Proposals submitted for Education and Learning stream
8th World Congress PAR/ALARA. September, 2010.

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Dr Franziska Trede

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Where is the praxis in practice-based education?

Practice-based education (PBE) is using strategies, content and goals that direct students' learning towards preparation for practice roles post graduation. One of PBE's goals is to enhance participation, meaning making, and reflection which together help students become aware and respond to the impact and consequences of their actions on others in practice. Such practice is morally, ethically and culturally committed and has been described as praxis (Kemmis and Trede, in press). Academics who teach in professional entry courses that prepare students for the world of practice might bring skills and expertise as practitioners or researchers but often do not have skills in facilitating transformative learning in their students which promotes praxis.

This paper reports on a strategy that aims to build capacity of university academics to enhance PBE with notions of praxis, namely the education for practice debates. The term debate was purposefully chosen to align its purpose with principles of critical pedagogy. These principles are: reason prevails over power, debaters take a self-reflective stance, and arguments need to be transparent and have intrinsic properties that help decide whether to accept or reject validity claims (Habermas, 1987). A critical perspective to debates promotes disclosure of interests, bias and motivation, rejects deriding rhetoric and unsubstantiated statements that lead to deception, and honours genuine transparent discussion.

In order to support an open, positive and creative online forum for discussion, participants were asked to:
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be as open as they can. Try to share critical moments that expose challenges, problems and errors that all can learn from. There is no pressure to be seen to succeed.
- Feel free to disagree and engage in vigorous debate, but treat other participants and their contributions respectfully
- Try to focus on problem-posing and exploring choices rather than immediately looking for solutions. This is a forum for learning and transforming, not teaching.
- Use the debate constructively for genuine professional development, not to simply manage frustrations.

This paper will briefly highlight the strengths of these debates but will predominantly focus on challenges and barriers to critical dialogues and enhancing praxis. Whilst participants in the education for practice debates were proficient in sharing their practices and critiquing own practices they were reluctant to challenge others and make changes. It was difficult to steer the debate towards a deeper discussion that involved questioning values and practices, and identifying ways to transform current practices. Although the debates raised awareness of the need to underpin education for practice with praxis it is yet to be seen how this awareness translates into action to foster praxis in PBE. This session will discuss transitions from practice to praxis.

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Bob Pease
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Interrogating Privileged Subjectivities: Tensions and Dilemmas in Writing Reflexive Personal Accounts of Privilege

In this paper, I critically review reflexive personal accounts of privilege and explore my own use of memory-work, autobiographical memoir and participatory experiential research in my academic writing and research about and against privilege. In recent years as part of an emerging literature in studies of privilege, there has been an increase in personal accounts of coming to terms with one's unearned entitlements. Individual authors write about the ways in which various forms of privilege have functioned in their own lives. From accounts of male privilege, white privilege, heterosexual privilege and class privilege, they describe how the dynamics of power and privilege have shaped key experiences in their lives. Through vicarious introspection, these authors provide accounts of their personal journeys to accept and challenge their own taken-for-granted assumptions about their privileged positioning. In a context of claims that sexism, racism, homophobia and class elitism also hurt those who hold privilege, how do members of dominant groups speak and write about their unearned entitlements without further inscribing their own privileged status? This chapter explores the politics of reflexive writing about privilege by examining the positionality of privileged writers in the context of wider debates about epistemology and socio-political forces.

Ching-Kuei Chiang, Ruth Elder and Helen Chapman

Empowering Teachers to Curriculum Change: An Action Research Approach

Empowerment is a popular term that is often loosely defined and has been uncritically used in a variety of ways. This may largely be due to the complex and vague nature of empowerment, which makes it difficult to define and thus uses in clear ways.

Empowerment is widely recognised as a valued process that is necessary to the success of educational or curriculum change. The literature suggests that educational change endeavors are often discouraging. It is common that teachers' roles in curriculum change are that of passive recipients and feel insecure and powerless of the change. Empowerment, in the sense of increasing individuals' control over decisions and actions has the potential to initiate and sustain ongoing improvement. However, the empowering process is complex and difficult to achieve.

Smith (1993) suggests that empowerment incorporates three interrelated spheres: self-growth, political consciousness raising and collective action/struggle. Smith's construct of empowerment to determine the ability and degree of empowerment an individual or group is capable of achieving may be useful in putting theory into practice.

From my experiences while introducing Collaborative Action Research for curriculum change within a school of nursing in a Taiwan university, I found that action research, with its emphasis on reflective, collaborative and democratic processes, has empowering potentials for enabling participants not only to understand social reality but also to change it. The specific conditions under which the empowerment process promoted in regard to facilitating curriculum change are:

- Increase teachers' knowledge and understandings associated with the change. Making teachers more knowledgeable is an important step in enhancing their power.
- Promote authentic participation in curriculum decision-making. Giving teachers a greater voice in making curriculum decisions - access to power - provides teachers greater influence over their work.
- Develop a collaborative work culture for the change. Teachers felt empowered when they were part of a group with a common purpose.
- Encourage reflection. On contemporary pedagogical knowledge and teaching practices. Reflection is a highly valuable strategy for promoting teachers' professional growth.
- Acknowledge the existing contextual conditions that might impact the development of empowerment.

In this discussion it would be helpful to learn from other researchers about their experiences in empowering participants to discover their own strength to change.

Smith, R. (1993). Potentials for empowerment in critical educational research. *Australia Educational Researcher*, 20(2), 75-93.

Greg Marston & Lynda Shevellar

"The only logical action would have to be one of desperation"[1]

The alternative finance sector has experienced enormous growth over the last decade and is currently the subject of much conjecture. There are currently eight different Acts are being finalised for implementation in 2010 that will impact upon people's ability to access and provide small loans. It is a heated area because at the centre of this debate is money: the rights and responsibilities regarding access to money, and the freedoms and powers that align with these. As researchers have commentated, only food and sex come even close to the emotional arousal of money.

Policy and law makers, consumer advocates and industry lobbyists are immersed in debate about best to regulate financial activities to maximise choice whilst protecting consumers from exploitation, and whether government intervention is unwarranted paternalism or an abandonment of our most vulnerable citizens. However for the consumers of the financial sector these debates are largely intellectual exercises that have little to do with their lived experiences. In 2009, to better understand the nature of the services being provided to people, and the experiences of people accessing these alternative finance services we conducted surveys and interviews with lenders, borrowers, consumer advocates, financial counsellors and researchers.

What we find is that what looks like irrational choices by individuals may actually be rational behaviour given people's circumstances and market options. We argue that without consideration of the *everyday experience* of those utilising financial services, the present social policy efforts will ultimately fail in their efforts to either liberate or protect.

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[1] From *Star Trek: Spock* (The Galileo Seven) – or until you come up with a better one Greg!

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THE VISUAL AND TACTILE APPEAL OF PUPPETS AS EDUCATIONAL TOOL IN SOUTH AFRICA

When puppets are used at the foundation phase of education, children gleam with radiance as they escape into the unrestrained arena of playful fantasy. Through the use of puppetry as an educational tool, children learn while they are playing in a way that is unrestrictive and non-threatening. Puppets contribute greatly to the development of a child's learning by providing the child with opportunities to assemble, discover and comprehend a wide range of concepts, knowledge, skills, and situations. Puppetry also provides a stimulus for, and reinforcement of, the child's learning as he/she engages in a wealth of concrete experiences, which are linked to a purposeful activity (Currell, 1976: 55). The presence of puppets in South African schools is noticeable in Pre-primary, Primary and High schools and puppets are constantly being utilised in diverse disciplines in the education of people of all age groups. However, the manner in which puppets are presented and utilised has a significant impact on the way they are perceived by learners. This paper attempts to evaluate the impact of puppetry as an educational tool. Using participatory action research methodology, the researchers embark on an exploratory study of the visual and tactile appeal of puppets on learners at the foundation phase level in South African educational institutions. The research also excavates the perception of educators on the value of puppets that are used for educational purposes.

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Maria Dolores Viga de Alva,
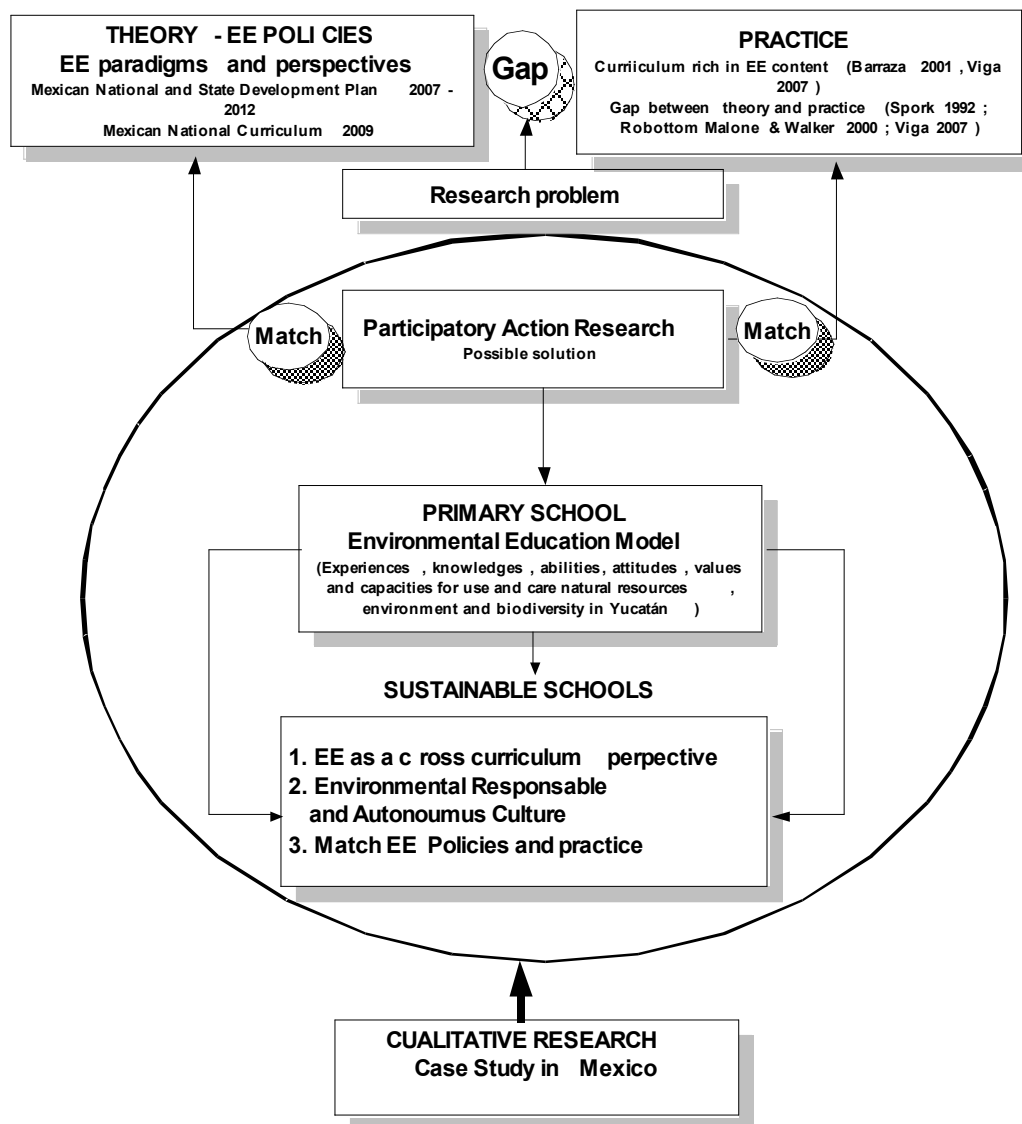Research and Advanced Studies Centre of the National Polytechnic Institute, (CINVESTAV)
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Participatory Action Research. A pathway to match theory and practice in Environmental Education in Mexican Primary Schools

One place to implement Environmental Education (EE) is the school, where individuals are expected to learn how to interact in a harmonious way with the environment, to care for their health and thus have a better life quality. EE in the curricula of basic education in Mexico was formally incorporated in 1993 (Barraza 2001). Viga (2007) analysed that curriculum finding that the EE objectives are not being accomplished, suggesting that it is necessary to analyse how teachers are implementing EE policies in their classroom. Mordock and Krasny (2001) suggest that one cause of the gap between EE policies and practice is that EE is not being developed in an interdisciplinary and holistic form, as well as it is not developing critical thinking, which results in actions to contribute to solve environmental problems. To support, Gonzalez (1996) (1996) emphasizes that to implement EE in primary school is necessary to develop in the students a critical sense. Participatory Action Research (PAR) represent a practical and theoretical proposal to develop critical thinking and action to work in environmental local problem since the school (Mordock & Krasny 2001).

In Mexico an EE model proposal has been developed, which incorporate PAR as its work methodology. Using EE and PAR, this model promotes that yucatecan population to develop actions to solve environmental problem that affect negatively their community development, health, and population's quality of life. Furthermore, this model proposes to integrate EE as a cross curriculum perspective in schools. To reach that goal, teachers and students from a rural zone in Mexico will be training in the use of PAR and environmental topics (Viga et al. 2009). The developers of the model state that PAR could engage students, teachers and community in participatory actions to analyse the context where they live, identify and rank problems and design proposal to solve their environmental problems.

To identify and analyse the contribution of PAR to match theory and practice a research will be conducted, which aims to analyse the national curriculum of Mexico, focusing in the part of EE policies, and provide evidences of how it is manifested in the practice of some specific cases, one of them using the previously explained Model, which use PAR in the teaching-learning process. To accomplish the aim, it will be conducted a qualitative research-based project with some elements of quantitative methodology, using case study as the principal method (Figure 1).

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Mexican National and State Development Plan 2007 - 2012
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Gap

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Gap between theory and practice (Spork 1992; Robottom Malone & Walker 2000; Viga 2007)

Research problem

Match

Participatory Action Research
Possible solution

Match

PRIMARY SCHOOL
Environmental Education Model
(Experiences, knowledges, abilities, attitudes, values and capacities for use and care natural resources, environment and biodiversity in Yucatán)

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

1. EE as a c ross curriculum perpective
2. Environmental Responsable and Autonoumus Culture
3. Match EE Policies and practice

CUALITATIVE RESEARCH
Case Study in Mexico

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Can the goldfish see the water? A critical analysis of 'good intentions' in cross-cultural practice.

Abstract: in this paper we use the work of Paulo Freire (1972, 1978), Jack Whitehead (1989) and Jean McNiff (McNiff & Whitehead 2005) to investigate case studies from our practice (Bruce with Chinese and Indian students visiting New Zealand to study; Pip with Maori staff/students). Freire advocates conscientised practice by those who seek to liberate themselves and others from oppression. Whitehead and McNiff, using Living Educational Theories, challenge educators to be overt about their own values, to present the standards by which they wish to be judged, and evidence of the congruence between claimed values, these standards and our practice as educators as perceived by our students.

Both of us would claim to hold values that our students are responsible and autonomous adults whose success in our courses is best facilitated by our understanding of and respect for their specific backgrounds and learning preferences. We would wish to be judged on these values by feedback provided by our students and those we work with, that our theories are theories-in-use, not just espoused theories, as Schon (1983, 1987) put it. However, is there a gap between our intentions and students' experience of these? How well, if ever, are we able to 'see the water,' the cultural conditioning that leads most of us to act in ways that seem supportive of our students to us, but may be perceived differently by them?

In this paper, we present conflicting evidence from our students as to their perceptions of our practice. We discuss where things seem to have gone well, and where interventions have been traumatic for the recipients – one of whom described a specific intervention as "viruses without vaccines". We raise questions about whether, and how, our practice cross-culturally can be safe, or made safer. We challenge ourselves and other educators to think carefully about our responsibilities to our students, whether our privileged positioning obliges us to share (Bishop, 1996) and if so, how that sharing can occur in ways that validate and equally respect the values of those with whom we work.

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http://www.jackwhitehead.com/aerictr08/jwictr08key.htm

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Organisational Boundaries and AR inside and outside Higher Education

In 2008, an assistant head of preschool in a municipality in Sweden approached my university to enquire about courses in AR. She intended to introduce AR as a means of organisational learning in preschools throughout her municipality. There were no courses on offer but I was about to wrap up my doctoral thesis, which was rooted in (feminist) action research as a methodology. An emphatic dialogue on course design ensued, and in September 2009, a one-year part-time AR course started with initially thirty participants. Many challenges needed addressing. For one, the limiting context of higher education with its traditional stance on course work and modes of examination posed problems that called for pragmatic solutions that would still honour the participatory spirit of AR. Furthermore, I wanted to pay close attention to ethical and epistemological issues by incorporating these in the course syllabus and subject matter for AR. Also, my role as a teacher in HE needed continuous de-dramatising so that the participants would be able to trust me. Prior to the AR course, most of the participants had been made project leaders by said assistant head, in order to implement systematic quality control in their respective organisations. There were considerable expectations of what this course could do to enhance organisational development in their respective organisational settings. Some otherwise questionable aspects could be successfully handled, such as granting an academic outsider partial power over a course in HE, stretching academic boundaries and thereby trying the patience of my superiors, as well as emphasising learning processes rather than learning outcomes for a certain course module. I will illustrate sometimes controversial aspects of a course in AR in HE, give examples of participants' well-documented learning experiences, and their concrete organisational AR projects outside the AR course, and how such projects and learning experiences can feed back into an AR course. In conclusion, the necessity of organisational boundary work, both inside and outside HE, will be addressed, and some theoretical perspectives, such as feminist pragmatism, will be suggested for further discussion of an AR course in an HE setting.

Keywords: AR, Higher Education, Organisational Development, Learning Processes, Ethics, Feminist Pragmatism

Jeanette Åkerström

Involving Young People as Partners in Research:
Experiences from a Research Circle with Adolescent Girls

By describing a research circle with young students and appraising advantages and challenges when engaging young people as partners in research, the aim of this article is to contribute to national as well as international methodological developments within the growing body of participatory research that involves young people. Nine adolescent girls, in the age of 15-19, from regular and special schools were requited to a research circle. Together with two adult researchers, they did research on participation and exclusion in the diverse school. By describing the process in the research circle the article will hopefully inspire research projects that account for young people's standpoints and agency. Methodological and ethical challenges when dealing with young people's changing lives and adult oriented bureaucracy are discussed. However, the article also highlights the dynamics, unexpected perspective shifts, insider perspective, and decisiveness that young people bring to the research process.

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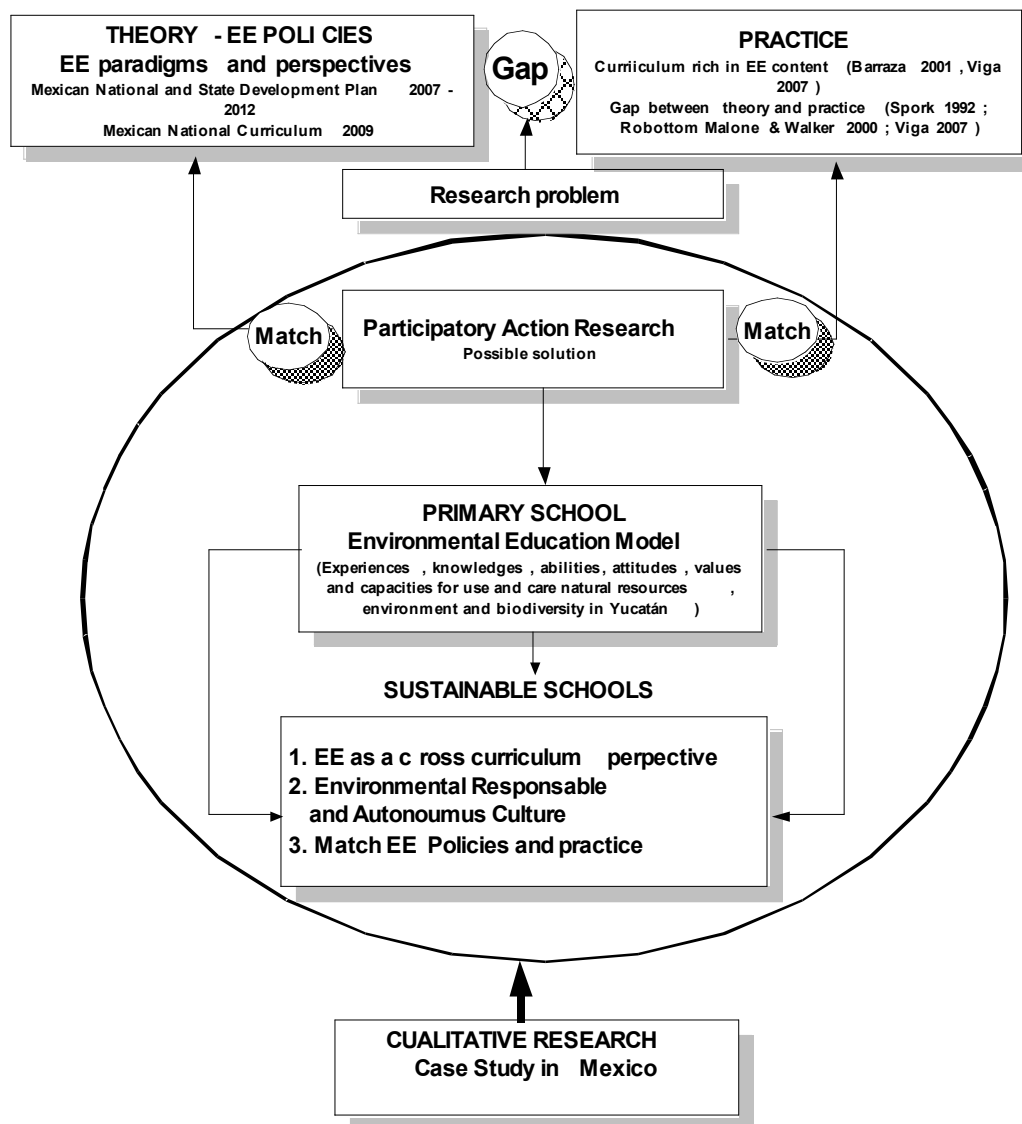
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Organisational Boundaries and AR inside and outside Higher Education

In 2008, an assistant head of preschool in a municipality in Sweden approached my university to enquire about courses in AR. She intended to introduce AR as a means of organisational learning in preschools throughout her municipality. There were no courses on offer but I was about to wrap up my doctoral thesis, which was rooted in (feminist) action research as a methodology. An emphatic dialogue on course design ensued, and in September 2009, a one-year part-time AR course started with initially thirty participants. Many challenges needed addressing. For one, the limiting context of higher education with its traditional stance on course work and modes of examination posed problems that called for pragmatic solutions that would still honour the participatory spirit of AR. Furthermore, I wanted to pay close attention to ethical and epistemological issues by incorporating these in the course syllabus and subject matter for AR. Also, my role as a teacher in HE needed continuous de-dramatising so that the participants would be able to trust me. Prior to the AR course, most of the participants had been made project leaders by said assistant head, in order to implement systematic quality control in their respective organisations. There were considerable expectations of what this course could do to enhance organisational development in their respective organisational settings. Some otherwise questionable aspects could be successfully handled, such as granting an academic outsider partial power over a course in HE, stretching academic boundaries and thereby trying the patience of my superiors, as well as emphasising learning processes rather than learning outcomes for a certain course module. I will illustrate sometimes controversial aspects of a course in AR in HE, give examples of participants' well-documented learning experiences, and their concrete organisational AR projects outside the AR course, and how such projects and learning experiences can feed back into an AR course. In conclusion, the necessity of organisational boundary work, both inside and outside HE, will be addressed, and some theoretical perspectives, such as feminist pragmatism, will be suggested for further discussion of an AR course in an HE setting.

Keywords: AR, Higher Education, Organisational Development, Learning Processes, Ethics, Feminist Pragmatism

Jeanette Åkerström

Involving Young People as Partners in Research:
Experiences from a Research Circle with Adolescent Girls

By describing a research circle with young students and appraising advantages and challenges when engaging young people as partners in research, the aim of this article is to contribute to national as well as international methodological developments within the growing body of participatory research that involves young people. Nine adolescent girls, in the age of 15-19, from regular and special schools were requited to a research circle. Together with two adult researchers, they did research on participation and exclusion in the diverse school. By describing the process in the research circle the article will hopefully inspire research projects that account for young people's standpoints and agency. Methodological and ethical challenges when dealing with young people's changing lives and adult oriented bureaucracy are discussed. However, the article also highlights the dynamics, unexpected perspective shifts, insider perspective, and decisiveness that young people bring to the research process.

Keywords: participatory research, research circle, young people

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Teacher Inquiry, Teacher Networks and the Preparation of Educational Researchers: Lessons Learned in a Multi-Partner Collaboration

A key element of the vision of the EducationWorks Leadership Council, a group of 50 representatives from foundations, businesses, hospitals, social service agencies, and education in North East Ohio, is personalized learning for all K-12 students so that the region may meet the diverse needs of its community more effectively. The Council invited five teams of high school teachers, together with their principals, to participate in a year-long project entitled "Personalized Learning for the 21st Century" (the Project). Building on the Governor of Ohio's core principles for education that "Our best teachers can show us what works best in the classroom…[And] we must strive to develop a specific, personalized education program that identifies how each individual student learns, and … use the teaching methods appropriate to each student's needs and abilities", the Project was designed to create a network of education professionals across NE Ohio to explore through action research a more personalized approach within their own classrooms and to learn from and support each other in discovering effective avenues to personalized learning.

Kent State University's College of Education, Health, and Human Services was invited to take the lead on the Project and I became the project manager. Each team of teachers was assigned a faculty consultant and doctoral student "research fellow" to support the work of the teachers in conceptualizing and documenting their inquiry. Our work with teachers was guided by the principles that teacher knowledge deserves to be central to the knowledge base in education and that sharing that knowledge through teacher networks can have an impact on student learning.

The following questions also guided our work together:
- How can university-based researchers support the production and sharing of teachers' knowledge and inquiry?
- What kind of collaboration honors teacher knowledge and inquiry?
- How was personalized learning conceptualized by teacher teams?
- What supports and obstacles existed for action research and networking?

What we are learning relative to each of these questions will be explored in the paper. A preliminary analysis of data indicates that teachers value the sharing of knowledge through networks; teams are more productive when the members are new to one another; and when foundations provide minimal guidelines, participants feel free to explore possibilities. Those who attend the session will be encouraged to discuss the implications for the preparation of educational researchers and for the involvement of foundations in educational research, practice, and policy.

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Surfacing learnings about power in the university and the community in a doctoral student's study of action research

This paper explores my experience as a doctoral student whose dissertation research was a case study of an action research project with human service professionals. In the course of the research, I surfaced learnings about relationships, power, and ethics in a Postpositivist university, agency, and community. Relationships of power affected my facilitation of the participatory action research process. I found that a web of power relationships affected every aspect of the action research process, and understanding these relationships is crucial to what it means to be an academic action researcher.

The action research process studied in the dissertation examined the prevalence of the phenomenon of burnout in the human service workplace and actions that human service practitioners could take to address it. Thirteen middle management professionals from twelve organizations came together for sixteen months to examine the issue of burnout in their workplace, becoming co researchers and leading a number of local initiatives. A matrix of power relationships in the human service workplace wound through the themes that emerged from the study's data.

The findings indicate that most workers enter the human service field with passion and commitment, only to be challenged by the marginalization of their profession in the larger culture. These systematic issues are exacerbated by issues of power, gender and social class. As co-researchers worked their way through an iteration of an action research cycle they developed and articulated an understanding of their lived knowledge and experience and exhibited increasing critical consciousness. Increased awareness uncovered an overall lack of planning and action to address the problem. Finding their voices, co-researchers led a number of local initiatives that contributed to worker autonomy and stimulated positive and sustainable change in a local context of the human service workplace, and exhibited how learnings about continuous critical awareness of power affect relationships in the system is needed to avoid the perpetuation of old relations of power.

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Nigawchiisuun: Participatory evaluation as indigenous methodology

Despite a recent apology for the trauma caused by the imposition of residential schools (Minister, 2008), the legacy of colonisation for First Nations and Inuit people by the Canadian state continues to reverberate on their communities. As the research of government commissions, scholars and activists has shown, despite the apparently well intentioned policies of successive federal governments, this legacy has amounted to genocide, racism, expropriation of their traditional lands, and forced migration, as well as the kidnapping of native children and their placement in residential schools until the last quarter of the 20th century. The effects of this pattern of events on aboriginal people, whether urban or on designated reserves, has had profoundly negative implications for their lived experience of Canadian society and culture. These negative legacies of colonialism are particularly visible in several areas: in education where their children still struggle to meet levels of attainment achieved by their southern peers (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003); in health where many communities are confronted by an emerging epidemic of diabetes (Boston, et al., 1997); and in socio-economic status, with growing poverty and its attendant social problems (Wotherspoon, 2002).

In countering the legacies of neo/colonialism, aboriginal communities across Canada are beginning to mount their own locally inspired and developed initiatives in business, health, welfare and education to address needs that they have identified and that are organised and delivered from their particular cultural standpoint and experience of the everyday world as they live it within the broader context of Canadian society. This paper reports on one such initiative that has been recently created and launched by the Cree Nation of Wemindji (in Quebec, Canada), called COOL (Challenging Our Own Limits) or Nigawchiisuun.

The paper will briefly outline the creation, development and implementation of COOL over the past five years and will discuss the theoretical and methodological framework that supports the project. COOL, we will argue, represents a potentially fertile approach to research in indigenous contexts (Kapoor & Jordan, 2009). We have organised the paper into three sections. First, we present a brief background and discussion of the origins, impetus and eventual launch of COOL as a pilot project in 2005. Second, we provide a general theoretical framework situating participatory evaluation (PE) in relation to the broader field of participatory action research (PAR). Third, and perhaps most importantly, we consider the implications and potential of this methodology for indigenous research. Last, we will provide concluding remarks on participatory evaluation as an indigenous alternative to mainstream program evaluation and related managerial technologies.

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Dr Judy Buckingham and Amanda Hiscoe

The Partner Assisted Learning System (PALS) project

The Partner Assisted Learning System (PALS) project was developed by Deakin University and Inclusion Melbourne (then Gawith Villa) as a participatory action research project to create a learning package through which people with an intellectual disability and those without could learn together in the community. The research was carried out by Dr Buckingham and her co researcher Amanda Hiscoe, who has an intellectual disability, and directed by a steering group of which four people had a cognitive disability.

The original project brief stated that it was to be "*an action research project involving three years of collaborative work with community adult education organisations which include people with intellectual disabilities in their programs*", the final outcomes to include an accredited curriculum package, which would promote participatory learning and which would be applicable Australia-wide.

Action research/learning was a vital component of every stage of the project. The two researchers each kept reflective journals through which the researcher with a disability was able to comment on the practice of the researcher without a disability allowing for emancipation on the one hand and learning on the other. Similarly participatory and reflective practices introduced into the steering group provided opportunities for those with a disability to contribute fully to meetings and to comment on the inclusivity and practices of both the process of meetings and the direction and content of the project itself.

The development of the learning package was again through action research in which each stage was trialled with people with and without a disability, redeveloped and re trialled. The processes outlined in the actual learning package are also structured to ensure action- reflection cycles as partners learn together.

This paper sets out the progress of the project, highlighting the importance of the participatory learning process, the mistakes and subsequent revisions made and the resulting efforts to become more truly inclusive.

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Collaborative Action Research and Action Learning

"Action research is an approach to professional development in which, typically, teachers spend 1 or more years working on classroom-based research projects" (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000, p. 199). Although action research for teacher development has gained prominence in the current literature, there has been little documentation as to how action research influences teacher learning and curriculum development. Moreover, little is known about how teachers have actually incorporated action research into their practice and worked with other teachers for curriculum development, particularly in the area of foreign language teacher education (Burns, 1999). This study aims at revealing how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers engaged in collaborative action research organized by university teachers and how, as a result, they changed their teaching practices in their school contexts.

15 Japanese high school teachers of English participated in this collaborative action research project for two years, which was organized by a university teacher and researcher. Using multiple data sources including interviews, classroom observations, surveys, and action research reports, this two-year long study delineates how these EFL teachers struggled with developing their practices through action research. All 15 teachers reported that collaborative action research encouraged them to reflect on their daily teaching and made it a habit of their profession. In fact, continuous teacher learning opportunities led to changes in their teaching style, developing their repertoire and building their confidence. On the other hand, only a few teachers reported that they could share new ideas with their colleagues in their workplaces. It appears that teacher collaboration within a school context seems to be essential for successful curriculum development

This study sheds light on the challenges and opportunities of collaborative action research for teacher and curriculum development. In short, Burns (1999) affirms that "experimenting with collaborative action research builds a professional learning community with other teachers...the research process empowers teachers by reaffirming their professional judgment and enabling them to take steps to make reflection on practice a regular part of everyday teaching" (p. 234).

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Linda Henderson

A Deleuzian Framework for Participatory Action Research

A problem is that which gives rise to thinking, it is where thought itself occurs (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). Problems are thus more than a realm of solutions rather they are series of potentialities. Drummond & Themessl-Huber's (2007) work theorise the cyclical process of action research drawing on the work of Deleuze in an attempt to contribute to current understandings of the learner and the problem-solving process that permeates action research projects. In particular they draw upon Deleuze's use of the term transcendental empiricism to open up the cyclical processes of action research in a manner that both enriches and moves beyond the more linear representations. Of particular importance in their work is an understanding of the virtual and the actual – "the virtual is not a realm of actual identifiable things...it is the background of contingent potentialities from which singularities...return into the objects and substances of the actual, including conscious thoughts and feelings" (Drummond & Themessl-Huber, 2007:435). As such we can never "get behind reality" in order to determine or plan what should take place next (Drummond & Themessl-Huber, 2007). This paper will extend upon this work by presenting a participatory action research project whereby the concept of desire from a Deleuzian perspective become the driving factor behind the cyclical processes.

The paper will highlight how through understanding desire as that which is productive saw the project become a "qualitative flow of duration" as opposed to a series of stages (Drummond & Themessl-Huber, 2007). It will draw on the work of three early childhood teachers and the teacher/researcher as they engaged in a year long participatory action research project of learning within the context of an independent school. The paper will outline some of the institutional difficulties experienced by these early childhood teachers as they attempted to engage in learning. Finally it will argue that it was through their assemblages of desire that the learning resulting from this participatory action research project saw them opening up what has been defined elsewhere as a empty space – the space between early childhood and school (Britt & Sumsion, 2003).

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Action Research PhD Cohorts – Elements for Success

Abstract: Traditional PhD study can be an isolating and lonely activity. Membership of a cohort of PhD students, working together supportively during the PhD process, enhances both the experience and the outcomes for the students concerned. This paper will outline the use of Appreciative Inquiry as the basis for the development of two case studies of AR PhD Cohort programs: one at Monash University; and one at the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP) at the University of Bath. These case studies identify five essential elements that contribute to the success of the PhD cohorts: process; relationships; intellectual stimulation; research method; and outcomes. This paper expands on the five elements and discusses a model for cohort based PhD study that uses these elements to enhance the success of both PhD programs and the individual students participating in them.

Key Words: Cohorts, PhD, Education, Action Research, Case Study

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INTERRUPTING 'NEOLIBERALISM AS USUAL' IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR: CONSTRAINTS AND POSSIBILITIES

How do we understand the changing conditions of teachers' work in Australia and the prospects for teacher participation in action research?

This paper traces three 'waves' of neoliberalism over the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s in governmental activity to control the work of teachers. I argue that neoliberal assumptions - marketisation, individualism, intensification of work, and subjugation of educational values to economic domains - have significantly altered the working conditions and spaces for activism in the Australian teaching profession, particularly in schools and colleges which serve marginalized populations.

Participants will join in identifying examples of neoliberalism in action, and explore alternative explanations for intervention that involves more participatory, decolonising and democratic approaches to schooling and teachers' work. Looking back over different efforts to support various forms of educational action research over the last 35 years, the paper goes on to suggest criteria for what might make educational action research more sustainable under narrowing conditions for teachers' work.

Group construction of new definitions for educational activism and political education of educational activists will conclude the session.

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Institutionalising quality learning in a research intensive university

How does one initiate and sustain conversations on quality teaching and learning in a research intensive university? This paper discusses how Action Research is applied to introduce an online curriculum mapping software. The aim is to ensure that university-wide conversations on good curriculum principles are promoted and translated into practice.

The project is mainly two sided. On the one side it is a project that uses the concept of curriculum mapping to create opportunities for the university community to engage in meaningful conversations about the 'what, why and how' of what is being taught, learned and assessed. On the other hand, the project provides an opportunity to investigate system requirements for such an institution wide agenda and to establish what technologies are needed to support such a venture. In this 'context of action' (Bradbury Huang 2010) curriculum data is plotted into the customized (information) system through a number of phases leading to curriculum analysis. 'Action' occurs at three levels: (1) customisation of the software to incorporate quality teaching, learning and assessment principles, (2) loading of curriculum data into the system with course teams, (3) analysis of the data using the web based system. Teaching staff and curriculum practitioners discuss and shape research questions, work though identified phases and plan for improvement cycles.

Though curriculum mapping is a well documented process (Udelhofen 2005), the paper based approach is far much limited to support the dynamics of curriculum development in higher education. The conversations that have to part of such a process are lost in the tediousness and scope of the work to be covered. The online system offers a number of features and 'affordances' (Anderson 2004) that enable curriculum analysis. The project design in this context allows for further research and development, and as such the acquired software is customised to meet institutional curriculum development needs, national legislative parameters as well as internationally recognised curriculum principles such as constructive alignment (Biggs 2001), coherence and articulation (South-African-Qualifications-Authority 2000). The presentation will include a demonstration of selected aspects of the system in order to facilitate discussion.

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Teaching Participatory Research: Making Higher Education Participatory and Relevant

The paper argues that the inclusion of Participatory Research (PR) in the curriculum of institutions of higher education will facilitate its actual practice, thereby contributing to new forms of knowledge production and social change.

Participatory Research (PR), as an alternative to dominant social science research methodology and an approach for social change, gained recognition in the 70s. More than three decades later, however, much more is needed for PR's inclusion in the formal higher education system. There have been disciplines like social work education wherein emancipatory research, encompassing PR and Participatory Action Research(PAR), are slowly being considered as valid form of research. However in practice not many academic institutions are teaching PR to their students and few doctoral students are using PR as a methodology for their work. The role of PR in promoting social change has found more supporters beyond the academic setting, as is evident in the way practices in diverse fields such as women 's empowerment, health, and natural resource management, among other have adopted it.

To strengthen the practice of PR, larger number of institutions of higher education and social science disciplines need to recognize this form of research as a relevant form of social enquiry, education and action. This paper highlights the status of PR in higher educational institutions in India, and analyses the viability of and the challenges in its inclusion in degree level courses across social science disciplines, and for doctoral research. The paper explores ways by which disciplines and academic institutions in India can include PR in the curriculum and teaching practices. It draws implications for institutions of higher education, with relation to the policy guiding the institution, the curriculum and pedagogy, as well as the institution's human resource, administrative and cultural dimensions.

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Participant-Centred Learning: Is Teaching by the Case Method an Effective Approach?

Learning by the case method has been described as the most relevant and practical way to learn managerial skills. The method calls for discussions of real-life situations that business executives have faced. As students review the cases, they put themselves in the shoes of the managers, analyse the situation, decide what to do and defend their decisions (Hammond, 2002).

The case method helps students to learn because the case studies cut across a range of organizations and situations thereby providing managers with greater exposure than they are likely to experience in their day-to-day routine. In class discussions, students bring to bear their expertise, experience, observations and analyses. Each student's contribution becomes key to the learning process as students bring different interpretations to problems and ways of solving them. Students active participation is therefore a key component to the success of learning using the case method (Hammond, 2002; Bruns, 2006). Despite these perceived benefits, do postgraduate students really derive the most benefit from the case method? Previous research indicates that at times their classroom participation can be as low as 30% in each session (Christensen 1994; Dixit 2005).

Why is this so? Ellet (2007) posits that student preparation is not about reading the case, but thinking about it and asking the right reflective questions. As such, if adequate time for reflection is not available, participation is low. Bruns (2006) takes the discussion further and suggests that student participation in class should be graded. He argues that if left ungraded, part of the motivation that students need to participate will be lost. The case methodology is also highly context-specific therefore, the instructors must be careful about the choice and age of the case, keeping in perspective the students' background and the lessons sought to be realized. If students cannot identify with the case, their participation is undermined (Jain 2005).

Ramsden (2003) found that the case study approach can result in an extreme form of surface learning, where students only answered the discussion questions given without engaging with the text. Students may perceive the discussion questions as an end, reading only sections of the text that enable them to answer the questions. They then 'pile a stock of answers' they expect to use in class (Ellet 2007). This piling of answers means that if the class discussion does not proceed as they had expected, they are lost and frustrated, and may not prepare adequately for the next class.

Furthermore, student participation is a function of the ability by the lecturer to create a supportive environment for participation (Frei 2004). Such support includes giving students an opportunity to evaluate the usefulness of particular cases, as this adds to their motivation to participate as they are willing to invest more in a learning process when they have a voice on the outcome (Golich 2000).

This paper seeks to engage the debate on the use the case method to enhance participant-centred learning, and present some empirical findings of a study conducted in Nairobi between January and April 2010.

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Developing reflective practitioners: a course designed to promote reflective learning

The ability to reflect has the potential to help students learn about their learning as well as their practice, and is an essential skill for nursing students. This study aimed to restructure and implement the Nursing Counseling curriculum to promote nursing students' capacity for reflection so as to develop their skills of counseling within a school of nursing in a Taiwan university.

Action research was chosen as the methodology to guide this study. Participants included three academics who taught in the Nursing Counseling unit. The action plan was developed in 3 phases through which nurse educators explored and became aware of students' learning needs and performance, developed a reflective learning process to guide teaching and learning in the unit, and then planned and implemented actions to change the curriculum, and examined and reflected on the curriculum transformation. Professional reading and group discussions were adopted to facilitate the change.

Through many cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, we tested our ideas in practice, refined our practices, and improved the curriculum. As a result of our collaborative endeavour, the interactive lecture and weekly reflective assignment were developed to assist students cultivate their competences in terms of reflection and counseling. This interactive lecture which constituted a mini-lecture followed by small group discussion to complete an in-class task based on the mini-lecture; the reflective assignment was an outside-of-class project which required students to plan an action to implement the theories learned in the classroom to a real world (either clinical practice or interpersonal process), and then write a report to reflect on their practice. Results of this study indicated that the level of reflection among the students who undertaking the Nursing Counseling unit had gradually increased during the semester.

From our experiences while introducing action research to restructure the Nursing Counseling curriculum for promoting the competence of reflection in students, we found the key factors that facilitate more effective levels of reflection among nursing students are:
- Balance lecture and process, lecture less and have students interact more.
- Create a classroom culture of collaborative sharing and reflection.
- Maintain a sense of trust, support, and openness.
- Ask reflective and provocative questions to stimulate reflection in students.
- Provide alternative angles or interpretations of the situation to enable students to reflect critically.

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Creating Dialogical Learning Space: Action-Narrative Inquiry as Alternative Teacher Education Curriculum

I propose to present a paper on a case of creating dialogical learning space at a teacher education institution where I work as an educator. For the past five years, students and I have engaged ourselves in social actions through after-school programs for disadvantaged children and have employed such methods as reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and story-sharing to construct our own learning projects. It was a life-transforming experience for most of us, while we learned to develop trust, dialogue, and collaborative inquiry relationships among ourselves in our daily struggle with institutional and social constraints,

Based on the practical knowledge gained from such actions and reflections, I am able to identify several key elements which were essential for our continuous learning and growth to occur and develop. Creating and sustaining a space for continuous collaborative actions, reflections and dialogues was a persistent task for all participants among us in the face of the oppressive force of control and discipline from the institution and from the social environment.

In the paper I will share narratives and analytical accounts concerning the process we have been through in the past few years. To gain a quick visual impression on who we are and what we have been doing, please visit our website (http://www.ed.nhcue.edu.tw/~dream_makers/) to see some photos.

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"Taking Off" and flying with action learning and action research

Action learning and action research are professional learning approaches available to teachers to collaboratively improve their professional practice. Action learning and action research can be resource heavy and often schools apply for government grants to assist them in implementing specific projects. Sometimes these projects target an identified local school need and sometimes systems use action learning and action research to implement a change across a range of schools. When government funding is expended, some schools continue with an action learning and action research "mode to inquiry" (Groundwater-Smith, 2009) and some schools do not.

Advantages of adopting action learning and action research approaches in professional learning include:
- Teachers gain a sense of agency and opportunities to contribute confidently in their unique workplaces, focusing on specific local issues.
- They gain professional confidence which includes openness to others' perspectives
- Learning communities are developed and strengthened through collaborative inquiry and reflective practice.
- Teachers gain opportunities to contribute to the process of research. In doing so they are building their own "living theory" (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) – an epistemology developed from dialectical theory and grounded in practice.
- They research their practice in a series of spirals, in a process of continuing reflection and rethinking (Griffiths in Noffke & Somekh, 2009, pp. 93, 94).

There exist a number of factors that recur in relation to what strengthens or inhibits the success of action learning and action research in schools (Aubusson, Ewing, & Hoban, 2009; Ewing, Smith, Anderson, Gibson, & Manuel, 2004; Fullan, 2010, 2009; Groundwater- Smith & Mockler, 2009). These factors play a role in determining whether action learning and action research are sustained as professional learning models in schools. The common approach to professional learning in schools is teachers being trained by others to introduce a new direction, although a change is increasingly evident in the literature (Doecke, et al., 2008; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005; McRae, Ainsworth, Groves, Rowland, & Zbar, 2001). The change is a result of research indicating the most successful professional learning occurs when there is "direction from the centre, but flexibility at the local level" (Hargreaves,

Fullan, Senge, & Robinson, 2007) to ensure an innovation meets the particular needs of a school and its community.

Since 2006, I have led teams of teachers in improving their professional practice through action learning and action research. These approaches are sometimes funded by systems and governments as tools to implement new initiatives in schools, and often focus on the quality of teaching in classrooms. The teams and projects that I have led have been funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations as an initiative of the Australian Government Quality Teaching Program (AGQTP). AGQTP "provides funds to strengthen the skills and understandings of the teaching profession" (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2003) and aims to improve teacher quality and ultimately student learning outcomes.

I am interested in investigating the sustained impact of action learning on teacher professional learning in schools. School based approaches that encourage teachers to learn together in collaborative groups to address local needs, are usually effective professional learning practices. An important part of this ongoing process of improvement is building positive professional relationships based on trust in which teachers are comfortable sharing their practice and receiving feedback from their colleagues. Yet despite both my experience as a facilitator of action learning and a significant literature that advocates it, schools generally do not take up an action research mode of inquiry, even though they have school based professional learning funds that would enable them to do so.

This session will investigate the factors that sustain action learning and action research as professional learning tools in schools.