators and photographer mentors and discussing the Photovoice concept and method, including issues of ethics and informed consent, before training participants in the technical use of the camera. In the production phase, participants are given sufficient time to take photos, sometimes around an initial suggested theme related to the specific research; emphasized in this stage is the 'voice' side of Photovoice: group discussion and interpretation of the images. Participants may be asked to select one or two significant photos, then to frame stories around the photos, following a Freirean decoding process, which moves from collective description of the images to connecting them to their own experiences, codifying them into themes, exploring the root causes of the problems represented and proposing action for change. The third phase involves selecting a format to share the photographs with the community and with policymakers and community leaders; if these relationships have been established from the beginning, there is a greater likelihood that the images will be fed into a more public policymaking process.

Examples

The technique has been used globally and for a wide range of issues. Wang's early research in rural China in the 1990s trained 62 village women to document the conditions affecting their health, such as lack of access to clean water; the photos from their participatory needs assessment became a catalyst for action, making the issue a priority for community leaders. Wendy Hussey involved five self-identified female-to-male transsexuals in the USA to examine their experience in accessing health care, to document the needs of the transgender community and to recommend policy changes and educate providers; they collectively identified six themes from their dialogue around the photos and insisted on being at the policymaking table, as visible agents for change.

Ethical Issues

Critical to any discussion of Photovoice are the ethical and political issues raised by its use. First of all, with the aim of social change, the process is explicitly political, and there are always power dynamics at play between Photovoice participants from marginalized communities challenging inequities, the project researchers/facilitators and the community leaders and policymakers they are trying to influence. Given that photographs cannot ensure anonymity, careful attention is given to ethical procedures of informed consent by participants, photo release forms by their subjects

and a consent form if images are to be published. A group discussion of ethics is essential, brochures and letters explaining the project are recommended, and participants are encouraged to give photos back to the people they have photographed. In some cases, honoraria are offered to participants or to those whose images are published, though remuneration can also affect the dynamics.

Limitations and Critiques

Critics have charged Photovoice projects with being tokenistic, creating false hopes and being naive about the political struggles needed to address deeply structural issues at the root of many problems documented by participants. While these critiques can be made of any PAR aimed at social change, the use of photos can exacerbate classic tensions between product and process, aesthetics and ethics, private and public, individual and collective, outsider and insider, ownership and use and education and action. In a culture that is enamoured with technology, there is also the danger of a kind of technicism, where the tools trump the content or process.

Often its success depends on the particular purpose of the project, whether it is mainly to empower participants within a community or if it is to have a broader policy impact. There are also questions about who initiates and leads the process, as the facilitator is never neutral and participation is never completely equal. Practitioners offer tips to facilitators about the importance of creating a climate for respectful dialogue, acknowledging their own non-neutrality while also not imposing their own agendas, adapting to the context and rhythms of the participants and being willing to learn from mistakes. The ubiquity of cameras and photographs in the digital age ensures that various practices of Photovoice will continue to emerge in diverse contexts, feeding the democratization of research and education, as well as a growing community media movement.

Deborah Barndt

See also Digital Storytelling; Freire, Paulo; Participatory Action Research; storytelling

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PHRÓNĒSIS

The word and concept *phrónêsis* is Greek. Its traditional rendering in English is ‘prudence’, from the Latin *prudentia*. Currently, however, ‘practical wisdom’ or ‘judgement’ is more common. The historical source for the current concept of *phrónêsis* is Aristotle (384–322 BC), in particular Book VI of his *Nicomachean Ethics*. After a brief review of some recent attempts to apply the concept in contexts of social research and professional practice, the following text presents the role and content of *phrónêsis* in the thinking of Aristotle.

Rediscovering Phrónêsis

In the twentieth century, the specifically Aristotelian concept of *phrónêsis* has been the explicit starting point for both Martin Heidegger’s phenomenology and Hans-Georg Gadamer’s hermeneutics and for trying to find ways of conceptualizing knowledge and understanding of human and social relations, alternative to the modern period’s dominant attempts at transferring models of theory, data and ‘applied’ knowledge from astronomy, physics and other natural sciences to the study and practice of human individuals, culture and society. Since the ‘relaunch’ of the concept, and as part of its gradual re-appropriation, many have attempted to apply, adjust and integrate Aristotelian *phrónêsis* into professional and managerial practice, modern education and social research. Most interpretations

separate *phrónêsis* from two other major knowledge forms in Aristotle in order to emphasize and cultivate *phrónêsis* as an independent alternative to *epistêmê* and *téchnê*, in other words to ‘science’ and ‘technology’ or ‘technique’. *Phrónêsis* is seen as a form of rationality connected to *praxis*, which in turn is interpreted as approximately our everyday or professional activities, in contrast to a predetermined formalism of encroaching requirements from science and technique. Based on a close reading of the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, the author criticizes widespread tendencies in the ‘applied’ appropriation of *phrónêsis*. *Phrónêsis* cannot be reduced to normative, applied social research and counselling within a modern division of labour between researchers and the researched or between professionals and clients, and *epistêmê* cannot be equated with modern science. There are differences both in kind and of degree *within* the Aristotelian *epistêmê*, and theoretical and practical philosophy cannot really be segregated. Theory should not be abandoned but differentiated and redefined. The concept of *praxis* as the foundation for *phrónêsis*, on the other hand, is more specific than our everyday or professional activities. It is also more specific than most modern hybrid concepts of ‘practice’. Different aspects of *praxis* must be distinguished even in its specialized Aristotelian sense.

Phrónêsis as an Intellectual Virtue or Excellence

According to Aristotle, *phrónêsis* is one of several ‘intellectual virtues’ or ‘excellences of the mind’. A virtue is a *hêxis* or *habitus* (Latin), which means an acquired ability, skill, habit or disposition and a proclivity for acting and feeling in certain ways, resulting from practice, exercise or habituation. A *habitus* can be either deficient or adequate in relation to standards inherent in its activity, but virtue is by definition the best *habitus* within its specific field or kind of activity. The activity of the intellect—in other words, thinking—consists in the use of reasoned speech or *lógos*. Its *lógos* character makes it intellectual. Its ability to use *lógos* correctly makes it virtuous. The common task of intellectual virtues is to attain truth by affirming and denying, as Aristotle puts it. The ‘true’ and the ‘false’ as species belong to the genus of validity in general, together with ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘expedient’ and ‘harmful’, ‘beautiful’ and ‘ugly’ and other validity dimensions inescapable for *lógos* users. In Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *phrónêsis* is defined in relation to several other intellectual excellences and faculties and by connecting it to *praxis* (pp. iii–xiii). *Sophía*, or ‘theoretical wisdom’, encompasses all the virtues, both intellectual and ethical. It is part of virtue as a whole, as ‘head’ of the virtues.

Sophía is composed of two intellectual virtues immediately ‘below’ it: *nous* and *epistêmê*. Both of these relate primarily to levels and aspects of things that remain the same through change. *Nous* moves ‘upwards’ inductively from particulars and grasps basic principles, while *epistêmê* (‘science’) moves ‘downwards’, reasoning deductively from basic and primary principles. *Nous* usually translates as some kind of intuitive intelligence but is also considered to be more reflective. Indeed, unfolded *nous* and the activity of *noêsis* may very well be interpreted as being inductive and searching dialogue or dialectics, in parallel to how Aristotle defines the unfolded activity of *epistêmê* as deductive or didactic demonstration. The previous virtues are not only intellectual but also theoretical in being non-intervening, non-normative and non-prescriptive and merely descriptive, distinguishing and analytically directed at stable elements, aspects or levels of things and activities. Other intellectual virtues such as *téchnê* (craft competence) and *phrónêsis* are non-theoretical but intervening or prescriptive, dealing with what can change or be brought into existence, depending on what we ourselves do or do not do. They concern things that we ourselves can control, in other words decide on, choose, initiate, change, develop or stop, so that the variation depends on us.

Phrónêsis as Deliberation

Phrónêsis, then, is a way of using *lógos*, a way of reasoning or arguing about what to do. In the Aristotelian scheme, there are several ways of reasoning. A finished science is deductive, research or unfinished science is dialectical or dialogical and *téchnê* is calculative. *Phrónêsis*, however, is deliberative (*bouleutikê*); in other words, it searches for and weighs arguments for and against on what to do, here and now, considering the particulars of the situation. But analyzing and understanding the particulars of the situation is not peculiar to *phrónêsis* alone. What Aristotle calls *súnêsis* or concrete understanding does this too, but without being normative and prescriptive. *Súnêsis* is merely critically distinguishing—a form of dialogical discretion. It is a theoretical virtue. Deliberation as such is not peculiar to *phrónêsis* alone either. Cleverness or smartness (*deinôtês*) deliberates as well, but for non-virtuous ends (e.g. arbitrary, tactical, strategic, egotistical, evil, etc.). As a deliberative ability, *phrónêsis* is inherent in the other ethical virtues (e.g. justice, friendship, courage, etc.). The ‘non-intellectual’ ethical virtues provide the ends, while *phrónêsis* deliberates about ‘means’, which is why we cannot be prudent (*phrónimoi*) without being (ethically) good. But in turn, the non-intellectual virtues are developed primarily through *praxis* and critical dialogue. Cleverness (*deinôtês*), concrete understanding

(*súnesis*) and ethical virtue (*êthikê arête*) are in a way integrated parts of *phrónêsis*, which transforms the parts in the integration process. An ethical virtue is a habituated inclination (*habitus*) to act and feel ‘correctly’, but not only according to right reason. Single virtuous acts can be done in a formally correct way from mere habit, by chance, by mechanical rule following or under the influence of others (by following orders). To be truly virtuous, acts must spring from a virtuous disposition and be done with the right reason or justification, according to Aristotle, and *phrónêsis* is right reason in these matters.

Phrónêsis as an Ethical Virtue or Excellence

Most of the intellectual disciplines and virtues are instruments or means that can be used for both good and bad ethical purposes. But *phrónêsis* in itself is also an ethical virtue, in other words a virtue of character. Apart from theoretical wisdom (*sophía*), the other intellectual virtues, being merely rational powers, are not given intrinsic ethical value. In such technical and instrumental virtues, a voluntary error is not as bad as an involuntary error. Making a deliberate mistake in singing or playing an instrument may merely prove your mastery of the art. But in the ethical virtues, a voluntary mistake—being deliberately unjust, unfriendly and so on—is worse than the involuntary mistake of being unknowingly unjust or unfriendly. Also, forgetting a technical skill is not generally considered blameworthy, but forgetting the ethical virtues is. Forgetting or making a mistake concerning *phrónêsis* is. *Phrónêsis* deliberates about how one should be just, fair, friendly, caring and so on in relation to other people here and now, people with quite different needs and wishes, all things considered, but still respecting their autonomy as thinking minds and wills separate from ours. *Phrónêsis* has to heed appearances through the different opinions and desires of different people at different stages, phases or situations of life, and how one identical, accidental property of something may appear pleasant, harmful, indifferent or simply instrumentally useful to different people. Hence, there cannot be any *téchnê* or precept for dealing with it. In addition, *phrónêsis* cannot be used to deliberate instrumentally about how to make anyone simply serve our purposes. Doing that would reduce it to *téchnê*. *Phrónêsis* does not try to manipulate or merely to persuade or seduce. It must present its own thinking and reasons for deciding and acting in certain ways as openly and as transparently as possible to the mindful judgement of others (as to itself), trying to show and convince, making them *see* but still respecting their autonomy. *Phrónêsis* must consider where others are, emotionally, intellectually and in their skills and attitudes, in trying to find the

right thing to do, but it cannot use these circumstances manipulatively in setting through some hidden agenda without ruining itself *qua phrónêsis*. It must know how to deal with egotistical, strategic, manipulative behaviour in others without itself becoming like this, but also without simply being subdued by it and letting such behaviour prevail in others and in general.

This is why and how *phrónêsis* is both ethical and intellectual: (a) because one would blame someone for forgetting or neglecting to do these intellectual exercises in dealing with others, treating everyone exactly the same regardless of circumstances, preconditions and so on; (b) because abstaining consciously and voluntarily from deliberating for and against on what to do would be considered an ethical deficiency and (c) because one would blame someone for deliberating merely cleverly for other—unethical—purposes in dealing with others or even manipulating others technically.

Phrónêsis as Understanding and Catching the Right Moment (*Kairós*)

Defining the right thing to do in general and unqualified ways, as general rules or commandments, becomes too simple, unconditional and absolute. Novices and amateurs with a shallow and superficial understanding of what they are dealing with think and talk in too general terms. Simultaneously, lacking the ability to analyze and deliberate autonomously, they depend on general rules. Such moralists do not adjust to the *kairós*—doing the right thing, for the right purpose, in the right way, to the right people, in the right amount, at the right time, in the right place and so on—but prescribe doing things ‘always’ or ‘never’. But *phrónêsis* is situated and considerate. It takes its own circumstances and conditions of performance into account. Following a rule always, dogmatically or mechanically, is not praxis because it does not use *phrónêsis*. Deliberation distinguishes *phrónêsis* in its relation to praxis. Someone deliberating presupposes independent minds like himself acting. Deliberation necessarily relates to independent minds in taking and giving counsel, since advice and admonitions must be understood. *Téchnê* and *poiêsis* do not presuppose independent minds or any consciousness at all among the receivers of their technical treatment. They presuppose the opposite. Technical causes do not have to be understood in order to work.

Phrónêsis Differs From Rhetoric and Syllogistic Reasoning

Phrónêsis differs from rhetoric. *Phrónêsis* searches openly for the best thing to do, weighing arguments for and against. Rhetoric is not primarily deliberative

but persuasive and seductive. In being open-ended regarding its concrete conclusions, *phrónēsis* is not deliberately persuasive, while rhetoric is deliberately persuasive or seductive for any kind of purpose. But in arguing persuasively in favour of predetermined and favoured decisions as conclusions, it is not very deliberative. True deliberation is open-ended. Rhetoric delivers the tools for conducting a debate where the point is to beat an opponent and to win an audience. It operates persuasively towards the audience and in agnostic ways towards its opponent. Aristotle speaks of rhetoric as a *téchnē*. Practical reasoning is sometimes reduced to practical syllogisms, in other words to a form similar to the following: Two premises, one universal (normative major), as, for example, 'All sweet things ought to be tasted', and one particular (descriptive minor), as, for example, 'This particular thing is sweet', will lead to the individual tasting this particular thing, if nothing stops him. But *phrónēsis* cannot be reduced to practical syllogisms. The most important aspect of *phrónēsis* is that it deals with particular circumstances in connection with acting. But the practical syllogism is deficient in leaving out its two most important parts: (1) the analysis of the concrete situation and (2) the deliberation about what to do and how, all things considered. There is no analysis, nor is any deliberation going on, moving through the practical syllogism, only deductive inference through formally identical terms.

Challenging Aspects

There are several controversial aspects of *phrónēsis*, particularly its relationship to general knowledge and to ends and 'values'. Many modern interpreters seem to think that *phrónēsis* is self-sufficient and can abandon theory and general knowledge. At the same time, they seem to think it represents a form of 'value rationality' in contrast to technical or instrumental rationality. Aristotle is quite explicit that *phrónēsis* consists not only (*ou mónon*) in general knowledge but in knowledge of particulars as well (*kai*), since it is practical and has a decision on what to do as its objective. If general knowledge is needed, the question is what kind. There is much general knowledge in the ethical virtues, not only in modern scientific theories. Aristotle also emphasizes repeatedly that *phrónēsis* deliberates the means, while the virtues provide the ends. Sometimes it is also claimed that *phrónēsis* is based on experience, in contrast to science and technique. But the same experience (*empeiria*) forms the base for all of these in Aristotle. Challenges like these complicate claims that *phrónēsis* can be a self-sufficient and independent alternative to *epistēmē*.

Phrónēsis and Action Research

Phrónēsis clarifies an inescapable aspect of professional practice—the analysis and consideration of and the adjustment to concrete situations and circumstances. It is similar to what Donald Schön called 'reflection in practice'. This also makes it clear, however, that *phrónēsis* is primarily a part of professional performance. The critical and analytical reflection 'on practice' was conceived as dialogical by Aristotle and Plato. *Phrónēsis* is clearly a natural part of the well-known cycles of action research, and it clearly belongs to a field of action and knowing relevant for action research, where events depend on what we ourselves do, or do not do, in other words, what we ourselves can control and decide on, choose, initiate, change, develop or top.

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See also hermeneutics; phenomenology; praxis; *téchnē*

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POPULAR EDUCATION

See Adult Education

POSITIONALITY

Positionality refers to the stance or positioning of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the study—the community, the organization or the participant group. The position adopted by a researcher affects every phase of the research process, from the way the question or problem is initially constructed, designed and conducted to how others are invited to participate, the ways in which knowledge is constructed and acted on and, finally, the ways in which outcomes are disseminated and published. Following is a description of the outsider and insider roles of researchers and a discussion of the multiple dimensions influencing how researchers may relate to the action research participants.

Insider or Outsider Role

In action research, the concept of positionality is referenced in terms of the researcher's insider or outsider relationship to the community engaged in the inquiry. Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson in their book on action research dissertations provide extensive discussion on the continuum of insider and outsider relationships. An insider is a researcher or participant who works for or is a member of the participant community, while an outsider (e.g. an academic researcher) is seen as a non-member. Herr and Anderson describe six positions along a continuum:

1. Insider (researcher studies own practice)
2. Insider in collaboration with other insiders
3. Insider(s) in collaboration with outsider(s)
4. Reciprocal collaboration (equal insider and outsider teams)
5. Outsider(s) in collaboration with insider(s) (non-equivalent relationships)
6. Outsider(s) studies

The first five 'positions' are consistent with the foundational principles of action research as a participatory

and reflexive practice that involves researchers and participants in a process of co-inquiry to address identified problems, create change or explore opportunities. Researchers as outsiders (the sixth position) involves gathering data about others as objectified research subjects, a position more typical of traditional research.

Dimensions of Relatedness

Feminist ethnographers are particularly sensitive to the issues of positionality, defined in terms of the degree of relatedness of the researcher to the study participants along dimensions of culture, class, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, childhood lived experiences and so on. Insider researchers generally have more in common with participants than outsiders along many of these dimensions. Implicit in these conceptualizations of positionality is the notion of power and intentions. The closer the researcher is positioned to the participants, the more likely that there are common expectations, intentions and power equity.

Positionality is multidimensional, and it is not uncommon for the researcher(s) to be closely positioned to the participants on some dimensions and not on others. These disparities can create conflict, changing the process and outcomes of the study. Kimberly Huisman eloquently describes these tensions in her ethnographic study with Bosnian women. She closely identified with her participants as a woman, friend and confidante but found that they were on different platforms in terms of life experience, culture and goals (she was a graduate student completing her dissertation, while her participants were a part of refugee families struggling to create new lives). While Huisman was acutely aware of her outsider privileged status and the multitude of different values and world experiences, she strived to build a collaborative relationship with her participants as insiders—joining culturally where she had values in common as women. In the end, she completed her dissertation work and moved away, further accentuating the differences.

Not only do dimensions of culture, class, gender, age and political or social identity define the degree of commonality between researcher(s) and participants, but these dimensions extend into the values and world view that one brings to the research enterprise, thus influencing what is perceived and understood as knowledge. Accepting that what is perceived in the workplace or social community as reality is socially constructed, positionality will significantly influence the decisions made during each cycle of the research process. An interesting variation on this concept of perspective or world view is offered by Patricia Hill Collins, who describes 'the outsider-within'. She suggests that one's location within the organization

creates different lenses of reality. For example, a small subgroup (e.g. women in a male-dominated workplace) may take on the role of marginalized or expert observers who shape their reality as outsiders (with an outsider's world view) and also their experience as insiders who have a common stake in the outcomes.

Evolving Nature of Researcher Positionality

In action research, positionality frequently changes over time through different phases of the inquiry process. Sonia Ospina and her colleagues drew on Herr and Anderson's typology of positionality to describe their hybrid research design exploring the development of leadership across 92 social change organizations. As the action research project evolved, the researchers discovered that their positionality varied from an 'insider in collaboration with outsiders' to 'reciprocal collaboration', to 'outsiders in collaboration with insiders'. The research team found that positionality varied with regard to control over the research process, the action orientation of the research and the voice represented in the production of knowledge. Despite the best of intentions to achieve reciprocal collaboration, constraints were imposed by external funder requirements, the difficulty involved in negotiating collaborative roles and the localized focus of participants.

Positionality is an important consideration in action research because it not only directly influences how the research is carried out but also determines the prevailing outcomes and results—whose voice(s) will be represented in the final reports or decisions. Ospina, Dodge, Foldy, and Hofmann-Pinilla (2008) noted that the funder's power elevated the position and perspective of the outsiders while minimizing or ignoring the interests of some community participants. In conclusion, researchers must be acutely conscious of the positionality issues and how they will influence the course and reported outcomes of an action research project, continually bringing them to the forefront for discussion with participants and seeking to redress power imbalances that disenfranchise or minimize the voice of key participant groups.

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See also ethnography; Feminist Participatory Action Research; insider action research; social constructionism; voice

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POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Positive organizational scholarship (POS) is a social science movement and orientation that focuses on the factors, enablers, mechanisms and effects of positive deviance in human organizational systems. The term *positive organizational scholarship* was coined by Kim Cameron, Jane Dutton and Bob Quinn in the early 2000s. The University of Michigan's Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship hosts a worldwide community of scholars who conduct POS-related research.

'Positive' indicates that POS aims to focus on those dimensions of the human experience that characterize exceptional effectiveness, well-being and a virtuous, desired state or capacity. 'Organizational' conveys that POS focuses attention on organization-level phenomena. Through 'scholarship', POS is intended to generate empirically defensible conclusions that can drive evidence-based solutions. POS is one component in a general movement among social scientists and philosophers to understand the positive or highly functional dimensions of the human experience, with parallel research occurring in related fields such as positive psychology, positive organizational ethics, positive organizational behaviour and virtue ethics.

In some respects, POS may be seen as an empirical, positivist counterpart to the constructivist orientation found in Appreciative Inquiry (AI). A foundational premise in AI is that organizations and institutions emerge from socially constructed, enacted images that come to be seen as an objective reality by those who participate

in them. This presumption supports a socio-rationalist approach to the intentional creation of positive change.

Thus, AI and POS arrive at the meaning of ‘the positive’ or ‘the good’ through very different lenses. AI relies on the constructionist notion that organizational reality is subjective and mutable and therefore open to design. Leaders and researchers alike can either choose to accept deficiency-oriented social constructions or foster abundance-oriented appreciative narratives. In contrast, the POS movement aims to explore the meaning of ‘positive’ through replicable, positivist empiricism in the mode of traditional science. POS advocates have intentionally sought legitimacy through the promotion of results-driven scholarship. At first glance, these perspectives might seem somewhat incompatible.

However, POS has helped legitimize and extend AI methodologies and other organization development approaches that claim to encourage positive dynamics in organizations. POS research has generated several theoretical frameworks that may help explain why AI works, providing insight as to how practice can be shaped to create the intended generative effects. Conversely, POS may also be seen as a manifestation of AI’s central, social constructionist hypothesis as applied to the world of scholarship: By focusing attention on questions that address the positive, exceptional dimensions of the human experience, our ability to articulate and enact positive organizational practices is growing.

To date, the connection of POS to action research has been made only indirectly, mostly through AI practitioners and scholars. However, POS is not synonymous with AI, and POS scholarship provides insights that may be of value to the broader community of action researchers, particularly with respect to the conditions that enable action in organizational life.

Indeed, AI proponents have gleaned a number of insights from POS research. These include discoveries related to the role of positive emotions, the function of positive energy networks, the buffering and amplifying of the effects of positive climate, the motivational power of meaning and significance, the significance of high-quality relationships and the imbalance of positivity to negativity in highly functional groups, among many others. The following areas of POS research have been frequently invoked by AI practitioners and scholars.

Positive Emotions

Much POS research focuses on the role of positive emotions in human and organizational life. Positive emotions (e.g. joyfulness, love or appreciation) enlarge the capacity for cognitive awareness. People

can absorb more information, make richer interpretations and engage in more complex thinking when they experience positive emotions. In addition, when people experience positive emotions in relationships, they are less likely to notice interpersonal differences and more likely to empathize with and connect with others. This body of research strongly supports AI practices that encourage generativity by helping people to focus on high-point moments, discuss meaningful experience and engage in playful activities. Such activities evoke positive emotionality, thereby inducing their predicted benefits, including a stronger capacity to engage in conversations that build new social constructions.

Positive-Energy Networks

A positive-energy network refers to the social connections through which positive emotion flows through an organization; a positive energy network indicates the presence of social capital. Positive energy is also described as the impetus for heliotropism, the tendency of an organism to seek sources of energy (i.e. as the head of a sunflower follows the sun). Some individuals in an organization can be identified as ‘positive energizers’, meaning that their acts are perceived by others as creating a positive, energizing impact on the people who interact with them. Positive energizers have an important effect on others. They support, uplift and boost those who are around them, and they exert an enabling, motivating influence. They are often perceived as having virtuous character attributes, such as optimism, integrity, humility and unselfishness. Most important, positive energizers enable others to be positive energizers through a virtuous cycle. One characteristic of high-performing organizations is that their network of positive energizers is three times the size of the energy network in an average organization.

Positive Interpersonal Relationships

The strength of interpersonal ties between people in organizations is another important enabler of positive change. Positive, high-quality relationships are those that create a ‘generative source of enrichment, vitality and learning’ for both individuals and organizations. Positive relationships are an important enabler of positively deviant outcomes—physiologically, psychologically, emotionally and organizationally. Even short-term, positive relationships can leave a lasting effect. Positive relationships create a conduit for resource sharing and co-ordinated action, which leads to greater organizational effectiveness through the formation of social capital and synchronicity. The scholarship on

positive relationships has interesting implications for AI. For example, a common assumption is that people feel secure in and are motivated by positive relationships when they receive love, support and encouragement from others. However, research suggests that *what people give* to a relationship has a stronger correlation to the outcomes of a positive connection. In AI practice, this effect may be activated through exercises that encourage people to recognize and describe the strengths and capacities they see in others.

Positivity-Negativity Ratio

An oft-cited POS finding is an imbalance favouring the frequency of positive over negative emotional experiences as expressed within high-performance teams and healthy interpersonal relationships. Though the exact dimensions of the imbalance have proven to be controversial, a pattern of imbalanced positive emotions over negative emotions consistently appears across a variety of studies and contexts. This pattern correlates with the propensity of people to form strong, positive connections. AI facilitators and writers have frequently cited such work as justification for the focus on positive questions as a primary mechanism for inducing the conditions that lead to generative dynamics in an organization.

Positive Meaning and Purpose

An important advance in motivation theory is the perspective that people can be more motivated by a sense of purpose than they are by extrinsic rewards, such as purposefulness and experienced meaningfulness. *Purposefulness* indicates that a person aspires to some end state, like excellence or virtue, that provides guidance and direction to one's behaviour. *Experienced meaningfulness* describes the inherent 'significance or meaning' that a person may draw from work itself. Often, work itself can acquire a character that conveys significance or meaning. When people view their work as having purpose and significance, they are typically motivated to perform this work at a much higher level. These theories support the use of and offer an explanation for the effect of how AI's reliance on conversations about meaningful and significant narratives, as well as strengths and values, should arouse the desire for a sense of purpose in people. This may explain why AI seems to create strong commitment in people to implement the changes that they develop through the AI process.

Positive Climate

A positive climate is a collective social state that is characterized by the presence of positive organizational

practices or organizational virtuousness. A positive climate enables people to work through negative or challenging experiences more effectively. Virtuous spirals create an environment in which people deal with setbacks through actions that generate amplifying and buffering effects. Research on positive climate is especially relevant for AI projects in difficult circumstances, such as downsizing, reorganization or mergers. Negative organizational dynamics, if dominant, create a downward spiral in which each setback or difficult moment may contribute to and amplify the stress, anxiety and other forms of negativity that people may be experiencing. AI can help create a pocket of safety in such an environment, in which people can discuss their situation in a proactive, functional and healthy manner. A positive climate activates the positive potential of negative emotions, as positive emotions counter the potentially negative effects of fear, anger, sadness or anxiety. In such a situation, positive social constructions can generate a sense of hope and possibility, allowing for regenerative outcomes.

As illustrated by these examples, POS is an important resource for any applied practice, like AI, that focuses on building or maintaining highly effective organizations.

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See also Appreciative Inquiry; Appreciative Inquiry and research methodology; Appreciative Inquiry and sustainable value creation; appreciative intelligence

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Websites

Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship, University of Michigan: <http://www.centerforpos.org>

POSITIVITISM

See Philosophy of Science

POST-COLONIAL THEORY

Post-colonial theory is a critical body of knowledge that questions the dominant ways through which the world is known and how this knowledge is defined. Also referred to as *post-colonial critique* or *post-colonialism*, this body of knowledge is fundamentally premised on the critique of what is seen as Western intellectualism and knowledge hegemony, with its discourses and thought formations believed to be unduly privileged as the mainstream. Spurning what it considers established agendas and radically rejecting accustomed ways of seeing, post-colonialism contends that these are not only rooted in colonial perspectives but that they advance a Western world view to the exclusion of ‘other’, non-Western views—that is, that there are intrinsically ethnocentric assumptions underpinning ‘mainstream’ disciplines which are fundamentally unrecognizing of the values and practices of other non-Western cultures.

Despite the chronological connotation reflected in the prefix ‘post’, post-colonial in this case does not necessarily refer to descriptions of time or periodic shifts, as in ‘after-colonialism’; rather, it is connotative of an adverse theoretical stance or opposing position to what has come to be regarded as the ‘establishment’ or ‘mainstream’ in knowledge formation. In her 2007 article, Brett Christophers defined this as the wide-ranging critique of the ways of thinking, of seeing and of representing the imperialist ‘empire’ which continue to persist in different degrees, long after the dismantling of that empire. In challenging established ways of knowing, it advocates a deconstruction of mainstream knowledge regimes, which it argues are a product of the colonizer’s world view and as such are underpinned by colonial forms of thought and patterns of knowing, and again, it calls for a repositioning of dominant Western discourses in a way that presents these not as totalitarian or universal but, more reflexively, as part of a plurality of knowledges.

Post-colonialism therefore challenges and critiques the dynamics of knowledge creation and argues for an ontological deconstruction of mainstream knowledge formations; in particular, it problematizes how we ‘know’ the world and pushes for an epistemological reorientation with regard to our perception, acknowledgement and validation of ‘truth’. This entry discusses

some of the main arguments and key theoretical concepts that underpin this perspective and will briefly examine its relevance as a possible outlook for future research.

Main Arguments

Post-colonial theorists contend that ‘the world’ has long been viewed through the one-sided ethnocentric lens of the colonizer and that this has been to the detriment and subsequent marginalization of the no less significant world views of the colonized. They hold that the systematic production and organization of Western knowledge in its show of ethnocentrism not only legitimized its privileged positioning as the mainstream but also created an uneven dichotomy in which other, non-Western forms of knowledge were cast in the periphery and, again, that this imbalanced view of the world was due more to reasons of vested economic interests and political control than to unintentional oversight or ignorant omission.

Although conquest and political subjugation had long existed, what appear to have significantly differentiated colonialism in this case were the economic, cultural and ideological dimensions to its operations. New lands were not only conquered and their wealth systematically extracted, but the colonies were subsequently linked to the West in complex arrangements of governance, unfair exchange and commercialization which ensured that they remained economically dependent on the West for sustainability. That is, colonialism not only created structures that facilitated the extraction of wealth from the colonies but also instituted economic systems which ensured a reliance on the West for the sustenance of economic life within the colonies. It therefore sought to impose Western hegemony not only politically but also economically, culturally and ideologically.

Furthermore, it has been argued that the diverse conquests and ensuing subjugation of new territories were captured in subject narratives that underscored the importance of the ‘White man’s burden’ and the various obstacles that had to be overcome to establish a new order of civilization within the new colonies, historical narratives that fundamentally ensconced the culturally tinted world view of the colonizer, particularly of the colonized ‘subjects’, and from which, it is argued, whole new disciplines were born.

According to this view, the colonizer’s quest to ‘civilize’ the ‘other’ did not only require an understanding of the latter’s ‘uncivilized’ world for the former to maintain effective political and economic control but also enabled the articulation of this civilizing cause in subject narratives. These subject narratives, progressively secured in systems of knowledge, not only

presented the colonizer's own culturally tinted view and understanding of the 'uncivilized' and their world but also helped to highlight the many obstacles to the civilizing mission. They would also seek to explain the reasons for these obstacles as well as how they could be sufficiently overcome. In this, however, the voices of the colonized were not considered necessary to this cause and as such were unsolicited and, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak notes, have remained dislocated from and incoherent in the mainstream, with their history and 'ways of being' subsequently re-inscribed by the pen of the colonizer, who allegedly 'understood' them and, as such, could represent and speak for them. Crucially, it is argued that this imperialist narrativization of history was progressively secured in systems of knowledge that found initial legitimization in regimes of political control and economic materiality and was subsequently perpetuated through rhetorical means of reiteration. As such, rather than a universal or totalitarian picture of 'truth', these knowledges are considered by post-colonial critics as the product of a rationalized, instrumentalist and individualist Western culture, and such is the thought formation which post-colonialism so fundamentally critiques.

Key Concepts

Post-colonial theory gained much prominence with the publication of Edward Said's influential, groundbreaking classic, *Orientalism*. Published in 1978, this work analyzed Western discourses of Islam and the Middle East and critiqued this as having produced a form of intellectual colonialism which reordered the world along binary frameworks designed to work in its favour; with the West cast as 'self' and the rest of the world classed as the 'other'. In post-colonial discourse, this practice of naming is termed *othering*; a covert process of naming in which the colonizer is projected as the 'all-knowing, civilized occident' and the colonized subject cast simultaneously as that referential inferior 'other', who, as Homi Bhabha observed, possessed an uncivilized reality that was entirely visible to and knowable by the former. Indeed, this 'other' is also sometimes referred to as 'the subaltern'. Originally derived from the Indian myth of 'widow burning', Spivak uses the term *subaltern* to represent the marginalized oppressed status of the historical colonized subject. In this, she describes a part of the Indian population who apparently have been written out of their own history by Western imperialist narratives of conquest and subjugation. Fundamentally, the concept of subalternity draws attention to the plight of the colonized female subject in history as one who is helplessly silent because she is doubly obscured from view—first, in a cultural sense as a female within a traditionally patriarchal society and, again, by the colonial

historical narratives of an imperialist political era in which she is presented as the native 'other'.

In the Indian myth of widow burning, this colonized female subject is silenced because she is unable to properly render her own experience or account of events. She 'cannot speak' to us because knowledge about her is presented through indigenous patriarchal accounts that traditionally obscure the female experience and, again, through imperialist narrativization of colonial history. The concept of the subaltern thus underscores the notion of the Third World subject and is fundamentally critiquing of how this subject is represented within Western discourse. It describes the predicament of the silenced colonial subject, whose voice is systematically foreclosed from formal theoretical formations underpinned by imperialist knowledge hegemony. It is used often in a negative sense in that it paints a picture of intellectual denial, one in which dominant discourses not only misrepresent certain peoples but, in a move that is essentially reductionist, obscure the heterogeneity of their ways of being in the development of Western rational thought. Spivak terms this reductionism 'epistemic violence', argues that there are certain interests at work which intentionally foreclose the agency of the subaltern and concludes that the development of the Western rational subject is itself dependent on the silencing of other, non-Western subjectivities. These post-colonial critics contend that this situation of silencing, oppression and subalternity has persisted in contemporary knowledge creation, and they therefore urge that deconstructive knowledge strategies be adopted in order to be able to reconstruct the subaltern in present-day thought. As such, it is felt that maintaining a post-colonial awareness in the process of knowledge generation is a key way to achieving this.

Post-Colonialism in Knowledge Creation

Presently, mainstream knowledge is still believed to be ethnocentric and largely underpinned by Western intellectualism, which may have failed to acknowledge the existence of a plurality of perspectives. Indeed, it is thought that even the instruments of knowledge creation are themselves ethnocentric. This is because, on the one hand, traditional research is fundamentally designed to analyze cause-and-effect relationships and establish causality, focusing on the researched as passive subjects who must be studied objectively from a distance rather than as relevant stakeholders whose voices are cardinal to the research process and should indeed be heard; on the other hand, post-colonialism has continued to cite the insufficiency of Western epistemological frameworks in grappling with the totality, complexity and heterogeneity of the rest of the world. It is felt that in order to address knowledge

ethnocentrism occasioned by a false consciousness of formerly colonized peoples, researchers should begin to strive towards maintaining a post-colonial awareness and, as Gavin Jack and Robert Westwood have noted, towards attaining a consciousness of subalternity in order to collaboratively engage with the world(s) of the researched in a way that acknowledges cultural and ideological heterogeneity and does not silence or marginalize their voices.

Conclusion

In summary, it is understood that Western colonialism and non-Western resistance to it have very important implications for how we see and know the world. Post-colonial theory decries the universalizing tendency of Western knowledge as being the negative enduring legacy of an imperialist colonial empire, one that has continued to silence and marginalize non-Western subjectivities. It stresses that rather than assume a totalitarian and universalist orientation, Western intellectualism should not only recognize the legitimacy of other, non-Western world views but, more important, should be positioned as part and parcel of a plurality of knowledges rather than as mainstream.

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See also epistemology; ontology; subaltern studies; subalternity

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POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism is a critical practice of describing and critiquing what proponents view as the fractured experiences of contemporary life. Its position is primarily that of the sceptic in questioning any supposed grand

theories or truths. Often criticized as relativistic, postmodernism targets the prevailing values and structures of meaning that persisted through modernism. While postmodernists are not in full agreement and do not regularly and consistently use the term, the common concerns of postmodernism include questions of identities and the formation of the self; truth and representation, especially in images and language, and the work of power structures for social control and marginalization. Postmodernism theory is notoriously difficult, and its texts are often criticized for their opacity, although demonstrating the elusiveness of meaning is part of the point. Postmodernism enjoys a wide purview and is commonly employed within critical theory. It has found particular standing within the arts, literature and humanities, claiming, as proponents do, the world as a 'text'.

This entry covers the historical development of postmodernism as well as several key theorists, their primary contributions and central issues, such as identity, truth and representation and the media. It concludes with consideration of postmodernism's relevance to action research.

Historical Development

As the 'post' indicates, postmodernism is in part a response to the positions of modernism. Some theorists view postmodernism as a continuation of modernism in its pursuit of individual truths and blurring of high and low culture. Others view postmodernism as a distinct divergence or correction to modernism because of its more self-aware contextualization, its more thorough scepticism and the rejection of progression or any foundational truths—individual or collective.

Postmodernism rose in prominence during and following the Cold War decades as traditional structures and institutions of meaning continued to lose standing. Especially in Western Europe and the USA, people increasingly lost confidence in their governments through war and scandals and lost faith in religion as the old cultural traditions for the pursuit of a meaningful life suffered in competition with increased individual freedoms and opportunities, however constrained. These cultural changes occurred at a time when easier travel, increased migration and the expansion of broadcast and interactive media were crumbling traditional boundaries.

The events of September 11, however, signalled to many an end to the rise of postmodernism. The consequences of a relativist view of truth became more problematic in a world where differing versions of truth contributed to terrorist acts. While the blurring of boundaries and the fusion of entertainment and reality that distinguished the attacks were considered the

hallmarks of postmodernism—the news footage frequently was said to resemble that of a Hollywood disaster film—the stakes were far greater than the weight of postmodern theory. Still, postmodernism remains widely influential within critical theory.

Key Figures and Contributions

Jean-François Lyotard and Questioning Meta-Narratives

Many key postmodern theorists are French intellectuals. At the forefront of these is the philosopher and literary critic Jean-François Lyotard, who was born in Versailles and had an international academic career teaching in Algeria and Paris as well as the USA, Canada and Brazil. A strong proponent of postmodernism, Lyotard was especially critical of the meta-narratives that held cultural positions of privilege in going largely unquestioned.

Lyotard was resistant to all general truth assertions and the meta-narratives of the Enlightenment that persisted through modernity. A meta-narrative, in his formulation, was any such story that serves as a cultural touchstone or organizing belief. Meta-narratives are particularly influential as foundational tales, such as the stories told about the pursuit of greater freedom and self-determinism in the American Revolution. These narratives are seen as establishing common values and providing a common cause in the completion of the narrative, as in the progression towards greater freedom through geographic conquest and social reform. Lyotard advocated for a position of general scepticism towards all such meta-narratives, and the ways in which they generalize histories and peoples. He described postmodernism as principally characterized by a sense of incredulity towards meta-narratives.

Michel Foucault and Critiquing Power

The philosopher and historian Michel Foucault also had an international career. He was born into an upper-middle-class family in France and worked as a cultural diplomat before pursuing a fuller academic career and teaching in France, Tunisia and the USA. Although Foucault did not describe his work as postmodern, his attention to the social uses of power has been widely influential and places him securely within postmodernist concerns of identities, the places of the marginalized and the critique of social structures and norms.

Foucault worked the archive and looked for otherwise neglected disruptions in history. He concerned himself with the ways in which social power operated and the effects it had in determining what kinds

of people, beliefs, dispositions and behaviours were marginalized and what kinds were normalized. Each categorization depended upon the other in its definition, Foucault argued, as the normalized is determined in contrast to the marginalized. The populations that Foucault focused upon included those labelled mentally insane, criminal and sexually deviant. In a typical example of his social analysis, Foucault adopted Jeremy Bentham's architecture of the panopticon, used for prison inmate observation and control, and adapted it to describe the general population's position in a surveillance society, thereby placing everybody within the panopticon.

Jacques Derrida and Deconstructing Texts

The philosopher and language theorist Jacques Derrida was born in Algeria. He is chiefly known for his theory and practice of deconstructionism, in which he takes apart a text to demonstrate the slipperiness of meaning between the text and what it is meant to represent. In this, Derrida shows how all statements include within themselves their own negation or deconstruction.

A key term for Derrida was *différance*, which he coined to play on the double meaning in French, both 'to differ' and 'to defer'. Derrida used the term to comment upon the inherently unstable meaning structures of language. The term refers to the reliance of language on creating meaning through the difference and deferral of what words do not mean, an always imprecise communicability based upon difference. These features of language presented for Derrida opportunities for the deconstruction of texts in order to showcase the constructed nature of meaning. Because Derrida saw all meaning as created through language—he claimed the world as a text—these principles of deconstruction were applicable well beyond the literary sites where Derrida practised them, with significant political and social implications to which Derrida turned his attention later in life.

Central Issues

Identity

Conceptions of identity and identity formation are a vital concern of postmodernism. For postmodernists, identity is fractured, heterogeneous, plural and largely socially determined. These theories of identity are in direct contrast to previous conceptions of identity as stable and continuous throughout a person's life.

To argue that an identity is fractured and plural is to contend that individuals are composed of a multitude of socially available identity positions, some more easily assumed or not assumed than others. In this way, identity is also socially constructed as it depends upon

the identity positions available and how those may be read by others. Postmodernists tend to talk about the 'subject' rather than the autonomous self in order to highlight the socially constructed nature of identity. This move away from the autonomous self corresponds in postmodern literary theory to the critic Roland Barthes's argument about the death of the author, an understanding that meaning was created not so much by authorial intent as by the work of readers and a work's context. Postmodernists also tend to reference identity in the plural; 'identity' then becomes 'identities' in order to recognize that an individual is always a composite contending with multiple identity positions.

The plurality of identities and their social nature within postmodern theory contributed to the rise of identity politics. While postmodernists held strong anti-essentialist positions and believed that there were no common qualities shared by any given population, they also held that the social positioning of different identities created distinct political interests for different identity groups, especially the historically marginalized and oppressed, such as women, ethnic and religious minorities, the poor and people of non-heterosexual orientations. While the rise of identity politics has helped some groups gain political standing and representation of their interests, those political movements have been criticized for coming at the cost of larger political solidarity and greater influence across marginalized and oppressed groups.

Truth

The critique of autonomous identities corresponds to postmodernism's larger concern with the nature of truth and the creation of meaning. While modernism upheld the importance of an individual pursuit of truth and meaning, postmodernism holds that there is no absolute and attainable truth. This position is in contrast to the progressive tradition of moving towards a greater truth and understanding, however imperfect or removed. Postmodernists instead focus on the socially constructed and determined nature of truth, placing postmodernists more securely within a relativistic perspective.

Reality and truth, for postmodernists, are functions of social agreements. They are constructed through language and other social conventions as reality is replaced by representations. Images, likenesses and references—which circulate without absolute foundations—become the primary substances of meaning. An increased reliance upon the media and technology, and the blurring of the boundaries between reality and virtual reality, bolstered postmodernists' claims that

reality is all a social agreement played out in a field of mirrors. Postmodernists did not argue that representations were without significance or consequence but rather that such representations and conventions were in fact the very sites of significance, and so they focused their critical attentions there.

These moves away from attainable and absolute truths coincided with the collapse of meta-narratives, the understanding of the world as a text and the desire to critique dominant and oppressive structures of power by revealing their artificiality. This was all meant to be liberating. In practice, however, some critics found the relativistic orientations of postmodernism to be inhibiting as it could be complicit with capitalism and provided no consistent or coherent values or positions upon which to ground moves towards greater liberation.

Media

The positions of postmodernism were exemplified by dramatic changes in the media. This is most evident in transitions to a more fractured and individual media experience and the dissolution of traditional broadcast boundaries of all kinds.

The postmodern era saw a shift from a few dominant television networks with codified broadcast schedules to a cable television—and later an Internet—era in which viewers could choose from a multitude of channels, watch as much or as little as they like and tune in on their own schedules. The viewing experience became more fractured and plural. It was constructed of individual media bits outside of the more consistent and progressive viewing experiences that networks had previously offered. Viewers became more active agents in their own viewing practices, and those practices were less homogeneous than before. In this fractured state, the media also made greater contributions to identity formation by being the primary site through which individuals were introduced to various identity positions and participated in their social construction.

The boundaries blurred by the media include the geographic and the cultural. Cable and satellite television, and later and more significantly the Internet, placed the world within easier communicative reach, even though that reach was limited to those with the necessary technological resources. This greater reach further exposed people to different cultures and beliefs, providing more significant opportunities for a relativistic questioning of the established ways of doing things and of dominant and otherwise unexamined meta-narratives. Furthermore, within national boundaries, the divisions between high and low cultures were troubled; television tended to flatten cultural preferences as

people watched the same shows. High culture was then brought down to the level of common culture through mass appeal, and the so-called low culture was elevated to the level of art through postmodernism's insistence that there is no objective standard by which to judge one cultural product or show it as inherently superior to another.

Continued Relevance to Action Research

Postmodernism's greatest relevance to action research lies in conceptions of identity and the critique of dominant power systems for their oppression of marginalized peoples. In focusing upon the fractured, plural and socially determined nature of identity, postmodernism fundamentally altered views of the self, although common ideas of an autonomous and consistent self persist. Identities are now seen as much more fluid and as operating within social situations and constraints in ways action researchers should continue to consider.

Similarly, critiques of power structures and their control of marginalized people, as best exemplified in the critical work of Foucault, offer a compelling conception of the relationship between the marginalized and the dominant within social systems. More than that, Foucault's work provides a strong critique of those systems, even as he demonstrates how the marginalized and the dominant rely upon one another to distinguish themselves, much as Derrida noted how textual meaning relies upon *différance*. An awareness of the functioning of these systems can provide both opportunities and motivation for the work of action research.

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See also aesthetics; discourse analysis; Frankfurt School; identity

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POWER

See Empowerment

PRACTICAL KNOWING

Philosophers over the centuries have explored different forms of knowing, such as aesthetic, mystical, religious, interpersonal, moral and common-sense knowing. In action research, this is known as the extended epistemology. While action research belongs primarily to the world of practical knowing, which seeks to shape the quality of moment-to-moment action, it also draws on other forms of knowing. This entry describes the characteristics of practical knowing as it applies to action research.

The realm of practical knowing (sometimes called common-sense knowing) is directed towards the practicalities of human living and the successful performance of daily tasks and discovering immediate solutions that work. One of its particular characteristics is that it varies from situation to situation and from place to place. What is familiar and what works in one setting or place may be unfamiliar and not work in another. Therefore, practical knowing needs to be differentiated for each specific situation so that decisions about what to say or do are appropriate. Accordingly, practical knowing is always incomplete and can only be completed by attending to figuring out what is needed in situations in which one is at a given time. Accordingly, as no two situations are identical, practical knowing requires attentiveness to and inquiry in the present tense so as to learn what is needed for the task at hand and in order to move from one setting to another, grasping what modifications are needed, and to decide how to act.

Cycles of Action and Reflection

In working within the realm of practical knowing where knowing is always incomplete and where reflexive attentiveness to unfolding contextual dynamics in the present tense is central to both understanding and action, action research's emphasis on cycles of action and reflection is paramount. Action research builds on the past and takes place in the present with a view to shaping the future. Accordingly, engagement in the cycles of action and reflection performs both a practical and a philosophical function in its attentiveness and reflexivity to what is going on at any given moment and how that attentiveness opens up inquiry and decision-making and yields purposeful action.

Scientific and Practical Knowing

A contrast of scientific and practical knowing points to differences in how practical knowing has a concern for the practical and the particular, while science has theoretical aspirations and seeks to make universal abstract statements. Practical knowing is content with only what it needs for the task at hand, while scientific knowing tries to be exhaustive and seeks to know everything and state all it knows accurately and completely. Practical knowing is typically spontaneous, while science is methodical and develops technical jargon. Practical knowing is particular, contextual and practical, and it draws on resources of language with a range of meanings, body language, eloquence, pauses, questions, omissions and so on. In summary, practical knowing remains in the world of things related to us, while scientific knowing relates things to each other.

Scientific and Practical Knowing in the Academy

Practical knowing has been neglected by scholars. After the seventeenth century, philosophers turned to problems of the objectivity of knowing—a shift from knowing in a descriptive mode to knowing in explanatory mode, where things were no longer presented in relation to the knowing subject but were related to one another in recurring patterns. A tendency to relate any method of thinking to the subject was criticized as being subjective and invalid and limited to surface appearances, as contrasted with scientific patterns of knowing. In a parallel vein, the gap between theory and action widened as theory was developed apart from the action that underpins it and action developed without grounding in theory.

Action research constitutes a kind of science that works from a different epistemology that produces a different kind of knowledge, a knowledge that is contingent on the particular situation and which develops the capacity of people to address their own issues and solve their own problems. In using the term *scientific*, it is argued, there is a need to move away from adopting frameworks from the natural sciences in order to engage with the world of practice. Hence, action research places an emphasis on articulating a kind of scientific inquiry that is conducted in everyday life as a science of practice. This emphasis extends the normal connotations associated with the term *science* and grounds its use as an appropriate term to use in the realm of practical knowing.

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See also Action Science; Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry; extended epistemology

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PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

Practice development is a facilitated approach to the development of person-centred and evidence-informed practice cultures in health care. It draws upon a variety of methods and approaches that together enable authentic engagement with individuals and teams to blend empirical evidence with the important personal qualities of professional practitioners, such as creative imagination, practice expertise and practice wisdom. The focus is on helping practitioners engage in active forms of learning (e.g. through play, creative problem-solving and/or observations of practice and storytelling) to bring about transformations of individual and team practices in the way health care is delivered. This learning and transformation that occur at individual and team levels are sustained by embedding both processes and outcomes in corporate strategy.

Practice development, whilst strongly connected with action research, has a slightly different emphasis or purpose. Whilst action research and practice development share the common purpose of bringing about changes in practice through collaborative and participative change processes, action research has an additional explicit additional purpose, that of generating new knowledge through the research process. This is not the case with practice development, where generating new knowledge is a secondary intent behind that of learning about the effectiveness of the change processes applied by practitioners in their everyday practice. For some practitioners, acquiring this new learning and internalizing it in a way that enables them to transform their own practice and that of others is

enough, whilst for others, they may apply systematic processes of evaluation to these active learning processes and, of course, therefore generate new knowledge that can be applied in a variety of contexts. It is this latter approach that brings practice development into the realm of action research and aligns it as a research process in itself.

Whilst there has always been informal practice development—meaning, individual practitioners changing their own practice and encouraging others to do so also—in the seventies, practice development became more formalized as a change process. Since its origins in the late seventies, practice development has been aware of the pitfalls of top-down change alone, and so it pays attention to these local practices in clinical settings whilst at the same time focusing on the need for a systems-wide focus on person-centredness and the development of person-centred cultures. In particular, practice development pays attention to what are increasingly acknowledged as ‘the human factors’ in health care—factors that acknowledge the importance of the connections between the desire for evidence-informed and person-centred practices and the need for practice cultures that are respectful of all people. Therefore, practice development pays particular attention to staff well-being, leadership, team relationships and morale in order to create a greater sense of belonging among teams, which in turn leads to greater clinical effectiveness and better patient outcomes.

The Evolution of Practice Development as Methodology

For more than 30 years, *practice development* has been used as a term to describe a variety of methods for developing health-care practice. In particular, the term has been used in the context of nursing development. In the early days of practice development, the term was used widely but inconsistently in British nursing. It was used to address a broad range of educational, research and audit activities. Practice development was underdeveloped as a methodology, and whilst there was a lot of enthusiasm for the methods because they resonated with the increased emphasis on quality improvement, clinical audit and using research in practice, there was no co-ordinated approach and, indeed, no common understanding of the most effective methodologies. Over the past 10 years, significant conceptual, theoretical and methodological advances have been made in the development of frameworks to guide practice development activities. Of most significance has been our increased understanding of the key concepts underpinning practice development work irrespective of the methodological perspective being adopted—for example, workplace culture, person-centredness, practice context, evidence,

evidence implementation, values and approaches to learning for sustainable practice.

The early proponents of practice development relied on what was then known about change management models and frameworks and adapted these in the context of bringing about systematic change to particular aspects of practice, such as medicine administration and other particular treatments and care activities for patients. The focus was not on changing the culture of practice settings to enable effective practice but, instead, on individual effectiveness and doing practices in ways that were technically competent and patient centred. Evaluating outcomes from these change processes, such as medicine error rates, fall rates and pressure damage incidences, was the key focus. So this kind of practice development can be considered as being *technical* in nature.

Further developments in practice development articulated the interconnected and synergistic relationships between the facilitation strategies used and the embedding of systematic, rigorous and continuous processes of change in order to achieve the ultimate purpose of evidence-informed, person-centred care as well as the development of knowledge and skills. The bringing together of these elements of change, empowerment strategies and individual and team learning shifted the focus on what practice development was about and led to a new understanding of practice development as being about emancipation from the taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning everyday practice. This approach to practice development was informed by the theoretical perspectives of philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas, Brian Fay and Paulo Freire, as well as action researchers such as Stephen Kemmis, Wilfred Carr and Susan Grundy. *Emancipatory practice development* explicitly uses critical social science concepts on the basis that the emphasis on the development of individual practitioners, their cultures and the contexts within which they work will result in sustainable change. Whilst one of the key distinctions between action research and emancipatory practice development has been the explicit intent of developing transferable knowledge in action research, this methodology of practice development articulates transferable principles for action and thus demonstrates a synergistic relationship between emancipatory practice development and action research.

More recently, new developments in practice development methodology through collaborative inquiry by an international community of practice developers, called ‘The International Practice Development Collaborative’, has pushed the boundaries of practice development even further and developed what is now known as *transformational practice development*. Whilst this kind of practice development has the same

shared purposes and underpinning values as emancipatory practice development, it has a particular focus on how we help human beings to flourish as individuals. The work of the author of this chapter along with that of Angie Titchen in particular led to the publication in 2008 of a new paradigmatic synthesis called ‘critical creativity’, which blended principles derived from critical science with those of creativity (where creativity is focused on accessing the inner knowing of individuals and drawing on a variety of sources of knowledge and expertise to create new understandings about the being and doing of practice). The intent of the critical paradigm with its focus on achieving democracy, inclusiveness and social justice is added to in transformational practice development, with its focus on human flourishing as the ultimate desired outcome. Earlier, it was suggested that the aim of practice development is the achievement of evidence-informed and person-centred practice. In this context, person-centredness means an approach to practice that is concerned with the quality of the relationships between and among staff teams and between staff teams and patients and families. Being person centred is linked to beliefs and values about the intrinsic moral good of personhood, with a focus on the uniqueness of the human individual, a concern with the meaning and purpose of human life and the promotion of an individual’s freedom to choose.

Facilitators of transformational practice development are, therefore, concerned with facilitating human potential and the growth of the whole person. This means finding out what people’s whole-being needs are, from their own perspective. By seeking an understanding of people’s perspectives about their own experiences, facilitators can help them focus on their unique experiential journeys of learning, critique, creativity and transformation. Within transformational practice development informed by critical creativity, therefore, there is a blending of the critical paradigm with its focus on improvement and transformation within the social world with that of attaining improvement and transformation of the individual lifeworlds of persons.

Practice Development Methods

It is clear that as practice development methodology has evolved and matured there is greater consistency among the methods used, set within a shared understanding of different methodologies. It is now generally accepted that when referring to practice development, emphasis is placed on

- improving patient care;
- transforming the contexts and cultures in which patient care takes place;

- employing a systematic approach to effecting changes in practice;
- employing systematic and creative approaches to active learning;
- engaging with a variety of forms of evidence and intelligences;
- employing practice development as a continuous activity normalized within teams;
- facilitating approaches that are enabling and transformational;
- using evaluation methods that are integrated with development processes and that are inclusive, participatory and collaborative; and
- identifying outcomes that demonstrate transferrable principles and key learning.

As the methodology of practice development has evolved, so too have the methods used for engaging with emancipatory and transformational processes. Processes such as developing shared values among team members, having a shared vision for ideal practice, developing team relationships, using work-based reflective learning strategies, engaging in critical questioning and adopting a systematic approach to changing everyday practice have been developed into facilitation strategies that set out to help individuals become empowered with the knowledge, skills and expertise to develop practice. There is shared agreement among practice developers that the following methods are the most effective in bringing about emancipatory change:

- Working with ethical processes that emphasize collaboration, inclusion and participation
- Analyzing stakeholder roles and ways of engaging stakeholders
- Focusing on being person centred and both process (way of working) and outcome (creating person-centred cultures) oriented
- Establishing and working with shared values as the ‘benchmark’ for practice
- Developing a shared vision for the future of practice
- Developing and maintaining collaborative working relationships
- Using creative, reflective and active learning strategies that generate a culture of high challenge with high support
- Establishing an evaluation framework that is integrated with the development work; is collaborative, inclusive and participative and which pays attention to the effectiveness of development processes in the context of the outcomes achieved
- Rewarding success through celebration, recognition and acknowledgement

In addition to these methods, transformational practice development places emphasis on the following:

- Blending and weaving different art forms with reflective and cognitive processes
- Creating the conditions for creative imagination to flourish
- Connecting with nature and the natural environment as a stimulus for engaging different intelligences (e.g. emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence).

These methods are collectively focused on developing evidence-informed and person-centred cultures so that the care that patients experience is of the highest quality possible and the places within which health-care workers deliver care practices are enabling, facilitating and rewarding and ultimately enable human flourishing.

Practice Development and Action Research

As the methodology of practice development has evolved, the connection between systematic approaches and action research has become clearer. The origins of practice development lie in a commitment to enabling practitioners to change their practice through equipping them with the skills and knowledge to critically reflect on their practice and identify ways of developing it. This emphasis was different from that of action research, as the focus was not on the answering of particular research questions through the taking of action and its evaluation. Whilst the development of transferable knowledge is the primary purpose of Participatory Action Research, this has been a secondary purpose of practice development. However, as the methodology has evolved, this distinction has become more blurred, and in a recent publication by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland, a distinction was made between practice development with a 'small *d*' (with its focus on helping practitioners to change their practice and the culture of practice in order for it to become more evidence informed and person centred) and practice development with a 'large *D*' (with its focus on the systematic development of workplace cultures towards settings that would facilitate better person-centred practice and the generation of new knowledge through the evaluation of processes and outcomes). The latter kind of practice development aligns itself within the same philosophical and methodological perspectives as those of participatory, emancipatory and transformational action research. It uses approaches to learning in and from practice as a key strategy for transforming practice. Skilled facilitation and formal systems for enabling learning as well as its assessment, implementation and evaluation in

the workplace are instrumental to effective practice development. Generating new knowledge through the systematic development and evaluation of the practice development activity and that has the potential to be transferrable is as important as the development programme itself. Methodological principles of collaboration, inclusion and participation are critical to the design of the programmes, their facilitation and their evaluation. New knowledge is therefore co-constructed through these principles. So whilst practice development has retained a distinct focus on helping individuals and teams to develop their practice, the evolution of the methodology has created greater alignment between the underpinning values of practice development and action research, and their potential to generate new potentially transferrable knowledge is shared.

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See also Critical Participatory Action Research; facilitation; Frankfurt School; Freire, Paulo; health care; nursing; Participatory Action Research; transformative learning

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PRACTITIONER INQUIRY

Practitioners are managers, teachers, nurses, engineers, doctors or anyone who gets the job done. Practitioners pride themselves on fixing problems, not just looking at or inquiring about things. Even so, practitioner inquiry need not be a contradiction in terms, and action research can help.

Skilled practitioners may well be practised at solving everyday problems that get in the way of getting the job done well. After many years, this becomes instinctual, which is effective, but it can become a problem if the old methods do not solve new problems. David Hume in his *Treatise of Human Nature* in 1739 said that we are creatures of habit, not reason. So even good practitioners need logical processes to help them overcome the limits of their own instinct and habit to do the same thing over and over. Even Sir Karl Popper recognized the inherent tendency of scientists to only seek information that confirms their own instincts. His version of scientific method (1972) was one way of helping scientists to challenge their own ingrained beliefs and instinct.

Popper's method works well with some problems, especially those that are within closed systems with relatively simple interactions between the component parts and little impact from outside influences. Practitioners, however, work in what Peter Checkland called in 1982 a 'human activity system'. They are open systems with complex relationships between the people and components in the systems and the wider environment.

Action research consists of methodologies that can help practitioners address real-world problems by learning by doing when their old methods are not suited to the new problems.

Action Research and Practitioner Problem-Solving Styles

The fundamental logic of action research is to have a clear intention, which leads to a clear plan, which when implemented can be checked against the original intention, and the plan can be reviewed for its effectiveness in achieving the intention. A new intention is the next issue for a dynamic human activity system to address.

The work of Peter Honey and Alan Mumford in 1982 on learning styles suggests that this might not be the case. Their four learning styles are also four different ways of addressing problems. *Theorists* like to look at the big picture and create a theory to explain the problem but might be less inclined to follow through with a plan. *Pragmatists* like the 'tried-and-true', which might not always work in new situations. *Reflectors* like to consider a situation from all angles but might be less interested in fixing it. Many practitioners are *activists* whose strength is to jump in to solve a problem. But if they do not take the time to understand the problem first, they might not solve the real problem.

Therefore, consciously and intentionally implementing a structured action research approach to problem-solving can enhance the natural problem-solving style of all practitioners, particularly activists who might 'jump to a solution' before identifying the problem.

Action Research for Practitioner Inquiry

One way to implement an action research approach to problem-solving is to systematically use action research at each of the stages of problem-solving:

- Defining the problem
- Planning and evaluating
- Considering what needs to happen next

Action Research for Defining the Problem

What Is a Problem?

The strength of an activist approach to solving practical problems is the ability to jump in and get started. However, jumping to a premature solution can cause unintended consequences and even make the problem worse. This can happen when practitioners do not appreciate the difference between a problem and a solution. A common mistake is to believe that a problem is the lack of something—money, support, direction, staff and so on. If the programme had more of these, all would be well. But this does not define what problem the additional resources would fix. A typical example is where more and more money is thrown at a problem and the problem remains or gets worse.

Jumping to a solution rather than defining the problem can result from a belief that the best way to work with complex problems, like human activity systems, is to break them down into their component parts and work with one component at a time. This is a reductionist approach and can work with simple, closed systems, like machines. This approach does not work so well in human activity systems, which are open systems. Ludwig von Bertalanffy described open and closed systems in his *Outline of General Systems Theory* in 1950. Open systems can be investigated more effectively by understanding the relationships between the components and the people within the system and by investigating the relationship of the whole system with its environment. Checkland, in his *Soft Systems Methodology*, describes human activity systems as relationship-maintaining systems rather than goal-attaining systems. So the dynamic of a human activity system is to use the positive and negative feedback loop to maintain the system in a steady, if undesirable, state.

An example of the difference between reductionism and systems theory can be seen in changes in family therapy. In the old, reductionist approach, family therapists consistently failed to 'improve' the identified 'problem child' whom families would present for therapy. No matter how much the individual improved, once he or she returned to his or her family, the behaviour quickly became problematic again. The internal pressures of a family that believed it had a 'problem

child’ came into play to re-establish the predictable but unhappy state of a ‘family with a problem child’. Further, if the ‘problem child’ is not returned to his or her family, another family member will become the ‘problem child’ in order to maintain the steady state of a ‘family with a problem child’. The systems approach to family therapy means that therapists now deal with problem families rather than problem children and work to improve the relationships between all the family members and the extended environment to create a different steady state of a ‘functioning family’.

Before family therapists or other practitioners can work to improve a situation, they need to have a good understanding of how it works in its current, if dysfunctional, steady state.

Define a Problem Situation

The rich-picture stage of Checkland’s soft system methodology is a tool that practitioners can use to understand the problem situation. Checkland’s stakeholder analysis can help practitioners identify a number of potential courses of action to improve a situation, rather than one right answer.

**Developing a Rich Picture:
Convergent Thinking**

A rich picture is a picture of the current situation that is inclusive of all the elements of the problem situation. It is ‘rich’ in detail. A human activity system is a relationship-maintaining system rather than a goal-seeking system; therefore, it is important to draw a picture of current relationships. This phase can be difficult because it is easy to become so overwhelmed with detail that it looks like chaos. Hence, people often avoid this uncomfortable stage by rushing to a premature decision. However, poor decisions are made when not enough options are canvassed at the beginning. Therefore, it is important to stay in the uncomfortable stage of convergent thinking long enough to fully describe the current situation, knowing that in the next phase divergent thinking will start to find patterns in the chaos that suggest options for action versus one right answer.

A rich picture is best drawn with minimum words to engage the big-picture thinking skills of the right side of the brain. The logic of the left side of the brain comes into play in the next analytic, convergent thinking phase.

Procedure

Using a very large chart or whiteboard, and with the input of as many relevant people as possible, draw the current situation, with minimal words. Record elements of the following:

- Slow-to-change *structures*—the organizational structure and environmental constraints (physical and social), physical layout, power hierarchy, espoused values, formal reporting structure and patterns of communication (formal and informal)
- Continuously changing *processes*—roles, relationships, activities, formal and informal communication patterns and values in practice
- The relationship between structures and processes, which is the *climate* or *culture* of the situation and is frequently where some of the core characteristics of the problem situation are perceived

Identifying Potential Courses of Action

The stakeholder analysis tool shown in Table 1 can enable a practitioner to identify several courses of action for improving a situation by, firstly, understanding who benefits from the current situation and, secondly, suggesting ways of maximizing the benefits for all people in the system. The benefit of identifying several courses of action is that if the first approach is not as effective as intended, there are other options to try.

Action Research for Planning and Evaluating

If practitioners are working on a whole new problem in a ‘greenfield’ problem situation, then they will need a planning tool. If the practitioners are addressing a current problem, then they are more likely to need an evaluation tool. However, a project can only be evaluated if it was planned with clear intentions and targets. Therefore, planning and evaluation are two sides of the same coin. Bob Dick’s Snyder Evaluation Process of 2006 can be used for both planning and evaluating a project.

<i>Stakeholders (By Name and by Role)</i>	<i>Their Stake (What’s in It for Them in Qualitative and Quantitative Terms?)</i>
<i>Actors:</i> The people or groups who carry out the activities of the system—that is, do the job	
<i>Customers:</i> The direct beneficiaries or victims of the situation	
<i>Owners:</i> The people or groups who have the power to support or abolish the system	

Table 1 Stakeholder Analysis

The elements of the Synder Evaluation Process, as shown in Table 2, are as follows:

- The vision or ideal for the programme—that is, the reason it exists and the main objectives of that vision
- Specific definable targets for each objective in order of priority
- Specific activities for achieving each target and statements on the intended impact of each activity on the target
- Both material and non-material resources that are allocated to all activities—that is, skills, time, goodwill and so on.

At the planning stage, it is important to ensure congruence across the plan—that is, that each objective has a target, each target has at least one activity, all activities are resourced, all resources are consumed only by the intended activities and all activities relate to at least one target.

At the evaluation stage, practitioners can develop a suite of performance indicators that link the resources used and the actual impacts directly back to the vision and its objectives.

Practitioners are now in a position to determine to what extent their programme has achieved its objectives and why this is the case—rather than assess it

against vague intentions and a measure of inputs. This is a form of evaluation that Michael Quinn Patton in 1980 called summative evaluation. However, Dick’s method of short-cycle evaluation, from 2006, as an optional part of the Snyder Evaluation Process, is what Patton calls formative evaluation and is a method for developing a self-improving system.

Action Research for Considering What Comes Next

The steps in Dick’s short-cycle evaluation are as follows:

- Identify the evaluation criteria (the most sensitive and readily available indicators)
- Identify the sources of that information
- Create information systems
- Review the continuing appropriateness, sensitivity and ease of operation of the information system

A simple but targeted information system can help practitioners quickly and effectively respond to problems as they arise.

Action Research for Practitioner Inquiry

Practitioners are problem-solvers. The systematic logic of action research fits naturally with practitioners’

<i>Vision: The Reason for the Project—Usually Too Broad to Be Evaluated Directly</i>	<i>Specific, Time-Bound Definable Targets for Each of the Main Objectives</i>	<i>Activities and Their Intended Effects</i>	<i>Resources: Tangible and Intangible—Money, Materials, Services, Information, Time, Goodwill, etc.</i>
Objective 1 (O1): More specific than the vision, in order of priority, but still not able to be evaluated directly	Target 1 (T1)—in order of priority	List activities based on their intended effects on O1 T1 (a) (b) etc.	Allocate resources against each activity
	Target 2 (T2)	List activities based on their intended effects on O1 T2 (a) (b) etc.	etc.
Objective 2	T1 T2	etc.	
Objective 3 (4 or 5 is enough)	T1 T2		

Table 2 Snyder Evaluation Process

instincts and can enhance these instincts with practical ways of collecting good information to better inform how they define and address a problem.

Pam Joyce Swepson

See also cycles of action and reflection; learning pathways grid; practical knowing; Soft Systems Methodology

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PRAGMATIC ACTION RESEARCH

Action research comes in a wide variety of forms, each having distinctive strategies and emphases. No single approach can stand in for the whole field because each has to be understood for what it proposes to accomplish and the strategies and mindset it enacts. Pragmatic Action Research focuses on the ongoing and purposive redesign of action research projects to enhance co-generative learning among the participants while they are engaged in the process. It also includes their collaborative evaluation of the results of their action designs and, if necessary, the redesign and redeployment of actions to better resolve the problems at the centre of the effort.

In using the term *co-generative research*, Pragmatic Action Researchers are referring to a form of action research collaboration in which the participants create an arena for learning within which all the stakeholders, including the facilitators, focus their learning efforts. Co-generative research is shared and ongoing. Going beyond an ethical respect for difference, Pragmatic Action Research welcomes differences as potential sources of experiences, ideas and strategies gained through the different life trajectories of the participants, upon which the collaborative group can build new solutions to shared problems.

Pragmatic Action Research Aims

Like all forms of action research, Pragmatic Action Research aims to produce liberating outcomes but without defining a priori or in absolute terms what should count as ‘liberating’. To a pragmatic action researcher, improving the ergonomics associated with the work of nurses in a hospital by engaging the nurses, doctors, patients and action research facilitator in co-generative dialogue can be just as ‘liberating’ when it improves the working life of nurses as can be the promotion of land reform for landless farmers in a society where the landless starve. Pragmatic Action Research views both scenarios as liberating—obviously in different ways—but insists that they can be similar in using collaboration among the stakeholders to move from a less acceptable to a more liberating and sustainable situation. In Pragmatic Action Research, the belief is that any particular human problem is worthy of attention if that problem negatively affects the quality of life of sincere people and creates obstacles to their flourishing as individuals and communities. Thus, Pragmatic Action Research sees the problems of people in industrialized societies to be as much a part of the mission of action research as the problems of the dispossessed and impoverished.

Pragmatic Action Research is by no means naive about power differentials and vested interests. However, Pragmatic Action Research believes that considerably more positive change is possible in coercive situations than many determinists think. An unequal society, an unfair political economy and vested interests by themselves do not prohibit significant improvements in the lives of individuals and communities through the construction of arenas for dialogue and learning. Gathering people to share their experiences, knowledge and aspirations under conditions in which the stakeholders feel both respected and safe has powerful effects on many apparently intractable problems. Following the line of argument of thinkers like Michel Foucault, Pragmatic Action Research sees power as something that can be generated from anywhere in a system. Power is not a finite source of control, monopolized by the few against the many. There are many more either win-win solutions or at least win–not lose scenarios possible under unequal conditions than the stakeholders often see at the beginning of the process.

Guidelines to Pragmatic Action Research

There are a few guidelines that pragmatic action researchers generally follow. They build arenas for co-generative learning without using their influence to predetermine what should be learned about and without allowing one stakeholder group to dominate others

in the problem definition phase. The role of the action researcher is to make the conversation fair and safe with the aim of 'keeping the conversation going', as Richard Rorty famously described pragmatic practices. Enabling people to speak to, hear from and learn from one another does not dissolve all problems, but it may permit sufficient mutual understanding to make certain intractable problems become more tractable.

The pragmatism of Pragmatic Action Research extends to methods as well. Pragmatic Action Research will use theory and methods from any corner of the sciences, social sciences and humanities if they offer some hope of helping a collaborating group move forward. If numbers are needed, statistical social science, surveys and other formal techniques can and will be used. If subtle cultural understandings are needed, then leading-edge feminist, hermeneutic, linguistic and other perspectives are used. If an estimate of the contamination of well water by an oil company is needed, then geologists and hydrologists are welcome partners. The mix and balance of these approaches is adjusted to the needs and priorities of the co-generative learning community.

Pragmatic action researchers work in a variety of ways. They often work in a plenary format, where everyone is able to hear from everyone else, but small groups and action teams often carry the bulk of the effort to sort out problems, gather evidence and build interpretations. Individuals also have the latitude to participate because sometimes they are uniquely situated to be of help. The guiding premise is that the group needs to know what its objectives are, what resources it has and what it needs and to mobilize them in whatever way seems manageable with the resources available. Once that information is widely shared, then working in smaller groups with occasional meetings of the whole group is a standard way of operating.

Examples of Pragmatic Action Research

An example of Pragmatic Action Research is an initiative by the Norwegian government to encourage older workers, particularly skilled workers, to continue working beyond the standard retirement age. This arose both because many older workers are in good health, live a long time after retirement and often struggle with being retired. Another reason is that they can continue contributing to the pension system longer rather than withdrawing resources from it. The social partners agreed to support work on this, and the action researcher, Anna Inga Hilsen, then engaged all the stakeholders in a process of dialogue, analysis and action planning that eventually came to focus on the need to reorganize and improve workplaces and work organization to make it reasonable for older workers to wish to continue to work. What needed to be done was

decided by the workers themselves and not imposed on them from above.

A project on composting (dry) toilets in Mexico City was developed by Ana Cordova, who combined an interest in environmental sustainability, hygienic improvements for residents of Mexico City with poor access to water and sewers and more general community development in poor areas of the city. Beginning with a strong technical design and tested models of these apparatuses, Cordova enlisted local community leaders, families willing to try these devices and a broader educational campaign in which this composting toilet initiative was part of a larger effort to develop a stronger civil society in poor urban areas.

In both cases, groups were formed, multiple stakeholders engaged and the local participants had a significant role in defining the agenda, in planning the changes, in redesigning the projects and ultimately in helping to carry them forward.

Historical Influences and Current Practitioners

This thread of action research derives heavily from key historical figures in philosophy. Among them are William James, John Dewey and Richard Rorty, whose development of American pragmatism is central to this practice. The driving force for this kind of approach is the belief that people placed in a situation to learn effectively together are able to design ways to build a better future and that these processes issue, in Dewey's words, 'warrants for action', meaning that the results are both desirable and believed to be sufficiently well understood as to be safely actionable. This testing of ideas through their efficacy in action is a hallmark of Pragmatic Action Research, though it also inheres generally in action research.

The hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer is also a major inspiration for this approach. Gadamer brought new credibility to hermeneutics by showing how the collaborative processes of interpretation and reinterpretation can lead to a kind of workable consensus (never final) that is capable of permitting people to continue their interactions and development.

Pragmatic Action Research also draws inspiration from some of the work of the Frankfurt School, most particularly the work of Jürgen Habermas, and from linguistic philosophy as developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein and his followers, such as Björn Gustavsen.

Within action research itself, leading figures promoting this pragmatic approach include Fred and Merrelyn Emery, the inventors of the Search Conference and participants in key developments in Pragmatic Action Research at the Tavistock Institute and in Norway in collaboration with Einar Thorsrud.

Among current practitioners, we would count Gustavsen, Øyvind Pålshaugen and many of their colleagues at the Work Research Institute of Oslo, Norway, as well as Morten Levin and his group, who have engaged in major regional and organizational development projects in this approach and trained generations of doctoral students in action research.

Strategies and Practices of Pragmatic Action Research

Among the work strategies that typify this approach are Search Conferences and attempts to develop multi-sited projects capable of effecting social change on a larger scale through networking the co-generative learning arenas.

There are significant national differences in Pragmatic Action Research. In Norway and Finland, there is a degree of national support through agreements among the 'social partners' (employers, unions and government) to fund Pragmatic Action Research work on particular subjects of national interest. There were strong developments in Sweden as well, but the past decade of increasingly conservative politics in most places, including Scandinavia, have undermined much of this work.

By contrast, attempts to engage in Pragmatic Action Research in a place like the USA face radically different challenges. There are no 'social partners', and civil society activities are heavily constrained by the neo-liberal market ideologies that drive many policies and policy development processes. Thus, Pragmatic Action Research often starts in small segments of local institutions in the USA, achieves gains and then attempts to use the successes as ways of encouraging others to engage in such efforts.

Rarely is Pragmatic Action Research used to create an organization. Rather, it takes place within existing structures and organizations that find themselves needing to change but are stuck for reasons that they cannot seem to address on their own. When Pragmatic Action Research does create an organization, it is often an offshoot of a process of co-generative learning that has led a group of stakeholders to decide to create a special-purpose organization as part of their efforts to solve their problems.

Though it is pragmatic, Pragmatic Action Research is not easy. Most problems facing organizations or groups that are stuck are quite complex and multidimensional. Quite probably the complexity of most situations exceeds the knowledge capacities of even the best-trained action research facilitators. As a result, such people must be simultaneously confident enough to keep the process moving but humble enough to be honest about what they don't know and about the need

to bring in others with the expertise the group have identified as necessary to solve their problems.

Training such facilitators is a serious challenge because most academic institutions are filled with Tayloristic bunkers of disciplinary expertise, which actively inhibit the kind of flexible multidisciplinary and humility needed to conduct this work properly. Thus, pragmatic action researchers must be trained against the grain of most institutions of higher education.

All Pragmatic Action Research processes have a strong communication and education component. Pragmatic Action Research is about creating co-generative learning arenas and also about helping stakeholder groups develop the capacity to create and manage such groups on their own so that this kind of problem-solving can continue without such dependency on outsiders.

Pragmatic Action Research does rest on a slippery ethical or political slope. By turning away from radical idealism and radical solutions, Pragmatic Action Research tries to find spaces for liberating action within existing structures and groups. In doing this, there is always a risk that Pragmatic Action Research will settle for less change than is needed and will be so non-confrontational as to leave too many unfair power relations intact. There is no clear guideline on how to avoid this kind of co-optation, and the risk is real. However, pragmatic action researchers think that the risk is worth taking.

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See also Dewey, John; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Norwegian Industrial Democracy Movement; pragmatism; Wittgenstein, Ludwig

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PRAGMATISM

Pragmatism is a distinctly American philosophy that aims to uncover practical knowledge—knowledge that *works* in a particular situation. The acquired knowledge is evaluated by reference to its problem-solving capacity in everyday life rather than its universal applicability, which makes pragmatism a fruitful tool for action researchers.

Pragmatism is better described as a philosophical method for doing rather than a philosophical theory per se. It is not simply a collection of viewpoints about a specific concept, such as truth, identity or reality. Pragmatism concerns how humans should conduct business, as managers, accountants or researchers, whenever engaging in any form of inquiry. In its narrow interpretation, pragmatism is a method of determining the meaning of concepts to show that there is no meaning without practical consequences. All concepts are therefore contextual by nature and have different meanings for different people in different situations. The meaningfulness of knowledge is determined by its ability to solve a practical problem.

As a result, knowledge is seen as a contextual property that evolves through everyday practices and is measured by its practical consequences. Hence, the notion *practical knowledge* is more appropriate in pragmatism as it reflects the situational creation of knowledge with regard to its problem-solving ability. In the same vein, action researchers view the development of knowledge as part of the daily inquiry process rather than as a monopolistic notion of academics or social scientists.

On a broader level, pragmatism is a method for uncovering contextual truth. For pragmatists, truth is naturally contextual since our knowledge and beliefs about scientific concepts, on which humans base their understanding of the world, are only *true* as long they bear practical consequences. Truth is provisional; it is the result of ongoing practical inquiry in the form of applying practical knowledge in different situations. Truth is defined by its pragmatic use in ongoing experiences and not in association with the objective qualities of the concept. Truth is the result and goal of inquiry, something that many action researchers would agree with. Inquiry is the reflective and iterative process of solving a particular problem. Throughout the process, consensus about both means and ends has to be established, which results in the co-ordination of thought, knowledge and action.

Origins of Pragmatism

The origins of pragmatism can be traced to the year 1870. A group of young students from Cambridge, Massachusetts, including Charles Sanders Peirce and William James, founded the so-called Metaphysical Club. The young men met regularly to discuss their views on modern philosophy and its associated problems, with the distinct viewpoint that there is no knowledge apart from the knower, opposing the predominant notion of objective and absolute truth at the time. Peirce and James used the debates to become the pioneers of pragmatism. Not long after these informal meetings, a more comprehensive description of pragmatism emerged, beginning with Peirce’s two essays ‘The Fixation of Belief’ (1877) and ‘How to Make Our Ideas Clear’ (1877). Shortly after, in 1878, James published a series of articles himself, in which he manifested his philosophical take on pragmatism.

The well-travelled James inspired and derived inspiration from a diverse assortment of fellow travellers, sympathizers and acute critics. As a result, pragmatism gained prominence and support and was soon closely followed by intellectuals in and outside America, including John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Giovanni Papini, Alfred North Whitehead and F. C. S. Schiller. A multiplicity of forms of pragmatism

emerged, but the works of Dewey and Mead, from the Chicago School, are particularly recognized as important texts. While Dewey, deeply influenced by James, became a prominent figure in applying pragmatism to the social sciences, Mead became one of the founders of social psychology and the symbolic interaction movement.

More recently, Richard Rorty had a significant impact on the pragmatic community by introducing linguistic pragmatism. In his work, also described as neo-pragmatism, Richard Rorty integrated and applied the principles of Dewey, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Charles Darwin and questioned the traditional concept of knowledge as a mental mirroring of our external world. Rorty's linguistic pragmatism highlighted the importance of conversations in the process of inquiry, which allow us to *use* our reality to get what we want. As in the first pragmatic wave, many figures have significantly contributed to the neo-pragmatic movement, such as Hilary Putnam and Susan Haack.

Since its origin in the late nineteenth century, the pragmatic method has been applied to many professions. Hence, it accommodates a number of theoretical viewpoints, some of which are conflicting. The internal disagreement makes it difficult to single out one precise form of pragmatism. Nonetheless, the main principles remain; pragmatism is a problem-solving method that aims to create practical knowledge through (scientific) inquiry.

Conceptual Overview

Pragmatism emerged as a critical response to Western philosophy and its existing dualisms. Dualism refers to a division between mind and body, proposed by the French philosopher René Descartes, who believed that knowledge exists independently of the knower. Pragmatists have no interest in dualistic debates around philosophical concepts, such as positivism versus postmodernism or theory versus practice, as they are perceived as mere language games. The debates occur independently of the context they are in. Instead, pragmatists are concerned with the application, integration and meaning of these philosophical concepts in daily life, rather than dealing with their objective meaning. Pragmatism rejects the notion of objective truth since all knowledge, belief and scientific concepts are provisional. Knowledge is contextual; there is no knowledge apart from the knower, and truth only exists as long as a concept offers meaningful practical solutions.

As a result of the discussions around traditional philosophy, pragmatism is a method that connects dualisms by focusing on the inquiry process that is set out

to solve problems. Pragmatism is built on two inter-related conceptualizations of philosophical inquiry: (1) interpretation of meaning and (2) interpretation of truth.

Interpretation of Meaning

In a narrow sense, pragmatism is merely an *interpretation of meaning*. The pragmatic maxim is mainly concerned with solving problems. Problem-solving as such incorporates the successful application of concepts, beliefs or theories in a particular situation. The main measure of success is a satisfactory outcome with regard to the problem to be addressed. Satisfaction, however, is a state of mind that occurs in the present moment and creates a logical problem as the present tense fails to provide meaning. Meaning can only be established through reflective experience.

At its core, experience enables the verification process of truth as it allows us to retrospectively attribute meaning to our actions. The significance of experience, however, transcends much further: It is the starting point when a problem is encountered, the source for potential solutions as well as the outcome of the tested solutions. In other words, the pragmatic concept of experience is threefold: Firstly, it is the product of the interplay between objects and action; secondly, it enables the creation of practical knowledge by engaging in problem-solving activities and, thirdly, it serves as a point of reference for verifying the meaningfulness of an act. As a result, pragmatists consider experience as plural, equivocal and in constant flux. Problem-solving becomes a process in which meaningfulness is created through the deliberate application of past experience, while new experiences are accumulated simultaneously. These meaningful activities lead to integration between the problem and the actor, the subject and the object, respectively, which allows pragmatism to reject existing dualisms. This view of meaning is mainly associated with James and Dewey.

For Peirce, on the contrary, the meaning of any concept is merely the sum of its perceivable practical consequences. Peirce introduced this notion of meaning in his work *Fixation of Belief* (1877), in which he argued that the meaning of a word must be understood with regard to the habits associated with it. In the same way, meaning is established for any concept, belief, idea or anything that acts as a sign. Peirce's interpretation leads to two conclusions: First, concepts without any perceivable practical consequences are meaningless, and second, if multiple concepts have the same practical consequences, the concepts are identical.

While Peirce's maxim deals mainly with the meaning of concepts, it is often perceived as his notion of

pragmatic truth. However, it is in fact just an application of the criterion of meaning to the concept of truth. Peirce defines truth as the state of a belief that ultimately has to be agreed upon by all who investigate, making truth independent of the individual. Peirce's truth is therefore closer to the natural sciences than that of James, Dewey or Schiller. Influenced by his scientific background, Peirce's truth is ultimately achieved through endless *abductive inference*. Abduction, as opposed to induction or deduction, is a form of inquiry that starts with a problem and then iteratively rejects or verifies the varieties of possible explanations before arriving at the best explanation, which allows the *fixation of a belief*. To other pragmatists, Peirce's proximity to the natural sciences increased the distinction. To avoid criticism, Peirce later renamed his doctrine *pragmaticism*. A major point of critique is the perception that pragmatism is more than a philosophy of meaning; it is a philosophy of truth.

Interpretation of Truth

In a broad sense, pragmatism is an *interpretation of truth* that disregards the traditional notion of objective truth entirely. Many pragmatists promote an instrumental version of truth, in which *true is what works*, implying that something is true as long as it is advantageous to believe so. For James, truth is made in the course of human experiences and cannot be separated from the context or the human actor. Any form of knowledge, a belief or a scientific concept *becomes* true through its successful application in a particular context. Two entwined aspects must be highlighted with regard to the pragmatic notion of truth: (1) truth is provisional and (2) truth results in practical consequences.

First, for pragmatists, there is no single absolute truth; there are multiple truths out there, all of which are context dependent. Truth is only provisional and therefore always subject to fallibility through further human inquiries. In other words, something is true as long as it provides a satisfactory practical consequence. Truth is simply the currently best knowledge available for a particular purpose. Hence, it is legitimate to believe in these provisional truths. A true believer is, however, constantly tested in everyday life through the human process of pragmatic inquiry. The aim of the process of inquiry is not to produce a final and objective truth. The process of inquiry verifies or rejects the problem-solving ability of a particular truth in a certain context. Nevertheless, a particular belief does not become truer even though it has been verified numerous times, since pragmatism rejects an absolute notion of truth. Despite an exceptionally high number of verifications, there may still be situations in which the belief fails to provide a satisfactory outcome.

Secondly, pragmatic truth must be investigated in correspondence to practical consequences—precisely, the satisfactory outcome of a meaningful action. For James, truth is the ability of an action—undertaken in correspondence to existing beliefs—to provide satisfactory consequences and is thus concerned with the relations of certain past experiences to new experiences. In a practical sense, the relation of action to satisfactory outcomes is to be seen as the achievement of a purpose through intentional practice. Truth can therefore occur on an individual level through personal experiences and is not the property of an objective outside world; truth is not limited to time, persons or circumstances. Accepting truth on an individual level implies a certain level of subjectivity, which allows non-experimentally testable concepts to be claimed as true.

In this interpretation of pragmatic truth, scientific theories, beliefs or ideas become instruments to *make* things true. For James, something is true as long as it helps the inquirer to get satisfactory results in relation to other parts of our experience. In that sense, facts, whether in the form of the theories, ideas or scientific concepts, are not true per se; they are only true when one experiences their practical consequences in particular situations.

The pragmatic concepts of truth and experience are deeply entwined. In fact, truth is considered as part of our ongoing experience. In that sense, action research must not only be informed by scientific theories, it must also include practical experiences in the form of testing and be verified by practical hands-on experiences that enable future actions to take place in meaningful ways. Whilst the process of pragmatic inquiry is experimental by nature—since every situation is inherently different—meaningful experiences provide comfort and guidance for future acts.

Critical Comments

Pragmatism is a multifaceted philosophy that has been applied and conceptualized in many different ways and professions. It is a doctrine whose supporters have always been engaged in critical internal debates: for instance, Peirce and James, whose disagreement about the fundamental assumptions of pragmatism led Peirce to rename his version of pragmatism as *pragmaticism*, or the more contemporary debate between Rorty and Haack, which shows that the pragmatic philosophy is still vibrant and alive. While this internal disagreement enabled the field to flourish and grow, the conflict is also a growing ground for criticisms, especially from those who strive for certainty.

Critics argue that pragmatism lacks explicitness and rigour as it does not aim to uncover certainty. Pragmatism therefore cannot be seen as a process of scientific

inquiry, making it relativistic in its core. The main concern is this: If there is no way of finding absolute truth or certainty, how can we know that something is better than another? Certainty as a philosophical concept is not addressed in pragmatic philosophy, as we can never know whether something is absolute. Pragmatism as a non-dualist philosophy rejects the object/subject categorization, which is a precondition for certainty—something that is, however, promoted by dualist philosophies, such as positivism. Pragmatists believe that object and subject cannot be separated and are therefore intersubjectively connected. More precisely, *intersubjectivity* describes the state in which subjects and objects affect and shape each other in everyday practice. It erases the subject/object division, which makes it impossible to uncover objective or absolute certainty, or truth.

The pragmatists address the issue of certainty by systematically bridging theories and experience. Truth is merely determined by the problem-solving ability of theories or any other form of knowledge. Theories are merely tools that become true through successfully solving a particular problematic situation. This process is inherently rigorous, as theories or scientific knowledge is often formulated in a precise and structured way. One can never know for certain whether a specific theory solves a certain problem—even though it has been verified multiple times. Theories are therefore constantly tested, verified and falsified by a practical community of inquiry. This verification process then leads to experiences, and subsequently to formalized knowledge.

Pragmatic Knowledge

The pragmatic concept of knowledge, and the way it is acquired and explained, is attractive for action researchers. Mainly promoted by Dewey, pragmatism opposes the view that knowledge exists independent of the knower, reducing the role of the knower to that of a mere observer. For the pragmatist, knowledge acquisition is subject to the occurrence of an actual problem that demands a concrete response, and thus the active participation of an actor in a problem-solving process. *Indeterminate situations*—the term that Dewey uses to describe a problem—are the conditions that result in inquiry. Knowledge acquisition is the process of successfully solving an intermediate situation, which involves reorganizing, verifying and testing multiple resolutions. Knowledge is therefore necessarily experimental, and it is only reflection on a successful problem-solving act that results in meaningful knowledge, which implies that there is no pure a priori knowledge. Knowledge does not exist independently of the context in which it arises. That in turn does not, however, entail

that a problem can only be solved with one particular process of inquiry. Different inquiries can lead to similar practical consequences or result in an equally satisfactory solution to the problem.

There is always a human contribution to any form of knowledge as researchers are active participants in the making of our world. Researchers are never mere spectators; their thoughts and actions constitute the inquiry process of solving a problem. Pragmatism rejects all dualisms and therefore does not differentiate between knowing and acting—meaning that action is seen as a necessary component when acquiring knowledge, rather than as a contaminating factor. Problem-solving actions are based on existing knowledge, which after reflection results in new knowledge. This newly acquired knowledge is then the starting point for problems encountered in the future. This inquiry process is synonymous with the action research cycle and highlights the entanglement of actor, action and knowledge in the process of inquiry. For pragmatists, any knowledge claim is therefore simply a point of departure for the problem-solving process, not a definite solution. The focus on the problem to be solved, rather than the existing knowledge as such, makes pragmatism well positioned to deal with the complexity of modern research challenges, whether it is in science, social science or philosophy.

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See also Dewey, John; practical knowing; Pragmatic Action Research; reflective practice

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PRAXEOLOGY

Praxeology is a theory of human action or practice. Etymologically deriving from the Greek word *praxis* ('purposeful action') and *logos* ('word' or 'thought' or 'principle of knowledge'), the origins of praxeology lie in the concern of Greek moral philosophers, notably Aristotle, with knowledge in the service of human betterment, what we might now term *fulfilment* or *well-being*. Modernist applications of praxeology found expression in nineteenth century Austrian economics, twentieth century theories of learning and organization development through Action Learning as well as Pierre Bourdieu's praxeological theory in sociology. Essentially, praxeology can be understood as a theory of practical knowing.

The relevance of praxeology to action research is twofold. Firstly, there is shared concern that knowledge should serve practice and a core value that the point of understanding a situation is to change it. Secondly, praxeology and action research both place value on knowledge gained through action and the interrelationship between a researcher's developing self-knowledge and emergent insight into the organizational context. This entry provides an outline of praxeology's origins, traditions and key ideas. Contemporary ideas and applications are illustrated before concentrating on the particular relevance of praxeology to action research.

Origins, Traditions and Key Ideas

The basic principles of praxeology were first articulated by Greek moral philosophers, who applied them as a basis for a eudemonistic ethics, a concern with how knowledge might best bring virtue, happiness and flourishing, what in contemporary language we might now term *well-being*. For Aristotle, human well-being requires a combination of types of human endeavour, notably not just thoughts and contemplation (*theoria*) but also action (*praxis*). These types of human endeavour are differentiated by their related types of wisdom (*sophia* and *phronêsis*). *Sophia*, sometimes translated as theoretical wisdom, broadly equates to reasoning and rational learning, such as mathematics, science, logic, history and so on. *Phronêsis* refers to practical knowledge, the capability to act ethically, with wisdom based on experience. Praxeology, as a theory of action or practice, is the bringing together of knowledge and action, of contemplation and practice, equating to the Greek *sophia* and *praxis*, respectively. It can be understood as a kind of practical knowing. *Practice* in praxeology refers to knowing how not just knowing about. Knowledge is understood to be a 'learning from action', not a theoretical 'learning before action'.

This approach was further developed by the Scholastics, who extended praxeological analysis to the foundations of economics and social science. Western thought continued into the present day to be influenced by a perceived dichotomy between *theoria/sophia* and *praxis/phronêsis*.

In the late nineteenth century, a praxeological approach to economics and social science was reintroduced through Austrian economics, with the term *praxeology* first applied to this approach by the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises. Praxeological economics is concerned with the study of purposeful human action in the course of consumption, in the sense of deliberately chosen behaviour by actors, such as preference, choice, creativity or incentives under a free market context. With a focus on how economic propositions came to be known, von Mises advocated a praxeological foundation to epistemology in economics, in contrast, for example, to mathematical economic models, with the rationale that without empirical testing, economic theories may be misconceived.

Contemporary Ideas

Within late-twentieth-century sociology, Bourdieu makes a particular contribution to contemporary praxeology with his theory of practice and the conceptual tools of habitus, field and capital, to make sense of social behaviour and the power dynamics of any social situation, including work organizations. 'Habitus' describes the constellation of inclinations, habits and ways of perceiving, understanding and behaving that an individual brings to social interactions. Individuals' habitus is strongly influenced by the resources, or 'capital', available to them by virtue of their social positions, including their socio-economic family background, geographical location, ethnicity and gender. 'Field' is a sphere of human activity, a context or setting. The extent to which individuals have influence over others in a particular setting, or field, depends on a combination of the resources (economic, social and cultural capital) they can draw on and the choices open to them within the norms and rules of the field.

Bourdieu's concern was to overcome the dualisms of structure and agency, as offered by Marxism, existentialism or phenomenology. Bourdieu's praxeological theory maintains that social life is always in relationship to multiple phenomena and that agents and agency are more than simply structurally determined cultural behaviours, which can be understood through the study of micro-practices in a specific context and in relation to the macro world of structural influences. This has clear relevance to action research, which engages study within a specific context of change and practice whilst

being concerned to contribute to wider knowledge and advance a wider understanding.

In relation to Action Learning, another action modality closely allied to action research, praxeology found expression in the work of Reg Revans, with his thinking on learning and his interlocking systems of action and learning: systems alpha, beta and gamma (Figure 1). System alpha focuses on the investigation of the problem, based on the managerial value system, the external environment and available internal resources. System beta focuses on the problem resolution, through decisions, cycles of negotiation and trial and error. System gamma focuses on the learning as experienced uniquely by each of the participants through their self-awareness and questioning. System gamma concerns the participants' cognitive framework, their assumptions and prior understanding.

The three systems, alpha, beta and gamma, are not linear or sequential, nor are they entirely discrete. They are perhaps best understood as a whole, whose interlocking yet overlapping parts were given differing emphases by Revans at different times. In Revans' articulation of praxeology, learning involves engagement with real issues rather than with fabrications. The engagement is both scientifically rigorous in confronting the issues and critically subjective through managers learning in action. Systems alpha and beta focus on the investigation of the problem, while system gamma focuses on the learning. System gamma invites connection to the manager's existing beliefs, assumptions and image of himself or herself. Implicitly, this is a systemic way of thinking of learning as an interplay between a manager's beliefs, actions and the results of

those actions. As managers engage in the investigation of a situation, experiment with possible resolutions and monitor the results, if they are also challenged to attend to their own prior assumptions and beliefs, they may well come to recognize that their perspectives are part of the problem and that they themselves must change some of their actions or beliefs if the situation is to be changed. Revans in fact suggested that it is the values of managers and the organization that are most likely to obstruct effective action and learning. Praxeology, as articulated by Revans, promotes the highest level of reflexive, systemic learning amongst those engaged, simultaneously to addressing organizational problems and improving professional or management practice. Praxeology in this sense can be understood as a growing mastery of learners over themselves as their mastery of their environment grows. Profound self-development comes from taking risks in the course of experimentation on tricky issues and from being challenged to be reflexive—to explore the relationship between the issue tackled and the actors themselves.

Application to Action Research

The reflexivity and systemic or relational thinking articulated in praxeology by Revans and Bourdieu are also seen as integral to action research by many traditions. Similarly, Aristotle's and von Mises' concern with praxis and pragmatic knowledge and research that can generate knowledge that achieves desirable, useful outcomes is reflected in action research. Praxeology is grounded in lived experience, just as action research is grounded in the lived experience of the researcher and the research participants. Action research shares the praxeological axiom that the point of understanding and interpreting the world is to change it.

The traditional and enduring structure/agency debate polarizes analysis of human behaviour and decision-making between, on the one hand, the argument that they are the result of agency, the ability or capacity of actors to act consciously and make their own choices, and, on the other hand, explanations that emphasize the role of social structures in shaping and delimiting individual agency. Praxeology in action research brings structure and agency together, integrating the recognition that structures are both the preconditions for participants' agency as well as the outcomes of that agency. In action research, participants become more agentic in the sense that they gain a stronger awareness of their own agency—that is, their ability to influence and act and shape their world. Yet simultaneously, through the reflexivity encouraged by action research, they gain an increased sense of the constraints within which they operate—the contextual influences structuring their agency.

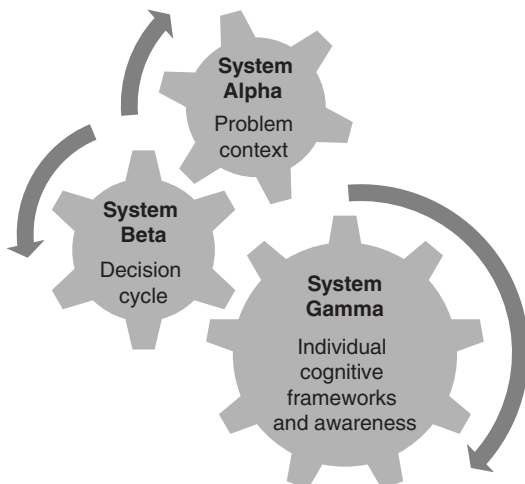


Figure 1 Revans' Praxeological Science: Diagrammatic Representation of Three-Systems Model

Examples

Praxeology finds application in management education and development and organization development through the integration of action-based processes of learning so as to create a synthesis of theory and practice, grounded in real-world experiences through interaction with organizations. For example, learners may be encouraged to engage in a series of questions and conversations that mirror Revans' praxeology through corresponding with the systems alpha, beta and gamma:

- *Alpha*: What is the reality of my situation?
- *Beta*: What do I need to know more about? What do I need to test out? What is my inquiry methodology?
- *Gamma*: What am I learning about how I act in the situation? How does that knowing more about this change how I act and how I learn?

Participants are supported to challenge their assumptions, to work with ambiguity and contradiction, to acknowledge emotions provoked by the situation and the learning and to develop greater self-awareness of both learning about practice and learning through practice. The knowledge generated may remain within the organization or, in an action research tradition, may be connected and made more widely available.

Praxeological inquiry, meaning inquiry through purposeful action, is an emerging terminology in qualitative research. In common with action research, this approach uses and generates theories of action to reveal the underlying assumptions the researcher and the participants hold about their work and to elucidate why they do what they do. In common with Critical Action Learning, it engages participants explicitly with the power and micro-politics of the situation which they are trying to change.

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See also Action Learning; Critical Action Learning; *phronêsis*

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PRAXIS

Action research concerns practice—that is, how research can be useful and relevant for practitioners and how practice is important for the research process and for theory. Hence, 'practice' is a central concept in action research. The following text outlines the roots of practice in praxis, how the original concept has been re-appropriated in the philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and its relevance for action research.

The modern word *practice* is a derivative of the Greek original *praxis*. But they do not refer to the same thing. Since the late Middle Ages, the word *practice* has become part of colloquial English and other modern languages. Currently, the study of 'practices' has become a field of theoretical and empirical research. Still, many theorists choose to use the word *praxis* in order to distinguish it from ordinary *practice*. Colloquially, 'practice' means just about any kind of activity as opposed to inactivity, the way things are customarily done' or 'doing it' as opposed to just 'thinking it' theoretically. Praxis is a special kind of practice.

Original Praxis

In ancient Greek, *praxis* was associated with politics. But major institutional differences make politics in ancient republican city states different from its modern namesake. Originally, politics concerned actions, rights and duties connected to active citizenship—in other words, to citizen (*politês*) membership in the immediate community or *pólis* (city state). Today, political membership and eligibility are widened. But in spite of slavery being widespread, the inferior status of women and the privilege of ethnicity in delimiting citizenship, the ancient *pólis*, citizenship and politics were considerably more directly participatory and egalitarian for those (adult native males) eligible for full inclusion. Primarily, politics concerned the activities citizens or community members shared and had in common as peers, and so did praxis. Hence, in the thinking of Aristotle (384–322 BC), *praxis* became a technical term designating a particular way of knowing (*gnôsis*) based on a certain form of activity.

Currently, there are two major waves re-appropriating *praxis* from its original Aristotelian context. The first springs from Marx and Marxism in the nineteenth century, and the second from Martin Heidegger's reading of Aristotle in the twentieth century, from his students Hans-Georg Gadamer and Hannah Arendt and from Jürgen Habermas.

First Wave: Marxist Praxis

The starting point for Marxist attempts at distinguishing praxis is particularly Marx' *Theses on Feuerbach*—that is, from 1845. Here, Marx attacks the passive and receptive thinking of earlier materialism for leaving the subjective and active side to idealism, for over-focusing on contemplative (spectator based) theoretical activity and for not understanding human activity as material and sensual. Questions about truth are not theoretical, he claims (nor are they passively perceptual), but practical. Human beings are not merely determined passively by their circumstances. The circumstances themselves are created by human beings. This means that human beings can take conscious control. Reflectively and consciously changing themselves and their surroundings is revolutionary praxis according to Marx.

In subsequent thinking inspired by Marx, then, the conscious analysis and change of social conditions by the practitioner-knowers themselves transforms ordinary practice as mere predetermined execution or conventional performance into praxis. Hence, praxis implies or presupposes a special form of theoretical understanding in practitioners, penetrating, distinguishing and enlightening social conditions—expressing social conditions as human practices in ways that bring forth unrealized, immanent human potentials for shaping and reshaping both themselves and their surroundings. Among others, Paulo Freire has emphasized this element and made it explicit as reflectivity and conscientization through critical dialogue.

Strict Marxism focuses on changing the social world through the political struggle of the modern wage-earning working class. But Freire brings Marxist praxis close to action research—that is, to cycles of action research and Action Learning and to Kurt Lewin's epistemological dictum that 'you have to change it in order to understand it'. Both Marx and Lewin were inspired by experimental natural science in emphasizing active intervention as a precondition for understanding. This similarity to experimentalism points to distinctions missing or only vaguely expressed in Marxist praxis but emphasized in the second wave.

Second Wave: Phenomenological and Hermeneutical Praxis

The second wave of *praxis* re-appropriation focuses on the difference between praxis and *téchnê* as different forms of activity. Heidegger and Gadamer both emphasize the concept of *phrônêsis* and its immanence to praxis as their point of departure for modern phenomenology and hermeneutics, and for liberating human and social knowing from its subordination to

knowledge models imported from modern natural science, focusing on prediction and control. Arendt's distinctions between labour, work and action and Habermas' distinctions between technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge interests bring attention to an important difference between praxis and *téchnê*, an important backdrop even for understanding the discussion between Marcuse and Popper about critical theory and social engineering. Critical theory evolved from Marxist praxis, while Popper's social engineering was accused of reducing social change to technique. The second wave of praxis re-appropriation emphasizes that understanding human and social relations cannot be done by modelling social science on natural science as political arithmetic or social physics or, consequently, as social engineering. This second wave distinguishes between *episteme* ('science'), *téchnê* ('technique') and *phrônêsis* ('practical wisdom'), all of which hark back directly to Aristotle's thinking about knowledge.

Aristotelian Praxis and Other Ways of Knowing

Aristotle singled out praxis as one form of *hêxis/habitus* or *gnôsis*—a 'way of knowing'—among several others, distinguished by (a) their different relationships between the knower and the known, (b) the location of the principle of change in the object known and (c) the different relationships between starting points, means and ends. Major terms besides *praxis* ('doing'), designating different ways of knowing along these dimensions, were *poiêsis* ('making'), *khêsis* ('using') and *pathos* ('being passively influenced from without'). These basic ways of knowing could all be tacit (*álogos*). They could also be articulated, however, through corresponding intellectual virtues or ways of reasoning, like *téchnê* ('calculation'), *phrônêsis* ('deliberation') and *episteme* ('deductive demonstration'). *Episteme* represented mainly a non-intervening theoretical knowing, made up of *theôria* ('insight') or *theôrêsis* ('spectatorship'). To distinguish praxis, these other ways of knowing must also be outlined.

Other Ways of Knowing

Generally, in *poiêsis*, *khêsis*, *pathos* and *theôrêsis*, the knower and the known are separate and external to each other, but their ways of interacting are different. In praxis and *theôria*, this relationship is internal as they tend to coincide.

In *poiêsis*, or making, the known is positioned as external material to be manipulated and changed according to the preconceived plans and ideas of the knower, as when a carpenter makes chairs and tables out of wood. The change is artificial, imposed from

the outside by art or craft. It is not natural, as when wood grows from a sprouting bud and then dies and deteriorates. In *poiêsis* relationships, the principle of change in the known is located in the knower, not in the known. Also, the end of *poiêsis* is a product—an artefact—separate from the maker and the process of making. The end of *poiêsis* lies outside *poiêsis* as an activity.

In *khêsis*, or using, the known is positioned as an instrument. Although the known is still manipulated according to the knower's preconceived plans and ideas, its qualities are not intentionally altered as in *poiêsis*. Yet the principle of movement and change in the known is outside it—in the knower (user). The instrument's movement is not natural. It has an external source. In both *poiêsis* and *khêsis*, then, the relationship between means and ends is external. The end of *khêsis* is also mostly outside itself (Aristotle distinguishes between instruments of *poiêsis* and instruments of *praxis*). There is no formal identity or similarity between starting point, means and end. In *poiêsis*, the transformed materials may remain in the final product. In *khêsis*, the instruments do not. Both *khêsis* and *poiêsis* are heterotelic; their end is separate, external to and different from the activity of *khêsis* and *poiêsis*. When the end is achieved, both activities stop. The activities of *khêsis* and *poiêsis* carry no intrinsic value. Both constitute artificial intervention competencies related to external objects, mostly carried out for getting something or somewhere else, not for their own sake.

Pathos concerns the known in *poiêsis* and *khêsis* relationships. Instruments or materials suffer pathos by being passively manipulated by users or makers. Hence, if conscious beings enter these positions as materials or instruments, their way of knowing would be pathos. The relationship is still external between the knower and the known. Pathos is knowledge derived from suffering, from being used or manipulated. The knower is passively affected by the known. Being subjugated under the power of others is pathos, and so is being under the sway of your own emotions. Even sense perception is a form of pathos, since we cannot but sense whenever an object is within the range of perception. Pathos is the knower's knowledge as she or he is affected from without.

Theôresis reverses this direction of attention focusing on the external object. The knower and known are still separate, distant and externally related. In the previous relations, there is interactivity between the knower and the known. In theôresis, there isn't (not even emotionally or by pathos). The knower is a spectator without the possibility or the legitimacy to influence, or to be non-cognitively influenced by, the known. Theôresis leaves the known object as it is.

Hence, the principle of any change or movement in the known resides in the object itself, not in the knower. The known moves or changes naturally, from within, not artificially from without as in *khêsis* and *poiêsis*. Thus, the knower is relegated to informed and intelligent guessing—creating analogical hypotheses and models—about what creates movement and change, and how and why. Theôresis describes the position of the knower in astronomy. Hence, this model of knowledge (together with *poiêsis* as a model for experimentation), and its specific ways of testing, validation and falsification, has had a profound historical influence on our modern thinking about science and research.

Praxis

In *praxis*, the relationship between the knower and the known, the location of the principles of change and the relations between starting points, means and ends are different from the previous forms. In a *praxis* relation, there is no object to be known outside the knower. The object is an internal objective. The known is in the knower. The end of *praxis* is not a separate external product as in *poiêsis* but rather excellent *praxis*, or *eupraxia*. *Poiêsis* makes things, *praxis* makes perfect! In *praxis*, the knower and the known tend to coalesce in bringing current *praxis* to coincide with its internal standard of excellence in *eupraxia*. As in *khêsis* and *poiêsis*, the knower is responsible for movement and change. But while the previous forms are heterotelic, *praxis* is autotelic, carrying its end within itself. Hence, in *praxis*, the location of the principles of change in the known—the whats, hows and whys of our own acting—is in the knower, but it is also in the known.

In the previous ways of knowing, the knower and the known, the principles of change and the starting point, means and ends are allocated to different positions. In *praxis*, they all coalesce. There is no formal separation or difference between starting point, means and end. As in learning a language, the novice piano player does the same thing formally as the one practising for perfection and the virtuoso performer. In the Aristotelian scheme, the development or improvement is a quantitative growth in capability through *praxis*, from abstract to concrete potential. Although each way of knowing requires its specific relation of user, maker, sufferer, spectator or doer to develop, this aspect of *praxis* also makes it common to all the previous ways of knowing. There is a *praxis* dimension to every way of knowing, through which we move from novice to expert in its specific knowledge relationship.

Praxis also singles out an *ethical* sphere of our existence. *Poiêsis* and *khêsis* hardly have inherent

value. Having their end beyond themselves, they are mere means. But certain kinds of activities are not merely means. What Aristotle called ethical virtues or excellences of character carry their ends inherently in themselves. All ethical virtues are *praxeis* like this. Justice is such a praxis virtue. Praxis is not just an aspect of justice, as it is in using means and manipulating materials. Justice is not a mere means for something else. It is an end. Courage is another such ethical virtue. So are truthfulness, wisdom, friendship, happiness as functioning well and others.

There are both technical and ethical virtues. Aristotle differentiates them thus. In technical virtues, a voluntary error is not as bad as an involuntary error. If you make a deliberate mistake in singing or playing an instrument, this may merely prove your complete mastery of the art. Not so with the ethical virtues. In ethics, a voluntary mistake—being deliberately unjust, unfriendly and so on—is worse than an involuntary mistake of being unknowingly unjust. Forgetting a technical skill is not generally considered blameworthy. But forgetting to be just or courageous is blameworthy. An ethical virtue is a habituated inclination (*héxis/habitus*) to act and feel correctly, not only for the right reason, since things can be done in a formally correct way by chance, technically or under the influence of others (by mechanical rule following or following orders). To count as virtuous, acts must be done with a right reason or justification. *Phrónêsis* is a right reason in these matters, according to Aristotle.

Theory and Praxis

The different ways of knowing have specific intrinsic ways of reasoning. Syllogistic deduction belongs to the presentation of finished episteme, *téchne* ('calculation') belongs primarily to *poiêsis* and *phrónêsis* ('deliberation') belongs to praxis and the ethical virtues. These will not be dealt with here. But something must be said concerning theory and praxis. According to Aristotle, theory is knowledge based on a non-intervening relationship with the known, letting the objects of study remain, unfold and develop as they are naturally. The principles of change and movement in the known reside in those objects themselves. Theoretical knowledge is merely distinguishing, descriptive and analytical. This includes more than merely episteme, however. Perception is theoretical in this sense. But intermediate ways of knowing like *poiêsis* and *khêsis* are not, since the knowers actively impose their own principles of change on the objects known and since their immediate aim is some form of activity.

But praxis, or the result of praxis as an inner object—a *pragma* ('thing') or *empeiria* ('experience')—remains as the basis for a form of theory, *theôria*, different from *theôrêsis* since, as required for theory, the principles of movement in praxis reside in the object known—that is, in the knower, in the inner *pragma* and in the internal objective of *eupraxia*. The standard of *eupraxia* is not strictly predefined but emergent, and the building and unfolding of practitioner potential through praxis, developing from the fumbling and inchoate amateurism of a novice to professional and virtuous/virtuoso practice, is not external intervention but similar to natural growth. But unlike the study of external nature (*theôrêsis*), the knowers are inside both praxis and *pragma*, or they are inside us as knowers. Hence, in praxis, we are responsible for movement, change and development.

Historically, astronomy is a paradigm of spectator-based theory (*theôrêsis*). Grammar is more suitable as a paradigm for a praxis-based *theôria*, or insight. The relationship between the knower and the known is widely different in these disciplines. Grammar articulates a reasoned practice and competence structure from within, and it transforms this into conscious and self-conscious praxis of and for the knowers-practitioners themselves. Applying the model from astronomy, however, divides society into two parts, one of which towers above (as spectators), as Marx writes in the third thesis on Feuerbach. Aristotle made deduction the paradigm of a finished episteme—in other words, the didactic presentation of a finished body of knowledge. But the inductive development of insight, understanding and competence as aims and ends in themselves (from novice to expert) was to be done dialogically through praxis—just as theoretical as deductive-didactic presentations—however, since developing competence and insight does not have an immediate or particular act or product as its aim. Its end is general. The perfection of praxis emerging and growing into *eupraxia* had two aspects: (1) *praxis*₁—the building of general competence or virtue and insight, guided by critical dialogue, and (2) *praxis*₂—the performative perfection of singular, ethically virtuous acts here and now, guided by *phrónêsis*.

Grammar brings us back to the intrinsic relationship between praxis and politics. Grammar we have in common and share as peers—in other words, it provides internal standards we all relate to, stretch towards and grow into as equals practically, even if some are novices and others virtuosos. This relationship also provided the standard for Aristotelian politics among the eligible in the ancient city states. Praxis carries the standard for political communities

within itself: community, equality and freedom. Its emphasis on conscious and self-conscious practice provides a model for a different kind of psychological, educational, social, organizational, economic and political theory, developed from within real and mundane subjectively experienced and articulated practices like Marx required, as action research and a methodology and ethics for knower-practitioners studying their own practices from inside, not as theoretical models emulating the natural sciences in attempting to study everything and everyone as observed, manipulated and controlled external objects.

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See also hermeneutics; phenomenology; *phronêsis*; practical knowing; praxeology; *téchnê*

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PRIA

See Society for Participatory Research in Asia

PROCESS CONSULTATION

There are many different forms of helping or consultation, from expert-based advice to process-focused facilitation. *Process consultation* is a term developed by Edgar Schein in the 1960s as his contribution to the development of organization development theory and practice. Process consultation is an approach to helping. It is defined as the creation of a relationship with the client that permits the client to perceive, understand and act on process events that occur in the client's internal and external environment in order to improve the situation as defined by the client. While its origins are in the organizational domain, it may be utilized by managers, parents, colleagues and friends as a way of helping others to think out and work through their own issues. This entry introduces process consultation, compares it with other approaches to helping and discusses diagnosis and intervention and process consultation's relationship with organization development and action research.

Helping Models

Schein locates process consultation in juxtaposition to two others approaches, what he calls (1) the doctor-patient model and (2) the purchase model. The doctor-patient model of helping is predicated on the familiar process of an individual experiencing pain and going to a doctor, who performs a diagnosis and prescribes a remedy which the individual implements. This form of helping—in other words, drawing on the knowledge of experts—is both common and useful. For this approach to work properly, several elements have to be in play: (a) the individual or client needs to reveal the necessary information for a good diagnosis, (b) the expert needs to have the necessary expertise for diagnosis and prescription and (c) the client has to accept the diagnosis, to implement the prescription and remain healthy afterwards. In the purchase model, the client purchases the skills of the expert. Here too, it depends on the client identifying the problem correctly so as to engage the relevant expert and impart the relevant information in order that the problem may be solved in such a way that the client accepts what the expert has done and remains healthy after the expert leaves. The organization equivalents of these two forms

of helping are (a) when external experts are brought in to perform an analysis and to write a report with recommendations for organizational action or (b) when external expert skills are brought in to design and install technology or other systems.

In keeping with the definition provided above, process consultation focuses on building a collaborative relationship between consultant and client so that the client sees what is going on, develops some understanding and builds a plan to take action. It is based on the underlying assumptions that (a) managers often do not know what is wrong in an organization and so need a special kind of help to understand what their problems actually are and (b) they often do not know what kinds of help consultants can give and so need help in knowing what kind of help to seek. They need help in being able to identify what needs improving and what does not. They may want to solve the problems themselves, but they need help in deciding what to do. Accordingly, process consultants need to have skills in establishing a helping relationship, knowing what to look for in an organization and intervening in such a way that organizational processes are improved.

Diagnosis and Intervention

In expert-based models, diagnosis is done by the expert as an antecedent to intervention. In process consultation, diagnosis and intervention are simultaneous processes as the process consultant engages the client in trying to understand what is going on and why. In process consultation, diagnosis is done by the client, and it occurs through the process consultant's interventions. In process consultation, the consultant is never just diagnosing but is always intervening, even when being silent. The process consultant asks questions and makes comments which aim to be helpful in structuring the client's thinking further and reveal information about what is really going on, thereby teaching the client how to look at his or her own information and analyze it. A key tacit process is that the process consultant is communicating to the client that he or she is willing to help but not take the problem onto his or her own shoulders.

What is central, therefore, to the theory and practice of process consultation is the focus on and skill of learning how to be helpful. For the process consultant, this involves recognizing the limitations of expertise and attending to how to be helpful. So there may be occasions when a particular expertise is needed by the client, and the process consultant may offer that expertise. Schein's advice is to begin in the process consultation mode—that is, with a spirit of inquiry. When one begins as the expert, it is difficult to step out of it,

while beginning in the process consultation mode and remaining firmly in it allows the process consultant to step into an expert role when the occasion demands and then step out of it.

Process Consultation and Organization Development

Process consultation lies at the heart of the values underpinning organization development. The core value is how employees discuss and analyze critical issues for change and find and implement solutions and evaluate the outcomes. Process consultation is a philosophy of helping that enables clients to understand and resolve their own problems. As such, process consultation constitutes authentic organization development.

Process Consultation and Action Research

Process consultation has a close relationship with action research in several ways. Firstly, the notion of process consultation grew out of Schein's reflection on his own experience and so emerged from an action research mode. Secondly, its way of working reflects the values of the collaborative mode of working that action research espouses, where participants are facilitated to understand their own context and so are helped to design and implement their own strategies and actions. Thirdly, and more explicitly, process consultation is equivalent to Clinical Inquiry, which is a mode of action research built on the assumption that the researcher is invited into an organization to help (and be paid for it) and that diagnostic and intervention activity is aimed towards enabling the system to function more healthily.

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See also Clinical Inquiry; organization development

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The project environment is often referred to as a ‘temporary organization’ where social interactions occur to deliver projects. The aim of a project is to deliver a unique outcome that solves a problem for a client within a specified time frame. Action research, with its foundations in social enquiry, provides a complementary approach to solving problems using iterative feedback cycles. In both project management and action research, there are prescribed cycles to conceptualize, plan, implement and close the work being undertaken. These action research cycles suggest a linear or single-loop approach, as in the application of the project management methods PMBOK, PRINCE2, and Logframe. However, the action research approach can also include multiple cycles of problem-solving activity to address a research issue, which is represented in the overlapping cycles of the Agile project management method.

The action research cycle is based on a continuous feedback loop that requires ‘actors’ to plan, act, observe and reflect in order to be able to identify variations and then manage them. The ‘actors’, or project managers, are involved in this collaborative inquiry to work systematically to evaluate their actions through a self-reflective spiral that informs future action cycles and also ‘spin-off’ cycles. These action research cycles can also be defined by the type of research project. For example, if the outcome is known, a technical approach may be appropriate; if the project drives the action, then a practical approach may be required; and if all participants play a role, then the research project may be defined as critical.

The subjective interpretation of information in action research, as with project management, can be classified as ‘idiographic’ as the work undertaken may not be objective, although interpretation of data and experiences can rely on multiple sources of information. The project manager and the action researcher have an opportunity to then test and explain any emerging deviations or themes that may contradict the expected outcomes and prior analysis of data.

Project Management History

Project management was described in terms of ‘scientific management’ in the late 1800s, when the early workflow tools were introduced. Throughout the early 1900s, a series of refinements were made to these tools, and by the 1970s, the project office emerged to provide the much needed oversight. In the 1980s, there was a wider acceptance of managing strategic and organizational change through project management methodologies which required a refocus on stakeholder identification,

environmental impacts and life cycle costing. The acceleration of change in the 1990s, driven by the introduction of the personal computer, provided the technology to manage a variety of project types across organizations. In the 2000s, the development of global strategic alliances provided an opportunity to collaborate across industry and across geographical boundaries.

Project Management Methods

To manage a project, the project manager can use several different project management methods, as is the case for the action researcher when deciding on the most appropriate type of action research method for the research. The selection of an appropriate project management method depends on the type of project, the organizational mandate or the project manager’s preferred method, or it might be a combination of several methods. The four project management methods that are most commonly espoused by governments, professional associations and industry are ‘A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge’ (PMBOK® Guide), ‘Projects IN Controlled Environments 2’ (PRINCE2), the ‘Logical Framework Approach’ (LFA or Logframe) and ‘Agile Project Management’.

PMBOK® Guide

The PMBOK® Guide, now in its fourth edition, was first published in 1996 by the Project Management Institute and describes a set of standard project management terms, processes and knowledge areas. The processes describe how a project is initiated, planned, executed, monitored and controlled and closed. The knowledge areas define a project according to the (1) elements of integration, (2) scope, (3) time, (4) cost, (5) quality, (6) human resources, (7) communications, (8) risk and (9) procurement. During the management of a project, the PMBOK® Guide provides an outline for the inputs, tools and techniques and outputs for each of the nine knowledge areas.

PRINCE2

The basis of the PRINCE2 method was developed by the UK government in 1989 for information technology projects, and it was further developed into a generic project management method in 1996. The PRINCE2 method is based on seven processes that describe a project in terms of (1) start up, (2) initiation, (3) direction, (4) controlling stages, (5) managing stage boundaries, (6) managing product delivery and (7) project closure. The techniques described in the PRINCE2 method include product-based planning, change control and quality review. Within these processes, the PRINCE2 method espouses principles that include the business

case, organization, quality, plans, risk and change progress. In addition, the themes cover continued business justification, learning from experience, defined roles and responsibilities, managing by stages, managing by exception, focusing on products and tailoring to suit the project environment.

Logframe

Logframe is a document that is used within the Logical Framework Approach project method, which was introduced in 1969 for the United States Agency for International Development to design, monitor and evaluate international development projects. To measure the progress of a project, Logframe relies on a 'temporal logic model', which requires the project manager to first identify and then connect project classifications. These project classifications include the description; objectively verifiable indicators, means of verification based on the objectively verifiable indicators and positive or negative assumptions according to the projects goal, purpose, outputs and activities.

Agile Project Management

The Agile project management method evolved in the 1990s as a reaction against the highly regulated software development project management methods from the 1970s, such as the Waterfall Development Model. The Agile method relies on collaboration between cross-functional teams that self-organize to rapidly respond to change when determining requirements for software development and engineering projects. This method is iterative and requires a flexible approach to overlapping project phases when deliverables have been completed, often in very short time frames. In direct contrast, the Waterfall Development Model, adapted from the manufacturing and construction industries, follows a sequential order of project phases, where each preceding phase must be completed before moving to the next phase.

Rethinking Project Management

An increased level of project complexity saw the acceleration of project failures, suggesting that the traditional project management tools and methodologies were inadequate. In 2006, a prominent project management research initiative was undertaken to identify how to manage project complexity and increase project success. A network of academics and senior practitioners from private, public and volunteer organizations in the UK, Canada, Europe, the USA and Australia was formed to undertake this research in response to the concerns of project managers in the areas of project complexity, social process, value creation, project

conceptualization and practitioner development. To include input from a wide range of perspectives, a learning system model was adopted by the network to set the research agenda using a process of inquiry. The concept of organized sense making was used to establish how formal meetings and additional work would focus on the core areas of concern. The iterative research cycles, representative of an action research approach, provided the network with a framework in which to produce papers on the perceived issues and themes from the meetings. Three key directions were identified and presented in the form of theories *about, for* and *in* the practice of project management. These directions provided recommendations on how to deliver value using social practices in a project context.

The processes and methods used to manage a project can be applied when undertaking an action research project. In setting up an action research project, the researcher will need to understand the organizational context when identifying and working with research participants and validation groups. Agreement on how the research will be undertaken and a common language need to be established before a plan to do the research is agreed on. The plan will need to include (a) the scope of the research project, (b) where information will be sourced, (c) who will work on the project at various times, (d) how the project will be financed and (e) a schedule of when the work will be done. Confidentiality needs to be ensured in the collection, use of, storage and retrieval of data. The design of an appropriate action research method needs to be guided by an existing framework that is flexible, to allow for changes after a review or intervention has occurred. At the conclusion of the action research project, the researcher needs to have the resources to analyze and document the findings and provide an evaluation of the project to document future improvements and areas for further research.

The process of undertaking an action research project described above is not dissimilar to the process that a project manager would follow to deliver a project. The social interactions and interventions that a project manager uses to achieve an agreed outcome with the client follows a method selected to suit the type of project and context. Agreement with the client on the scope of work and the resources that will be engaged to complete the project sets the framework for delivering an agreed outcome. The project manager will negotiate the budget and time, balanced against the expectations of quality, at the same time ensuring that the communications are appropriately managed. When change occurs, the project manager will assess the impact based on the agreed risk tolerance and throughout the project will keep the validation group, often referred to as a steering committee, informed of the

progress and seek advice as required. When the project has been delivered, a review and evaluation of the outcomes will be captured and recommendations made for future projects.

Both project management and action research aim to solve real-world problems using iterative cycles of action and reflection through a collaborative and appropriate method. Therefore, action researchers and project managers may benefit from sharing and comparing their respective approaches to the management of their work. The increased level of complexity in projects and the need to provide a higher level of clarity around the action research process suggest an overlap in these two practices.

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See also development action research; practitioner inquiry; stakeholder analysis; technical action research; transferability

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PUBLIC SPHERE

See Critical Participatory Action Research



QUALIMETRICS INTERVENTION RESEARCH

The qualimetrics methods were created in the early 1970s by Henri Savall and his colleagues at the Socio-Economic Institute of Firms and Organizations (Institut de Socio-Economie des Entreprises et des Organisations, ISEOR), a research centre associated with the Jean Moulin University Lyon 3 and E. M. Lyon (École de Management de Lyon) in Lyon, France. At first, it is necessary to define qualimetrics intervention research. It is a specific Intervention Research methodology aimed at triggering a common representation system shared by all the actors of an organization through the use of qualitative, quantitative and financial data. On the face of it, qualimetrics intervention research shares the same sociological and anthropological roots summed up in the concept of ‘participative observation’, a method which consists in carrying out observations by participating in productive activities. As in action research, in qualimetrics intervention research, researchers are at the same time partners as regards companies’ observation and co-producers of knowledge with company actors. Intervention researchers when applying a qualimetrics methodology adopt a decidedly transformative approach towards the research object, as the objective is to change the structures and behaviours observed in the company or the organization by experimenting both on and with the actors so as to better understand the phenomena observed ‘through and for action’. Like in action research, the objective of qualimetrics intervention research is to create a community of inquiry. However, qualimetrics is focused not only on the creation of such communities of inquiry regarding social phenomena but on a more comprehensive analysis of the organizations that takes into account both social and economic performance. Indeed, most action research and Intervention Research methodologies find their common origins in sociology and not in the field of

accounting or economics. Conversely, the qualimetrics methodology as a measure of performance is seen as more efficient than classical quantitative measurement as it seeks to reconcile the three opposed logics systems—qualitative, quantitative and financial—by recontextualizing them so as to circumvent a silo type of approach and to get a clear picture of their interaction.

Qualimetrics methodology assumes that accounting only gives a partial representation of a company’s overall economic performance. Traditional accounting is the realm of number crunchers. The rigidity of numbers (which, moreover, can be tampered with or selectively manipulated, as evidenced in the ethno-statistics approach) can lead to distorted images of organizational performance. Conversely, what is often referred to as the magic of words can also be misleading. To reconcile these opposite approaches to the bottom line, the qualimetrics modelization permits bringing meaning to both words and numbers. Qualimetrics is thus defined as an intervention into the way in which numbers are produced, analyzed, displayed and interpreted.

Epistemological Underpinnings

The qualimetrics intervention research approach mobilizes the following three concepts or principles.

Cognitive Interactivity Principle

First, the cognitive interactivity principle is an interactive process of knowledge production between company actors and intervener-researchers through successive feedback loops, with the steadfast goal of increasing the value of significant information processed by scientific work. In other words, several interviews and meetings are organized to help actors be more accurate with regard to the dysfunctions to be addressed. It partly draws on a constructionist epistemology as it considers that the complex object is difficult to grasp in its entirety. It therefore differentiates from positivist research, which seeks so-called neutrality: Action

researchers and qualimetrics researchers alike are interacting with actors. Cognitive interactivity leads to two types of results:

1. For company actors, it modifies their viewpoint on the operation and performance of the enterprise as well as their behaviour in the workplace; they are led little by little to modify their representation of the research object.
2. For intervener-researchers, it brings out new facts which allow them to strengthen existing hypotheses or to express new ones, thanks to the additional qualitative, quantitative and financial data provided by the qualimetrics approach.

Contradictory Intersubjectivity Principle

Second, the contradictory intersubjectivity principle is a technique for creating consensus based on the subjective perceptions of different actors in order to create more objective grounds for working together through the numerous interactions between the actors. It thus consists in confronting the points of view of all the actors, the objective being to identify specificities and convergences and to reconcile different or conflicting logics within the enterprise. It avoids the limitation of a purely conceptual model of action: lack of rigour in inquiry method and in applying validity procedures. Multiplying different images of or perspectives on company operations improves the quality and the significance of the information captured, hence the necessity to collect information from diversified and multiple pools of informants, since confronting subjective representations results in the production of a new, collective representation and sensemaking. They are indispensable in the context of change entailed by the qualimetrics methodology.

Generic Contingency Principle

Third, the generic contingency principle designates the epistemological principle that, while recognizing the operational specificities of organizations, postulates the existence of invariants that constitute generic rules, embodying core knowledge that possesses a certain degree of stability, universality and reproducibility. Knowledge produced by intervention researches tends to be specific, and hence contingent by nature, but the contribution of the qualimetrics method is to help bring to light fairly permanent features and invariants, thanks to the scientific programme stemming from the exploitation of a database in which are collected the results obtained through intervention researches carried out by ISEOR in hundreds of companies and organizations throughout the world, constituting a highly reliable statistical

series. This is why the qualimetrics methodology is construed as 'a generic knowledge construction instrument'.

Those epistemological tenets have enabled the building up step by step of a generic knowledge creation now explicitly referred to as the 'socio-economic approach to management'. Indeed, the qualimetrics intervention research methodology unveils the infra-micro relationships between the economic and social performance factors, as opposed to only focusing on either economic or social performance.

The implementation of the qualimetrics method has resulted in the design of participative management tools, as opposed to widespread centralized and authoritative management tools. Those tools are aimed at promoting development and facilitating decision-making.

Internal and external action plans consist of 3- to 5-year master plan listing and prioritizing the strategic initiatives to be taken for ensuring the development breakthroughs. This strategic action plan involves each and every actor throughout the organization and is consequently participatory in essence, as opposed to traditional strategic planning. In accordance with the qualimetrics approach, one major objective is to enhance awareness of the hidden costs resulting from dysfunctions and the conversion of hidden costs into value added with a view to avoiding loss of energy and removing obstacles to the firms' strategic development internally and externally.

Priority action plans are implemented half-yearly and are meant to identify the high-value-added development actions as against the low-value-added ones, to help attain strategic objectives as advocated by the qualimetrics approach and prevent dysfunctions. This participative tool is meant to involve all team members in order to reconcile participation and co-ordination. This phenomenon goes by the name *decentralized synchronization*.

The competency grids are synoptic tools displaying the competencies of each and every company actor. This grid is designed through communication, co-ordination and co-operation so as to come up with a shared vision of the existing skills and the integrated training required for job enrichment and career prospects development as well as multi-skilling. They play a pivotal role in qualimetrics research intervention when it comes to drawing up a bottom line which would avoid the usual fragmented approach between economic, social and ecological performance metrics and which would allow one to link them by shedding light on the interactions between those three factors. It helps in analyzing the ratios featuring on balance sheets and in accounting for the dysfunction costs resulting from lack of skills or wrong job specifications. The grid actually

deals with the intangible assets of a company or an organization partly or totally left out in accounting documents and thus contributes to obtaining the proper qualitative, quantitative and financial evaluation specific to the qualimetrics approach.

Socio-economic logbooks are used as opposed to traditional accounting and management control documents. This set of indicators broadens the scope of economic and social performance measurement by embracing not only short-term performance but also the creation of potential—in other words, long-term performance. It contributes to changing organizational roadmaps by better balancing short- and long-term qualitative, quantitative and financial results elicited by the qualimetrics approach. It thus enables organizations to better achieve sustainable development.

The qualimetrics methodology enables the measuring of impacts of dysfunctions (qualitatively, quantitatively and financially) translated into hidden cost (or loss of value added). It helps in identifying and quantifying hidden costs which are rarely or never mentioned in a company's traditional accounting information system. Capitalizing on the results of 34 years of international research in 35 countries around the world made it possible to describe different categories of dysfunctions within companies and organizations, classified under six headings: (1) working conditions, (2) work organization, (3) communication-co-ordination-co-operation, (4) time management, (5) integrated training and (6) strategic implementation.

The intervention researchers when implementing the qualimetrics approach proceed to a monetary assessment of the hidden dysfunctional costs by evaluating the costs linked to five major indicators: (1) absenteeism, (2) occupational injuries, (3) staff turnover, (4) non-quality and (5) direct productivity gaps. They are, at this point, in a position to bring to light and evaluate the chief components of the financial consequences of dysfunctions: excess salary, excess time, overconsumption, non-production, non-creation of potential and risk.

At the end of the qualimetrics intervention process, improvements are evaluated financially by measuring the transformation of hidden costs into value added. Indeed, the objective of the qualimetrics intervention is to operate the conversion of hidden costs stemming from dysfunctions into value-added creation. The gains in value added actually identified are compared with the cost of the research actions, which permits establishing the actual economic balance as well as assessing the profitability of the change actions implemented by the enterprise. Those economic balances are determined by taking into account the investments and the subsequent improvement in performance in terms of increased value added.

Conclusion

The contribution of the qualimetrics methodology to action research processes is, on the one hand, to break the silo between social and economic objectives. On the other hand, this method demonstrates that action research projects are important not only for social reasons or to enhance reflexivity and organizational learning but also because they can result in sustainable economic development: the qualitative, quantitative and financial evaluation of the metamorphosis of dysfunctions and hidden costs into added-value creation and performance improvement is done in terms of both immediate results and creation of potential.

The qualimetrics intervention research is aimed at enhancing the quality of scientific participative observation in the field of organizational change. Indeed, such a scientific object is difficult to grasp because it is intangible, complex and ever-changing. It requires eliciting implicit variables, which can be achieved only through research methods that enable in-depth and up-close observation of the research object. Such a scientific observation methodology needs to analyze the organizational change phenomena from different points of views so as to better analyze the multifaceted scientific object. Such a challenge can be overcome only by involving a research team consisting not only of the intervener-researchers but also of the organizational actors, who are in a way 'scientists in the raw'. For example, the ISEOR laboratory took the initiative of organizing yearly conferences where intervener-researchers along with company actors present the outcomes of the research processes, as opposed to a more traditional 'ivory tower' practice.

Another difference with other forms of action research practices is the concept of generic contingency (see above), which can be illustrated by the implementation of co-built management tools, as opposed to more informal organizational learning processes.

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See also Appreciative Inquiry; collaborative action research; epistemology; evaluation; Intervention Research in management

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QUALITY

Action researchers conduct their participative inquiry *with* people who are the stakeholders to the issues and inquiry at hand. This orientation to inquiry is found most frequently in efforts aimed at improving social systems—in other words, those complex meeting places where our human reality as social and biological creatures intersects with behavioural and technical systems, giving rise to politics. Action researchers strive for rigour, but not at the sake of the vigour of the work together. Assessing the quality of timely action in behaviourally and technically complex situations therefore requires a way of conceptualizing quality that goes beyond conventional notions of validity. A new understanding of quality is emerging that is informed by conventional notions of validity but that necessarily moves beyond its limitations. Because action researchers acknowledge the complexity of social phenomena, we emphasize multiple dimensions of quality, which are offered as choice points to guide collaborative action.

Multiple Dimensions of Quality

Action research, although not easily defined, is described as a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury describe it as bringing together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people and, more generally, the flourishing of individual persons and their communities. Action research therefore seeks to interweave what is often kept separate, thereby honouring unity and diversity, leading to a multidimensional terrain of endeavour.

Timely action with people in social systems at this moment in history means a willingness to engage with unprecedented challenges of sustainability that are interrelated and compounding. Challenges include complex issues such as poverty and injustice, patriarchy, climate change, the degradation of nature,

globalization, inequalities and fundamentalisms of all types. Conventional science and its conduct are part of these problems. Far from being the enterprise of a lone researcher, action research engages local stakeholders—particularly those traditionally excluded from the research process—in problem definition, research processes, interpretation of results, design for action and evaluation of outcomes.

There has always been tension with regard to how objectivist we ought to be in the development of knowledge. Kurt Lewin, often considered the founding father of action research, exemplified a hypothesis-testing approach. John Collier, Lewin's colleague, who actually coined the term *action research*, advocated a more democratic collaboration in the treatment of important social issues. Contemporary action research continues to hold this tension. Yet in the light of serious efforts to integrate the insights since the post-Lewinian linguistic and pragmatic turns—insights largely ignored by conventional social science—Collier's original vision appears to be in the foreground today.

Beyond the Cartesian Split to Integrating Linguistic and Action Turns

Orlando Fals Borda has claimed that action research is the most natural form of inquiry known. Dawn Chandler and William Torbert go as far as to assert that it is ubiquitous, especially in its embrace of future considerations as a part of inquiry, rather than documenting only what has safely passed. Indeed, for most of history, most people in most parts of the world have been practical and time sensitive in their efforts towards knowledge generation. That is, until the great Cartesian split—the split between reason and intuition, mind and body—that resulted from the implications of a world view that primarily and solely privileged a search for objectivity. The resulting conventional knowledge is therefore evaluated according to internal and external validity, reliability and its generalizability. Bjørn Gustavsen has quipped that conventional research is concerned only with being 'very right'. In most social science studies, this 'rightness' is garnered by focusing on as narrow a segment of reality as possible, with the cost of discounting most of lived reality. The circumscribed concerns of validity are simply unsuitable to the broader aims of action research, which include helpfulness to its stakeholders, insight for practice at the personal, group and larger systems levels as well as social transformation.

Action researchers' concern for 'quality' is similar to the concern that 'validity' plays in conventional science. At this moment in the unfolding philosophy of science, action research is unique in its integration of objective-empirical with subjective and pragmatic

orientations. Our integration of the subjective is informed by the ways in which we now understand that experience is mediated by cognition and language. Referred to by Richard Rorty as taking ‘the linguistic turn’, action researchers acknowledge that language fundamentally shapes what is knowable about phenomena. But simply knowing is not enough. Action researchers stretch to the action turn because we understand that social reality is profoundly relational and that the co-ordination of action is at play among us. Thus, the motivation for knowledge creation is not so much simply to know what is true, for the sake of objective, disembodied truth, but rather to accomplish something of mutual value. As a consequence, validity is enhanced with the multidimensional considerations that spring from a potentially deeper integration of subjectivity and pragmatism with objectivity, or more properly, partial objectivity.

Reimagining quality from an action research perspective therefore invites us to think of action research as a way to access much more than the narrow slice of reality addressed by conventional social science methods. It is also to note that even conventional social science has slipped from the vision that its founding luminaries, such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Marx, and Max Weber, offered with their praxis. If their successors have retreated into the world of auto-poetic self-engagement, action researchers are called to think more broadly about the dimensions of time, practice and voice in our praxis. Where conventional social scientists focus only on controlled studies about the past (time), action researchers also usefully consider a future (e.g. what future are we contributing to?). We might also ask, for example, whether and how people’s aspirations for creating a future together influence their practice. And where conventional social scientists focus on third parties (voice), action research needs to consider our own personal reflections on action (first person work) along with the reflections of those we regard as co-researchers (second person work). All efforts result in insight useful to co-ordinating mutually agreeable action. Indeed it is because of its multidimensional character that action research can help explain more of the empirical variance in situations than conventional science.

The multiple dimensions of quality are primarily concerned with promoting the good of a social system, as understood and enacted by the stakeholders in that system. Because what is ‘good’ is rarely a straightforward matter, reflection is required among those involved as to what is learned and who is served. Thus, useful responses to a challenge, combined with reflection on what are the shared conditions that make something useful, constitute the basic building blocks of creating quality action research.

Choice Points for Quality

All knowledge is political in the sense that as *shapers of discourse* we have political agency in our efforts. This applies also, or especially, to the shaping of discourse on what constitutes quality. The following seven criteria offer a useful and tested starting point on what constitutes ‘quality in action research’. They are the product of an ongoing ‘collogue’ among action researchers associated with the journal *Action Research*.

1. *Quality requires articulation of objectives:* Quality is reflected in the extent to which the action research explicitly addresses the objectives relevant to the work and the choices made in meeting them.

2. *Quality requires partnership and participation:* Quality is reflected in the extent to and means by which the action research reflects or enacts participative values and concern for the relational component of research. By the extent of participation, we are referring to a continuum from consultation with stakeholders to stakeholders as full co-researchers.

3. *Quality requires contribution to action research theory-practice:* Quality is reflected in the extent to which the action research builds on (creates explicit links with) or contributes to a wider body of practice knowledge and/or theory, which contributes to the action research literature.

4. *Quality requires appropriate methods and process:* Quality is reflected in the extent to which the action research process and related methods are clearly articulated and illustrated. ‘Showing’ and not just ‘telling’ about the process and outcomes usually means including the voices of the participants in the research.

5. *Quality requires actionability:* Quality is reflected in the extent to which the action research provides new ideas that guide action in response to need.

6. *Quality requires reflexivity:* Quality is reflected in the extent to which self-location as a change agent is acknowledged for how it both enables and limits knowledge creation. By self-location, we mean that action researchers take a personal, involved and self-critical stance, as reflected in clarity about their role in the action research process, clarity about the context in which the research takes place and clarity about what led to their involvement in this action research.

7. *Quality requires significance:* Quality is reflected in the extent to which the insights are significant in content and process. By significant, we mean having

meaning and relevance beyond their immediate context in support of the flourishing of persons, communities and the wider ecology.

Approaching Quality as Choice Points

It is simply not possible to have all quality measures to be of equal importance throughout all phases of all action research. Judicious choices must be made. The key point is that quality requires that these choices be made transparent. Where important, concern for conventional validity may be included inside a broader spectrum of quality choice points. This is particularly important, for example, when writing an action research dissertation as dissertation committees often look for conventional forms of rigour. Making choiceful decisions is the result then both of art and of systematic inquiry, with action researchers integrating what is most appropriate to the setting.

Action researchers may well help with revitalizing the practice of social science with the spirit of partnership. The lack of priority given to the specifically relational and pragmatic nature of human living and knowledge creation has led to blind spots and dead ends with conventional social science. Davydd Greenwood has documented the growing crisis of irrelevance that limits the impact of conventional social science, unmitigated by increasing calls to develop what is variously called translational or implementation science. The latter comes as an afterthought to the continued use of conventional methods, which discount the fundamentally relational, pragmatic reality of social inquiry in the first place. The gap between theory and practice cannot be effectively addressed through epistemological argument and translational afterthought but can be understood in terms of building research practices as social capital. Action researchers design for relational, pragmatic action from the start. More partnerships between action researchers and conventional social scientists would appear promising.

For action research, with its integration of pragmatic and relational subjectivity as a central feature, replication and generalizability are therefore also reimagined. In reality, there is little that is independent—all phenomena co-arise and are interdependent with one another. Action researchers are therefore called to investigate and work also at expanding the boundaries of their work. Here, quality as partnership and participation is to be taken seriously by including a view outwards, which requires scouting the external boundaries of a project while our view is naturally drawn inwards to the local stakeholders. Social networks and global networks, supported by social media, can only bode well for this interdependent future work.

The Future of Quality: Stretching Towards Inclusivity

Implications of a Relational World View

A relational-pragmatic world view, and the ethic and practice of partnering that arise from it, has far-reaching political implications when we consider partnering with those heretofore omitted from the research. For example, in health-care action research, the ethic of partnering means including patients as key stakeholders in decisions that affect them. In education, it means including students. In business, this means looking beyond financial stakeholders to social and environmental stakeholders. Each of these efforts to stretch towards inclusion of heretofore excluded stakeholders goes against strong cultural norms and power positions. It is precisely in this practice of partnering that we see the emancipatory potential of action research that guides the practical and technical outcomes in the work with stakeholders.

Action researchers are attuned to the importance of relationships and relational networks. It is noteworthy that, to a degree, action research still labours with an essentialist view of the self which sits awkwardly with the relational practices. Turning again, with Habermas, to the American pragmatists, such as Dewey and James with their relational understanding of the thorough-going interdependent rather than separate self, may be the beginning also of a more relational conceptualization of the self for action researchers. Freed from an anachronistic, mechanistic world view, a thorough-going relational understanding of the self frees us from believing that we ought to be doing research in accord with the dictates of conventional validity (as a bounded individual developing my theory) and leads us to doing work informed by the needs of stakeholders. This, in turn, better situates action researchers to take the next step in garnering more support for our way of doing work—namely, by developing relationships across large networks of practitioners/scholar-practitioners (perhaps aided by the globe-spanning social media), bringing a stronger focus on building relationships inside our research and also within the action research community itself.

The integration of reflexivity in contemporary action research, which means stretching to include the inner landscape of the self, may well be the most significant contribution action research makes to social science more generally. The reflexive self is largely omitted from objectivist research. Action researchers are, relative to conventional social scientists, more autobiographical in expression because we acknowledge that all claims to knowledge are shaped by interests since knowledge claims are never neutral. An author's reflexivity helps contextualize the claims, create transparency and anchor ownership of expression, which can otherwise masquerade as worryingly disembodied and neutral. We might say

that reflexivity is as much a part of explaining any project as is the array of methodological and literature review statements at the outset of most conventional articles.

For example, Erica Foldy offers her reflection on how White racial identity shaped and, in turn, was shaped by her dissertation data collection. She identifies specific choices and experiences in the research interviews that were influenced by race, using both data from her own journal as well as feedback about the interviews from two informants of colour. She traces how conducting the interviews and writing about them make meaning of her own racial identity. She offers these reflections as a contribution to two conversations, both related to exploring and learning about race. First, her discussion of how being White influenced her study contributes to important dialogues about how researcher identities reverberate through the research process. Second, her consideration of the change in her own racial identity suggests implications for those interested in learning from and about race. In turn, the European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness were invited to respond to her published reflections. They wrote in support of Foldy's premise that we cannot learn about race until we make it a 'discussable', thereby joining her in reflecting on the relationship between her White identity and her dissertation research. They conclude by describing an important state of inquiring mind that they call critical humility. In this work, we see the potential increase in rigour brought about by including first person perspectives. The turn inwards is as important as the turn outwards.

Debra Merkin's research with primates, *Hearing Voices: The Promise of Participatory Action Research for Animals*, pushes the limits out beyond the familiar 'humans-only' boundary normally used to determine who constitutes a research subject. The implications for all our work are thought-provoking. Merkin seeks to articulate an action research approach that fully accounts for those who are silent, most especially in inter-species studies. We are confronted with the ubiquity of the ideology of superiority that insists upon a strict boundary between human and other than human. We may yet come to know the universe as composed of subjects to be communed with rather than of objects to be exploited. Such radical studies may yet come to represent a formal turning point for action research, and for social science more generally, in expanding how we define research subjects as participants. This means that we must consider more clearly what relationship and participation may mean.

Conclusion

Quality in action research is multidimensional, leading to choice points for developing quality. Concern for partnership and participation refers to the quality of the

relationships with primary stakeholders and the extent to which all stakeholders are appropriately involved in the design and assessment of inquiry and change. Concern for actionability refers to the extent to which the work provides new ideas that guide action in response to need, as well as concern with developing action research crafts of practice on their own terms. Reflexivity refers to the extent to which the self is acknowledged as an instrument of change among change agents and stakeholders. Significance means having meaning and relevance beyond the immediate context in support of the flourishing of persons, communities and the wider ecology. Stretching further outwards, inwards and towards deeper inclusivity in the work of action research may well be the new horizon in nurturing the future quality of action research.

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See also action turn, the; critical reflection; phenomenology; validity

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QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Quantitative methodology is the dominant research framework in the social sciences. It refers to a set of strategies, techniques and assumptions used to study psychological, social and economic processes through the exploration of numeric patterns. Quantitative research gathers a range of numeric data. Some of the numeric data is intrinsically quantitative (e.g. personal income), while in other cases the numeric structure is

imposed (e.g. ‘On a scale from 1 to 10, how depressed did you feel last week?’). The collection of quantitative information allows researchers to conduct simple to extremely sophisticated statistical analyses that aggregate the data (e.g. averages, percentages), show relationships among the data (e.g. ‘Students with lower grade point averages tend to score lower on a depression scale’) or compare across aggregated data (e.g. the USA has a higher gross domestic product than Spain). Quantitative research includes methodologies such as questionnaires, structured observations or experiments and stands in contrast to qualitative research. Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of narratives and/or open-ended observations through methodologies such as interviews, focus groups or ethnographies.

Quantitative approaches to research can be very powerful and useful to social scientists. For example, they provide researchers the ability to systematically compare responses across many people in a relatively inexpensive, fast and consistent way. Some methods, like surveys, can provide a space for people to share personal information in an anonymous way that they would otherwise be unwilling to share with an interviewer. And politically, quantitative research can open doors to audiences who privilege numeric results. However, Participatory Action Research (PAR) is more often known for its use of qualitative rather than quantitative methodologies. This is not a coincidence. The collaborative and engaged approach of PAR tends to overlap more naturally with the flexible, open-ended, thematic approach of qualitative research. However, PAR reflects a commitment to democratic participation and social action more than a commitment to any single research method. Therefore, PAR researchers should not avoid projects that are best served by quantitative methodologies. Indeed, quantitative approaches do create a set of challenges that PAR researchers must find creative ways to contend with. This entry first reviews some of the challenges to the use of quantitative research methods in PAR and then provides examples of studies in which quantitative methods have been effectively used in the context of PAR projects.

The Challenges of Quantitative Methodology for PAR

Quantitative Bias and ‘Real’ Science

In the social sciences, there is a bias towards quantitative research as ‘real’ science. While potentially informative, quantitative tools convey a sense of authority and persuasiveness. The appearance of precision and the illusion of neutrality can make them seem somehow above critique. However, counting is

a fundamentally exclusionary human activity. To count is to make a choice about what is included and what is excluded: not only what to count and how to count but who to count. Thus, quantitative research can both distort and enlighten, has strengths and weaknesses and should be in conversation with, not in opposition to, qualitative methods. Quantitative methods or analyses are sociopolitical practices that are historically and contextually situated. Researchers employing quantitative approaches are not without bias when making decisions about what should be researched, what questions to ask, how the data is interpreted and what should be presented.

For PAR researchers to effectively conduct quantitative research, they often find it important to take a critical stance. A critical perspective on quantitative methods and statistical analyses does not only (or even largely) suggest critique, but instead it also invokes a commitment to historical connectedness, political awareness, an intersectional standpoint, methodological heterogeneity, redistribution of expertise and public and community involvement. A critical approach to quantitative research involves using numbers in a principled way towards the larger pursuit of democratic participation and, in service of marginalized communities, to reveal oppressive systems, institutions and policies. A critical approach to quantitative research is connected with theories that help understand social inequality and help promote activism, emancipation and justice.

The Rigid Assumptions of Statistical Inference

The data produced from quantitative research is analyzed using statistical techniques. Courses that teach statistical analyses devote most of the time to reviewing inferential approaches. Inferential statistics are designed to use sampled data in order to estimate (infer or generalize to) information regarding the population of interest. This is done using statistical probability and the collection of data through probability samples (e.g. random or randomized samples). Inferential statistics tend to be deductive and hypothesis driven, with heavy guidance from predetermined theories. At its most conservative, all of the analyses are pre-planned so as to not capitalize on chance or random fluctuations (i.e. Type I error, family-wise error). Quantitative research using inferential statistics involves a set of very restrictive assumptions and requirements that can produce an inflexible environment that runs counter to the intent of PAR.

Many prominent statisticians have cautioned the social sciences regarding their over-reliance on complex modelling and unwarranted causal claims. The general concern is that the complexity of social and

psychological experience is often uneasily or inadequately captured through quantitative means. The proposed remedies often involve a more humble stance on the limits of quantification, a more varied use of research methodologies, greater reliance on replication and greater willingness to explore one's data. In addressing this last point, a set of statistical techniques called exploratory data analysis (EDA) is particularly useful to PAR researchers since it stands in contrast to the rigidity of inferential statistics.

EDA is an iterative, descriptive, graphical approach to statistics. Its techniques are designed to probe for possible patterns among the individual responses in the sample, rather than using the data to statistically generalize to a larger population. While it is always important to consider sampling, EDA does not necessarily rely upon probability (and probability sampling), and therefore frees researchers to investigate what the data reveals without fitting the findings within a formal, rigid structure—similar to analyzing interview transcripts. For example, a series of quantitative participatory techniques called stats-n-action is rooted in collaborative EDA. One part of this technique engages in a back-and-forth process, with the research group thinking through what quantitative relationships would be interesting to test, immediately running those analyses using a projector to display the results and then using the output to mediate a deeper conversation about what they think it means and what further slices of the data need to be examined to make the best interpretations. Thus, EDA provides an open-ended approach, stressing description and flexibility, that often does a better job at fitting the goals of PAR than the more traditional quantitative approaches.

Disconnected Research Moments and Isolated Expertise

Quantitative research, when used appropriately and under the right circumstances, has a lot to offer in the way of data collection and analysis. Yet, the quantitative piece, particularly the statistical analyses, is often seen as disconnected from the rest of the research. It can too often serve as a gatekeeper to participation, separating the expert from the layperson. The necessary critical conversations that numbers should facilitate are disconnected and reserved for 'professionals'. The person with statistical expertise is assigned the power to report back 'what was found', and for those on the research team who are anxious about numbers, this quantitative process can serve as an alienating conversation closer. Thus, statistical information produced from quantitative methods can too often be un-jointed and un-participatory, shutting down critical discussion and therefore not conducive to the commitments of PAR.

When examined closely, the quantitative research process is actually a series of highly connected, small and large decisions with multiple opportunities for broad and interactive participation (e.g. the strategies for measurement, the questions that are asked, the sampling, how the data is 'cleaned' in a data set, how the variables are disaggregated and aggregated, how and with whom the analyses are discussed). Therefore, quantitative PAR researchers have found creative ways to promote statistical literacy and critical, democratic participation throughout the quantitative process by demystifying the technical complexity of quantification and allowing for opportunities to collaboratively run, interpret and trouble simplistic quantitative interpretations of human experience. A movement called 'Barefoot Statisticians' embodies this participatory ethic and creativity. Barefoot statisticians are trained to serve the local community's basic quantitative needs for the purposes of critical democratic engagement and activism in the spirit of China's 'Barefoot Doctors', who are locally trained to provide the basic medical and health needs of poor and rural communities.

Two Examples of Quantitative PAR

The next section will provide brief overviews of two quantitative PAR projects that have effectively combined participation with numbers to uncover great empirical insight with strong social action.

Morris Justice Project

The self-report survey, also known as a questionnaire, is probably the quantitative method most commonly used by participatory action researchers. The work of the Morris Justice Project is within the historical lineage of 'community self-surveys' and the mid-nineteenth-century to early-twentieth-century amateur and localized quantitative efforts that became known as the Social Survey Movement. These multi-methods studies (e.g. community surveys, mapping, interviews) tended to be explicitly conducted for the purposes of social justice, reform or human rights. Usually with the help of local volunteers and grass-roots organizations, extensive data on many layers of social and economic factors is collected within a relatively defined community.

The Morris Justice Project was designed to document the experiences of living in a heavily policed neighbourhood. From 2011 to 2013, researchers collaborated with and sampled from a single, 40-block community in the South Bronx, which had the highest percentage of police contact leading to physical force in New York City. The research team was composed of elders, mothers, fathers, youth, students, university faculty from the City University of New York, researchers

at the Public Science Project and public interest attorneys from Pace University Law School. This team of co-researchers developed all of the research questions, methods, analyses and products collaboratively.

The participatory design began by making connections with local community members in order to build a research team interested in studying experiences with and attitudes towards the New York Police Department. Over multiple sessions and rich discussion in the local public library, the research team developed a survey as well as interview questions. Surveys were distributed systematically block by block and filled out in person using a pen and clipboards. Surveys were also distributed with the help of local businesses, churches, the library and social networks. Over 1,000 surveys were collected. Additionally, the research team conducted focus groups and individual interviews.

The research team analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data collaboratively. The findings were used towards a broad set of local and citywide activism intended to raise awareness as well as support ongoing legal and legislative work. This included producing a local newspaper series to communicate the experiences/impact of aggressive policing, co-sponsoring events with community organizations to address neighbourhood safety and producing an active social media campaign in solidarity with court cases and legislation related to police reform. In addition, and throughout the research process, the lawyers on the research team provided education and legal services for individuals living in the neighbourhood.

Child Friendly Cities and Communities Research Initiative

The Child Friendly Cities and Communities Assessment and Monitoring Project was an international evaluation focused around a series of deeply democratic and participatory community surveys. In 1996, UNICEF and UN-Habitat created Child Friendly Cities to ensure that urban spaces were liveable for children and their families. The programme was intended to foster the human rights of children and youth by adopting participatory governance and urban management approaches. Hundreds of cities globally have since labelled themselves 'child friendly'. While progress at the national policy levels was successful, contextually relevant community input in developing and implementing this initiative was limited, particularly from children. Furthermore, there were no tools for assessing and monitoring how 'friendly' the child environments were.

Thus, researchers and practitioners at UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Childwatch International and the Children's Environments Research Group of

the City University of New York developed community surveys measuring a set of common child-friendly indicators (e.g. play and leisure, safety and protection, educational resources). They were designed to be collaborative, educational, locally flexible, richly informative and used on/by/for/with a broad group of community members, including children, adults as well as community providers and authorities. In addition to documenting conditions, the participatory surveys were designed to promote awareness of child rights and serve to voice grounded concerns to policymakers, urban planners and local governance. The surveys have or currently are being used in many cities across nine countries: Brazil, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan, France, Italy and Spain.

The community surveys involved participatory activities engaging children, parents and local service providers in the data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. The surveys incorporated words and pictures for every item and scale (e.g. never true, sometimes true, mostly true) in order to enable comprehension by children. The data collection or analysis process involved group participation through the use of poster-size surveys and colourful stickers, which the participants used to indicate their answers. Such active engagement and visual display of data allowed for immediate critical reflection on collective numeric tallies across items, including the evaluation of bivariate patterns (e.g. gender and age differences). The process also facilitated democratic discussion of how the overall frequencies and averages exposed needs for improved living conditions, application of rights, new community programmes, more inclusive policies and stronger governance structures that support the quality of child-friendly urban conditions.

Conclusion

Quantitative methods play a dominant role in the social sciences; however, they can pose challenges to PAR researchers, whose epistemological, ontological and ethical commitments can stand in contrast to traditional quantitative approaches grounded in a positivist world view. As a result, merging quantitative and participatory strategies requires creative awareness of the numerous opportunities for collaboration that exist throughout the quantitative process. When done well, quantitative participatory research has great empirical power to advance our knowledge and inform our actions.

Brett G. Stoudt

See also collaborative data analysis; Community-Based Participatory Research; Critical Participatory Action Research; philosophy of science

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R

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

The most common general meaning given to reflective practice is that it involves thinking about what one has done after completing an activity or while one is still engaged in an activity. The usual purpose of this is to improve what one does, to develop and grow, or to find new ways of thinking or doing. Reflective practice is often thought of in concert with the idea of continuous learning. While not exclusively so, reflective practice is usually taken to be something that people engaged in professional practice might and should do. While reflective practice might occur at an unconscious level, outside of our awareness, most of the discussion about it concerns how to make it deliberate. In fact, identifying processes that might assist people to become effective reflective practitioners is a concern of a large body of literature. This entry initially examines the origins, definitions and various perspectives people have about reflective practice. It then goes on to look at what has been said about the relationship between action research and reflective practice.

Definitions

Desiderius Erasmus (1469–1536) once stated that ‘reflection is a flower of the mind, giving out wholesome fragrance; but revelry is the same flower, when rank and running to seed’. The important message from Erasmus seems to be that reflection involves effort, design and purpose by being something more than idle thought. Indeed, dictionary definitions of reflection generally refer to the cognitive activity of reflection as careful thought or consideration. However, this definition does not quite capture the meaning applied to reflection by academics, educationalists and practitioners engaged in using reflection in practice. For example, Dewey defined reflective thinking as a number of phases involving a state of doubt, hesitation and mental difficulty. This results in action that will resolve the incongruity.

David Boud and his colleagues have described reflection as a process involving both emotion and cognition that results in a new understanding of a phenomenon. Don Schön, like John Dewey, saw reflective practice as thoughtful consideration of one’s previous experience while connecting theory to practice. While reflection can be a quite unconscious process without purpose, most practitioners who use the term *reflective practice* take it to be a deliberate activity that has a method and can be taught. It is often thought as a continuous activity and, in some cases, a response to critical incidents that occur in one’s life or work.

Some, however, take reflection to be somewhat more than changing what one does and include examining the deeper aspects of oneself, such as motivation, emotional response, values and beliefs. The reflective process involved in Buddhism is an obvious case in point, although this understanding of reflection is seen in more secular activities such as education, psychology and sociology. In this conceptualization, reflection is sometimes perhaps confused with the notion of reflexivity, which involves the process of examining cause-and-effect relationships. In particular, reflexivity, as it applies to the social sciences, concerns self-referent behaviour arising out of action. Reflection is commonly and inappropriately taken to mean the same as reflexivity.

Reflective practice takes on a slightly different meaning from reflection alone. There are a number of interpretations of what reflective practice entails that will be explored in the next section. But a generic definition is that it involves practitioners using processes to examine their performance and increase personal awareness so that they create opportunities for growth and development.

Perspectives on Reflective Practice

The idea of reflection can be found in the work of the ancient philosophers. Reflection for Confucius (551–479 BC) was seen as the most noble of ways to learn wisdom. Socrates is well known for his quite

famous reflection that ‘the unexamined life isn’t worth living, behind every experience there is room for interpretation of the meaning of that experience’. Indeed, the Socratic method involving the use of artful questioning of another’s viewpoint is a form of active reflection. Marcus Aurelius was probably engaged in reflective practice in his *Meditations*. The Buddhist literature is replete with references to reflection, particularly of the self, through meditation. Certainly, reflection needs to involve higher level cognitive activity. John Biggs muses that when one looks in the mirror one just gets back what one sees. Clearly, reflection needs to be more than that and should involve an improvement in what one does.

More recently than Confucius and Socrates, and with more direct reference to practice, John Dewey is perhaps the best known modern author to canvass the idea of reflection in his writings about education and the teacher. For Dewey, thinking could be either deep, and hence meaningful, leading to positive future action, or ‘idle’, where experience just passes through the mind. Dewey thought that reflection is the process that enables meaningful thought. He considered reflection to be critical to the ability to test one’s beliefs and assumptions against data and other possible interpretations in a scientific and systematic way. Thus, reflection is more than an idle occupation or meditation and is deliberative in nature.

In a broader sense, Dewey thought that this process was essential in a democracy and, hence, critical in education. Thus, it is not sufficient to just be involved in an event, an intellectual bystander; it is important to be able to make sense of it. To this end, Dewey thought that either education could enhance this ability and lead to intelligent action and be positive or it could retard growth and be negative. There are two principles to positive reflective thinking. The first of these is continuity. This is an assumption that one’s experience will affect one’s future, either positively or negatively. The second principle is interaction, which is the active comparison of present experience with past experience.

There are five main elements to Dewey’s concept of reflective activity:

1. Suggestion making that involves coming to rapid initial solutions.
2. A conscious cognitive recognition of the complexity that the person has experienced with respect to the problem that is being solved.
3. The serial use of each suggestion as a hypothesis to guide further collection of facts.
4. The intellectual elaboration of the hypotheses or suppositions.
5. Testing the hypothesis by intentional action.

These elements have been criticized because they seem to have a linear rather than dynamic quality, as if it is a method to be followed. In addition, there is no real concern with dialogue other than that which is internal to oneself. Others suggest that the role of emotion, such as doubt, needs to be included in any attempt to provide a model.

An interesting aspect of Dewey’s notion of reflection is that people who are able to practise reflection have certain characteristics that these days would be seen as personality attributes. These characteristics are open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness. These are components of what are now known as the Big Five Personality Traits, which have been shown to predict behaviour.

Inspired by Dewey and Lewin, David Kolb incorporated the idea of reflection into his Experiential Learning Model. The model consists of four parts: (1) concrete experience, (2) reflection on the experience, (3) theorizing from the reflection and then (4) testing the theory. Perhaps the most well-known and greatest contributor to the notion of reflective practice, and the originator of the term, is Don Schön. Like Dewey, Schön thought that a key element of reflection is the capacity to draw on past experience that for the expert practitioner is intuitive.

This intuitive decision-making occurs at the moment one is doing something. Perhaps, the person is confronted with a problem, or something is not going well. There may be an instant insight that there is a better way to do something, an improvement. Schön called this reflective process, ‘reflection-in-action’ that occurs spontaneously during an event.

Closely related to reflection-in-action is the concept of ‘knowing-in-action’, which was derived from Michael Polanyi’s notion of tacit knowledge. Usually found in the repertoire of the expert practitioner, tacit knowledge becomes obvious only during the carrying out of a task or while solving a problem, and perhaps not even then. The problem or task is often complex and expertly done. However, articulating tacit knowledge is no easy task, requiring a high level of self-awareness.

Schön also identified a different reflective process, which he called ‘reflection-on-action’. As the name implies, this occurs after the event and is mostly a more conscious process of examining what happened. This reflection might be planned, a structured process and a part of what has more recently been called continuous improvement. In addition, Schön thought that it could occur in a quiet moment when the person starts thinking about the event. This might be stimulated by a sudden awareness that something isn’t quite right or that in fact the whole experience went very well, and the mind starts to wonder why. Reflection-on-action

can occur with another person, Socratic perhaps, or in a group, or it might involve writing things down. This latter process has proved to be very popular in recent times and, as we shall see later, is commonly used in action research as a reflective diary.

An extension of reflection-on-action is the notion of double-loop learning, which was described by Schön. Compared with single-loop learning, which is a reflection on what happened, double-loop learning involves examining underlying assumptions or what Schön called 'theories-in-use'.

These processes were central to Schön's belief that practitioners can be taught how to reflect more effectively. This can occur during the Reflective Practicum, in which learners are coached by expert practitioners who demonstrate reflection-in-action. Then, a formal process is used to teach how to do reflection-on-action so that it becomes part of the practitioner's repertoire. For Schön, reflection is not just one-dimensional but a 'ladder of reflection'. In a Socratic process, the learner and the teacher can reflect on the activity, they can experiment to test assumptions and, ultimately, they can reflect on the process of reflection.

Schön thought that in order to learn and to understand, one had to enter into an experience without any attempt to prejudge. Borrowing from Coleridge, he called this the 'willing suspension of disbelief'. At the same time, there is a need to attend and absorb information and to participate in the experience rather than simply observe. Schön called this process 'operative attention'.

Applications

Reflective practice has been closely associated with the idea of lifelong learning and professional development. But it has mostly been embraced as fundamental to professional practice and professional identity. There is considerable reference to the application of reflective practice in the educational literature in particular, closely followed by nursing. Other professions, such as sport coaching, management coaching, medicine, management and consulting, for example, have also adopted reflective practice as a professional activity. Most of these applications of reflective practice have tended to take a retrospective approach rather than reflection-in-action.

In nursing, the model most often used for reflective practice is Graham Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, which was derived from Kolb's Experiential Learning Model, mentioned previously in this entry. Gibbs suggests reflection as providing an analysis of the situation and describing what happened, what thoughts and feelings were involved, what was good and bad about the experience, what could have been done differently and what would be done differently the next time. Many

practitioners will recognize similarities between Gibbs' model and Reg Revans' description of Action Learning. This consists of asking questions after an event, as follows: What was planned? What actually happened? What worked? What didn't work? What would we do differently next time?

For some, this process doesn't go deep enough. Real change is thought to come from the more introspective activity that questions values and beliefs, our schema about the world. It is here that the notions of reflexivity and reflective practice become blurred. David Boud and his colleagues, in the field of education, have come close to combining the two with their three-stage model. This involves reflecting on the experience by replaying it in their mind in a descriptive and non-judgemental way, examining feelings and discharging those that are negative and then re-evaluating the experience in a new way. This latter stage consists of association (comparing new information with current knowledge), integration (making new relationships among and between data), validation and appropriation (making the new understanding one's own).

Another model used in the health field, largely with nurses, is Johns' Structured Reflection. This, as the name implies, is a very structured approach to reflection (i.e. a virtual checklist) and has the advantage of providing a framework for teaching reflective practice.

The idea of reflective practice seems intuitively sensible, and to a large extent, its advantages are self-evident. However, this has led some commentators to reflect that there is not much in the way of evidence to support it as an activity, outside of the anecdotal. More important, there have been warnings that reflection can be poorly executed, leading to erroneous conclusions. Others even suggest that reflective practice, particularly of the more introspective kind, can be harmful to how people see themselves and, ultimately, have an emotional impact.

This is a somewhat sobering thought and supports the conclusion that there is a need for more systematic research about the effectiveness of processes that purport to develop reflective practice, the impact on people and whether or not reflective practice in fact produces any real outcomes.

Reflective Practice and Action Research

There have been arguments put, mainly by the educational community, that reflective practice often occurs without any framework or structured methodology to guide it. Action research provides such a structured framework, in which reflection is an integral part. It provides a link between action and theorizing, and reflection. At the same time, action research uses methods such as journaling, memoing, recording,

storytelling and autobiographies, for example, as vehicles for undertaking reflection. The often collaborative nature of action research enhances the potential for critical reflection, usually in relation to practice.

Kurt Lewin was one of the early pioneers to discuss the merits of reflection as a scientific endeavour within the context of action research, which he first mentions in 1944. Reflection is a component of the action research spiral that is discussed in great detail throughout this encyclopedia. Within Lewin's conceptualization of action research, reflection is a purposeful, conscious activity: part of a problem-solving activity. Thus, Lewin linked thinking with action. Lewin was also interested in bringing about social change, the betterment of society, through action research, of which reflection on data and action was a part rather than an end in itself.

It was later, through the work of educationalists such as Lawrence Stenhouse and John Elliott, that action research was applied to the improvement of the practice of teachers, which could be either an individual or a group activity. In these models, the teacher is seen as a researcher on her own practice, and reflection is tied to the research process. For Elliott, action is initiated by reflection but needs to end in action. Following contemplation of the identified problem, the teacher then might try out a variety of solutions and see what happens, modifying the approach on the way. In what has been coined as *educational action research*, reflection takes a central role and is seen as a professional quality that needs to be learned by teachers.

For Richard Winter, reflection is not given the precedence it deserves in conceptualizations of action research. He argues that reflection is the core activity that enables us to make sense of the world, of the evidence that we have gathered. However, he goes further to invoke the notion of reflexivity, which is required to try and explain phenomena. Reflection then is informed by reflexivity on process and theory.

Reflective practice and action research are both cyclical and concerned with improvement and creating the opportunity for change. They are both emergent with action dependent on an evaluation of what has been learned from reflection. Schön saw action research and reflection-in-action as equivalent. However, there are times when action research legitimately involves reflection-on-action as either an individual or, more often, a group activity. Elliott also sees reflective practice and action research as the one and the same.

The exact nature of both action research and reflective practice are, according to some, still relatively vague and still needing more robust conceptualization. Whether they are the same activity is also open for discussion.

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See also cycles of action and reflection; Dewey, John; educational action research; experiential learning; Lewin, Kurt; practical knowing; practitioner inquiry; praxis

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The notion of 'region' may span from a 10,000 square-mile territory in the Arctic with a handful of inhabitants to 'the region of Asia'. For the notion of 'region' to acquire meaning, it is necessary to link it to specific discourses. For action research, there are, in particular, two perspectives that have been important: one emanating from internal differences within nation states and one from the need to introduce several levels of organization to build the bridge between local developments and broader waves of change.

Differences between units that live under the same general conditions have for a long time attracted interest in social and economic research. The interest in regional perspectives emerging in recent decades can, however, to a large extent, be brought back to Italy and to the differences between the North and the South. Against the stagnant South, there is a North characterized by affluence, modern business and administration; a high rate of innovation and a leading-edge position internationally within areas like design, fashion and sophisticated industrial products. How can these differences exist side by side?

There are many possible explanations, from history and culture to technical skills. Widening the perspective to include differences within other countries as well, much of the attention has come to focus on knowledge and, in particular, the notion of surplus knowledge. With new knowledge continuously available, enterprises can continuously renew their products,

services and processes and, consequently, develop and grow. New enterprises will more easily be created, and enterprises from other places will move in because there are knowledge resources available for exploitation. Over time, the result will be affluence and the ability to finance more knowledge creation and strengthen the spiral. In many versions, this is the basic assumption behind the notion of the knowledge-driven economy.

Why should the search for exploitable knowledge lead to regional organization? Many enterprises are too small to directly benefit from global sources and are in need of local mediators, such as local universities or other gatekeepers. With a growing emphasis on experience-based knowledge, there emerges a need for social mechanisms that can transfer this kind of knowledge between enterprises, with an ensuing demand for direct contacts. The use of knowledge is not only a question of identifying relevant sources, it is also a question of the reliability of the sources. This leads to the issue of trust, an issue that has gained prime importance in the innovation context. The generation of most forms of trust will benefit from direct contact. In sum, a common vision today of an 'innovative environment' is an area where a number of enterprises can be found, in association with institutions of higher learning, with providers of risk capital and with public authorities intent on promoting innovation, all linked to each other in the form of various arenas for co-operation. Otherwise, they vary from, say, Silicon Valley, with several million inhabitants, to regions with maybe a hundred thousand. There is no sharp boundary between region and other social collectivities, such as community.

With its orientation towards how to make knowledge actionable, and towards the social processes needed to link actors to each other, action research is a natural candidate for an important role in this kind of knowledge-driven development. This demands, however, that action research be able to fill a role within contexts that are sufficiently broad and complex to defend the notion of region. Historically, action research is strongly linked to the dynamics of face-to-face groups, units rather far from regions. This leads to the other discourse that has brought the issue of regional development to the forefront in action research: the discourse on how to transcend face-to-face contexts to create more broadly framed processes of change. Several approaches have been tested in this context, and the one that has proven fruitful is the use of regional links and ties; a pioneering example is the Baldwin Corridor project in Pennsylvania.

Even in relatively small regions, research cannot reach all people directly. What is important is to reach all interest groups and types of actors: not only political leaders or the management of large enterprises but

also unions, ordinary employees, small enterprises, public services, educational institutions and whatever other types of actors may be important. If it is possible to reach all major types of actors and link them to each other, these actors can generally exert a pull on a wider range of actors, making it possible for action research to relate to fairly large regions. Those who represent the different types of actors are there in their capacity as representatives, not leaders. Although there may be an element of leadership development in the process, this is to take place in a collective form through the creation of the mutual trust that makes it possible for many people to govern together rather than through building up the capacity of a few actors to direct the rest.

Reaching out in this way can sometimes be done in one sweeping move, through large-scale interventions, that is, mass meetings. Such events covering whole regions are, however, very difficult to organize. The common procedure is to build the links and relationships stepwise. Core measures in this context are various forms of encounters where actors are brought together and given the opportunity to find out if they want to work together and in what way. Encounters of this kind often lead to spin-offs in terms of project groups and other units for the performance of specific tasks or to follow-up events of various kinds. In most cases of action research involvement in regional development, action research is responsible for organizing and facilitating the encounters and, in this context, for deciding what encounters to organize and in what sequence. In constructing an innovative region, it is important to work from a long-term perspective where all actors of potential relevance are not only pulled in but also used at a time and in a way that is consistent with the roles of the different actors. In the Grenland region in Norway, a group of process enterprises discussing work organization were the first participants successively to be joined by their local suppliers, by institutions in research and education and, when this alliance had become sufficiently strong to exercise a major regional pull, by the regional political authorities. The discussion agenda, which started with work organization, today includes many forms of competence development and innovation support. From being a 'rusty region', Grenland now appears as a dynamic one with a high score on innovation and with more people employed than ever before.

Regions like Grenland and the Baldwin Corridor are characterized by much of the innovations emerging out of the learning of the established actors in the region, such as workers and managers in the enterprises that are already there. Even when innovation is linked more strongly to scientific advances—even global spearhead advances—a regional organization is quite common—Silicon Valley again being an example. Even though

the notion of 'region' constitutes a common ground, the more specific strategies needed to create and sustain the region as a framework for innovation will differ. The type of system the process aims to achieve will influence what challenges appear and what should be done about them. Are all employees in all organizations to be mobilized early in the process? Are there local research institutions that are to be partners? What encounters are called for to link the various elements to each other? What events are particularly well suited to create the mutual trust called for in a pattern of horizontal co-ordination? In the thinking about how to construct 'the ripples in the water' effects needed to create a regional framework for innovation, two notions appear as particularly important: (1) the notion of innovation system and (2) the notion of social movement. With roots in economic theory, contributions under the heading of innovation systems tend to emphasize structural characteristics, sharply featured lines of reasoning and a traditional perception of theory; social movement tends, with roots in social sciences such as anthropology and sociology, to emphasize the organic, the interactive and the openness of the process. Insofar as action research has entered the field of regional development, the contributions tend to fall more under the social movement perspective than under the innovation system one.

Regional processes generally involve many different types of actors and organizations and are often made up of a number of different but overlapping part processes. To understand where we are each and every time and what the next step should be is often difficult. This has provided research with a major function beside the creation of the links: to keep track of what happens and to interpret events. These research contributions often form the point of departure for what encounters are organized and what agendas are set. This does not necessarily imply that research provides a lengthy summing up before the encounter gets going. In most cases, it is the actors concerned who tell the story; where research can help is in pointing out which actors should be called upon.

The notion of region is, today, popular within a number of politically defined areas. The European Community has divided Europe into regions, and national bodies often build administrative systems on a regional perspective. Common to most of these orders is that the regions tend to be much larger than those that action research has, so far, been able to handle. While many of the regional architects in politics and administration move top-down and create 'quasi-states', action research needs to move bottom-up and, consequently, always needs an anchoring in concrete realities. What is to be seen as a region cannot span beyond what can be anchored in the lifeworlds of its inhabitants.

While the notion of region, at least in 'the West', has been strongly linked to strategies for employment, growth and innovation, there appears a widening of the perspective, in three directions. First, in the wake of the finance crisis, more weight is placed on the issue of socially responsible innovation. Since social responsibility can be created only through surrounding the innovation process with a democratic dialogue among the people concerned, the region appears as a possible framework. A second factor is the growing interest in social innovation. Social innovation not only demands but also is generally identical to changes in the relationships between people, and such changes need to be pioneered within frameworks that allow for concrete forms of collaboration and joint learning, pointing the region out as one of the important frameworks. Third, while the efforts to provide help in the development of Third World local projects often seem to be successful, the efforts to transform states into open and democratic institutions have fared less well. This implies a need to strengthen the bottom-up processes, pointing out the region as a major area for future efforts.

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See also Development Coalitions; Emery, Fred; Norwegian Industrial Democracy Movement; Search Conference; Tavistock Institute

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RELATIONAL-CULTURAL THEORY

Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) posits that we grow through and towards relationships throughout the lifespan. This model, which originally grew from a feminist base and was aimed at altering traditional models of human development and clinical practice, has been expanded to better understand the power of connection in all people's lives. RCT rejects a view of human development as a path towards separation, independence and safety achieved through exercising power over others. The need for connection is

seen as essential to human life from beginning to end. In healthy relationships, mutual empathy, trust and responsiveness prevail, forming the basis for social justice and new, more equitable power arrangements. Built on clinical observation and research in psychology, RCT advocates a major theoretical shift based on a new paradigm that applies relational-cultural models to wide and fundamental social change.

Core RCT Concepts

The core ideas of RCT point to the centrality of relationship in people's lives. Initially developed to better understand and represent women's experience, RCT now posits that all people grow through and towards connection throughout the lifespan. RCT also studies how highly individualistic cultures interfere with growth-in-connection and undermine psychological well-being. 'Power-over' systems combined with hyper-individualistic, competitive values create chronic and destructive disconnections as well as unhappiness for people who feel pressured to separate and go it alone. RCT has not only contributed to the practice of a more relational and contextually sensitive therapy but also stressed the importance of social change and social justice to bring about more mutuality and connection in all our lives. Practising the RCT precepts of mutual empathy, authenticity, 'power with' and growth-in-connection challenges the hyper-individualistic status quo in psychology, psychotherapy and social political organization.

Until quite recently, most Western developmental and clinical theories were built around the notion of 'the separate self'. Studies show that the USA has placed far more value on developing a separate self than any other society. The dominant ideals of those in power—White, male, middle-class, heterosexual males—lead people to believe that acting out of self-interest and finding safety in exercising power over others is the best and most natural way to be in the world. Standards of maturity and psychological well-being are often skewed in the direction of building a strong separate self. Thus, child rearing, clinical interventions and educational policy have all focused on the importance of bringing dependent babies into an adult state of independence, autonomy and self-sufficiency.

'Hardwired' to Connect

New neuroscience data supports the core concept of RCT that humans grow through and towards connection throughout the lifespan. Humans need connection as much as they need water and air; they are neurologically hardwired to respond with extreme urgency to isolation or exclusion. People's brains function best and grow in relationships; the pain of exclusion travels

to the same area in the brain (the anterior cingulate) and is recorded in the same way as physical pain. Functional MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) studies show us that social pain is *real* pain. This has implications for social programmes and attitudes towards groups that are marginalized and excluded from the mainstream. The pain of exclusion and even the threat of exclusion are as debilitating for people as serious physical pain, such as that from chronic arthritis, migraines or severe burns. Isolation is one of the essential sources of suffering in people's lives. Our bodies and brains are primed to register extreme alarm when we are cut-off from human connection.

Rethinking 'Human Nature'

Influential developmental theories and popular culture have contributed to a misrepresentation of human nature as basically greedy, selfish, aggressive and initially lacking in the capacity to care about others. According to this model, people need taming by a vigilant and controlling society, and children have to be socialized to control their primitive antisocial natures and to be kind. Darwin's concept of the survival of the fittest is misrepresented as a testament to the success of raw, self-interested and aggressive competition, even though Darwin gave ample credit to the importance of co-operation and collaboration to individual and group survival. Researchers now know that one of the core contributors to ecological adaptation is the capacity for flexibility and resilience, which depend heavily on relational factors. Neuroscience data and RCT point to the importance of building mutual and empathic relationships and good vagal tone. Misrepresentation of self-interest as a biological imperative that defines human beings, rather than a social prescription, is a distortion of our core relational nature and allows the slanting of social policy in a pessimistic direction.

RCT argues that mutuality should replace the dichotomy of selfishness versus selflessness, the prevailing model characterized either by competition over scarce resources (me first, greed, zero sum) or self-sacrifice. In mutual relationships, people contribute to each other's growth, to the relationship, and then move towards increased trust, appropriate vulnerability and openness to being affected by one another. Safety is gained by building good connections and not by exercising dominance over others.

Working With Disconnections and Building Resilience

In the RCT model, people are seen as growing in connection and suffering in isolation. Acute disconnections—such as thoughtlessness, misunderstanding, ignoring

people and empathically failing one another—are inevitable in any relationship, but they can be reworked so as to build stronger and more flexible connections. If a person with power hurts a person with less power and the less powerful person can represent his or her hurt to the more powerful person, who then responds with empathy and earnestness, both people develop an enhanced sense of mattering to each other and of being effective. Trust grows, and the relationship gains strength, stability and resilience. If, however, the more powerful person disregards the less powerful person's feelings, fails to express interest or concern or responds punitively, it can lead to chronic disconnection. For instance, the less powerful, hurt person begins to feel that she has to hide both her sense of hurt and her self-protective or angry response. As an adaptive survival strategy, the injured person gradually keeps more and more aspects of herself out of connection in a particular relationship, building relational images that prohibit certain expressions. These particular relational images become overgeneralized so that the person feels that her anger is not acceptable in any relationship. As she brings less and less of her authentic experience into other, possibly all, relationships, the liveliness and zest generated in a growth-fostering relationship begin to disappear. People begin to lose their sense of worth and clarity and become less productive and more isolated from others. Jean Baker Miller coined the term *five good things* to describe the outcome of growth-fostering relationships: (1) an increased sense of zest, (2) greater clarity, (3) a sense of worth, (4) increasing productivity and creativity and (5) a desire for more connection. Chronic disconnections lead to the opposite, draining individuals, relationships and communities of vitality, stability and creativity.

Healing Through Mutual Empathy

Mutual empathy is at the core of healing in RCT. For empathy to provide a healing experience, the client must be able to see, hear and know that she has had an impact on the therapist. She must know that she *matters* in this relationship and will be responded to in a way that puts her interests at the core of the interaction. Much healing takes place around reworking relational failures and working with relational authenticity on the part of the therapist. When the therapist misunderstands or empathically 'misses' where the client is, it is important that the client sees that the therapist notices and regrets the misreading or the hurt he or she has inflicted. The therapist is responsive, not reactive. The therapist's role is to protect the well-being of the client by carefully providing feedback that helps the client see the impact she has on others. In this way, the client develops increasing relational competence and

feels less alone. Clients whose early-life relationships led them to feel that their feelings, thoughts, reactions and pain do not matter can be heard and respected in the therapeutic relationship. Their needs and hopes can be responded to, and disconnections can be reworked. Mutual empathy points to the fact that relationships which foster growth for one person are growth fostering for both people.

By nature, people are drawn towards mutual engagement, which involves profound respect and openness to being moved, touched and changed by each other.

When Culture and Psychobiology Clash

Culture is not an add-on in RCT but is seen as central to the way people grow, thrive or face daunting hurdles. Cultures shape values, meaning systems, what gets defined as good, strong, successful or shameful. In cultures that idealize separation and autonomy, people may feel invalidated and shamed if they experience a sense of need or dependence. Given that most human beings inevitably feel vulnerable, uncertain and dependent in various ways, this sets people up for a sense of failure. The disconnection and clash between cultural prescriptions and neurobiological realities create stress and an enormous dilemma for all people living in hyper-individualistic cultures. When we are pitted against our own neurobiological inclinations by cultural prescriptions and imperatives, great stress is inflicted on our bodies and our brains. The brain, however, is characterized by enormous neuroplasticity. Growth-fostering relationships can rebalance and reshape brain structure and functioning throughout the lifespan. In fact, empathic connection is a prime source of positive brain growth and change. Our capacity for empathy grows when we exist in a world that is characterized by empathic responsiveness. An empathic relationship is likely one of the core sources of healing and growth, both in psychotherapy and in everyday experience.

Mutual Empathy and Action Research

Mutual empathy is not simply a 'feel-good' mood elevator for individuals but rather a basis for social justice. Radical respect for others' experiences, openness to being moved and influenced by others and shared power are at the heart of social justice. Societies that empathically attend to the needs of their more vulnerable members are societies that are good for everyone. Data now shows that when empathy levels fall in a society, violence increases, economic inequality increases, instability infiltrates the social institutions, health conditions worsen and educational systems are short-changed. Anxiety, depression and a

sense of powerlessness ensue when economic inequality is rampant. Individual well-being and communal stability suffer under conditions of low empathy and significant economic inequality. Action research in the RCT model is about applying the understanding gained through theory building, clinical insights and neuroscience research to changing the social arrangements that threaten our individual health and global sustainability.

Judith V. Jordan

See also authenticity; empowerment; feminism; gender issues; social justice

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RELIABILITY

Reliability in research is the quality of consistency in a measure or procedure. This entry begins with a brief definition, then moves on to an exploration of the applications of the concept of reliability in quantitative research and consideration of its applicability to action research. The entry explains that when action research includes quantitative measures, conventional views of reliability can apply to that part of the research. Conventional means of attaining and affirming reliability can be used. In other action research, the applicability

of the concept is disputed. Those who argue for its use may advocate an alternative or a less stringent concept of reliability. Methods from some of the qualitative research literature may be relevant. Even in more emergent forms of action research, some of the strategies used to achieve reliability elsewhere may still be useful. Finally, not all consistency is useful. The entry concludes with a consideration of ways of achieving useful consistency that take into account the special nature of action research.

Definitions of Reliability

Reliability is a concept derived from quantitative research. There, a reliable measure is one that yields consistent results. It may be described as consistent or repeatable. Reliability is often contrasted with validity. A valid measure is one that measures what it claims to. An example often given is that a reliable clock, in the technical sense of the term, is one that is consistent, even if always fast or slow by a fixed amount. On the other hand, a clock is akin to an adequately valid measure when it always very nearly indicates the correct time, even if sometimes a little fast or a little slow. Together, reliability and validity provide accuracy. A measure that is very unreliable cannot be valid. Reliability without validity is not useful.

Yvonna Lincoln has proposed the use of the terms *dependability* and *consistency* in qualitative research as replacements for *reliability*. In some literature, including some action research literature, this has become common usage. Lincoln has since advanced *stability* as a more appropriate term, less indebted to positivist notions of good research. In consequence, there is no commonly agreed-on terminology for the concept in qualitative research.

Reliability can also be applied to procedures or processes, where it is the characteristic of being repeatable. A reliable research procedure delivers the same result on the same sample at different times or on different but equivalent samples. In their much cited monograph, Jerome Kirk and Marc Miller call these 'diachronic reliability' and 'synchronic reliability', respectively. For procedures or measures, reliability is often reported as a correlation coefficient or sometimes as the percentage of agreement between the results being compared.

Quantitative Measures in Action Research

Although most action research is qualitative, quantitative measures may be incorporated as part of an action research study. This is not unusual, for example, in some community-based participatory research. A team consisting of researchers and community members may

administer quantitative measures perhaps to determine what the focus of the action research is to be or for diagnostic purposes. The administration of the measure and the collection and scoring of data follow quantitative research protocols. Researchers and research participants then determine collaboratively the local relevance of the scores and their practical implications.

For such quantitative components, traditional definitions of reliability apply. High reliability is achieved by adopting the practices of good quantitative research. This is likely to include strategies such as standardized administration, judicious random sampling and careful recording of results.

Questions About the Applicability of Reliability

There are features of most action research that impair reliability as conventionally conceptualized. The necessary flexibility of a process that is intended to produce action also generates unpredictability. Each turn of the action research cycle typically has an action component, usually intended to change the research situation. There are therefore ongoing changes to the research setting in which the action research takes place. The participatory nature desirably leads to diverse views, with the result that outcomes change from time to time and are therefore initially unpredictable. The collaborative nature of participation can lead to apparent consistency that in reality is a false consensus (see the discussion below).

Attention to reliability as a concept is not strong in the action research literature, even in work that does consider validity. Some authors have dismissed it on the grounds that traditional views of reliability assume an unchanging world. For reasons discussed above, action research is very likely to face a changing and less predictable situation. Where research standards are discussed in such literature, terms such as *rigour* and *quality* are more likely to be used.

It is relevant that for some decades there has been a debate, sometimes vigorous, about the status of action research as scientific research. There are academic journals and academic departments in which only traditional experimental approaches to research are accorded high status. Different authors respond to the dispute in different ways. As action research consists of a large family of research approaches, attitudes vary. Action researchers also subscribe to a variety of philosophical positions.

Some researchers use forms of action research that are able to meet many of the requirements of traditional research. Also, to achieve funding and publication, authors may adopt traditional research criteria. This is true of some educational action research, for example,

which at times resembles quasi-experimentation. In such forms of research, reliability and validity are achievable if their definitions are relaxed compared with those in traditional use.

Research quality is a theme given more attention in action research since the late 1990s. For instance, it features prominently in both the 2001 and the 2008 editions of the *SAGE Handbook of Action Research*. There is also a growing literature in both action research and qualitative research generally that encourages the achievement of research quality by means other than those common in quantitative research. In qualitative research, Lincoln has been an advocate for alternative approaches, favouring terms such as *consistency* and *dependability*—or, more recently, *stability*—as replacements for *reliability*.

Practices for Improving Reliability

Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman have proposed what amounts to a checklist for reliability. It takes the form of a number of questions a researcher can ask. Some of these questions are likely to fit only a limited range of action research studies. For instance, they assume that data is first collected and only then coded. This is less common in action research than in most other research approaches. As a further important example, they (and others) recommend standardized procedures for collecting and interpreting information. However, in most forms of action research, the research process as well as the information is improved from cycle to cycle. The saying attributed to Kurt Lewin that to understand a system you try to change it captures this characteristic well.

Other Miles and Huberman criteria may be useful, especially in the less empowering forms where the researcher maintains a distinct role from the other participants. For example, they recommend questions about issues such as clarity of the research questions and the use of research features that suit the questions; an explicit role and status for the researcher; parallel findings from different sources of data; the use of appropriate samples of settings, times and informants; ways of maintaining comparability of different researchers' work and so on.

The maintenance of adequate documentation as the research proceeds can provide the audit trail that some authors recommend. This may take the form of the field notes common in much qualitative research. In more participatory and empowering varieties of action research, it may consist of notes taken on whiteboard or chart paper as the discussion develops.

Some of the Miles and Huberman criteria are applicable whatever the form of action research used. For instance, they suggest attention to the convergence or

otherwise in different observers' account and some form of peer review.

There are also forms of reliability that actually undermine validity. Information may seem reliable because there is consistency across researchers and across sources of information. Sometimes, this consistency arises in ways that actually acts against the validity and usefulness of the information. For example, it may be consistent because there is a conventional but inaccurate view held by participants. It may be often expressed. If it is never confronted by disagreement or by contrary evidence, it becomes a norm. Or the consistency may arise because participants have guessed at the purpose of the research and are being co-operative by giving what they perceive as the right or the expected answer. Kirk and Miller call this false consistency 'quixotic reliability'. Fortunately, ways of dealing with it can be applied in most forms of action research and much other qualitative research too. Some strategies for doing so are described in the next section.

Approaches to Reliability in Action Research

As mentioned, there are features that militate against the achievement of reliability—and perhaps cast its relevance in doubt. However, whether termed reliability or something else, random inconsistency is not desirable. Importantly (and fortunately), the very features of action research that threaten to inhibit reliability can instead be used as sources of research quality.

For example, the involvement of participants as co-researchers has the potential to provide varied and rich information. If a culture of honest collaboration is created, the resulting synergy can yield high-quality interpretations. This is more easily done in very small groups or in one-to-one interviews (see the entry 'Convergent Interviewing'), though even here, it is not a trivial matter. As Chris Argyris has maintained over many decades, it is rarely achieved. It requires both trusting relationships and a willingness to discuss topics that may not be easily discussable. Argyris has also given reasons why all or most social research faces this issue. With its commitment to empowering relationships, action research is better placed than much social research.

When direct and open relationships are achieved, heterogeneous participants can generate diverse viewpoints. In resolving their different perceptions and opinions, participants have the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the situation they face and how it might be improved. This is most likely to be achieved when any initial inconsistency is resolved through meaningful discussion. In a process analogous to Louise Kidder's negative case analysis, participants can provide information disconfirming of

others' views. The disconfirmation can have the effect of refining the growing collective understanding. The early stages of an action research study are therefore very important in establishing a suitable culture and appropriate participant roles and expectations.

The action orientation of action research, together with its cyclic process, is potentially a further advantage. The wish for beneficial change provides a common goal to be pursued. In addition, participants realize that their emerging understanding will face a reality check when they attempt to convert their understanding into action. This occurs in each action research cycle.

In summary, the relevance of the concept of reliability to action research is not a resolved issue. Whether or not reliability applies to action research, there are practices that can remove undesirable randomness from information. When this is done, finding agreement within diverse perceptions, and transforming that agreement into action, is a worthwhile endeavour.

Bob Dick

See also Action Science; convergent interviewing; data analysis; generalizability; rigour; technical action research; validity

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RESEARCH CIRCLES

Research circles (RC) as they have developed over the past decades in Sweden constitute a Participatory Action Research (PAR) device that particularly emphasizes the participatory and collaborative dimensions of this tradition. They were launched in the mid-1970s in Sweden as an answer to radical changes in society at that time. In these circles, a group of people, gathered because of a mutual problem, meet in order to establish a basis for action by further exploring the issue. The work in the circle is strengthened by the participation of one or more university researchers, who are responsible for the mutual knowledge work. Generally, RCs are intended to be a kind of knowledge bridge between the more experientially flavoured knowledge of ordinary people and the academic or theoretical knowledge carried out in universities. They constitute a tool for collective and democratic knowledge work and thus contribute to breaking the divide between the researchers and the researched.

Procedures

In an RC, about 5–10 people work together in order to enlarge and deepen the knowledge about a mutual problem. An agreement to meet regularly is needed, generally at least 5–10 meetings for 2–3 hours at a time. Most of the RCs will go on much longer, and it is not unusual that they last for years, sometimes changing their focus in response to new challenges. In an RC, the participants have access to an abundance of knowledge resources. The practitioners contribute with their first-hand knowledge about the focus problem. The researchers bring to the circle their knowledge from research that has relevance for the problem. They also contribute with their professional competence as researchers in dealing systematically with research problems, developing new knowledge and documenting the process. Further, they have the function as members of the academic community to find colleagues from various disciplines who can contribute to the circle work with relevant research. In this way, potentially all research in any field from any corner of the world could be accessible for the RC. Not least important, the researcher can bring the fundamental scientific attitude of being critical and at the same time be self-critical in the sense of being humble, open to new perspectives and willing to modify his or her own knowledge.

Characteristics

The mutuality in the creation of knowledge is characteristic of what is going on within an RC. The knowledge

transmission that takes place between the participants is not directed either from above or outside. Since the members of the group together own the problem, it is the right and the duty for everyone to contribute in the collective knowledge building. The role of the participating researchers is not using their academic knowledge to exert power over the content or direction of the circle work. On the contrary, it is their task to take into consideration and to value all kinds of knowledge and experience. At the same time, it is also important that researchers can critically challenge all kinds of knowledge, not least research results. By doing so, RCs can be described as examples of democratic knowledge processes where the knowledge construction is taking place in co-operation with all concerned and where different interests are considered.

The researcher who is trained to work in order to create new knowledge has the duty to facilitate the process. In order to ensure that the experiences and perspectives of everyone are made visible, he or she needs to be a good catalyst. It is a responsibility to bring forward the hidden knowledge, the experiences from individuals as well as structural perspectives. The researcher has a duty to bring to the circle other research that is done about the problem under scrutiny. It is also essential that the participants can discuss and question their findings together. In this way, democratic knowledge processes also contribute to a better knowledge base from which to act in order to change the participants' circumstances. The results can be manifold, and what is achieved is always documented by the participating researcher.

There is a great potential knowledge concerning the breadth and depth of the problem under scrutiny that already is at hand within the participants (the researchers included) of the circle. And there are many opportunities to gather more knowledge through researching activities by the circle or by bringing knowledge from a variety of research to the circle. The fact that sometimes very different kinds of knowledge are simultaneously accepted as relevant and regarded with a critical distance is also enriching.

History

Study circles are well known in Sweden, and most Swedes even have personal experience of participating in a study circle. They have roots in the nineteenth century and were important for educating the developing labour movement during the beginning of the twentieth century. Nowadays, there are several study organizations providing circles in a variety of subjects, often like small evening courses. But it is still possible for a group of people to organize a study circle around their own topic.

The concept 'research circle' was coined in Lund in Sweden in connection with a pilot scheme with university courses for trade union representatives, with content related to the newly passed labour laws (e.g. the Co-Determination Act of 1976 and the Work Environment Act of 1977). Together with these courses, the unions organized study circles as a kind of support for their participants. It was observed that both university teachers and union representatives were curious and eager to share in each other's knowledge and experience. A simpler arrangement for this mutual exchange was sought, and so the idea to revitalize and extend the study circle into an RC was born.

In the beginning, RCs were initiated by trade unions around various topics like work environment, municipal and regional development, or union organizing. Researchers at the University of Lund from a number of academic disciplines were engaged, and the work of the circles was documented and reported. Soon, the RC idea spread around Sweden, inspiring not only unions and their members but also various groups of people and organizations to start circles. Today, for example, RCs are used in the school and education system, in health care and eldercare, with immigrants and handicapped people and so on. The RC idea has also been tried in other countries in Europe and in South America and South Africa with varying success.

There have been many ways of providing the economic conditions for the work in RCs. During the 1980s and 1990s, trade unions in Sweden had the labour laws and a Work Environment Fund to support representatives and union members in participating in circles. Even for researchers, there existed several funding opportunities to pay for their work in RCs. In the neo-liberal era, these advantageous conditions have become rare, and in the 2010s, there exist comparatively few union-initiated RCs. Today, circles have been organized in a number of ways, for example, as parts of research projects, as part of education or as elements of development projects.

Different Kinds of RCs

It is apparent that the RC is a very flexible tool for knowledge work that can be adapted to many different contexts and uses. The original flavour of the RC idea is connected with the ambition to contribute to strengthening groups of people and social movements wanting to 'change the world' in a genuinely humanistic and democratic spirit. But like action research in general, there are many differing approaches and ways to use this tool. A rough classification of RCs that could be made is as follows:

1. *Emancipating circles* dealing with empowering people: Many of the first circles were of this kind. Some of them were with working-class women, for example, cleaners, factory workers and nurse assistants. The early circles often had a historical perspective, including groups such as farmworkers, typographers and butchers.
2. *Strategic circles* dealing with comprehensive social issues: Circles of this kind could involve trade unionists and politicians who wanted to deepen, understand and create tools to achieve a better impact on issues such as the European Union, the privatization of the common sector and the role of trade unions. It has also been used in working to support gender equality and other issues of general importance in schools and communities.
3. *Pragmatic circles* dealing with organizational or professional issues: In these circles, the focus has been on issues like work organization, school development and work content in different professional branches.

Potential Advantages

From the perspective of the university, RCs can contribute to developing the university into a so-called Mode-2 university more open to the society and interacting more with parties outside the academy. This might improve the university's social status by establishing the idea of the university as a useful knowledge source in the public mind. In Sweden, it is regulated in university law that universities should 'collaborate with the surrounding society', and consequently, the use of RCs is one way of doing just this.

From the researcher's perspective, RCs have the potential of giving access to knowledge that is difficult to obtain through traditional research. First, the knowledge and experience of the circle participants is of great potential value for the researcher. Sometimes, life history approaches or interviews can be used to tap this knowledge source. Second, the participants might also provide access to research in their context, for example, their workplace, organization or company. Another potential gain for the researcher is the opportunity to get feedback on research results or perspectives presented to the circle. Not least important is the fact that the researcher often gets inspiration from the work of the circle to initiate further research.

The participants in the circle deepen their knowledge about the problem that has been the focus of the circle. A very common observation is that participation in an RC is empowering for the participants to varying degrees. Their self-confidence usually increases; they

acquire new knowledge and feel more competent in putting forward their demands.

In relation to the PAR tradition, it seems clear that RCs are inherently participative, they prepare for, inspire or include action and provide an excellent arena for merging research and experiential knowledge and for doing research together.

Potential Drawbacks

First, the idea—like all good and constructive ideas—could be misused. Its positive side of being flexible in a good sense unfortunately also has a negative side of being too easily adapted and thereby losing the original potential as a democratic and an emancipating tool. There is a risk that it might even be used to enhance opposite interests that have a hidden and manipulative agenda.

Second, conditions are not always optimal or even suitable for RCs. They seem to demand at least a minimal level of preparedness for this idea concerning democratic knowledge work on the part of both the universities and the organizations or groups in society. In Sweden, the idea has been (and still is) compatible with some existing traditions, like the study circle tradition, providing scope for this kind of activity, and the same holds for other parts of the world where similar democratic traditions exist.

Finally, RCs are time-consuming, usually going on for at least half a year and often much longer. This means that resources in the shape of time and economy for the participants and their circle work must be found. These resources are sometimes not easily obtained.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, however, RCs are recommended as a promising and useful device for PAR.

Gunilla Härnsten and Lars Holmstrand

See also Co-Operative Inquiry; democratic dialogue; Dig Where You Stand Movement; empowerment; knowledge democracy

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RESEARCH INITIATIVES, BANGLADESH

Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB), a not-for-profit organization, was founded to promote knowledge on poverty alleviation that is relevant, useful, innovative, participatory and action oriented, with a special focus on marginalized and socially excluded communities. RIB views poverty as a multidimensional process and recognizes that the needs of poverty groups go beyond simple income generation, food and shelter to areas such as equality, dignity, justice, human rights and good governance. RIB supports marginalized and minority groups who are unable to access basic services due to social discrimination and conducts people's research (*gonogobeshona*) on the development schemes that affect them most, in order to develop ownership and generate community mobilization.

Over the years, RIB has conducted and implemented over 200 action-based research and follow-up development projects among 31 'missing communities'—that is, communities whose agendas are not addressed by mainstream organizations. RIB has also undertaken action research-based development activities among the seasonally food-insecure and drought-affected mainstream marginalized farmers and wage labour households of northern Bangladesh through dissemination of appropriate agricultural technologies. During the past 10 years, RIB has reached, through its Research Partnership Network, around 20,000–25,000 socially excluded and marginalized households. During this period, through its Kajoli preschool programme, 5,000 children from 1,200 economically ultra-poor households are entering primary schools annually with full preparation. It has also trained and developed around 1,100 community-based internal animators or facilitators to undertake and help poverty reduction among the rural marginalized communities.

Currently, RIB is implementing (a) a project to promote the implementation of Right to Information Act, which is supported by Rosa Luxemburg Foundation for the third phase; (b) dissemination of Kajoli Early Childhood Learning Centres (a model developed through research within RIB) for the children of marginalized families, supported by Kwintet AB of Sweden; (c) conducting of preschool programmes through community mobilization for the children inside the refugee camps of Cox's Bazar as the implementing

partner of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; (d) dissemination of agricultural technologies for improving food security and adaptation against drought and flash floods among the marginalized and landless households in Nilphamari district under the CSISA-IRRI-RIB (CSISA, Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia; IRRI, International Rice Research Institute) Partnership project and (e) strengthening of the indigenous Santal community's rights to land, government services and education as a partner of NETZ Bangladesh, a German non-governmental organization funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Germany.

The following are some of the characteristics of RIB's approach to research.

First, RIB believes that Bangladesh's research agenda should be based on local needs and perception. However, a truly demand-driven approach should consider the demands of the people themselves, the intended beneficiaries of the research, to be the main basis for identification of research topics.

Second, the research projects that RIB supported over the years have been largely based on application of the participatory research approach. RIB's efforts were aimed at ensuring that people benefiting from the research should be involved in a continuous process of inquiry. It has been seen that when peoples' views are treated with respect, they are eager to participate in the search for knowledge on their own situation rather willingly. It boosts their self-esteem and enhances their confidence.

The participatory approach was taken a step further through the application of the internationally acclaimed Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which became a hallmark of RIB's work. The PAR approach has demonstrated that when ordinary people are involved in a research process aimed at improving the conditions of their lives, they begin to reflect on those conditions and initiate change. The efficacy of PAR, which is based on the principle of reflection, followed by action, followed by reflection again, has been amply demonstrated in many RIB-supported research projects. As a result of RIB's efforts in promoting the approach, PAR has acquired a new name in Bangladesh. It is now popularly known throughout the country as *gonogobeshona*, or 'peoples' research'. Since action is a core element in such research, the results are easier to follow up at the policy or advocacy level than conventional research.

Third, RIB began its work on the premise that poverty is a multidimensional and dynamic process and not simply an experience of economic deprivation. It includes considerations of knowledge and skills, human resources and capacities, vulnerabilities and coping strategies, gender inequalities and human security and finally social exclusion and people's initiatives. Using these indicators, one can effectively

develop a perspective on poverty alleviation from the point of view of the most deprived groups and minorities in Bangladesh, whose needs have thus far not been addressed by the development establishment, government or non-governmental.

Fourth, by identifying social discrimination and ethno-racialism as a cause of poverty in its work, RIB has sought to include these factors as being equally responsible for the under-development of minority communities as well as the hampered growth of a secular and democratic polity. Forms of social discrimination such as untouchability and caste consciousness have kept many downtrodden communities, such as the *kewras* ('pig rearers'), *rishis* ('leather workers') and *horijons* ('sweepers'), on the margins of development. Ethnic discrimination against indigenous people by the majority community has kept many in these communities from accessing social justice and the benefits of developmental activities. For these communities, therefore, achieving self-dignity forms an equal part of their development agenda as food and shelter. The development needs of such communities therefore traverse the realms of needs and rights. PAR, such as the ones the RIB focuses on, has served as an apt tool for community and development workers to reach out to the needs of these 'missing communities'.

Fifth, due to scarcity of academic or professional researchers to undertake research on poverty issues, RIB had to turn to capacity building of new, young researchers to fill the gap almost from the beginning. RIB's efforts in this regard were aimed primarily at people who may not have the necessary academic background for research but who are more attuned to the ground situation and committed to participatory research. Over the years, through many workshops in and around the country and through short-term project support, a large number of young men and women have been equipped to serve as researchers and/or research animators.

Meghna Guhathakurta

See also capacity building; *gonogobeshona*; Participatory Action Research

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Website

Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB): <http://www.rib-bangladesh.org>

RIGOUR

Positivist scientific inquiry aspires to imbue knowledge production with rigour that enables the objective replication or falsification of the results. The knowledge produced by such rigour in science is deemed by other scientists to be trustworthy. Action research more often responds to a different paradigm of inquiry, variously labelled qualitative, naturalistic, interpretivist, post-positivist and so on. Consequently, action researchers often hold on to general principles of qualitative rigour, such as those detailed by Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba. Because such studies involve unique social contexts, they cannot be repeated with exactitude, which means that rigour cannot be demonstrated through repeatability. Since it is not possible to replicate action research studies, rigour in the action research paradigms must enable the post hoc assessment of the results' truth-value through applicability, consistency and neutrality. In such paradigms, the rigour of the research process makes the knowledge products trustworthy because researchers are demonstrably shown to be engaged and aware of the context, open and attentive, careful and conscientious, sensitive and empathetic and honest and reflexive.

Qualities of Action Research Rigour

The rigour in an action research study provides the means by which knowledge outcomes attain four important qualities of trustworthiness. These qualities are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. For each of these qualities, there are features in action research studies that provide the opportunity for researchers to instil the rigour that ensures the trustworthiness of their results.

Credibility

Credibility requires convincing evidence of the integrity of the research and the plausibility of both the process and the results. Rigour in action research can achieve credibility in unique ways. One way involves a sufficient time commitment to enable a demonstration of how the results of the actions taken achieved a

solution that assuaged the practical problem at hand. Such demonstrations might be qualitative or quantitative, but there should be convincing evidence that an enduring problem solution arose from the study. In action research, these achievements often occur after multiple iterations of an action research cycle have both rejected unproductive theories and established useful ones that precipitate valuable results. Action research can draw rigour from the achievement of a useful outcome that is demonstrably relevant to the action undertaken. Because action research results are actionable, the success of the action is one possible confirmation of the results. However, because action research engagements are sometimes situated in complex social contexts, they can become prolonged until such a demonstrably relevant solution becomes evident.

Credibility also arises when the research rigorously tracks the consequences of actions in terms of the problem under examination and the theory underlying the formulation of the action. Such a focus on the relevance of the theory-action-consequence relationship in each of the study iterations adds rigour in terms of the persistent observations that are required to cover both practical and theoretical outcomes.

Credibility is further enhanced by the iterative nature of most action research methods and the rich sources of data that become available when researchers intervene in social settings. Interview data is useful, but there are also meeting notes, log files, memoranda, e-mail, participant journals and so on. Such rich and varied data sources arise because actors in the setting (often both researchers and subjects) are usually deeply engaged in determining serious actions and interventions in the research setting. Further, multiple iterations of action research can involve changing or adapting the theory base for determining action. These data sources and expressed theories are replicated in each of the iterations of the study. Iterations build a large volume of empirical data in the study. More important, this research database provides a potential means for triangulation on the findings from multiple data sources, multiple theories and multiple iterations in which theories are applied to determine actions in the setting. Triangulation as an element of action research rigour means that multiple sources of data, multiple iterations of method and multiple theories all point to the findings that embody the knowledge produced in the research.

Credibility also arises because reflexive evaluation is often a key process in action research methods. Many action research methods involve a distinct evaluation activity that includes appraising the outcome of the actions and specifying what has been learned about the setting, theory, action and so on. Careful conduct and

documentation of evaluation processes provide several opportunities to instil rigour into the research process. For example, where a collaborative team is engaged, a carefully documented team debriefing as an evaluation component provides negative case analyses of what did not work, what undesirable outcomes resulted and why these negative results might have arisen. These evaluations can rigorously document the theory-action-consequence relationships. Once the research achieves its final action outcome, the evaluations will not only provide an analysis of the final iterations but also return to earlier, unsuccessful iterations to examine and possibly explain failed theories and actions. Such comprehensive evaluation provides the rigour of referential adequacy (the ability to explain the outcomes in previous iteration events from the theoretical perspective of the final, established theory).

Transferability

Transferability requires sufficient knowledge about action research theories, actions and results to enable other researchers to use the knowledge in future. The rigour in achieving credibility provides the basic groundwork for transferability. However, in action research, transferability means that further use of the knowledge must account for the unique features of the setting in which the study was conducted. For transferability, future researchers must know enough to decide whether the results from a past action research study are relevant in a novel setting. In action research, both the theory and the action may be conditioned by the exact social situation. The research results must provide sufficient documentation of the social setting to enable someone to compare it with a future social setting in order to appraise the differences and potentially adjust the action, or even the theory, for a novel setting. Applying action research knowledge requires an understanding of both the original setting and the novel setting. Action research methods sometimes employ ethnographic data collection techniques to enable transferability. These techniques include thick descriptions, confessional diaries and structured journals. Action research methods provide particularly strong opportunities to increase their rigour through transferability. This rigour is enhanced because actions taken without careful consideration for the social setting will often fail to achieve fully the desired outcomes. The opportunity for research rigour arises because evaluation involves explicit learning about the interaction of the theory and the setting.

Dependability

Dependability requires that the knowledge offered in an action research study will operate successfully

in the future. Like an experiment, an action research study will usually be able to show that its theory and its action are known to work only once. A rigorous action research study will include features that indicate that its knowledge will be dependable in the future; it should operate more than just once. Action research studies achieve dependability through the iterative cycles present in most action research methods. Near the end of such studies, confidence in an operating theory will build as minor successes lead to major ones. Final iterations will often expand actions from limited experiments to broader operating solutions. Dependability is achieved by rigorously iterating action research studies until the theory-action-consequence moves beyond an action experiment to become a documented operating solution.

Confirmability

Confirmability requires that an action research process can be reconstructed, even if it cannot be repeated. A rigorous study will yield sufficient documentation to support an independent audit of the action research process. Few action research studies may be subjected to such inquiry audits, but rigour is achieved when the documentation is present and available for such an audit. Such an inquiry audit can operate from a carefully administered research documentation database, necessary to achieve credibility, transferability and confirmability. In qualitative methods, such as action research, the purpose of an inquiry audit is to confirm the knowledge from not necessarily the research but rather the process by which the knowledge arose. Action research is a highly situated process, and an inquiry auditor may lack an adequate background in the exact social setting to confirm the content of research decisions. However, the inquiry auditor can review the procedures and the data to confirm that the research was conducted properly. The researchers' own journals are perhaps the most important element in the research database for the purpose of confirmability. When the researcher journal is reflexive, it provides a primary means for an inquiry auditor to distinguish and appraise the care with which both the objective and the subjective contributions were made by the researchers to the actions and the consequences of the study.

Assessing Rigour and Its Value

For scientific journals, the qualities that define research rigour also provide one source of criteria for determining whether a research report should be published. Peer reviewers will often try to assess whether studies have rigorous features. Reviewers focus on the credibility aspects that should be evident in reports.

Examples of the questions such assessment may drive include the following: Did the action research achieve the desired practical outcome (prolonged engagement, dependability)? Is the theory linked to action and its consequences in each of the iterations of the cycle (persistent observations)? Was the data carefully collected, in each of the iterations, from the subjects and the researchers involved (triangulation)? Were the failed actions closely examined (negative cases, referential adequacy)?

Scientific rigour is sometimes contrasted with the relevance of scientific studies, and action research may be seen as one solution to this contradiction. Strongly scientific studies can be so reductionist that the results are nearly meaningless for a practical expert with a real problem to solve. Because experimental models reduce social settings to a few testable constructs, practising professionals struggle to apply the results in rich social settings. Action research proponents argue that it is possible to use action research, with strong methods and tightly maintained links between theory and practice, to engage real settings with rigorous research features that lead to both scientific and practical knowledge. Rigour and relevance, however, do not guarantee breakthrough social science discoveries. Action research studies sometimes can only rigorously

confirm that well-known theories operate correctly to solve difficult problems in novel settings.

Richard Baskerville

See also authenticity; epistemology; evaluation; generalizability; interviews; quality; quantitative methods; reliability

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SCHÖN, DONALD

Donald Schön was an iconic thought leader and practitioner of action research. His multifaceted and multi-layered inquiry into the nature of everyday practice led to key concepts that have helped shape action research and organizational intervention; the nature of professional knowledge and know-how; the process of technical, business and social innovation and professional education. Over a span of nearly 40 years he worked as a manager, a management consultant, the leader of a consulting firm and professor and department head, while continuing to explore the nature of practice and publishing books with great regularity.

Schön's legacy includes the identification of key processes such as (a) the use of the 'generative metaphor' in making sense of new and difficult situations; (b) 'beyond the stable state', describing the state of impermanence of organizations in a changing environment and the challenge to their 'learning systems'; (c) 'espoused theory' and 'theory-in-use', capturing the gap between what professionals and organizations say they do and what they actually do, based on observation and inquiry, and using that gap as a catalyst for change (with Chris Argyris); (d) 'single-loop learning' and 'double-loop learning', describing learning in practice within a constant frame and learning that reshapes the frame that informs individual and organizational action (also with Argyris); (e) 'the artistic component' of professional knowledge, ignored in instrumental views of knowledge; (f) 'rigour versus relevance', to capture the dilemma of practitioners who want to go beyond the circumscribed problems and canons of professional practice; (g) 'experimentation on the spot', to capture how highly skilled professionals address difficult problems that defy their current understanding, leading to new knowhow and knowledge, and (h) 'frame-reflective discourse', capturing the process that shapes how opposing views, values, perspectives (frames) and

interests can come to resolution of intractable social problems (with Martin Rein).

Career

Schön was born on 19 September 1930 and grew up in eastern Massachusetts. His academic training was in philosophy at Yale (bachelor's degree) and Harvard (master's and doctorate). At Yale, he also immersed himself in analyzing theatre plays. Around the same time, he studied advanced music (piano and clarinet) at the Sorbonne in Paris. He was also a product of this time, with a passion for social change.

Throughout his career, Schön drew on the interaction between (a) his training in philosophy, in particular epistemology and Dewey's theory of inquiry for transforming indeterminate situations into more manageable situations; (b) his appreciation of music, in particular the practice of improvisation in jazz ensembles; (c) his passion for social change, in particular the issue of how its messiness defies the canons of instrumental rationality, and (d) his appreciation of organizations as theatre plays, in particular how the exercise of power can be understood as being informed by scripts. Early on in his career, he was also deeply exposed to work at the Tavistock Institute in London on organizational research and intervention.

After his studies, Schön started working as a management consultant at ADL (Arthur D. Little) in Boston, at the time one of the pre-eminent consulting firms focused on technological innovation. His collaboration with Raymond M. Hainer, a scientist at ADL, profoundly influenced him, and he pointed to his intellectual indebtedness to him throughout the rest of his career. In 1963, he published *The Displacement of Concepts*, later published under other names, exploring how people get to new ideas and pointing to the role of the generative metaphor in framing and inquiry during the process of invention. He was recruited to work for the Commerce Department in the Kennedy administration,

in particular in the National Bureau of Standards, with its Experimental Technology Invention Program. In 1967, he published *Technology and Change: The New Heraclitus*, reviewing models of innovation, observing the propensity of organizations and bureaucracies for 'dynamic conservatism' and viewing them as limited 'learning systems'. Next, he founded OSTI (Organization for Social and Technological Innovation), a consulting firm, where he explored, among others, the organizational difficulties in translating invention into innovation and organizational change. In 1970, he was invited to give the Reith Lectures for the BBC. This led to *Beyond the Stable State* in 1971. He combined the observation of a permanent change in the external environment at increasing speed with the need to radically transform individual and organizational learning. Rather than seeing organizations in a merely instrumental way, he also saw them as learning systems and political entities.

In 1968, Schön became a lecturer at MIT's Department for Urban Studies and Planning, and in 1972, he became the Ford Professor of Urban Studies and Education. In this period, he began a close collaboration with Argyris from Harvard's School of Education (later Harvard Business School), culminating in two books: (1) *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness* (1974), on the interpersonal skills needed for inquiry into professional practices, and (2) *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective* (1978), on the interpersonal skills needed to overcome organizational practices that inhibit organizational learning. Both books provided a perspective on organizational intervention learning in which the concept of the 'behavioural world', both individual and organizational, is the key link between behavioural and professional, managerial and organizational knowledge. A behavioural world can facilitate or inhibit learning (zero-, first- and second order learning). Individual theories of actions patterned on win-lose (which they called Model I) often get in the way of learning, while theories of actions focused on valid information, free and informed choice and learning (which they called Model II) facilitate learning. He emphasized that maps and frames need to be changed for organizational learning to take place at the level of instrumental practice—an aspect often overlooked in the focus on individual behaviour and action. Both Argyris and Schön focused on the quality of individual and organizational inquiry that would lead to what Gregory Bateson called 'deutero learning', or learning to learn. While learning within a constant frame (single-loop learning) was not uncommon and was institutionalized, in business organizations, for example, learning to change the frame (double-loop learning) was exceedingly more difficult and rarer. The task of effective consulting,

they proposed, was to help individuals and organizations develop a capacity for deutero double-loop learning in a world changing at an ever faster pace.

In the 1980s, Schön focused squarely on the nature of professional knowledge and how new knowledge was created. Drawing on a wide variety of cases across professions, including architecture, urban planning, business, psychiatry and economic development, he wrote an in-depth critique on the rational model of knowledge with its separation between theory and use, means and end, research and practice. If professionals were true to this model, they would face a dilemma of rigour versus relevance. In order to get out of this dilemma, he proposed turning the view of knowledge creation on its head—rather than seeing practice as the application of theory, he proposed to see knowledge created as emerging when highly skilled practitioners are in difficult situations that resist their traditional practices and canons. Caught in such situations, they display a kind of artistry—they can do more than they can tell. Through an often tacit process of 'conversation with the situation', which he called 'reflection-in-action', they make an indeterminate situation manageable. It is this process of improvisation and on-the-spot experimentation in the situation that he described in detail, showing how such a process of multiple design moves accompanied by intended and unintended consequences has a rigour in its own right. He proposed reflection-in-action as the core of an epistemology of practice, as opposed to an epistemology based on rigorous research and instrumental thinking. In 1983, he published *The Reflective Practitioner*. In 1987, he published *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, challenging the traditional relationship between universities and professional schools and showing that practices such as the architectural studio and medical education have strands of learning predating the formation of the current US version of the German research university. He advocated that professional schools should incorporate versions of such practices into their curricula.

In 1990, he edited *The Reflective Turn*, an anthology of case studies by scholarly consultants and researchers grappling with the messiness of organizational and institutional life. In 1994, when he was head of the Urban Studies and Planning Department at MIT, he published with Martin Rein *Frame Reflection: Toward the Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies*. Based on a review of in-depth case studies ranging from homelessness in Massachusetts and pension systems to introducing computers in the classrooms at MIT (Project Athena), the authors focus on the discourse around intractable policy controversies, the stances proponent take (talking from their frame) and how, in admittedly rarer cases, some policymakers often caught in difficult situations are able to engage in frame-reflective

discourse and in the process reframe the situation. In the mid-1990s, Argyris and Schön issued a paperback edition of *Theory in Practice* and a revised edition of *Organizational Learning II* (1996), drawing on their own insights resulting from research, consulting and teaching as well as on the work of their students.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, Schön continued to teach the core course in the Urban Studies and Planning Department, often with Langley Keyes; to conduct a research course in design with, among others, John Habraken, Larry Bucherelli, Jean Bamberger, John DeMoncheaux and a host of other design faculty and students from across MIT and to teach and develop a hands-on master's course in business leadership at Duxx, in Monterrey, Mexico, informed by design thinking and reflective practice.

Overall, his career of four decades after his education is best conceived as a set of four periods in which various key themes come to the fore through inquiry and publication. During the first period (later 1950s to late 1960s), invention and innovation featured prominently (influenced by Hainer). In the second period (late 1960s to late 1970s), he inquired deeply, with Argyris, into the individual and organizational behavioural worlds in which invention and innovation are played out. In the third period (late 1970s to late 1980s), he focuses on in-depth inquiry into the nature of practical and professional knowledge and how to teach it working with colleagues in the MIT School for Architecture and Planning. Finally, he turned to intractable policy controversies with Rein. In the process, he reached across many institutional, professional and academic boundaries rather than focusing on one specific discipline or field of function. Not surprisingly, a colleague of Schön described him as the 'fox' in Isaac Berlin's 'The hedgehog and the fox', whereby the hedgehog knows one deep truth and the fox knows many.

The early themes of his career—epistemology and inquiry into indeterminate situations, musical improvisation and artistry, social change and messiness, power and conservative mediocrity—were always there. When Schön passed away prematurely in 1997 at the age of 67, he had in mind a publication that could be a career capstone—a contribution to action research and Action Science.

Willem Overmeer

See also Action Science; Argyris, Chris; Dewey, John; double-loop learning; extended epistemology; map-making; practical knowing; reflective practice

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SEARCH CONFERENCE

Search Conferences are a much used action research form that shape arenas for participative planning and development. The theoretical model behind a Search Conference is a participative process aimed at combining a description of a problem area with the development of a vision for a desirable future. In addition, a Search Conference also generates diverse strategies and actions aiming at reaching desired goals, collectively prioritizing the best strategies and forming plans for implementation. In short, Search Conferences help develop understanding of a problem, prioritize what is important and ensure that someone starts working actively to reach the desired solutions. The Search Conference is a method which has its origins in action research, and research groups in Norway and Australia have dominated its development. The first Search Conference in Norway was carried out in a fishing community and was aimed at developing strategies for development of business and social life in this active coastal community. The main actor in the development of Search Conferences on the Australian continent has been Merrelyn Emery, but now Search Conferences have been held on almost every continent.

The Overarching Structure

A Search Conference may ideally last 2 days. Two sets of factors are important in this regard. First, a 2-day

conference allows participants to establish relations, because they will then, among other things, have dinner together and will often be staying in the same place. When a Search Conference is held in a place where participants can stay the night, it has the benefit that participants are removed from their daily tasks. This allows them to focus all their attention on the conference. The evening and night also give participants time to reflect and learn from the challenges and learning that the first day has contributed. A smart routine is to start the next day by asking whether anyone has pondered on anything or has any new ideas since the previous day. This often gives rise to many exciting ideas.

In principle, a Search Conference starts with the identification of a problem area, and it ends with the generation of concrete projects to meet the challenges that the conference has brought to light. Activities in a Search Conference are, as mentioned, divided between presentations and discussions in the plenary session and work in groups, and the group work is usually conveyed to all participants in plenary.

The Search Conference is led by a staff of professionals (at least two people). In addition, it is often natural to involve key local players. The local participants can contribute local knowledge which is necessary to select the right stakeholders, but they can also function as a doorway to the local community.

Selecting Participants

The first challenge for a staff that is organizing a Search Conference is selecting participants. A basic feature of the selection process is to find people who reflect as many aspects or interests of the issue in question as possible. It is important to make every effort to give all relevant stakeholders a voice in the conference. For example, in a conference that relates to a local community, participants should include children, youth, politicians, business managers, active women's groups and representatives of public administration. Thorough work must be done in selecting participants based on an assessment of who is important with respect to the specific issue at stake, and the potential participants must be judged to have the ability to co-operate in learning and planning processes. It is also important that the staff responsible for the conference establish as good an understanding as possible of the organization or community that is the focal point of the conference. One possible way of doing this is to interview all potential participants in advance, who will give the staff an understanding of who they are and an opportunity to convey what the Search Conference involves, and to motivate people to take part.

Staging

In the first phase of the actual Search Conference, the staff introduces the direction or focus of the activity. It is up to the organizers of the conference to decide whether to keep a tight direction of the topic or to have a more open process. For example, in co-operation with the Canadian Aviation Authority in Alberta, a Search Conference was held in which the topic was 'Increased Efficiency and Safety in Regional Aviation'. Such a precise definition of the topic implies tight direction. In a community context, it may be equally appropriate to announce a general theme concerning a desirable future for the inhabitants. The topic of a Search Conference must, of course, be clarified with the initiating groups. A common way of starting the search is to let a local respected authority of the area (e.g. a mayor, an important professional or a local hero) frame the conference. This will be the first introduction, where everyone is together in the plenary setting listening to the presentation.

How Is the Problem Perceived?

At this stage, conference participants are divided into homogeneous groups with an assignment to describe how they understand and experience the issues at stake. Historical development should also be a part of this description, because it helps locate the current situation in a historical perspective. An important perspective in this group work is that no experiences are wrong or right because the aim is to portray the broad understanding that is held by the participants. Therefore, it is important to encourage participants to create an understanding that includes the breadth of the opinions that are conveyed through the group's work. For example, if the conference is run in a manufacturing company, it may be natural to form groups consisting of operators on the floor, mid-level operations management, marketing and sales and top management. These groups should be as homogeneous as possible. The groups' work is presented in a plenary session in such a way that the span of opinions is presented to everyone. It is important in this phase that the staff does not open up for a discussion of what is right and wrong but only gives participants the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. All the groups present their work, for example, by conveying the main points on flip charts. All the flip chart presentations are put up on the wall in the plenary hall and remain there throughout the entire conference. This allows participants to refer back to the broad understanding of how the problem was perceived.

Problem Definition and Desired Future

The next step is an assignment where group members are asked to work on how they see the challenges for

the future. Work is carried out in the same homogeneous groups as in the previous phase. Again, group members should be encouraged to actively support each other in order to provide a basis for broad problem clarification. The objective of this process is to identify what can be seen as the problem situation or definition of the problem. Visions of desirable futures can be woven into this phase, but some process leaders prefer to separate problem definition and visions of desirable future into two different phases in the course of the Search Conference. In both cases, the results of the teamwork are presented in the plenary. Also, at this stage, it is important not to open up for discussions of what is the right or wrong understanding of what characterizes the problem. The first day of the conference ends with reporting out from this problem-defining assignment. In the evening, participants will often have dinner together, and there is opportunity for discussion throughout the evening.

Staff's Organization of the Day's Work

During the evening, the staff prepares the next day's work. The staff's challenge is to organize the input from the first day's work so that consistent categories are developed. Attention is directed at placing the visions of desirable futures in consistent categories that are meaningful to the participants. If it turns out that problem definitions merge into visions of what a desired future is (which may often be the case), it will be natural to integrate them under 'desired futures'.

A significant professional challenge for the staff is to understand what meaning the participants attach to their utterances in order to create categories of the contributions from the groups in a way that makes them recognizable to the participants. An absolute requirement is that one keeps all text (as it is written on the flip charts) in its original form. This organizational process is demanding and challenging work, which often leads to little sleep for the staff. The second day of the conference starts by sharing the staff's organization of the previous day. Special attention is devoted to understanding the different perspectives on what constitutes the problem in focus.

Assigning Priorities for Central Challenges

The second day starts with the staff asking participants whether they have thought about other factors related to the issues at stake, or if they have anything else that they would like to contribute. This could be either new perspectives or a further reflection on earlier presentations. Then, the staff explains its reasons for the organization and tests if the structuring categories are in line with the participants' way of making sense of the situation. It is not necessarily a requirement that

all agree on the way the actual categories structure the problems at hand. Opinions are now sorted by prioritizing what is important. If there are elements that participants do not recognize or that they disagree with, these will simply be issues that none of the participants would vote in favour of. The assigning of priorities can be carried out in different ways. An important challenge for the staff is to understand how disputed some topics can be. If it is likely that a discussion cannot be carried out in a plenary session, it is important to stop the discussion and let it continue in groups. This is an assessment that the staff has to make. If this is the case, it may be relevant to use groups which represent a cross section of participants. Regardless, the result of this process is a list of problems in ordered priority. In this phase of the conference (with a plenary session), visions of desirable futures are presented in different categories of prioritized tasks. This list forms the basis for the next step, which is to develop alternatives for action.

Developing Alternatives for Action

There are several ways to approach this phase. To summarize, the purpose is to bring the visions of desirable futures as a goal for concrete problem-solving activity. At this point, participants are in a plenary setting, where the prioritized visions or problems, which now have become development projects, are conveyed by posters or flip charts which are taped up on the walls of the room. Perhaps the most efficient way of manning the various development projects is to let participants 'vote with their feet'. This means that participants sign in on the poster that presents the topic they are most interested in. Thus, groups are formed which can immediately start working on concrete alternatives for action. Each group will make a plan for implementation. This should include a project plan which identifies who will take part and how the project will develop over time (a milestone plan), and an initial consideration of whether it will be important to recruit members other than those who have accepted the challenge at this point. An absolute requirement is that each group has identified who will participate in the first meeting and who would be responsible for calling and leading each meeting. A plenary session with a joint presentation concludes the Search Conference. At the end, the participants have to decide when the first follow-up meeting will take place.

Follow-Up Meetings

After the Search Conference, there will be several groups working to solve the problems that were identified. This is a situation where there are a number of project groups at work. The follow-up meetings have several purposes. First, it is important to co-ordinate

the activities of the various groups so that people can build on and support each other's activities. Second, different groups will have encountered different obstacles and seen alternative possibilities, and this is, of course, information which might be important and useful for all groups. Third, the follow-up meetings create a structure which commits participants to report and subsequently co-ordinate activity. The number and frequency of follow-up meetings depend entirely on the particular development process.

The staff can conclude its tasks by writing a report of the Search Conference itself. In most cases, it is natural for the staff to continue as long as there are follow-up meetings, but after the conference, it is important to create local leadership for the development activities. An ideal development is that the professionals from the staff gradually withdraw.

Morten Levin

See also Development Coalitions; Dialogue Conferences; large-group action research; Norwegian Industrial Democracy Movement; regional development; second person action research

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SECOND PERSON ACTION RESEARCH

Second person action research or second person inquiry is the name often given to action research approaches that involve two or more people inquiring together about questions of mutual concern. In this form of research, the researchers and the research subjects are one and the same. Co-inquirers work together to identify and formulate inquiry questions, to determine the ways in which information will be gathered, to make sense of it and to act on their conclusions. Groups are small enough to have some significant relationship with each other, traditionally meeting face-to-face, although use is increasingly being made of online and virtual inquiry groups. Second person inquiry is widely used by action

researchers and could be said to typify the underpinning values of action research, since a commitment to create collaboration, incorporate diverse perspectives and build mutual respect is a fundamental characteristic of this way of working.

The term *second person inquiry* was coined by Bill Torbert in 1998 to describe a particular quality of conversation and was subsequently developed by Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury in their 2001 *Handbook of Action Research* to mean all forms of collaborative, face-to-face inquiry. However, this way of working became established at least two decades earlier as 'new paradigm' researchers sought to find creative and collaborative ways of conducting research with human subjects who acknowledged, and even celebrated, their humanity and capacity for self-determination. Second person inquiry encompasses a wide range of practices from one-to-one conversations to large-group inquiry processes. The thinking behind this approach and significant variations in this range of work are explored below, together with the main skills required for this sort of action research practice.

Second person inquiry holds a particular place in the action research field because it claims that there is a form of knowing that concerns people in relationship with others. The idea of research *with* people rather than *on* them is held as a strong, informing value. John Heron, among others, argues that it is logically absurd to hold researchers as autonomous, meaning-making human agents but to treat the human subjects of research as if they are not equally self-determining. Mainstream research imposes meaning on human behaviour from the outside, as if researchers know what people are doing better than they themselves can. Furthermore, people are more than just thinking agents: They are sentient beings, who draw on experiential, symbolic, expressive and practical ways of knowing their world in addition to propositional sense making. Inquiry into the human experience, therefore, should try not to reduce all knowing to rational thinking. Humans encounter each other in ways that are tacit and cannot fully be described in language: The experience of relationship between persons, the act of encountering each other, is a vital and informing part of human life that is an inextricable part of how the world is understood and how knowledge of it is generated. Although there are certainly aspects of second person inquiry that draw on rationality, conversational approaches to inquiry that draw on a pragmatic tradition stemming from Dewey, at its fullest it is much more than group work or 'putting heads together' to solve problems: It is a way of trying to access and honour the tacit knowing of relationship, where experience is not.

There is also a political dimension; knowledge and power are tightly linked: In so far as the researcher is

claiming knowledge of another, she or he is exercising power over that person, exercising the right to name the other's experience for them. This is seen as one of the ways in which the voice of the elites that dominate academia shape and categorize everyday reality for those without such access. To engage in collaborative inquiry is an act of resistance against such an exercise of power, and a claiming by all those engaged in the inquiry to understand and speak for themselves. In this way, second person inquiry—along with other forms of action research—seeks to include voices of less powerful individuals and groups that traditionally have been excluded from systematic knowledge making. And since the act of recognizing and naming one's own experience in collaboration with others is an affirmation of individuality and autonomy, this in turn can contribute to the political emancipation of those involved. There are echoes here of the process that Paulo Freire called 'conscientization'.

It is not suggested the individual inquirers know their own experience in ways that are free from distortion or self-delusion but that, through interrogating that experience alongside that of others and in good relationship with them, such distortions will be challenged, clarified and shifted. Mutuality and accountability to each other are seen as ways to move beyond habitual forms of relating and conventional assumptions, to surface, acknowledge and learn from an exploration of experience. Validity in this kind of inquiry does not lie in arriving at objective truth. Rather, it is a negotiated validity, tested against its usefulness in helping those involved in the work address the challenges or dilemmas they are facing, together with the quality of the collaborative process involved.

Although groups engaged in second person inquiry may bear some superficial similarities with focus groups, there are important differences of principle and practice. Focus groups are convened by a third party for their own purposes and are given a topic to discuss. The results of that discussion are then used in ways that the discussants have no control over. Second person inquiry groups involve people who share an interest in or investment in the question to be explored: They may, in some circumstances, be convened by and facilitated by a third party, but their purpose is to meet the needs of the group itself. This may range from relatively casual and emergent co-inquiry through conversation to more formal groups, who spend time contracting on their terms of engagement and negotiating their inquiry question with each other.

Types of Second Person Action Research

Bill Torbert and his associates have developed practices on inquiry through conversation as part of the

work they have termed *action inquiry*. They propose the use of four distinct ways of talking, in order to open up possibilities for noticing and questioning the assumptions people hold about each other and increase the amount of overt and shared questioning. These are (1) framing—explicitly stating the purpose and context of the conversation, (2) advocating—setting out an opinion or desired course of action, (3) illustrating—giving a concrete example which supports what is being advocated and (4) inquiring—explicitly asking questions which explore the opinions and responses of others. The intention is to uncover the material which in everyday settings frequently goes unremarked, in a non-judgemental and non-defensive way, with the aim of increasing awareness of self and others and so enhancing mutuality. Such conversations may be planned or may arise spontaneously and are usually combined with other forms of reflective first person inquiry.

A more formal approach is Co-Operative Inquiry, first developed by John Heron and Peter Reason, in which a small group, usually between 5 and 15 people, pursue questions of shared concern through explicit cycles of action and reflection, meeting regularly over a period of months or even years. This is a demanding form of practice, in that all group members are strongly held as both co-researchers and co-participants. Issues of contracting, leadership and authority are part of the inquiry of the group, and use is often made of experiential, intuitive and presentational ways of knowing.

By contrast, Action Learning sets are a more pragmatic and contained form of second person inquiry, in which a small group meet with the support of a facilitator to explore questions relating to their work/practice. Participants are usually invited by virtue of their shared area of work—managers in different parts of a company, for instance, or people who have been on the same training course—and the facilitator helps them move through a process of disciplined questioning and reflection on their work.

Less formalized than either of these are various forms of collaborative inquiry and dialogue groups. Again, these have a strong relational aspect—still small enough for there to be face-to-face connection, so usually less than about 40 members—but membership of the group is somewhat more fluid and negotiated than in either of the previous examples: Not everyone is necessarily present at every meeting. Use is made of dialogic principles in which judgements are suspended and open, non-defensive conversation takes place. The aim is to create an awareness of knowing that arises collaboratively within the group as a result of its conversation and inquiring interaction, so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Such groups may have a convenor and/or facilitator, but the

facilitation is in the service of the inquiry of the group, not vice versa.

On a larger scale, there are a number of well-established facilitated large-group processes that aim to create co-inquiry in gatherings that can be as large as 200 or even 300 people. Such practices explicitly draw on systems thinking, trying to incorporate diverse parts of a human or organizational system to inquire into some shared problem or dilemma—partly by helping parts of ‘the system’ that may not previously have been aware of each other’s perspectives to recognize their interconnection and think together. Examples include Marvyn Weisbord and Sandra Janoff’s *Future Search*, the World Café approach of Juanita Brown, David Isaacs and others and Harrison Owen’s *Open-Space Technology*. These are usually timetabled events lasting 1–3 days, which seek to reach decisions in real time. Participants move between small groups, to explore issues in depth, and the large group, supported by visual or verbal mapping of the different perspectives within the room. As in the smaller groups, the processes involved are designed to encourage the suspension of judgements, draw learning from the experiential encounter of collaboration and prevent the closing down of issues until diverse positions have been heard and understood. Decisions or action points then arise with transparency, if not consensus.

With the advent of user-friendly information technology, increasing use is being made of web-based forms of second person inquiry, with the relational process taking place in virtual space or through ‘blended’ face-to-face and virtual interaction. Action Learning sets linked to formal learning and development programmes are now often conducted by telephone or through web platforms. Accounts are also starting to appear of online co-operative and collaborative inquiry, although there is no strong enough literature base as yet to enable a good assessment of whether the quality of experiential encounter is changed when there is no face-to-face meeting.

Skills

Whilst the concept of inquiring with others is simple enough, significant practical skills are required for collaboration and co-inquiry to take place. Action research journals carry many accounts of the challenges encountered by practitioners in overcoming hierarchical ways of working and the lack of trust amongst members of inquiry groups to achieve a quality of relationship that supersedes everyday assumptions and patterns of behaviour.

Many second person inquiry processes are initiated, led and shaped by an individual or small group, who then have to find ways to balance leadership and

collaboration as they are joined by others. The first steps in making invitations and starting an inquiry can easily establish patterns of ownership and dependency which are unhelpful for co-inquiry. Awareness of group process and basic facilitation skills are needed so that all participants are clear about their contract with each other. Ethical questions will also arise: how to support co-inquirers who feel exposed or vulnerable, how to deal with conflict, where the boundaries of confidentiality lie and who owns the knowledge generated by the inquiry.

Good second person inquiry requires mutuality and trust. All participants, therefore, need self-awareness and openness and the ability to establish empathetic relationships.

Gill Coleman

See also Action Learning; dialogue; extended epistemology; first person action research; Search Conference

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SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Social accountability can be defined as an approach in which citizens or civil society organizations hold public institutions (institutions established by law and statute and funded by public money) accountable. It is an ongoing and collective effort by citizens or civil society organizations which bridges the gap of electoral accountability. Through social accountability, public institutions instead of being indirectly accountable to citizens (via independent government bodies or a special wing of a government department, e.g. Vigilance) become directly accountable to citizens.

Citizens, civil society organizations and sometimes universities collaboratively take up social accountability, which involves data gathering about the performance of the government from the community and government departments. Social accountability can be considered a form of action research as it raises

awareness about poor accountability in a political system amongst the above-mentioned stakeholders and encourages critical reflection that can lead to solutions. The collaborative learning also creates opportunities for further innovations in social accountability and its replication in other regions.

At the outset, it is important to understand the rationale for choosing social accountability as a means to promote accountability in different political contexts. The history of social accountability explains that the shift to social accountability was not sudden; it has taken quite long for social accountability to establish itself as a credible instrument of accountability. Different types of social accountability mechanisms across the world are described in the next section. The section on enablers of social accountability describes the basic factors that make social accountability successful in a particular social context. The expectations from social accountability are then discussed, as well as the constraints of social accountability.

Searching for Citizen-Centred Accountability Mechanisms

Existing accountability mechanisms including electoral accountability do not give space for the participation of citizens in accountability as government-established bodies are the main instruments of ensuring accountability. In such cases, citizens are mute witnesses to a huge web of accountability procedures, and the only means of intervention is to approach elected members of parliament or attend the consultations convened by government bodies. This route to accountability is long and leaves little room for the articulation of citizens' opinions. As a result, basic services to citizens are delayed, and there are opportunities for siphoning off government funds. These constraints to citizen engagement have led to a search for a shorter route for citizens to directly engage with public institutions. Social accountability is one of the shorter routes which allow citizens to engage directly with public institutions to ensure accountability.

Types of Social Accountability

Social accountability can be divided into four stages based on the public finance expenditure cycle. The examples in the four stages have been taken from Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, India and the Philippines.

1. *Planning*: Public policymaking and participatory planning
2. *Budgeting*: Independent budget analysis and advocacy, analysis of budget for local bodies, gender-responsive budget and participatory budget

3. *Expenditure*: Public expenditure tracking and social audit
4. *Performance*: Participatory performance monitoring, community monitoring, Citizen Report Cards on health and water, citizen charter, right to information and public hearing

These social accountability mechanisms have improved the delivery of basic services such as employment, food subsidy and education to children and checked corruption. For example, through Government Watch Social Accountability in the schools of Naga City, Philippines, the quality of school education has improved; participatory budgets in some municipalities in Brazil have resulted in the prioritization of budgets by citizen needs and social audits of the Employment Guarantee Scheme in India have checked corruption and provided employment to the poor. The changing pattern of engagement between citizens and public institutions has gained prominence in recent times, but it has roots going back to the 1980s and 1990s, when tools such as participatory budgets were tried out in Latin America.

Enablers of Social Accountability

Certain conditions or enabling factors are prerequisites for social accountability. These enablers have been identified as supportive laws and institutions, the power of information, local capacity, local ownership, information and communication technology and the development of coalitions.

Supportive laws and institutions imply the availability of legal provisions and institutions for the articulation of citizens' voices. Disclosure of information by public institutions is vital to social accountability as it helps assess the government's performance with indicators such as the budget for government programmes, the number of beneficiaries and the number of items or resources to be distributed among citizens. Citizens who have an especially long history of marginalization lack the competencies and resources to participate in social accountability processes. So local capacity building is an important prerequisite. Sustained and long-term investment is required not only from the government but also from non-governmental organizations and international organizations in building their capacity.

Local ownership of social accountability mechanisms is important for broad-based participation and sustainability. It has often been witnessed that the community is wary of bearing the cost (human as well as financial) of social accountability processes as the members are not convinced about its effectiveness. Information and communication technology, like the Internet, e-mails, text messages and local radio, has

become an important tool for information dissemination and community mobilization. These media can also be important for monitoring and surveying government schemes.

Constraints of Social Accountability

A deficient democratic structure, rules, policies and institutions can be serious hindrances to social accountability. The multiplicity of institutions and the sharing of political authority across a number of levels from the local to the national to the regional to the global create institutional complexities that lead to democratic deficits, thereby posing challenges to ensuring social accountability. In such situations, citizens simply do not know whom to make accountable at what level. The capacity deficit among government and communities, despite the existence of legal mechanisms, can prove to be a hindrance at the outset. Further, ethnicity, illiteracy and caste or class discriminations exclude marginalized sections of society, including women and indigenous communities, from participating in accountability processes. The support for the initiative in terms of human and financial resources can be substantial, which the poor communities and even the government and civil society organizations in several countries of the world may not be able to afford.

Social Accountability and Action Research

The results of social accountability can be manifold. Social accountability improves the accessibility of basic services such as food, education and employment to the poor. It also activates the existing accountability mechanisms by prompting actions by courts and oversight agencies, for example, ombudsmen, public accounting or auditing bodies or legislative oversight agencies. The reports of social accountability are the basis on which complaints and litigation are filed, which creates pressure on courts and oversight agencies to take action. It brings a bad name to public institutions, which are highlighted in the media and on the Internet, harming the reputation and credibility of the public agencies. It forces them to take corrective action to improve their performance. It also leads to punishments and sanctions of public officials for non-performance. In this way, the performance of public institutions is improved, and citizens get access to facilities offered by government schemes. Thus, answerability and enforceability, the key measures of good accountability practice, are present in social accountability. The experiences of social accountability from different parts of the world need to be adapted as per social and political context. Social accountability takes

citizen participation from 'voting to monitoring' in a democracy, thereby deepening democracy.

Beneficiaries and actors such as students or civil society organizations can use these social accountability tools and bring the working of public institutions into the limelight. Use of social accountability tools will involve action research as they collect data using action research methods. In this way, action research will facilitate change in the working of public institutions—in other words, making them transparent and accountable.

Vikas Jha

See also citizen participation; Citizen Report Card; participatory governance; social audit

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SOCIAL AUDIT

A social audit is a tool to evaluate programmes, schemes and activities, often used by government-run service delivery agencies. As a concept, 'social audit' was introduced in 1972 by Charles Medawar to promote corporate, governmental and professional accountability. The underlying principle of the social audit is that a decision-maker, in any democratic system, should be accountable for the use of power and that power should be used in consultation and understanding with the people who are affected by the use of that power. At a later stage, this concept evolved as a tool, especially among corporations, to report their contribution to the overall development of society and to receive feedback from the community on their contribution.

Some organizations use this tool to evaluate their impact on the environment and employment in case of closure and/or relocation of an enterprise. Initially, these evaluations were completed without a shared structure, method or criteria, and the concept was used

more as a social concept than as an economic concept. Further, community-based organizations use this tool in the interest of the community to interrogate physical and social assets, natural resources and other needs. Recently, some non-government organizations, mostly in the developing countries, have started using this tool very frequently and on a large scale.

The social audit is a process in which the details of the financial and non-financial resources used by public agencies for development initiatives are collected, analyzed and then shared with the community. Different stakeholders, like community people, department officials, representatives of implementing agencies and office bearers of the institution or local government, participate in this audit. The sharing takes place on a public platform. Ultimately, the process provides users an opportunity to scrutinize developmental activities, methods of decision-making, the pattern of expenditure, and more, and it allows people to enforce transparency and accountability in those activities. Social audits strengthen downward accountability and help give voice to the poor and marginalized.

Different approaches are popular in different countries to conduct social audits. One very common approach to conduct a social audit is a 'campaign' linked with awareness generation activities within the community at various levels. In this method, community members form groups, collect information from various sources and develop their knowledge related to various aspects of a particular development project. In this process, they also try to develop knowledge of the respondents (and other stakeholders).

Some government agencies conduct social audits using pre-designed formats. These agencies collect data, with limited engagement of the community, and share that with higher authorities, again with limited engagement of the community. Since this method does not promote community engagement, it also does not generate knowledge among the community members.

Another approach to social audits is facilitated mostly by civil society organizations, in which they engage volunteers, mostly from outside the community, and collect data to share in a public hearing attended by government officials. With this process, they try to generate knowledge among community members and local officials, through engaging external expertise and resources.

A nascent approach is where local governments come forward to conduct social audits in collaboration with non-government organizations (as a third party) and share their contributions with the community.

Some key principles have been identified from social auditing practices around the world. These principles are considered as the pillars of social audit, where socio-cultural, administrative, legal and democratic settings

form the foundation for operationalizing the social audit. These principles are as follows:

- *Participatory*: Encourages participation of stakeholders (male/female, literate/illiterate, child/aged, labour/contractor, donor/receiver, etc.) and sharing of their values
- *Multi-perspective*: Reflects the views (voices) of all the people (stakeholders) involved with or affected by the organization, department or programme
- *Multidirectional*: Shares and gives feedback on multiple aspects
- *Comprehensive*: Aims to (eventually) report on all aspects of the organization's work and performance
- *Comparative*: Provides a means whereby the organization can compare its own performance each year against appropriate external norms or benchmarks, and provides for comparisons to be made between organizations doing similar work and reporting in similar fashion
- *Verified*: Ensures that the social accounts are audited by a suitably experienced person or agency with no vested interest in the organization
- *Disclosed*: Ensures that the audited accounts are disclosed to stakeholders and the wider community in the interest of accountability and transparency
- *Regular*: Produces social accounts on a regular basis so that the concept and the practice become embedded in the culture of the organization covering all the activities

Social audits are an important tool to promote accountability. However, they also promote the participation of the people, transparency of the system and responsibility of different stakeholders. In this way, they try to inform various stakeholders about their duties and roles. As a social audit is an ongoing process and can be done at every stage, from the planning of an activity through to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, any potential beneficiaries or stakeholders related to an activity or project can get involved at any stage of a social audit.

Social audits have the potential to check malpractices and encourage the accountability of the individual(s). Non-compliance with rules and regulations and incidents of corrupt practices, identified through social audit, can be highlighted through the publication of reports.

Where a culture of silence exists, partly out of ignorance and partly out of dependency, strong-arm tactics by government agencies, the conflicting socio-economic

interest of a society and limited availability of data may discourage social audits. Further, social audits can be expensive and may require extensive human and financial resources.

Experiences related to social audit show that extra efforts are required, along with statutory provisions, to promote transparency and accountability in various public institutions. The demand side (community) needs to be strengthened by generating awareness, building capacities, mobilization and facilitation of entitlements. The supply side (service delivery agencies), primarily responsible for follow-up actions, should be supported by creating a non-threatening environment and capacity building in record keeping. It is also important to give actual power to local governments because accountability cannot be fixed without power.

The large-scale involvement of community-based civil society organizations in social audits can have a great impact on the relationship between government and non-government agencies in the future, which currently varies from conflict at one end of the spectrum to collaboration on the other end.

Alok Pandey

See also community dialogue; Participatory Action Research; social accountability; stakeholder analysis

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SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Over the past 50 years or so, the assumption in social theory and in the social and behavioural sciences that what is ‘out there’ is an already well-made reality simply awaiting our discovery of its basic building blocks, along with the rules, laws or principles of their configuring and reconfiguring, has been challenged by scholars from a number of major disciplines and sub-disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, psychology and anthropology, along with

what is called discourse analysis, deconstructive and Foucauldian analyses, micro-sociological analyses and many others. All, in one way or another, have challenged the positivist assumption that humans live in an established reality of which they are merely ignorant. Social constructionism—which is sometimes called a theory or meta-theory, sometimes a theoretical orientation, approach or movement—constitutes a ‘turn’ in the sense that it is both a turning away from what went before and a turn towards previously unnoticed features of social interaction as being of importance, along with a whole new set of questions and concepts to do with these features. Central to it is a shift of focus, away from thinking that social organizations can be understood by analyzing them into a set of already naturally given basic things and facts, along with their laws of motion, to a focus on the ongoing, active, living interrelationships between people and the others and otherness in their surroundings, and on the creation amongst them all of what we take such things and facts to be. The formative influence of contexts comes to the fore. This entry discusses major contributions to the development of social constructionism and the relevance of this body of work to the way in which action researchers challenge established understandings and innovate new practices.

Social Construction in Its Own Developmental Context

As a ‘turn’, the origins of social constructionism can be traced back to a number of intellectual traditions, most notably in the sociology of knowledge and social philosophy, all of which put into question the nature of what is ‘out there’ in our surroundings existing independently of us, what we take as real.

Berger and Luckman

The first book to have the term *social construction* in the title was Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman’s influential book published in 1966, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, and this is often acknowledged as the origin of social constructionism—at least, in its epistemological version. As they see it, things that are ‘real’ for humans, for example, social institutions, are aspects of their experience that are independent of their own volition, or things that are there whether they like it or not—they cannot wish them away. Berger and Luckman defined ‘knowledge’ as the certainty that experienced phenomena are real and possess specific characteristics.

The term *sociology of knowledge*, they pointed out, had already been coined by Max Scheler, but it was

from Karl Marx' earlier work, they say, that the sociology of knowledge derived its root proposition—that man's consciousness is determined by his social being.

It is important to note that Berger and Luckman were careful not to focus their efforts just on the world of theorizers. As they saw it, theoretical formulations of reality, whether they are scientific or philosophical or even mythological, do not exhaust what is 'real' for the members of a society. It is what people treat as real in their everyday, non-theoretical or pre-theoretical lives that must, they said, be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. For it is precisely this common-sense knowledge that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist and function as such. In saying this, they acknowledged that they owed this fundamental insight into the nature of people's everyday, common-sense knowledge of their society's reality to the work of Alfred Schutz.

Alfred Schutz's Critique of Max Weber: From Products to Productive Processes

In Schutz's work *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, originally published in German in 1932 and in English in 1967, he focuses critically on Max Weber's idea that social behaviour can be studied by interpreting the actions of individuals in the social world and the ways in which they give meaning to social phenomena. Schutz is critical of Weber because he fails to distinguish between *actions in progress* and *completed acts*, between the meaning of a situation for an agent in the course of trying to produce a cultural object and the meaning of the object so produced.

Exemplified here is one of the most pervasive, misdirected tendencies in social theorizing: Already accomplished actions are presented retrospectively as a series of well-defined steps towards a foregone conclusion. Prospectively, however, for the actor performing them, they are not like that at all. Nothing is more difficult in everyday life than getting clear—like bringing a severely blurred visual field into focus—the next steps, the ways forward available for one's next move in a still indeterminate situation.

As Schutz saw it, in people's everyday lives, they live immersed in a flow of essentially undifferentiated experiences that melt into one another in a flowing continuum; but this is not how they represent them to others in their theories: Experiences constituted as phases or as noticeable aspects within the flow often become nameable objects of attention for them. These objects are presented to others as such, not by how they have actually lived through the experiences but as a result of their acts of attention. Consequently, people too easily come to treat experiences as separate, nameable, 'objective things' and to ignore the fact that they

are only sustained in existence by being embedded in a larger, unending flow of activity. And this can further, as Schutz pointed out, lead people to ignore the orienting, guiding and motivating influences their experiences can also exert on them, and within them, in relating these experiences to their surroundings.

Dangers of Reification

No wonder that, as Berger and Luckman in fact pointed out, the real relationships between people and their worlds become reversed in our theories. It is only too easy for people in their search for objective knowledge to reify their own nature and, in so doing, to construct a reality which excludes their own agency. Reification, apprehending human phenomena as if they are things, is a very present danger in social theory. Although theorists want to live in a logically ordered world of separate, decontextualized, objective and nameable things, the fact is that in their everyday lives they live within a still developing, undivided flow of activity, amenable to many different orderings. Thus, a social order, both in its development (genesis) and in its existence at any instant of time, is a human product. But this is perhaps to go too far, for to the degree that a social order can be differentiated out of the overall flowing continuum within which it has its existence as such, it is always in *statu nascendi*, always unfinished, continually open to yet further specification and development.

As a consequence, Berger and Luckman conclude that the academic discipline of sociology—as itself an only partly formed social order—is still in formation, and as such, it must be carried on in a continuous conversation with both history and philosophy or lose its proper object of inquiry. This requirement, however, is not always observed.

More Recent Developments in Social Constructionism and Language Use

The same goes for social constructionism as an academic discipline, as a social order still in development. Yet it is often forgotten that our intellectual forms of life grow and develop within an argumentative context, thus we cannot understand the meaning of the claims made within an intellectual tradition or discipline merely by examining the organizing assumptions, ideas, images, or models at work in it only as a structure in itself. As an academic discipline, we must also consider the larger, usually unstated background context within which it 'has its life', so to speak. For the claims being criticized, the alternatives with which it is implicitly comparing its own claims are at work also in shaping it.

Linguistic Social Constructionism

This invisible or implicit background context of everyday activity, within which our more explicit claims are rooted, has not, however, always been emphasized. Indeed, it has been, and still is, more often than not, ignored. Earlier versions of the working assumptions of social constructionism, as set out by Kenneth Gergen, for example, suggested that the terms by which we understand our world and our selves are neither required nor demanded by ‘what there is’, that everything we have learned about our world and ourselves could be otherwise and that how we describe, explain or otherwise represent things in fact contributes to shaping our future.

This led to what might be called a linguistic version of social constructionism, a version with a central focus solely on our ways of talking, aimed at formulating alternative linguistic representations (portrayals, descriptions) of the situations of concern to us. Only now, instead of taking it that our representations are caused in us by the reality around us, the direction of influence is reversed: What we take our reality to be is formed for us by our linguistic representations of it. The idea of a reality existing independently of our volition, as something we cannot wish away, disappears in these assumptions.

This led a number of critics to comment, that although language and discourse are of importance, continuing to ignore or downplay the importance also of our embodied being and of materiality was a mistake. Yet it is still the case that many studies claiming a constructionist provenance merely pay lip service to its philosophical underpinnings and still appear to view social constructionism as being ‘just about language’.

This, however, is to ignore not only the material influences of our use of language on the others in our surroundings but also the fact that we are as materially influenced by our surroundings as we influence them, if not more. And it is this issue that critical realists, as critics of social constructionism, have seen as central. They have suggested that one way of coping with it—while retaining the importance of the linguistic turn—is to put these two disciplinary discourses in debate with each other, in the hope that the best or ‘fittest’ solution to the dilemmas will emerge. But the trouble here is that we still tend to view debate in a Popperian, neo-Darwinian light as not only aiming at a finalized objective knowledge but also being conducted in such finalized forms of talk—Schutz’s difficulty with Weber’s account of action again.

Hacking and the ‘Social Construction of What?’

To put it in more subjective terms, regarding the motivating and guiding influences at work in people

as theorizers or researchers, if the claims being made fail to arouse in them a felt sense of the still invisible ‘yet more’ that they are striving to express (that they need to learn to ‘see’), then they will fail to get their point, in other words, what it is actually that they are trying to draw our attention to in their talk—a difficulty that Ian Hacking outlined in his 1999 book, *The Social Construction of What?*

As Hacking noted, social constructionist talk is now everywhere, and it is easy to get the impression that almost everything people once thought of as solid and well defined is in fact socially constructed. Thus, rather than pre-existing in material structures out in the world, things such as organizations, societies, social groups or families, social realities—along with identities—are all now talked of as being created, as having their being, within language-intertwined interactions with the others and othernesses around people. But what does it actually mean to say that?

Hacking notes that social construction talk is often in reference not only to worldly items, like things and facts, but also to the beliefs and ideas about them. Thus, it is true to say that discussions as to what there is for people in the world depends upon the use of language rather than on the structure of the world, because in discussing language use people are in fact discussing what counts as belonging to the world. Their ideas or concepts of what belongs to the realm of reality are given for us in the language that people use. They see the world around them as much, if not more, through their words as through their eyes. For, if they do live their lives within an essentially undifferentiated flow of experiences, how they pick out and focus on an identifiable aspect of it is crucial to how they can go on to act from within that flow. As Hacking sees it, the world is for people as they present it to themselves through their concepts; thus, if their concepts change, that will mean that their concept of the world has changed too.

But what is crucial here is their use of words, especially nouns, and in particular the word *fact*—for Hacking, it is not so much the tendency to reification that they must avoid but nominalism, a fancy way of saying ‘name-ism’—the tendency to think that when using a noun, it must be the name of some ‘thing’.

Moving Beyond Nominalism and Reification: Staying Within the Flow

More recent ‘turns’ within social constructionism itself have become very wary of this still prevalent tendency to reification and to a forgetting of our ineradicable immersion in the unceasing flow of language-intertwined social activities.

Kenneth Gergen, in his book *Relational Being*, published in 2009, would now like to speak of what

traditionally researchers have seen as an array of independent elements as now having their existence within a confluence, an intermingling flow constituted by an array of mutually defining entities. Others also want to make a similar claim: that social objects and phenomena such as the organization, the economy, the market or even stakeholders or climate change do not have a straightforward and unproblematic existence independent of their language-shaped understandings. Instead, they have to carve them out of the undifferentiated flux of raw experience and conceptually fix and label them so that they can become the common currency for communicational exchanges. So although people still have a very important use for nouns, they teach themselves their different meaning—as picking out aspects within a flowing continuum, not as the names of separately existing things.

This, as Berger and Luckman have indicated, means that people must try to set the starting point for their inquiries within the non- or pre-theoretical world of everyday life, instead of in the worlds of theorizers. But to do this, they need to move back upstream, so to speak, to those beginning moments in the flow of speech communication, in which events of a quite different kind occur than those which develop from them later. Researchers' aim in focusing on these singular events is to try to outline the concrete and unique details of both the creative origins of and the formative processes productive of their more explicit and stable experiences, especially of the intellectual frameworks they construct. Those upstream events, although already partially specified or articulated, are still open to yet further specification, but not just in an 'anything goes' fashion; the next steps possible can only be of an already specified kind—to reify them, to treat them as finished, nameable entities, as indicated above in the section on Schutz, is to lose the motivating and guiding influences that they can in fact exert in our actions.

Conclusion

These tendencies to reification and nominalism are still pervasive in theoretical talk in the social and behavioural sciences, as well as in organizational and management theorizing, especially in the urge to arrive at 'actionable knowledge' expressed in propositional forms. Their influence is especially pernicious in that they can lead us to forget, as we saw above, that organizing is first and foremost an ontological activity, to forget that although a developmental flow of undivided activity is continually at work in our everyday lives, we nonetheless have a hermeneutical capacity to 'bring to presence' the sense of a dynamic, unitary whole from a sequential sense of its parts over a period of time.

Of need of further study, then, as a major topic of action research is how many social phenomena, such as organizations and many other such named entities—which can become closed to innovative development by the reifying or nominalizing effects of current discursive conventions—may be opened up by different uses of language. The question thus becomes for social constructionism whether it can offer to practitioner-researchers and to researcher-practitioners alike concepts and methods of use to them in refining, correcting and elaborating their practices or in innovating uniquely new practices altogether. Or to put the question in a more practice-based, action research context, can action researchers catch the process of social construction 'in the act', so to speak? The study is of importance as researchers need to understand why so many of their academic disciplines and discourses—along with their forms of talk within their everyday social institutions—seem so prone to the tendency of reifying their subjects of discourse and, as a result, close themselves off from further development and become doctrinaire.

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See also constructivism; critical constructivism; critical realism

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SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice encompasses an ideal condition in which all members of a society have equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. David Miller in his book *Principles of Social Justice* contends that in order to become an operable concept, social justice presupposes the existence of a relatively bounded political community with a determinate membership, shared definitions of needs and resources and

some agency such as the state having the capacity to change its major social institutions and thus influence the equal distribution of social resources among the citizens according to the principles enunciated under the concept. Liberal democracies have given birth to the concept of social justice, though its ideas were initially shaped by religious traditions such as Judaism and Christianity. It is mainly in the late twentieth century that it has emerged as a secular concept with the influence of the philosopher John Rawls. A socially just society is based on principles of equality, values human rights and uses democratic processes to achieve these ideals. Action research supports processes to promote democratic social change through participation of the involved community or group. Action research through the co-occurrence of its three elements—action, research and participation—increases the abilities of communities or groups to be in control of their own resources and destinies by overcoming the barriers of class, gender or race and thus function better in a more equal and just environment. By removing the divide between social action and social research, action research is more suitable to nurture processes which are conducive to promoting social justice in the society. This entry discusses the history and development of the concept of social justice, its interrelationship with domains such as rights, gender, polity and the challenges posed by forces of globalization and, finally, the relevance of action research to social justice.

History and Development of the Idea of Social Justice

The term *social justice* was first coined by the Jesuit Luigi Taparelli in 1840 based on the religious teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. The concept was further elaborated by J. A. Ryan, who was also responsible for advocating the concept of a living wage. John gave a secular dimension to the concept of social justice, and political theorists such as John Stuart Mill, John Locke, David Hume, Kropotkin, Friedrich Hayek, Herbert Spencer and others brought the term into the mainstream discourse.

Two theories explain social justice from two different views: (1) utilitarianism and (2) the contractual theory proposed by Rawls. In its essential form, utilitarianism tells us ‘to perform whichever action among the options available will produce the greatest sum of happiness for all’. Thus, from the utilitarian point of view, certain sets of actions are considered socially just if their application results in greater happiness than any other alternative action. However, utilitarian theory could not account for the distributive character of justice, which emphasizes the fair and equal distribution

of certain rights and opportunities among all members of a society.

Taking on this point, Rawls developed his contractual theory of social justice. To his mind, each member of society has an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. Social justice, according to Rawls, is concerned with the fair or equal distribution of social primary goods—rights, liberty and opportunity, income and wealth—among the members ‘unless an *unequal* distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advantage of the least favored’. He suggested that social justice should be based on two rationales: (1) each person in society should have an equal right to basic liberty and opportunities and (2) social and economic inequalities are not acceptable or justified unless they result in the greatest benefits to the least advantaged. According to Rawls, these rationales are legitimized by following a particular system of collectively enforced social arrangements. In order to ascertain the agreement of the people about an arrangement or a general principle, he advocated a two-step contractual process. According to this process, (1) a majority of the members of a society agree to be represented by a representative for certain actions, and to that extent the representative holds these powers as a trustee of the members’ interests, and (2) the members are bound by the decision of the representative as long as the trust is not violated by either of the parties.

Thus, the same contractual arrangement also extends by the same logic to other territorial bodies, including the nation state, which is the ultimate trustee in this sense. Rawls asserted, however, that the general principles of social justice should arise from the people and not from the lawmaking powers of the nation states.

Taking further the principle of distributive justice, Miller in his influential work *Social Justice* pointed out that social justice was primarily concerned with the distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation within one society. The values of the benefits are to be established by their worth based on a broad consensus among the relevant population. The benefits could be a range of goods, services and opportunities, such as money, commodities, property, jobs, medical care, honours, prizes, housing and so on. Burdens include, for example, military service, hard, dangerous or degrading work and care for the sick or elderly. Therefore, social justice, as Miller argued, was about how these benefits and burdens are assigned to individuals in a society. He advocated three circumstances which should be present for social justice to function as a policy-guiding ideal with political relevance: (1) a self-contained politically organized community with a bounded membership, (2) an identifiable set of institutions whose impact on the life situations of individuals

of the society can be traced and (3) an identifiable agency, such as the state, which can change the institutional structures in approximate ways according to the guidance of the theory of social justice.

Within these circumstances what principles need to be kept in mind for the society to be a just one? In the *Principles of Social Justice*, Miller has put forward three principles that the society must comply with while assigning benefits and burdens to individuals to make it a just society. They are *need*, *desert* and *equality*.

Needs are met by social resources which are set aside for distribution to individuals on the basis of need. Services are provided fully or partially according to a shared understanding among the members of what one must have in order to ensure a minimum decent life in the society. The needs will be fulfilled by a range of institutions such as families, public institutions such as schools, health-care agencies, social security institutions and so on. If resources are scarce to meet a particular need (e.g. food), in order to ensure justice, specific allocating systems will be put in place, and the need will be taken as an important criterion and applied across the whole society for distributing the resources pertaining to the need. For example, measures such as unemployment allowance, minimum-wage legislation or cash transfers can be used to provide adequate security to meet the need of food among the disadvantaged. This is what is called distribution of needed goods on a non-market basis. When social resources such as prizes, honours or positions are allocated on the basis of display of merit or a special talent by the member of the society, it is called desert. Miller suggested that deserts are different from needs in the sense that certain activities will be valued differently because of their qualitative attributes, such as performing well in the arts or contributing to the production of goods and services, based on which individuals come to deserve these benefits. Not recognizing these differences will amount to injustice to such members. The third principle of equality flows from these two in the sense that for social justice to become an operative ideal in a political community or society, the members should be treated as equals in such a way that the income and other benefits people receive correspond to their respective needs and merits. Here, it may be noted that equal treatment need not be identical treatment. Sometimes, failure to provide different treatment because of pre-existing unequal social and economic positions of different groups in itself will evoke instances of injustice. Thus, treating two strong individuals or two weak individuals as equals is social justice. But treating a weak individual and a strong individual as equals is identical treatment, which is not social justice. Miller's argument of different treatment because of pre-existing

unequal social and economic histories of groups is reflected, for example, in the affirmative or positive discrimination policies for certain caste groups in India or for African Americans.

Interrelationships With Other Domains and Implications to Social Justice

What kind of institutional structures, contexts and relationships are necessary to realize the goal of a socially just society? What type of knowledge needs to be generated to understand and make these systems work? How can this knowledge be generated? In a majority of nation states, a formal constitution is the institutional structure that specifies the set of rights that each citizen must enjoy and the rules and procedures for realizing the same. In this context, law becomes one of the instruments to achieve social justice if it is interpreted to keep the justice ideals enshrined in the respective constitution. Miller identified three institutional contexts in liberal democratic societies—(1) the family, (2) the workplace and (3) citizenship associations—where the three principles of social justice—(1) need-based distribution of resources, (2) merit-based distribution of rewards and (3) equality-based access to resources in associations—are realized, respectively. While Rawls and Miller focused on the distribution issue of social justice, some scholars argued that the dimensions of social relationships do matter. Thus, social justice needs to be understood by examining the ways in which the existing social structures and social institutions promote some people and oppress others. Therefore, different forms of social oppression should be understood in the analysis of social justice. Amartya Sen opposed the distribution view by claiming that what matters in social justice is not what resources we manage to distribute fairly to people but to what extent we are able to help people develop their 'capabilities'. Thus, the capability approach directs our attention away from the procedures of distribution of resources to 'what people are actually able to do and to be' to achieve effective social functioning.

While it is important to understand the different dimensions of social justice, its practical implications can be understood only when we examine its manifestation in a range of sociopolitical contexts. Thus, action research as a strategy leads to a critical analysis of the institutional structures, contexts and oppressive relationships with the engagement of the people in action. It would lead to the development of evidence-based action through a democratic process which can make people, communities or organizations realize and put in place social arrangements which are informed by the principles of social justice. Such co-generated knowledge would enable groups,

communities and organizations to challenge the existing hegemonies based on capital, gender, race or caste and change them into more sustainable and just environments. The concept of justice unfolds as practitioners encounter various forms of oppression through research, understanding and action.

For example, during the 1960s, when women contested sexual and gender discrimination; African Americans contested racial segregation, inequality and racialized distribution of resources and Dalits (communities historically marginalized on the basis of *caste*, an ascribed status by birth) in India contested physical and psychological segregation in the form of untouchability, practised in residential, social and cultural spaces, they based their claims for justice on the a priori assumptions associated with social justice. There are other examples of such contexts, for example, gender, human rights and law, health care, bioethics, environment and climate change and the identity issues of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people. In societies which have progressed from feudal to egalitarian societies, the movement has always been interspersed with protests and debates regarding innumerable violations of the right to liberty, expression, association and equality. Exploring these contexts and situations through action research will help us understand how the practical implications of social justice are played out in these contexts.

Social Justice and Action Research

Thus, action research aims at co-generating knowledge with the express purpose of taking action to promote democratic social change. The abilities of involved communities or organizations are increased to control their own destinies more effectively and continue to do so in a more sustainable and just environment. To make the social justice concept socially relevant and applicable to different social contexts, there is a need to build empirical evidence about how the various dimensions of justice are framed and understood by the public at large. Theories of political philosophers about social justice need to be tested against the beliefs of ordinary people so that there is better convergence between what people hold and what philosophers debate about justice. If the aim is to arrive at publicly justifiable principles, then one should look at the principles that people accept about justice and its various manifestations. Action research by its very nature is grounded in evolving theory and action through people's participation. The steps of action research are interwoven with the social justice principles, such as equality, fairness and rights. Therefore, it can play an important role in examining the different dimensions of social justice in its practical contexts and in developing a normative

theory of social justice. Action research can be an important strategy to understand the changing boundary of the concept of social justice and its implications for peoples, contexts and nation states as a philosophical precept.

Prospects of Social Justice in the Context of Globalization

The scope and meaning of social justice underwent a dramatic change in the context of globalization. Globalization is a process where national boundaries have become permeable in such a way that people's lives are affected increasingly by the working of global market changes, on which nation states have little control. Therefore, contemporary theorists of social justice argue that in the context of globalization, the scope of social justice can no longer be limited to the state as a politically bounded community but needs to be extended beyond to the level of global justice across humanity. From this perspective, Miller suggested that nation states need to abide by certain obligations to promote global justice, such as the obligations to respect human rights and to refrain from exploiting vulnerable communities and individuals, and to provide countries with the opportunity to achieve self-determination and social justice.

He further argued that the effects of globalization and multiculturalism on contemporary societies across national boundaries have in fact changed the relevance of social justice in the global context. In the era of globalization, questions about the interrelationship between growth, poverty and inequality will get addressed in a different manner if we ask how the fruits of growth have been shared and whether the processes and arrangements underlying the current phase of globalization are just. First, though globalization is often equated with international equity, Amartya Sen pointed out that there was inter-country equity and interpersonal equity and that they were not the same. The impact of interpersonal equity on people and communities may differ depending on their plural identities, such as race, caste, religion, ideological or sexual orientation and location within nations. Therefore, the notion of global justice may not only be able to capture these impacts under the category of global justice, but also these differences cannot be used to understand the equality or inequality issues between states. Second, if we consider the rules governing the present economic arrangements in respect of the relationship between capital and labour, they are far from just. For example, China received 150 times more foreign direct investment to its economy than any other country, even the USA if we take into account the recent past. Similarly, a small increase in the US wage rates can lead to

changes in the direction of US-based capital in terms of its outsourcing of labour from another country, thus leaving the labour and capital vulnerable and insecure. With the impact of these global forces, the assumption of the nation states as self-contained political entities is increasingly challenged.

Multiculturalism is another manifestation of globalization, where a variety of groups within nation states—religious, ethnic, caste, cultural—assert that their voices and separate identities be given political recognition. When societies are divided along ethnic, religious and ideological lines, they tend to articulate their perceptions about the concept and principles of social justice more sharply. Therefore, it will be increasingly difficult to arrive at shared agreements about social justice. At the same time, globalization makes states' policy options more constrained and difficult to pursue in the direction of social justice. When political communities within the state are sharply divided along diverse identities, it erodes the state's capacity to direct the major institutions and resources due to the perceived differences in the definition of social justice. Action research is well positioned to understand these challenges. Finally, Hayek argued that the more powerless the state is to intervene in the distribution of the resources that the global market creates, the more impossible it becomes to pursue social justice in practice. Many scholars contend that social justice is a lost cause in the context of global economy, and as Miller pointed out, that one might well drop the idea of social justice from the political vocabulary and stop constructing elaborate theories on the basis of it. Though he used strong words, it cannot be denied that his observation reflects the current debates about the prospects of social justice at the global level.

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See also citizen participation; environmental justice; gender issues; LGBT; social accountability

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SOCIAL LEARNING

The meaning of social learning is dependent of the field within which it is talked about. Social learning as a concept, theory and approach has come to be an important dimension of action research and even more so of Participatory Action Research.

The Diverse Theoretical Sources of Social Learning

The roots of social learning as it is now understood in the context of action research can be found in different but related bodies of literature. Social learning does not as such have a linear historical trajectory, but as a concept it takes its sources from a number of academic fields of expertise, such as education, developmental psychology, organizational development, international development and sustainability. Social learning was first articulated in the 1970s as a theory by Alfred Bandura, a development psychologist who focused on how children learn from observing and engaging with their environment, underlying the importance of social interactions in the learning process. During the same period, Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, who worked on organizational development, highlighted the role of organizational learning for organizational change to happen, implying that there is a systemic dimension to learning. The links between learning and change are also central to Paolo Freire's pedagogy and to Jack Mezirow's transformative learning theory. But much earlier, in 1946, it was Kurt Lewin's seminal paper on action research which introduced the idea of the dynamics between actions, research and how social interactions or field forces can stop or foster learning. Nowadays, in the context of international development, and more specifically in natural resource management, social learning is conceptualized as a process of learning collectively to foster systemic changes. Jim Woodhill and Niels Røling consider social learning as a framework to foster reflective critical learning between stakeholders in the context of adaptation and innovation. Meg Keen, who worked with Val Brown and Robert Dyball in Australia, see social learning as an interactive process between, what they call, five braided strands of social learning. (1) Reflection and reflexivity, (2) system orientation, (3) integration, (4) negotiation and (5) participation are five ongoing processes, and the weaving of these strands help generate ideas and solutions to promote more sustainable futures.

The Process of Social Learning

Independently of the strengths and limitations of these contributions to the field of social learning,

what transpires strongly is that social learning encompasses a dynamic process of interactions between people which stimulates learning and should generate some form of transformative change, based on critical reflection and analysis, where power and power relations play a major stimulus. For Freire, change is about creating new and different types of power relationships rather than having a reversal, with the oppressed becoming the oppressors. This is an important aspect of action research and more so Participatory Action Research, where the role of the researcher is to step down from the authoritative position of the expert to become a facilitator of the collective critical learning process. There are a number of different dimensions in the learning process that are emphasized by different social learning theorists. For Mezirow, transformation is key, and learners become able to look critically at their own mind frames and world views to consider others and create new world views which help them to be more innovative and adaptive. The learner should also retain this capacity to keep transforming as new information is acquired which challenges the old worldview. For Ira Shor, knowledge has to be reinforced by a critical dimension where learners become aware of what holds them back and what prevents them from achieving transformation. Chris Argyris and Donald Schön conceptualize learning as a process of moving through a succession of learning loops where the learner moves from following the rules (single loop) to changing the rules (double loop) to eventually learning about learning (triple-loop learning). Critical analysis is essential to move between the loops. Meg Keen and her colleagues have adapted this model, whereby the single-loop learning from an event leads to action, the double loop leads to questioning or changing the governing assumptions and the triple loop leads to reconsidering the governing values. This step is akin to Mezirow's level of transformation. Finally, the other dimension of social learning, which runs through most of the work on adaptive management, is the acknowledgment of *interconnectedness*: People are connected to each other through very complex and dynamic relationships, but people are also a part of systems, such as the social, environmental or economic systems. And, thus, while poverty or environmental degradation, for example, have multiple roots, they cannot be solved through unilateral actions. Rather, they need to be understood through different disciplines as well as through the lenses of multiple social actors.

From a social learning point of view, action research mostly makes sense if it leads to social change and transformation. Röling has written about the need to develop a collective distributive cognition. Unlike shared cognition, where people share values which lead

to collective action, collective distributive cognition draws on different viewpoints from a diversity of value systems and builds on this diversity new understandings of the context in crisis and new creative ways to resolve the crisis.

Social learning is therefore more than just the result of social interaction. It also involves profound intrapersonal analysis and the decision to act for change. Social learning needs to be facilitated in order to stimulate not only exchange, sharing of knowledge and creation of new knowledge but also critical analysis to develop what Röling calls concerted action. To a large extent, there is a capacity-building dimension in social learning as people should learn the skills to keep on being able to learn and adapt. Participation is also an important concept or set of values underpinning social learning, with citizen participation and empowerment very much on the social learning agenda. Participation has been widely and at times rightly criticized for its mechanical implementation in a depoliticized way. In the context of social learning, however, it is considered as transformative participation, where politics, social justice and power are constantly being scrutinized; it is understood as praxis in the Freirian sense.

Promotion of Social Learning

Whilst at some level, learning from one another through social interactions is what humans do, it does not just happen. For learning to gain a richer texture and to be transformative, it needs to be fostered and facilitated. Careful facilitation of the weaving of the five strands is needed, and facilitation is a complex skill which is learnt through praxis, meaning that the act of facilitating is underlined by a commitment to change power relations and foster critical transformation during the research process. In the context of Participatory Action Research, the researcher is the facilitator and needs to transform her or his role. The aim of the action research process is to create a space for people to do their own research, data collection and analysis in order to address their own collective problem and dilemma. In the social learning process, the focus is all of the above in addition to facilitating learning on and from the process itself. The aim is not only to facilitate groups to generate subjective knowledge of their own context but also to help them learn how to learn, so that these groups integrate into their own awareness the value of learning and the need to continue learning when new challenges emerge. Typically, participants (be they illiterate farmers or highly educated policymakers) usually reflect that the most powerful dimension of participatory processes is the learning that occurs simply by taking part (when the process is genuinely participatory). The social learning

process focuses on making this learning explicit, which is also a central tenet of liberation pedagogy. As Gillie Bolton has demonstrated in her work on reflective practice, transformation and critical knowing happen through reflexivity, which is a deeper process of reflection where one looks at one's own process of thought and analysis and assesses its limitations in a self-critical way. Reflexivity is also a central tenet in qualitative research when researchers need to assess and challenge how their own ontology and subjectivity affect their research process. But here, in social learning, reflecting needs to lead to action in order to foster transformative change.

At a more practical level, facilitation relies on the creative combination of participatory research tools in order to stimulate reflection, discussion, exploration (collective and self) and analysis in a people-friendly, inclusive way, adapting the choice of tools and techniques to the context and the people. Diagrams, maps, calendars, transects, lifelines, drawings, matrixes, and role play can all be used in different ways. At a more strategic level, social learning processes revolve around the formation of multi-stakeholder processes, also often called multi-stakeholder groups or platforms. Stakeholders are individuals or groups of individuals directly concerned by the issue at stake. Stakeholder analysis, a prerequisite to any social learning process, consists of two steps: (1) the facilitator with an initial group of individuals start listing groups/individuals who should be involved and (2) then all the groups together proceed to an analysis of the relationships between all these different groups. It is important to understand not only the power and hierarchies between groups but also the history of conflict or co-operation and alliances. This approach is used in any participatory process or a conflict analysis/resolution process. Then, the groups engage in a social learning cycle such as the one Keen and her colleagues have articulated, whereby individuals and groups (a) diagnose where they are at, (b) create the design by adding new ideas and identifying the skills and resources in hand and those needed, (c) test the design and try out new ideas mixed with old ideas, (d) develop through evaluation and reflection on what was learnt and learn what should or could come next and, then, (e) restart the whole process in an ongoing, continuous way.

Social learning can be facilitated at different levels or scales. Some action research projects funded by the European Commission, for example, have promoted social learning at the European scale, with different European partners working on integrated management and sustainable use of water at the water catchment level. Others apply social learning principles to grass-roots-level community resource management,

for example, work done in Nepal by Hemant Ohja and his colleagues from Forest Action in Kathmandu.

The Challenges for Social Learning

The facilitation of multi-stakeholder platforms has its challenges, since bringing groups of individuals with long histories of conflict or distrust and with apparently conflicting agendas to the same process is not easy. It takes time, resources (financial and human) and a willingness by all parties to address the issue in a collective, inclusive way. As this process also challenges power relations, the most powerful may fear that there is too much to lose. Thus, developing a collective understanding that historical power structures may be a hindrance to moving forward is not a foregone conclusion. Cees Leeuwis and Rhianna Pyburn, from Wageningen University, borrow from Rölting the metaphor of the 'wheelbarrow full of frogs', which the driver has to push skilfully through heavy mud, constantly balancing and rebalancing, possibly changing direction before coming back on the path, in order to keep all the frogs, which are ready to jump off, in the wheelbarrow. In the same way, facilitating the social learning of a multi-stakeholder platform will not be linear and the outcome not predictable. What is predictable is that the group dynamics will be central to the success or failure of the process, and managing these well will be crucial.

Research in education and also experience in the field of social learning and Participatory Action Research demonstrate that people are also resistant to learning beyond the first or the second loop as discussed above, because challenging one's own world views is emotionally destabilizing and can have deeper, ripple effects in one's life. In work conducted in Nepal by the author with women-only user groups on social equity, it became clear that elite women were well aware of how social injustice constrains poorer women from the lower castes. However, they said that implementing a different, more equitable redistribution of resources (rather than giving all an equal share) would create too many conflicts with the upper castes and destabilize the social order. So learning and knowledge do not necessarily lead to action or the 'right' action which will promote social change.

In the daily hustle and bustle of professional life, it is also not always easy for people to make the time and space to engage in lengthy interactive processes which have no clear goal in sight, and so social learning, not unlike conflict resolution, tends to be considered as a last resort when the crisis point has been reached. The Landcare movement in Australia can be considered as the first social learning process on a large scale where landowners started to co-operate

amongst themselves and also with other stakeholders to reconsider land management practices. This was possible only because environmental degradation had become a problematic reality and salinity was destroying their land and livelihoods. This led to tree planting and land management changes, decided and designed by all the stakeholders involved (as opposed to a top-down policy change), on an unprecedented scale in Australia. And it also contributed to building stronger, more resilient communities. It is perhaps also not surprising that social learning has also been more studied, conceptualized and implemented in the Netherlands, mostly around water management, than anywhere else in Europe. Because of their history of community participation, the crucial importance of water as an ally and as a constant threat, the high population density and a deep sense of democracy, the Dutch understand the need to develop a social consensus to work with all stakeholders to develop solutions for more sustainable futures. This is not to say that there need to be social or historical prerequisites for social learning processes to be possible but that understanding the socio-historical, cultural and political contexts is important to setting up strong, inclusive processes.

The Relationship Between Social Learning and Research

So where is the research in social learning? It could be argued that social learning falls more on the action than on the research side and that it is nothing more than a participatory development process with a specific focus on learning. However, it qualifies as a Participatory Action Research process because it generates new knowledge and understanding on the issue(s) under scrutiny as well as on the process itself. As already discussed, researchers become facilitators and step down from their authoritative, expert role, but this does not mean that they forget their knowledge and skills. On the contrary, they will use them to help the process along. Researchers play three complementary roles. First, they are scribes who observe and document the process almost in an ethnographic way, so that we can better understand how these collective learning processes work, in order to inform the next learning cycle and in order to provide evidence to policy and decision-makers of the intrinsic social economic and environmental values of social learning. Second, they are key informants and inform the collective process with general knowledge of the issues at stake or previous collective learning processes (there is no need to let people reinvent the wheel just for the sake of participation). This role provides opportunities to share and disseminate research outputs or to update academic, relevant knowledge amongst end

users, which may otherwise stay locked up in academic journals. Researchers also use their 'expertise' to keep an eye on the process. They make sure the process is inclusive, deal with potential destructive group dynamics, stimulate the critical reflexion and alert the group about structural constraints they may not be aware of. Finally, researchers are advocates who lobby the academic world and contribute to the growing body of evidence which suggests that knowledge that matters is deeply rooted in context and subjectivity and reflects the needs, fears and opportunities of the people themselves. Thus, for these reasons, social learning fits very well as a companion process within action research. And, as with action research, these roles the researcher plays in promoting social learning demand reflexivity, flexibility, respect, openness, creativity, humility, some courage and patience, whilst at the same time maintaining rigour and quality and intellectual honesty.

Marlène Buchy

See also Action Learning; capacity building; citizen participation; critical pedagogy; double-loop learning; empowerment; facilitation; multi-stakeholder dialogue; Participatory Action Research; reflective practice; stakeholder analysis; sustainability; systems thinking; transformative learning

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SOCIAL MOVEMENT LEARNING

Social movement learning refers to both the learning that takes place within social movements and learning about or from social movements. It is a rapidly

growing area of interest, including within action research, and begins with the concept of social movement.

Social Movements

A social movement is a collective of people with a common interest directed towards political and/or social change. Because there must be widespread popular support and active participation, social movements are distinct and different from small, staffed and resourced organizations (like non-governmental organizations) or tiny pressure groups advocating, organizing, publicizing and/or pressurizing for an issue or position (e.g. Trotskyite sects or corporate lobbyists). There has been a growing interest in social movements because they are seen by many as important agents for social change.

For the most part, there is broad understanding of the political nature of social movements and broad agreement that they operate outside of the state. However, there are many areas of considerable disagreement. One such area concerns exactly what it is that social movements are trying to do. Since they usually emerge to deal with some concrete objective(s), social movements are often described as being 'issue' focused. Sometimes, this is accurate and reflects the self-understanding of the members of a movement. However, when a movement is explicitly struggling to overturn the existing order of things, such a description functions to diminish the scope and relevance of the social movement by reducing it to a 'stakeholder' that has a set place in the existing order of things.

Another key area of disagreement is the issue of the politics and democratic practice of social movements. Whilst there is often a widespread assumption that social movements are politically left oriented, many are in fact movements of reaction and intolerance. Even those social movements that are genuinely progressive when they emerge do not necessarily remain that way. Sometimes a social movement is the engineered product/project of a small group of committed activists who need to add social power to their argument or position or theory. Social movements created in this way seldom sustain themselves at the popular grass-roots level. In other instances, a social movement emerges from the experiences, thinking and struggle of ordinary people and is a genuinely grass-roots, popular project. In any case, social movements are invariably dynamic and contested spaces.

Social Movement Learning

As suggested above, for social movements to be social movements at all, the issue or issues they deal with must matter to a lot of people, and these people must

be organized in some way. Further, for social movements to have an impact, the ideas and thinking about the nature of these issues and how to overcome them must also be well-organized, coherent and convincing. Not surprisingly then, there is growing interest in the processes and content of the learning and knowledge connected with social movements.

The relationship between social movements and knowledge and learning emerged as an important theme within social movement theory in the early 1990s. It was argued that social movements define themselves within society precisely in the creation of new knowledge and are thus fundamental determinants of human knowledge. Since then, there has been an increasing interest in social movements as sites of learning. Much of this work has centred on knowledge and knowledge production and has been undertaken by academics or intellectuals outside of the movements themselves. There is thus a growing body of work considering the differences between 'academic' and 'movement' intellectuals.

Academic Versus Movement Theory and Knowledge

It is currently frequently argued that our understanding of the politics and processes of knowledge and theory production within and by social movements is still limited and that movement knowledge and theory tends to be undervalued, whilst 'academic' theory is privileged.

Thus, an increasing emphasis, as with some streams of action research itself, is on work emerging from *within* social movements, and in particular what they have to say about learning and knowledge production. The key difference, it is claimed, is that intellectuals outside of movements produce knowledge about movements, whilst movement intellectuals produce knowledge for and within movements. Some writers have reminded us that much of the theory now widely drawn on by academics was originally produced by movement intellectuals—including Marx and Lenin—who ground their theory in concrete situations and struggle; however, such theory has now been divorced from actual struggle on the ground.

Even *within* movements, two different kinds of theorizing and knowledge production have been detected, related to how the movement was formed in the first place and how it is organized.

Vanguardist Versus Grass-Roots Theory and Knowledge

When a social movement is the engineered product/project of a small group, the processes of learning are often determined by the small expert group who created it (the 'vanguard'). Here, learning tends to be

top-down, and the ordinary members are implicitly or explicitly expected to learn from the experts and to fit their experiences into the bigger theory of the vanguard intellectuals.

When a social movement is a genuinely grassroots, popular project, learning is often open, realistic and transformational because it starts from people thinking about the reality of their life and society. It is inherently a bottom-up, and not a top-down, process of intellectual labour. Such movements start from the assertion that they think (they do not need anyone else to do their thinking for them) and that it is in thinking of the struggle that they create something new, a challenge to the existing order of things. Examples of movements making this assertion include the Zapatistas in the Chiapas region of Mexico and the shack-dwellers' movement, Abahlali baseMjondolo, in South Africa (who refer to the 'university of Abahlali', the space in which they think and theorize their struggle). This insistence of the primacy of the thinking and will of the people is sometimes characterized as anti-intellectualism. In practice, however, most of these movements access and learn from relevant expertise when they need it.

Other Areas of Focus

An area of particular interest in social movement learning is that of the relationship between individual and collective learning, with some theorists arguing that collective learning is a more appropriate lens through which to look than individualized learning theories. This is still a relatively undeveloped area of study. A number of theorists have also emphasized the importance of the women's movement, because it is based on experience as much as theory; it acknowledges emotions as a source of knowledge, not just reason, and it acknowledges that all knowledge is unavoidably fallible.

Anne Harley

See also Critical Action Learning; engaged scholarship; environmental justice; experiential learning; organization development; praxis; social justice

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SOCIETY FOR PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN ASIA

Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA, www.pria.org) is an international centre for learning and promotion of participation and democratic governance.

PRIA began its journey as a development organization committed to social change in 1982 and celebrated 30 years on 6 February 2012. Since its inception, PRIA has embarked on a set of key initiatives focusing on participatory research, citizen-centric development, capacity building, knowledge building and policy advocacy. PRIA works with a diverse range of partners at the local, national and global levels. Its professional expertise and practical insights are utilized by other civil society groups, nongovernmental organizations, governments, donors, trade unions, private business and academic institutions.

Vision

PRIA's vision is of a world where informed, empowered citizens participate in the process of deepening democracy, with tolerance towards its large numbers and diversity. These include the marginalized, especially women. Citizens' rights and responsibilities are nurtured through a balance between authority and accountability. A harmony between economic and social development is sought in an eco-friendly manner, where local priorities are not sacrificed to global demands. Individual freedom and autonomy are sustained with collective solidarity.

PRIA's vision of a desirable world is based on values of equity, justice, freedom, peace and solidarity, with a philosophy (Knowledge Is Power) that takes forward all its actions.

Mission

PRIA's mission is to work towards the promotion of policies, institutions and capacities that strengthen the voices against marginalization of communities and increase the participation of the marginalized in society. The idea is to improve their socio-economic status through democratic governance. PRIA's mission is to reach out, through such governance, to everyone in society and to ease his or her participation in the governance process.

‘Knowledge Is Power’ is PRIA’s operating mantra, and organizationally, this means the following:

1. *Valuing indigenous knowledge*
 - Recognizing local, indigenous, practical knowledge
 - Supporting the articulation of this knowledge vis-à-vis ‘official’, formal knowledge
 - Facilitating the systematization of practice-based and experiential knowledge
 - Documenting local, experiential and practical knowledge
2. *Demystifying scientific or macro knowledge*
 - Bringing new, related frameworks, concepts and tools to local knowledge
 - Sharing relevant knowledge ‘externally’ produced
3. *Building perspectives, awareness and skills*
 - Encouraging critical reflection of one’s own knowledge and that of others
 - Motivating self-reflection in the face of self-doubt and confusion
 - Supporting sharpening of one’s own perspectives
 - Building skills
 - Practicing conscientization
 - Handholding
 - Showing one’s own unlearning (and vulnerabilities) and learning from the relationship
4. *Interfacing knowledge mobilization and sharing*
 - Disseminating local, indigenous knowledge to other practitioners
 - Encountering systematization of local knowledge with policy-related knowledge
 - Facilitating network and coalition building with like-minded others
 - Opening doors with the ‘powerful’ to engage
 - Supporting individual-group-collective mobilization for articulation
 - Institutionalizing such indigenous knowledge and its collective production or reproduction

Approaches

PRIA adopts three main approaches in its work, which is crosscutting (across themes and geographical areas) and across different levels (local, meso and global):

First, PRIA intervenes directly in the field in order to promote citizens’ collective voices to make demands on governance institutions to claim their rights, access services and ensure accountable utilization of public resources in development programmes.

Second, PRIA provides on-demand advisory and consultancy services to a wide array of clients internationally. It utilizes its practical knowledge and professional expertise to offer participatory and sustainable solutions to improve the supply side of development and democracy.

Third, PRIA offers educational programmes in human and social development themes, drawing from its field experiences, advisory services and extensive research projects. These educational courses are offered in face-to-face and distance modes.

Trajectory of PRIA’s Work

In its journey over 30 years, there have been some hallmark phases. The work in each phase is not watertight. Many national and international political, economic and sectoral developments from an earlier phase have influenced and shaped decisions in a subsequent phase.

Phase 1: Systematizing Local Knowledge for Empowerment (1981 to Early 1986)

At the time of PRIA’s conception and birth, the planetary arrangement of national and global forces was very specific. In India, at the national level, the new Congress government (led by Indira Gandhi) had come back to power after a failed experiment of the Janata Party government. The Total Revolution movement led by Jai Prakash Narain in the early 1970s had mobilized students and youth on an unprecedented scale. Many such youth groups of the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini (‘Student Youth Struggle Brigade’) became disillusioned with formal party politics and set up voluntary action groups around this period.

At the international level, recognition for people’s participation had just about begun following the Food and Agriculture Organization’s Rome conference, which pronounced the criticality of organizations of the rural poor, and the World Health Organization’s Alma Ata Conference, which defined community participation as a building block of primary health care. Nicaragua’s Literacy Crusade had galvanized adult educators in support of liberation struggles. The International Council of Adult Education anchored the regional networks of participatory research, and the First International Conference on Participatory Research was held in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, in 1980.

PRIA (and its name) grew out of engagement in the International Participatory Research Network. As the node for the Asian Regional Network of Participatory Research, PRIA was active in building knowledge and capacity for participatory research in a variety of settings. PRIA applied the concepts and practice of the international network to its work in India and also

began to actively influence the network and activities of the International Council of Adult Education in the international arena.

The principal activities in the first phase were promotion of participation, use of participatory research methodology and documenting, and evaluating and disseminating indigenous local knowledge. Participatory research activities by PRIA helped promote the following:

- Indigenous knowledge of forest dwellers and tribals around deforestation
- Local knowledge of families displaced due to land alienation and dams
- Experiential knowledge of workers on issues of occupational health and safety
- Lived-in knowledge of rural poor women on questions of literacy and livelihood

Phase 2: Building Competencies as Change Agents (Early 1986 to Early 1991)

In this period, PRIA articulated capacity as learning, learning for empowerment and learning to value experiences and knowledge. This focus on learning as empowerment emerged in practice as follows:

- Participatory training methodology with grass-roots activists and change agents
- Process documentation and evaluation of the projects and activities of voluntary organizations
- Dialogues and consultations amongst social action groups involved in struggles against dams and displacement
- Learning workshops with informal sector workers and their activists in the struggle for health, livelihood and dignity

The principal activity during this period was to use participatory research and adult education in development practice to promote participation—participatory planning, participatory monitoring and evaluation and participatory training. Training of Trainers programmes became vehicles for self-development of change agents in the sector. This helped facilitate critical self-reflection and build competencies as change agents. PRIA continued to be active internationally as an important actor in adult education and participatory research.

A 'code of conduct' for the voluntary sector had resulted in a major galvanization around the country. Mobilization against externally imposing this code of conduct on voluntary organizations created, for the first time, the identity of a 'sector'. PRIA gained visibility as a spokesperson for the sector, with a focus on the

relations between government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Phase 3: Institutional Strengthening of Civil Society (1991 to Mid-1997)

In this phase, PRIA focused on innovation in the development and application of methods and tools for institutional strengthening and learning of voluntary organizations. Three types of activities were carried out:

- Workshops or training programmes for existing grass-roots-level organizations
- Evolution and strengthening of a network of regional support organizations in India and Asia
- Catalyzing new civil society initiatives in underdeveloped regions of the country

Systematic opportunity for learning skills was provided through the training of fieldworkers of grass-roots organizations to build internal capability. Local groups and activists were helped in developing their plans, reviewing future programmes and strengthening internal capabilities and systems, primarily through participatory evaluations, programme reviews and planning exercises.

Learning in workshops needed handholding support in the field; such support had to be practiced as mutual learning (not teaching). Intensive sharing and learning through new networks and platforms of civil society were facilitated for collective identity and empowerment. Sectoral advocacy on promoting participation and empowerment was enabled through systematization of local experiences by monitoring global institutions.

Phase 4: Accountable Panchayats (Mid-1997 to 2001)

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts were a turning point in Indian democracy, not only because they introduced institutions of local self-governance in the country but also because they instituted a provision for reservation of seats in local government for traditionally marginalized communities (Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and women). PRIA's experience reinforced the need for people-centred and people-managed development. Decentralized local self-governance provided a constitutionally mandated context for local control over community resources and its sustainable and equitable use for socio-economic development. It is in this background that PRIA began its work in strengthening local self-governance institutions (*panchayati raj* institutions and urban local bodies).

Activities focused around the following:

- Engagements with newly constituted panchayati raj institutions
- *Gram sabha* mobilization for collective participation at the village level
- Capacity building of newly elected representatives
- Strengthening leadership at the grass roots, particularly of women

The flagship programme designed for promoting citizen engagement with the processes of local self-government was Pre-Election Voters Awareness Campaign (PEVAC). PRIA first undertook PEVAC in a few *gram* panchayats of Mandi and Chamba Districts of Himachal Pradesh in 1995. Since then, PRIA has conducted (along with partners) PEVACs in Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Jharkhand.

Internationally, PRIA facilitated local, national and global civil society coalitions and platforms for knowledge sharing and asserting collective and autonomous identity. PRIA co-ordinated the engagement of the southern grass-roots voice in monitoring World Bank's Participation Policy and enabled and supported a global coalition of multiple stakeholders to articulate capacity building of southern NGOs. As a member of the NGO Working Group, PRIA helped organize and implement the policy to foster participation in World Bank projects and the first outside evaluation of those projects. With colleagues from the Working Group, PRIA helped organize the initial meetings of what became the International Forum on Capacity Building.

In the same period, PRIA continued to be very active in promoting the development of international institutions and policies to support the civil society sector. PRIA helped define the conceptual and institutional base for CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, which has become the largest transnational network of civil society organizations.

Systematic efforts to engage with academic institutions, departments of social sciences and social work and catalyzing local partnerships with grass-roots civil society organizations have also been made. Academics and students have been trained in participatory research and participatory development for generating knowledge from the experiences of the marginalized.

Phase 5: Governance From Below (Between 2002 and 2008)

As India was 'shining' a couple of years into the new millennium, the Indian government announced the

policy to stop bilateral aid. Voters brought in the United Progressive Alliance at the centre, and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was created. A series of progressive legislations were enacted—Right to Information, Right to Education, the employment guarantee programme and forest rights. The National Policy on Voluntary Sector was announced. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission was set up to make recommendations on improving governance and administration in India.

PRIA adopted the approach to reforming governance from below and linking local and global participatory governance initiatives under its programme 'Governance Where People Matter'. Multi-sectoral coalitions and platforms were created for shared learning and building a common agenda. PEVAC, PRJA (Panchayati Raj Jagrukta Abhiyan) and continued *gram sabha* mobilization around the country focused on voters' awareness, capacity building of elected representatives and working with state election commissions, state finance commissions and other provincial actors. By convening engagements between the voices from below and the powerful from above, agencies responsible for delivery of public services were brought in direct dialogue with the citizens who receive them. Going beyond a programmatic focus on women's empowerment, PRIA began to focus its interventions on gender mainstreaming institutionally.

Phase 6: Multi-Sectoral Engagements for Deepening Democracy (Since 2008)

The 'War Against Terror' spread far and wide. Global coalitions of civil society worked together to 'make poverty history'. As fuel, food and financial crises hit the world, European and North American economies faced meltdowns. Citizen protests demanding equality and freedom spread in the Arab region; the 'Occupy' movement occurred everywhere. International development assistance in India has been curtailed, and changes in the tax regime and mode of funding of civil society have posed several challenges for the non-profit sector in India.

PRIA's work on promoting social accountability practices for reforming institutions to make them deliver their mandates has come at a time when the government has been caught in webs of corruption. Civil society movements galvanized youth around the country to demand greater accountability of all public institutions, officials and leaders. With rapid urbanization in India and Asia, mobilizing the voices of the urban poor has also become an urgent agenda for action for PRIA.

As new practical experiences become available and new information technology becomes accessible, PRIA invests in systematizing practice at the grass

roots to enable distance learning for practitioners. It has supported initiatives to establish mutual learning engagements between the grass roots and institutions of post-secondary education through community-university partnerships for knowledge mobilization and sharing.

Pursuing its long held belief that 'knowledge is power', PRIA is using old and new media and communication platforms to continue its journey of systematizing, synthesizing and disseminating local knowledge. The latest example of this is a knowledge portal, Practice in Participation.

Sumitra Srinivasan

See also adult education; indigenist research; International Council for Adult Education; International Participatory Research Network; social accountability; voluntary sector

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SOCIO-TECHNICAL SYSTEMS

The notion of socio-technical systems (STSs) refers to the necessity of taking both social factors and technological factors into consideration in designing and implementing humane work organizations. This approach to systems design grew from European concerns about scientific management after World War II and spread widely around the world in the 1980s with joint management and trade union co-operation under the label of Quality of Working Life. Action research is an essential methodology for redesigning work as different sectors, technologies and employee characteristics require a customized approach. Further, the

amount of time and labour involved in STSs means that the dynamics unique to a particular organization have to be worked through and managed as part of the change process.

By using action research, scholarly practitioners can combine linear planning and problem-solving methodologies with longitudinal observation, analysis and interpretation, made possible by being in the workplace up close and over time. Multiple streams of linear project management for changes coexist with aspects of organization wherein social and technical issues evolve in less linear ways and at less predictable paces. This entry summarizes this type of action research, using six dimensions linked historically to the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, the research and development organization in London, UK, often given credit for its original formation and early experimentation in workplaces.

Framing the Change Situation

Action research from the perspective of STSs tends to start with plans to introduce a new technology, different work procedures, new products and other aspects of operating a business or providing services. Such strategies require co-operation from employees for alteration in assignments, training, terms and conditions and occupational differentials. Such changes almost always have to do with the organization's regulatory or competitive environment more widely and need to involve bargaining with employee representatives. Industry, commerce, shipping and energy are the sectors in which this framing of change originated.

Role of Consultant and Stakeholder in a Typical Change Approach

Scholarly practitioners involved with an STS analysis use design interventions that help people study their own work processes and identify improvements in how the people and technology relate across and between flows of work. The role of the consultant tends to include expertise in elements of diagnosis, analysis and recommendations for particular work organization redesign. By definition, an STS approach includes those with a stake in the outcome in problem-solving and decision-making groups of various sizes and interconnectedness.

Nature of Intervention and Character of Participation

A central orientation of intervention from an STS perspective can be the work organization design. A few, well-established approaches to intervention tend to be

used, sometimes in co-operation with other change management techniques and goals. A long-term infrastructure tends to use organization-wide steering teams, specific design teams for subunits or a series of temporary project teams to design and deliver elements of the change. Alternately, large-group interventions focus on bringing people together in order to design and deliver work restructuring. Participation is of particular importance for STS action research: People who will be working in the new work system must participate, thus building capability to manage STS change through training of internal people and including their views throughout.

Dynamics of Social Stratification

Management of boundaries and collaboration within and across boundaries are two phenomena of particular concern for STSs. Another way of saying this is that work is understood to take place within and across boundaries—points where two or more things intersect. Managerial roles tend to be redefined in terms of managing outwards towards the environment of the work being redesigned, while managing inwards within the focal work tends to be self-managed by groups or by shallow hierarchies within shared roles and responsibilities. One of the ways in which the latter is achieved is through inter-professional or inter-occupational groups. The assumption is that psychological and political dynamics will be less frequent to the extent that people control their own work together. Also, unnecessary differentials in terms and conditions may be removed in favour of group-based measurements and rewards as a way to decrease conflict and envy.

Intra-Organizational and Inter-Organizational Issues

Action research from an STS perspective typically focuses on intra-organizational change and development. A major purpose of STS action research is creating a humane design of work and enhancing the focus of the workforce on the primary task, while eliminating distracting bureaucracy and hierarchy. Boundaries are drawn at the interface points so that workers have more control over quality. Awareness about strategic concerns in relation to the environment both motivate and maintain STSs: attracting and retaining talented labour, increasing quality and productivity, improving services in terms of better co-operation across roles or other subunits. A shared knowledge about what they are facing in relation to the work outside the organization is seen as essential.

Nature of Work With Feelings and Fantasies as Contribution to Learning for Change

Scholarly practitioners specializing in STSs consider working with feelings and fantasies as they relate to learning for organizational change in two seemingly distinct ways. Emotions about apparently objective elements of the work organization design will be seen as both necessary and relevant. Issues of fairness and equity related to terms and conditions, access to business information and influencing decisions and the necessary resources and education to do a good job all would be acceptable and included in change processes. However, there tends to be little tolerance for emotions that privilege one side having more power over another side.

Jean E. Neumann

See also systems psychodynamics; Tavistock Institute

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SOFT SYSTEMS METHODOLOGY

Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) works within an action research paradigm and exhibits capabilities similar to other forms of action research. In fact, SSM itself was developed using an action research approach by Peter Checkland, while addressing complex, messy, ill-structured problems faced by managers, in situations where 'hard systems' approaches such as systems engineering failed to deliver the expected results.

SSM enables understanding of the key stakeholders, and in the seven-stage method that was derived as its earliest version, it analyzes the client, actors and owners involved in a problematical situation and integrates their involvement into the process. Checkland, after extensive work in SSM, also developed a four-stage cycle for simplifying his method, similar to a four-stage approach often used by action researchers: Plan-Act-Observe-Review.

Checkland also proposed a frame and a methodology for research directed to a real-world problem or an area of concern (A), working from a theoretical framework (F), which must be declared by the researcher, and a methodology (M), which is used to formulate and guide the intervention. Action researchers who use a systemic perspective often use the F-M-A model to conceptualize their research.

Judy McKay and Peter Marshall suggest that when adopting the F-M-A model to set up action research, the M in the model should be extended to have a methodology for the research (M_R) as well as a methodology for the problem-solving (M_{PS}) part of the intervention. This helps balance the importance of an action research intervention between conducting research and problem-solving, between theory and practice.

Historical Development: The Three Versions

The first version of SSM is called the seven-step model, developed in the early 1980s. Checkland felt that this model was simple to understand, made it easy to teach the process and helped in its early usage. The seven steps, briefly, are as follows:

1. Experience a situation in everyday life that is considered problematic.
2. Express the problem situation (often using 'rich pictures').
3. Develop a root definition of relevant purposeful activity systems that could help improve the problem situation.
4. Develop conceptual models of the (purposeful activity) systems identified through the root definitions.
5. Compare models developed to the real-world situations expressed earlier.
6. Consider feasible and desirable changes as a result of the comparison.
7. Take action to improve the problem situation.

Activities 3 and 4 were expected to be carried out during systems thinking about the real world, whereas the other activities were expected to be carried out in the real world. This delineation of the 'real' and 'systems-thinking' worlds was not carried forward to the later versions of SSM.

Checkland urges the use of the word *problematical* instead of *problem* when a situation being investigated is messy and needs a systemic inquiry process to learn more about it. The term *purposeful action* or *activity* is used to describe deliberate actions that human beings decide willingly to take in response to their own experience of the world.

As SSM started being used by practitioners, it was felt that reading situations culturally and politically was also important. In the second version of SSM, which has been explained in a book by Checkland and Jim Scholes, two streams of analysis were suggested: (1) a logical stream and (2) a cultural stream. While the logical stream resembled the analysis carried out in the seven-step version, the social and political systems were added to consider the 'roles', 'norms' and 'values' that influence the behaviour of the people involved. The political stream considered the issue of power that affected decision-making. In the second version, Checkland also advised identifying 'clients', who caused the intervention to happen; 'practitioners', who carried out the SSM intervention, and 'issue owners', who took ownership of the issues addressed, as sometimes more than one role could be taken up by the same party.

The third, and more contemporary, version of SSM, which is currently used to address the inadequacy of the seven-step model, to match the more flexible ways in which SSM was being used, uses only four steps. Checkland describes these four steps as follows:

1. Find out about a problem situation (this includes the cultural and political analysis added to the second version of SSM).
2. Formulate some relevant purposeful-activity models.
3. Debate the situation using the models to consider the desirability and cultural feasibility of the changes proposed to improve the situation, and also find accommodation for these changes among the conflicting interests of the people involved in the actions to improve.
4. Take action to bring about improvements.

The latest version of SSM gives the researcher or practitioner the maximum freedom to structure the intervention and is quite close to the Plan-Act-Observe-Review process used in action research.

Key Components of SSM

The key components of an SSM intervention are drawing rich pictures, context analysis using CATWOE (a mnemonic for a checklist for problem or goal definition) and root definition and the development of conceptual models.

Rich Pictures

SSM engages the process of finding out about the problems in the real-world situation and possible resolutions to these using 'rich pictures'. Rich pictures enable the development of the keys to understanding

and resolving the complex problematic human situation in terms of its multiple interacting relationships between a range of factors including criteria, methods and cultural and political risks. Rich pictures enable the depiction of the physical and obvious issues as well as the often ignored, but very important, intangible or more subtle issues.

The rich pictures that evolved from a research project that the author undertook for a post-disaster recovery project in Indonesia are now used as an example to explain an SSM intervention.

The rich pictures developed for the intervention took significant and painstaking work as each one needed to achieve validation from very busy and focused key personnel involved in development projects. In most cases, the rich picture effectively became, in many ways, that person's canvas for his or her life's work, or a recent part of that. The interviews to develop the pictures were mostly carried out on-site at the location chosen by the stakeholders, to best interface with and witness their challenges and problems in situ. This took the author to the outer reaches of Indonesia. In each case, the interviewees were very valuable participants, and they also appreciated the effort and feedback required in each exercise.

The eight rich pictures did evolve a very strong alignment in the processes that emerged from them. The key colour-coded, three-level layering processes that the author introduced to the rich picture process were a valuable improvement on previous traditional use of rich pictures in the SSM process. One of the eight rich pictures is presented in Figure 1 to explain how it was constructed and applied.

Working together with the author, this rich picture was created by the Australian chief operations officer of an NGO involved in the post-disaster programmes being carried out in Indonesia, mostly out of their headquarters in Australia. The key steps or factors drawn out here relate to the importance of the stakeholder engagement, the sharing of objectives within the organization, the programme planning, the importance of the communication process and the need to get an effective process between top-down commitment and bottom-up planning. It also brings out the need for commitment to the project plan and the keys of monitoring and evaluation to achieve sustainable outcomes.

What evolved from these rich pictures was a very clear synergy of steps working through each one to understand the overall situation. These key steps could be reviewed together and consistently through the methodology of the development of the rich pictures. The interviews and extensive notes that were taken were reviewed with each participant separately and confidentially. The key factors, as agreed within those reviews, were then interpreted into three layers on the pictures to provide an overall picture.

What also proved very valuable was the use of the natural precedence of colours, which has been realized in other arts and sciences, in the development of the sequencing and flow through the various timings and precedence guiding project development. So that rather than a flow chart connected by logical, or input to output, systematic positivist-type arrows (which most of these sort of operators just don't work with and may see as too rigid or mechanistic), the same sense of precedence and flow, but with less rigidity, was developed through the intelligent use of colours, much the same way an artist would develop a picture on a canvas.

Colours also have synergies in international use, such as danger, growth, communication, safety and wisdom. That more general understanding and feeling were able to enhance the development of the order of outcomes, or the more human understanding and development of sequences, in both background and key-factor, front-end process and resolution.

This was never seen as an end in itself and crucial to the research, but it certainly did enable the less threatening and more flexible arrival at key process order and communication. In fact, the value of the colour sequence was picked up by all the participants, even in the peer review by Western practitioners in primarily 'hard' project world views. This also enabled development of colour codes for rapid decision location and enactment to sense making in post-disaster response. These colour codes were then used in developing manuals for the project.

As it evolved, this rich-picture approach and outcomes proved as important as, if not more important than, the words and processes that followed. Many of the participants agreed that working through this process actually clarified their own view of their own perspective and experience and gave clearer insight and understanding into their situation.

Once the rich pictures were analyzed in their totality and as some level of saturation appeared, with themes emerging as being commonplace across these projects, more general themes emerged. The key steps for each of the eight pictures were then extracted, and that is when the very strong synergies became clear.

Context

Another of the key benefits of SSM is its engagement of the relevant perspective or context. Context and the world view, or the 'point of view' within which these solutions are to be developed, need to be defined for the solution to be found relevant and realizable. Through the formulation of the mnemonic CATWOE, SSM enables the context of the problem and the proposed solution to be put in a clear and usable context. The value of the solution is then much more

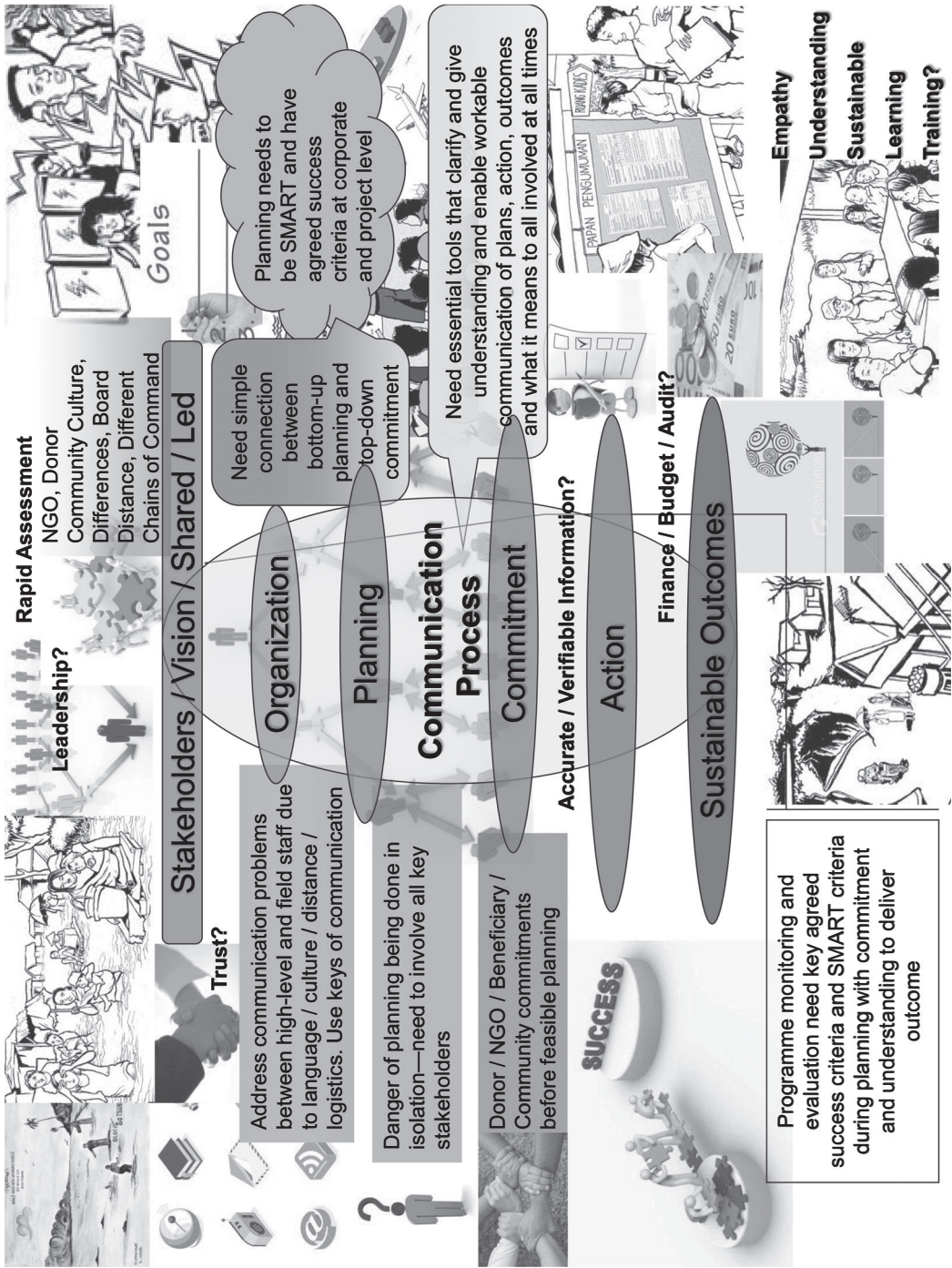


Figure 1 Example of a Rich Picture

NOTE: SMART = specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound.

focused on the situation than if it were simply generic and all-embracing, as usually happens. This context and understanding also bring a much stronger aspect of reality and resolution to the planning of the outcomes.

CATWOE considers the following elements:

- C* Clients, who would be the victims/beneficiaries of the purposeful activity
- A* Actors, who would do the activities
- T* Transformation process—what is the purposeful activity, expressed as an input-T-output
- W* World view or point of view that makes this definition meaningful
- O* Owner or stopper of this purposeful activity
- E* Environment—constraints in its environment that this system takes as given

The CATWOE developed for the post-disaster recovery will help explain its use:

- Client:* Community, donor
- Actors:* Stakeholders, in other words, NGO, donor, community, local government, project manager, aid partners
- Transformation:* Tangible and intangible, in other words, infrastructure, shelter, security, livelihood and knowledge, process, trust, support, empathy, understanding, sustainable and safe future
- Weltanschauung (Why bother?):* Because it is urgently and desperately needed to assess the achievability of planning and implementing an

emergency preparedness/recovery/reconstruction/livelihood project or programme—does it align with the need and group objectives, who are the key and reliable stakeholders, can it be resourced and will it achieve a sustainable outcome?

Owner: Project, programme manager (for) donor, NGO, community (key stakeholders)

Environment: Poor, under-resourced, possibly desperate or endemic context, urgent needs, demanding and possibly hostile environment, need for long- and short-term goals

Root Definition

The root definition helps develop the core purpose of the (purposeful activity) system that helps achieve the transformation to be carried out by applying SSM. The CATWOE mnemonic helps develop a root definition. Later, Checkland also suggested three key context questions related to developing root definitions, often called P, Q and R: (1) What to do (P)? (2) How to do it (Q)? (3) Why do it (R)?

The following root definition was developed for understanding the post-disaster recovery scenario:

A project manager has to rapidly assess the feasibility of competing projects for a community after a disaster or for general aid or relief. This is done for, and in conjunction with, a group of stakeholders to scope, plan and implement (if feasible) a programme or project to enable disaster preparedness or recovery or reconstruction towards a set of sustainable outcomes.

Figure 2 shows how an analysis of the context and the development of a root definition assisted in the

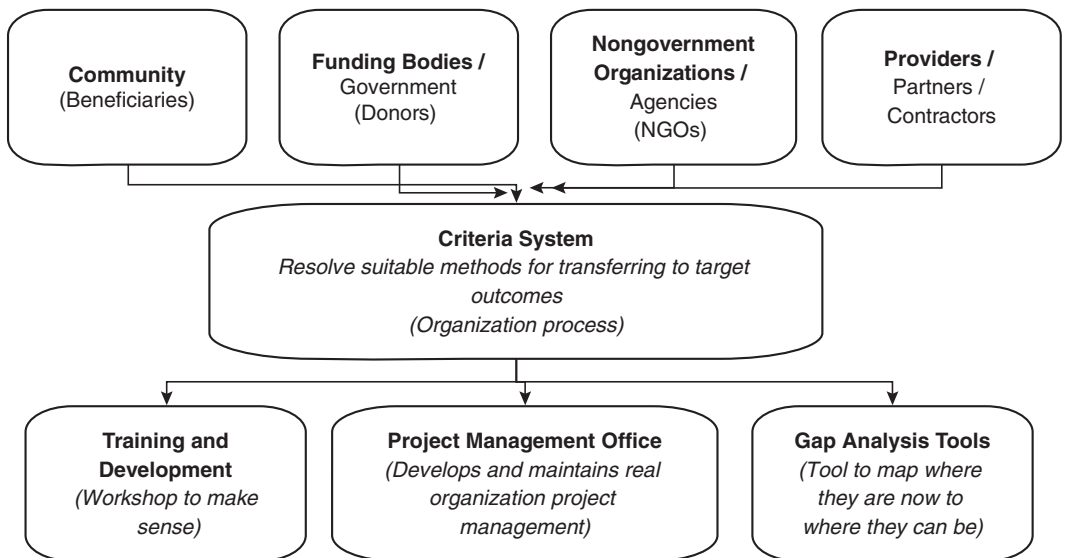


Figure 2 Work Breakdown of the Disaster Recovery Projects

development of a work breakdown for the post-disaster recovery project.

Conceptual Model

In SSM, the conceptual model is a set of purposeful human activities logically put together to carry out the transformation process. In later versions of the SSM, the conceptual model also had to include monitoring and control activities, as well as the transformation

process being subjected to performance checks to ensure that it achieved the intended outcomes (efficacy) with minimum resources (efficiency) that are sustainable over the long term (effective).

For the post-disaster recovery projects, a conceptual model was developed for solution and implementation, as shown in Figure 3.

The final working model that was tested and validated internationally through a number of real-life, in-the-field applications, is illustrated in Figure 4.

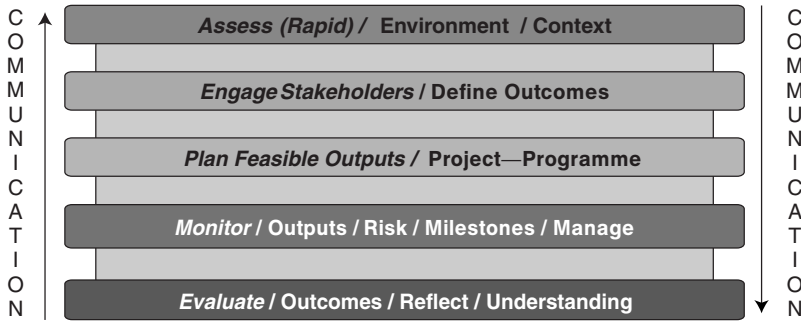


Figure 3 Conceptual Model for Implementation of the Post-Disaster Recovery Project



Figure 4 The Final Working Model That Was Tested and Validated Internationally

Conclusion

The SSM approach is itself a form of Action Learning, and the development of rich pictures is an act of collaborative learning, reflecting and knowledge generation about the studied phenomenon. It is essentially a highly pragmatic research method, with its value and validity based on findings and outcomes that are judged as understandable, workable, useable and acceptable by those who could gain benefit from the research. It has many elements of action research embedded in it. Shankar Sankaran, Martin Orr and Tay Boon Hou have explained how SSM was embedded in action research in two doctoral research projects—explicitly in one and implicitly as a thought process in another.

SSM has been praised for its ability to clarify messy situations using a structured thinking process, but it has been criticized for not providing solutions to problems. Often SSM is combined with a more deterministic back-end process to achieve solutions, and in the example given in this entry, a project management approach was used after analyzing the situation using SSM.

Paul Steinfort

See also Appreciative Inquiry; systems thinking

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STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Stakeholder analysis is a process or action research methodology used to explore the various opinions that different stakeholders may have on potential outcomes and their relative influence. It is a technique that is widely used for strategic programme planning and policy development. It is particularly popular in the fields of business management, international development and health care.

The term *stakeholder* has a long legal history, denoting a neutral third party that literally holds the ‘stakes’ or assets for interested parties until their rightful owner is determined. However, in the 1960s, the term became popular in the management literature as a deliberate play on words to challenge the notion that corporate decision-makers should take into account only the interests of *stockholders*. The definition was expanded to include those who ought to be considered when management had to make important choices—consumers, suppliers, creditors, competitors and employees. Today, popular usage of the term denotes people, groups or networks that have a vested interest or are affected by or can influence actions.

Depending on the issue under study, stakeholders may include politicians, community groups or organizations, media outlets, corporations, faith-based agencies, funders and donors, academics, resident coalitions, unions, school boards and health-care agencies. They are groups, entities or individuals who are important to hear from when making a decision because they (could) have the power to sway the outcome and may be affected by it. Conducting a stakeholder analysis is a pragmatic approach to understanding who stands to win and who stands to lose from a variety of options.

Stages of a Stakeholder Analysis

Identify Stakeholders

The first step in a stakeholder analysis is to identify the stakeholders. Sometimes, the list is obvious. When the community is small or when you know it well, it can be fairly simple to enumerate the key players. Other times, it may take some legwork. A popular approach may be to start with the most discernible informants and use a snowball approach to grow the list.

Poll Stakeholders

The second step is to ascertain how the stakeholders feel about your issue and their relative power to influence. This can be done through a variety of means. Many stakeholder analysts recommend a qualitative

interview approach. Stakeholders are asked to reflect on their positions (as well as other options), their capacity to make change, the resources they have available and their perceptions of other key actors. Alternatively, a more quantitative process may be used. Stakeholders may be asked to rank several options and/or the relative power of other stakeholders to influence change. Sometimes, a more prescribed approach, such as a Delphi process, is adopted. The Delphi process is one where experts are iteratively polled until consensus emerges. Qualitative methods are often more labour intensive (to both collect and analyze) but are particularly useful for more open-ended brainstorming. Quantitative methods are more expedient but are likely to limit the scope of the conversation. In addition to talking directly to stakeholders, information can be gathered from secondary sources such as websites, blogs, annual reports, newspaper articles and other public documents.

Map Options

Once all the data is collected, the next step is to try to make sense of it. Frequently, stakeholder analysts create diagrams, tables or graphs to map a summary of options. Summary documents often succinctly answer the following questions: Who are your key stakeholders? What is their position on the issue? How influential are they? What resources do they have mobilized? What resources might they be able to mobilize? How impactful are they likely to be? How are they related?

Develop the Strategy

Armed with the knowledge generated from a well-created map, a researcher can then begin to develop an informed strategy. A good strategy will take into account who the ‘allies’ are and find ways to mutually support organizing efforts. It also takes into account who is likely to oppose changes and why. Informed decisions can then be made about whether there are ways to accommodate alternative perspectives in the plan to build consensus or whether to move ahead regardless.

Other Considerations

Stakeholder analyses can be used to retrospectively assess what influences led to a particular outcome. They can also be prospectively applied to assist with future planning and decision-making. They can be done on a macro (e.g. global) scale or micro (e.g. small organizational) scale. Human, financial and time resources will likely set the scope of an analysis. A stakeholder analysis is a way of gathering time-limited information from a range of constituents to help inform decision-making.

How much weight is given to results should be proportional to the efforts inputted. It is always important to recognize that a variety of natural (e.g. an earthquake) and political (e.g. a scandal) factors outside the control of researchers or analysts could radically change the results. Consequently, prospective recommendations are contextually limited. Care should be taken to balance inputs and efforts with the seriousness of outcomes. Furthermore, the reliability of the data is only as good as that of the informants. Stakeholders may purposefully or inadvertently withhold information or mislead researchers for their own political purposes. This will likely result in unreliable predictions.

Unlike other action research methodologies, stakeholder analysis does not have an explicit social justice orientation. In fact, marginalized voices can be easy for analysts to dismiss as they likely have little power to influence change. The concerns of relatively powerless stakeholders may be discounted (even if they are important). Stakeholder analysis has been widely used in business to optimize results for stockholders—often at the expense of other groups. Groups that are likely to be heard are those that have the loudest potential for influence, those that are aligned with the interests of a project sponsor and those that are capable of making change happen.

Nevertheless, the methods can be applied and used by diverse groups to map the landscape for organizational and policy change. It can be an extremely useful strategic planning tool when used appropriately and can be adapted to accommodate more participatory and democratic processes.

Sarah Flicker

See also multi-stakeholder dialogue; project management; strategic planning

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STORYTELLING

Stories and storytelling are ubiquitous. There have been human societies and civilizations that have flourished without benefit of the wheel, but none have existed without stories. As recent studies in anthropology,

philosophy, cognitive psychology and neuroscience consistently show, humans are storytelling animals; to be human *is* to tell stories. It follows therefore that the role of the story in action research is critical to understand. This entry introduces the concept of storytelling and asks us to consider these implications for our work as action researchers.

The words *story* and *narrative* are often used interchangeably. However, in this entry (unless otherwise stated) *story* should be taken to mean an ordering of events that infers causal relationships between them, while *narrative* is used to mean the use of words and/or images to convey a story to a listener, reader or viewer. Thus, stories can be narrated (or told) in many different ways and by using many different media, including the graphic arts, song, dance, drama and film. This entry is primarily concerned with the telling of oral and written stories, where the term *storytelling* finds its most direct and literal application, but—broadly speaking—its conclusions can be applied to any form of narrative.

Not all communication is telling a story; humans analyze data, exchange information, proffer opinions, make arguments and plead their case, as well. There seems to be some consensus in the literature that a story is an imagined (or reimagined) experience narrated with enough detail and feeling to cause the listener's imagination to experience it as real.

The Nature of Storytelling

The essence of storytelling is its tangibility: The storyteller seeks to convey an experience (something that actually happened, might have happened or might yet happen) in such a way that it seems real. It might be a story remembered—and perhaps embroidered—from life; it might be a conscious fiction made up about ourselves or others; it might even go beyond what is humanly possible into the realms of folklore, fairytale and fantasy. But in whichever of these spheres a story has its centre of gravity, something has to happen, and it has to happen to somebody (human or otherwise).

Stories necessarily involve particular events happening to particular characters. They sit within a presentational form of knowing that exemplifies experience and offers it to the listener or viewer for exploration. Narratives that veer towards generalities, explanations and abstractions or which insist on conveying their moral or meaning have abandoned storytelling in favour of propositional knowing and advocacy. Thus, the teller of a traditional tale is more likely to begin by saying, 'Once upon a time there was a king and a queen' rather than 'On the whole, there was royalty'.

In literate societies, the power of the spoken word has largely been displaced by the written word. Walter J. Ong, in his classic study of the development of

language and literacy, explains the psychodynamics of the spoken word for preliterate ancestors. In oral cultures, he says, words are considered to have power; all sound is dynamic, especially oral utterance which comes from inside living beings. In a wonderful example, he points out that while a hunter can experience the presence of even a dead buffalo through all his other senses, if he hears one, then it's alive, and something is definitely going on!

Although similar to each other in many ways, the experience of writing (and reading) a story differs from the experience of telling (and listening to) a story because in the former the relationship between the storyteller and the audience is less immediate than in the latter. There can be no eye contact with the writer and no sense of the writer's physical presence as one reads; the words do not fall upon the ear but linger before the eye, so they can be read and reread at will, whereas the words of the oral storyteller are ephemeral and must command our attention moment by moment.

Whether oral or written, humans tell stories for many reasons: to authenticate their claims to knowledge, to claim their individual and cultural identities, to connect with other people, to influence what others think, to make sense of the world around them, to remember where they have come from, to imagine the future and their part in it and sometimes simply to amuse and entertain.

In all these domains (and countless others), the power of storytelling lies in its exceptional capacity to stimulate both the imagination and the feelings of teller and audience. It does so because, as the cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner explains, while humans receive information and argument with a logico-rational mindset, through which they can exercise critical judgement, they receive stories with a different mindset, which he calls the narrative mode. He makes a clear distinction between the two, indicating that a good story and a well-formed argument are different natural kinds.

The story is the primary means for humans of attributing significance and meaning to the world and their experience of it. As the anthropologist Hugh Brody explains, this mode of thought developed early in the history of the species (as hunter-gatherers). The logico-rational mind developed later in physiological and social evolution (with the arrival of agriculture and settled communities) and is the primary modality for sorting data, analyzing cause and effect and making critical judgements.

Recent developments in neuroscience support the idea that humans are, in effect, hardwired for storytelling. The synapses in their brains can be observed responding to imagined experiences (through the action of mirror neurons) in much the same way as they do to

similar real-life experiences. The ability to learn from such vicarious experiences is thought to have provided a potential evolutionary advantage to their ancestors in terms of survival, whilst the pleasure to be derived from hearing a good tale might have contributed to social bonding and even to the selection of a mate.

Thinking With Stories

All humans are steeped in stories; human beings are (as an apocryphal story describes it) the ‘featherless storytelling creatures’ of indigenous mythology. Individuals can all benefit from a better understanding of the significance of stories and how they work, but the participative, engaged nature of action research makes storytelling a crucial skill for practitioners, whose praxis is both to understand and to change the stories they study. Furthermore, they must recognize and explore the ways in which they themselves are implicated in those stories and how their own story is changing as a result of their involvement.

Conventional qualitative research methodology invites researchers to distance themselves from the research subjects whose stories they may collect, the content of which can then be analyzed with techniques intended to secure the researcher’s objectivity. In such methodologies, understanding is achieved by thinking *about* the stories that have been told: The logico-rational mode of thought is applied to products of the narrative mode in an attempt to bridge the irreducible differences between them. This kind of textual analysis can render the stories meaningless; at the very least, they become detached from the context of the teller and reduced to data.

The alternative offered by the sociologist Arthur Frank is to learn to think *with* stories. Thinking with stories takes the stories as already complete: They are not treated as data with which to prove or disprove a hypothesis; rather, they become the stimulus for engaged enquiry.

How can this be done in practice? Geoff Mead has argued that people’s understanding of a story is deepened (and its impact on them amplified) when they respond to it with presentational and experiential forms of knowing, keeping it alive and active in their bodies and imaginations *before* bringing their logico-rational minds to bear on it, a process he calls staying close to the story.

Action research is commonly thought of as operating in the realms of the first person, second person and third person (sometimes expressed as ‘for me’, ‘for us’ and ‘for them’). In each of these realms, as articulated by Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury in the introduction to the *Handbook of Action Research*, storytelling has a significant role to play.

Since first person action research, practice skills and methods address the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, researchers must explore the way in which they create their sense of self (their self-concept or identity) through storytelling. Conceptualizing the self as a more or less coherent collection of stories is the first step in opening themselves to personal change; most psychotherapeutic approaches are essentially concerned with re-storying the self. Put another way, individuals imagine themselves to be living out a story of some kind, and the kind of story they imagine will shape the way they live their lives.

Since second person action research and practice address researchers’ ability to inquire face-to-face with others into issues of mutual concern, they must be concerned with both how they share their stories with others and how they open themselves to others’ stories, as well as how they co-create stories in the course of their mutual inquiry. Here, they directly encounter issues of power and voice, of whose story counts the most and of how to listen deeply to stories that are different from (even antithetical to) their own. Turn-taking structures such as story circles are particularly useful to democratize the storytelling process and to open up communicative spaces in which one can go beyond superficial exchanges of opinion.

And since third person research and practice aim to create a wider community of inquiry involving persons who, because they cannot be known to each other face-to-face, have an impersonal quality, researchers might seek to expose and disrupt the hegemonic stories that unconsciously govern their behaviours in ways that maintain systems of power and authority. They can do this by telling (or helping others tell) stories from countervailing stances. There are many examples of this type of intervention: stories of people with disabilities and their carers, stories from ethnic minorities and indigenous communities, stories from the transition town movement, stories from the front line in Afghanistan, stories of religious dissenters, stories told on behalf of animals and the more-than-human world. Coming out of what Jürgen Habermas called the life-world rather than the system world, such stories testify to other realities and challenge existing regimes of truth by offering alternative discourses.

Storytelling, as Walter Benjamin told us in 1936, has a moral dimension. The stories people tell are fateful, and in this postmodern (perhaps hyper-modern) age, the importance of storytelling is increasingly recognized. New social media provide platforms for an unprecedented exchange of personal stories; the art of traditional storytelling is undergoing a widespread revival; environmental activists call for a rejuvenation of oral culture as an ecological imperative.

When, in 1979, Jean-François Lyotard declared the end of the grand narrative of modernism, it signalled not the end of storytelling but the legitimization of a multiplicity of stories told from many standpoints: a world in which little can be taken for granted and in which the grip of hegemonic stories has been loosened. Storytellers and action researchers can take heart from Arthur Frank's conclusion that the moral genius of storytelling is that each teller and listener enters the space of the story for the other. Telling stories in postmodern times, and perhaps in all times, attempts to change one's own life by affecting the lives of others.

Geoff Mead

See also autobiography; Digital Storytelling; first person action research; narrative; organizational storytelling; second person action research; third person action research

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the organization wants to be, in other words, strategic direction. Step 3 is to plan effectively to get there, in other words, to implement a plan based on strategic decisions. Step 4 is to monitor the progress of the plan implementation. These four stages are desirable to complete the full cycle of a strategic plan.

Relevance for the Not-for-Profit Sector

The resources of the non-profit organizations are primarily provided by individual donors, the institution or the government. Being the recipient of public funds, there is a social and moral pressure on the organization to demonstrate outputs and change. Measurement of changes in the life of the poor and disadvantaged sections of the society due to interventions of the organization has always been a challenge. Therefore, the public nature of the grants provided to non-profit organizations demands greater accountability and the most effective use of the resources. Strategic planning becomes an important exercise to be effective in attainment of impact along with efficient utilization of resources.

Dimensions of Strategic Planning

The strategic planning involves initial agreement of a governing board. (Non-profit organizations are registered under various acts as per the laws of the land. The governing structure is defined differently in different countries or by different organizations). In other words, the apex decision-making system of the organization initiates the process. It begins by identifying a steering group or team within the organization. Most likely, the chief executive of the organization leads the process. The governing board provides the team a mandate for the strategic planning. The principles of participation of the primary stakeholders and the scope of the strategic planning are defined by the board to determine the time frame and required resources. The board or the senior management may decide to engage an external facilitator to ask relevant questions and help the team work out strategic choices. The process of strategic planning involves the following:

- Revisiting the vision and mission of the organization and building a shared understanding is the first step after undertaking an organizational assessment through internal reflection or by an external evaluation. The vision is a larger world view of the society which provides values for the organization. The mission statement draws a line as to what the organization will do effectively and what it will not do or should not undertake.
- The SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat) analysis provides a realistic assessment to

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning determines the focus and direction of the organization for attaining the mission within the given external environment, making the best use of the available resources within the given time frame. A strategic plan can be prepared for 1 year or longer depending on the size, complexity of interventions and age of the organization. Michael Wilkinson defines strategic planning as a four-step process. Step 1 is to understand where the organization is now, which is also known as situation assessment. Step 2 is to determine where

determine how far the organization can stretch to expand and where it should focus for quality impact within the current opportunities and threats in the environment. There are various other methods of identifying the organizational capacities and scanning the environment, for example, PEST (political, economic, social and technological) analysis and the Appreciative Inquiry method.

- The strategic options for the organization become easier with a detailed and appropriate SWOT analysis. The strategic choices are identified in areas such as geographical expansion versus consolidation, thematic diversification versus deepening engagement in existing thematic areas, different forms of team organization and so on. Each of the options has certain advantages and disadvantages. The organization has to weigh the best option to make choices. Making well-thought-out choices is critical in strategic planning. Therefore, it becomes different from regular activity or programme planning. The strategic choices are followed by detailed resource planning. It means that the required financial resources and human resources for attaining the outcomes are undertaken after the strategies and broad activities are determined as part of the strategic plan.

- The strategic plan needs to be endorsed by the governing board, and it should be widely shared with the stakeholders so that they know about the shifts and change in the goalpost, if any, for attaining different sets of results. The plan should be regularly reviewed and monitored so that the set goals and mission are achieved with efficient use of the organizational resources.

Knowledge Generation and Action Research

The success of the strategic plan depends on the level of engagement of various stakeholders in the process of preparation. The governing board needs to be involved to revisit the existing vision and mission. The board may decide to revise the vision or mission of the organization in the light of the changing environment. A participatory evaluation of the organization or any specific programmes can be a starting point for the involvement of data generation in the performance of the organization and the programme. Knowledge generation by the primary stakeholders of the organization, in other words, communities and staff, along with other stakeholders such as donors, government officials and other interested persons or agencies initiates the process of self-reflection within the organization. Participatory research leads to the understanding of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from the lens of the constituencies the organization serves.

A workshop of the primary stakeholders leads to determining actions and strategies. The board members provide an oversight function to dispassionately advise the most effective possible choices. The team concerned with attaining a specific result will detail out strategies for attaining the outcomes. Such organizations build a culture of participatory knowledge generation, where the constituencies served and the 'not powerful' staff within the organization are invited for reflection. Their participation and contributions are respected. The data generated is used in the process of strategic planning and action. Such organizations become learning organizations and remain relevant in a dynamic and changing external environment.

Yogesh Kumar

See also organization development; stakeholder analysis

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STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

Strengths-based theory and practice incorporate a multidisciplinary approach derived from a range of sources including social change theory, motivation theory and positive psychology. The basic tenet of any strengths-based approach (theory and practice) is that every individual, every group and every organization has strengths. Identifying these assets and using them as a starting point for research or practice enables researchers to frame their work within a positive paradigm and build upon the available strengths.

The approach was developed as a counterpoint to the more traditional deficit approach wherein professionals, as experts, would observe their subjects and identify their deficits so as to then intervene, address the deficit and solve the problem. This deficit approach, however, could undermine participant confidence and sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Conversely, a strengths-based approach can enhance participants' sense of self as they generate strategies and solutions for themselves and their context. The approach emerged from the fields of social work and family and community services, and its application continues to expand, for example, to health and educational contexts.

Strengths-based theory and practice do not expect the researcher to ignore deficits and problems but to adopt a perspective that incorporates a new balance when researching and working with individuals, groups and organizations. Deficiencies are not emphasized. While one can acknowledge that a range of challenges exists, at the same time one can use a strengths-based approach to work through any challenges *with* the individual, group or organization. Researchers will vary in the degree to which they apply this theory and practice. Contemporary contributors to this field are Wayne McCashen and Dennis Saleebey.

A strong alignment between a strengths-based approach and action research make it an appropriate choice for the action researcher and practitioner. This entry starts with an overview of the alignment between the approach and action research, followed by the strategies available to support this option for research. The alignment and strategies for integration of practice conclude the entry.

The Nexus Between Strengths-Based Theory and Practice and Action Research

The central tenet of strengths-based theory and practice is analogous with that of action research: All stakeholders in a project or activity are participants in a process of enquiry searching for the best answers and solutions while developing new knowledge. To achieve this critical nexus, the strengths-based approach requires a focus upon, and uses as a starting point, the identifiable strengths of these participants. Both the strengths-based approach and action research share an emphasis on action as a goal and on achieving change. Given that reflective practice is valued and inherent to both, this change may be transformative.

A strengths-based approach can inform the theory, research and practice of action researchers as they progress through the stages of the action research cycle. Several components of the theorizing process of the action researcher will be influenced when a strengths-based approach is integrated into research. Initially, the basic assumptions underpinning the researcher's theorizing will incorporate three key principles: (1) that all individuals, groups and organizations have strengths; (2) that researchers work collaboratively with individuals, groups and organizations and (3) that an outcome of the research process is action that results in change.

Contributing to this theory building, key concepts related to the research will acknowledge, connect and build these assumptions into a coherent theory adopted by researchers to frame and inform their work.

Each component of the simplified action research cycle of plan, act, observe and reflect can be informed by a strengths-based approach.

Plan

The planning phase requires action researchers to identify research strengths as areas for enquiry, drawing on existing resources. Action research plans should be developed through a process of negotiation and founded upon a strengths perspective. This can be achieved by incorporating and extending upon research practices that team members have already demonstrated as successful. Key research questions need to be framed with a strengths perspective, and this approach then cascades to the role of questioning throughout the project. Thoughtful, even reflective, questions that empower all participants are aligned with this approach, for example, asking research participants and colleagues, 'How do you feel?' or 'What would you suggest?'

When a strengths perspective is overtly and publicly stated in research plans and grant applications, then researchers can feel empowered and validated in using the approach as a legitimate research strategy. In turn, they may also be more confident as they feel safe and sanctioned to model this approach with all research team members and participants with whom they interact.

Act

Throughout the acting phase, both action researchers and participants enact a strengths-based approach. This includes identifying, acknowledging and developing strengths. Data collection is more than a process of gathering information. Researchers need to refine their questioning skills, remaining cognizant that participants have the answers and that there is no need to provide them.

Observe

The observation phase requires action researchers who are using strengths-based theory to figuratively wear lenses that focus on the positive contributions that are being demonstrated. Emphasis is placed on observing and identifying the strengths of participants within the context of the research process, while also acknowledging areas for ongoing development. Strengths are noted and may perform the role of critical, or noteworthy, incidents that can prompt and focus reflection in the next phase.

Reflect

Reflection is the defining phase of the action research cycle. A strengths-based approach espouses that researchers evaluate and review their actions and processes at each step of the research project. This allows the acknowledgement of achievements and aligns with the reflection phase of the action research cycle, a practice that is repeated with each iteration of the action research cycle. Upon reflection, constructive evaluative feedback is provided. The resource of dedicated time needs to be provided to make possible the reflective process.

Strategies for Integrating a Strengths-Based Approach Into Action Research

Integrating a strengths-based approach into research requires a move from doing research ‘on’ people to one of research ‘with’ colleagues and participants. With its close alignment to action research, there is a range of strategies that can be considered to enhance the enactment of strengths-based practice with research projects, teams and participants. These strategies include the following:

- When first forming an action research project team, select and invite the team members based on their strengths and on their potential for living a strengths-based approach. Authentic case study scenarios may be presented to potential team members that require a response, which can then be evaluated for its affinity with a strengths-based approach.
- Select qualified colleagues who enhance the success of action research and support the co-development of strengths in colleagues.
- Actively educate colleagues in both strengths-based theory and practice, and provide access to training and Action Learning options.
- Encourage colleagues, such as research team members, workplace partners and research participants, to share their strengths by encouraging them to provide formative and ongoing feedback, for example, through a feedback box, wiki or blog.
- Provide colleagues with regular opportunities for input into research activities, for example, by co-generating an agenda or negotiating a research action plan.
- Provide regular opportunities for colleagues to meet informally over a staff or project team lunch or more formally through structured discussion and reflection times.
- Develop regular and effective communication, whether it is face-to-face, through printed

media such as newsletters, or electronically through different forms of social media.

- Share and disseminate information on strengths-based theory and practice with colleagues, and encourage them, through networking, to do the same.
- Model the approach in your relationships with colleagues, an important aspect of which is avoiding stereotyping and judging colleagues or research participants.
- Use a constructive approach for all feedback to support a strengths-based approach—for example, always start and finish with an acknowledgement of a strength.

In project teams, a strengths-based approach will clarify what is possible, allowing participants to share leadership while progressing towards research goals. Leadership thus becomes fluid, determined by the strengths that each team member contributes to the research project. Members take turns to lead the research as they draw on their strengths at appropriate developmental phases of the research project. This form of leadership is aligned conceptually with ‘distributed leadership’, where leadership is not limited to a traditional hierarchical or formal positional approach but is distributed across all levels of a team or organization. Acknowledging that all individuals have strengths extends to the assumption that all individuals can lead.

Active listening and providing affirmation are important strategies in a strengths-based approach. This means extending an affirmation to the research contributions of colleagues and acknowledging contributions, for example, with thank you notes or e-mails. It involves reinforcing and acknowledging prior learning and experience as a strength. It means allowing colleagues to have some autonomy but also balancing this autonomy with clear boundaries, monitoring through the use of mentoring and being available, consistent, and respectful.

At the commencement of a research project, reasonable expectations need to be established, so that individual strengths are used, developed and extended. However, if things go wrong, avoid apportioning blame. A strengths-based approach aims at shared responsibility founded on collegiality. Overtly acknowledge challenges and use reflective practice to develop strategies to address these challenges. Action research provides a researcher with the iterative cycles to test strategies and to amend plans in response to challenges. Incorporating a philosophy of organizational change into research overtly acknowledges that change is a part of both action research and a strengths-based approach.

At every stage of action research, it is necessary to collaboratively debrief with reflective colleagues. Always aim to end any action research process, whether

it is a meeting, interview or evaluation, on a positive note. When writing up and disseminating research results and findings, ensure that a language of strengths is used for reports, journal articles and all publications.

Strengths-Based Practice

A strengths-based practitioner will adopt a variety of strategies and processes when interacting with individuals, groups or organizations. First and foremost, the practitioner, like the researcher, will encourage individuals to draw upon their strengths to make decisions and devise individualized strategies or action plans to address any challenges with which they are presented. For example, a practitioner working with new parents will assume that the infant's parents know the baby best and with time and support can devise solutions to many of the challenges they may face.

The practitioner adopts the role of a supporter, providing a secure foundation upon which the individual or group can develop their strengths. The practitioner does not adopt the role of an authority or expert but one of a peer who is there to support the individual or group as they work through the decision-making process to find solutions to their challenges. A mother with young children experiencing domestic violence may be empowered to leave the violent relationship when she is supported to identify that her love for her children is a strength and a motivator for change.

The practitioner may provide and build links for the individual or group with opportunities to learn and develop. For example, a practitioner working with a homeless person may provide a safe and supportive environment for the individual to explore new accommodation. The individual can articulate the steps he or she has already followed, and after affirming this progress, the practitioner can provide additional links to aligned services and support.

Strengths-based practitioners benefit from a holistic or ecological approach to their work and research. They acknowledge and collaborate across disciplines and organizations, drawing upon the strengths of each to provide for the needs of the individuals and groups with which they interact.

Strategies for Integrating a Strengths-Based Approach Into Practice

Strengths-based practice is an effective approach as it brings about change. This approach can result in a spillover effect, for as strengths are identified and shared, others' perspectives are reframed towards a more positive paradigm. Focusing on strengths can result in researcher, practitioner and participant achieving a more positive sense of efficacy.

It may be challenging for individuals and groups to be aware of their strengths not having thought about them before; therefore, the researcher or practitioner can play a significant role in facilitating an awareness of strengths and validating the role of individuals and groups. Ownership and partnership are the foci of any strategy used by practitioners. Envisioning a successful outcome can be an effective strategy for the practitioner and participants.

Aligned with this approach is the use of positive reinforcement. Practitioners reinforce positive strengths with verbal and non-verbal praise as appropriate to the participants and the context.

A strengths-based approach requires practitioners to draw upon professional knowledge. As this approach is applied to research or professional practice, the experience develops new knowledge. This knowledge development, as with action research, cannot be fully predetermined or controlled. An important strategy is to acknowledge and allow for flexibility in professional practice that adapts and adjusts to contextual needs, for it can be during unplanned, informal moments that new knowledge is created. In addition to being flexible, the practitioner needs to accept that change takes time and is incremental, with small changes leading to bigger changes. Strengths-based theory and practice offer researchers and practitioners alike a multidisciplinary, collaborative and positive paradigm for change, with the potential to further encourage growth in the capacity of all participants.

Marina Harvey

See also Appreciative Inquiry; collaborative action research; Participatory Action Research; reflective practice; transformative learning

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SUBALTERN STUDIES

'Subaltern studies' refers to the study of social groups excluded from dominant power structures, be these (neo)colonial, socio-economic, patriarchal, linguistic, cultural and/or racial. When people lack voice, when they are barred from systems of political or cultural representation, they are called subaltern; their subalternity is the consequence of their limited access to structures of authority. Subaltern studies investigate both these structures of authority and the consequent conditions of subordination experienced by marginalized groups.

The term *subaltern* has military origins, referring to a junior or subordinate officer. The Italian political philosopher and activist Antonio Gramsci made the term famous, reportedly using it as a synonym for 'working class' or 'proletariat' to avert censorship of his writings by prison authorities during his lengthy incarceration. But it is the Subaltern Studies Group, made up of historians of South Asia, who have made the term central to their work, influencing not just the contemporary study of historiography but also their understanding of the politics of representation. Their work has been taken up by, and has important implications for, several fields of study, including cultural studies, post-colonialism, feminist politics and, indeed, action research. Moreover, while once dominated by South Asianist researchers (e.g. Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, Gyan Prakash and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak), the study of subalternity is now central to the work of many Latino or Latin American post-colonial scholars (e.g. Gloria Anzaldúa, Édouard Glissant, John Beverley and Walter D. Mignolo).

The Difficult Task of Investigating Subalternity

Since their establishment in the 1980s, the intellectual purpose of the Subaltern Studies Group has been to 'write history from below': They have been critical of mainstream historiography (e.g. colonial, nationalist, Marxist), which they say has tended to represent history from the point of view of the colonizers or social and economic elites, thus discounting the agency of colonized and subaltern groups (e.g. subsistence farmers, informal-sector workers, indigenous communities, marginalized women, slum dwellers and racialized minorities). Their aim, therefore, has been to try to rectify what they see as the elitist bias of much academic research.

In the early writings of the group, edited by the historian Guha, the tendency was to valorize subaltern agency by trying to represent it as independent and autonomous of elite politics. But this task proved increasingly difficult. Partly, it was a conceptual problem, since by

definition subalternity meant subordination to a dominant power, implying the impossibility of autonomy. Partly, it was an evidentiary problem, as documents written by subaltern groups (e.g. worker diaries, peasant testimonials) during colonial times proved difficult, if not impossible, to find. And partly, it was a political problem, with the discovery that so many subaltern acts of rebellion against the colonizer had failed. Many members of the group thus came to the realization that not only were subaltern attempts at political change often temporary and unsuccessful but the very project of investigating independent subaltern agency was doomed; far from ignoring or discounting elite powers, the project of retrieving the subaltern 'voice' could in fact only happen in relation to the dominant.

Can the Subaltern Speak?

Spivak's groundbreaking article 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' pushes this problematization of the recovery of the subaltern voice even further. Focusing on the gendered subaltern, Spivak contends, in fact, that the subaltern *cannot* speak—not because the woman does not have a voice or will not act but because she is not given a subject-position from which to speak or act. In other words, for Spivak, elite discourses are so powerful that they ignore, filter out and are deaf to the subaltern, so much so that even when the subaltern does speak, she is not heard.

Spivak's important point is that the subaltern voice is always mediated by dominant systems of representation. And her argument has at least three related implications for researchers:

- We have no unmediated access to subalternity: Because we always work from within dominant epistemic systems, we cannot retrieve any 'pure' or 'authentic' subaltern voice.
- We cannot claim neutrality or objectivity in our research on or encounters with the subaltern: We always bring our personal, professional, institutional, socio-economic and geopolitical biases into our work—be they deadlines, budgetary constraints, ideological prejudices or gender and class positioning.
- To the extent that our representations of the subaltern say more about us than about the subaltern, we *produce* the subaltern and, in fact, we may well end up reinforcing their subalternity. When our representations reflect our own image and desires, then not only are we unable to encounter subalterns on their own terms, but in so doing, we are merely reproducing our dominant epistemic structures. Our representations run the risk of

appropriating the subaltern for our own purposes, denigrating, orientaling or, indeed, romanticizing them to suit this or that personal or political objective of ours.

Hearing the Subaltern

How, then, do researchers encounter the subaltern, even as they are immersed in dominant systems of power and representation? How might they really hear what subalterns have to say or, indeed, learn from them? Far from retreating from these difficult tasks, the Subaltern Studies Group has been adamant that not only are the tasks worth doing but also these decolonizing gestures must be done with great care and responsibility. Even though the very recovery of the subaltern voice risks its erasure, it is crucial to record this erasure so as both to valorize the space of 'difference' of the subaltern and to critique the domination of imperial, socio-economic, epistemic and patriarchic discourses.

Acknowledging the researcher's complicity in and contamination by the dominant power structures helps researchers and investigators contextualize their claims, reducing the risk of personal arrogance or geo-institutional imperialism. In this regard, the Latin American post-colonial critics Anzaldúa, Mignolo and Glissant speak of 'border thinking' to reveal the hybridity and diversity within seemingly unified dominant power structures. Border thinking not only helps unsettle 'core' foundations of the Western canon but also enables researchers to see how 'peripheral' (e.g. Native American or Latino/a American) ideas and practices have shaped the 'core' (e.g. global actors such as the USA). Glissant coins the term *diversality* to refer to opening up new imaginaries and initiating meaningful intercultural exchange: Diversality implies coming to terms with the difference and what he calls the 'turbulence' of the subaltern while simultaneously unlearning dominant systems of knowledge and representation.

Ilan Kapoor

See also anti-oppression research; critical race theory; hegemony; indigenous research ethics and practice; post-colonial theory; subalternity

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SUBALTERNITY

The notion of subalternity is associated with the subaltern, in other words marginalized individuals or groups who are disenfranchised because they are not part of the hegemonic power structure of a society or colony. It means belonging to or being the subaltern. The word *subaltern* has a long history of usage. The perspective of the marginalized, or the study of cultures 'from below', has been part of colonial histories and literature from the eighteenth century onwards. The term as it has come to be used today, however, has its origins in Gramsci's writings on the proletariat or working-class struggles. The concept was appropriated in a particular way in post-colonial theory in India by Ranajit Guha, who was highly influential in the development of subaltern studies, offering a new site for scholars to explore studies of nationalism, societies, histories and cultures from below. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in 1988, broadly referred to subalternity as the interrogation of a voice that could not be heard since it was structurally written out of the imperialist or colonial narrative. While confined originally to post-colonial theory, cultural theory, literary theory, cultural anthropology and nationalism, the notion of subalternity has influenced the nature of research in many other domains of study and research, such as policy studies, developmental studies and sociolinguistics. It is included here since a consideration of subalternity in action research contexts has the potential not only to ensure a critical site for inclusion of marginal perspectives within scholarship but also to give voice and discursive space to individuals and communities that we partner in collaborative research and in the production of co-generative knowledge.

In policy studies, for example, the notion of subalternity may need to be included in the interpretation of data collected from individuals and groups, since it denotes in a particular way the social actors who become the crucial agency that affects and shapes the way a certain social policy is implemented.

In sociolinguistics, and in the study of language policies in multilingual contexts in particular, perspectives on how macro language policies are being implemented increasingly include subalternity as a research variable to gauge the efficacy of implementation in local contexts. A recent sociolinguistic study by Pol Cuvelier, Du Plessis, Meeuwis, Vanderkerckhove and Webb (2010), for example, provided a forum for

scholars in different countries to examine language policy implementation in multilingual contexts from the perspective of the subaltern; that is, those who rather than submissively implement policy, modify it, renegotiate it and re(de)fine in on the ground.

The Subaltern as Participant in Action Research

Action research involving reflection on the implementation of any given policy in organizations or communities can include subalternity in the creation of change and collaborative learning. The inclusion of a consideration of subalternity may become important in ensuring a truthful, dialogic transaction between researcher(s) and participant(s). In other words, for sociocultural, socio-economic or ideological reasons, the participant, while participating in the action research process and co-generating knowledge, might, nonetheless, see herself or himself as residing or located at the margins of the research process and power structure. Thus, the participant might need to be given space to speak, to have voice outside the hegemony of any research approach, however inclusive and collaborative it might aim to be. Rather than being the passive collaborator in action research, the participant as social actor can appropriate the research agenda, steer it in novel and unforeseen directions and demonstrate agency and ownership. A careful consideration of subalternity in action research, therefore, has the potential to ensure a more dialectic, truthful and transformative process of interaction and exchange between researcher(s) and participant(s). This means that once given the site to 'speak', as in Spivak's original conceptualization, truth is co-constructed by researcher(s) and participant(s); subaltern agency can become an active and powerful social agency of change exercising power and influence within the constraints imposed by organizational structures or research structures.

The Local and the Subaltern

For the researcher and the participant, it is worth considering that the subaltern is often best defined and understood in terms of and in relation to the local space or local site which they physically, emotionally and spiritually inhabit. Suresh Canagarajah has proposed that the notion of the local is often short-changed in the discourses on globalization, reminding us that the local is not of secondary importance or of a subsidiary status to the dominant discourses of the powerful community, where the global is applied or contextualized to the local.

This means that we may need to re-examine our disciplines and approaches to research to orientate to social relations from a radically different perspective. Thus, research with co-participants must include not

only their interpretations of the research questions and agenda but also their negotiations and resistances in the local site they inhabit. This interpretation helps the researcher to understand the realistic scope of action available to individuals and the locality that shapes their experience.

Subalternity, therefore, can be closely related to action research. Firstly, subalternity in action research contexts has the potential to include marginal perspectives within scholarship. Secondly, it allows the participant who may see himself or herself as belonging outside the research process, or marginal to it, to participate not only in a site where he or she can have voice but in a place where he or she can have agency and steer the research process in a new or in an unforeseen way.

Muiris Ó Laoire

See also advocacy and inquiry; agency; collaborative action research; hegemony; subaltern studies

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SUBJECTIVITY

See Philosophy of Science

SUPERVISING ACTION RESEARCH THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

Supervising action research theses and dissertations means helping students understand action research

methodology in theory and practice, specifically how to (1) plan, implement and evaluate an action research project of significance in a particular context and with a group of people who are as passionate about solving the issue or problem of concern as the student-researchers themselves; (2) collect, record, analyze and interpret qualitative data relevant to answering the research question and (3) write a concise thesis or dissertation within a given timeline.

The most effective way to supervise action research theses is to practise and model action research philosophy and values with students by using a collaborative, participatory approach to supervision rather than the single-supervisor model based on a hierarchical relationship. This requires the supervisors to be collaborative, reflective, innovative and creative in their supervisory practice and in forming Action Learning ‘sets’ (groups) of students as action researchers for mutual support.

Supervising action research theses is a topic of urgent importance to students, supervisors and institutions in the present climate, when global problems through economic crisis, climate change and so forth spark ever-increasing interest in action research as a methodology for addressing important, totally new and complex organizational, community and social issues. Students’ lack of knowledge about the action research paradigm, methodology, processes and project management may lead to poor-quality research and writing and/or delay in completion time or non-completion—with all kinds of implications. For example, floundering students often suffer from personal/psychological/health problems and fail to maximize their learning opportunities. And because some governments no longer fund students who delay or fail to complete their theses, institutions miss out on the necessary funds for resources, and consequently, supervisors must take on a higher workload along with cost to their academic reputation from supervision failure. Therefore, we need (a) useful resources for supervisors and students; (b) a supervisory praxis that mirrors action research culture, values and strategies and (c) effective, alternative structures to replace or improve the traditional single-supervisor model.

Useful Resources

Books such as Gina Wisker’s *The Good Supervisor* and Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson’s *The Action Research Dissertation* and guides such as Bob Dick’s *Action Research Theses* and *AREOL (Action Research and Evaluation Online)* are of paramount importance. This is especially so when applying and teaching qualitative research and action research because these methodologies are relatively new and are not taught or

understood to the same extent as traditional, quantitative research and statistics.

Supervising action research theses can be more (and also less) difficult and time-consuming than supervising traditional research theses. As just mentioned, it is more difficult because the methodology is relatively new, and supervisors often struggle themselves when using and especially when teaching it. Therefore, postgraduate research students should be required to complete a course on action research (including qualitative research) before enrolling in a higher degree programme. If that is not possible, Bob Dick’s free online course on *AREOL* is highly recommended, especially the assignments, which may be assessed, examined and even accredited by supervisors and action research specialists in a university.

Action Research Culture

Action research has its own distinctive research culture formed by action researchers’ beliefs, values or *Weltanschauungen* (world views). Just as culture is the expression of the usually unacknowledged, often unquestioned ways in which we think, speak and live, similarly a research paradigm (as defined by the renowned science philosopher Thomas Kuhn) comprises the full constellation of beliefs, values and techniques that members of a community of scholars share.

An action research culture or paradigm is normally known to be inclusive, friendly, open, sharing, collaborative, empowering, democratic, critically reflective, emancipatory and enjoyable. Action research has been proven to be an effective method for (1) conducting research that is practical, useful and relevant to professional practice and organizational or community learning and (2) developing people’s ‘soft’ skills, competencies and other attributes required by employees, group members and leaders in ‘learning organizations’ in the twenty-first century. The five disciplines of a learning organization (as defined by Peter Senge, the creator, theorist and practitioner of this concept) are also the aspirations of action researchers, namely, personal mastery, mental models, a shared vision, team learning and systems thinking. Systems thinking means that all members understand the whole organization’s culture, structure and processes, rather than only parts of these, and that collaboration and team learning are essential for synergy, meaning that the collaborative team results are more effective and richer than the sum of the individual contributions.

Supervising action research theses can be made easier if students work in groups instead of individually and collaboratively instead of competitively. However, supervisors need to have or obtain the knowledge and process facilitation skills to work with groups

effectively and develop lifelong Action Learning for action research students so that they can live and work in the action research culture.

Group Supervision

A new structure is proposed here for an action research methodology model for postgraduate supervision that involves candidates in providing guidance and help to each other and sharing resources in a group setting. Supervisory groups comprising both students and supervisors can usefully supplement the traditional structures that involve only faculty (e.g. the single supervisor, joint supervisors or supervisory committees). While in the traditional structure, supervisors are usually content to be experts in their discipline, while supervisors of action research theses need to be interdisciplinary problem-solvers and knowledgeable in action research methodology. This can be a problem for supervisors who are either just beginning their own work in action research or coming from a different paradigm and methodology. These supervisors need to learn, and that is the advantage of an action research culture. It allows you to admit your weaknesses as well as your strengths and learn with and from your colleagues and students. For example, here are two scenarios.

First, form an Action Learning set of three to six students who can work with or without a supervisor as self-directed, autonomous learners. In the beginning, facilitate the process of relationship and team building and introduce ground rules, the use of a reflection diary and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats) analysis. Students must understand the need, and make a commitment, to attend regular (weekly or fortnightly) set meetings to share access to faculty supervisors and other resources and help each other in completing their research and thesis on time. Once this arrangement is in place, each meeting has an agreed agenda, starting with reflections on the previous meeting and on subsequent actions, followed by some focused input from a faculty member (and increasingly from a student later), with subsequent discussion and questions. At the end of each meeting, members in turn reflect on what went well for them, what did not and why or why not. Then, they agree on the agenda for the next meeting, with a new focal topic and presenter. The advantage of covering one key issue/topic (or more) per session is that supervisors can be sure that in the end all students have been exposed to all the essential knowledge and skills necessary for an action research thesis. Another advantage is that supervisors need to provide the necessary information only once instead of multiple times. In the traditional structure, supervisors do not always remember what they taught or discussed with individual students, which can often lead to misunderstandings

and misguided expectations. The reason for limiting an Action Learning set to six members is that this is the maximum size for a leaderless group (without a chairperson). And with more experience, the group can meet without a supervisor. For example, they may invite guests who have successfully completed their higher degrees and can talk about their positive and negative experiences and their learning. Students can also share information and resources that they have found useful and read and comment on one another's first drafts of proposals and chapters before submitting their work to their supervisor. Any reciprocal input into their research projects may reduce supervisors' workload.

The second scenario of group supervision is a larger programme with several Action Learning sets. Think of other colleagues in your university, or in other institutions in your region, who supervise action research theses. Invite them and their students for a 'think tank' or an initial workshop to discuss mutual interests and a possible joint programme with a series of workshops on general issues of action research, thesis writing and supervision. These workshops can be facilitated in turn by faculty supervisors (and possibly by students later) to discuss key problem areas among students and supervisors, such as staff/student expectations, the role of the supervisor, thesis requirements and standards, defining the central/focal research problem or question and identifying its significance and methodology, proposal writing, mind maps and model building, planning and writing the first draft with clear concepts and structure (in contrast to the fine-tuned and precise final draft), the use of a bibliographical database and so on. These interdisciplinary, intra- or inter-university workshops increase networking and support for both supervisors and students and reduce supervisors' time spent with individual students without cost to the student. It does not matter that students' thesis topics are unrelated and in different disciplines—on the contrary, students learn to answer questions in simple English instead of jargon—but what they all have in common is an interest in action research and how to complete a thesis successfully and in minimum time.

Advantages

The advantages of including candidates in group supervision are clear. Students continue to be actively involved in critical thinking through group reflection and interaction, they have input into the content and decision-making of the workshop programme, they share ideas and resources and they maintain high motivation through group support. These processes are true to the action research culture/paradigm, especially collaboration and the cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting—learning, researching and supervising through action and for action.

Limitations

Whilst these group supervisory sessions with student involvement are very useful at the beginning of candidature and for developing methodology, there comes a time when students need to work on their own particular content and problem in depth and face-to-face or electronically with their supervisor(s). Students' needs change from group to individual supervision.

Another limitation may be that students are at different levels of understanding of action research and of one another's disciplines. Therefore, the workshops have to cater to all student needs. More advanced students benefit from smaller subgroups of two to four (rather than the large group) in order to have more specialized discussion of their thesis progress and of tabled action research case studies and completed theses as examples/models. In conclusion, larger, cross-discipline group meetings with one or several supervisors can work well at the early stages of the research process, but these group meetings soon need to be supplemented by topic- or problem-specific subgroups with their own supervisor.

Conclusion

Supervision of action research theses and dissertations requires the same supervision capabilities, strategies and skills as for other theses, but it also requires knowledge of action research methodology, a relatively new and constantly emerging field. In this sense, some supervisors may find it more difficult, but it can be made easier if the single-supervisor model is supplemented by group supervision with candidates' involvement in small Action Learning sets of up to six members (Scenario 1) and/or larger workshop programmes with several faculty supervisors sharing the tasks and workload of research guidance (Scenario 2). Both group structures constitute a support system for supervisors and postgraduate students, reduce students' intellectual isolation, improve their performance and productivity and may lead to lower attrition rates. The importance of group support in boosting students' morale, self-confidence and learning has not drawn the attention it deserves as a means of reducing high attrition and low or late completion rates among postgraduate students. Through participating in collaborative supervisor-candidate sets and contributing to the workshop programme, supervisors can create a more co-operative and open environment for learning and research that is appropriate for the purpose of action research, with intellectual enrichment for supervisor as well as student.

Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt

See also academic discourse; cycles of action and reflection; dissertation writing; practitioner inquiry; reflective practice

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SURVEYS

See Quantitative Methods

SUSTAINABILITY

Although there are many definitions for sustainability, most frequently it is described as the *state* that results from the *process* of sustainable development. The most generally accepted definition of sustainable

development appeared in the 1987 Brundtland Report, published by the World Commission on Environment and Development, where a sustainable form of development was described as one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Thus, this definition recognizes that development need not be inconsistent with sustainability. The key implications for sustainable development and for the associated *state of sustainability* are the twin principles of intergenerational and intra-generational equity. Intergenerational equity refers to preserving capital or resources for future generations, and intra-generational equity refers to fair access to capital or resources for current generations. Decision-making that accords with sustainability requirements considers and seeks to balance short- and long-term human, economic, environmental and social needs. Such decision-making should also seek to adopt a precautionary approach—allowing that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.

Current sustainability areas of local, national and international concern include combating global warming, managing ecological support systems, conserving natural resources (e.g. water, soil, air, species and ecosystem biodiversity), supporting a cyclical economy and ensuring an equitable society in terms of quality of life. The 1992 Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio Declaration) in adopting the concepts outlined in the Brundtland Report also embraced the principles of the earlier (1992) Dublin Conference: that ascertaining the divergent human demands with regard to natural resources, and how they change, was as critical to science-based decision-making as an understanding of ecological science. This approach pointed to a role for action research as a tool for engaging stakeholders in complex decision-making. This entry provides a brief explanation of the increasing importance of sustainability to communities and in policy development and organizational decision-making. The entry also discusses some of the key strategies, many based on action research and Action Learning principles, being adopted by institutions and organizations of all types in order to support a more sustainable future.

Adaptive Management and Sustainability

In the 1970s, North American scientists, confronted by issues of complexity, uncertainty and risk in seeking to sustainably manage bounded ecosystems, developed the concept of adaptive management. As expounded by 'Buzz' Holling and others, adaptive management

in its simplest form is a common-sense application of a recursive approach to the scientific method of controlled experimentation, advocating that implementation of management policies is primarily an experiential learning experience. Adaptive management explicitly recognizes the need for management decisions to consider economic, social and environmental values in an integrated and decentralized fashion, the need for the presence of diverse stakeholders in environmental management issues and the inherent uncertainty of environmental processes. In these concepts, one can see the genesis of the Dublin Conference principles, which, following the Rio Declaration, were embodied in the Rio implementation plan titled *Agenda 21*.

Since the 1970s, the principles of applying a process that involves a cycle of 'plan-do-review-re-plan' have been recognized as something that can be applied to more extensive ecosystems than those first considered. Adaptive management focused attention on the need to consider a broader range of contexts, levels and scales for policy formulation and decision-making where complexity, uncertainty and risk are involved, including in political, governmental, business and other social spheres. More recent formulations perceive the adaptive approach as relevant within the context of participatory (or adaptive) governance.

The need for participatory approaches to awareness raising and implementation of sustainability concepts relates to the multiple interpretations of what equitable access to resources or capital means for now and for the future. For example, capital may be thought of in terms of natural, economic, built, cultural or social capital or as human skills and capabilities. Wider interpretations of sustainability are classified as either strong or weak according to whether all forms of capital are maintained intact independent of one another. Strong sustainability requires that each form of capital is kept constant. When applied to the organization, strong interpretations therefore assume that social, environmental and economic objectives must be addressed simultaneously if any one of these objectives is to be of value. Hence, the adoption of a position on intergenerational equity which aims to preserve economic and built, but not natural, capital is described as 'weak sustainability', while a 'strong' or 'deep green' position argues from the perspective that nature has intrinsic value and therefore cannot be compensated for with economic or built capital. Coupled with the ethical nature of concepts perceived as being part of the sustainability agenda (e.g. the 'rights' of ecosystems, plants and animals), this multiplicity of contexts for policy formulation and decision-making provides part of the explanation for the number of competing definitions of sustainability.

Drivers for Sustainability

There are many factors that can be listed as primary drivers for the worldwide concern on issues surrounding sustainability. A non-exhaustive list would include not only factors associated with increasing resource constraints, world population increase and demographic change, globalization, the explosion of new technologies, climate change and global heating but also, significantly, the impact of social movements and the resulting political pressures that have emerged, particularly since the 1970s.

Increasing Resource Constraints

Increasing demand for natural resources of all kinds is now coupled with a realization that much of humans' use of those resources is wasteful, potentially leading to an exhaustion of non-renewable and even renewable resources. Each year, humans consume 1.4 times the resources produced naturally per year.

World Population Increase and Demographic Change

The world's population reached 7 billion in 2011 and is still rising. It is also becoming increasingly urbanized, driving the demand for more resource use and increasing emissions. Demographic changes have important implications for migration, housing, infrastructure and food supply. The world will need to double food production in the next 40 years to feed its population.

Globalization

Globalization has brought positives and negatives. Greater interconnectedness allows co-ordination of human activity on a scale unknown before and faster social change. Expanded access to information and the wider reach of the media has brought to the attention of a world audience man-made disasters such as the effects of acid rain in the 1970s, the Three Mile Island nuclear meltdown in 1979, the release of toxic gases at Bhopal in 1984, the nuclear meltdown at Chernobyl in 1986–87, the Exxon *Valdez* oil spill in Alaska in 1989, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 and the Fukushima nuclear meltdown in 2011. But it has also brought greater world awareness of issues concerning drought, famine, species extinction, habitat depletion, desertification and water resource depletion. Organizations connected with such issues can now be more closely scrutinized and by a wider audience than ever before, and there are more demands for community dialogue and participatory disaster management.

New Technologies

While the rapid increase in new technologies following the end of the Second World War brought benefits to humankind generally, there were attendant unintended consequences. Unforeseen effects of the use of DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) were brought to world attention following the publication, in 1962, of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. The unanticipated problems that attended the use of asbestos sheeting as a cheap building material still give rise to problems with regard to safe disposal of what is now regarded as a highly dangerous material. The use of hydrofluorocarbons as refrigerants (and in aerosols) was identified as interfering with the earth's sensitive ozone layer, and the use of such compounds was eventually effectively banned following the signing of the Montreal Protocol in 1987. Thus, many of the new technologies that had been perceived as improving our quality of life (e.g. control of disease and insect pests, cheap housing, improved hygiene and food storage) came under suspicion as creating more problems than they solved. Conversely, new technologies such as generation of energy from renewable resources and computer and Internet technology not only provide significant human welfare benefits but also offer the promise of new industries and new avenues for employment.

Climate Change and Global Heating

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was established in 1988 to advise on the risks of climate change. Its first report was published in 1990. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change does not carry out original research or monitor climate or related phenomena. Its main activity is to publish reports on topics relevant to scientific evidence with regard to climate change. The potential effects of climate change are now increasingly well documented. They include the melting of ice caps and permafrost, rising sea levels, increasing ocean acidity, deforestation—particularly of rainforest—large-scale species decline and extinction, more extreme-weather events (e.g. droughts, floods and hurricanes) and terrestrial desertification. There is now a widespread appreciation of the likelihood of a global average temperature rise of at least 2 °C this century, and possibly 4–6 °C, unless there is a radical shift in our relationship to the environment. Even with radical emission reduction, there is high risk of abrupt and irreversible climatic shifts taking place, possibly in the next 5–10 years, certainly in this century.

Social Movements for Sustainability

The environmentalist movement—environmental and conservation groups established at local, national

and international levels—is often identified as a key driver of change towards sustainability. Certainly, the work of venerable institutions such as the Sierra Club in the USA and the Commons Preservation Society in the UK and, operating worldwide, the activities of Greenpeace, the World Wide Fund for Nature, Friends of the Earth and the Rainforest Alliance have played an important part in highlighting the need for sustainability. However, these groups are not the only players in the field.

While there are competing claims for the origins of what has become known as the environmental justice movement, it appears that, starting in the 1960s, groups that have been associated with such a movement developed independently of one another in diverse parts of the world, yet sharing common concerns and even common discourse. This movement differs from the environmentalist movement in that it focuses firmly on issues of discrimination, racism and equity with regard to the unequal distribution of the burden of environmental degradation and on the need for appropriate community dialogue and engagement.

Since the 1960s, environmental action and interest groups have proliferated. One aspect of these groups is that they often draw membership from sectors of the public otherwise unengaged in politics. Yet the nature of their activities can often attract political attention. While some groups utilize local action or the Internet to pursue their various causes, the rise of green political parties in a number of countries, sometimes as serious competitors for political power, can lead to other mainstream parties adopting environmental policies to attract the 'green vote'. The existence of and publicity given to environmental groups and their campaigns have undoubtedly brought about changes in social expectations that have driven moves by governments to enact environmental and social legislation, and the number of multilateral international treaties and agreements

entered since the 1980s in particular is testimony to the scale of influence of such changed expectations.

It is not only governments that have reacted to these changing world views. In the world of finance and accounting, the Global Reporting Initiative aims at establishing a sustainable global economy by providing sustainable reporting guidance, the Equator Principles offer a credit risk management framework for managing environmental and social risk in project finance transactions and a range of sustainability indexes, such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, maintain indexes to benchmark the performance of investments in sustainable companies and funds. Business organizations, too, have become increasingly aware of the need to maintain a 'social licence to operate' and preserve reputational capital. In some fields of business, some firms and organizations have found it to their advantage to become leaders in the field of sustainable practice, pursuing what they perceive to be the 'business case for sustainability' while creating an image or reputation for their organization that has the potential to establish a market advantage for their products or services.

Organizational Change and Sustainability

Within organizations, participatory change programmes that draw on Action Learning and action research principles are frequently utilized to embed sustainability and share meaning across diverse value systems and functional areas of the organization which may have very different understandings of sustainability.

The problem of classifying organizational or corporate sustainability and appropriate change and leadership mechanisms is often addressed through a phasic approach to organizational development, such as in the use of the phase model presented in Table 1, applied to both human and ecological sustainability.

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Key Principle</i>	<i>Typical Actions</i>
1	Rejection	Employees and the environment are exploited and seen as 'free goods'.
2	Non-responsiveness	Financial factors dominate decision-making. Broader human resource and environmental strategies are ignored.
3	Compliance	Compliance with legislation and formal codes of conduct is the priority.
4	Efficiency	The focus is on systematic attempts to harness environmental efficiencies.
5	Strategic proactivity	The emphasis is on product stewardship based on a life cycle approach, strategic repositioning, product development and market redefinition to take advantage of the increasing community emphasis on sustainability.
6	Ideal phase of the sustaining organization	Priorities are renewing and replenishing social, human and natural capital

Table 1 *Phases of Organizational Sustainability*

SOURCE: Dunphy, Griffiths, & Benn (2007).

From the above discussion we can see that implementing sustainability in organizations means dealing with a multilayered and ambiguous concept, involving multiple stakeholders and value systems, with the potential to be highly politicized. Research has shown that moving between such phases is supported by employee engagement in sustainability planning and management as well as by engagement with external stakeholders. The complexity of the problem is such that a single individual, institution or business or government organization cannot enable a more sustainable future for the planet. To achieve this, we need to depend upon partnership and collaboration across sectors, among communities and between individuals from all walks of life.

For many critics, the problem lies with our obsession with growth and consumerism. New business models based on the principles of natural capitalism, such as biomimicry, adaptive manufacturing and re-manufacturing, are taking the value chain in a more sustainable direction.

Implementing Sustainability

As discussed, the material consequences of not adhering to sustainability principles are increasingly obvious through speeding climate change, increasing air and water pollution and soil and ocean degradation. Yet it is equally apparent that we face challenges in incorporating the means to address them into our pre-existing institutions and organizational systems and structures. Education for Sustainability (EfS) has been shown to be one of the more effective approaches in consciousness raising and empowering individuals to generate action around sustainability. EfS has been endorsed by the UN in the current Decade for Education for Sustainable Development, and its discourse has been embraced widely by governments and other intergovernmental bodies. While it has an educative basis, EfS is really an approach to learning and change, and its key principles can be employed within wider organizations and communities as well as in educational institutions. Action research can be an important component of EfS, and an understanding of action research is often listed alongside key skills associated with EfS, such as critical, creative and systems thinking, communication, conflict management and problem-solving.

Action Research and Sustainability

As spelt out in the Rio Declaration and *Agenda 21*, participation is an essential component of sustainability. Action research is therefore highly relevant to sustainability because certain approaches to action research can be a means of participative change, engaging individuals and communities in a reflective practice that allows them to enact sustainability in their personal

and professional lives. Action research is particularly important as a means of enabling change for sustainability because participants are encouraged to actively and systematically engage with a sustainability issue of relevance to their personal or workplace lives.

Suzanne Benn and Andrew Martin

See also Action Learning; Appreciative Inquiry and sustainable value creation; community dialogue; environment and climate change; environmental justice; experiential learning; participatory disaster management; participatory governance; systems thinking

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

See Sustainability

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Symbolic interactionism is an empirical theory which centralizes the importance of activity. It holds that people act towards things based on the meaning those things have for them, that meanings emerge from social interaction and that meanings are modified by individual interpretation and on-going social exchange. These premises create a methodologically cohesive frame which informs a distinct process of empirical inquiry. Founded on the philosophical theorizing of George Herbert Mead and the sociological work of Hebert Blumer, symbolic interactionism centralizes meaning, interpretation and social interaction for the emergence, construction and maintenance of language, understanding and behaviour. In this entry, the philosophical foundations and methodological root images of symbolic interactionism will be described and related to action research.

Meaning, Social Interaction and Interpretation

Theoretically, it is often assumed that meaning is unimportant and can be ignored, or alternatively, human

behaviour is viewed as the product of various factors. Attention is generally concentrated on behaviour per se and the factors presumed to be creating them (e.g. psychology—stimuli, perception and cognition; sociology—status, social roles and values). Meaning is thus either merged with the initiating factors or is treated as a mere transmission link which can be ignored in favour of the initiating factor. However, in symbolic interactionism, meaning is centralized, and to ignore meaning is to neglect its fundamental role in the formation of behaviour.

This stark difference becomes clear when considering the origin of meaning. Meaning is accounted for in one of two ways. The first, realist view is that meaning is assumed to be intrinsic to the thing itself and is part of its objective nature. For example, a chair is clearly a chair—all that is needed is to recognize the meaning of the thing which is there in the thing. The second account stresses the psychical attributes connected to the thing via the individual's psychological make-up, for example, the individual's history, feelings, ideas, memories and motives. An example would be tracing the meaning of *prostitution* by examining the attitude of the person who considers 'prostitution'.

Alternatively, symbolic interactionism holds that the origin of meaning emerges from the interaction between people. Meaning is understood as being constructed, maintained and recycled from social interaction; therefore, the source of meaning is intrinsically social. Thus, symbolic interactionism does not reduce meaning to a mediating event between either psychological (causal factors within the individual, e.g., personality or personal history) or sociological (causal factors in the society, e.g., poverty or social class) factors but instead emerges in the interaction between individuals with regard to the thing, that is, the collective engagement with the thing, which creates the thing per se. Symbolic interactionism views meanings as social products, creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact.

However, the use of meaning does not equate to the social production of meaning. That would be to reduce meaning to the application of established meanings, albeit in this instance social as opposed to realist or psychological. Instead, the importance of interpretation is acknowledged. Interpretation has two steps. In the first, the actor has to indicate to himself the thing towards which he is acting; he has to point out to himself the things that have meaning. This is an internalized social process in which the actor is interacting with himself. In the second step, via communicating with himself, interpretation becomes a process of handling meanings. The actor checks, selects, suspends and transforms meanings in the light of the situation in which they are placed. Interpretation is not an automatic application of

established meanings but is instead a formative process in which meanings are used and revised as instruments of guidance and the formation of action. In symbolic interactionism, action centrally implicates the self-interaction and reflection of meanings.

Root Images

Blumer holds that symbolic interactionism is founded on a number of 'root images' or basic ideas. These are human groups or societies, social interaction, objects, the human being as actor, human action and the interconnection of lines of action.

Human Groups or Societies

Human groups consist of human beings who are engaging in action. That is, fundamentally, human groups or societies exist in action, whether individually, collectively or on behalf of some institution or group of others. It is on this basis that symbolic interactionism carries out empirical research of human group life. For example, culture becomes understood as a derivation of what people do. Thus, terms such as custom, tradition, norm, status, role and authority refer to the relationships emerging from how people act towards one another. Human society is necessarily understood as an ongoing process of fitting together the activities of its members.

Nature of Social Interaction

As noted, symbolic interactionism centralizes the importance of social interaction in the establishment of meaning. Whilst a physical reality independent of human observation is generally assumed, it is not, however, responded to directly. Instead, humans respond to the social understandings and meanings ascribed to this reality. From this, individuals and society become understood as inseparable: firstly, as both are formed through social interaction and, secondly, as one cannot be understood without reference to the other. That is, we understand ourselves and others with reference to meanings that are socially ascribed, and in becoming constructed selves, we then engage in the ongoing construction of social meaning. Put another way, social interaction is the process that *forms* human conduct, instead of being merely a means or setting for the expression or release of human conduct.

Further, the actions of others enter into the formation of our own actions. Mead identifies two levels of social interaction: (1) the 'conversation of gestures' and (2) the 'use of significant symbols'. Blumer names them 'non-symbolic interaction' and 'symbolic interaction', respectively. Non-symbolic interactions are those actions which are responded to immediately and

unreflectively; however, human interaction is typically characterized by interaction on the symbolic level, as humans seek to understand the meaning of one another's action. Any gesture has meaning not only for the person who makes it but also for the person who receives it. When the meanings of both the recipient and the sender are in alignment, they understand each other. Mead argued that there is a 'triadic nature of meaning'. That is, any gesture signifies what the person who is making the gesture plans to do, what the person to whom the gesture is directed is then to do and the joint action that is to arise by the articulation of the acts of both. If at any of these points, there is confusion, communication is ineffective, interaction is impeded and joint action is blocked. Thus, central to joint action is the capacity to take another's role, in order to understand the other's gestural meaning.

Objects

Objects have a special meaning for symbolic interactionism. The social world is understood to be composed of objects, and these objects are the products of social interaction. An object is anything which can be referred to, whether it is a physical object (e.g. chair, tree, bicycle), a social object (e.g. mother, president, friend) or an abstract object (e.g. moral principle, philosophical doctrine, idea). The nature of any object consists of the meaning that the object has for the person for whom it is an object. For example, a chair is understood as a chair not because its meaning is housed in the 'thing' itself (i.e. it has an inherent chair-ness) but because we come to recognize a chair through sharing our understandings and interpretations of certain physical objects as 'chair'. With time, we forget the process through which we understand 'chair' as a chair and simply see the chair. However, this amnesia does not remove the social process by which we become able to understand 'chair-ness' and an object as 'chair'; a chair remains an object with socially derived meaning.

One implication of this is that human beings may inhabit the same physical space yet inhabit very different environments. As Blumer points out, humans interact and recognize only those objects which they are familiar with; this means that humans can literally inhabit different 'worlds'. But more important, it is in relation to objects that action is focused. It is through a vast process of forming, sustaining and transforming the meaning of objects that social life is played out and carried on. In bringing together different 'worlds', objects are kept in play.

Human Being as Actor

Mead argued that human beings have a 'self'; that is, human beings can be objects to themselves.

Human beings are able to recognize themselves as young, as wives, as fathers, as successful or as being in debt. Human beings must be able to stand outside themselves, taking the place of others to view the self as others view it; thus like all objects, the self object emerges from a process of social interaction. Action is carried out in accordance with this assessment of the self carrying out social roles. This ability to be an object to oneself means that an individual is in continual and ongoing social communication and construction, allowing for not only changes to interpretation but also transformation and direction of behaviour. This is radically different from understanding human beings as merely the behavioural manifestation of psychological or sociological forces.

Nature of Human Action

Human action is thus understood as being more than the result of underlying causal factors; human action is instead an active process of socially meaningful objects which are understood in conversation with an interpreting self. Whilst Blumer acknowledges that human beings may do a miserable job interpreting and constructing their actions, construct they still must. To do so, they must take into account a 'flow of situations'. This flow cannot be understood as mere factors acting through the agent, as any one factor is instead only a small element which must be considered and interpreted by the agent to understand the presenting situation requiring action.

Interlinkage of Action

Human life is then understood as lines of action which fit together. Blumer refers to this as 'joint action'—the societal organization or conduct of different acts by diverse participants. Joint action can be more than the constituent parts, for example, a marriage, a birthday party or a parliamentary debate. Nor is it necessary to identify individual participants, for example, a family, a business corporation or a nation. Fundamentally, however, joint action is collective interlinking action and is continually undergoing a process of formation. Even when the behavioural pattern is well established and routine, each activity cycle must be created anew and is open to transformation in the construction and interpretation of meaning. Joint action is also historically framed within a temporal context, that which went before informing that which is done now. To ignore the informing background of any new joint action is to effectively argue for spontaneous generation. This view of joint action challenges the notion that organizations are regularized operating systems. Instead, organizations are viewed as a diverse array of participants occupying different points in a

network engaging in their actions using a given set of meanings.

Relevance to Action Research

Symbolic interactionism can be related to action research in a profound way. Once we theoretically acknowledge that the social exchange and interpretation of meanings create a social world which is both simultaneously stable and fluid, the possibility for change in social understanding and action emerges. To put it simply, symbolic interactionism can be used to theoretically account for the possibility of change in the 'real world'.

Symbolic interactionism is founded on the notion that actors act towards objects in accordance with the objects' perceived meanings. This means that at any point our meanings and the meanings of others are open to transformation. As we reflect on our object of interest and come into contact with others' reflections on the object, our meaning of that object can change. In and of itself this would be unimportant, but it must be remembered that symbolic interactionism is predominantly a theory of activity, activity which occurs in interconnections of actors coming into contact with one another. As the social fluidity of meanings becomes apparent, activity becomes open to the possibility of change. Thus, not only does symbolic interactionism provide a theoretical account for the dynamic of change, but it also suggests meaning as an empirical lens for the study of activity change.

Anne Duguid

See also action anthropology; activity theory; collaborative action research; constructivism; hermeneutics; insider action research; social constructionism

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thinking and complexity theory. Its focus is not so much on the social, economic and organizational systems themselves as on a *systemic* understanding of how change happens and how norms become established. This distinguishes it from other forms of large-system action research that engage across organizational systems and networks, as articulated in the work of David Coghlan and Bjorn Gustavsen. There is an emerging dialogue between systems theorists and action researchers. Gerald Midgley and Ray Ison have argued for the importance of action research to systems intervention, and Bob Flood changed the name of the long-established journal *Systems Practice* to *Systemic Practice and Action Research*. Methodologies of systemic action research have been extensively developed by Yoland Wadsworth and the author. The author was strongly influenced by the thinking of Susan Weil, who established the SOLAR action research centre in the UK.

The Intellectual Underpinnings of Systemic Action Research

One of the most important foundation stones for systemic action research was laid by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s. He not only articulated the importance of action research itself but also developed the notion of a field of relations. He argued that phenomena do not exist in isolation but are interconnected through multiple relationships. His notion of a force field was a precursor to the relational understanding of power articulated by Michel Foucault, which sees power not exclusively in the relationship of the dominant with the exploited but rather as a system of constantly shifting interrelationships which create dynamic patterns of inclusion and exclusion, dominance and submission and insistence and resistance. These relationships form a 'system'. Another key conceptual underpinning has been the work of Checkland, who developed the idea of 'soft systems'. Moving radically away from the idea of systems as depictions of objective reality, he highlighted the different and overlapping systems of relationships that are perceived by actors. An understanding of multiple subjective versions of reality allows us to learn about how 'reality' might be constructed and what the systemic patterns that emerge from this tell us about how change might happen.

What follows from this is that changes in one part of the system create changes across the system. The patterns they create can crystallize into 'social norms' and other 'system dynamics'. These become powerful forces which militate against further change. Change may happen but is frequently not sustainable as power is exerted through these norms to force divergent behaviour and activity back towards the status quo.

SYSTEMIC ACTION RESEARCH

Systemic action research is an approach to action research which is built on the foundations of systems

This thinking is strongly supported by complexity theory, which shows how underlying ‘attractors’ draw people towards equilibrium points which can be sustainably changed only when strong enough alternative attractors are created.

Change is considered typically to be iterative and emergent. One thing leads to another, and each of these changes, in turn, has an impact on a myriad of other relationships within the system. This leads to emergent outcomes where there is no directly apparent relationship between the components and what emerges as the whole. This means that it can be as effective to create changes in parts of the system that do not initially seem to be the centre of concern as to focus on where the ‘problem’ appears to lie. Because of the relational nature of change, we need to be constantly alert to the fact that even changes which appear to be desirable in relation to a particular intervention may have unexpected or unwanted consequences elsewhere in the system. Similarly, positive outcomes can come from unanticipated sources.

Contrary to early systems theory, complexity theory highlights the importance of not seeing change as a linear process. The tendency to think of change in terms similar to ‘Intervention A will lead to Outcome B’ is not only a characteristic of traditional research; it is to some extent implicit in the classic action research cycle. Systemic approaches to action research enable non-simple causality to become comprehensible by seeing change as also created by multiple actions of multiple actors and as resulting from combinations of predictable and unpredictable effects. The implication of this is a shift in emphasis in both the focus of action research and the design of action research processes.

The Focus of Systemic Action Research Processes

Systemic action research has a strong focus on changing the system dynamics and building new attractors to support sustainable change. This requires an understanding of the underlying dynamics of change, and the latent attractors which lie beneath the surface until they can find expression and reach critical mass.

Many action research approaches emphasize consensus-building or collective problem-solving processes. Systemic practitioners focusing on complex problems will often be working in situations characterized by deep conflicts of interest, where there is no consensus or even joint purposes to be had or found. So the emphasis of systemic action research is often more on changing the equilibrium of a system. This does not require the acquiescence of all parties; it is rather what happens when multiple small (and sometimes larger) changes have an impact on the balance of

power within a system. So when action researchers are exploring a map which describes the system, they may be looking for opportunities, entry points, and leverage points for changing the system and not necessarily, in the first place, taking actions which they perceive will be direct answers to the issues or questions that they are seeking solutions to.

Key Characteristics of Systemic Action Research Processes

While systemic action research is built on a long tradition of action research and shares many of its characteristics, there are some aspects of its methodology which differ, amongst which are the following.

Building Pictures of the System

In order to engage with complex systems, it is necessary to observe them and then to understand them. Different techniques have been used to build pictures of the system. These often take the form of system maps. Burns has developed a multistage mapping process where action research facilitators firstly engage multiple stakeholders in inquiry, secondly produce complex issue maps where the knowledge of all the action researchers is consolidated and relationships debated and drawn and thirdly draw out of parts of the big maps to depict specific patterns and or dynamics which shed light on the wider dynamics of the issue that is being explored. These maps are then opened to scrutiny, firstly by those who generated them and secondly by the other stakeholders.

Multiple Starting Points for Inquiry

In systemic action research approaches, it is important to engage multiple stakeholders in inquiry. Different approaches to this have been adopted, with different implications. Wadsworth and co-researchers’ seminal study of acute psychiatric hospital practice in Victoria, Australia, started with a group of service-using consumers who initiated multiple dialogues with professional staff and managers. They started in one hospital ward (unit), next extended their inquiry throughout the hospital, then moved on to the area mental health system and eventually approached state and federal policymakers. The action research process tick-tacked between all participants, feeding back the results of around 35 smaller studies. At all times, the group driving the research was the mental health services user group (in effective collaboration with the other stakeholder groups). Burns’ approach was different. He has argued that in order to fully understand the system it is necessary to start at multiple points within the system. So, for example, an inquiry into female genital mutilation might separately

engage the young girls who had the practice carried out upon them, the mothers, the tribal elders, the non-governmental organizations that were rescuing the girls and the hospitals that were carrying out the practice in order to keep it clean and safe. In this scenario, a core group does not own the inquiry in the same way as it might in a Co-Operative Inquiry process.

Multiple and Parallel Inquiry Strands

This is important for many reasons: (a) to see the whole system, it needs to be seen from multiple perspectives; (b) seeing issues from multiple perspectives opens up possibilities for action which can lie in the juxtaposition of perspectives and which otherwise would not be visible and (c) complex problems are often characterized by power relationships and competing interests, which means that people cannot always inquire together in one space. As the inquiries develop, and the field of relationships is changed by the actions which have been generated from one or more of the inquiries, possibilities may emerge for different strands of inquiry to be brought together.

Fluid Inquiry Groups Which Follow the Issues

Most group-based forms of action research take the form of a co-inquiry by a relatively stable group of people, who can build trust amongst each other, and a shared inquiry history. A systemic action research process follows the issues and continuously draws in new people as they are needed, as the inquiry evolves, adding complexity for co-inquirers to continue to share a coherent narrative.

Burns sees the systemic action research approach as raising some complex dilemmas around the trade-offs between participation and a deep understanding of power and system dynamics, seeing both as critical to effective emancipator action but not always sitting easily together. In a Participatory Action Research approach, there is greater direct ownership of the process, but there may be a limited set of lenses through which to understand the power dynamics. In a systemic action research approach, more control over the process may lie with facilitators who are engaging across the system, but a much greater understanding of the dynamics of power may be achieved. This can be problematic for systemic action research facilitators, who hold the same values as Participatory Action Research practitioners and believe that the process needs to be deeply owned by the participants. In one attempt to combine systemic and participatory approaches, Ghana Community Radio Network developed an approach where the process was held and guided by community-based radio stations that developed a range of methods,

including the use of phone-ins and dramas, to deepen the participatory engagement with the inquiries. At the same time, they were able to open up inquiries with multiple stakeholders to build up pictures of the power relationships and system dynamics.

How and Where has Systemic Action Research been Applied?

Systemic action research has been applied in a variety of contexts. Wadsworth facilitated eight long-term, large-scale systemic change projects using action research in health, education and community services contexts as well as the acute psychiatry U & I project with Merinda Epstein in Australia. In the past decade, the author (with a range of different colleagues) has also developed systemic action research with a range of partners: The British Red Cross carried out a whole-organization systemic inquiry into ‘vulnerability’, SNV (The Netherlands Development Organisation) used a systemic action research approach to underpin a series of change programmes in Kenya and some other parts of East Africa, VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) commissioned a six country systemic action research study exploring the impacts of volunteering on poverty, the UK-based National Centre for Public Engagement in Higher Education facilitated a systemic action research programme which engaged over 40 universities in an inquiry on embedding public engagement in higher education and, as mentioned above, the Ghana Community Radio Network have used systemic action research to underpin their work on climate change and have since developed systemic inquiry approaches to underpin their whole approach to broadcasting.

Danny Burns

See also force field analysis; Grounded Theory; meta-methodology; Participatory Action Research; Soft Systems Methodology; systems thinking; third person action research

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SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMICS

The notion of systems psychodynamics refers to social, psychological and political forces that underpin human behaviour in social systems of all kinds. Almost by definition, the people involved in such dynamics either lack awareness of the degree to which these forces influence them or interpret what they are aware of in a way that serves their self-interests. Action research has proven a pivotal methodology necessary for understanding and changing the dynamics in a social system—be it a family, group, organization or community, or a bigger and more complex situation.

Through using action research, scholarly practitioners can observe, explain and interpret the social, psychological and political forces that are helping the social system in (or hindering it from) being effective during normal operation or in making the changes needed for survival and growth. Bringing such dynamics to awareness for explicit discussion and debate can contribute to working through difficulties and recognizing strengths. This entry summarizes this type of action research, using six dimensions linked historically to the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (TIHR), the research and development organization in London, UK, often given credit for its original formation and early application to workplaces.

Framing the Change Situation

Action research from a perspective of systems psychodynamics tends to start with concerns about organizational culture and persisting difficulties in working well together. Commissioners of such action research may speak to unhelpful attitudes or poor motivation within a section of the social system or, indeed, across two or more parts of a larger organization. Often, leaders link strategic challenges currently under way or anticipated with an out-of-date historical or societal element in employee behaviour. Education, social services, health care, religious organizations and government systems

illustrate sectors in which this framing of change originated.

Role of Consultant and Stakeholder in a Typical Change Approach

Scholarly practitioners working predominately from a systems psychodynamic perspective use developmental interventions that create meetings and workshops for people to work through difficult thoughts and feelings about relevant aspects of a challenging change. The role of the consultant tends to emphasize observation, analysis and interpretation. Of particular concern are types of social defences people enact as they avoid anxieties. Those people with a stake in the change process usually take responsibility for making conclusions, planning actions and otherwise identifying outcomes from the process of working through. This type of action research often works well alongside other, more familiar types of change management.

Nature of Intervention and Character of Participation

A central orientation of intervention from a systems psychodynamic perspective can be understood to be process consultation. Many types of intervention can be used: individual coaching or counselling, third party consultation, small groups, inter-groups, medium or large groups. In order to work with the emerging data, scholarly practitioners need to be in a participant observation role. This allows them to discover and then share verbally tentative hypotheses with the people in the room. Alternately, working notes can be written and circulated for a wider population to study. Generally, the consultant retains a specialist role while encouraging employees to increase their competency in sense making and in taking up roles to improve their situation.

Dynamics of Social Stratification

Studying authority relations and the impact of social stratification on the total situation are two phenomena of particular concern for systems psychodynamics. The underlying theory is that people position themselves in relation to authority figures much as they experienced in their childhood and early years. Psychological and political dynamics can be stirred, observed and explored in the relationships between bosses and workers, higher status and lower status roles and those with more and with less influence. By bringing differences into focus, developmental work can help people reclaim their productivity and authority in their roles.

Intra-Organizational and Inter-Organizational Issues

Action research from a systems psychodynamic perspective typically focuses on intra-organizational change and development. A major purpose of this perspective is to address thoughts and feelings of being unable to make a difference within individual and collective roles as well as in individual and collective working relationships. The social system in its environment will be worked with in terms of similarities and differences in how people experience it from various roles, subunits and levels. A shared sense of what they are facing in relation to the world outside the organization will be seen as essential. Instead of splitting (some know and care, while others do not), all people need to take action from every position within the organization and across boundaries to interact effectively with clients, customers, regulators and so forth.

Nature of Work With Feelings and Fantasies as a Contribution to Learning for Change

Working with feelings and fantasies as a way of enhancing learning for organizational change can be understood to be a basic methodology of systems psychodynamic action research. Scholarly practitioners often specialize in depth psychology through formative education or advanced training. Subjectivity is understood as intricately interconnected with peoples' aspirations for objectivity and rationality. Thus, feelings and fantasies are considered normal, coexisting or dominating at different points to help or hinder, respectively, and have no discernible impact one way or another on productive work. Working subjectively, however, aims to discover non-logical, non-obvious interconnections. By bringing these to awareness, blocks can be released, and escalations calmed down. Generally, discovering emotions about tangible issues and challenges in the social system brings increased freedom and a better atmosphere for making differences to the total situation.

Jean E. Neumann

See also socio-technical systems; Tavistock Institute

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SYSTEMS THINKING

Systems thinking is an approach to understanding and improving complex issues and situations. It attempts to deal with these as wholes rather than through the reductionism of conventional science. Reductionism understands complex issues by examining smaller and smaller parts. Systems thinking sees the whole as different from the sum of its parts, because of the interactions between the parts. The issue for systems thinkers then becomes one of defining a relevant whole. The way this question is answered leads to a variety of approaches to systems thinking. This entry presents an overview of these ideas and outlines the history, development and current state of systems thinking and its links to action research.

A System and Systems Thinking

Unlike in traditional science, the whole, or the *system* of interest as it is called, is never separated from its environment. Traditional science has as some of its basic tenets reductionism, randomization, replication and independent observation: It strives to be value-free. While such science has been very successful, there are many issues of concern that it is not possible to tackle through this approach due to their complexity, uncertainty and changing nature. It is these issues with which systems thinking engages. Systems thinking is thus a complement to traditional science, not a way of thinking that is trying to replace it. Rather than isolating a part in a controlled environment for the purpose of designing an experiment, systems thinking always considers the system and its actual environment as an integrated whole and looks at how best to intervene to improve a situation or issue.

Systems thinking is linked to action research because of its interest in improving situations and issues rather than just observing them. When systems thinking is used to assist in an intervention into real-world situations, it is called systems practice. Many of the developments of systems thinking have occurred either through the explicit use of action research or through the implicit use of its principles. Other aspects that systems thinking has in common with action research are the participation of those involved to a greater or lesser degree and learning from the experience both of improving the issue of concern and of the practices used to achieve that improvement. Ideally, those involved also decide what constitutes an improvement.

In addition to its commitment to holism, systems thinking sees relevant systems as themselves being made up of systems—known as subsystems. It is the interaction between these subsystems that leads to emergent properties that make the whole different from the sum of its parts. These emergent properties cannot be predicted from knowledge about the subsystems. In the same way, the system's environment is a wider system of which the bounded selected system is a subsystem. Thus, there is a never-ending hierarchy, and systems thinkers need to use their judgement to decide the appropriate level of the hierarchy at which to select the systems of interest to improve. The bounded system selected is seen as preserving an important set of relationships between its subsystems and the wider system (environment).

The qualities of systems thinking described in the above paragraph are referred to as identity, boundary and emergence. Others include communication and control, negative feedback that leads to stability, positive feedback that leads to change and purpose—which when defined from outside the system's boundary is referred to as *purposive* and when defined within the system's boundary is referred to as *purposeful*. Finally, systems are seen as open, if they interact with their environment, or closed, if they do not.

History and Development of Systems Thinking

Ideas within systems thinking can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle and can be seen in the conceptualization and practice of many historical figures since, including Leonardo da Vinci, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and other holistic thinkers. However, systems thinking as it is known today emerged during the 1940s from within the field of biology, where it was recognized that an organism was more than just a collection of parts and that an understanding of the parts of an organism did not tell you all you needed to know to understand that organism and how it might respond in any given environment. Rather, knowledge was also needed about how the parts interact and communicate, how control was achieved and what the organism's purpose was. Systems thinking quickly led from natural science to social, cognitive and management sciences, and on to philosophy.

Early approaches to systems thinking defined the whole—the system of interest—quite objectively, and these approaches had little in common with action research. This early work drew together people from widely different fields and led to the emergence of hard systems thinking, as it is now known, which includes operations research, systems analysis and systems dynamics.

The pioneers came together under the title of general systems researchers and included Ludwig von Bertalanffy (biology), John von Neumann (mathematics), Kenneth Boulding (economics), Anatol Rapoport (mathematics), C. West Churchman (philosophy), Russell Ackhoff (organization theory) and Geoffrey Vickers (law), followed by Jay Forrester, Donella Meadows, Peter Senge, Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. Concurrent, and often in association, with this group emerged the field of cybernetics—or the science of control in steering towards a goal. The key figures here were Norbert Wiener, Ross Ashby, Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, Stafford Beer and Heinz von Forrester. The initial aim of both general systems thinking and cybernetics was to find universal, mainly mathematical, models that could be applied in a trans-disciplinary way; however, this original goal was soon dropped. This is often referred to as the first wave of systems thinking and had little explicitly in common with action research, although aspects of these bodies of work continue to influence the work of many action researchers (see, e.g., Bateson).

Subsequent waves of systems thinking share the underlying principles of action research, most notably its interest in intervention as much as observation, where such intervention strives to meet some human need or desire. When used to aid such intervention, systems thinking becomes systems practice. Observations of intervention cannot be independent or value-free—indeed, many would argue the same for traditional science, but this is explicitly accepted in systems thinking. It was Churchman who first raised this concern and who noted that the selecting of a boundary for a relevant system was a value-laden activity. Much subsequent work in systems thinking builds on his concern for the positioning of the boundary. Alongside this, reflecting critically on an intervention is now a key aspect of systems thinking. The other common principle it shares with action research is that of participation, although different strands of systems thinking deal with participation in different ways.

As many of the early systems thinkers encountered intractable issues which were irresolvable through the use of mathematical models, many moved into second wave systems thinking. A key figure here was Peter Checkland, who explicitly used action research during the 1970s to develop his approach to what came to be called soft systems thinking. Others in the USA also used Churchman's ideas about systems to develop other soft systems practices. In cybernetics, the move was towards the *cybernetics of cybernetics* and the beginnings of a consideration for learning in both a theoretical and a practical sense: Soft systems thinking was seen as a learning approach to change, yet little consideration was given explicitly to the learning process as such.

The third wave of systems thinking developed from the 1990s onward and drew insights from social theory to deal with issues of power and to attempt to respond to the challenges of postmodernism. The work of Michael Jackson, Robert Flood, Gerald Midgley, Werner Ulrich, John Mingers and Norma Romm was influential here, developing ideas that led to what emerged as critical systems thinking and its associated systems practices of total systems intervention, critical systems practice and systemic intervention. All these have features in common that include methodological pluralism, boundary judgement, intervention and critical reflection, and they have much in common with action research, as demonstrated by the title of one of the main systems journals, the *Journal of Systems Practice and Action Research*.

There was a fourth wave of systems thinking; learning systems had its origins in the exploration by Bateson of the logical types of learning, second order cybernetics and soft systems thinking as a learning approach, as well as in the double-loop learning of Chris Argyris and Donald Schön. However, for all of them, there was little consideration of systemic learning as such.

Systemic learning was the focus of what became known as the Hawkesbury approach, led by Richard Bawden. Drawing on the experiential learning theories and practice of David Kolb and on insights from developmental psychologists, particularly Marcia Salner, who linked this field to systems thinking, the Hawkesbury group drew out theories from their praxis of systemic development—their learning approach to change.

This approach recognized that modern education and society are grounded in the world view of reductionist science, and so the first step to becoming a systems thinker is to *appreciate*—a term proposed by Geoffrey Vickers—different world views. It is not that one world view is the best but that different people hold different world views based on differences of ontology (e.g. objectivism and relativism), epistemology (e.g. holism and reductionism), axiologies (notably ethics, e.g. utilitarianism, deontology and virtues) and aesthetics. Appreciating complex situations and intractable issues through a dialogue about a variety of world view perspectives can lead to the emergence of potential improvements. Different methodologies and methods associated with different world views assist this process. These *epistemes*, or world views, are often tacit, and it is through explicit, critical reflection on these as part of a social learning process that improvements may be proposed.

There are three levels of learning in this systemic learning process: learning about the situation or issue, learning about the learning methods used (meta-learning or double-loop learning) and a third level of reflecting on the *episteme* or world view reflected by the first two levels and critiquing its strengths and weaknesses. This

third level leads to the potential adoption of other world views through the use of alternate methodologies. Collaborating on this process with a group of stakeholders potentially enables a social learning process.

Also recognized is the important role of inspirational learning in helping draw insights for participants in the creation of meaning—the end, purpose or significance of something. Thus, systemic learning combines learning from the outer world of experience, the inner rational world of conceptualization and the insights of the inner human spirit. As a learning system, this will all occur in an environment of emotions, power and dispositions that need to be considered. These theories have been extended into the wider field of social learning and Etienne Wenger's communities of practice by Chris Blackmore and Ray Ison in the UK and Europe.

Conclusion

Systems thinking has emerged since the 1940s and continues to develop. Many of the original methodologies have changed as theoretical developments unfolded, such as operations research transforming into soft operations research. Key principles have emerged, however, that have much in common with action research. These include (a) ensuring the incorporation of multiple perspectives that adopt different world views; (b) using a range of methodologies to put this principle into practice; (c) understanding and using the processes of systemic and social learning in a critically reflective way, particularly through the facilitation of dialogue amongst experts and stakeholders; (d) being context specific yet ensuring that critical reflection allows for wider implications and principles to be drawn out and made publicly available and (e) applying systems thinking through systems practices that lead to improvement in issues of mutual concern in ways that are systemic, responsible, sustainable and defensible.

Roger Packham

See also communities of practice; critical reflection; dialogue; experiential learning; reflective practice; social learning; Soft Systems Methodology; systemic action research

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T

TACIT KNOWLEDGE

Tacit knowledge is a term concerned with the nature of human knowing and was first introduced by the Hungarian scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891–1976). His radical idea is summed up in the bold claim that ‘all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge’. The relevance to action research is that Polanyi is offering a basis for theorizing human action that involves implicit knowledge, skill, know-how and so on. The challenge that Polanyi poses is that even though tacit knowing is inherent to practically all human experience and action, it seemingly remains inexpressible and difficult to make explicit. Until now, his notion of the tacit nature of all human knowing has been largely ignored by modern epistemology, which has been largely concerned with ‘knowing that’ rather than ‘knowing how’, and his work has also been marginalized by recent writers in the philosophy of science. However, as a vast precognitive resource, tacit knowledge is emerging as an important field of research. One area where tacit knowledge has been recognized as having a particularly crucial role to play is in the organizational and management sciences. Such ideas could even anticipate the prospect of a major paradigm shift for the human sciences. This entry reviews Polanyi’s concept of tacit knowledge and provides examples of how this kind of embodied knowledge operates in our everyday lives. The role of tacit knowledge in organizations and its application to action research are then discussed, and finally, a model which recognizes objective, discursive and participatory forms of knowing and articulates a strategy for enabling tacit knowledge to be made explicit is presented.

Personal Knowledge

Polanyi expanded his Gifford Lectures of 1951–2 into his magnum opus, *Personal Knowledge*, published in 1958. In this text, he stresses the vital and inescapable

role that the personal plays in all human knowing, skill, action and experience. Polanyi proposes that ‘all knowing is personal knowing’, involving ‘participation through indwelling’. In this way, he offers a radical challenge to the simplistic view of normal science; he argues that at the root of claims to objective scientific knowledge, there is always reliance upon personal knowledge. He characterizes these ideas, central to his philosophy, as a post-critical philosophy.

This idea of personal knowing has previously been outlined by other philosophers in their various ways as a kind of knowledge by personal acquaintance, by familiarity with an object, event or situation. This dates back to the ancient Greeks and their idea of a practical knowledge, a knowing by doing. In more recent times, key thinkers such as Hermann von Helmholtz, William James, John Dewey, Bertrand Russell and Gilbert Ryle have all in some way discussed a notion of knowledge by acquaintance. However, Polanyi has, more than anyone else, tried to theorize and explain what knowledge by acquaintance might actually entail. His argument for the participatory, tacit nature of all human knowing is still groundbreaking.

Furthermore, Polanyi’s philosophy bears resemblance to what lies at the heart of Martin Heidegger’s notion of ‘being-in-the-world’. What Polanyi calls participation through indwelling seems to correspond to Heidegger’s notion of ‘readiness-to-hand’. Heidegger describes this as a dealing with things that are closest to what it is to be human, by which he means a kind of ‘concern’ involved in manipulating and using things that we find in our world. He sees this ‘concern’ as having its own kind of knowledge, and presumably precognitive. Indeed, considering the tacit as having its own kind of knowledge lies at the heart of Polanyi’s philosophy.

Polanyi’s Tacit Dimension

Although what we know by personal acquaintance may be available to some extent in our personal awareness, Polanyi proposes that we are simply not aware

of a great deal of what we know at all. It is this that he calls tacit knowing. By defining the tacit in this way, he is pointing out the knowledge that is implicit to a task (e.g. as know-how, skill), to a situation (e.g. when travelling, interviewing, cooking), to a perspective (e.g. reflecting a point of view, a belief) and so on.

The tacit is precognitive, similar to John Searle's notion of 'background', and is historically grounded in direct participatory experience, in other words, by personally taking part in some previous activity. It manifests through circumspection, experienced in forms of know-how, skill, expertise, coping, knack, adaptability, improvisation, affordance, absorption and so on. It is knowing that, when called upon by a particular situation, it is made effortlessly available.

The key to understanding Polanyi's tacit dimension is in the distinction he makes between focal and subsidiary awareness. When engaged in any action, awareness is necessarily divided between the goals of the task at hand and the component 'sub-skills' necessary to complete the task. For example, as I type this text into my laptop, my focal awareness is upon what I am trying to express, and I only have a subsidiary awareness of the spelling of words and the rules of grammar. I do not consciously think about the position of the keys on the keyboard or the finger and hand movements I make, let alone the eye movements being made between the screen, my notes, the keyboard and the kitten playing on the floor. Yet if a problem arises, any of these aspects can be brought into focal awareness, although at the expense of a disruption in my writing flow. Polanyi's point is that the knowledge which is operating at this subsidiary level is tacit and that if we are asked how we are able to engage with such a task, then there would always be more that we 'know', more than we can actually tell. For Polanyi, knowing is *action*, tacit knowledge is *embodied knowing*.

Tacit knowledge is not something that is necessarily learned explicitly, rehearsed or committed to memory. It is participatory knowing, in other words, knowledge from participatory experience, by indwelling, simply by being somewhere, doing something, engaged in extended practice. Later, within the context of a specific situated action, tacit knowledge is made available, efficiently and immediately, for the task at hand. Two brief examples will make this clear.

Maps are schematic; map-reading is a complex skill. Consider the map of a city you are visiting. Buildings may be indicated but not represented by their height and style of architecture, distances may be very difficult to estimate, walking routes may be obscured and detours may be required on arrival. Skilled judgements are needed to locate your current position, involving improvised comparisons between the physical environment where you find yourself and the schematic representation of the map. You intuitively work out a route

to follow. All of this creates as well as draws upon a wide range of complex tacit knowledge which you are hardly aware of. Alternatively, because of little previous participatory experience, in other words, a lack of tacit knowledge, the map might prove useless; you risk being lost or you fall back on other tacit knowing that circumvents using the map. Furthermore, it should be obvious that your tacit knowledge of the city after just one brief visit bears little resemblance to the limited knowledge gleaned from the map. The feel of the place, its ambience, the construction work in hand, detours, helpful signs, the people, facilities, a bookshop, that café, the day's weather and so on are all coded for subsidiary use. You end up with a personal mental map, with its own emphasis, meanings and interpretations. Perhaps later, helping someone visiting the same city, you draw a map for them. But no matter how good your map, it cannot capture all the knowledge you have of the place you visited. There is always more than you can tell.

For a second example, consider the problem of following instructions for some self-assembly furniture recently delivered. You open the pack, find the instructions and study them carefully. What you do next will heavily depend upon just how methodical is the strategy that is incorporated into your tacit knowing, for example, how you will count and arrange the components or find the tools necessary for the task (including knowing where to find them). With luck, the furniture is built in no time. But either from problems that emerge or by simply using reflection-in-action, it is quickly realized that the instructions are merely a set of ordered steps for the assembly process and do not describe how this is to be done. The instructions do not specify which tools to use for which operation, let alone how to use the tools properly and safely. Nor do they tell you how to position and glue the parts together, let alone prepare the glue for use and clean up the mess it undoubtedly makes. No instructions can make allowances for the particular workspace available or the specific help you need if you have limited strength and capacities. Normally, most issues are sorted out by tacit knowing operating at a subsidiary level of awareness. This knowing is not mechanical or 'automatic' but is responsive, timely, dynamic, idiosyncratic and invariably creative, drawing upon resources from participatory experience. Such knowing is difficult to make explicit. It is easier to show someone else how to do something, and let them try it for themselves, than to tell them explicitly how. Letting someone learn for themselves is precisely what the tacit dimension advocates from its theory of human action.

Tacit Knowledge in Organizations

One field where the concept of tacit knowledge has made a significant impact is knowledge management,

but this is not an area without its controversies. Haridimos Tsoukas has pointed out how the concept of tacit knowing has been misused, and how Polanyi is being misunderstood. He explains that Polanyi has sometimes been wrongly interpreted as simply describing a kind of ‘hidden knowledge’ that merely requires the right procedures to be made explicit. In addition, it is a field that needs to be approached with some caution concerning notions such as ‘knowledge economy’ and ‘knowledge capital’ and an overconfidence in the idea of ‘capturing’ tacit knowledge. However, this is a relatively new and pioneering field of inquiry, and inevitably, organizations will have their obvious focus on the commercial value of knowledge, fuelling naive discussions about how tacit knowledge can be communicated and made explicit.

New Methodologies for Action Research

Recognition of the tacit nature of human action requires rethinking research methodologies. As an immeasurable precognitive resource, tacit knowledge is not straightforward to elicit or to research; it cannot simply be ‘captured’ and made explicit. But ways are beginning to emerge. For example, human narrative is emerging as an important resource for sharing what is tacitly known. When confronted with something that is unexpected or out of the ordinary, we can effortlessly seize upon a narrative which places the events into some context. In turn, such intuitive narrative thinking can easily be communicated to someone else in the form of a story. In this way, narrative becomes a vital means by which the tacit can become explicit.

Reflection-in-Action

Another approach, which has been illustrated in the examples discussed above, involves the close interrogation of experience. This is an empirical phenomenological approach employing reflection-in-action, which is repeatable, reproducible and confirmable. In this respect, Dvora Yanow and Haridimos Tsoukas have reframed the work of Donald Schön in a Heideggerian way, describing a phenomenological mode of reflection that takes place in the midst of action. In turn, they relate this to the tacit nature of the background knowledge that accompanies all human practice. This promises to become a key tool for action research.

Moustakas’ Heuristic Inquiry

Polanyi’s philosophy has also been incorporated by Clark Moustakas into an approach that he calls heuristic inquiry, which explicitly emphasizes the participatory role of the (co-)researchers in the research process. Polanyi’s influence is clearly seen in Moustakas’ core

conceptual framework, which includes the following: personally identifying with the focus of the inquiry, researcher self-dialogue, intuition, indwelling, focusing and discovery of tacit knowledge.

Developing a Model for Human Knowing

Currently, what is needed is a model of human knowing that includes a view of human action as participatory, embodied and enactive (in the sense that actions express the underlying tacit resources). One solution is presented in Figure 1, which treats human knowing as an overlapping, threefold practice. The three practices—objective, discursive and participatory—are complementary and not in opposition. Human action takes place in three realities: physical, shared and personal. Such a model offers the prospect of a paradigm shift in the human sciences, which might properly incorporate the tacit dimension.

David R. Hiles

See also narrative inquiry; organizational storytelling; practical knowing; reflective practice

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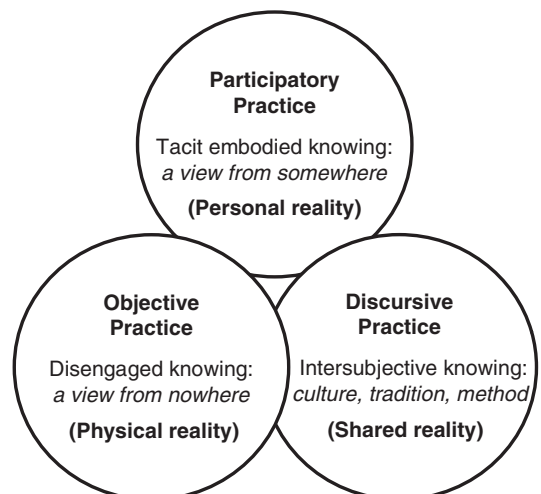


Figure 1 A Model of Human Knowing

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TAVISTOCK INSTITUTE

An extensive portfolio of project work undertaken by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (London, UK) exemplifies action research as an integral methodology for understanding and contributing to change and development in a broad range of social systems. The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was established as a registered charity in 1947 from a previous base as the Social Department of the Tavistock Clinic. Its explicit purpose was to study and encourage effective human relations under both normal and unusual circumstances. Members of the founding association cared deeply about how to use social science to find a way to help people cope with stresses and to thrive in a society emerging from the two World Wars.

Initially supported by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, Tavistock Institute staff became early pioneers in using action research as a way to rebuild or otherwise create renewed social infrastructure: with individuals and their families, in workplaces and communities and through governmental policies at local, regional, national and European levels. This entry summarizes some well-known action research projects from the Tavistock Institute's early decades, selected particularly because their dissemination sparked innovations around the world. This entry goes further to indicate action research during subsequent decades that tends to be lesser known, although of equal integrity given a different funding environment. These examples from the overall portfolio of work have the added advantage of illustrating how social scientists at the Tavistock Institute continue to approach action research.

The Socio-Psychological Perspective

The Tavistock Institute's socio-psychological approach was so labelled because an important shared enterprise at the time was to understand how people—usually without awareness—placed their psychological issues into the social situation in which they found themselves.

Through action research, it was possible to study what was being enacted in the social situation, to hypothesize how that enactment might be related to unresolved psychological issues being experienced by the people and to craft social experiments and other system changes intended to clarify and resolve psychological issues. This angle was the mirror opposite of the approach of the Tavistock Institute's sister organization. Post-World War II, the Tavistock Clinic entered the new National Health Service as a psychoanalytically orientated mental health outpatient unit: Its strong innovation at the time was to discover, describe and work with ways in which the social situation contributed to psychological issues. Indeed, several founding members of the Tavistock Institute association maintained some involvement with the clinic as well. However, the interest in psychological issues as being enacted and reinforced in the total social situation resonated with the institute's increasingly diverse associates, comprising sociologists, political scientists, social anthropologists, operations researchers and social psychologists.

Combined with a nascent action research methodology that gathered data from many people within any one social situation, integrated teams of social scientists began to notice multiple and simultaneous influences on human behaviour. They used and taught each other how to use a wide range of concepts from depth psychology to social anthropology, to political science. Such an approach felt both grounded in the reality of the people whom they were trying to help, as well as pointing out unusual ways to change organizational aspects of the social situation in order to address the psychological. The institute found that a simultaneous socio-psychological approach enabled them to understand and contribute to development and change in a wide variety of situations. Here are three examples of influential action research projects with a predominately socio-psychological perspective.

Transitional Communities and Social Reconnection

This project assisted British prisoners of war with resettlement as civilians once they were repatriated. They often felt disorientated and experienced difficulties with reintegrating with their families, jobs and wider communities. A period of collective living with others, combined with a developmental programme of activities with specialists, was worked out, with steady improvement through cycles of action research.

Working Through Industrial Conflict

Based in a service department of Glacier Metal Company, this project helped management and workers collaborate on difficulties in changing their payment system. Through many discussions using existing

committees, interdependences became apparent between morale, methods of payment and inter-group conflict. Action research helped them make progress by also taking seriously cultural issues, administrative practices and technological changes.

Social Systems as a Defence Against Anxiety

This project started as a diagnosis of problems in training student nurses within a general hospital. Unusually high levels of stress and anxiety were leading to withdrawal from training by student nurses and changes in jobs by seniors. Careful action research eventually drew attention to the way work practices and organization contributed to stress. While senior nurses intended to cope with strong emotions related to the main task of dealing with terminally ill patients, aspects of their processes and procedures made things worse.

The Socio-Technical Perspective

The Tavistock Institute's socio-technical approach was so labelled because the circumstances for several industrial action research projects concentrated on social problems that seemed interrelated to the introduction of new technologies. After the publication of a book based on the Glacier Metal Company, requests for assistance increased, and the institute selected fellows from industrial clients to be trained in fieldwork. Now, social scientists (external to an organizational client) were paired with industrial fellows (internal to that organizational client or a similar sector): Together, they actively combined field-based data collection methods from social anthropology with group-based psychoanalytically informed practices to test the usefulness of tentative findings. Cycles of research, action and reflection—in collaboration with small groups within different parts and levels of the organization—led to evolving understandings about what was happening, as well as leading to actions intended to improve aspects of the social situation relevant to technological change.

A breakthrough came when one industrial fellow pointed to an innovation in work practice and organization created by front-line employees. Through action research, it was possible to understand that the workers did not maintain a tight distinction between what they wanted and needed at work—job satisfaction and social structure—and the satisfactory performance of their duties. When the new technology introduced by the company disrupted what they needed, they changed how they worked in order to continue to get their needs met. Tavistock Institute's social scientists considered that they were discovering a new field of inquiry,

which they termed *socio-technical systems* design, and a new approach to working that countered scientific management and semi-autonomous working groups. Subsequent action research led to an extensive body of theoretical and practical literature aiming to optimize both the socio-psychological needs of employees and the technical needs embedded in the work. Here are three examples of influential research predominately from a socio-technical perspective.

Longwall Coal Mining Cycle

When the British Coal Board introduced mechanized coal-getting equipment, one manual role persisted that was treated as if it was part of a cross-shift team. This led to several difficulties that decreased productivity with the new technology: private arrangements to help each other out, personal secrecy about better places at the coal face, cross-shift scapegoating and absenteeism as defiance. Using action research, it was possible to understand the socio-psychological needs requiring attention through changes in work practices and organization.

An Indian Automated Weaving Shed

When the calico mills in Ahmedabad first introduced an experimental building (called a shed) with automatic looms, they did so using methods of time and motion studies common to scientific management as related to the cyclical process of operating a single loom. But the task of running an automatic weaving shed constituted a continuous process of multiple looms weaving and all roles and tasks being completed simultaneously. Using action research, a new social organization in relation to two main types of automated looms—based on groups with all the various roles working in relation to an identified set of looms—began iterations of improvement until both social needs and productivity goals were met.

Stepwise Socio-Technical Systems in a Petroleum Company

Automation of chemical processes motivated Shell UK executives to undertake action research for the purpose of addressing alienation and poor performance throughout, aiming for a more participative management style. Large-group meetings to review and revise a draft document—co-ordinated by a small, internal employee relations group, with help from the Tavistock Institute—cascaded down through executives, senior managers and local refinery managements. Subsequently, two pilot refineries undertook an innovative stepwise methodology for detailed analysis and implementation of socio-technical systems.

The Socio-Ecological Perspective

The Tavistock Institute's socio-ecological approach was so labelled because, in collaboration with people engaged in change and development within their organizations, action researchers increasingly revealed that the changing environmental contexts of organizations was a key factor in their broader social field. Successes with interdisciplinary, collaborative projects on work practices and organization resulted in a different sort of project that placed social scientists at an apparent boundary between inside the organization and outside the organization. Decision-makers within both public and private large enterprises needed to take account of anticipated futures 'out there' and their potential impact on separate organizational entities.

By this time, the Tavistock Institute's blend of theory and practice had made great strides in bridging the traditional splits between psychology and sociology. Multidisciplinary social scientists and industrial fellows had stretched open-systems thinking in order to define a task environment for organizations that included customers, supply-chain relationships and statutory regulations. At the time, to consider that the environment might be in continuous flux—as both input and output for people in social systems—required an extension of the theoretical framework. This was nothing short of accepting that 'out there' needed to be conceptualized as a practical field of study—directly and mutually interrelated in the total social situation for individuals' psychological issues. Here are three examples of influential action research predominately from a socio-ecological perspective.

Causal Texture of Organizational Environments

In an effort to make sense of several large-scale action research projects, the Tavistock Institute's social scientists accepted the notion of 'boundary' as a functional arena for human relations, instead of as a structure that separated inside from outside. Thus, they experimented with four links between a social system and its environment: (1) parts within the same system, (2) output to the environment, (3) input to the system and (4) the environment. Their resulting hypothesis was that the system and its environment were mutually determinative, with different qualities of environment providing limits and opportunities for organizational strategic choice. These qualities were labelled as placid, randomized; placid, clustered; distributed, reactive and turbulent fields.

Referent Organizations and the Development of Inter-Organizational Domains

An increase in government-funded action research projects required multi-actor collaboration within

particular public and private sectors or across regional, national and international boundaries. This work challenged the ways of thinking about an organization as a single entity, thus placing the institute's social scientists in positions of working with representatives from several organizations simultaneously without a single authorizing body. Socio-psychological methodologies helped with crafting inter-group and institutional discussions, as did the large-group methods emerging from socio-technical systems work. But the ability to work with the complexity and uncertainty characteristic of these inter-organizational domains raised new action research challenges: competing economic and political interests, regulatory decision-making processes and contested societal values.

Overcoming Adversarial Relations Across an Industry

Paradoxically, several projects came about once government and industrial leaders agreed on social systems changes for the benefit of both society and business interests. In one instance, their proposed solution of strategic partnerships often faltered. The Tavistock Institute undertook action research over several years within the UK construction industry to assist those people who were authorized to decrease adversarial relations between the multiple firms involved in new buildings. Court battles over legal contracts, spiralling costs, overruns on delivery times—all plagued the typical 30-plus specialist firms that struggled with the interconnected nature of designing, planning and managing a build. Action research focused on cultural changes as related to workflows and necessary collaborative deliberations.

Experiential, Participative and Cross-Boundary Applications

Social scientists continue to interweave three types of action throughout the Tavistock Institute's interdisciplinary research. Experiential learning, participative decision-making and cross-boundary interactions initially emerged from careful consideration of solving problems with applied social science theory. At the time, these actions were unusual, running counter to models of objective science and autocratic leadership of change. But it was precisely through action research that the necessity of these actions emerged for both analyzing and enabling changes within the particular social situation.

Experiential Learning in Groups

Action research at the Tavistock Institute uses an approach that optimizes developing theory and

improving practice. Its group relations programme continues to surprise staff and participants as they discover how the psychological can be discerned with the social and how the social can be linked with the ecological. Known as the ‘Leicester conference’ after the English university that serves as venue, working conferences combine experiential learning, participative decision-making and cross-boundary interactions. Group-based study configurations include individual role consultation, authority relations in small groups, formation and dynamics between groups, dynamics between subunits and stratification in institutional contexts.

Strategic Choice and Interconnected Decision Areas

By blending operations research for urban planning with interactive working in decision-making groups, the institute’s social scientists demonstrated how complex planning tasks could be used for adapting strategic choices. This multi-actor, cross-boundary work proved a significant application of all three institute perspectives. Pioneering city planning departments accepted the notion that to conceptualize such large, complicated projects as a single organization grossly underestimates the evolving volume of multiple, simultaneous initiatives needing continuous co-ordination and mutual adjustment.

Participative Evaluation Research

Through its own projects as well as its international journal named *Evaluation*, the Tavistock Institute has led the dissemination of innovative approaches to evaluating social policy, especially those that actively involve multiple shareholders in interpreting and using their own data. Instead of emphasizing judgements, participative evaluation focuses on processes of ongoing learning in order to facilitate change. For an evaluation to have real impact, policymakers and funders are challenged to move beyond a summative, measurement orientation and to support more formative, developmental orientations. For example, an extensive action research project across 20 UK sites, addressing better delivery of information to citizens, used several methods: case studies, quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews and Action Learning.

Developing Capability in Social Engagement of Social Sciences

The notion of ‘the social engagement of social science’ reflects the fact that the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations thrives on an underlying, value-based commitment. Its articles of incorporation explicitly relate multidisciplinary social science to the needs and concerns of human beings, from individuals, groups and

organizations through to communities, industries, governments and society overall. As an independent, not-for-profit organization, the institute has had to make its own way financially in the world while honouring its founding values. This has often meant joining others in learning how to engage socially with social science—action research has been pivotal in this endeavour.

Human Relations

From its earliest days after World War II, the Tavistock Institute’s journal aimed to integrate multidisciplinary social science for the purposes of contributing to both the theory and the practice of effective human relations under both normal and unusual circumstances. The underlying three perspectives, discovered and developed through action research projects, were published in full—sometimes over several issues. Many decades later, and despite numerous competing journals, *Human Relations* remains one of the premier publications in fields having to do with organizational change, social policy and human behaviour in a wide variety of situations. The relationship between theory and practice, especially as it relates to contemporary relevance for managers and leaders, continues to drive editorial policy.

Education for Organizational Change and Related Consultancy

Learning to take up a role as manager, leader, consultant or some other agent of systems change requires individuals to be aware of a wide range of social science as well as to have developed substantial self-understanding and capabilities in working within groups and across boundaries. The Tavistock Institute has experimented with a range of ways to provide education and development with just such a layered learning agenda. Scientific staff, guest scientists, industrial fellows and action research interns have undertaken psychoanalysis, attended group relations working conferences and served on teams for multiple field projects. As professional development and postgraduate programmes increased in number, the institute made its mark with various offerings, for example, the advanced organizational consultation programme, practitioners’ certificate in change and consulting and coaching for leadership and change.

Action Research ‘House Style’

Institute staff found that a single orientation for applying social science was too limiting in addressing the depth and breadth of the social issues they were challenged to consider. Thus, their interest in cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary working emerged.

Early on, some common principles from field theory guided their collaborations. Field theory took as its fundamental premise that people and their surroundings and conditions depend closely on each other. This meant that the institute's scientists found it necessary to take a dynamic approach, discovering multiple forces at work in any situation. As the basis of action, they concentrated on elements of the current situation that motivated or otherwise influenced people and their situation. By coming up with constructive ways of presenting and discussing such complexity, those involved could be helped to shape their own change. This house style persists in the Tavistock Institute of today.

Jean E. Neumann

See also socio-technical systems; systems psychodynamics

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TAYLORISM

In 1911, the American engineer and management consultant Fredrick Winslow Taylor published a tiny book called *The Principles of Scientific Management*. The book referred to the experiences Taylor had while conducting experiments on improving the efficiency of work processes in a steel company through so-called *time studies*. In retrospect, the book stands out as probably one of the most significant management books ever written and is the bible of the management ideology called 'Taylorism'. By introducing a radical division of labour between managers and workers, this book is constitutive of our modern conception of the organization of working life. It has been a central point of reference for discussions and practices of management and organizing, both as a source of inspiration and, not least, as a target of critique. Although highly criticized from the beginning, the ideology still seems to diffuse in ever new practices and technical disguises

(Business Process Re-Engineering, Lean Production, etc.). Thus, most approaches to management and organizing relate to this work in one way or another, explicitly or implicitly. This is also true of the branch of action research that addresses the management and organizing of working life, the industrial democracy tradition of action research. This entry expands on the concept and the impact of Taylorism in modern working life and outlines how the industrial democracy branch of action research has been developed as a reaction to Taylorism.

Basic Principles of Taylorism

The principles of scientific management (hereafter SM) according to Taylor (1998) can be summed up as follows:

- A radical division of work between manager and worker, where the manager will have the full responsibility for developing and designing the procedures and the organization of the work processes, leaving the workers the task of enacting or implementing the work

The managers' tasks will thus be to do the following:

- Assess scientifically the best way to perform the tasks and outline them in a specific scheme of actions that can be distributed to a series of actors performing simple actions instead of complex ones
- Select the best persons to perform the tasks according to scientific methods
- Guide and train the workers to perform the tasks efficiently
- Monitor the performance of the workers to ensure that the procedures are followed and the expected result achieved
- Treat the workers as individuals—create systems of incentives and learning addressing the individual workers rather than the collectivity of workers

Taylor's principles of management and organizing gained a lot of influence within industrial work from the early and mid twentieth century, associated with standardized mass production of, for instance, cars (so-called Fordism, even though many sources claim that Ford did not know about Taylor when he designed his first mass production factory). It has also contributed to the enlargement of bureaucracies, as systems of standardized and impersonalized routine processing and implementation of decisions.

What has been termed by Ritzer as *McDonaldization* of service work is basically Tayloristic in its

management and organization. The concept of 'lean operations' that is currently mushrooming through both private and public sectors internationally is another example. By using expert observation and analyses as a basis for redesigning all kinds of tasks, from surgical operations at hospitals and care work within nursing homes to processing of insurance cases, these 'lean' strategies of change are typically Tayloristic. Specific management technologies like 'balanced scorecard', measuring specific performances and so on are often claimed to be practised in a Tayloristic way

The purpose of the principles of SM was, according to Taylor, an entirely humanistic one. Their aim was to contribute to the prosperity of modern American society and, at the same time, to the prosperity of the individual worker by rationalizing work to increase productivity and output both for the owners of firms as well as for the workers. However, this humanism has been widely disputed. The principles of SM can be characterized as typically modernistic, building on a positivist conception of knowledge, believing in the possibility of developing objective and universal knowledge about the one best way of working. It builds on a notion of a fundamental difference between experts, with their formalized knowledge, and lay people, who lack significant knowledge. It builds on an essentialist view of the difference between 'working men' and 'educated men'. Further, it builds on a simplified conception of man as *Homo economicus*, primarily motivated and engaged by securing his physiological and material needs. On this basis, Taylorism has 'fuelled' a vast range of alternative approaches to management and organizing that take a critical stance towards Taylorism for carrying great human costs, creating a democratic deficit in the society, preventing employees from developing competence and creative abilities and not even ensuring productivity in simple repetitive work operations. Examples are the human relations school of labour relations, organization development and motivation theory.

The Industrial Democracy Branch of Action Research

The industrial democracy branch of action research is also conceived as a reaction to Taylorism, in line with these general critical views. With conceptions of socio-technical design of work processes, psychological job demands and semi-autonomous groups, the industrial democracy tradition contributed an important and influential share of alternatives to Taylorism. However, what has turned out to make the action research approaches particularly viable in the long term compared with other alternative approaches to Taylorism were not the alternative models and ideologies of

management and organizing as such. Rather, what today seems to be the most important contribution of action research is the challenge to Taylorism related to its concept of knowledge, and thus its failure in the development and implementation of knowledge for the improvement of working life.

In this sense, action research shares with SM the premise that improvement of the organization and performance of work processes should be based on research. However, SM's concepts of research-based knowledge differ fundamentally from those of action research. Where SM rests on positivism and the general belief in expert knowledge, action research builds on the premise that knowledge is situated in character and needs to be extracted from the experiences of the actors involved in the (work) situations where the knowledge is to be used. Thus, emphasizing the significance of *the process* of improving the organization and the performance of tasks, the industrial democracy branch of action research has developed from experimenting with specific alternative models of organizing to the organizing of continuously co-operative learning processes, for instance, in the form of Dialogue Conferences, Development Coalitions or organizational learning. This is done through democratic dialogue: Here, employees, managers and researchers are engaged in doing action research in their own organization (and situation) as part of its daily operation, bringing their various experience and knowledge to the table. This approach to improvement in working life acknowledges the impossibility of finding universal solutions to optimal organization and performance. Instead, it emphasizes the significance of the ability of organizations to continuously learn and develop their operational conditions and situations. In this way, action research also avoids being co-opted and turned into an even more efficient vehicle for Taylorism, as has been the fate of many models of organizing initially launched as alternatives to Taylorism.

Lars Klemsdal

See also co-generative learning; Collaborative Management Research; Development Coalitions; Dialogue Conferences; Norwegian Industrial Democracy Movement; Pragmatic Action Research; praxis; socio-technical systems; Work Research Institute, the; work-based learning

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TEACHING ACTION RESEARCHERS

Teaching action research is not teaching students *about* action research but facilitating their learning of a complex research practice that integrates conceptual knowledge with lived experience. Unlike most traditional educational experiences, this involves co-generation of knowledge on the part of the learner through being engaged with other students, all of whom are learning how to be action researchers through active inquiry. Specific pedagogical designs vary based on the institutional setting in which action research is taught, and for what purpose. However, most seek in one way or another to reflect the action research process itself in how it is being taught. In other words, teaching action research is a practice of involving the learner in the cognitive processing of conceptual information while engaged in praxis.

Common to all action research initiatives are the goals of empowering the researchers to solve pertinent problems that are confronting them while producing new practical knowledge. The intended outcomes

of action research vary across a spectrum, from the empowerment or emancipation of community members through taking action on problems within their social setting, to contributing scientific knowledge relevant to a broader academic or social discourse. Achieving these outcomes requires initiating and taking collaborative actions, fostering critical reflection on the process and the outcomes of having taken those actions, along with rigorous data analysis, synthesis and writing reports about the knowledge generated.

Conducting action research requires a researcher to have a complex mix of competencies in social or group dynamics (to organize the process in a collaborative, democratic way), personal and collective reflective learning practices (to enhance reflexive awareness of how the actors are intervening in the setting and are thus embedded in the study itself) and research methods (for contributing robust conclusions to the relevant scientific/social discourse). Conducting action research involves applying this mix of capabilities in real social environments where action produces unexpected as well as intended consequences. Effectively navigating dynamic social settings entails blending tacit intuitive knowing drawn from lived experience and formal conceptual knowledge into practical application. Practising action research requires being able to manifest this blending in the moment, engaging in what Donald Schön describes as reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action with others. Teaching action researchers how to manifest this complex skill set involves creating pedagogical designs that mirror the practice itself. In short, learning how to do action research and, by extension, teaching it involve engaging in a pedagogy involving praxis—reflection and taking action in the world to change it while obtaining new insight and understanding from doing so.

In addition to learning the above skills, students need competencies in data gathering and analysis. Data-gathering competencies include interviews, field observation methods, working with archival data, focus groups, constructing and conducting surveys, as well as inferential statistics. Coding data, thematic analysis and triangulation are critical analysis capabilities. Learning to effectively perform these research skills also requires understanding how to select the right mix of methods for the project at hand, including sequencing them appropriately. There is no pre-given formula for making these decisions. As Morten Levin has stated, the research question and project objectives determine the methods to be applied.

Approaches to Teaching Action Researchers

A rich and diverse literature exists on the process, roles, methods and skills of action researchers. However,

less attention has been given specifically to how these aspects of action research need to be taught. The practice of teaching action research within the context of higher education is complicated by the dominant institutional culture of higher education that focuses on lecture and discussion of the existing theoretical literature in the field of study. The dominant paradigm in universities is teaching research from the perspective of doing research *on* subjects rather than *with* participants who are partners in the research.

Recently, however, experienced action researchers who have grappled with the challenge of teaching action researchers in a range of higher education institutions across the globe have written about their pedagogical approaches and the challenges they commonly face in implementing them.

Challenges in Teaching Action Research

Action researchers teach distinct groups of learners in terms of academic level (undergraduate, master and doctoral students, including Ph.D., D.B.A. and Ed.D., among others) and in terms of varied professional motivations for engaging in action research (e.g. emancipatory and/or community revitalization broadly conceptualized, addressing problems related to organizational performance, contributing to the social/behavioural sciences). Regardless of the focus, a number of teaching challenges must be recognized in preparing to offer courses, or a programme, preparing action researchers. Some of these are embedded in the complexity of the action research process itself, others in the epistemological underpinnings of action research, which significantly contrast with those dominant in higher education institutions.

Paule McNicoll notes six challenges encountered when teaching action research, in contrast to teaching more conventional forms of research, whether quantitative or qualitative, experimental or traditional field research: (1) initial struggles of students to adopt a new frame of reference regarding the nature of the research, (2) issues in grading student performance, (3) recognition of ethical concerns and gaining approval from institutional ethical review boards, (4) time limitations placed on academic courses by academic programme structures, (5) balancing tension between research and action and (6) the centrality of the group process. While this is not an exhaustive list of challenges, it captures a wide range of dilemmas described by action researchers teaching action research.

Many students come to action research with the epistemological role model of maintaining an objective stance towards their environment embedded in their frame of reference. This is particularly true of those students who have taken traditional research courses

that emphasize maintaining the subject/object split, with reactivity on the part of either the researcher or the research subjects seen as potential validity threats. This is also true of many professionals whose training is framed in terms of acting *on* the system and not as collaborators whose actions are a part of the system and reflected in the performance of the system. When first encountering the epistemological assumptions of action research, some students are sceptical of the practice, at least from a research perspective. Paule McNicoll suggests that one way of beginning to address this challenge is having students actively engaged in developing their own research questions addressing problems for which they want to seek practical answers. Through the process of planning and piloting their projects, a new understanding begins to emerge, leading to a fundamental shift in their perspective. Experience, not logical argument alone, is what creates new frames of reference.

Another challenge involves the grading of student performance. Grading practices in higher education are very test focused. The emphasis is on acquiring content knowledge and then answering questions. Alternatively, papers are assigned along with structured guidelines. The scored test or paper is assigned a grade. In contrast, assessing learning in an action research context involves observing the growth that takes place as the student develops his or her project while applying newly acquired conceptual knowledge and engaging in critical reflection throughout the process.

There is wide agreement among action researchers that in teaching action research, it is important for the teacher to model the relationship that needs to be fostered between the student action researcher and the other participants. Accordingly, more of a mentoring or coaching role is adopted, asking questions, making recommendations and documenting the growth of the student. Papers written by the student may be marked with asterisks throughout, noting questions from the professor regarding the content of the paper. The student submits responses to the questions. Papers are drafts to be reworked, not final assessments. William Foote Whyte argued that writing and rewriting is part of the research process. The researcher is having a conversation with his or her experience and data.

Similarly, provocative questions raised by the professor during discussions about decisions made in the field by the student stimulate reflective practice, as well as reinforcing certain principles of action research.

Another challenge is getting projects approved by university ethics committees, whose assessment criteria conform to traditional experimental and field research designs that are largely pre-structured. Given the emerging nature of an action research project, with the design co-developed with participants and evolving

over the course of the project, traditional criteria for approval cannot be met. Prior to engaging the participants, specific research questions cannot be defined. Nor can all the actions that will be taken be identified prior to initiating the research project.

Strategies for addressing this challenge will vary across institutional contexts. In every case, however, these strategies will involve educating key members of the committee about the intentions and values of action research, along with developing allies on the committee. In part, this includes not minimizing the importance of the committee's work. Davydd Greenwood has recommended developing an ongoing dialogue with the chair and other members of the ethics committee, helping them better understand action research and building a relationship of trust. Other strategies include having a subcommittee that handles these projects with a designated contact who is in communication with the researcher throughout the project.

The duration of action research projects varies greatly and is somewhat unpredictable. Consideration needs to be given to what aspects of the teaching process can be completed within a set time frame that corresponds to the semester structure of the institution and what aspects need to accommodate unpredictability. Solutions vary from having particular modules placed between extended periods of time that are administered similarly as internships or practice classes to year-long sequences of modules that the faculty member administers flexibly.

Taken together, the tension that exists between research and action, and the challenge of group dynamics involve the conducting of meaningful emergent research in the midst of a change process. While efforts can be made in the class setting to simulate the dilemmas that often emerge over the course of an action research project, such simulations cannot capture the ambiguities and power dynamics that emerge when working within a community in which participants hold varied agendas and interests. The student must learn to balance and integrate the capturing of data while in the midst of maintaining a focus on helping forge effective action. This often involves the researcher struggling with the aforementioned challenge of absorbing a new definition or framing of research even while organizing the project. In the process, he or she has to incorporate the participants into the research process. It is not unusual for participants to be more interested in solving the problem that they seek to resolve. Initially, they may have little tolerance for the need for gathering research data and documenting their experience. These are just two of the conundrums that foster initial issues of group dynamics. Navigating these kinds of challenges is again learned through experience, including reflecting with the teacher on missteps made by the

student in the field, with the teacher in a mentoring or coaching role.

Interestingly, the above challenges mirror many of the conundrums frequently described by experienced action researchers in reporting on their own practice. Teaching action research requires confronting and modelling ways of addressing the challenges students need to learn to navigate and resolve in their practice.

Pedagogical Designs for Teaching Action Research

The challenges discussed above contextualize the pedagogical approaches for teaching action research. Within this context, a pedagogical design must be crafted for developing the complex mix of skills and competencies described in the introduction to this entry. Pedagogical designs for teaching action research are consistent with adult education theory. Levin and Ann Martin have argued that adult education theory emphasizes the need for learners to be self-directed as they learn to apply skills through experience and engage in critical reflection. They emphasize that developing engaged researchers requires creating learning spaces that involve the students as self-directed learners. Their argument is consistent with experiential learning theories, such as David Kolb's learning cycle of having an experience, reflecting on that experience, making meaning through conceptualizing the experience and then, consistent with the work of Kurt Lewin, experimenting by taking new action. Levin and Martin note that a pedagogy for teaching action research builds on the Freirian belief that emphasizes that teaching directly through projects that address problems of personal concern to the students is foundational for fostering self-directed learners.

The emphasis on adult education is also strongly emphasized by Chris Kenyon and Stewart Hase, who have coined the term *heutagogy* in place of using the term *pedagogy* or Malcolm Knowles' term *andragogy*. Their point in using the term *heutagogy* is to emphasize the importance of self-determined learning as students are placed in non-linear situations that can be highly disorienting for those trained in traditional research and problem-solving methods. As the learners get increasingly embedded in the complex practice situation, their frame of reference begins to shift towards engaged research.

While there are significant variations in programme designs depending on the student population being trained, a review of the literature on teaching practices reveals that in one way or another many pedagogical designs utilize learning groups or sets, with the students actively engaged with each other while they develop, implement and write up their projects. These designs

incorporate the seminal work of what Reg Revans described as Action Learning sets, where people learn together while working on real-world problems. Action Learning is a process through which learners integrate what Revans called 'P', or programmed learning—acquiring conceptual knowledge—and 'Q', or questioning insight through working on a real-life quandary. Again, the theory is that working on real problems of importance to the learner generates self-direction. This is consistent with the position of action researchers involved with teaching the practice, such as Levin and Johan Ravn, that teaching action research involves creating spaces for learning about Action Learning while acting.

Shankar Sankaran, Bob Dick, Ron Passfield and Pam Swepson have made explicit the connection between action research and Action Learning, providing several examples of using action research and Action Learning as part of a pedagogical approach. Shankar Sankaran and Tay Boon Hou describe how teaching action research has been explicitly combined with Action Learning in order to enable doctoral students who are managers in companies to more easily obtain permission to use action research in their organizations for their thesis. Framing their thesis projects as a process of Action Learning emphasizes the benefits to be derived by the organization and provides a workable framework for the pedagogy. The integrated learning process consists of three interconnected cycles, each of which evolves through the learning cycle of plan, act, evaluate and conclude.

In this programme, developing and conducting the thesis as action research is framed as a cycle evolving through the action research process: (a) *planning* around the research project to address the problem; (b) *taking action* by initiating the thesis project in the student's organization; (c) *evaluating* through observation, reflection and theorizing and (d) *concluding* by creating the first draft of the thesis. This first cycle intersects with the second cycle, when the planned action research project is implemented as Action Learning, with cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting with participants. The final cycle is the writing of the thesis—plan the final draft, act by writing the thesis, conclude and submit. These three cycles reflect what in learning theory is described as a stable core of plan, act, reflect and conclude, with flexible and interacting cycles taking place within the stable core.

As Action Learning is often characterized as one variation of action research, it provides a workable framework for designing an effective pedagogy. The faculty member is functioning both as the expert providing just-in-time programmed knowledge and as an Action Learning coach facilitating the experiential

learning of the student. Dick has designed a web-based one-semester course for Action Learning students called Action Research and Evaluation on Line, which is offered through the Action Research Action Learning Association. Initially developed to provide a convenient source of 'P' learning on topics related to action research and evaluation in support of thesis students, it can also be taken for free for non-credit. Students use the discussion list for dialogue and raising questions while engaged in completing assignments. The continuing enhancement of web-based technologies can facilitate the communication around set members who are geographically dispersed while implementing their projects in local sites.

Conclusion

Teaching action research can be a challenging (and rewarding) process. It involves teaching a complex mix of competencies using pedagogical designs in which the professor transitions from a collaborating expert to a coach and a mentor. The process has to be one of engaging self-directed learners. Such designs do not fit well with the traditional institutional structures and practices of higher education, which are based on the transmission of codified knowledge from instructor to student.

Consequently, designing and conducting a programme for training action researchers is itself a process of Action Learning on the part of the faculty. Levin has described variations of a Ph.D. programme at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Each cohort had a different mix of students, with the design reflecting lessons learned from the prior one, which is itself a process of engaged praxis.

Lyle Yorks

See also Action Learning; adult education; co-generative learning; cycles of action and reflection; higher education

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TÉCHNĒ

The term *téchnē* is Greek. Linguistically, it is at the origin of everything ‘technical’ or ‘technological’ in modern languages. In modern contexts of action research and professional practice, *téchnē* is often presented with *phrónēsis* and *epistēmē* as knowledge forms introduced by Aristotle (384–322 BC). It is usually interpreted as a technological or mechanical knowledge form. With *epistēmē*, interpreted as ‘science’, *téchnē* is used to describe ways of knowing dominant in the modern period, with which action research mostly does not want to be identified. The following text presents central aspects of *téchnē* as it was coined through the philosophy of Aristotle.

Téchnē Is Art

The original meaning of *téchnē* is ‘art’. Like the Latin *ars* and the English ‘art’, it carries double meanings. *Ars* and *téchnē* indicate what a modern ‘artist’, and also what an ‘artisan’ and a ‘technician’, does. On the one hand, it indicates something creative and expressive for which there hardly exist clear rules and where skilful and mindful discretion is decisive. On the other hand, it indicates something technical, in other words something which by definition is strictly rule-based, drill-based and almost mechanical. *Téchnē* is both art and craft, which modern languages tend to separate. Every artist may need to be an artisan, and an artisan should preferably be an artist as well. But today, poetry belongs to the creative and expressive pole, while everything technical belongs to the rule-following, drill-based and mechanical pole of the old *téchnē*.

Téchnē Is a Way of Reasoning

With Aristotle, *téchnē* is a specific way of using *lógos*, in other words, a way of reasoning or using reasoned speech. In a wide sense, *téchnē* is connected to any consciously intentional and knowledge-based activity provided with a method. A *technitēs* was ‘an expert’, and *téchnē* could mean ‘articulate, skilled expertise in any field or subject’. According to Aristotle, there are several ways of using *lógos*. Finished science requires deduction. Research or unfinished science works dialectically or dialogically. Both have theoretical aims. In a different ‘department’, there was *phrónēsis*, which is deliberative (*bouleútikē*), and *téchnē*, which is mainly calculative (*logistikē* or *logismós*). Both *téchnē* and *phrónēsis* are non-theoretical in an Aristotelian sense, since they aim at and deal with what changes or is brought into existence, depending on what we ourselves do. They concern things that one can produce

and control, in other words, choose, decide on, initiate, change, develop or stop so that the variation depends on people. Still, their ways of bringing about change and using *lógos* differ.

Téchnē Immanent to Making and Using

In a narrower sense, *téchnē* is inherent to the specific kind of knowing or activity called *poiēsis* (‘making’, ‘creating’ or ‘bringing forth’) and, by analogy, to *khreōsis* (‘using’), in other words, to the ability to manipulate, move and form external objects (as materials or as tools) according to the preconceived concepts, aims and plans of a separate user, artisan or artist and where the end and aim is an ‘artefact’, a product or condition formally separate from and external to the process of producing it or arriving. Having built a house, the process stops; having reached your destination by car, you stop using it. *Poiēsis* could be tacit and without *lógos*. *Téchnē* is the specific form of reasoning and articulation connected to *poiēsis*. Thus, *téchnē* and *poiēsis* indicate something ‘artificial’, in other words, something made by art, something non-natural, something that does not happen naturally or by itself. But Aristotle also emphasizes that true art does not go against nature but supports and complements it. *Téchnē* may restore nature where nature has gone astray, as in the best forms of medical practice where the artificial in a sense exceeds nature. Nature (*phúsis*) and *téchnē* differ in that natural change springs from forces, sources and principles internal to the changed object while *téchnē* imposes change upon the object from the outside.

Téchnē Versus Phrónēsis

According to Aristotle, the less events happen by chance (*túchē*), in other words, where there is a predictable order and regularity, the more *téchnē* can take over. Where there is room for chance, however, there is also room for volition and deliberation. Also, *epistēmē* and *lógos* provide a free space for deliberation and choice since the same knowledge can produce the opposite results, for example, medicine can produce both health and disease. Deliberation and discretion are needed in fields or cases where there are no precepts. Where clear rules and precepts exist, technique and *téchnē* enter. *Phrónēsis* is deliberative on behalf of ethical virtue. As deliberation, *phrónēsis* is prescriptively and normatively advisory, exhortative and admonitory, while *téchnē* and *poiēsis* intervene. As intervention, *téchnē* or technical reasoning is basically calculative. Knowledge-based calculation and intervention presuppose stable connections between applied causes and resulting effects in the objects to be manipulated and affected.

Although human beings, relations and affairs can be studied, treated, manipulated or conditioned like objects or animals, they do not strictly comply with these requirements since new insight and understanding (epistēmê and lógos) may make people realize that they are being manipulated or that they are ruled by stimuli, habits, conventions and traditions. Discovering and grasping an ingrained habit or reaction, or a pattern of conduct, could make it possible to break it (doing the opposite). Also, in human affairs, questions about what to do, requiring deliberation, and questions about what really is going on here, requiring critical interpretation and understanding of particulars (*sínesis*), keep reappearing continuously in action. There is no téchnê, nor do any precepts (*paraggelía*) exist for doing this, since accidental properties are infinite and may even be merely imagined or arbitrarily defined, and the same thing, or some such accidental aspect of a thing, may seem pleasant to some, harmful to others and merely useful or completely indifferent to still others.

Téchnê as Applied Epistēmê

Aristotle says that téchnê does *not* deal with particulars the way phrônêsis does and that téchnê does *not* deliberate (*ou bouleúetai*). This suggests that téchnê is a form of applied epistēmê. Téchnê, then, narrowly defined, is a deductive application of general epistemic knowledge of ‘high regularity’ in creating the changes planned and induced by us, where the application of a certain cause can be calculated to produce the same chain of effects regularly. This is done with the use of lógos by the technician(s) in a certain phase, in finding and applying the right stimulus as a cause and in calculating the ultimate effect as the result of a chain of predetermined causes in the objects concerned. But it is done without any use of lógos in persuading or convincing the manipulated or influenced object itself to react in certain ways or in showing and giving it reasons and justifications for choosing, acting or reacting in certain ways. Mindless material objects do not need, and are also quite unable to receive, that kind of communication. They are not invited as sharing members and colleagues into the communicative group. Hence, if téchnê in the narrow sense is applied to other people, it does not primarily relate communicatively to their minds by sharing thoughts through lógos and by providing advice and counsel. It relates interventionally to their bodies or souls, fixing bodies and conditioning their habits, emotions, desires and actions.

Speaking ‘Technically’ or Communicatively

In contrast, phrônêsis is practical reasoning (aiming for action) based on mindfulness and understanding

in the ‘objects’ to be influenced—in other words, co-subjects, co-thinkers, co-actors who understand the meaning of what is said. Phrônêsis exhorts, admonishes and appeals to humans’ independent, reasonable minds through valid arguments, reasons, justifications and observations to heed certain particulars when acting in order to attain some specific result. For téchnê in the narrow sense, however, the other is a thing. Speech, used technically, is an influencing force among other forces, where the effect on others is what counts, not the validity of the intellectual, cognitive content of something said and communicated. Understanding in the recipient has nothing, or only accidentally something, to do with the technical effect of spoken words. As part of poíêsis or khrêsis, téchnê calculates effects on human beings as well as on other objects. In human relations, this form of téchnê is the mastery of influencing, manipulating and using other human beings.

Although, after Aristotle, Stoic philosophers were in many ways formalists in their reasoning, the wider meaning of téchnê became more salient in Hellenistic times (330–31 BC) as, in their term, *téchnê peri tòn bion*—in other words, *ars Vivendi*, or ‘art of living’. The Stoic ‘art of living’ covered much of what for Aristotle was best covered by phrônêsis, in other words, human affairs. The clear distinction between téchnê and phrônêsis, emphasized by Aristotle, thus became more blurred in later philosophy.

Téchnê in Action Research

For action research, the term *téchnê*, both in a wide and in a narrow sense, raises interesting questions about the nature of the relationship between researchers and whatever is researched, between knowers and the known and between ‘change makers’ and others. Inspired by Lewin’s dictum ‘You have to change it in order to understand it’, many action researchers see their activity as interventions, taking their models from medicine or engineering. This may be seen to be a form of téchnê. Others find inspiration in the concepts of praxis and phrônêsis. Understanding and mapping how these differ, overlap or interact should provide food for thought and for important discussions within the community of action researchers.

Olav Eikeland

See also phrônêsis; practical knowing; praxis

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used with respect to organizational development. Using Jürgen Habermas' theory of knowledge-constitutive interests as a springboard, they distinguished *technical* action research from *practical* action research guided by an interest in educating or enlightening practitioners and from *critical* action research guided by an interest in emancipating people and groups from irrationality, injustice and harm or suffering.

To Theodor Schatzki, these three kinds of action research differ in their 'teleoaffective structure' in that the overall structure and purpose of each, or *teleos*, involves different kinds of emotional, or *affective*, investment.

Foundational to how TAR has been defined by critical educationalists is the view that TAR reflects a technical approach to reasoning where the means to an end are seen as the focus of change or improvement rather than the ends or the broader political, historical and sociocultural contexts in which a practice is located. This critique considers that technical approaches to action research are not truly owned by or empowering for participant practitioners and are not transformative or critical. In other words, TAR is underpinned by certain values and assumptions and not by others. The concession is that it may provide a springboard for practitioner-initiated inquiry and, in some contexts, lead to more critical and participatory forms of action research.

TAR as a discernible form of action research has a longer history than the term itself. The pragmatic quality of TAR is evident in the contributions of John Dewey. Kurt Lewin's field experiments have been cited by writers such as Bjørn Gustavsen and Ian Hughes as reflecting the TAR characteristic of the researcher's role being clearly distinguished from that of participants. Others, such as Davydd Greenwood, see action research as undertaken by action research experts who work with local stakeholders. A great deal of action research has been undertaken where the inquiry has been initiated by government, management or researchers, including those undertaking postgraduate projects.

Writers such as Michel Thiollent suggest that action research and participatory research have different lineages which have converged to some extent since the 1980s. Distinguishing technical from participatory forms of action research occurred at the same time.

Action research can be considered technical for a range of reasons. In TAR, the researcher's role is clearly distinguishable from that of the practitioner, consistent with the notion of the researcher being an *outsider* as opposed to an *insider*. Outsiders according to Olav Eikeland are generally researchers, consultants, therapists, educationalists, social workers or others whose institutional base and primary practices are not embedded in the specific field of practice that is

TECHNICAL ACTION RESEARCH

Technical action research (commonly referred to as TAR) is one of many suggested types or modes of action research. The primary purpose of TAR is improving the outcomes of a practice or an intervention. The focus of the inquiry process is typically determined by parties external to those directly involved in the practice, with action research techniques used by an external researcher or facilitator to identify or improve practices which meet predetermined ends. Examples include the testing of external findings in practice, the exploration of practice or organizational methods to achieve a particular desired outcome and the improvement of existing ways of doing things. This entry discusses the history and characteristics of TAR, together with consideration of the contexts of its application.

The interest in distinguishing TAR can be located in the critique of positivist-scientific enquiry. The term was first used by the Australian writers Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis in the mid-1980s in the context of wanting to distinguish a critical and emancipatory form of action research for education from what was seen as a more practical orientation of British action research

the focus of the action research. Whilst such outsiders come and go as part of particular projects and may engage in substantial collaboration, they are nonetheless highly influential in establishing the terminology, the techniques to be used and the theory produced from the action research process.

TAR broadly encompasses action research underpinned by *positivist* assumptions about how problems are best understood and responded to. TAR in this sense can be thought of as action research located in the conventional norms of social research, as opposed to the emancipatory and political location of more critical forms. Action research has been used in variously termed inquiry approaches, including applied research, Intervention Research, action experiments and Action Science, where partnerships between researchers and organizations have the goal of generating new scientific knowledge. A number of dynamics might help explain the reported increase in popularity of forms of action research which have a technical character. These include the discourse of evidence-based policy and practice, the challenges of implementation in relation to complex issues and environments and managerialism.

TAR has also been suggested as using a particular form of reasoning. The focus of this reasoning is on instrumental change or *techniques* embodied in notions of *efficiency* and *efficacy* rather than transformed social relations. An over-slavish use of the action research cycle to structure the inquiry process rather than engagement with social and collaborative richness has also been suggested as a consequence of reducing action research to a technical form.

TAR has been used in a wide variety of contexts. It has been used in institutional contexts where practitioners require a significant level of mandate and endorsement from management to undertake action research processes, as a framework for evaluation of a programme or intervention, to develop interventions which better appreciate the contexts of their application, to develop and improve social programmes and as a methodology for scientific and quasi-scientific studies in fields such as agriculture, engineering and management. As action research has been applied in various settings, there has been criticism from critical action research and Participatory Action Research theorists that the true values of action research have been subsumed to technical purposes.

A feature of the application of action research since the 1990s is the diversity of forms it can take and the contexts it is applied within. Many contexts are institutional in nature and bring with them particular social, political and material relations. According to Michel Thiollent, action research is increasingly practised in larger projects, incorporated into institutional

arrangements involving government, research bodies and organizations. Much of this use is within neo-liberal environments and has something of the character of TAR, given the broad alignment of action research with institutional goals and endorsed outcomes. In Australia, the use of action research within the Reconnect early intervention into youth homelessness programme is one such example. The broad outcomes of preventing homelessness provide a politically and organizationally endorsed parameter for action research into improving practice, though what practices and micro-questions are specifically investigated is left for each funded service and their practitioners to determine.

TAR has clear applications in contexts where representational knowledge outcomes are prioritized. There are limitations if TAR is used as a stand-alone approach to inquiry. TAR is a normative construct in that it is defined by critical action research theorists as being at best an intermediary platform en route to more desirable forms of action research. It is better understood as an archetypal category of action research which is used in contexts where the focus and the meaning of inquiry are necessarily limited at least in the short term to deepening understandings around agreed objectives and where the impetus for inquiry has its origin outside of those most central to the practice.

Approaches to defining action research can reflect a static view or one that is dynamic and developmental. A dynamic and developmental approach considers that the characteristics associated with ideal forms of action research (participatory or critical) develop over time and that the role of the action researcher is to facilitate and maximize such development. The definition of action research developed at the Australian National Action Research Symposium in 1989 reflected such a developmental approach. Other writers such as Yoland Wadsworth have discussed the way researchers often work over time to assist research subjects to become their own researchers or co-researchers, effectively transferring power as engagement, understandings, relationships and skills develop.

How action research is defined continues to evolve. Schemas for distinguishing various types of action research highlight particular characteristics seen as central from a particular vantage point. TAR is characterized by its focus on technical goals and the location of research power as external to those undertaking and affected by the practice in question. Whilst TAR may have collaborative aspects, it contains elements of research *on* or *for* people rather than research *with* them. Writers such as Susan Adler have suggested that the technical improvement and democratic enhancement goals of action research are contradictory.

A feature of the literature since the 1990s is the emergence of more nuanced understandings of how roles,

purposes, scope and context interact in various action research processes in quite complex ways. As part of this, there has been recognition that dichotomous categories inferred by terms such as *participatory*, which implies that an approach is either participatory or not, do not match the reality of utilizing action research in real-world contexts typified by complexity. As suggested by Bob Dick, Appreciative Inquiry has developed as a constructivist approach that aims at large-system change through an appreciative focus on what already works in a system rather than what is deficient. This mirrors the development of strengths- and asset-based approaches in clinical practice, community development and organizational practice.

A number of shifts in action research relevant to TAR are evident in the twenty-first century. The application of complexity theory means that dualisms such as inside/outside have less cogency given there may be many participants and stakeholders who engage with each other at various levels of horizontal and vertical integration, evident in different aspects of their activities. How top-down policy and governance measure the interface with participatory bottom-up processes becomes a critical focus for conceptualizing social change processes. How various forms of action research are defined and how the role of technically oriented processes is understood continue to be of interest.

Phil Crane

See also Action Science; Dewey, John; insider action research; intervention research in management; Participatory Action Research; Pragmatic Action Research

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regular jobs in an organization and want to contribute and succeed but, at the same time, are treated as outsiders because they represent ideals, agendas, values or even identities that are somehow at odds with the dominant culture. Their stance as outside insiders can be a disturbing force, shifting organizations in the direction of incremental change. Shaking things up is their *modus operandi*, with a penchant for making change from within organizations. In effect, tempered radicals are the change makers who put to meaningful use the methods of action research.

Tempered radicals favour action, the type of action that represents their values and beliefs and the difference that makes them who they are and how they contribute to their organizations. Action research and its varied methods privilege moment-to-moment inquiry in action. The courageous stance of the tempered radical to invoke and initiate such processes is essential. Action research methods interweave first, second and third person spaces. The subjective first person experience focuses on self-awareness and is important because the change leader must be authentic and wholly present to be effective. In addition, the intersubjective or second person space of interpersonal communication and interactions emerges as the tempered radical works with a team to enact a change in the system. Finally, the objective third person space which enables the change leader to see the system in its totality, to envision and create impacts and observable outcomes of action, is necessary to ensure that the vision driving the change is realized. Each of these enables tempered radicals to maintain their curiosity about the intentional actions that may lead to sustainable organizational transformation over time.

Tempered radicals are people who operate deep within big companies, well beneath the cultural radar, who are a part of the organization as professional irritants, employing many different styles and strategies. They work to slowly change the rules. Action research requires advocates who are willing to hold steady in the face of uncertainty and inquire into potential pathways for action, direction and resource recruitment. Tempered radicals who employ the strategies of action research, such as reflection, deep inquiry and dexterity, in speaking the unspeakable have two special capacities. The first is their capacity to tentatively fit the context they find themselves in while, at the same time, shaping and reshaping themselves to remain within that context and make change. The second capacity is their ability to live in the paradox of change making. Such curious, tempered agents of change have the capacity to endure a state of ambivalence while small shifts take place within an organizational system. Their capacity to remain curious rather than to prematurely seek resolutions to systemic challenges or organizational

TEMPERED RADICAL

In this era of unavoidable rapid change, economic globalization, hyper-compression and ambiguity, the role of the tempered radical is essential. Tempered radicals are self-described as organizational insiders who have

conundrums makes them excellent researchers who seek the knowledge that supports meaningful transformative action.

At the heart of the continuum of action research inquiry methods is the assumption that understanding and improving the human condition requires approaches that validate knowledge that comes from within and throughout the system as well as everyone's learning. Action research democratizes the processes of human inquiry as a practice of learning accessible by all adults within systems. Democratizing the process of together making change demands three capacities from the tempered radical: (1) to be an outsider within; (2) to be critical of the status quo while, at the same time, critiquing untempered radical change and (3) to be an advocate both of the status quo when the system is not ripe and of deep change when the system is ready.

For the tempered radical, these capacities come at a cost. These costs include the fact that in truth they have no one single identity and they receive feedback that they are perceived as hypocrites due to the contradiction in their thoughts and actions. In addition, the system fights fiercely to compromise their identity, to move them from outsider to insider and to make them act according to the rules of the system, which may well be at odds with their values and beliefs. The emotional burden associated with this resistance can lead to stress and strain.

Tempered radicals have an uncanny inclination to remain on the margins and at times a contradiction that allows them to span the boundaries of a system to develop new knowledge that may catalyze deeper change. Changes such as personal change, organizational transformation and large-scale social change are the tests of validity that the action research method is at work and affecting a system. Action research methodologies such as Participatory Action Research, Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry, Appreciative Inquiry, collaborative inquiry and action research provide tempered radicals with a liberating structure that allows them to explore with curiosity the possibilities for change within a system and over time.

In the context of the new normal, a time of great uncertainty and risk, so much of what tempered radicals do is to provoke learning and to seek truth. By taking the risk to act on what they believe and value and being authentic to their identity, with deep respect for their context, they begin new conversations in organizations that over time lead to change. These men and women working within organizations recognize and are committed to the values, beliefs and risks of democracy, which in practice is an endless process of collaborative social inquiry.

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See also Action Science; Appreciative Inquiry; Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry; Freire, Paulo; Participatory Action Research

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THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

Theatre of the Oppressed is a genre of theatre devised in the 1970s by the Brazilian director Augusto Boal. This methodological approach, and its associated repertoire of theatre-based methods (sometimes called games, tools or techniques), continues to be used in various parts of the world in research, community development, education, political activist and therapeutic settings. Associated practices include Theatre for Development, Theatre in Schools, Theatre for Living, Applied Theatre and Popular Theatre, among others. It is an approach to theatre that is intentional in its desire to shed light on social issues of oppression and marginalization.

Theatre of the Oppressed was founded on three main techniques: (1) Image Theatre, (2) Invisible Theatre and (3) Forum Theatre. Boal's later works include 'Cops in the Head', 'Rainbow of Desire' and 'Legislative Theatre'. A brief overview of each of these follows.

The first, Image Theatre, is a series of methods that invite participants to create still images with their bodies. Boal claimed that when participants use their bodies instead of their voices to express meaning, these images can sometimes be closer to participants' true feelings, because embodied language can bypass rational defence mechanisms or self-censorship. Image Theatre is often used as a warm-up, in preparation for the more formal theatre productions that follow.

Invisible Theatre is performed in public spaces where people are unaware of the actors in their midst. In his book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (2002), Boal lists examples of actors who have sparked heated debates on the theme of sexual harassment in the Paris Metro, the Swedish medical system in a Stockholm ferry boat and the topic of racism in various unsuspecting cafés. When engaging in Invisible Theatre, it is important that the actors rehearse their dialogue and timing privately in advance. Although there is an element of improvisation in that the actors do not know how their audience will respond, the key themes they want to communicate, and the extreme positions on those themes, must be made clear ahead of time. In this form of street theatre, actors are very much dependent on the audience and must be confident that they themselves and the unsuspecting audience members have the ability and the knowledge to address the issues at hand. Unlike other forms of street theatre, however, audience members remain unaware that they were participants in an Invisible Theatre performance and are therefore not left with the impression that they were part of a didactic interaction. Scholars such as Bonnie Burstow have discussed the ethical dimension of this kind of theatre.

Forum Theatre is the technique most frequently associated with Boal. In the forum setting, a play is constructed around pressing issues in the community, and the protagonists are always represented as encountering oppressive situations in which they lose. That is, the plot reaches a negative climax and then ends—no resolution is given. The play is performed once in its entirety and then started afresh a second time. During the second performance, audience members are invited to yell ‘Stop!’ at any time and come on stage to replace a character with whose struggle they identify. When they do come on stage, these audience members try to change the outcome of events so that the protagonist, in changing her or his behaviour, can also change the outcome of the oppressive interaction.

The interactions occurring between audience and actors are mediated by a facilitator, or what Boal traditionally called the ‘Joker’. This Joker explains the protocols of audience engagement and explains, in particular, that the spect-actors should not present magical solutions where people suddenly become kinder human beings; the ideas enacted on stage ought to attempt to truly engage with the complexity of the real-life struggles represented. Boal also cautions the Joker to be aware of evangelical interventions in which audience members who have had no experience with the oppression being depicted come on stage and advise protagonists on how they should proceed. Instead, the interventions can serve as a dress rehearsal for action in the spect-actors’ own

lives and the forum as, ultimately, a venue to rehearse a revolution.

As his methods developed, Boal and others following his lead realized their limitations, particularly in that they could not be transposed, as they were, outside the Latin American countries in which he worked. For example, while working in Europe, Boal discovered forms of oppression he had not previously encountered, such as loneliness, isolation, emptiness and lack of communication, which could not be expressed so easily using Forum Theatre. Through the realization that people had internalized their oppressors, he devised a series of exercises to bring awareness to and ultimately dislodge these self-oppressing voices or ‘Cops in the Head’.

In addition, Forum Theatre is limited in terms of individual agency in the face of oppressive structures (laws, policies, ideologies, etc.). In an attempt to influence these structures, Boal began an experiment in what he termed *Legislative Theatre* upon being elected into the municipal government in Rio de Janeiro. In this capacity, he worked with theatre at the grass-roots level to elicit knowledge about people’s struggles and convert their suggested solutions into law.

As the Theatre of the Oppressed began taking hold around the world through Boal-authorized training centres, it gained a certain level of legitimacy in the eyes of state and provincial funding agencies. This created somewhat of a division amongst theatre artists, where those who do not train in Boal’s methods are generally understood to be applied theatre artists as opposed to Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners.

Theatre of the Oppressed and Popular Education

Theatre of the Oppressed was strongly influenced by popular education, in particular the work of Paulo Freire. Both Freire and Boal advocated for the use of creative methods in literacy education, and as their work spread around the world, various approaches to popular theatre emerged. Freire-informed participatory educators and community development workers initiated several Theatre for Development projects across the African continent in the 1970s, for example, and many such projects continue to this day. For example, Zakes Mda reported several theatre projects in which people were mobilized to take part in national development projects; communities drew connections between local problems and organizations working at national and international levels; genuine, two-way dialogue was established between government and rural villagers; communities were moved to discuss and implement solutions to local problems; solidarity was achieved at village and inter-village levels and, finally,

local forms of cultural expression were validated. He also cautioned that theatre-based approaches can and have been used as propaganda to promote top-down objectives.

Theatre of the Oppressed as an Action-Oriented Approach to Research

Ontologically, Theatre of the Oppressed-based researchers are aligned with a critical, action-oriented position that the purpose of research is not merely to understand or explain reality but to *change* it, in some way, for the better. Epistemological claims include that knowledge can be gleaned from all of the senses, not solely through rational thought, and that new knowledge can be co-created through participatory research processes that involve the people who are experiencing the problem under investigation.

Because they explicitly engage the whole body and the imagination, Theatre of the Oppressed (and arts-based methods in general) can help to access 'other' (and 'othered') knowledge that cannot be so easily accessed via questions and conversation alone. Arts-based methods such as Theatre of the Oppressed serve to holistically integrate intuitive and rational ways of knowing, and as such, using creative media in research offers great potential to surface preconscious or previously unarticulated concerns and desires.

Representation, Knowledge Translation and Theatre of the Oppressed

Through the methods described above, theatre can serve as a means of collecting data. It can also serve as a means of analyzing data and representing results. For example, analysis in Forum Theatre occurs as participants move from Image Theatre into creating a performance based on all the data (stories, images, emotions, visceral experiences) they have gathered through the methods. The performance then serves as a representation of the results. Audience intervention in the performance adds another layer of analysis as members of the community interpret, relate to and take action in relation to the events portrayed on the stage. In this way, presenting research findings through theatre-based methods can serve both a knowledge dissemination and a knowledge translation purpose. Theatre and other alternative means of knowledge dissemination are useful since scientific articles are rarely read outside of academe, nor can they be read by people without the requisite literacy skills or access to scientific databases.

As with any representation, theatre poses a few dilemmas. One such dilemma stems from the question of interpretation. Because research has historically

been concerned with conveying *the* truth, art is sometimes perceived as overly subjective. This dilemma is resolved in part through the argument that we filter the meaning of text through our own experiences in the same way that we filter art. A similar dilemma comes from the possibility that the artist's voice (whichever medium that voice may take, theatre or otherwise) may dominate over that of the participants or that of the essence of the data. This dilemma is addressed through participatory endeavours such as Theatre of the Oppressed, where participants use art to speak for themselves.

In spite of these problematic areas, Elliot Eisner, a strong advocate of arts-based research, offered five reasons to use creative means of representation. First, the arts enlarge our understanding. He suggests that the reason to use a specific tool is because it does a better job than others, and he suggests that the arts are useful in eliciting an empathetic response, which is often required in action-oriented research. Second, he argued, the arts can portray a sense of the particular, and thereby deepen our understanding of the particular, in ways that abstractions cannot. Third, he draws attention to the potential for 'productive ambiguity', suggesting that productive research can serve to complicate our lives by expanding our thinking. Fourth, the arts increase the range of questions addressed by researchers. The arts can give rise to questions from novel perspectives as they engage non-dominant modes of perception and thinking. Finally, he suggests that the arts can activate and cultivate multiple forms of human intelligence. As different researchers inevitably possess different skills, use of the arts can express a broader range of human researcher aptitudes.

Validity

Although diagrams, graphs, charts of various kinds and even some images (photographs, drawings, cartoons) are generally accepted as valid means of representing data within the confines of a text, art alone as a form of scientific representation is still relatively uncommon outside the disciplines of the fine arts. As such, theatre as representation raises a host of questions around validity. This is partly because many people do not have (or do not believe they have) the requisite aesthetic literacy to interpret the validity of the art and partly because the usual means of disseminating knowledge through publication are simply not accommodating. However, since theatre and other arts-based representations often have a powerful effect on their audiences, understanding multiple means of validity becomes increasingly important.

How, then, can theatre-based researchers allow claims to pass as true, valid, justified and substantiated?

Qualitative researchers such as Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba have argued that contemporary research attends to multiple, and at times conflicting, criteria for quality, authenticity and validity, including fairness of stakeholder views, ontological and educative authenticity through the raised consciousness of both participants and audience members and catalytic and tactical authenticities through the researchers' ability to prompt action. Transgressive forms of validity also enable social scientists to transgress, reshape and create new ways of relating to and doing research, create heterogeneity of perspectives and make multiple openings for action.

The issue of generalizability in arts-based methodologies is manifested through the relationship between artist and audience. Theatre-based representations are often more concerned with telling the particular stories of participants; however, when readers, audience members or other observers see, hear or feel an aspect of their own reality in the art, they are able to generalize a lesson to a broader context. In this sense, theatre-based representations, like qualitative case studies, can highlight both the threads of individuality and the common experiences of our shared humanity.

Arts-based research in general, and Theatre of the Oppressed in particular, is riddled with questions of aesthetic quality, on which there are competing lines of thinking. In short, one side privileges the quality of participant engagement throughout the process while the other privileges the aesthetic quality of the product. The thought to which a particular researcher or theatre practitioner subscribes is often related to the professional background and training of the person in question, that is, whether or not the person has formal training in the fine arts.

Catherine Etmanski

See also arts-based action research; Boal, Augusto

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THEOLOGICAL ACTION RESEARCH

Action research is in the business of bringing about change and takes account of people's values and motivations and the value base of organizations. When working with religious groups, theology (articulated religious beliefs) comes into the picture. Professional researchers need to know how to bracket their own value commitments when necessary and negotiate their way around the values of the group. This also holds true for theological beliefs, but it may be more challenging. Theology is obscure to many. Providing a way of handling the specific quality that religious beliefs bring to social action is one reason for having clear procedures for theological action research (TAR).

Many religious groups want to bring a research focus to their mission and practice. They are aware that theological research must examine action and activities, not just the belief system. This is the task of 'practical theology', and it requires proper criteria and procedures and social scientific rigour. But religious groups are right to be wary of underlying assumptions, the risk of a reductionist mindset brought into the research process—even unconsciously—and the religious-theological factor being simply 'sociologized' or 'psychologized'. TAR sets the research process firmly within the lived world of religious faith and theology. As a methodology, it is an adaptation or contextualization of action research.

The model of TAR presented here was developed by a university-based, ecumenical, interdisciplinary research team ARCS (Action Research: Church & Society) on the basis of action research work with 12 Christian outreach initiatives. The team defined TAR as 'a partnership between an insider and an outsider team to undertake research answering theological questions about faithful practice in order to renew both theology and practice in the service of God's mission'.

The main characteristics are as follows:

- a. A particular approach to the experience-reflection-learning-action cycle
- b. An interactive, ‘conversational’ process between the outsider research team and the insider research partners
- c. A specifically theological understanding of the action goal

Theology in the Action-Reflection Cycle

The cycle moves from practice to reflection to practice in an iterative way and as distinct operations, but it is important to note that awareness and understanding are present throughout. The reflection phases intensify but do not exhaust theological awareness, even if these are characteristically seen as the ‘theological moments’. Theology comes to expression thematically in reflection and also in a non-thematic way in experience and action; it is multifaceted and multidimensional. The lived practice of faith already embodies theology.

The ARCS team developed a heuristic scheme (and others are possible) for analyzing and interpreting the research data, which guards the inherently theological nature of this methodology. There are four dimensions—‘the four voices of theology’—the *espoused* and *operant* at the level of practice and the *normative* and *formal* at the reflective level. There is the theology that can be discerned in a group’s adopted mission (*espoused*) and in its actual practice (*operant*) and the theology that is acknowledged as having authority (*normative*—scripture, creeds, liturgical) and that is the fruit of ongoing inquiry (*formal*—the work of the academic theologian). These are not totally discrete streams of theology but ‘places’ where theology is located. They are constantly interacting and interact differently in different confessional traditions.

Partnership, Process and Conversation

The research involves the insider and outsider teams working collaboratively. This generates a range of perspectives that stimulate reflection. The insider team are the practitioners or owners of the practice that is the subject of the research and have a commitment to exploring it with a view to initiating change. Crucially, it is they who determine what the research question is—not the research professionals. The role of the outsider team is to facilitate the research, build the capacity of the insider team and broaden and deepen the reflection by bringing different knowledge and perspectives.

The teams work through a structured process—agreeing on the goals of the research; clarifying the research question; gathering the necessary data; identifying, first separately and then jointly, the emerging theological themes and exploring them; formulating learning points; determining future action and initiating further research. This process unfolds over time—the chronological time it takes for work to be co-ordinated, dates booked and events arranged and the ‘*kairos*’ time that arrives as the insider-outsider dynamic matures: the right moment, the unplanned insight or the conversation that takes off when participants ‘lose track of time’.

Insiders and outsiders have to learn the art of their conversation. They often feel isolated within their own immediate circles—practitioners struggling to relate action to theology and professionals struggling to relate theology to action. TAR as a systematic process establishes relationships and a structured way of having the conversations that bring insight and deepen theological understanding. Misunderstandings can always occur because the process probes differences between belief and action, theory and practice and theology and life. It requires a lively expectation that uncovering such truth points will be creative rather than crushing.

The Action Goal in Theological Action Research

Faith-based social action has direct and immediate purposes, and it also serves the Gospel vision of life. Similarly, TAR has two goals: (1) to stimulate new actions where required and (2) to make openings to a deepened faith dimension. It does this by a research process that enhances theological literacy and, especially, theological fluency. TAR seeks *theologically* imbued change in action.

This deepening of the process of theological reflection on practice within the dynamic frame of action research is at the heart of TAR. Experience shows that as a result new faithful action for God’s mission arises.

James Sweeney and Clare Watkins

See also capacity building; Christian spirituality of action; community-based research; conscientization; hermeneutics; insider action research; practitioner inquiry; reflective practice

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THEORIES OF ACTION

The term *theory of action* figures prominently in several literatures, including the philosophy of action and practical reason, sociology, artificial intelligence and policy analysis. This entry focuses on the theory of action approach developed by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, which has made seminal contributions to professional education, organizational learning and action research. These contributions include the concepts of double-loop learning, theories-in-use, organizational defensive routines and Action Science. They also include practices for helping individuals and organizations improve their ability to double-loop learn and for creating knowledge that can be used for this purpose.

The theory of action approach begins with the premise that human beings design action to achieve intended consequences. These designs can be seen as theories of action of the form 'In situation S to achieve consequence C, do A'. Theories of action include the assumptions under which the actor believes the causal connection to hold and the values that make the intended consequence desirable. A theory of action consists of a complex set of interrelated propositions, a kind of master programme for producing action.

Theories of action are of two kinds. Espoused theories are those that individuals believe they follow and are able to state. Theories-in-use are those that can be inferred from actual behaviour. For example, an individual's espoused theory for handling a disagreement might be 'Get all the issues on the table, and talk it through'. Observing what that individual actually does might lead to inferring the theory-in-use: 'Emphasize facts that support my position, and downplay facts that support the other's position, while presenting myself as an even-handed seeker of truth'. Individuals are usually unaware of discrepancies between their espoused theories and their theories-in-use.

Seeing our behaviour as determined by theories of action directs attention to the knowledge we hold about people, situations and what causes what and also to the reasoning by which we bring our knowledge to bear as we design action in particular situations. But the theory of action approach does not presume that we are consciously aware of all this. Rather, in Schön's phrase, when we act intelligently, the knowing is *in* the action. We rely on tacit knowledge, much as native speakers utter sentences that are grammatically correct without thinking about or even being able to state the rules of grammar that govern their speech. Or, to switch analogies, we are like someone who knows how to ride a bicycle. We can maintain balance, make turns and dodge obstacles without thinking about how we are

doing it. What we are not doing is thinking step by step through a set of rules of the kind that would be necessary if we were to programme a robot to ride the bike. If we tried to do that, we would fall.

What, then, do we gain by understanding behaviour in terms of theories of action? One answer is that it offers a way to reflect on our behaviour in order to become more effective. The idea that there is a design, a theory-in-use, that is governing our behaviour, that it may differ from our espoused theory and that we are probably unaware of discrepancies between the two provides a template for productive reflection. It tells us that we have to begin with the data of our actual behaviour and infer the theory-in-use rather than only introspect on what we were trying to do or what we think we did. Then, we can reconstruct and critically reflect on the assumptions and reasoning embedded in the theory-in-use that we have discovered in our action. We become researchers into our own practice.

Single-Loop and Double-Loop Learning

Theories-in-use are a means for achieving intended consequences. When there is a mismatch between intended and actual consequences, the actor may seek to correct the error by trying a different action strategy while leaving unchanged the governing values, norms and action frames of the theory-in-use. Argyris and Schön called this single-loop learning. For example, a manager who finds that workers are not complying with a directive may shift from the strategy of 'Announce it in the group' to the strategy of 'Call them in one by one and tell them if they don't, they're in trouble', or perhaps the strategy of 'publicly praising those who do it'. These are instances of single-loop learning in the service of getting workers to comply with what the manager has determined is the right thing to do. Double-loop learning, in contrast, occurs when the actor reflects on and alters underlying values, norms or frames and acts accordingly. Double-loop learning might occur if the manager reflects on the possibility that there may be a good reason why the workers are not complying, that perhaps the directive is flawed, and, therefore, inquires into what barriers they are encountering and entertains their suggestions for how to proceed.

Learning processes for double-loop learning differ in important respects from learning processes for single-loop learning. Double-loop learning entails questioning assumptions that may be part of one's sense of competence, identity or code of behaviour. In the above example, the manager may have to reframe the role of manager from 'one who knows, decides and tells' to 'one who engages others to come up with good solutions'. This can be deeply unsettling and may elicit defensive reactions.

Single-loop learning is prevalent, while double-loop learning is rare. A primary concern of the theory of action approach is to enable individuals, groups and organizations to become better at double-loop learning.

The Behavioural World

Human beings live in behavioural worlds created by our own behaviour in interaction with the behaviour of others. For example, if we think we are among friendly people, we are likely to act friendly. Our behaviour elicits more friendly behaviour from others. Over time, friendliness may come to be seen as a characteristic of the community, influencing the behaviour of new arrivals.

Theories-in-use determine behaviour, and therefore, shared features of the theories-in-use of individuals shape the behavioural world. At the same time, the effectiveness of a theory-in-use is partly determined by the behavioural world in which it is situated. Trusting behaviour in a low-trust behavioural world is often punished rather than rewarded. The behavioural world therefore shapes the theories-in-use that individuals come to hold. This interdependence, indeed co-creation, between theories-in-use and behavioural worlds is a point of emphasis in the theory of action approach.

Model I and Model II Theory-In-Use

While espoused theories vary widely, under conditions of embarrassment or threat, almost everyone exhibits some variant of the interpersonal theory-in-use that Argyris and Schön called Model I. The governing values of this theory-in-use are (a) define goals, and try to achieve them; (b) maximize winning, and minimize losing; (c) minimize generating or expressing negative emotion and (d) be rational. The predominant action strategies are to design and manage the environment unilaterally, own and control the task and unilaterally protect self and others. This theory-in-use has predictable consequences for the behavioural world, for learning and for effectiveness. The actor is likely to be seen as defensive, controlling and incongruent. People are unlikely to give each other clear feedback both because doing so would violate the governing values of minimizing negative emotion and unilateral protection and also because they perceive each other as not open to learning. Therefore, actors remain unaware of their incongruence and the impact of their behaviour. It is rare for people to reflect on their underlying assumptions. Learning tends to be single loop, not double loop, which leads to decreasing long-term effectiveness.

Argyris and Schön developed an alternative theory-in-use, Model II, with the governing values of valid information, free and informed choice and internal commitment. The predominant action strategies are to define and

control tasks jointly, to make one's reasoning explicit and testable and to encourage inquiry. The consequences of Model II are that the actor is seen as minimally defensive, reasoning is publicly tested and learning-oriented norms develop. These conditions favour double-loop learning as well as single-loop learning. Problem-solving and decision-making are more effective, especially for difficult problems.

Most people readily espouse Model II, except for situations requiring unilateral control, such as protecting young children from risky behaviour. But most are unable to produce it as theory-in-use, especially under difficult conditions, and are unaware of this limitation.

Organizational Theories of Action

Organizations and their subunits can be seen as having theories of action, both espoused theories and theories-in-use. For example, an espoused theory in one organization was that there is no preset budget for bonuses; if every employee performed at a high level, they could all get large bonuses. But in practice, there was a target number for the total bonus pool, although it was not published. When bonus recommendations exceeded this number, they were returned to the individual departments to be reworked. So the theory-in-use was to set a budget for bonuses, to deny that this was the case and to enforce it by requiring resubmissions. We can speak of this as *organizational* theory-in-use because the individuals involved were acting in their capacity as agents of the organization—as a finance manager, as an executive approving the budget and so on—and because it continued even as different individuals came to hold each role.

The instrumental theory-in-use of an organization includes its task system, processes and procedures and norms for performance. It is enormously complex, and some parts may be inconsistent with others. As the organization's environment changes, so must its theory-in-use, or its performance will deteriorate. Often, these changes involve particular action strategies or procedures, for example, increasing or decreasing production, correcting defects or changing advertising campaigns. Making such changes requires organizational single-loop learning. Some changes, however, involve governing values, norms and underlying assumptions—the organization must, in some sense, remake itself. These changes require organizational double-loop learning.

Organizational Learning

The theory of action perspective on organizational learning focuses on the process of organizational

inquiry. 'Inquiry' is meant in the sense of John Dewey's theory of inquiry, as a process of thought and action that proceeds from doubt to the resolution of doubt, restoring the flow of action. When members of an organization encounter a problematic situation, they seek to understand what is causing it and what they or others in the organization can do to make it better. They inquire on behalf of the organization. If their inquiry leads to changes in the behaviour of people acting in their capacity as agents of the organization, it changes organizational theory-in-use, and we can say that organizational learning has occurred.

Putting organizational inquiry at the centre of organizational learning directs attention to the quality of that inquiry and the factors that influence it. People may be more or less aware of data relevant to the inquiry that resides in other parts of the organization. They may have difficulty talking openly with people in other departments because of inter-group rivalries. They may be reluctant to give a full account of their findings to superiors because of possible repercussions. Factors like these inhibit organizational learning.

Organizational inquiry, as a form of organizational action, is governed by organizational theory-in-use. We can distinguish between the organization's instrumental theory-in-use (how it designs and produces products, sets prices, organizes the sales force and so on) and its theory-in-use for the process of organizational inquiry. We can further distinguish between single-loop and double-loop learning in each of these domains. Of particular interest in the theory of action approach is double-loop learning in the theory-in-use for organizational inquiry, because this increases the capability for double-loop learning in the organization's instrumental theory-in-use.

Organizational Learning Systems

An organization's learning system is formed by the behavioural world that grows around the structure, information network and incentive systems of the organization. The behavioural world includes norms and expectations that affect organizational inquiry such that, for example, some issues are treated as 'undiscussable' or discussion is largely about scoring points or avoiding blame.

As noted earlier, individual theories-in-use and behavioural worlds are interdependent. The theory of organizational learning developed by Argyris and Schön describes how individuals with Model I theories-in-use, acting as members of an organization, create a limited learning system, designated O-I ('O' for 'organization'). An O-I learning system is characterized by dysfunctional group and inter-group dynamics, undiscussable issues and the proliferation of

organizational defensive routines. These factors reinforce Model I theories-in-use.

The preferred entry point for changing these dynamics is the theories-in-use of senior leaders in the organization. Changes in structure, incentives and policies can be helpful but are unlikely to achieve their intended effects in a sustained way unless there is change in the theories-in-use of the people whose behaviour shapes the behavioural world. The reason for starting with senior leaders is that changes in their behaviour are often a precondition for others to use new behaviour and also because they are better positioned to alter organizational factors that otherwise inhibit change. It is also necessary to help people at the next levels to see their responsibility for contributing to the behavioural world and to learn to change their behaviour. As members of the organization develop skill in Model II theory-in-use, the learning system of the organization shifts towards what Argyris and Schön described as Model O-II.

Intervention and Research

The theory of action approach developed out of the long experience of its founders as interventionists, educators, consultants as well as university-based scholars. Argyris was involved in the early years of laboratory education (T-groups) and conducted some of the first studies of increasing organizational effectiveness through laboratory education with intact leadership teams. Schön founded and led consulting organizations in technological innovation and social research before joining the MIT faculty. In his 1970 book *Intervention Theory and Method*, Argyris proposed that the primary tasks of the interventionist were to create conditions for valid information, free choice and internal commitment. When Argyris and Schön published the first statement of the theory of action approach in 1974, these showed up as the governing values of Model II theory-in-use. It was this history of involvement in helping organizations change that led to the emphasis in the theory of action approach on altering the defensive patterns in the organizational behavioural world that inhibit learning and change.

To create knowledge that is useful for practice, researchers and practitioners should join in collaborative action research. The role of the researcher is partly to understand and describe what practitioners do as they inquire into problematic situations and strive to make organizations more effective. But the action research role also includes intervention and coaching to help practitioners go beyond what they already know how to do and to study what then happens. This means that the researcher is also a practitioner and must develop the requisite skill. From the perspective of the theory of action approach, this means reflecting on one's own

theory-in-use and becoming capable of producing Model II responses in the face of defensive patterns embedded in the behavioural world of the client system.

Robert W. Putnam

See also Action Science; advocacy and inquiry; Dewey, John; double-loop learning; ladder of inference; Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production

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THIRD PERSON ACTION RESEARCH

Third person action research—as distinct from first and second person action research—involves several issues. In this entry, third person activities are taken to refer to processes between people who do not have direct contact with each other. This entry focuses on the myriad challenges posed by third person inquiry and on the possibilities it presents in terms of action research's broader contribution at societal, systemic levels. It also exemplifies some contemporary attempts at third person work.

Although the originators of action research, such as Kurt Lewin, were preoccupied with broadly framed social issues, not least anti-authoritarianism and democracy, their main approach was the utilization of face-to-face groups, where the researchers are either themselves members of the group or work in close contact with it. Against this background, moving beyond the group to reach a wider audience and promote change within, say, large organizations, regions and societies represents a challenge. Various responses have been proposed. The most conventional is to present the experiences from the face-to-face project in a text and expect

the text to diffuse the message. Another possibility is to repeat the project a number of times until a 'critical mass' is reached. A third is to organize the project as a large-scale intervention in the first place, where many people participate in a mass meeting, open inquiry or festival. Sometimes this works well and ensures a broad anchoring through one sweeping move. There are, however, problems: These events are difficult to organize and, as such, tend to be stand-alone events with little 'before' or 'after'. Furthermore, although many people are present, there are generally differences between them: Some are 'on stage', while others constitute an audience. A fourth option is to work with managers and leaders and expect them to transmit the message to those they lead. A fifth is to perform the initial project with units that exist within social contexts—such as networks—which can carry the message further. These are just some examples. Each one can take many different shapes, in addition to which they can be combined in various ways. They can all be strengthened through training and education. They have all been tried, and all can claim advances under certain circumstances. There is, however, no specific approach, or combination of approaches, that functions under all circumstances.

Whatever strategy is chosen, the products of action research have to be fed into more broadly framed processes. While research, under the influence of René Descartes and his successors, has seen the objective observer and disinterested bearer of truth as the foundation for research and, consequently, sought to maximize the distance to other actors, action research has from the beginning departed from this perspective: Research exists within the world, in multiplex relationships to other actors. Research has access to the same channels of influence as all other social phenomena, and since there are numerous sources and means through which society is constituted, there are also numerous channels through which action research can reach out beyond its own immediate context. In this sense, third person inquiry, strategy and process can be identified as the active use of all channels of influence society offers, which go beyond a demand for face-to-face contact. From this perspective, it is not participation in society-level discourses that is the challenge; rather, it is to identify the specific contributions which action research can offer *within* specific kinds of discourse. What is it that action research can contribute that cannot be contributed by others?

Action Research's Contribution at the Third Person Level

Even in action research, it is common to argue that what is produced is knowledge. A similar claim, however, is made by all other forms of research. Insofar as action

research produces something that is unique, the uniqueness must have to do with the *way* in which the knowledge is produced. There are two things that are unique to action research settings: first, the participation of the potential users of the knowledge directly in the generation of the knowledge and, second, the possibility of linking the concepts or propositions through which the knowledge is formally expressed directly to observable behaviour.

For example, in general discourse, the notion of 'trust' is a word linked to other words. In an action research setting, it refers to, in addition, observable forms of behaviour between specific people. From the perspective of understanding the relationship between second and third person discourses, it is the second alternative that emerges as the most important. *The unique characteristic of action research is the creation of situations where words can be systematically confronted with behaviour.* On an abstract level, a concept like trust can mean an almost endless number of different things. When the notion of trust is used in a specific situation where the issue is not only to apply the word but also to demonstrate its meaning through specific forms of behaviour, the options shrink radically. It is like sending the word through a washing machine: When the process is over, the concept is cleaned of a lot of mud that had become associated with it. When the word is again fed into society-level discourse, it has become more powerful through an improved ability to distinguish between real trust and manipulative trust. From this perspective, the role of action research in third person conversations is to feed behavioural understandings of concepts—acquired in second person processes—into the third person discourses.

If we look at some of the major action research projects that have occurred over the years, we see that this is just the kind of function they have had. While the projects of Lewin and associates on issues like authoritarianism, democracy and participation were not repeated, or even investigated with reference to their direct impact beyond the experimental sites, they came to influence more broadly framed discourses on democracy through pointing out specific behavioural aspects of democracy, such as the relationships between leaders and members in ordinary, everyday organizations, like youth clubs. The same pertains to the field experiments with autonomy in work of the 1960s and 1970s. By the end of the 1970s, the wave of experiments had generally died out; what had not died out, however, was the need to link ideas like democracy and learning in work to specific forms of organization. A number of action research projects in association with Majority World aid programmes have laid bare the need for local mobilization and loaded the notion of Third World aid

with criteria for such mobilization. There are many further examples.

Above, the discourses in which action research takes part have been divided into two categories: (1) those that occur in face-to-face contexts and (2) those that occur on the level of society in general. The discourse formations of a modern society are far more complex. In addition to those that occur within the context of the local projects, there are discourses on a number of levels: the organization, the community, the network, the region, the nation and the global, just to mention some examples. To promote development and change, it is often necessary to participate in a number of these. This may look like a very demanding task for research, not least since each discourse formation has characteristics of its own, posing different demands concerning what contributions are relevant and how they need to be expressed. On the other hand, in all societies there will, at each and every point in time, be a number of such discourse formations in operation. Research will not have to construct them all from scratch, but can join the existing ones. The challenge for action research will more often be to change the existing discourses than to create wholly new ones.

Efforts to create change on the level of society will, even when a number of discourse formations are involved, take time. It will seldom be sufficient to back such changes with one, two or even a handful of local projects. Their ability to sustain meanings will diminish over time; competing events will emerge, and important conditions will change. There is a need for a certain rate of renewal of projects to provide new inputs into the broader discourses. The new projects will almost never be direct replications of the previous ones; new conditions and challenges will demand new strategies and new processes.

A further concern is where they should occur. In programmes to promote participation and learning in work in Scandinavia, it has turned out to be an advantage if projects can be spread out geographically to involve new actors continuously. This will also ensure that they occur within different formations on levels such as the network, the cluster and the region. In this way, each formation is subject to direct inputs from within its own domain. These programmes also demonstrate that in building working life in whole nations—even small ones—on notions such as participation, autonomy and learning, the activities need to become permanent. Instead of sporadic inputs into more or less suitable existing discourse formations, there is a need to make the inputs from local projects continuous and to put effort into the construction of discourse formations that are particularly geared to the understanding and use of this kind of input. To achieve this, the programmes are constructed in co-operation between public authorities,

research councils and labour market parties and build on establishing partnerships of various types on regional and similar levels and on producing an ongoing stream of projects throughout the country.

Manifestations of Third Person Inquiry

Discourse formations with a capacity for linking local experiences to society-level processes are sometimes referred to by the terms *development organization*, *Development Coalition* and *social movement*. They extend the idea of large-scale events but with more consideration of the issue of time. Development organization is used to emphasize the point that the kind of organization needed to develop and diffuse change generally differs from the kind of organization needed to handle ongoing production. *Development Coalition* can refer to any kind of network, community or organization; the point is to emphasize that various forms of co-operation are not the result of naturalist forces but of conscious human intentions. The notion of social movement indicates that efforts to achieve broad change do not function through creating identical developments in a large number of places but developments that have some common goals but otherwise show a number of differences conditioned by, for instance, differences in local conditions.

What characterizes the above is a joint interest from a substantial number of people in improvements within an area, in combination with a willingness to actually become engaged together in the improvement process. Today, this seems to be the main approach to the challenges associated with reaching out in society. Projects pertaining to, say, Majority World aid programmes, democracy in work and the status of women will always occur within a context. This context will consist of other researchers interested in the same topic, of various groups of concerned people, of organizations and public agencies working within the area and more. They will often constitute a scattered landscape rather than a co-ordinated social movement.

There will, however, always be some elements of links and relationships present, and there will generally be possibilities for strengthening these elements and activating new ones so that the notion of social movement can be approached. Looking at how action researchers actually function in their daily work, this is very often what they do. Along with project work, there are not only written texts but the active use of other media as well, including meetings and discussions, efforts to convince other actors, alliances with like-minded actors and so on. The notion of spreading research knowledge through social movements, consequently, does not constitute a break with everyday activities but a continuation of them. Furthermore,

even in its face-to-face form, action research deals with, and specializes in, process issues: in how to organize actors, create sustainable developments and mobilize actors around common causes. Complete success in the form of world movements is not common and is difficult to achieve. However, a complete lack of success is not common either. In most cases, action research has some kind and degree of impact, often without itself being fully aware of how far and deep this impact may go.

Recognizing these points, there are some examples of systematic efforts to see to what extent an increase in impacts can be achieved. One example is found in the workplace development programmes unfolding in Scandinavia: Currently existing primarily in Finland and Norway, the programmes are anchored in collaboration between the labour market parties and the political authorities characterizing 'the Scandinavian model'. Generally, using a public agency as the executive body—in Finland a state agency for the promotion of innovation, in Norway the national research council—the central actors form the programme level. The purpose of the programme is to promote projects but within a specific institutional framework. At the same time, as all the projects must fall within the general framework, the programmes have a distributive profile in the sense that they initiate a substantial number of projects spread all over the country.

In the initial phase, each project is limited: It may, for instance, include three to five organizations or even one single organization, provided that it has a complex internal structure, and some researchers in collaboration. This pattern allows for face-to-face contacts between researchers and the organizations involved—at the same time as it makes organizations accustomed to working with other organizations and researchers accustomed to focusing on inter-organizational relationships. Each combination of organizations and researchers can be called a node.

If the nodes are successful in terms of advances, they will be able to pull in further user organizations to provide the foundations for networks, or clusters, of organizations. The new members generally come from the near environment and are recruited not only on the basis of the results achieved but also on the basis of factors such as mutual recognition and trust.

If a number of networks can be established within a geographical framework, generally a region, the perspective of regional development can be added. At least in Europe, most countries have regional institutions for backing economic development, in particular through innovation. These institutions, often forming regional partnerships, can function as policymakers, in particular through linking networks to each other and through co-ordinating the relationships between the networks,

on the one hand, and various support resources, on the other. If there are parallel developments in a number of regions, one may talk about a social movement as a process intervening between the region and society.

With the notion of social movement at the centre, there emerges a structure with a number of levels: the workplace, the organization, the small group of organizations, the network of organizations, the region, the movement and society—and often, the international world can be added. While the workplace generally allows for close and rich contacts between the actors concerned, this potential is successively thinning out as one moves upwards in the system. There is, however, no radical break point. Participants are exposed simultaneously to face-to-face contexts and more distanced contexts in the sense that all levels are present simultaneously.

This multilevel design for change is based on the assumption that people will not be able to develop shared understandings and joint action outside face-to-face contexts unless they have experience with understanding and acting together in their near environment. Only through being formed in the lifeworld will values like truth, fairness and justice be solidly anchored not only in words but also in behaviour.

The chief contribution of the notion of third person action research is not that it has found some new and hitherto undiscovered method of reaching out broadly in society but that it reaches out broadly without losing its basis in the lifeworld. Third person approaches interact with second and first person ones.

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See also community-university research partnerships; comprehensive district planning; disseminating action research; Frankfurt School; large-group action research

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TOULMIN, STEPHEN

Stephen Edelston Toulmin was a London-born philosopher (1933–2009) well known in Europe and the USA. He taught for many years at the University of Chicago and then at the University of Southern California. A Ph.D. in philosophy at Cambridge, his early work focused particularly on Ludwig Wittgenstein. Toulmin authored 22 books on a wide range of subjects.

Toulmin's general significance as a philosopher was broad: the philosophy of science, moral reasoning, the critique of both absolutist logic and Platonism and a synthetic critique of Cartesianism based on a more experiential, human and complex view of the world and his linkage of pragmatic and Aristotelian philosophy through science and technology studies in medical anthropology and action research. An elegant writer, Toulmin had a discerning ethnographic eye and the ability to move back and forth among engagement in concrete, pragmatic and policy questions; the history of ideas and philosophical theory and reasoning. He particularly focused on ethics and moral reasoning through extensive work on the dilemmas of ethical treatment of human subjects in research, in medicine and in organizational research. In this way, he contributed to the revitalization of pragmatic philosophy by combining it with systems theory in his work in science and technology studies.

His general significance to the field of action research resides in his unique combination of pragmatic and linguistic philosophy. Through his connections to the Scandinavian action research networks, particularly those of Bjørn Gustavsen, he became a participant in the evaluation and consolidation of a number of large-scale Norwegian and Swedish action research projects. Gustavsen was working hard to bring the 'linguistic turn' from Wittgenstein into action research, arguing that language games were key to larger goals of creating learning networks of action researchers along which new ideas and practices would diffuse. Toulmin's competence in Wittgenstein's work was indisputable, but he added his detailed familiarity with Aristotelian philosophy and American pragmatism to this mix, work that resulted in the revitalization of pragmatism and particularly a focus on Aristotle's

concept of *phronêsis* or clinical or prudential reasoning in context.

Rather than emphasizing the abstract, theoretical habits of contemporary philosophy, Toulmin used his combination of linguistic philosophy, borrowings from Aristotle and neo-pragmatism to press both philosophers and action researchers to operate differently. For the philosophers, he argued, as he did throughout his career, for direct engagement in messy, empirical struggles on the grounds that philosophy's reasoning tools should be made valuable through application in real-world contexts. For the action researchers, he unsettled the constant tendency of practitioners to eschew theoretical and intellectually defensible reasoning about their projects and merely tell stories. He urged them to take responsibility for and create a language adequate to translating empirical cases into challenges to larger understandings about modernity, social democracy and the welfare state. Thus, he issued a challenge to both philosophers and action researchers to meet on a middle ground between cases and abstract theory and build an enriched understanding of both.

Toulmin's work was part of a significant revival of interest in action research in the work of Aristotle, and it is now part of the core discourse of the field of action research. A major publication in this area was Bent Flyvbjerg's book, *Making Social Science Matter*, which gained attention for the Aristotelian distinctions between *theoria*, *téchnê* and *phronêsis* and Olav Eikeland's tour de force, *The Ways of Aristotle*, the work of a Ph.D. philosopher with a quarter century of work in action research at the Work Research Institute of Oslo, Norway. As a guide to Aristotle, Eikeland's text is far and away the most comprehensive and complex. He argues that both Toulmin and Flyvbjerg abstract *phronêsis* out of its larger context in Aristotle and make it too easy for the non-expert to assume that *phronêsis* alone should be the basis for action research. Eikeland shows persuasively that all modes of knowing were celebrated and validated in the Aristotelian system and that using *phronêsis* well requires us to develop nuanced understandings and methods based on *theoria* and *téchnê* as well.

Eikeland's pedagogy here is important in making it clear that for action researchers to simply appropriate an Aristotelian term and use it out of context is an unacceptable shortcut to intellectual legitimacy. Rather, as with most complex matters, raising the level of analytical discourse in action research requires good training and significant effort. Toulmin deserves credit for placing the concept of *phronêsis* at the centre of action research's theoretical and methodological debates and getting this productive dialogue going.

Davydd J. Greenwood

See also *phronêsis*; Pragmatic Action Research; *téchnê*; Wittgenstein, Ludwig

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TRANSFERABILITY

The transferability of a research finding is the extent to which it can be applied in other contexts and studies. It is thus equivalent to or a replacement for the terms *generalizability* and *external validity*. This entry outlines a brief history of the term and its successors, a discussion of the most important aspects of transferability as it applies to action research and an account of the strategies an action researcher or other researcher can adopt to increase transferability.

Brief History

In the second half of the twentieth century, a shift occurred in discussions of research quality. An earlier tradition of quantitative research persisted, characterized by experimental design and statistical analysis of increasing sophistication. At the same time, discussion of qualitative research rigour increased. Reflecting the growth, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* passed through four editions between 1993 and 2011. However, in much of the literature, experimental

designs (i.e. research designs involving careful control of predetermined variables), and especially randomized control trials, were regarded as the research approach to be encouraged. Many governments held similar views: In the USA, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was explicit that only experimental designs counted as quality research and deserved government support.

Initial discussions of qualitative research often used the same terms and concepts as quantitative research, modifying them only as necessary to accommodate the different characteristics of qualitative research. *Generalizability* was the term used to describe the application, in one study or situation, of research findings from a different research study. Yvonna Lincoln was a prominent champion of qualitative methods during the period under discussion. To counter the dominance of quantitative research, she proposed replacing the methodological concepts of quantitative research with different terms. *Transferability* was substituted for *generalizability* and became a term in common use in the qualitative literature and the action research literature.

Later still, there was a move to choose terms that were devised independently rather than being based upon quantitative research concepts. In these later formulations, *transferability* as a label was less in evidence, though still in use by some authors. By the time of the appearance of the 2011 *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, the concept for Lincoln had become *cumulation*—the cumulative addition to knowledge by each of a number of studies.

Transferability of Action Research

Action research and case study research—all or most action research can be regarded as intervention case study—have both been criticized for a lack of transferability. It has been argued that generalization is not possible from a single case, though that has been disputed. In some current qualitative research, the issue is not regarded as important or relevant. Many qualitative researchers take the constructivist view that reality is not directly knowable. All theory is therefore a construction of unknown relevance to an unknowable reality. On this view, there is no definitive means of distinguishing one construction from another. A much quoted chapter in Guba and Lincoln's 1979 book *Naturalistic Inquiry* is titled 'The Only Generalization Is: There Is No Generalization'. Some action researchers hold a similar constructivist position, and of them, some have accepted that transferability is not possible. An alternative view is more pragmatic: The main aim of action research is to bring about improvement in some social situation. What is important is what works.

Most definitions of action research pay homage to the three goals of participation, practical outcomes and contribution to knowledge. For many action researchers (particularly practitioner researchers), though, emphasis is on local improvement. Transferability is less important. In the index to the 2008 *SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, there is no entry for transferability. In the same index, the term *generalizability* barely appears—three times, each of those referring only to brief mentions in the text. In the action research literature, as in Kurt Lewin's writing, it is learning or knowledge that is transferred. As action research participants strive to improve their situation, they learn from their experience. It is no coincidence that the action research cycle bears a close resemblance to the experiential learning cycle of authors such as David Kolb. For some authors, such as Judy McKay and Peter Marshall, there are two cycles, one for problem-solving and one for research. Learning can occur in each cycle, about the situation and about the process, respectively.

There is much that can be learned and then used elsewhere. Participants learn about different aspects of the situation they are analyzing and improving. As Margareta Hult and Sven-Åke Lennung explain in their review of action research definitions, participants increase their competence in research and problem-solving as they make use of the iterative action research process. Participants may improve their ability to collaborate as they work with each other. External researchers can then apply their now augmented experience to other action research studies. Participants internal to the community or organization can apply their new knowledge to further improve their situation in the future. Whenever some learning has taken place, it can be argued that some form of generalization or transferability has been achieved.

Strategies for Enhancing Transferability

Research quality is an important precursor of transferability. A lack of confidence in the findings of a study inhibits their use elsewhere. An important strategy for achieving both quality and transferability is to pay keen attention to what is happening. The action research cycle of planning, action and critical reflection provides space for such thoughtful attention in the reflective phase, though it is more valuable if practised at all times. If so, it then provides a quality of presence and engagement that some have identified with mindfulness. Donald Schön named it reflection-in-action and argued that it is a key component of how practitioners learn from experience. With mindfulness, a researcher is more likely to notice a surprising event or result and is thereby given an opportunity to develop new insights. To take this further, participants

in a study can be active in seeking out information that appears to contradict present understanding. Experiential learning is often tacit. Reflection and mindfulness throughout each action research cycle help tacit learning to be made explicit, and thus more easily explained and reported and transferred.

Many aspects of research design play their part too: the choice and engagement of participants, the diversity of participants and informants, using literature to test the boundary of application of findings, access to other people with varied points of view, different forms of triangulation and attention to surprise and disconfirmation. These are discussed in more detail below.

Diverse participants, whether deeply engaged as co-researchers or more superficially involved as informants, provide diverse views. The potential for conflict is thereby heightened, and attention to co-operative ways of relating is necessary. But if participants' views can be reconciled through discussion, a deeper understanding of the situation can arise for all. As a shared commitment is built towards common action, the understanding becomes more practical and deeper still.

Diversity aids rigour and transferability in other respects too. The use of varied methods and processes increases the likely relevance of the findings to other settings. Michael Patton, for example, has argued for diversity of data sources (data triangulation), researchers (investigator triangulation), theory (theory triangulation) and methods (methodological triangulation). In his descriptions of developmental evaluation, a form of evaluation very similar to action research, he again encourages diversity in many aspects of research. In addition, several research sites can be included in a single study, or a study may be researched over a long time period. Similarly, generalization from multiple and diverse studies is easier than from a study of a single site.

Drawing on outside sources of information can help action researchers define the boundary within which their findings may apply. Relevant but different literatures can provide part of this. So can communities of practice: networks of people with similar or overlapping interests. Electronic mailing lists can serve a similar purpose. Common in the educational action research literature is the use of a critical friend, a colleague or mentor who challenges all aspects of a study as an aid to more penetrating reflection.

Used separately or collectively, these strategies enhance both the quality and the transferability of research findings. Some authors describe this approach as dialectic. The strategies have in common the use of multiple sources of knowledge or learning that, when compared critically, allow more confidence in the eventual findings. When some or all of these strategies are employed, the participants of the study are helped to enhance their competence at remedying problems

and improving situations. To that extent, transferability has been achieved.

Transferability Beyond the Study

For the study to be of use to others not directly involved, one or other of two possibilities must occur. On the one hand, the results of the study may be applied elsewhere by those engaged in the study in some way. On the other hand, the findings can be communicated, perhaps in the form of books or journal articles, or less formally through word of mouth, to colleagues and others. For many authors, therefore, such communication is one of the defining characteristics of action research.

Robert Stake has coined the term *naturalistic generalization* for one form of transfer. He claims that it is natural for people to make sense of their experience as it happens or as they read about it in case study descriptions or the like. As they do so, they draw upon current events and observations and also upon previous experience and other information that they have acquired. The flexibility of action research allows even partially relevant learning to be applied, perhaps crudely at first and then with increasing refinement through the trial and error of the cyclic action research process. Stake further suggests, therefore, that it can be left to the reader, listener or observer to decide, naturally, when and what generalization is possible.

A contrary view, as mentioned earlier, is that transferability is difficult. Its feasibility depends upon the similarity between the original source and the situation that is to be the target of the transfer of learning. Only by specifying the salient features of the source can a writer facilitate use of the findings by a reader. Deciding which features are salient then becomes an important choice.

At this point, the different interests of academics and practitioners come into play. Academics are more likely to prefer tightly specified theories that identify causal links between defined variables, even though the cause is often ambiguous in complex situations. Practitioners, on the other hand, are more interested in knowing what they can do to achieve certain outcomes.

Bob Dick

See also generalizability; rigour; theories of action; validity

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TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

The term *transformative learning* (commonly known as TL) is an approach to adult learning and education that is embedded within the behavioural sciences, a collective term for a number of disciplines that focus on the study of human behaviour. Emanating from the work of Jack Mezirow, who takes a cognitive rational approach building on constructivist assumptions, it explores how adult learners integrate new learning with their existing knowledge and experiences. In other words, we build and integrate new and revised interpretations of the meaning of our experience, validating it through interaction and communication with others. The end goal of TL is the achievement of greater personal autonomy and independence. There is a special emphasis on the individual as a rational constructor of knowledge, where meaning making happens in a logical and thoughtful manner. The learner works through experiences that challenge his or her tacit, taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, values and expectations. The learners renew themselves through envisioning their future and structuring their meaning perspectives appropriately, and as a result they become more open, transparent, flexible, authentic and capable of change. The teacher's role involves taking a consensual approach to teaching, with an emphasis on the centrality of experience, critical reflection and rational discourse. This entry discusses the history and characteristics of TL, in addition to the key concepts of TL, plus TL research and action research.

History of TL

TL and in particular *perspective transformation* as a concept were introduced into the field of adult education in 1978 by Mezirow. The idea drew attention to a critical dimension of learning in adulthood that enables us to recognize and reassess the structure of our assumptions and expectations. Influences include Jürgen Habermas' three kinds of knowledge, Paulo Freire's 'conscientization', Thomas Kuhn's 'paradigms', the concept of 'consciousness raising' in the women's movement, John Dewey's 'prior knowledge and previous experience', Jean Piaget's 'stages of cognitive development', Lev Vygotsky on higher mental functions and the work of the psychiatrist Roger Gould.

The origins of TL theory lie in a national study sponsored by the US Department of Education in the late 1970s. It looked at 83 women returning to college in 12 different re-entry programmes. The research results led Mezirow to posit a theory of adult development, which he called perspective transformation. He focused on the changes in role and self-concepts (perspective transformations) that these women experienced as a result of participating in the respective programmes and the process in which they recognized and reframed their culturally induced dependency and role relationships. Mezirow was interested in the ways in which a person's past (psycho-cultural assumptions) constrains or filters perceptions of the self and relationships with others.

Over the following 10 years, education was incorporated as a process in fostering critical self-appraisal—particularly when linked to self-directed learning. Meaning perspectives were defined as a web of cultural and psychological assumptions, and meaning schemes as the rules and expectations that govern our lives. By 1991, TL was well established within adult education literature, with a strong emphasis on critical reflection and critical self-reflection. It was criticized for being too rational and ignoring the role of symbols, intuition and images in learning, while also neglecting issues to do with social action, power and cultural contexts. Mezirow invited and encouraged critiques of his work, hoping that through engagement with the community of educators interested in TL, the theory would continue to evolve. In 2000, Mezirow acknowledged the importance of the affective, emotional and social contexts of TL and introduced some new terminology. He suggested that the frames of reference which we use to make sense of the world around us have two aspects: (1) a habit of mind and (2) a point of view. Habits of mind are the deeply embedded routines or predispositions that we use to interpret experience, usually expressed as a point of view. TL theory and

writing have evolved over the past 36 years into a complex and comprehensive theory of how adult learning changes the way people think about themselves and the world. A TL movement has developed in North American adult education, with International Conferences on Transformative Learning held since 1998, and the *Journal of Transformative Education* was established in 2003. The origins and development of the TL body of knowledge have been critiqued, examined and further developed predominantly within the field of adult education. This has provided a forum for the continued detailed analysis of TL theory—contributing to a multidisciplinary body of literature and community of practice.

Characteristics of TL

TL theory offers a powerful model for understanding how adult learners cope with the complex demands and conflicts of life. While there are many characteristics of TL, the central ones emphasize adult learning as a process of making meaning out of our experiences and of questioning our assumptions based on prior experience. Our expectations—that is, what we expect to happen—are based on what has happened in the past; they are the product of our experiences. It is these expectations that are called into question during the TL process. Mezirow argues that it is only in adulthood that people develop the reflective judgement necessary to assess their own reasoning about their habitual expectations. Therefore, self-concept is as relevant to TL as it is to adult learning in general. By definition, TL leads to a changed self-perception.

TL is said to occur when individuals experience changes in their thinking that lead to new world views and new perspectives on their personal and professional lives. When the right circumstances occur, TL enables the individual to redevelop existing frames of reference (or points of view), which then become more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective and integrative of experience.

Mezirow describes defined stages in the TL cycle that include the need for the following:

1. A catalyst for change (disorienting dilemma) that has to occur
2. Critical reflection involving self-examination that acknowledges one’s feelings
3. Consideration of the assumptions being held by the individual
4. A recognition that one’s discontent or destabilization often walk hand in hand with the experience of transformation
5. Exploring one’s options for new roles, relationships and action
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring the knowledge and skills essential for implementing the newly formed plan
8. Testing and provisionally trying out the new roles, relationships or actions
9. Building competence and self-confidence in the new roles and relationships
10. Reintegration of the persons back into their lives, taking on board the changed conditions that are necessary in order to support the new perspectives they have developed through the TL experiences

Mezirow begins with the assumption that everyone has constructions of reality or ‘perspectives’ that are dependent on reinforcement from various sources in the world around them. His seven stages in the TL cycle can be broken down into four distinct parts which tend to operate as a learning process with a sequential flow, namely, (1) experience, (2) alienation, (3) reframing and (4) reintegration (see Figure 1).

Experience of a Disorientating Dilemma (Stage 1)

The TL process begins with an experience, but not just any experience. It is an experience in which

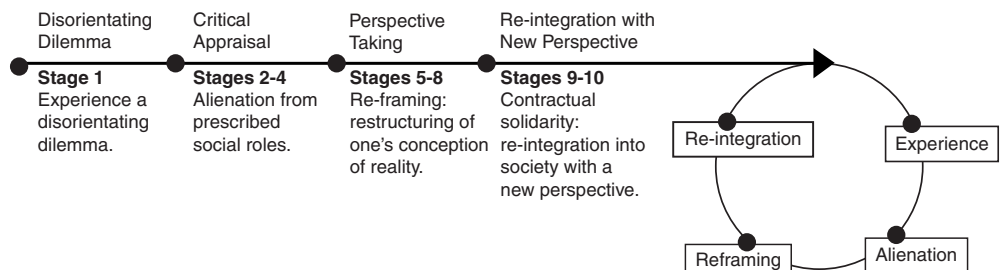


Figure 1 Iterative Nature of the Transformation Cycle

individuals' perspectives (current assumptions and beliefs) are not in harmony with the world around them. As a result, they experience a disorientating event—a critical incident where their construction of reality is challenged or not reinforced by sources around them. Their sense of well-being is damaged or changed in some way. The catalyst for change (critical incident) that has to occur is usually a major personal life event.

Alienation From Prescribed Social Roles (Stages 2–4)

The individuals concerned critically examine the assumptions and beliefs that have led to their interpretation of this experience. In colloquial language, they speak about 'questioning themselves' or 'taking time out to think about things again in a different light'. They experience 'disjuncture', a feeling of not being in harmony with one's knowledge of the world in which one is acting and with the emotions being experienced. The adult becomes ill at ease or disoriented. This experienced lack of accord between the external world and the internal biographical interests or knowledge can create such a feeling of disorientation that adults begin a process of re-evaluating their previously unexamined values, beliefs and understanding. At this stage, individuals engage in critical appraisal—examining or recognizing their feelings of fear, euphoria or anger—consider their assumptions and recognize their discontent and sense of destabilization. Once the individuals have critically examined the assumptions and beliefs that have structured their experience, they may find that it causes them to revise their assumptions about themselves and others. This can be up to and including the revision of the very basis of their previous assumptions—to the extent that they have been changed completely.

Reframing One's Conception of Reality (Stages 5–6)

Reframing occurs when adults search for a way to add new knowledge and experiences to what they already know. Adjusting or changing their previous assumptions, they begin to move towards new meanings or perspectives. External and internal biographical interests and knowledge begin to adjust in such a manner that it causes a transformation in these perspectives—leading to a new meaning being created by the individuals, which at this stage is very subjective, fluid and changeable. They are in a state of 'flux', which is resolved by testing whether the new meaning created is true or authentic. From this point, they move to explore their options for new roles, relationships and actions—planning a course of action and determining what knowledge and skills are required for implementing the plans. To arrive at the best possible judgement, the person will actively seek out opinions

of others, including opinions that will challenge the status quo. When engaging in this discourse, they are actively searching for a common understanding, an assessment of the justification for an understanding or a belief. This discourse is not about debate or conflict; it is a focus on finding agreement in order to build a new understanding. It can happen in a one-to-one context, in groups and in formal educational settings. It is important to move adults from an argumentative mindset to one of empathic understanding of others' lives. Having considered what new knowledge and skills are essential, the adults test out their planned new roles, relationships or actions—thereby increasing their self-confidence and competence.

Reintegration With the New Perspective (Stage 7)

The result of this experience, critical appraisal and reflective discourse is taking action, which might happen immediately, be delayed or be the reaffirmation of an existing pattern of action. The individuals experience a reconnection as they reintegrate into society with new or changed perspectives. Their world is back in balance again when they have taken on board the changed conditions that are necessary to support the new perspectives they have developed through the TL experience.

Key Features of TL

The following are some of the key features of a TL approach to adult learning and education.

Meaning Perspectives

These are a complex network of assumptions and expectations through which a person filters his or her experiences and determines how he or she sees the world. These networks have two dimensions: (1) a habit of mind and (2) the resulting point of view.

Habits of Mind

These are broad outlooks or dispositions that are used to interpret experience; they are usually expressed as points of view or opinion. Individuals' points of view comprise a cluster of meaning schemes that are habitual, general rules for interpreting experiences. In short, it's how they think or have learned to think about things, including deeply held assimilated ways of knowing, believing and feeling. Some of these include unquestioned or unexamined beliefs, as well as prejudices, distortions and stereotypes. Simply put, a habit of mind is a way of seeing the world based on one's background, experience, culture and personality. All six are interdependent and interrelated—overlapping and influencing one another (see Table 1).

<i>Epistemic</i>	<i>Aesthetic</i>
Knowledge, how we acquire it and how we use it; the way we learn, learning styles and preferences	Values, attitudes and tastes; judgements and standards of beauty, art, music and fiction
<i>Sociolinguistic</i>	<i>Moral-Ethical</i>
Social norms and cultural expectations; the way we use language, for example, ‘IT speak’, and our roles in society—woman, teacher, father, child—all define how we should behave	Conscience and morality, how we define good and evil and how we act on our views of goodness and see ourselves responsible for advocating for justice in the world
<i>Psychological</i>	<i>Philosophical</i>
Who we are and how we see ourselves—our self-concept, needs, inhibitions, motivations, anxieties, fears and personality	Our world view, philosophy or religious doctrine determines our social, political and economic aspects of living

Table 1 *Habits of Mind*

SOURCE: Adapted from Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Perspective Transformation

These start from the assumption that everyone has constructions of reality that are dependent on reinforcement from various sources in the world around them. Maintaining a meaning perspective is safe. They change or are transformed when individuals’ perspectives are not in harmony with the world around them. In this state of disjuncture, the person’s construction of reality will be transformed when one changes a belief or attitude (a meaning scheme) or experiences a revolution of an entire perspective (habit of mind). There is a recursive and evolving nature to the TL process that is best explained as a constant process of constructing and integrating new or revised interpretations of the meaning of one’s experience. Learning occurs when an individual encounters an alternative perspective. This was originally seen as a single disorientating event (epochal), but it has since been acknowledged that it could also be a gradual cumulative process (incremental) of everyday events.

Conditions for TL

The most important concepts to emerge from extant research on the conditions that support TL include (a) life experience, (b) the nature of critical reflection, (c) rational discourse and (d) action (see Figure 2):

- a. Life experience or disorientating dilemma is the starting point for the TL process, but not just any experience. It has to be a critical incident that acts as a catalyst for change where current assumptions and beliefs are challenged or not reinforced by sources around the learner. A diminished sense of well-being is experienced

as a result of a *disorientating dilemma*, which can lead to the person concerned critically examining the assumptions and beliefs that have led to his or her interpretation of this experience.

- b. Critical reflection and critical self-reflection are central to TL. Three kinds of reflection are identified: content, process and premise. Content and process reflection ask the questions ‘What is the problem?’ and ‘How did it come to be a problem?’, and this may lead to transformation of specific assumptions and

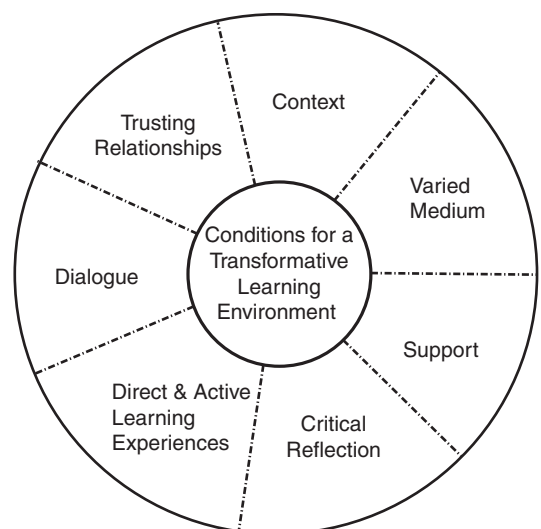


Figure 2 *Conditions for a Transformative Learning Environment*

beliefs. Premise reflection, challenging the very basis of the problem or issue, has the potential to promote transformation in habits of mind.

- c. To arrive at the best possible judgement, individuals will actively seek out opinions from others, including opinions that will challenge the status quo. When engaging in this reflective discourse, they are actively searching for a common understanding—an assessment of the justification for an understanding or a belief.
- d. The result of this disorientating dilemma or experience, critical reflection and reflective discourse is taking action. This can happen immediately, be delayed or be the reaffirmation of an existing pattern of action. The range of activity can be from making a decision about something to actively engaging in events or doing things

Types of Learning

Not all learning is transformational. This does not imply that other learning is not highly significant or an important experience for the learner. Individuals can add to their existing meaning schemes or add new meaning schemes to their storehouse of knowledge that are highly significant and a source of achievement and success for them. TL theory identifies four ways in which learning occurs: (1) elaborating existing frames of reference, (2) learning new frames of reference, (3) transforming points of view and (4) transforming habits of mind.

TL Research and Action Research

Three major reviews of TL research have been conducted covering the periods 1978–98, 1999–2005 and 2006–10. The subdivision of the body of knowledge, based on ‘locus of learning’, provides a useful way to identify the underlying assumptions within these varied perspectives (see Table 2).

<i>Individualistic</i>	<i>Sociocultural</i>
Psycho-critical	Social-emancipatory
Psycho-developmental	Cultural-spiritual
Psychoanalytical	Race-centric
	Planetary

Table 2 *Approaches to Transformative Learning*

SOURCES: Cagney, A. G. (2011). *Finding the red thread: The role of the learning space in transformative learning in executive education* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland; adapted from Taylor, E. W. (2007). An update of transformative learning theory: A critical review of the empirical research (1999–2005). *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 26(2), 173–191.

The early-stage (1978–99) research review revealed that TL was found to be effective at capturing the meaning-making process of adult learners, particularly the learning process of paradigmatic shifts. Many of the phases of the transformative process described by Mezirow were confirmed, in addition to the essentiality of critical reflection and the centrality of a disorientating dilemma as a catalyst for change. It also revealed a learning process that needed to give greater attention to the role of context, the varying nature of the catalysts of transformative knowledge, the increased role of other ways of knowing, the importance of relationships and the need to broaden the definitional outcome of a perspective transformation. By the time the second review (1999–2005) was published in 2007, there was less research identifying transformative experiences in different settings and more research about fostering TL and the complex nature of critical reflection, the importance of relationships, the emerging role of difference, the nature of perspective transformation and the role of context. Three broad themes that emerged at the time were as follows: (1) the continued predominance of qualitative research methods in the field, (2) the emergence of action research as a methodology congruent with the nature of TL and (3) a growing trend towards mixed-methods studies. The third review (2006–10) has identified action research, narrative inquiry, autoethnography and case study as the predominant methodologies, with collaborative inquiry and group dialogue research showing promise. Interdisciplinary interest has grown, as evidenced by studies in agriculture or the sciences, archaeology, religious studies, health care, critical media literacy and spirituality. Research conducted outside classroom environments has increased, with further exploration required into what is unique about these settings and their implications for fostering TL. Areas for future TL research include (a) adults in later stages of adulthood, (b) adolescents, (c) exploration of how people make sense of transformative experiences, (d) application of other theoretical frameworks to address the areas of weakness in Mezirow’s dominant perspective (e.g. affective learning, spirituality and power) and (e) emerging insights about the social nature of TL revealed in the constructs of social recognition, social accountability and the significance of relationships.

TL theory in general is about change—dramatic fundamental change in the way individuals see themselves and the world in which they live. This type of learning is more than just adding to what they already know; it is transformative because it shapes individuals in ways that result in changes that both they and others around them can recognize. Described as a shift of consciousness that alters in both a dramatic and a permanent way our ‘being-in-the-world’, it changes *how* we know. It leads to a different kind of thinking

and being that enables individuals to become open to revisiting their interpretations of the meaning of their experience, in turn guiding future action. It is precisely this unique aspect of TL that makes it so congruent with action research.

Action research involves the individual learner in his or her own learning, not only producing better learning but also more valid data on how it actually occurred. When individuals try to change their internal systems of belief and assumption, it often involves variables that cannot be controlled by traditional research methods. Action research is flexible, allowing an experiential approach which goes with the story as it evolves, and involves adult learners in the inquiry process itself. This is one reason why action research has a natural affinity with TL, as it allows the study of how learning and understanding develop in the midst of bringing about personal change and development.

Secondly, TL requires a collaborative, facilitative and reflective interventionist form of research that demands that those involved in the research initiative attend explicitly to their own learning in action, to the dynamics and quality of their engagement with adult learners and to the generation of actionable knowledge. Managing both the highly emotive consequences associated with TL and the learner-centred approach often intrinsic to action research is a challenge within the context of a clearly defined research agenda. The flexible nature of action research can accommodate studies that incorporate research designs that could potentially lead to greater reliability in the identification of essential components like critical reflection and perspective transformation. It offers a way to begin to engage with this type of inquiry while producing research that is rigorous, reflective and relevant. Thirdly, TL provides a pedagogy for classroom teaching that shares similar assumptions and outcomes about teaching for change with action research—the participatory approach, the emphasis on dialogue, the essentiality of a reflective process in learning and the need for action. More longitudinal action research studies could contribute to a more informed practice for fostering TL and an effective method of classroom research.

Action research offers a complementary methodology of working with adult learners as they go through this TL process. It is continuously evolving as it has the capability to adapt and respond to the variety of emerging challenges experienced by individuals, groups, organizations, communities and societies. It can therefore keep pace with the multidisciplinary and evolving nature of TL research and thinking. It involves collaborative research in that it has always espoused research *with* people rather than *on* or *for* them.

Anne Graham Cagney

See also adult education; conscientization; first person action research; living life as inquiry

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TRANSPERSONAL INQUIRY

Transpersonal inquiry, although regarded as a relatively new empirical approach to research, derives from a very long and ancient tradition that has explored the deeper and more subtle aspects of human awareness, experience and action. The term *transpersonal* (in other words, *beyond* personal/ego/self) was first coined in the field of psychology in the early 1970s, with its immediate roots stretching back more than a century in the work of William James, Carl Jung and many others. It is an approach to inquiry that embraces the creative, the spiritual, the subtleties of consciousness and human community, as well as both the normal and the exceptional in human experience. Partly through the work of Peter Reason and John Heron, the transpersonal has become established as a focus within action inquiry, offering an approach to research that is more relevant to a holistic view of human practices and the wider contexts of human action that is committed to the promotion of human flourishing.

A Transpersonal Vision

Rosemarie Anderson and William Braud, in their revised outline of transpersonal inquiry methods (2011), have argued for the pressing need to reclaim science's original vision to promote a global community which would include a 'more-than-human' world. This transformative vision for research would aim to support individual, communal and worldwide transformation by embracing and honouring the full range of the world's wisdom traditions. This calls for an approach to human inquiry that would involve the

reinvention of humanity as a global community, such that people worldwide should become perfectly themselves without any need to imitate each other. The human species cannot survive without diversity. It is through our diversity that we will survive.

It is precisely this vision that resonates with what Reason and Hilary Bradbury offer as a ‘participatory world view’ for action research, which they see as a democratic process that can develop practical knowledge in the search for what is really worthwhile in being human—in other words, research that will identify realistic ways to encourage the flourishing of individuals and their community. Reason and Bradbury’s emphasis upon a participative approach to action research closely aligns with the transpersonal world view.

In Heron’s Co-Operative Inquiry approach to action research, an extended list of ‘special inquiry skills’ has been identified. This includes participative knowing, being present, openness of imagination, emotional competence, non-attachment, self-transcending intentionality, chaos and order, managing unaware projections and authentic collaboration. Such a range of skills is largely supported by an underlying transpersonal level of awareness, which again reinforces the close link between transpersonal inquiry and action inquiry.

Furthermore, the important consequence of equating action research with a participative inquiry approach is the link that is being made to the idea that the essence of transpersonal experience is that it involves the notion of ‘knowing through participation’. This idea of knowing through participation is part of what Jorge Ferrer has called the ‘participatory turn’ in the human sciences, which relates directly to ideas such as ‘participatory consciousness’ (Morris Berman), the ‘participatory mind’ (Henryk Skolimowski), ‘sacred inquiry’ (Peter Reason), ‘participatory reality’, ‘participatory theology’ and a ‘sacred science’ (John Heron).

Ferrer suggests that transpersonal phenomena are really more like someone being at a party, where an individual cannot be said to be having experiences but is participating in the social event. These participations are neither ‘objective’ nor ‘subjective’. As such, they are not anyone’s property but are simply the coming together of certain conditions. Ferrer suggests that this situates transpersonal inquiry more closely to the tradition of spiritual practice, where it is generally accepted that the aim is not to have an experience but to participate in a special state of discernment. Transpersonal phenomena are not to be understood merely in phenomenological terms but rather need to be seen as the consequence of participating in aspects of being that transcend the merely human.

When referring to knowing through participation, there are three points that can usefully be made. Firstly, human thinking, meaning making and action

all spontaneously arise from the creative embodied interactions of the individual person with his or her environment. Secondly, any method of research concerned with authentic human practice will necessarily need to focus at some point on transpersonal/spiritual experience, which must entail a participatory approach to inquiry. Finally, it might be useful to regard the essence of human spirituality as a profound participation in life. Indeed, humans experience life by taking part in it, which may seem obvious, but it does need to be fully explored. Therefore, taken from this perspective, what seems to distinguish the spiritual from other forms of participatory knowing is its authenticity, and any research concerned with authentic participatory practice must take human spirituality (in its widest sense) more seriously.

Methods for Transpersonal Inquiry

The essence of a transpersonal approach to inquiry is that the participatory experience to be studied cannot be forced or coerced into view but can be facilitated by a careful consideration of the optimizing participatory context. These might include, for example, a human inquiry group; a workshop; a meeting, ceremony or ritual practice; a meditative or spiritual practice (e.g. transcendent awareness); an exercise in mindfulness, reflection-in-action and non-ordinary states of consciousness (e.g. dreams, guided fantasy and spontaneous visions); a personal story or a simple person-centred interview, amongst others.

More than any other influence, the field of transpersonal inquiry has been advanced by the publication of two landmark texts by Braud and Anderson (1998, 2011). Together with the major contributions made by Heron and Clark Moustakas, these approaches to inquiry are briefly outlined below.

Braud and Anderson’s Basic Holistic Methods

In chapters by the respective co-authors, Braud and Anderson (1998) consider five different approaches to transpersonal inquiry:

1. *Integral inquiry* (Braud): This approach focuses on an experience with great meaning, affirming the view that human experience is multilevel, complex and transformative. Integral inquiry is therefore multifaceted and pluralistic. There are four basic research questions: (1) the nature of experience, (2) experience conceptualized through history, (3) the triggers of experience and (4) the outcomes/fruits of the experience.

2. *Intuitive inquiry* (Anderson): This is characterized as following the ways of the heart, exploring experience that is complex and subtle and stressing intuition and

altered states of consciousness. It is based on classic hermeneutical understanding as personal and cyclical rather than linear and procedural. Throughout intuitive inquiry, compassion towards the self and others is considered central to understanding.

3. *Organic research* (Jennifer Clements): This uses the fundamental technique of listening to and telling stories, growing out of the researcher's own story, emphasizing the use of the participants' own voices and words. Organic research involves a three-step process: (1) preparation, (2) inspiration and (3) integration.

4. *Transpersonal-phenomenological inquiry* (Ron Valle): This approach offers an explicit focus upon the nature of transpersonal/transcendent awareness. Recognizing the limits of a basic phenomenological methodology (with its focus on the contents of consciousness), it attempts to explore deeper senses of spirituality and self-transformation. It holds that transpersonal awareness is prior to human consciousness in that it is always unavoidably connected to a notion of what is beyond being human.

5. *Inquiry informed by exceptional human experiences* (Rhea White): This approach involves exploring a wide range from the anomalous to exceptional human experience, with a view to honouring other ways of knowing and other realities, with their potential for transformation, for example, dreams (including lucid dreams), hunches, hypnagogia, hallucinations, empathy, extra-sensory perception, out-of-body experience, synchronicity as well as mystical, psychic or near-death encounters and exceptional normal experiences. The emphasis is on not exploiting the subject matter but on empathizing with it.

Heron's Sacred Science

Co-Operative Inquiry and lived inquiry are Heron's basic research tools for his emerging participatory inquiry paradigm, which emphasizes that inquiry into the human condition cannot be done from outside. Heron argues that it is not possible to be outside oneself. And even if we could by some means get outside, we would need to get back inside in order to study ourselves.

In Co-Operative Inquiry, the exclusive roles of researcher and participant are replaced by a co-operative relationship of shared initiative and control. This is not research on people but research in co-operation *with* people.

Co-Operative Inquiry involves two or more people researching a topic through their direct experience of it, using an adaptation of the action research model,

cycling through four steps: (1) agreeing on a focus of inquiry, (2) action, (3) reflection and (4) evaluation, leading to the next cycle.

Moustakas' Heuristic Inquiry

As an approach to self-inquiry, heuristic inquiry is possibly without rival. Heuristic inquiry involves a way of knowing where the researcher must have had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated. The researcher experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge, promoted by self-search, self-dialogue and self-discovery. What explicitly becomes the focus of the approach is the transformative effect of the heuristic process on the researcher's own experience. It is the participatory nature of this heuristic inquiry process that relates it to the transpersonal.

Other Approaches to Transpersonal Inquiry

In addition, two other transpersonal approaches are worth briefly mentioning. Valerie Bentz and Jeremy Shapiro have developed what they have called 'mindful inquiry', which combines the methods of phenomenology, hermeneutics, Buddhism and critical social science into an innovative transpersonal approach. And Les Todres has outlined an approach that he calls 'embodied inquiry', which considers the lived body as a primary way of knowing and being, which offers, in turn, a participatory/embodied view on human spirituality.

Current Issues in Transpersonal Inquiry

While the nature of the transpersonal paradigm requires an approach to inquiry that is necessarily somewhat in contrast to other areas of scientific inquiry, it does not need to be seen as any less scientific or empirical than any other area of inquiry. The empirical data may be different, taking the form of subjective experience, discernment and direct knowing. But here it is worth noting something that the transpersonal philosopher Ken Wilber has stressed. In his discussion of transpersonal experiences, he asserts that such experience is repeatable, reproducible and confirmable, which, of course, are the basic requirements of the scientific approach.

Transpersonal research methods are being used widely in the human sciences, although this does involve ways of working with participants using 'methods' which generate data that goes beyond simple verbal accounts of human experience. These can involve visualization, active imagination, meditation, body and sound work and so on, all of which can facilitate human experiences that will require unique ways of recording data and unique forms of data analysis.

Finally, it is worth noting that transpersonal inquiry has generated an innovative range of transpersonal research skills that may be of direct use to action researchers. In addition to those proposed by Heron mentioned earlier, there is also an extensive discussion by Braud and Anderson of matters such as encountering and collecting data, engaging and confronting data, expressing and communicating findings, together with their expanded view of validity, ethical considerations and so on.

David R. Hiles

See also authenticity; Co-Operative Inquiry; hermeneutics; mindful inquiry; phenomenology

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TWO-COLUMN TECHNIQUE

The two-column technique is a case method designed to help action researchers and their participants or clients investigate the effects of hidden assumptions on performance and quality of learning. The technique consists of the written recollection of a past conversation along with the unsaid thoughts and feelings experienced at the time. It presumes that the flow and outcomes of conversations are affected as much by the implicit, the hidden and the unsaid as by what is explicitly stated and that exploring the

disjuncture between the two provides powerful learning opportunities.

The technique was first described in Chris Argyris and Donald Schön's seminal book *Theory in Practice*, where it provided a window on the role played by *theories-in-use* (a hypothesized cognitive grammar that governs goal-directed action) in the misunderstanding of social situations and the perpetuation of conversational routines that prevent learning. The method reached a far broader audience with its inclusion in Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* in 1990. Here, the technique was presented as a useful method to explore the sometimes counterproductive role of hidden assumptions in shielding people from their own, and others', underlying thoughts and feelings, thus preventing learning and effective problem-solving.

An example of a two-column case is given in Table 1. Typically, the instructions that accompany the development of the case ask the participant to begin with a one- or two-paragraph description of the situation, usually incorporating a brief synopsis of the history of the problem, the people involved and the participant's role. The writer is also required to briefly describe her strategy: What were her expectations for the interaction? What did she want to achieve? Why and how did she intend to reach those goals?

The writer then completes the case proper. Dividing several pages in half (suggested lengths vary, but two to five pages is typical): The right-hand column contains the recollected dialogue that actually occurred (or, in a projection of a future episode, dialogue that is expected), while the left-hand column contains any unsaid thoughts or feelings that occurred to the writer at the time but for whatever reason remained unstated. Lastly, the participant is asked to list any lingering concerns, puzzles or questions and evaluate whether her outcomes matched her intentions and, if not, how she accounts for the discrepancy.

Working With the Two-Column Case

An action researcher can facilitate participant work on the two-column case in a variety of ways that will depend on the needs of the participants and the purpose of the research engagement, as well as the action researcher's explicit or tacit theories. The merit of the two-column data is that it helps with the exploration of the implicit dimensions of conversations. The role of hidden and untested assumptions, the viability of the overall strategy for the conversation and the social rules that underlie what can and cannot be said (including which emotions are permitted in the discussion) can all be examined and their role in the conversation's outcome(s) made tangible.

Tim Rogers

Description of the situation

I (Maggie) want Li-Na to enrol in a public speaking workshop (my goal for the conversation). I've heard that it is very good. Li-Na is the lead on our team for the project we are working on and must do the key presentations to clients on the approach we are hoping they will endorse. She has been a very poor presenter but appears to be totally unaware of this. It is costing us clients and might end up costing us our jobs. My aim is to help her improve, but I have to handle it carefully. After all, she's my boss!

*Unsaid thoughts and feelings**What was said*

Me (Maggie): Li-Na is a really lousy presenter; it's amazing she's come so far in her career without having dealt with this. It's up to me to get her to improve, and fast.

How did you feel the presentation went?

Me: Them? I think you didn't demonstrate any of the advantages we offer. At any rate, it's the unprofessional face you present to clients that really hurts us.

Li-Na: As well as can be expected, I don't think they were ready to hear us.

Me: I go?! I only volunteered to make it easier for her to go. She's in complete denial and doesn't understand the gravity of the situation.

Maybe. We might need to really lift our game to get through to clients who aren't ready. You know, to really push through. There's a workshop coming up in mid May at Andersen's that is designed to help us do just that. Maybe we could see if we can both go?

Li-Na: Maybe—our schedule is tight right through to September. Perhaps you go and fill me in.

Me: She looks angry. I took a big risk there and I'm feeling on the spot. I won't be doing this again.

I really think as team lead, you're the one in the spotlight most and so need the cleanest, most up-to-date skills.

Li-Na: I've done dozens of those things. I'm not about to drop the analytics I'm responsible for preparing and go to a workshop.

Sure, just an idea.

Conclusion

I tried to make it easy for her to make an improvement. I honestly think she's resistant. I don't know how to get through to her.

Table 1 A Hypothetical Example of a Two-Column Technique Case

See also Action Science; systems thinking; theories of action

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U

UBUNTU

The concept of *ubuntu* is an alternative to individualistic and utilitarian philosophies that tend to dominate in the West. It is a Zulu/Xhosa word, with parallels in many other African languages, which is most directly translated into English as ‘humanness’. Its sense, however, is perhaps best conveyed by the Nguni expression ‘*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*’, which means ‘a person is a person through other people’.

The origins of *ubuntu* as a concept can be traced to the Bantu peoples of southern Africa, although the philosophy is now shared across much of the continent. It is perhaps best understood as a social philosophy—based on principles of care and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness—that expresses the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence. It has been described as a philosophy of peace and is perhaps best known as a guiding concept of the African Renaissance, spearheaded by post-colonial and post-apartheid leaders in South Africa such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Thabo Mbeki, in which Africans are urged to re-engage with African values. It has been an important concept in the reform of education and public services in post-apartheid South Africa and offered a framework for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which bore witness to the injustices of the apartheid era from the perspective of both perpetrators and victims.

Whilst the origins of *ubuntu* are distinctly African, parallels have been drawn with similar concepts in other societies, including the Chinese philosophy of *Jen*, the Filipino philosophy of *Loob* and the Russian concept of *Obschina*. Similar concepts are also illustrated in the writings of certain European philosophers such as Emmanuel Levinas and Paul Ricoeur, although no comparable word exists in the English language.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has called *ubuntu* ‘the gift that Africa will give the world’ and, along with

others, has called for its wider application well beyond Africa. Former US president Bill Clinton has also been a staunch advocate and promoted it through his foundation as well as in high-profile speeches in the USA and UK. The term has also become well known through its use as the name for an open-source computer operating system and even as a brand of fair-trade cola, although these are not the focus of this article.

Assumptions and Implications

Ubuntu can be considered as both a descriptive account of the value systems that operate across much of sub-Saharan Africa (and hence helpful in understanding and contextualizing research and practice in this part of the world) as well as a normative philosophy of how people should relate to one another (of relevance well beyond Africa). Both perspectives comprise a number of assumptions and implications that are relevant to researchers and practitioners from an action research perspective. Whilst these points are clearly of relevance to those conducting work with and for Africans, they may also offer the potential for reframing the process of research and inquiry elsewhere.

Interdependence

Ubuntu is a relational philosophy; its frequent articulation as ‘I am because we are’ points towards a strongly constructivist ontology in which individuals’ sense of being cannot be detached from the social context in which they find themselves. It highlights the importance of a subjective and emotional appreciation of human experience rather than privileging objectivity and rationality. In terms of research, an *ubuntu* perspective calls for an interpretivist epistemology in which precedence is given to qualitative methods that enable an inductive understanding of how individuals and groups make sense of the world around them. Whilst such an approach is relatively common in the field of action research, it

stands in stark contrast to the positivist paradigm that dominates much social theory and research.

Inclusivity

Ubuntu is collectivist in orientation—expressing the value of collaboration, co-operation and community. It espouses an ethos of care and respect for others and the importance of solidarity in the face of adversity. It is perhaps unsurprising that such an approach has prevailed in a continent that has experienced so much social, political, environmental and economic upheaval, where collective action and mutual assistance have been essential to survival. Whilst some collectivist philosophies have been criticized as oppressive and totalitarian, ubuntu is described as an inclusive approach which calls for dignity and respect in our relationships with others. In research, such an approach would suggest a tendency towards participative and Co-Operative Inquiry, where the researcher develops a close relationship with participants and actively engages them in the design, conduct, interpretation and application of research as co-investigators. It is also well suited to asset-based approaches, such as Appreciative Inquiry, which emphasize the need to recognize and build on strengths rather than focusing on how to resolve weaknesses.

Intersubjectivity

Whilst described as a collectivist philosophy, in practice, the concept of ubuntu is intersubjective in that it focuses on the *relationship* between the individual and the collective, rather than privileging one over the other. Such a perspective may help researchers and practitioners address the ‘structure-agency debate’ by indicating that it is not a case of either/or but the manner in which independent agents interact with more enduring social structures that matters. The intersubjective dimension of ubuntu is further highlighted through calls for greater inclusion of indigenous knowledge in education and organizational practice, and even the incorporation of spirituality. From this perspective, a detailed appreciation of context and how it influences the subjective realities of different parties is an essential part of the knowledge creation process.

Limitations and Critique

Whilst Africans and non-Africans alike have enthusiastically advocated the philosophy of ubuntu, it is not without its challenges.

Rhetoric and Reality

The first, and perhaps most significant, critique is that in many cases there is a huge gap between the espoused philosophy of ubuntu and the lived

experience of people in communities that purport to embrace it. The concept of ubuntu, by its very nature, tends to be most prevalent in societies facing substantial social, political, economic and environmental challenges. Such contexts, however, are often marked by large inequalities in the distribution of status, power and resources, which may be perceived as contradictory to the principles of ubuntu. Across much of Africa, there is a long history of corruption, coercion and collusion in politics, business and society, where those in senior positions benefit at the cost of those further down the hierarchy and the traditional concept of the monarch-chief continues to be influential at the local level. Whilst ubuntu has been put to good effect in challenging inequality and injustice during the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa, it arguably has done little to counteract endemic corruption and inequality elsewhere. Indeed, even in South Africa, it has been suggested that ubuntu, rather than challenging the status quo, may have been used by those in positions of political power to promote loyalty and respect and to suppress resistance to government-led reform. Whilst similar tensions exist in many societies, the challenge for those seeking to advocate a philosophy of ubuntu is how to reconcile such paradoxes without recourse to idealism, manipulation or denial.

The Limits of Interdependence

As a collectivist philosophy, ubuntu highlights the importance of interdependence and of people working together in pursuit of shared goals. A question remains, however, over how far this interdependence and collectivity can be extended. The concept of ubuntu developed at a time when African society was still largely organized around membership of tribal groups. Within this context, allegiance and loyalty were to fellow members of the tribe, and whilst there may well have been instances of collaboration and co-operation between groups, identity and identification were still largely based on ethnic and family relations. In an increasingly urbanized and globalized society, however, where do we draw the lines between communities and groups? Historically, part of the success of ubuntu was in articulating a framework for reciprocal responsibility whereby members of a particular group supported one another and, in so doing, increased the resilience and likely survival of the group. Where identification is extended more broadly and members of a particular group may self-categorize in different ways (e.g. as Africans, Nigerians, Igbo, Lagosians, etc.), the practical implications of ubuntu for the sharing of food, resources and so on become far more problematic. Historically, the power of ubuntu has been in forging stronger relationships between people in a particular

location; the prospect of its extension to other groups and cultures, whilst potentially attractive from an ideological perspective, may ultimately lead to its undoing as a practical solution to local problems.

The Connection Between People and the Environment

A further question raised by some authors is the extent to which ubuntu makes a false separation between people and the environment. Puleng Lenka Bula, for example, suggests that common conceptions of ubuntu (and the synonymous concept of *botho*) are anthropocentric in that they focus on human relations yet fail to recognize the connection with the physical and natural environment in which such interaction occurs. She calls for an extended notion that incorporates ecological and spiritual concerns, which, she argues, are essential elements of a framework for justice and ethics. By limiting our focus to human relations alone, it is suggested, we may inadvertently support harmful environmental practices and deny the spiritual concerns that guide many peoples' lives. By including these additional dimensions, however, we complicate matters, making it hard to achieve consensus or coherence of conclusions.

The Ontological and Epistemological Status of Knowledge

Finally, the concept of ubuntu raises fundamental questions about the nature and status of knowledge. As a relational philosophy that stresses the interdependence and intersubjectivity of knowledge and experience, it poses real challenges for the construction of an objective and enduring understanding. Whilst many advocates of ubuntu call for the sharing of 'indigenous knowledge', it is questionable whether any such knowledge base could be developed, and uncertain how it could be captured and communicated. All knowledge is culturally contingent, and the strongly constructivist nature of ubuntu would suggest that knowledge gained in one context may not be transferrable to other times and places. Furthermore, even if it were possible to develop a coherent body of knowledge, it is unclear whether this would lead to beneficial outcomes or simply an 'othering' of the context from whence it came as in some way 'different' and of questionable relevance elsewhere. Alternatively, ubuntu and related concepts may become appropriated by non-Africans and employed in ways that may diminish their clarity and potency.

Conclusion

This entry suggests that the African concept of ubuntu articulates a relational and compassionate world view that resonates with many of the principles of action research. It offers a means for expressing the interdependent and intersubjective dimensions of human experience and calls for an inclusive approach that embraces diversity, collaboration and the co-construction of knowledge. There are, however, some reservations about the extent to which the concept of ubuntu can be extended and employed in different contexts and the risks that this may pose in both ideological and practical terms.

Richard Bolden

See also Appreciative Inquiry; collaborative action research; constructivism; Co-Operative Inquiry; indigenist research; intersubjectivity; Participatory Action Research; post-colonial theory

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V

VALIDITY

In research generally, validity pertains to the relationship between the research and the situation researched. Valid research adequately depicts what was researched. For example, in quantitative research, a valid measure is one that accurately measures what it purports to measure. A valid theory is one that describes well some relevant aspects of what has been researched. As described below, these relationships are not easily defined clearly in action research. A different conception of validity is required. On these grounds, some authors question the applicability of the term *validity* to action research and recommend substituting different concepts. Others continue to use the term with modification.

This entry briefly describes the approaches to using or avoiding the concept of validity. Some of the sub-varieties of validity are identified. The entry concludes with a brief discussion of the main threats to validity in action research and some of the strategies for addressing those threats.

Applicability of Validity to Action Research

The concept of validity was developed in traditional quantitative research, where it fits well. A well-conducted physical experiment when it is replicated is likely to give the same results as before. When it does, the accuracy—the validity—of the findings can be accepted with confidence. In contrast, situations involving human actors in interaction are characterized by greater uncertainty and unpredictability. Action research studies such situations, which may be described technically as ‘complex systems’. Very often, these systems can behave very differently than the way simple physical systems behave. As a consequence, different repetitions of an action research study are unlikely to yield identical results except at high levels of abstraction, and not always then.

In action research, attitudes to the use of validity as a concept subdivide researchers into two camps. Influenced by the US qualitative research literature, there are those who favour the replacement of validity by other concepts. Others use the term, while advocating its modification to suit the requirements of action research. In some action research literature, the term *quality* is used rather than validity, while other authors such as Hilary Bradbury and Peter Reason use the two terms more or less interchangeably. Similarly, some treat validity and trustworthiness as interchangeable terms.

Yvonna Lincoln has been an influential advocate of the view that qualitative research should develop its own criteria for evaluating research. Her views have been influential in action research too. Initially, her criteria took the form of labels for concepts that were analogous to their traditional counterparts. Rigour was translated to trustworthiness. Internal validity became credibility, and external validity or generalizability became transferability (see below). Lincoln has since developed other terms that are not translations of traditional concepts from quantitative research. However, her earlier concepts still have wide currency, again also with some action researchers. For many who take this view, there is a concern that, evaluated against traditional criteria for validity, those who don’t sufficiently understand non-traditional research may find action research and qualitative research wanting.

Janice Morse is an example of those who hold a contrary view. Motivated by a wish for qualitative research to be accepted as a legitimate form of research, she argues that it is to the advantage of qualitative researchers that they are accepted as part of the wider research community. To this end, quantitative concepts of validity can be translated to fit qualitative research. Part of this argument is that qualitative research (and by implication action research) can be performed to sufficiently high standards that its quality can be defended against those who question it. Qualitative research, quantitative research and action research can then be treated as

complementary research approaches suited to different research situations and purposes.

Influences on Definitions of Validity

Underpinning these differences, the form and even the relevance of the concept of validity depend both on the style of the research and on the philosophy of the researcher. Traditional quantitative research is able to adopt the positivist stance that the world is essentially as we perceive it, either directly or through the use of our instruments. Where situations can be understood by first understanding their components, positivist research methods work well. Conventional definitions of validity are then appropriate. More complex situations lack this predictability. They require different approaches and different ways of conceptualizing them.

The opposition to positivist views and traditional criteria is most evident from those who hold a strong constructivist position. Such a position asserts that all knowledge, including scientific knowledge, is necessarily a social construction. On this view, reality is unknowable, and 'truth' becomes an undefined term. There are then no safe grounds on which two pieces of knowledge can be compared for accuracy. As Allan Feldman has pointed out, such a position offers no possibility of evaluating competing claims. There are other, less extreme constructivist positions in which competing claims can to some extent be judged. Morse has also posited that the constructivist approach may have the undesirable effect of shifting attention to validity from the design phase of research (see later) to what happens after the research is complete.

Two other philosophies appear to be increasing in currency. Critical realism adopts a position incorporating some aspects of both positivism and constructivism. Like positivism, it is ontologically realist in assuming the existence of an actual world. Like constructivism, it is epistemologically fallibilist in its treatment of knowledge as tentative and only partially accessible. It also offers a layered and systemic view of reality in which intangibles such as human attitudes have material outcomes. Knowledge can be pursued and used without demanding certainty.

Pragmatism has a long history in action research. It is experiencing a partial resurgence after being sidelined for a time by constructivism. It weighs relevance as more important than rigour, thus appealing to practitioners who are often satisfied with the practical outcomes from their research. It seeks evidence for research validity in the outcomes of the research. Jacqueline Fendt and Renata Kaminska-Labbé have summarized the current views, especially as they apply to the gap between theory and practice.

Given this confused background, it is not surprising that there is no precise and agreed-on definition of validity in action research. Anything more than a broad characterization may be ambitious. Roughly speaking, validity may be described as the extent of fit between some research element (e.g. data, explanation or proposed actions) and some phenomenon that the research element refers to. An attempt at a more precise definition must deal with two issues. First, as mentioned, the easy replicability of physical experiments is seldom available in field research, where each research situation is more or less unique. Second, and related, the complexity of field situations seldom allows a full description of that situation and also increases unpredictability.

Varieties of Validity

In traditional quantitative research, there is general agreement on several subcategories of validity. At the most general level, a distinction is made between internal validity and external validity. Internal validity refers to the validity of inferred relationships (typically, causal relationships) between the variables that have been studied in a particular piece of research. For example, a force applied to an object (in the absence of other forces) causes the object to move predictably. External validity is equivalent to generalizability. It applies when the findings of a particular study can be extended to apply to other studies. A given force applied to an object of given mass produces equivalent movement in other equivalent situations.

There are many other sub-varieties of validity in quantitative research. Their descriptions and labels are widely accepted by quantitative researchers. They are not further discussed here. In action research, the situation is again less clear. In some formulations, validity is sought in the research report rather than in the research itself. In others, as Morse has pointed out, validity is something that is achieved after the research is done rather than (as Morse prefers) being part of the conduct of the research. Participant validation is an example, where research findings are distributed to the participants for comment.

Writing about qualitative research from a constructivist perspective, Steinar Kvale proposes three varieties of validity that do apply to the actual conduct of the research. They are craftsmanship, communicative validity and pragmatic validity. All can be applied to action research whether or not a constructivist philosophy is adopted. They remain relevant when a pragmatic or critical realist stance is taken. Craftsmanship, as the word implies, is displayed in the care and mindfulness of the researcher as the research is carried out. Communicative validity arises from the way in which

interactions between researchers and participants occur and is akin to Anderson's dialogic validity, discussed immediately below. Research exhibits pragmatic validity when it yields favourable outcomes for the research participants. It resembles Anderson's democratic validity.

In some areas of action research, the formulations of Gary Anderson and his colleagues have achieved some acceptance. Kathryn Herr and Anderson postulate five varieties of validity, specifically applying to action research and evaluated by the outcomes achieved by the research. Catalytic validity applies to research that produces some transformation in the participants. It can be evaluated by assessing the learning that researchers and participants achieve. Research has outcome validity to the extent that it leads to action that achieves the research purposes and outcomes. Research with process validity has used appropriate means to pursue the outcomes and is evaluated by the knowledge it produces. Dialogic validity refers to discussion between stakeholders that is sufficiently critical and deep, also yielding new knowledge. Democratic validity is achieved when research involves stakeholders collaboratively in ways that produce outcomes that are locally relevant.

Overcoming Threats to Validity

Implicit in the validity criteria described above are certain threats to validity, and certain ways of reducing or eliminating those threats. As validity depends upon quality information, strategies for improving reliability can also improve validity—see the entry on reliability in this encyclopedia. Validity and its threats can also be categorized in terms of the aspect of action research where they are found and managed. Action research can be described as participatory, pursuing both action and understanding, and iterative. A few examples of each will suffice.

Consider the nature and extent of participation. Questions such as the following can be raised: Are the appropriate participants involved? Are they engaged in such a way that they find it easy to tell the truth as they see it? Is there a climate in the study and a style of interaction that allow differences to be resolved constructively, leading to deeper understanding?

Or consider action and understanding. How easily does the understanding inform the actions? Are the actions chosen on the basis of an understanding of the situation that is to be changed? Are the people who identify the actions the same people who will carry them out? Were the actions agreed on in such a way that people are motivated to carry them out as planned?

Finally, the iteration within the action research spiral allows the knowledge and action to be built up

cumulatively. Through trial and error, if necessary, both action and knowledge can be pursued until achieved.

Bob Dick

See also complexity theory; constructivism; critical realism; pragmatism; reliability; rigour

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VIVENCIA

The concept of *vivencia* is a crucial, and sometimes disputed, component of action research. *Vivencia* is often translated into English as 'lived or life experience'. It is more than this. *Vivencia* is the essence of treating people as actors in their own lives and recognizing that what they bring to the table is integral to all research for social change. *Vivencia* acknowledges what people know and believe and uses their present reality as a starting point for all work. It then builds upon the existing knowledge as expressed by the most affected to continue to study for the purpose of engaging in social transformation.

Further, vivencia recognizes that what happens between people—the relationship that exists—is critical to an understanding of their world and their reality and equally critical to making lasting change to that reality. This means that the research process is demystified so that all are able to comprehend and actively participate as equals in the process. It permits research to be understood as a political process of rediscovering and re-creating personal and social realities, as well as producing new or recovered knowledge, allowing oppressed people to generate an assertion of their knowledge. Vivencia grounds all forms of action research in the belief that all persons have intellectual capabilities and the capacity to generate knowledge.

Using vivencia as a point of departure, Orlando Fals Borda suggested that the purpose of research is not just to build knowledge or test interventions but to take action towards social justice. This is referred to as the democratization of knowledge and has its roots in the vivencia of real people. Fals Borda further pointed out that an intricate part of this vivencia has to do with the relationships that are an integral part of the research process. In most research methodologies, there are hierarchical relationships based on submission. In action research, the relationships are of mutuality and partnership. Therefore, vivencia is a practice of participatory democracy that demonstrates the value of a commitment to full democratization in both content and method. This process is often feared by those with power. Fals Borda noted that the practice of reflecting upon the vivencia of the people and pursuing an agenda based upon that reflection leads to a process whereby grass-roots movements become empowered and those in power become alarmed by that empowerment.

In action research, vivencia is expressed when a group of people collectively enter into a living process, examining their reality by asking penetrating questions, mulling over assumptions related to their everyday problems and circumstances, deliberating alternatives for change and taking meaningful actions. The group has ownership over what questions are pursued based on its members' vivencia. Vivencia talks about how important the process of seeing and learning with both the brain and the heart is in creating a new society that is egalitarian. This means that those persons who previously were the focus of study, or the objects of study, are now the experts in their own lives and actively engaged in the research process. As such, Fals Borda recognizes that action researchers can be considered members of social change movements based upon a critical understanding of vivencia. These movements are engaged in practice—both research and action—that recognizes that those most affected by the injustices in society know more about their own situations and therefore need to be in the forefront of making change happen.

Rather than having knowledge produced about them, they, too, are engaged in the production of knowledge.

In this way, it is the vivencia of those most affected in society—the oppressed, exploited, vulnerable—that is prioritized over the vivencia of the privileged, including members of the academy. Vivencia calls on researchers to use methods and strategies that are not typically used in the academy—to partner with grass-roots people as the experts in their own lives and to express their knowledge through creative means. It asks researchers to critically analyze the reflexive relationship between 'us' and 'them', giving preference to those who are typically considered 'them'.

Vivencia, then, necessarily includes the process of conscientization—stimulation of self-reflected critical awareness on the part of oppressed people of their social reality and of their ability to transform it by their conscious action. This is the essence of vivencia, and of any research that aims to work diligently against social and economic injustice.

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See also adult education; conscientization; Fals Borda, Orlando; Freire, Paulo; knowledge democracy; Participatory Action Research

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VOICE

Voice is a versatile term, used in research to describe the ability, mode and/or right of individuals or groups

to make their ideas, opinions, emotions, perspectives and needs known to others. Similarly, *to voice* is to make such an expression, while *to give voice to* is to allow or support this expression. In the domain of action research, voice becomes more than just an innate way to express oneself; it is also a way to participate and engage in conversations around social justice and change.

The first voice to consider is that of the researcher, whose feelings, experiences, interests and positionalities cannot be divorced from the topic of study and, indeed, are often the basis for an inquiry. Most action research involves a measure of relationship and trust wherein both the researcher and those researched must allow each other into their lives in order to explore an issue together fully. The researcher must be aware of his or her own voice in order to remain transparent in advocating for the voices of others.

Voice can be a profound source of empowerment for all involved, but particularly for those parties whose voices have traditionally been marginalized, ignored or completely silenced. Voice is a necessary aspect of agency, or the capacity to make choices and act for oneself, which for many has also been compromised. Action researchers who wish to validate the experiences and ‘ways of knowing’ of the participants in an inquiry are first tasked with uncovering the true voices of those participants, which are all too often influenced by undercurrents of power and privilege, cultural barriers and similar inhibitors. Moreover, they must know where to find those voices.

Voice comes in many forms and serves various purposes, from personal to collective, private to activist. It is embodied not only in words but also in silence, abstinence, action, demonstration, appearance, artistic expression and so on. It is not limited to traditional avenues of speech and writing, but it can also be found through narratives and storytelling, Photovoice (the use of photography to document one’s perspectives), inclusive debate and dialogue and anywhere else individuals or groups have the opportunity to express themselves by whatever means necessary and without limitation or judgement. There are voices of all colours, shapes and sizes, diverse in race, class, gender, age and ability; and there are voices that require advocacy, such as those of the dependent and/or incapacitated or the ‘voices’ of the natural environment, non-human beings and other entities or causes that need an interpreter. Finally, not all voices and expressions of voice can be objectively separated from one another, as they inherently coexist in an ever-changing, interconnected web of stimuli and experience, of history and possibility.

The action researcher must consider all these facets of voice within the scope of a study. As a starting point, this entry will further explore issues of voice with

regard to power dynamics, authenticity and ethics, and their accompanying implications for action research.

Power Dynamics and Voice

The main questions one must ask in regard to voice are as follows: Whose voices are being heard? Who is listening? Why? In research, a voice is representative of something particularly intriguing to the researcher and is likely characterized by some sort of ‘otherness’, or previously misunderstood or missing perspective. Because power dynamics affect whether voices are heard and how they are portrayed or perceived, they also determine the hierarchy of knowledge within communities, institutions and society. Those voices with the most power get heard and, additionally, have the capacity to control how other voices are represented, which can often be worse than silencing these voices and typically serve to reinforce unequal power structures. For many, fear of reprimand or retaliation has stifled their voices, so that their perspectives are only partly knowable or, worse, completely inaccessible.

Power also affects whose opinions and ideas matter and whose do not, such as when weight is given to the words of academics and other ‘experts’ but not to those of the population experiencing a subject firsthand. Action researchers, conversely, aim to use their scholarly influence to give voice back to the people in their research, recognizing that there are multiple truths, multiple ways of knowing beyond their own and therefore seeking research conditions that foster visibility and safety for the expression of these alternative voices. Participatory Action Research, for example, includes community-based ‘co-researchers’ in a study, wherein the subject population of an inquiry is given power to co-create the questions, methods, data collection, analysis and action of that inquiry. Overall, fair representation and breaking the barriers of hierarchical influence are vital to overcoming the adverse effects of power dynamics on voice. Research participants must be empowered to aspire, to be leaders, and to effect institutional, societal and political change for themselves.

Authenticity of Voice

Once a voice is allowed to surface, it becomes important to ensure the authenticity of that voice for research purposes. Culture, education, media, politics and so on are highly influential and can either support or alter one’s authentic voice. This is not to say that such a voice can only exist in a vacuum—individuals are surely shaped by their experiences—but that an authentic voice should be a voice that truly speaks for itself. For instance, the unadulterated voices of

youth are sometimes difficult to uncover beneath the ideas and attitudes instilled in, and often expected of them, by parents, peers and the culture in which they were raised. Likewise, personal challenges and self-perceptions can change the way one sees the world and one's place in it. Hardship and marginalization are disempowering and can dilute a person's ability to speak in his or her own interest. Here again, authenticity becomes entwined with power and privilege, where those voices with power are buoyed up by confidence and those without are often shaken and unsure, internalizing structural failings as their own. Outwardly conveying one's intuitive voice can feel dangerous or wrong in these instances, so it is necessary for researchers to establish a safe and trusting space for exploring true feelings and ideas.

Other ways the authenticity of voice can be derailed are through misinterpretation and devaluation. It is all too common for displays of voice that do not align with 'mainstream' societal norms to be misunderstood and/or quickly dismissed. Perhaps some might automatically interpret a teen's loud music and non-conforming dress as rebelliousness. From that teen's point of view, these may very well be to protest, defy or offend, or they may only be self-expression, voicing his or her tastes and ideas. This is why it is important to seek first-hand insight into the pertinent voices of a topic. A person or group can tell their own story if given the opportunity, so it is in the researcher's best interest to seek not only participants' endorsement but their direct input when making analyses.

One must also acknowledge that results may not be true for larger populations—may not be generalizable—but that does not make them any less authentic for the subject individual or group. This illuminates another notable barrier to authenticity, which is the common error of assuming that a voice is always representative—as in 'Because this is the voice of a homosexual Latino man, working in this type of job and living under these conditions, this must be the voice of any and all such homosexual Latino men'. While it can be valid that these men would have a lot in common, they are still individuals, and their life experiences and how those translate into voice are unique. The goal of action research is not to identify a singular voice to speak on behalf of a universal need but instead to identify particular voices, which when added to other voices can be a force for change locally, and eventually globally.

Issues of Ethics Around Voice

It is often difficult in research to uncover voices that are authentic, unhindered by power structures and, most important, willing to tell their stories to outsiders.

One of the greatest challenges action researchers face, despite their sincere desire to help historically disenfranchised people, is that based on past experiences these groups often do not trust the intentions or actions of researchers. Traditional methods have tended to exclude participants not only from the meaning making of a study but also from the end results and benefits. In the worst cases, people's voices may have been used to cover up others' manipulative practices, or they may have been decontextualized to support someone else's agenda. Deserving, gaining and keeping the confidence of one's community contributors are primary ethical concerns for action researchers. Further matters to consider include creating the conditions for true collaboration, protection of participants and acting on and disseminating the knowledge gained.

As previously stated, all researchers bring their own voices to the table, and transparency builds trust. Participants must see clearly not only the goals and methods of the research but also the personal connections and aims of the researcher, opening dialogue on how the inquiry can support everyone's ideals and interests. Ethical relationships in action research must go beyond the requisite, traditional protocols. The more researchers work on equal ground with community members, the easier it becomes for everyone to contribute their voices openly. Participatory research methods are the easiest way to ensure that all voices receive equal opportunity to affect the results of a study. Under ideal circumstances, there are no researchers and the researched, only co-researchers and their topic of inquiry. The most accurate and rigorous results come from intensive collaboration between all voices within a research community.

In some research, participants take a great risk in expressing their voices. Extreme care must be exercised when evaluating the possible repercussions of such a study. Practitioner action researchers, for example, often face pressures from within their organizations that may threaten their friendships, positions or livelihoods if they voice unfavourable information about the organization or its other members. It is therefore imperative that researchers weigh the outcomes of their findings and how they plan to publicize them with the amount of risk involved for everyone who could be affected, and take whatever steps necessary to ensure that no one's well-being is jeopardized unwillingly.

A final distinction between the ethics of action research and traditional methods is, as implied, the action of the work. The goal of finding, listening to and evaluating voices is not only to generate an academic product or to contribute to some abstract knowledge base on a subject but also to deliver a measurable

benefit for the participants. Action researchers may be under the same pressures to publish and circulate their work within academia as other researchers, but at the same time they will want to have learned something new and made a difference in the lives of those they study. To do this, they endeavour to share results and actions with their partnering individuals and communities, and it is not uncommon for final reports to come directly from the participants, through public speaking, writing, the arts and other forms of open expression and dissemination.

As the only life forms on earth capable of using sophisticated language, we human beings appear evolutionarily inclined to make our thoughts known through the use of a literal voice, and our complex intelligence enables us to communicate in a variety of unspoken ways as well as to advocate for others. These biological developments demonstrate that voice may be one of the most fundamental of all human abilities, important to our survival, well-being and overall progress. Action research aims to support this capacity for voice through participatory and inclusive inquiry into issues that affect human and environmental flourishing on both the individual and the universal level.

Amy Rector-Aranda

See also agency; dialogue; experiential knowing; identity; interviews; narrative; oral history; Photovoice; storytelling

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VOLUNTARY SECTOR

The voluntary sector can be defined as a sector comprising a group of organizations or collectives of individuals working for the betterment of society and for the common public good. It serves as an important link between the citizens and the government. The social change initiatives of the sector would encompass initiatives as diverse as welfare services for the poor and excluded, strengthening the capacities of the marginalized, undertaking research interventions and influencing policies for social change.

The roots of participatory research and Participatory Action Research can be found in the early initiatives of the voluntary sector. Early proponents of the sector recognized that critical reflections of their own realities by the marginalized have the potential to ensure collective action by them to enhance their life conditions and address injustices, leading to a dynamic cycle of critical reflection and action. The action research philosophy thus forms a fundamental component of a large number of transformational initiatives facilitated by the voluntary sector.

This entry provides an understanding of the voluntary sector, traces the history of the sector with the help of an example from India, explores the role of the sector in addressing the issues of socio-economic development of the marginalized and concludes by tracing the challenges faced by the sector.

Understanding the Voluntary Sector

The term *voluntary* is derived from the fact that the early efforts of the voluntary sector had their genesis in charity, philanthropy and relief activities, driven by the sector’s belief in selfless service to the society.

In the current scenario, the nomenclature for the voluntary sector includes terms like *non-government organizations* (NGOs), *non-profit organizations* or *not-for-profit organizations* (NPOs), *civil society organizations* (CSOs) or *the third sector*. These terms are generally used when these institutions are incorporated under the local laws of registration. Along with these formal entities, the voluntary sector also includes informal, unregistered grouping of people coming together for a common cause, like community-based organizations, traditional groups, social movements and social activists. It also includes networks of the formal and informal groups, as well as professional and membership associations.

One way to understand the voluntary sector is from the type of functions formed by the different organizations covered under its ambit. An important cluster of organizations within the voluntary sector are those

organizations which primarily provide basic services to the poor and marginalized, in areas like education, health or sanitation. The second group of organizations in the sector includes those who are involved in awareness generation and organizing work with vulnerable groups, which includes providing information to the marginalized about their entitlements under the law or the provisions under the various government-sponsored schemes. The third category includes groups which are involved in research and advocacy endeavours. They provide feedback to policymakers and negotiate with and on behalf of the excluded. There are also groups which define themselves as support institutions, providing either financial or technical support to the above groups so that they can undertake their interventions in an effective manner.

The varied interventions and innovations in the voluntary sector have been grounded in and facilitated by action research and its related approaches of Participatory Action Research and participatory research. Participatory approaches are used at different stages of the development programmes to mobilize and sensitize the community, advocate for the rights of the marginalized and facilitate action research interventions by the constituents of the voluntary sector.

History of the Voluntary Sector: Case of India

The evolution of the voluntary sector has followed different trajectories in different countries. Using India as an example, this entry attempts to explain the evolution process of this sector.

Like any other country of the world, India also has a long tradition of voluntarism, philanthropy and charity. The primary role of the state has always been providing security and basic infrastructure to its citizens. The state also provided welfare activities like health, education and social security to its citizens. The well-off segments of the community also provided basic services like free health or education to the poor, and institutions were also created to support the efforts of the government to provide a better quality of life to the poor.

The first attempt to provide a regulatory structure for volunteerism in India came with the Societies Registration Act of 1860. This was a period when various socio-educational movements were taking shape and a need for institutionalization of these initiatives was felt. A critique of this act has always been that it was an attempt by the British administrators to provide a regulatory structure to the sociopolitical movement in India to track such groupings. Many outstanding voluntary organizations were formed in India from 1860 to 1947 that made remarkable contributions to the fields of education, health and socio-economic reform.

These included religious and faith-based groups, temples, educational institutions and philanthropists who facilitated the delivery of services in remote locations.

The second phase of growth came after India gained independence in 1947. The freedom movement of India was led by Mahatma Gandhi. After 1947, he gave a call to the people to come forward as social activists, and many organizations were formed by the freedom fighters who believed in the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. Such organizations were commonly known as 'Gandhian organizations'. The institutions formed under this movement were primarily engaged in socio-economic development of the marginalized. They believed in the philosophy of simplicity, non-violence and universal brotherhood.

The third phase of development of voluntary organizations came after the movement led by Jay Prakash Narain against the internal emergency declared by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975. Thousands of youth leaders participated in the mass movement against the autocratic regime in the mid-1970s. After the movement, they abandoned their professions and started working for the upliftment of the marginalized masses. This was the period when not only numerous innovations took place in the sector but also many critical and reflective documents were prepared on development discourse.

The late 1970s and early 1980s marked the beginning of more professional voluntary action in India. Professionally trained volunteers began to enter the voluntary sector and undertook various developmental initiatives. This led to numerous innovations in service delivery areas such as health, education and sanitation and in various methodologies for training, evaluation and impact assessment. These innovations of the sector were replicated and scaled up by the government.

The 1980s and 1990s saw growing recognition, support and funding by the government and international donor agencies, and the increased emphasis towards people's participation in various development projects contributed to a more rapidly growing voluntary sector. However, due to the old laws, many types of institutions which were not necessarily voluntary organizations were registered in the non-profit category. These included sports clubs, resident welfare associations and government-sponsored institutions, amongst others. In recent years, there has been an upsurge in corporate social responsibility initiatives of the private sector, with many new private foundations being formed and working in the areas of socio-economic development, with a greater focus on service delivery initiatives.

The voluntarism in India, thus, has undergone changes, and in the current context the voluntary sector has an important identity as the third sector, the other two being the state and the market. In other countries

also, the voluntary sector has evolved through the years, following a unique trajectory based on the context of that country.

Strengthening Citizens' Participation

The voluntary sector has made significant contributions to facilitate social and economic development in the countries, ensure effective governance and deepen democratic processes.

Internationally, a very important role played by the voluntary sector and the agencies associated with it is enhancing the participation of citizens and the community in development and governance interventions. The voluntary sector aims to stimulate the active participation of citizens in matters that concern them and their community, using action research and Participatory Action Research approaches. The facilitation of collective inquiry, knowledge production and utilization of the knowledge by the citizens and communities is a very important role and contribution of the voluntary sector. The use of different participatory development and social accountability approaches, building on the philosophy of Participatory Action Research, like participatory planning, participatory monitoring and evaluation and social audits are important contributions of this sector.

The voluntary sector has historically played a very responsible and constructive role in public service delivery. Innovations in incorporating Participatory Action Research interventions in service delivery interventions by the voluntary sector have helped in demonstrating an empowering and sustainable model of development work at the grass roots.

There is a marked increase in the participation of the voluntary sector in policy processes in different countries. Voluntary agencies are increasingly playing a very important role in influencing policymaking and policy implementation on diverse national and global issues. The generation of knowledge and the use of this knowledge to influence policy, both components of action research philosophy, are also important contributions of the voluntary sector.

The voluntary sector also has a significant role in balancing the forces of the state and the market, in ensuring that they are both accountable to the citizens and that the needs and aspirations of the citizens, especially of the marginalized, are met.

Challenges

The sector faces a spectrum of challenges from both within and outside its remit, in performing its significant role in society. Some of the key challenges in the current context include the following.

The changing global economic scenario has implications for access to resources for the activities for the voluntary sector, especially for the work of the organized section of the sector, like the NGOs and CSOs. A number of countries of the Global South are facing a reduction in their official development assistance, thus affecting the work of the voluntary sector, especially on interventions dealing with awareness generation and policy influence work. In the countries of the Global North, the economic recession has also affected government support for voluntary or civil society action, within their own countries as well as externally, with some functions of the sector being negatively affected more than the others.

With the reduction in financial aid, the organized section of the voluntary sector also face increasing pressure to ensure transparency in their dealings, to build in effective internal governance mechanisms and to demonstrate concrete changes in the lives of the community. This is in keeping with the demand for their upward accountability to the resource providers; downward accountability to the recipients of their services, which in most cases includes the poor, deprived communities, and horizontal accountability to their peers in the sector.

Ensuring effective inter-agency collaboration between the voluntary sector or the third sector, the state and the market is another challenge. Each of the three sectors has a unique character, and how they interact with each other varies across different cultures, regions and countries of the world. The collaboration among these three sectors thus can be quite complex and sometimes antagonistic. For example, the stringent laws and regulations of the state are adversely affecting the functioning and sustainability of the sector across many countries of the Global North and South. Further, the growing role of the private sector in social development issues, in the form of their corporate social responsibility intervention, also has implications for the shrinking space and positioning of the voluntary sector.

Harsh Jaitli

See also advocacy and inquiry; citizen participation; community development; Development Coalitions; empowerment; organization development; Participatory Action Research; participatory governance; social accountability

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W

WHOLE-SYSTEMS ACTION RESEARCH

See Systemic Action Research

WHYTE, WILLIAM FOOTE

For many students and scholars in North America, William Foote Whyte's work represented the first exposure to the idea that people learning and working together to improve things could succeed much more readily than individuals working in isolation. For many, too, who had missed the practical reform work of Paulo Freire in Brazil and Myles Horton in the southern USA, Whyte's writings introduced us to the potential in empowering problem holders to solve their own problems. The researcher in such a situation takes on the role of co-learner rather than know-it-all expert. The researcher helps problem holders organize and find the resources to create positive social change but does not impose his or her ideas for change. Indeed, Whyte persisted until the end of his life in adding the word *participatory* to "action research" to emphasize the significance of engaging those who might otherwise be seen as 'subjects' in the research.

Whyte was born June 27, 1914, in Springfield, Massachusetts. He grew up in the Bronx, Caldwell, New Jersey, and in Bronxville, New York. He graduated from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania in 1936, having majored in economics. Following this, he went on to 4 years at Harvard University as a member of the Society of Fellows, followed by 3 years at the University of Chicago, where he received a Ph.D. in sociology with a minor in social anthropology. Whyte began his teaching career at the University of Oklahoma. In

1943, he contracted polio and spent a year at the Warm Springs Foundation in Georgia, where he learned to walk with a cane. From that point on, Whyte conducted all of his fieldwork with the aid of crutches or a cane. From 1944 to 1948, he taught at the University of Chicago and then moved to Ithaca, New York, where he joined the faculty of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University. When he retired as an active faculty member, he co-founded Programs for Employment and Workplace Systems to promote the engagement of faculty in participatory action with union leaders and managers. He died in Ithaca on 16 July 2000.

In his autobiography, *Participant Observer*, Whyte recounts a lifetime of research projects that illustrate the role of the participatory action researcher. A clear example of why participation is critical can be seen in his 1950s work with poor farmers in Latin America, as part of a Cornell University rural development project. He went there to study the organizational and cultural issues in the introduction of new farming technology. It turned out that the local farmers' rational practice of growing corn with beans meant that growing a new, high-yielding variety of corn would not work. Local knowledge was needed for the successful introduction of technology. Inclusion of peasant farmers in the planning of agricultural improvement would lead to far better results.

In his earliest study, published in 1943 as *Street Corner Society*, Whyte's approach was unconventional because he engaged as a participant in the social world of the people he was studying. When Whyte reported to one of the Boston gang members he was studying that he 'just want[ed] to understand these things as best I [he] can and write them up,' he was challenged to believe that in writing about the conditions of poverty and lack of work the gang members experienced, he might be able to change things. He came to understand that he was working *with* the group of young men he was studying.

There are countless stories among Whyte's students and colleagues of his broad reach into fields of study

beyond his own: While he began with organizational behaviour with the gangs in Boston, this expanded to human relations, the human response to technical change, union-management cooperation and worker ownership, to name a few. What is common in this activity is the search for what people can accomplish together.

Stepping back, it is easy to see that Whyte's practice showed a way for action researchers who were attracted to the philosophy of inclusion and collaboration but were uncertain about how to combine this with what was understood as research. From the beginning, Whyte exhibited habits of mind that lasted a lifetime. These habits of mind describe a framework for action research: rigour, a commitment to joint learning, inclusion and a determined focus on social reform as an outcome for research.

Whyte's rigour as a researcher showed up early in his life. His own account of the research for *Street Corner Society* shows him, involvement notwithstanding, retreating to the men's room in a bar to record notes of conversations he'd just witnessed. The action researcher is not a sloppy researcher. Whyte kept records meticulously throughout his life, a habit that was confirmed when he revealed near the age of 80 that the source documents for his autobiography included letters he'd written to his parents while at college. And he was rigorous in his inquiry; he kept track of his own mistakes, but more important, he was critical in his feedback to the institutions he studied. The latter included his own employer, the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University, and the Cooperatives at Mondragón, Spain.

Whyte's assumption that by including others we learn more applied not only to the participants in his studies but also to colleagues. Stories are told by many former students and colleagues about how he liked to gather people together to think about projects. This is how Davydd Greenwood, a Cornell anthropologist, ended up in Mondragón; it was responsible for the practice of communal reflection on projects in Cornell's PEWS (Programs for Employment and Workplace Systems), which Whyte founded. At a distance now, one can see now the connection between this 'habit of mind' and the post-Whyte development of collaborative inquiry by Peter Reason and others at Bath University and Lyle Yorks at Teachers College, Columbia. This way of learning deepens the capacity of action research.

As to social reform, that was always Whyte's thought, though it was exercised in ways professional reformers might not recognize. By raising awareness in early 1940s Boston, by writing about employee ownership, by listening to Peruvian peasant farmers, by sticking his neck out in the late 1960s period of university

strife to support a local alternative school and by founding PEWS, an active labour-management programme in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations Extension Division—quite in the face of academic disdain—Whyte proved to be an active reformer.

One might say that Whyte habitually supported people—including himself—acting outside of accepted and expected patterns. This brings us back to the core qualities of inquiry and reflection that characterize action research. In his work and in his writings, Whyte offers a model of these practices as a way of life.

At the time of his death, the *New York Times* wrote that Whyte had written '20 influential books'. That didn't include countless articles and other books. For an introduction to his work, two extremely influential books, *Street Corner Society*, referred to above, and *Learning From the Field* (1984), a guide for social science researchers that, if read carefully, instils the values of action research, can be recommended. For an overview of Whyte's work and life, and to decide what else you might like to read, *Participant Observer* (1994) can be recommended. Finally, a perhaps forgotten volume he wrote with colleagues and students, *Worker Participation and Ownership* (1983), is worth tracking down. The subtitle of this volume is *Cooperative Strategies for Strengthening Local Economies*, a topic as relevant today in the second decade of the century as it was then and a fine example of Whyte at work collaboratively with others to do research that will make a difference.

Ann W. Martin

See also Cornell Participatory Action Research Network; Mondragón Co-Operatives; Participatory Action Research

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WITTGENSTEIN, LUDWIG

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) was an Austrian philosopher who had a major influence on logical positivism and analytic philosophy. This entry focuses on

how his thought is influential in action research in that, in his remarks, he highlights how actions are shaped and rendered meaningful only by occurring within particular surroundings; lacking a context, they are literally senseless.

In action research, where inquiries are conducted from within one or other particular organization, or a particular practice within it, with the hope of improving that organization or the practices within it in some way, inquiries are thus practice driven rather than theory driven; similarly, words come to make sense by being used within a specific situation rather than within a theoretical framework. Thus, for Wittgenstein and for researchers with people's activities as their central focus, 'the words you utter or what you think as you utter them are not what matters, so much as the difference they make at various points in your life. Practice gives words their significance'. So although in the fields of management and organization studies terms such as *leadership*, *expertise*, *organization*, *system*, *strategy*, *innovation*, *motivation* and so on are used, and actionable knowledge is sought by practitioners in the hope of understanding how to implement appropriate causal processes to bring about such things, as Wittgenstein sees it, there are no such things in existence for these words to refer to.

Indeed, these words in fact refer to certain characteristics that are observed in people's activities only after they have been performed. Thus, in Wittgenstein's terms, theory-driven, scientific forms of inquiry arrive on the scene too late and look in the wrong direction with the wrong aim in mind—too late because scientists act as if the basic elements of their analyses are already there in existence as fixed, determinate and nameable entities; in the wrong direction because they look backwards towards already existing actualities rather than forward towards possibilities; and with the wrong aim in mind because they seek a static picture or theoretical representation of a phenomenon rather than a living sense, or sensing, of it as an active agency at work in shaping lives now, in the actual place and actual time of their enactment.

This is what makes Wittgenstein's kind of investigations so special: They are concerned with ontological rather than with epistemological issues, with reflexive rather than reflective investigations, with changing us in ourselves and not just our knowledge. Given researchers' training as rational thinkers and scientific investigators, they are inclined to think of all the difficulties they face as problems that can be solved by the application of a science-like methodology. But as he sees it, besides such difficulties of the intellect, they can also face a difficulty of the will, a difficulty that manifests itself in each new situation when they encounter what, spontaneously, they want to see. Relational or

orientational difficulties such as these cannot be overcome by the application of any current theory-driven methods of inquiry. They are difficulties to do with the embodied expectations and anticipations with which researchers go out to meet the detailed features of their surroundings, and thus to find their way about and to go on within them without (mis)leading themselves into taking inappropriate next steps. Thus, the difficulties they need to overcome involve a working on the way they see things (and what they expect of them).

Thus, if researchers were to liken what is involved in arriving at theory-based, scientific understandings to the learning of a second language, they will come to know that some of the hidden processes behind the appearances already well known to them are really other than what they appear to be; Wittgenstein's concerns are with their elaborating their first language learning. That is, he is concerned not with their reflective abilities but with their sensing, with their ability to learn to pick out distinctive features within an otherwise fluid, indeterminate circumstance and their ability to draw attention to these features, linguistically, to others. The task is not translation but language learning.

Thus, straightaway, Wittgenstein engages researchers in a set of practices very different from those they normally undertake when faced with a bewildering or difficult situation. Instead of beginning with an analysis of it, into its supposed elementary parts, he asks researchers to undertake a set of imaginative practices or different ways of seeing things or other methodical ways of thinking—all drawing on their already lived experiences—aimed specifically at both overcoming their intellectual ways of relating or orienting themselves to their surroundings and coming to know their way about within the unique concrete situations that bewilder them. And as they explore the unique qualities of their initial bewilderments, researchers can come to feel so much at home within their bewilderments, he suggests, that they can come to see previously unnoticed possibilities for going on; thus, the bewilderments guide their next steps in terms of the degree to which they satisfy the sensed disquiets they initially aroused within the researchers.

In all of this, it is researchers' use of words that is crucial. For it is how a word is used in relation to its particular surroundings that gives it its meaning—its practical meaning. As a reminder, Wittgenstein says, 'I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the "language-game"'—where the idea of a game is meant to remind us that things occurring within a game have a quite different meaning or use from those occurring outside it. He thus describes the turn, or the change in attitude he intends here, as being of the following kind. When philosophers

use a word like *knowledge*, *being*, *object*, or *I* and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself, 'Is the word ever actually used in this way in the language game which is its original home?' What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. For, as Wittgenstein sees it, when used in metaphysical (or theoretical) statements, divorced from their everyday surroundings, words have no determinate sense whatsoever. Thus, to repeat, he is not concerned to arrive at any new knowledge as such but to inquire into the ways of sensing 'what is possible before all new discoveries and inventions', to inquire into possible new ways of seeing and acting in relation to our present surroundings, ways that can go beyond those into which we have been trained so far.

John Shotter

See also Appreciative Inquiry; constructivism; social constructionism

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WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Women's political empowerment is the modern notion of the first struggle for women's suffrage—the right to vote and to run for office—which began in France in the late eighteenth century. Today, women's suffrage is explicitly stated as a right under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the United Nations in 1979.

Women's Political Representation

While there are regional variations in women's representation in national parliaments, they occupy only

18 per cent of parliamentary seats around the world. Representation is highest in Nordic countries at 42 per cent and as low as 10 per cent in Arab countries.

There is much truth in Nussbaum's observation that unless nations place the special needs of women as central to development goals, there cannot be overall improvement in addressing issues of poverty and development. For this, women must be represented at the political level, one of the highest levels of decision-making in a country—their voice, needs and concerns articulated at every stage, from conceptualizing to the planning and implementation of programmes that affect their lives. This entry seeks to draw linkages between the processes that empower women leaders within political institutions and the process of action research.

Political representation alone cannot be an adequate measure to ensure women's participation and inclusion in the exercise of their agency. Women political leaders need knowledge, soft and hard skills, relevant information with regard to political processes and political issues and the appropriate use of this learning to influence decisions in ways which enable them to initiate change in the structures of power they belong to, paving the way for others who follow.

Importance of Political Empowerment

Women's political empowerment is envisaged as the vehicle that allows women to exercise their leadership and develop the potential to analyze their specific needs and the challenges that prevent them from realizing the same and negotiating these from a position of authority and strength. Political empowerment also implies enhancing individual competencies, building collectives and developing collaborations and networks for women to be effective agents of change.

According to Martha Farrell and Mandakini Pant, more important than exposure to ways of governance and strategies in the effective administration of their office is the need to draw the attention of these political leaders to analyze the factors that render women's voices invisible, that exclude and marginalize individuals on the basis of their sex and prevent the exercise of their agency.

The process of collective learning is a powerful tool enabling women to understand gendered identities and practices that often act as forces for exclusion of women from leadership positions. Workshops, discussions forums, training programmes and the formation of women's networks and collectives for women's political empowerment are based on principles of adult learning and participation, which perceive learning as

- learner centred, building upon individual knowledge and experience;

- comprehensive, with a focus on awareness, knowledge and skills;
- active and allowing for practical use of the new knowledge;
- centred around real-life issues rather than theoretical concepts; and
- flexible and sensitive to the needs and requirements of the learners.

Women's Political Empowerment and Action Research

A typical adult learning cycle is very similar to the process of action research and comprises (a) the need and desire to learn; (b) sharing the experiences of self and hearing the experiences of others in the context of problem-solving; (c) reflection and analysis of these experiences; (d) building new knowledge and understanding; (e) application of these experiences in their work and practice and (f) changed ways of behaviour and functioning. This process of learning is not a one-time exercise but rather a continuous process of sharing, reflection, analysis, application and action.

Conscientization and critical consciousness, popularized by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, are still used as a sociopolitical educational tool for women political leaders. The process of raising awareness of why women are excluded from the mainstream enables them to question the roots of social inequity and initiate processes of political action and social change to remedy their current situations. Women are enabled to analyze that issues related to their exclusion and denial of power to them are very often political ones, because they are based on how women are expected to fit into social and political structures that have been created neither by them nor for them. This process of inquiry enables them to recognize gender discrimination at a personal level, which is rooted in patriarchy, and draw links to its systemic nature.

The increased participation of women in political processes also has an impact on the governance structures, making them gender sensitive and equitable. In India, the constitutional amendments of 1993 mandated that women constitute a critical mass of at least one-third representation at local levels of governance. This brought to the fore the reality of the multiple challenges that women face in their political leadership. It was soon realized that women have no direct exposure to governance; many came straight from the confines of their homes into public office, with few female role models for them to emulate. The process of political empowerment created hundreds of successful women political leaders, whose abilities and competencies created success stories all over the country, as a consequence of which most provincial governments have

increased to 50 per cent the reservation of women in local governance.

The process of women's political empowerment is also closely linked to the development of their leadership, by providing opportunities for systematic learning in order to influence others in the fulfilment of their goals and objectives. The scope for leadership includes placing on the agenda women's issues usually considered 'apolitical', such as health of women and children, education of the girl child, sanitation, potable water, gender-based violence and other issues of safety and security.

Women's political empowerment provides women the insights to use their legitimate political space and the authority to guide processes and influence outcomes that are coherent in their objective of redistribution of power, allocation of resources and creation of opportunities in favour of all marginalized people, especially women.

Martha Farrell

See also conscientization; empowerment; feminism; Feminist Participatory Action Research

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WORK RESEARCH INSTITUTE, THE

The Work Research Institute (WRI) was founded in 1965 as a part of a group of state-owned research institutes directed at challenges in working life. In 1986, the WRI was separated from the group to continue as an autonomous institution. The ownership functions were later transferred from the Ministry of Labor to three university colleges. Currently, the institute is in the process of being incorporated into the Oslo and Akershus University College.

Since action research was a main activity from the beginning, the institute has half a century of continuous experience within this area. It has had occasion to not only follow but to some extent also spearhead the transformations in action research that have occurred during this period.

From Experiments to Participative Projects

In the beginning, the WRI was strongly influenced by the ideas of Kurt Lewin and, in particular, by the idea of the field experiment. In a major effort, in the 1960s,

to spearhead democracy in work through experiments with autonomous work groups, it was discovered that while experiments could give rise to many processes, in particular various forms of discussions, there was a limited direct impact on working life in general. There was a need for a broad mobilization of the will to change among the workplace actors themselves. Experimental methodologies were replaced by more participative research contributions, pertaining mainly to mobilization of those concerned and organization of the process of change. That the efforts would, in spite of a more modest role for research, still aim at autonomy was thought to follow from psychological needs inherent in all people. However, the unions did not want to rely purely on this kind of force and promoted the incorporation of autonomy and participation in the institutional conditions of work defined by society. In particular, in the period from the middle 1970s to the middle 1980s, the WRI was directly involved in processes of legislation and labour agreements in Norway.

A Communicative Turn

With the growing focus on the distribution of influence over the change processes, there emerged a turn towards the medium in which influence is exerted—workplace conversations. When, in 1982, the labour market parties made an agreement on development, the main focus was on how to initiate and structure labour-management communication. In co-operation with action research, a form called democratic dialogue was developed and the Dialogue Conference became the ideal arena for broad participation in change.

Clusters, Networks and Regions as Units of Change

As early as the 1970s, an effort was made to use inter-enterprise conversations as a lever in change. From the late 1980s, the idea was further expanded towards the establishment of networks and clusters of organizations. For action research, this implied a corresponding continuation of the shift towards inter-organizational processes as a main theme. The WRI came to focus in particular on how to link actors to each other and on how to develop and sustain collective self-understandings that can keep disparate actors with no common steering mechanism working together over long periods of time.

Around the turn of the millennium, the notion of regional development attracted political attention. The government promoted the formation of regional partnerships to take charge of policy within areas like sustainable development and innovation. Clusters and networks of organizations were to be linked

to each other within a regional context and, through this, provide a foundation for prosperous regions. For action research, the regional partnerships became new partners, and action research faced the challenge of translating local and network experience into regional perspectives on policy and development.

Change as Social Movement

A development towards seeing change as a broadly framed social process has continued with the introduction of the notion of 'social movement' to describe the nature of the process. In a social movement, many actors move in the same direction, with exchange of impulses between them as the chief generative mechanism, but in different ways and at different speeds.

Learning Over Time

Action research is often seen as a family of approaches where differences are accounted for in terms of theoretical differences or differences in societal context. The continuous work with more or less the same partners within the same context has made it possible for the WRI to see differences in research perspectives from a longitudinal perspective. The communicative turn that occurred in particular in the 1980s, for instance, did not start with a theoretical rethinking or a shift in context but with a reorientation away from design and towards the generative mechanisms as such emerging out of experience with the previous design strategies.

Along with these changes, there have been changes in the role of the WRI itself. The strong historical link between action research and small-group dynamics has, to an increasing degree, been replaced by an action research that sees itself, and is seen by others, as an actor in the discourses and processes that shape society. Field projects, which by necessity have a modest scale, are no longer performed to create models for replication on a broad front but to charge and recharge concepts used in societal-level discourses—such as democracy, participation, autonomy, trust—with the kind of meaning that can be achieved only when the concepts are used in contexts where they can be linked to observable behaviour.

The move towards work reform initiatives acquiring the shape of broadly framed social movements has implied the involvement of a number of research institutions in co-operation, but to some extent also as bearers of different theories about, and approaches to, organization development. The challenge is how to achieve, in spite of these differences, a strengthening of action research through co-operation within the research establishment itself.

See also democratic dialogue; Development Coalitions; Dialogue Conferences; Norwegian Industrial Democracy Movement; regional development; third person action research

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WORK-BASED LEARNING

Work-based learning (WBL) entered the lexicon of higher education in the early 1990s as a term to describe learning that takes place in, for and through work. It is not a work placement, although the participant is usually employed throughout the learning process. It is not *in-service training*, a term more commonly used for courses designed elsewhere and run in the workplace. It is not a traditional form of distance learning, but neither is it campus based. WBL is distinguished most clearly in its curriculum. Its programmes are designed around the learning needs of the practitioners and their workplace rather than the conventional disciplinary frameworks of the educational institution. It is learning embedded in the social, economic, political and cultural context of work. This entry introduces the characteristics and origins of WBL and discusses the common ground it shares with action research in practice-centred inquiry leading to personal, organizational and social transformation.

WBL is a significant development in educational practice that reflects the shift from an industrial to a knowledge-based society. Although not represented on the balance sheet, knowledge has become an essential asset in all sectors of public, private and not-for-profit organizations. Knowledge that generates wealth or impact is contextual, timely and, above all, practical. ‘Knowing how’ complements ‘knowing what’ as a vital ingredient of success. WBL has become an umbrella

term to describe this kind of knowledge acquisition—learning that is focused on achieving specific outcomes of significance to business or organizational objectives.

Origins

In simple terms, work is a productive activity undertaken by an individual or group of people to achieve worthwhile outcomes. It may or may not be remunerated. It can be understood in its widest sense to include the multitude of ways in which people act purposefully in the world. It is interesting to note that we often identify ourselves through our work, and the workplace can teach us a lot about ourselves. Work can be the place where we grow, acquire new skills and develop wisdom.

WBL emerged in the last decade of the twentieth century as a way of defining and developing learning in, for and through work. There were two principal drivers in this development: (1) policy initiatives to widen access to higher education and (2) technological changes that resulted in a significant increase in the demand for knowledge in the workplace. In the new knowledge economy, intellectual capital has become the measure of organizational wealth. The workplace is no longer just a site of economic production but also of knowledge creation.

No longer can business or the public sector rely on skills training alone to equip their workforce. Knowledge has become an essential aspect of work, with the consequence that we are witnessing a shift from training to learning in the workplace. This is more than a semantic difference. Staff development is no longer just about the transfer of skills but also the development of an attitude of inquiry that is open to fresh ideas and innovation. Learning in, for and through work has become an essential part of the productive ecosystem, which must adapt to meet the needs of the people involved in it and the organizations that embrace it. Knowledge has become a dynamic commodity, and new ways of recognizing and enhancing it are needed in the global marketplace. The workforce is also becoming more mobile, and individuals are looking for transferable qualifications.

WBL is also shaping higher education, which is seen as a field of study with its own standards and mode of study, offering an approach to professional development across the university curriculum. As work and learning converge, the institutions of higher learning are adapting to align the requirements for university accreditation with the lifelong learning of individual workers and the long-term development of organizations. Formal learning is no longer seen as a contract between the institution and the student but is located in a partnership between the institution, the employer and the employee.

Several influences in higher education have preceded these developments. Work placements have long been included in teaching, social work, nursing and engineering, although their contribution to formal learning outcomes was limited. University structures were not able to keep up with the expanding range of professional and academic interests of students, and they began to expand Independent Studies from a single course to full degree programmes, giving individuals or groups an opportunity to negotiate learning outcomes specific to their own interest and need. This was further enhanced by systems designed to recognize learning acquired in other institutions or from experience. Individuals were able to negotiate their own learning agreements and obtain recognition based on a portfolio of prior learning. These developments provided the emerging field of WBL with the basic tools needed to recognize learning in, for and through work.

Characteristics of WBL

WBL is a broad and expanding field of learning, leading to qualifications at all levels of higher education, from certificate to doctorate degrees, and in all professions. It has several significant characteristics:

- WBL recognizes that learning is already happening in the workplace. It does not initiate the learning process. Practitioners are continuously reshaping their practice through experience and interaction with others. WBL recognizes that learners bring significant prior knowledge (often tacit) into the formal learning process. Everyone is an emerging expert in his or her own practice.
- WBL engages with the interests and needs of the workplace, not the disciplinary boundaries of the university. However, while the WBL curriculum is project oriented, focusing on the desired outcomes of the participants and their employers, not the learning outcomes of subject-based study, it is set in a framework designed to pose cognitive and experiential uncertainty in order to deepen critical awareness and achieve worthwhile ends.
- WBL is as much about the development of the learner as about what is learned. It is about becoming a good practitioner, about making good choices, about treating others with respect—ultimately about transforming work practices to achieve worthwhile aims while at the same time transforming the practitioner. It therefore addresses questions of personal identity and values.
- While WBL can and does occur on an individual basis, there is a growing

commitment to WBL, which is expressed in partnerships among participants, their employers and institutions of higher learning. This has obvious benefits in providing a context in which the learning can be supported and practised and offering a return to the sponsoring enterprise in aligning personal development and organizational mission.

- The curriculum of WBL is work. Work, in all its variety, does not map easily onto the traditional disciplinary frameworks of college or university study. It is transdisciplinary in nature. As a result, learning is assessed through generic learning outcomes that focus on the quality of inquiry and judgement evident in the learning. Disciplinary knowledge is not, however, excluded. It may be necessary for practitioners to acquire specific knowledge relevant to their field of professional practice, and this may be included in a learning agreement.

Knowledge Creation

Various scholars have recognized what has been called the ‘practice turn’ or the ‘action turn’ in the social sciences. Both recognize that work is often conducted in turbulent conditions, in which knowledge is in constant flux. Yesterday’s knowledge is a poor fit for today’s challenges. In a widely referenced publication, Helga Nowotny and her colleagues drew attention to the way in which the boundaries between the context in which knowledge is produced and the context in which it is used have become blurred. What they call Mode 1 knowledge arises from rigorous inquiry in closed groups using established methods. Once published, Mode 1 knowledge may be applied in practice. Mode 2 knowledge, on the other hand, emerges from socially diverse sources and a wide range of practitioner experience. It is oral, contextual, multilayered and often contested. Mode 2 knowledge has open boundaries. From the perspective of the academy, it is transdisciplinary. It is, as Nowotny suggests, inherently transgressive. Its philosophical roots are in Aristotle, Dewey, Heidegger, Gilbert Ryle and Polanyi, amongst others.

While Mode 1 knowledge may be necessary to meet the baseline requirements of the workplace, Mode 2 knowledge is critical to the practitioners’ attempts to enhance and transform their practice. Knowledge that is located in the intentions, actions, experience and sense making of the participants rather than in empirical data and logical reason is, of course, open to social and political influence—a challenge faced by both the work-based learner and the action researcher.

WBL and Action Research

WBL and action research share common ground. They sit Janus-faced at the interface between academia and what Jürgen Habermas called the lifeworld, engaging on the one side with the discourses of the academy, wrestling for recognition of transdisciplinary or multiple ways of knowing, and on the other side seeking to articulate in coherent ways the complex and messy reality of daily practice. Both borrow widely from the tools of psychology, sociology and political analysis. Both are committed to practical ends. Both straddle the boundary between the personal and the professional. They share a pedagogy that enables learners to reflect on who they are and on the choices they make and not just what they think. Both value the qualities of personal judgement and collaboration. Both reach beyond simplistic notions of reflective practice to engage critically with their context and practice.

WBL and action research share an epistemological position that recognizes that the best way to understand a situation is to participate in it. They are committed to exploring the interactions between individual cognitive experience and collaborative forms of knowing. They both recognize multiple ways of knowing—knowledge can be conceptual, but it may also be experiential, practical, expressive, and intuitive. They both bring together the experiential and the rational in pursuit of a greater wisdom than is possible from an exclusive focus on one or the other. These two perspectives by which the individual interprets reality exist as two different cognitive processes that when aligned provide a richer source of inspiration for deliberative action. The one gives attention to emotional, narrative and affective perception, the other to the verbal and analytical.

Prospects

While sometimes employing disciplinary knowledge or research methods, WBL flows beyond the boundaries of the disciplines in pursuit of a more unified way of knowing. It draws from a wide range of research methods, although action-based approaches are likely to predominate and many practitioner-researchers adopt multiple methods. As a field of inquiry, WBL is reflexive, responding to changes in the economic, social and business environment and leading the way in the transformation of higher education. At the heart of WBL is a commitment to effective partnerships between the academy, the employer and the employee in the creation of productive knowledge. It is well placed to address the wider ecological implications of economic and social action. As a flexible and yet rigorous approach to learning, WBL can play a significant role in the transformation of our economic, social and educational systems.

In many of these respects, action research is a natural partner to WBL, although in the segregated structures of higher education there has been little opportunity for cross-fertilization. Many in the WBL community view action research as a methodology or as a source of practice-based tools of inquiry, perhaps unaware of its holistic systems approach to the complexity of the practice situation. While action research can benefit from the insistence of WBL on practical outcomes (impact), WBL may find it helpful to explore the ontological roots of action research in a participatory world view that leads to open, co-operative forms of inquiry. In their shared pursuit of an epistemology of practice, WBL and action research bring to the knowledge economy the conceptual resources, pedagogy and practical tools needed to recognize, accredit and improve good work.

David Adams

See also Action Learning; action turn, the; Frankfurt School; insider action research; Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production; practical knowing

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WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The origin of occupational health and safety dates back to the time of the Industrial Revolution, when millions of workers employed in factories and industries worked under inhuman conditions. It was a time

when no provisions towards ensuring safety and security with regard to the health of the workers existed. The gap between the employers and the employees (workers) was huge, leaving no scope for the latter to express their grievances. As the society was purely capitalistic, the 'rule of the jungle' prevailed, where one group of people suppressed another group. It was a conflict between the powerful and the powerless.

In contrast to this, participation was an egalitarian concept, attempting to bring the workers at a level equal to that of the employer. The concept of participation began to be understood and embraced in the mid twentieth century and later, when a substantial amount of thought went into devising strategies towards addressing safety and health concerns among workers. There was a realization that in order to address occupational health and safety concerns, the employees' perspective should be taken into consideration. This entailed creating spaces for workers to engage in the institutional systems and creating avenues for them to participate in ensuring better health and safety conditions within the workplace. Efforts were undertaken towards engaging workers in the process of planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation and monitoring, processes from which they had been initially excluded.

In order to ensure that the workplace became safe and hazard free, the engagement of workers was felt to be necessary. The reason was that the worker was aware of the real challenges existing within the workplace and, based on his or her experience and expertise, would be able to suggest solutions towards addressing those problems. This has been the key premise of the 'participatory approach', which gives importance to the perspective of the common people, the ones at the grass roots, that is, the workers.

Strategies on Workers' Participation

The EU-OSHA (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work) describes workers' participation on health and safety issues as a two-way process, where employers and their worker representatives speak to one another, listen to each other's concerns, share information and views, discuss various issues, take decisions together and share a relationship of trust and respect.

Employers should involve workers in all discussions pertaining to health and safety within the workplace. This would mean the involvement of the employer and the worker in each stage of planning and decision-making regarding health and safety issues. Right from the identification of the problem till the stage of devising strategies and solutions, the involvement of both is necessary. For example, the team designing a proposal or framing a policy on health and safety for the

organization must comprise both employer(s) as well as representatives from amongst the workers. Furthermore, workers should also have a role in monitoring and evaluating a particular plan or a health and safety mechanism within the workplace. Feedback from workers must also be sought, as they constitute a major percentage of the workforce. Such measures loosen the hierarchies, making both employer and employees equally responsible.

Various mechanisms could be adopted to ensure the participation of workers as well as the management:

Safety Committee

Safety committee refers to a group comprising top management, supervisors and worker representatives. The key objective is to ensure that worker representatives provide information to the management on health hazards, accidents and safety-related issues within the workplace. The committee may undertake activities such as inspection, investigation of accidents as well as suggesting recommendations for the future.

Attitude Surveys

The objective behind attitude surveys is to ensure a wide degree of participation by workers. It is to understand how the workers perceive the organization. It seeks workers' opinion on the workplace culture, management-worker relations, career development, working conditions, policies and procedures, safety concerns, overall satisfaction and so on.

Focused Groups

Another name for face-to-face interaction within groups could be termed as *focused groups*. Focused groups can be composed of only workers or a combination of management and workers. The aim is to discuss issues in an informal manner by eliciting people's opinions. Workplaces could have focused group discussions, where workers are specifically asked about their opinion on health and safety provisions within the workplace or if the available safety mechanisms are enough to address the health hazards within the workplace. In industries where both female as well as male workers are employed, focused groups can be organized separately for female workers and then for male workers, to specifically gain insight on the different concerns and priorities of both.

Quality Circle

Another name for Quality Circle is Safety Circle. The purpose is that in addition to involving workers in discussion of occupational health and safety management, Quality Circles involve workers in planning,

decision-making and the management of occupational health and safety.

The true purpose of participation is served when the workers are provided a platform to express and are made to realize that their opinions are equally valued within the workplace. Being the ones exposed to risks, workers are in a position to understand the root cause behind health hazards or accidents occurring within their workplace. Globally, millions of workers employed in factories and industries handle heavy machinery and work under extreme temperatures, most often without proper lighting or ventilation. Thus, workers are the ones exposed to the maximum risks and accidents. Based on this very rationale, participation of workers in ensuring occupational health and safety becomes an essential component.

Saswati Baruah

See also knowledge democracy; organization development; participatory governance

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WORK-FAMILY INTERVENTIONS

Second generation approaches to work-family interventions focus not on policies but on deeper level changes in organizational cultures. The goal is to change the way work is accomplished—its design and its norms and expectations—so that employees are better able to align their employment with their personal lives. It is a way, also, of making the workplace more gender equitable. The method used is called Collaborative Interactive Action Research (CIAR).

Changes in work practices geared to better aligning work and personal life are particularly difficult to accomplish because they are linked to two sets of gendered organizational assumptions: one about the ideal worker and the other about ideal work. Organizational norms about ideal workers are implicitly linked to stereotypical notions of professional masculinity, such as strength, assertiveness and a life situation that includes

someone else taking care of family and other personal issues. Assumptions about ideal work practices are linked to a set of beliefs about the use of time and space, the role of managerial oversight and evaluation measures that are also anchored in traditional notions of masculinity. Less obvious but critically important is the fact that these gendered images also have an unexpectedly negative impact on work effectiveness. CIAR explicitly links equity and effectiveness—two objectives long thought to be adversarial—and promotes a dual agenda. It challenges the deeply embedded assumptions about ideal work and the ideal worker and does so in actionable ways.

Though collaboration is part of most action research, CIAR is somewhat different because it rests on a mode of interaction that is self-consciously based on mutuality and fluid expertise. Mutuality brings two types of expertise together—the researchers' on gender dynamics and the organization's on work practices and systems—to create new, actionable knowledge. The process is explicitly fluid and two directional. This type of collaborative interaction requires the typical skills of action research, but using these presents special problems because these skills are themselves gendered, associated with the feminine, domestic sphere of life. Enacting them can engage strong, even disproportionate resistance. Exploring, rather than attempting to overcome, this resistance provides additional data about the gender dynamics at play and the work practices to examine.

The action part starts at the point of entry into an organizational site. Whether entry takes the form of a survey, interviews or focus groups, its primary goal is to connect—explicitly and from the beginning—the goals of equity for people's work-family concerns with effectiveness issues in business. Therefore, the initial interviews probe the details of work as well as family and try to elicit a new, shared understanding of how these are connected and not necessarily adversarial. The interviewer is not passive in this process but actively engages the interviewee to surface and challenge assumptions. The goal is to bring together the two domains of equity and effectiveness at the level of everyday work practice. These mini-interventions prepare the work group for a larger experimental intervention, which is designed collaboratively. The design must address both sides of the dual agenda and include outcomes to be evaluated.

Finally, the research part is the one aspect that is not collaborative and hence different from other types of action research. In CIAR, the researchers alone analyze the data. It is their expertise. Looking at data to identify taken-for-granted assumptions that unexpectedly have negative consequences for equity and effectiveness requires an understanding of gender dynamics

not usually available in the organization, though it is a goal of the process to introduce this understanding. Feedback is perhaps the key intervention: It provides a new narrative about work practices and opens up the possibility of change.

Take the example of the finance department of a large manufacturing site. One assumption identified there was that 'time is cheap'—in other words, when problems arose, the most common resource deployed was time, ignoring the costs of that practice for both equity and effectiveness. This led to a culture of *overdoing* work. When senior managers requested information, junior analysts would develop a full-blown analysis, complete with graphs, charts and even supporting presentations before going home that night. The problem was that this level of analysis and the immediacy of the response were rarely required. Often a simple back-of-the-envelope analysis was all that was needed. The analysts, however, were reluctant to ask about the technical or time parameters of the task because they did not want to raise questions about their commitment or competence. Instead, they took it as an opportunity to shine; to show the senior managers that they were willing to go the extra mile. These norms had dual agenda consequences. Overdoing led to unnecessary long hours and unpredictability in schedule, which was particularly problematic for personal life. But it also had significant effectiveness implications. Wasting time on unnecessary analysis meant that other tasks were ignored or under-analyzed, leading to productivity and efficiency issues. The team were asked to come up with a simple, actionable step to change this informal norm. They quickly devised a one-page form that asked senior managers to describe the parameters of each request and when the data was needed. The form took the onus off of individuals to ask clarifying questions and encouraged managers to think more seriously about requests and the cost and benefits of what were often casual inquiries. As one senior manager noted, 'I had no idea folks were staying till all hours to get these things done. I usually don't read them until the end of the week'. In retrospect, it seems an obvious solution. But without surfacing the assumption about time, these inefficient practices would not have been identified or been able to be changed.

In summary, CIAR is a mode of action research particularly well suited to work-family interventions. It is geared to identify gendered assumptions that not only hurt equity issues related to personal life but also detract from effectiveness. Importantly, it offers organizations an opportunity to rethink previously unquestioned work practices and develop concrete, work-based changes that are systemic and structural, creating workplaces that are good for people and good for work.

Lotte Bailyn and Joyce K. Fletcher

See also collaborative action research; gender issues; organizational culture

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WORLD CAFÉ, THE

The World Café is an interestingly paradoxical process. It is a social technology for engaging people in conversation. It uses a tightly controlled format to generate free-form conversation, engaging stakeholders in meaningful dialogue to identify and shape future directions for action. It is not primarily intended to find answers but to generate a broad range of perspectives for influencing inclusive, ongoing attention to strategies, goals and tasks. It may, therefore, be of less use to individuals conducting research on theoretical topics. As an action research method, it employs short-term (usually ½ to 1 day in length) intentional engagement of larger numbers of individuals exploring tightly focused questions requiring targeted input from different perspectives.

Description

While specific content may vary widely, every World Café applies a single set of design principles with three common features: (1) the visual appearance of the setting for the conversation, (2) the roles enacted by those involved, and (3) the use of carefully chosen questions, graphics and writing to generate and collect data and information. The concept originators list seven underlying design principles on their website:

1. Set the context.
2. Create a hospitable space.
3. Explore questions that matter.
4. Encourage everyone's contribution.
5. Connect diverse perspectives.
6. Listen together for patterns and insights.
7. Share collective discoveries.

The visual appearance is that of a 'café', and whether it is a huge arena with hundreds of participants (as used at the 1995 SoL Global Forum in Vienna) or a small meeting room with as few as 20, the features are common to cafés around the world. There are tables for 4, with colourful tablecloths and interesting centrepieces. The room is informal and well lit, and there is usually no obvious presenter's podium. However, the 'implements' are different from the usual café scene—the tables have an extra 'cloth' of oversize sheets of paper and are strewn with coloured pens; one or more walls may be covered by huge sheets of blank paper; posters on the walls advise participants to

- focus on what matters,
- listen to understand,
- contribute their thinking,
- speak their minds and hearts,
- link and connect ideas,
- listen together for insights and deeper questions,
- write and draw on the 'tablecloths', and
- have fun.

Process

The key roles in a World Café event are the client, the facilitator, a few presenters, 'hosts', participants and a graphic recorder. The client nominates the Café topic, guides the selection of participants, outlines the questions to be addressed and may also participate. The facilitator introduces the process, controls the timing and movement while otherwise not engaging with the emerging content of the event. Presenters, given the task of provoking conversation and dialogue, abide by the client and the facilitator's guidelines to produce short introductions to a series of 'powerful questions' (see below for explanation) to encourage dialogue. The host role is adopted and retained by one person at each table or may be shared among participants as the event proceeds. Participants create conversations—generating ideas and information for collection. The graphic recorder observes and analyzes the event—turning the participants' words into original images that gradually coalesce into a visual representation of the flow of the event.

The first presenter introduces the theme, states their thinking on the issue and poses the first powerful questions for exploration during the opening dialogue cycles. Presenters are limited to 5 minutes and may then join a table for the remainder of the event. The facilitator manages the ensuing process. The first cycle begins with introductions—as in any conversation of strangers—and an agreement on who will host the table. The host remains at the table for the remaining cycles, while the other participants relocate to different tables when directed to do so by the facilitator. This arrangement may vary according to the client's goals. After each relocation, the participants introduce themselves, listen as the host briefly summarizes the conversation that preceded their arrival and then pick up the threads by adding to, amending and building on reported ideas as recorded by their predecessors. Depending on the preset sequence, there may be three or more such cycles of relocation before a conversation of all participants draws together the threads of the dialogue about the presenter's question. Agreement is not sought. The goal is generation and recording of as many ideas, concepts, exploratory suggestions and propositions as possible.

The questions posed by subsequent presenters then lead the conversation deeper into exploration of the event's key theme or issue. Each presenter's questions are followed by the same number of cycles of discussion and relocation. Towards the end of the event, there may be a final summing up of key ideas, insights and suggestions for ongoing action. Summarizing and collating all the data collected during the event is usually the task of those sponsoring and directing the World Café. Participants may anticipate receiving a subsequent report—if this is part of the plan for the event.

The use of powerful questions implements the Nobel Prize winner Arno Pensias's recommendation to 'constantly examine your own assumptions'. As described in *The Art of Powerful Questions*, they are the heart of the World Café process—designed to frame exploratory questions about issues that truly matter, without simultaneously expecting immediate answers. Such questions take time to compose, and the client and the facilitator's preliminary work includes ensuring that they sufficiently challenge assumptions and habits to generate deeper questioning and analysis. They are 'problem-finding' tools leading to 'problem-solving' strategies, intended to avoid premature 'leaping to solutions'. Voigt et al. suggest that powerful questions (a) focus collective attention, (b) connect ideas and (c) create forward movement.

For example, a World Café conducted for an Australian mining industry conference asked the participants three questions: (1) What is the real purpose of our regulatory environment? (2) What assumptions

can we challenge about mine safety training? (3) How does education sustain a safe working environment? The results informed the development of immersive learning strategies varying markedly from traditional approaches.

In short, the World Café engages and challenges participants without expecting quick answers but with a deep belief in the value of exploring together to enhance future prospects.

Elyssebeth Leigh

See also collaborative action research; Community-Based Participatory Research

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Websites

Cafetogo (a quick reference guide for putting conversations to work): <http://www.theworldcafe.com/pdfs/cafetogo.pdf>

WORLD CONGRESSES OF ACTION RESEARCH

The World Congresses provide a global forum every 2–3 years for participants to meet across disciplinary boundaries to develop and exchange concepts, ideas, experiences and their reflections on current thinking and practice and to explore possibilities for the further development of practice, networks and collaboration.

History of World Congresses, ALARPM and ALARA

The congresses were founded by Australia-based Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt and Ron Passfield, working in the higher education, managerial and organizational learning field in Brisbane in the 1980s and 1990s. They also co-founded the auspice organization the Action Learning Action Research and Process Management Association (ALARPM), renamed the Action Learning Action Research Association (ALARA) from 2008.

The precursor to the world congresses of action research was the first International Symposium on Action Research, organized by Mary Farquhar and Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt in 1988 at the then Queensland Institute of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. This led in 1990 to the inaugural World Congress of Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management. The ALARPM/ALARA World Congresses are hereafter referred to as the World Congresses.

First World Congress 1990—Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

- Partner organization: Australian Institute of Training and Development
- Convenor: Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt
- Theme: Action Learning for Improved Performance
- Keynotes: Reg Revans, John Elliott, Sheila Harri-Augstein, Laurie Thomas

Second World Congress 1992—University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

- Convenor: Patricia Weeks
- Theme: Transforming Tomorrow Today
- Keynotes: Peter Checkland, Bob Dick and Tim Dalmau, Orlando Fals Borda, Brian Hall, Robin McTaggart, Yolanda Wadsworth

Third World Congress 1994—University of Bath, United Kingdom

- Convenors: Pam Lomax and Jack Whitehead
- Administrator: Moira Laidlaw
- Theme: Accounting for Ourselves
- Keynotes: Pam Lomax and Jack Whitehead, Orlando Fals Borda

Fourth World Congress 1997—Convention Centre, Cartagena, Colombia

- Partner organization: The 8th World Congress of the international Participatory Research Network
- Convenor: Orlando Fals Borda
- Theme: Convergence in Knowledge, Space and Time
- Keynotes: Immanuel Wallerstein, Manfred Max-Neef, Agnes Heller, Marja Liisa Swantz, Rajesh Tandon, Robert Chambers, Robert L. Flood, Robin McTaggart, Ted Jackson, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Anibal Quijano, Peter Reason, Budd Hall, Anisur Rahman, Eduardo Galeano. Paulo Freire was to be lead keynote but died 2 months before the World Congress.

Fifth World Congress 2000—University of Ballarat, Australia

- Partner organization: The 9th World Congress of the international Participatory Action Research (PAR) Network
- Congress advocate: Stephen Kemmis
- Theme: Reconciliation and Renewal—Through Collaborative Learning, Research and Action
- Keynotes: John Gaventa, Evelyn Scott, Susan Weil, Patricia Maguire, Bob Macadam, Susan Goff, Yvonna Lincoln, Martin von Hildebrand, Vijay Kanhere, Susan Noffke, Robert Flood, Mandawuy Yunupingu, Anisur Rahman, Victoria Marsick, Isaac Prilleltensky, Robert Chambers, Deborah Lange

Sixth World Congress 2003—University of Pretoria, South Africa

- Partner organization: The 10th World Congress of the international Participatory Action Research (PAR) Network and five South African technical and higher educational institutions
- Convenor: Tessie Herbst
- Theme: Learning Partners in Action
- Keynotes: Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt and Thomas Kalliath, Peter Reason, Cheryl de la Rey, Susan Weil and Danny Burns, Ineke Buskens, Richard Bowden, Tim Dalmau

Seventh World Congress 2006—University of Groningen, the Netherlands

- Convenor: Ben Boog
- Theme: Standards and Ethics in Participatory Research
- Keynotes: Ben Valkenburg, Yoland Wadsworth, Judi Marshall, Michiel Schoemaker, Øyvind Pålshaugen, Sandra Schruijer, Naomi Scheman, Julia Preece

Eighth World Congress 2010—Bayview Eden Hotel, Melbourne, Australia

- Partner organizations: Institute for Development Studies, UK; Deakin University
- Convenor: Jacques Boulet
- Theme: Participatory Action Research and Action Learning: Appreciating Our Pasts, Comprehending Our Presents, Prefiguring Our Futures
- Keynotes: Alan Rayner, Budd Hall, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Yoland Wadsworth

Characteristics of World Congresses

Networking

Networking is a central feature of the World Congresses. Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt's European background and international perspective brought to the World Congresses the fields of Action Learning and process management. Her co-organizer Ron Passfield, a strong local networker and publisher, encouraged diversity and a focus on dissemination of thinking.

World Congresses often arise out of partnerships with a related institution or network—most significantly with the international Participatory Action Research (PAR) Network. Three World Congresses were held in conjunction with those of the older international Participatory Research Network (also called World Congresses: 8th in 1997, 9th in 2000 and 10th in 2003).

An important driver is the common experience by action researchers of isolation in situations where the field may be small and diverse or other methodologies have dominated. As an epistemology of change, action research also endures the paradox of simultaneous popularity and unpopularity as it questions how things are and how they could be otherwise. Networking serves a function of strengthening practitioners' confidence and theory of practice.

Individuals attending have been encouraged to network by different methods adopted at different world congresses. These have included daily-meeting affinity groups, the use of hosts and host groups in advance of the World Congress, the presence of central 'open spaces/marketplaces', the continuous availability of refreshments in 'gathering spaces', extensive bring-and-share tables, poster displays and notice boards as well as the formal meeting of named sub-networks, including the five main 'strands, streams and variants' (see below).

Numerous and durable examples of international collaboration, for co-research, co-writing and publishing, journal board participation, inter-country visitation and teaching (including North-South alliances such as Ecuador, Britain, the Netherlands, Tanzania, Australia and Bangladesh, or China, the USA, Bangladesh, Israel and Norway) have followed networking at World Congresses.

Diverse Contexts and Different Foci

The multiple 'strands, streams and variants' around which World Congresses have structured their programmes have emerged from the social, historic, economic and political contexts in which the characteristics of action research have proved relevant.

The five key substantive topic streams have been education, agriculture/environment and farming, health/

welfare and human services, community development, and business and management. The auspice organizations also indicate a natural history of the key methodological interests of Action Learning, action research, process management and systems thinking, as well as the participatory research tradition represented in adult and community education, urban and community development, immigrant/settlement, indigenous, consumer and other critical and appreciative movements, the developing world and the natural environment. Other streams of interest are feminism, evaluation, organizational development, human resources, user-centred design and the climate emergency.

Creative Modes of Presentation

Reflecting the diversity of stakeholders and the methods needed to give voice to people's knowledge, experience, concerns and visions, the World Congresses have experimented with creative, artistic, aesthetic and alternative presentational methods, often in preference to traditional academic methods. World Congresses have pioneered, for example, an informal 'conversation pit', a 'Café of Possibilities', meeting spaces/market places, a 'Garden of Proposals', photographic displays, a video salon, songwriting, narrative creation, memorabilia, dramatic presentations and collective artworks. A conference dinner has on occasion enabled table groups to form small learning communities, for example, to create and present micro-theatres representing key concepts of the field.

Built-In Evaluation

To encourage small, self-correcting action inquiry, World Congresses have developed methods to 'feel its own pulse', that is, to use action research methods to better understand the nature of the World Congress experience for participants. These methods have included roving reporters, photographic and video narratives, a giant ear listening post, check-ins at the end of sessions, reflections by affinity groups or pods at the end of each day, post-Congress written feedback, a published evaluation journal article and follow-up reflection, report-back and sharing sessions by local networks.

Numbers

Typically, attendances have ranged between a low of several hundred and a high of 1,800 at Cartagena in 1997.

Participants in World Congresses

Those attending are employed or self-employed people working in schools, universities, higher education

providers, technical and further education, government research departments, training and development agencies, health care, human resource management, consulting firms, non-governmental organizations, church organizations or community groups, small- and medium-size businesses or large corporations, finance, defence, police, agriculture, travel, real estate, architecture and engineering. Particular World Congresses have attracted more Aboriginal, indigenous and First Nation researchers, self-help group members, service users, patients, consumers, residents, members of other communities-of-interest and citizen activists. To some extent, the philosophy of co-researching has brought groups and teams of people to the World Congresses, crossing boundaries of class and other distinctions.

Governance and Auspice Organization

World Congresses were initially auspiced by the founding group in Brisbane, Australia, but soon began to be hosted in other countries by local groups and institutions. ALARPM formed as a governance vehicle and continues, as ALARA, to be a core contracting, not-for-profit, non-government, community-based association that is committed to continuity. ALARA is legally incorporated in Canberra, Australia. ALARPM/ALARA expanded beyond organizing the World Congresses to develop an interested membership who meet locally or in state or national network meetings primarily in Australia. It also provides membership (called networking) directories, an online open-access journal to circulate practitioners' accounts in accessible written form and national conferences in Australia in the years between the World Congresses.

To ensure that the Australian basis of ALARPM did not skew the governance of the World Congresses, and assisted by a Participatory Action Research process facilitated by Susan Goff, ALARPM's committee of management became more internationally representative in 2001, with more than 20 members, of whom 17 were from countries other than Australia. An attempt to unite within a self-co-ordinating world network-of-networks with other national groups has been discussed at several World Congresses, without practical results to date.

Management of World Congresses

Various experiments with the continuum between central and local control led eventually to risk management of potential losses by the ALARA Management Committee by use of a legally robust Memorandum of Understanding and a linked World Congress Policy as the basis for negotiating each local agreement to achieve transparency and equity. The ALARA's Global

Vice President, supported by these two documents, establishes the World Congress committee or subcommittee and any networked groups to support the committee's work. Typically, there is a local convenor with the local committee, plus overlapping membership of some kind.

World Congresses and the Development of Action Research in Wider Social, Political and Economic Contexts

The World Congresses' themes and the nature of their sponsoring contexts illuminate their hermeneutic character in the context of the wider, co-creating social, political and economic situations. For example, in 1990, the focus on *performance* reflected the concerns of a worldwide post-recessionary context. In 1992, a focus on *transformation* reflected introducing the community development and health and human services streams, which in turn reflected the desire for social change and improvement in a post-war era of change from the 1970s and turbulence after the late 1980s' economic and technological business crash. In 1997, in South America, the focus on *convergencia* reflected the hitherto isolated 'strands, streams and variants' beginning to learn about one another in a rapidly globalizing world economy.

In 2000, the focus on *reconciliation* in Australia highlighted the historic strengthening of indigenous voices taking place, while in 2003, the focus on *learning* was situated within a post-reconciliation 'new South Africa'. By 2006, in the Netherlands, a focus on *standards*, with stronger representation of both agriculture and the environment, reflected a maturing field in a business world wanting to see grounded evidence of quality assurance and outcomes. And in 2010, back in Australia, a focus on *stock taking* indicated the field's growth and consolidation after the long post-war era,

its taking a strong local-global perspective on international development, merging with the new systems thinking, and joining the action research epistemology with biological and ecological systemic approaches, to address more deeply the growing imbalances of wealth, power and environmental degradation worldwide.

Other International Conferences

Over the decades of the World Congresses, a wide range of local, regional and national action research associations, groups and networks also formed around the world, as well as a growing number of consultancies, academic groups and centres. Only one other of these networks has held regular international conferences. Originally titled the Classroom Action Research Network, with a teaching/learning and education focus, the Collaborative Action Research Network broadened to include other professions and disciplines. This UK-based organization, along with the World Congresses, remains the only current opportunity for action researchers and those using related methodologies to meet internationally to further the work of the field.

Yoland Wadsworth

See also Collaborative Action Research Network

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Y

YOUTH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a general approach to research that counters researcher control over the process of constructing, sharing and using knowledge in favour of participant empowerment and voice and some form of transformational action. All forms of PAR involve participatory or group conceptualization, information collection and the resultant action. Generally, the target populations for PAR are those who have been politically, economically and culturally marginalized. PAR uses participatory research methodology coupled with critical social and emancipatory pedagogy to introduce people who have experienced marginalization and discriminatory practices to new ways of re-learning and representing their own contemporary and traditional knowledge, so as to move the action/policy agenda in their direction. Thus, PAR usually has a specific change-oriented social justice agenda.

PAR approaches evolved during civil rights and rural and urban independence movements in the USA, Canada and countries dominated by colonial orders in Latin America, Africa, Australia, New Zealand and South Asia. It is rooted in the struggles of marginalized working-class people, minoritized racial/ethnic groups, people with disabilities, LGTBQ (lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, queer) groups, girls and women and indigenous populations around the world. PAR combines the deep commitment of researchers to reverse the inequities of power, dominance and control, typical of research on populations, with the desire of people affected by structural inequities to move to the centre using a combination of knowledge and political organizational capacity. PAR also is an effort to place the theories, methods and techniques of science in the hands of those who have been excluded in order to raise issues, speak the truth to power and advocate

for change. Changes may be focused on revising policies, building new institutions and improving service delivery, or reversing the structures of power, influence and economics that impede freedom of decision-making, political advancement and social action. The process of advocating for transformative changes frequently brings about significant changes in the PAR researchers themselves. PAR is thus a transformational process working both simultaneously and sequentially, at the community or societal level, within PAR groups engaged in collective action and in the individual PAR actors themselves. The entry provides a general description of Youth Participatory Action Research (youth-PAR or YPAR), followed by a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that inform this approach and examples of approaches and methods for carrying out YPAR projects.

Youth Participatory Action Research

Youth-PAR, defined as PAR with and by young people, is based on a political philosophy and research methodology similar to that of adult PAR, but it takes into consideration child and adolescent development. Youth-PAR is intended to enhance young people's ability to make informed judgements about the social and environmental injustices that affect them and their communities and to take action to address them. The topics they select may relate to negative peer, family and contextual influences; ineffective school or other institutional policies or social service system failures. Ethical considerations require assurance that the research that youth undertake does not place them in positions of undue risk as individuals, within their families or in their schools and communities; that the research and related actions result in some intended benefit and that the experience is not disempowering.

Youth-PAR can be applied to a wide range of different topics of concern to youth. Issues that youth bring up repeatedly in Canada and the USA are sexuality,

pregnancy and sexual risk, stress and suicidal thoughts, violence, racial/ethnic and other forms of discrimination, substance abuse, bullying and homelessness. Young people also express interest in unjust school policies ranging from tracking to inappropriate suspension, conflicting policies regarding work, school and day care for young mothers, racism, language and other forms of discrimination, income inequity, unwelcoming environments, gaps in adequate food supply and inadequate service delivery. Internationally, youth have conducted PAR for HIV prevention in Brazil, Africa and Bosnia and Herzegovina, human rights and responses to civil strife and war in Sri Lanka, project and service development in England and the use of pesticides in El Salvador.

Theories Used in Youth-PAR

The goals of youth-PAR focus on empowerment and transformative change at the individual, group, community and structural levels. Theories guiding youth-PAR as a programmatic or intervention approach must be relevant to all of these levels and guide reflection instruction or action. They include critical, ecological, identity, sociocultural, empowerment and co-constructive instructional theories.

Critical theories focus analysis on the structural barriers to achieving greater equity. Critical educational theorists, who provide the conceptual underpinnings of youth-PAR, work from the premise that formal and informal educational institutions have a responsibility to address issues of inequity through the engagement of students and instructors in analysis and interpretation of the structures of power, dominance and oppression. One purpose of such analysis is to improve life chances for students who are marginalized. Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda articulate the right of people living in oppressed circumstances to conduct a group analysis of the structural and experiential contradictions in their lived experience, which would lead them to radical change. Each of these frames of reference emphasizes the oppressive nature of traditional power structures and demonstrates the important role of 'hope', a concept that connects structural analysis to action and empowerment. 'Hopeful' resistance to structural limitations and barriers occurs through examining, reflecting and acting to change institutions that constrain more equitable distribution of resources (economic, educational, etc.) across communities or groups.

Ecological theories as articulated by the work of researchers like Urie Bronfenbrenner and Joy Dryfoos situate individuals in a social system, thus providing an analytic framework that enables identification of sources of power and oppression, risks and resources.

Bronfenbrenner's model points to the interaction among system components, thus calling for a systemic or multilevel, community-wide approach to research and intervention. A risk-protection framework, first proposed by J. David Hawkins, Richard Catalano and Janet Miller, offers a means of identifying risk and protective factors at multiple levels. Youth-PAR takes advantage of both, using critical ecological theory to identify and locate power differentials and individual and group social and health risks and stressors and supports in various sectors (family, peer, school, work, community, etc.), examining the effect of these on behaviour within the system.

A variety of theories about ethnic heritage, cultural bonding and identification with the 'cultures or countries of origin' permeate the literature on identity, and we believe that these theories are important in reinforcing the pride and power of racial/ethnic and ethnic/cultural groups that have been marginalized. Pride in community, culture or country of origin is an important protective factor, enabling youth to withstand multiple forms of criticism and stigmatization. At the same time, many young people are more concerned with sharing major elements of a common, globalized 'youth culture' consisting of music, clothing and fashion, role models, values, experience and beliefs about the future. In local settings, youth often self-define into groups that share common interests and goals (skateboarders, Goths, gang members, etc.). Youth-PAR programmes must pay attention to commonalities and differences in the ways in which youth define themselves, affiliate with one another and differentiate between themselves and 'others'. This is important in terms of both forging PAR group identity and understanding the communities and other settings in which youth-PAR efforts try to bring about change.

Recognizing and addressing power differentials at multiple ecological levels and interpersonally through positionality and reflection (e.g. recognition and negotiation of one's status in relationship to power) are critical to youth-PAR, promoting and protecting equitable sharing of power, knowledge and action. Youth-PAR recognizes the fluidity and transitional status of identities that shift with developmental stage, setting, choice and constraints. Among youth in diverse environments, ethnic heritage, peer relationships and social groupings, and global youth culture intersect in unpredictable ways in local settings. Thus, identity considerations must be embedded in any youth-PAR approach.

If power refers to the capacity of the 'unit' (individual, group, community) to exert agency to 'solve its own problems', empowerment can be defined as processes that enhance the capacity to do so through voice, individual or collective action and social justice.

Critical ecologists link individual empowerment supported in a group setting to transformational processes in group and community settings, which form the basis for youth-PAR for social justice.

Approaches and Methods Used in Youth-PAR

To bring about transformational change, youth-PAR approaches utilize some form of knowledge co-construction for action, including civic engagement, community organizing to address injustices, youth participation in evaluating responsive public services and programmes for young people, and youth knowledge production for social justice. Different approaches balance research/inquiry, reflection and action differently.

Proponents of youth-PAR for civic engagement argue that youth as assets are missing from the social dialogue in their schools and communities and should be included to ensure their future civic involvement. The emphasis in civic engagement is greater involvement of youth as competent citizens in civic institutions and public representation. The PAR approach draws on their assets and offers them the opportunity to shape and hone their own views and become involved in larger social issues. Service learning and environmental advocacy have been important in forms of youth-PAR oriented towards civic engagement, serving mainly mainstream youth and students. An important subset of PAR researchers working with marginalized youth take a critical approach to service learning and civic engagement, arguing that PAR with those marginalized from the civic mainstream (voice, voting, civic service) can enable young people to understand the nature of exclusion and take politicized action to address it.

Youth involvement in community organizing is a growing movement in which young people learn organizing and advocacy skills to mobilize their peers and others to take some form of social action. Adults and/or youth choose the topic, but the favoured form of choice is youth preference. The field of youth organizing, as a whole, is focused on community issues including the following (from the most prevalent to the least): education, racial and ethnic disparities, health, environmental justice, juvenile justice, immigrant rights and issues related to gender and young women. Youth involvement in community organizing focuses on addressing injustices in these areas. It is an effort to involve youth in the formation of active national and international alliances to reduce social, economic and other injustices. Key elements in community organizing are relationship development, 'popular education' (or the non-institutionally based exploration of local knowledge and historical and political injustices) and social action. While the emphasis in community organizing

is on mobilization for action, some research, generally consisting of surveys, mapping and interviews, is conducted to better justify the arguments underlying the organizing effort, and at the same time to strengthen the voices of youth.

Youth involvement in research and evaluation (YRE) is a third approach to youth-PAR and focuses on evaluation as research. It attributes empowerment to youth involvement in the evaluation of social, educational, recreational and health/mental health services and policies that are important to them. Typical youth-PAR methodology is used to involve youth in identifying service delivery problems, using research methods to address the scope and effect of the problems and using the results to suggest changes. Proponents of YRE, like Kim Sabo, argue that youth affected by poor-quality services will have a larger impact on improving them than adults. YRE may or may not achieve critical analysis or transformational change.

Youth-PAR as knowledge production for social justice is the least well known and the most comprehensive of the approaches. It balances collective knowledge production with action outcomes. It uses eco-critical and self-reflective approaches to enable youth to focus on the root/structural and social causes of a problem. The process of knowledge construction is based on lived experience, group reflection, examination of injustices in the environment and reaching consensus on a common issue to be investigated and changed. These elements are typical of most youth-PAR approaches. Knowledge production for social justice, however, as developed by the Institute for Community Research in Hartford, goes beyond this to introduce interactive, face-to-face empirical ethnographic research methods that enable young people to test their own experiences and ideas with those of others, both adults and peers, while enhancing their logical thinking, social and communications skills. Youth learn multiple research methods, create a hypothetical research model identifying the perceived structural, social and individual causes of their identified problem, develop tools and collect data, analyze the results, present them and develop transformational actions, which in turn leads to more inquiry. In one such example, youth decided to focus on the structural, family and individual factors that promoted the generation of informal or semi-legal forms of income, sometimes referred to as 'hustling', which included pirated CDs and videos, borrowed or illegally acquired clothing and various forms of illegal drugs. After developing a conceptual model within the family, peer and financial domains, they used mapping and a brief survey, which they administered to teens at bus stops, fast-food locations and other sites in the city where small groups of teens gathered, to identify the places where various

items were hustled; pile sorting to understand what teens and adults thought about why teens hustle, what items were more or less risky to hustle and what family situations affect hustling and a longer survey to explore the family, income and peer factors contributing to hustling. After analyzing the data, they came to the conclusion that more and better paying employment programmes for teens would encourage avoidance of hustling. Over the next year, they advocated for youth employment funding at the city and state government levels, spoke to local merchants about job creation and created a job bank at their school. This form of youth-PAR can be conducted with students in school or out of school in summer institutes or camps and after-school programmes. Research methods are linked to academic skills (reading, writing, communication, math, history, science and political science). Reflection is ongoing. By building on youth experience, the approach is culturally, developmentally and contextually appropriate; supports civic attachment and community affiliation and offers opportunities for career exploration.

The Importance of Qualified Adult Leadership in the Conduct of Youth-PAR

Effective youth involvement in PAR depends on skilled facilitators who want to work with youth; can transform research methods into tools for interactive learning and data collection appropriate for elementary and high school children and youth and view themselves as agents of transformative change. At each step in the conduct of youth-PAR, adult facilitators must assess the skills and abilities of youth participants and integrate their lived experiences into their work. Young people in marginalized environments in the USA and elsewhere encounter issues of stigma, discrimination, exclusion, continued exposure to negative feedback and lack of recognition of strengths, assets and accomplishments. Youth-PAR facilitators thus need pedagogical, theoretical and methodological training that highlights the importance of positionality; addresses differences in positionality in instruction and research practice and develops skills in research, reflection and action. Only with personal reflection can facilitators introduce these ideas to young people. In addition to methodological skills and ability to relate to young people, facilitators must be able to model the desired learning behaviours, enable youth to extend their knowledge through interaction with one another and the facilitator and lead students to reflect on their learning and group experience. Thus, selecting and supporting facilitators with appropriate training, motivation, skills and dedication are critical to the approach.

Youth-PAR consists of a set of approaches, methods and tools tested over time that can be applied to any

topic of concern to a group of young people. The field of youth-PAR is well established in the Global North, in particular in the USA, Canada and Australia, but with some exceptions, it has not yet emerged as a major approach to empowering voiceless youth in the Global South. A systematic, theory-driven approach to building leadership and voice among disenfranchised youth, it should be widely supported in schools and communities in countries around the globe. Formal programmes that provide effective training for qualified youth-PAR facilitators are a priority both nationally and internationally to ensure effective programmes of research and action and to help them grow.

Jean J. Schensul

See also Community-Based Participatory Research; Digital Storytelling; Participatory Action Research

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