

Action Research: Transformation Of Knowledge Creation for Helping Professionals



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INTENTION TO OFFER:

Basic definition and elements of action research.

How it contrasts and complements conventional social science.

- A form of practice based research used by helping professionals.
- Emancipatory and practical, not just descriptive, science.
- First, Second and Third person research/practice with illustration from the "helping professions."

Further: Sage Publications Handbook of Action Research. Eds.,
Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury. 2000, 2008, (2015).

- Action Research, a peer reviewed Sage Publications journal.

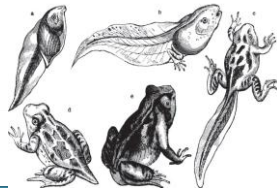
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Defining Action Research

...seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people.

– Reason & Bradbury, 2001a:1

Action researchers are found helping in complex social change situations.



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ACTION RESEARCH CAN ALSO COMPLEMENT CONVENTIONAL SCIENCE

CONVENTIONAL

Descriptive/explanatory.

About the past.

Focus on objective knowledge.

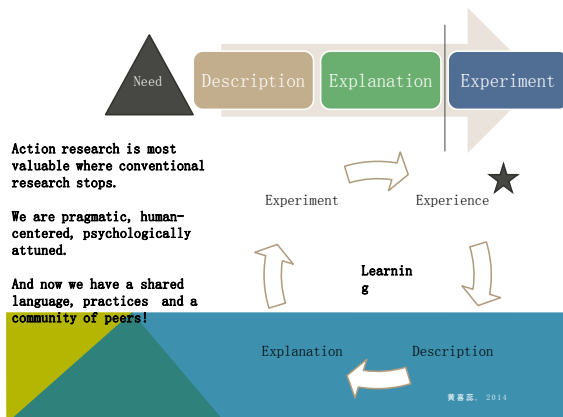
Aimed at understanding.

Ostensibly values free.

Controlled studies for replication.



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What is knowledge for?

Action researchers work within complex social change. We are pragmatic, (truth has "cash value," James).

Our work is good when it has beneficial outcomes for all the stakeholders involved.

Stakeholders have a "stake in," are concerned with the process and outcomes: Doctor and patients; Health providers and clients. *And, and, and...*

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SCIENCE BEYOND OBJECTIFICATION



How about some inter-subjectivity then?!

To objectify: to reduce to a mere object

Requires separation, abstraction, judgment

While a subject is active, with agency, an object is passive, being acted upon...

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SCIENCE BEYOND PATERNALISM



How about meeting as stakeholders (with different skills?)

Ethicists decry medical paternalism.

Patients — clients — demand to be treated like consumers.

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The primacy of practice

1940's – 1970's

- Kurt Lewin: "Action Research and Minority Problems."
 - John Collier: Invents the term "action research"
 - Jacob Moreno: Connection among equals, Spontaneity, Practices.
- Orlando Fals Borda brings science and popular knowledge together (Latin America)

1980's Socio Technical Systems (hypothesis testing + action/dialogue)

2000, 2008, 2015.

Integrates objectivity, subjectivity. Integrating the "linguistic turn," of pragmatism with the "action turn" of effective practices and philosophy of participation. "Contemporary action research" is self validating.

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Action research is a critical, transformative science.

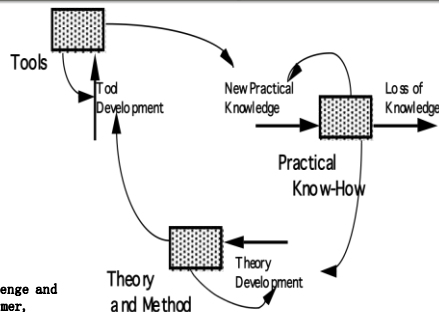


Action research is not about describing reality or becoming an agent of technical mastery.

Action researchers are:
Relational (therefore emergent, responsive)
We include planning for the future.
We integrate personal reflexivity (biases),
We coordinate action and understanding,
We contribute to human/eco flourishing.

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Action Researchers create a community of Scholars and practitioners



Per Senge and Scharmer, 2000

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QUADRANTS PERSPECTIVE ON DOMAINS OF KNOWLEDGE: ACTION RESEARCH INTEGRATES.



Quadrant 1
Individual subjective factors

Quadrant 2
Individual objective factors



Quadrant 3
Collective subjective factors

Quadrant 4
Collective objective factors



Per Habermas and Wilber

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DEFINING FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PERSON ARP

SECOND PERSON ACTION RESEARCH
PRACTICE = "YOU"

Inquiry done with a group of stakeholders, e.g., the goals we hold as a group, the future we want to create.



FIRST PERSON ACTION RESEARCH
PRACTICE = "I"

Inquiry done with myself
e.g., my own assumptions, so that I create more choicefulness in my action/conventional

Third person action research practice= Objective/conventional inquiry

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Example 2nd Person: Understanding/Creating Nurse Success



Quadrant 1
Individual subjective factors

Quadrant 2
Individual objective factors



Quadrant 3
Collective subjective factors

Quadrant 4
Collective objective factors



After Wilber

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EXPLORING CONTEXTS - FACILITATING CHANGE



Quadrant 1
Individual subjective
Ready for action

Quadrant 2
Individual objective
Relevant skills



Quadrant 3
Collective subjective
Cultural impetus

Quadrant 4
Collective objective
Opportunity



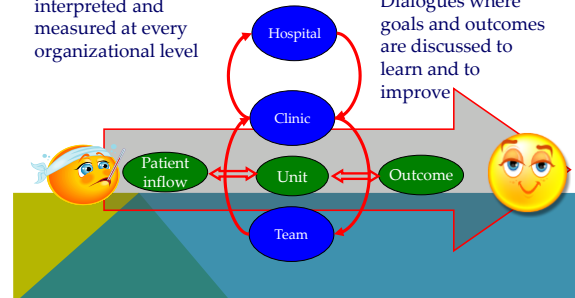
2014 study led by Bret Lyman and Hilary Bradbury with Care Oregon.

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Goals and dialogues

Goals are translated, interpreted and measured at every organizational level

Action research: Dialogues where goals and outcomes are discussed to learn and to improve



Organizational Learning History: A practice of Second Person ACTION RESEARCH

Documenting success and convening collaborative conversations is key to powerful, long lived transformations.

Gearty, Bradbury, Reason, 2013.

The organizational learning history process and product

- Seeks multiple perspectives on results to support knowledge transfer.
- Convenes cross system stakeholder dialogues in a neutral space.
- Pioneers whole system maps to highlight leverage points for entire system.
- Coordinates action across silo's where indicated.
- Facilitates and manages new collaborative projects with breakthrough results.
- Shares results; Publishes case studies
- Grows a regional system into global learning networks

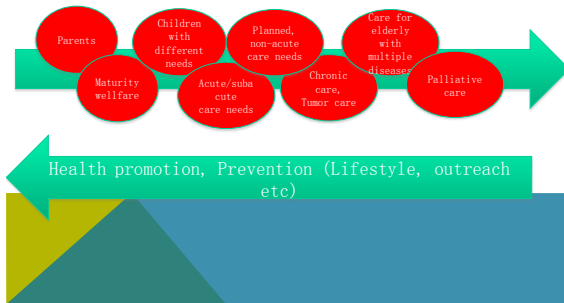
Various Applications: local and "open"

- Expanding Sustainable Development efforts (e.g., The Natural Step) from Northern Europe to USA
- Knowledge transfer in carbon reduction efforts in England and The Netherlands.
- Supporting leadership development among physicians at an academic medical center.

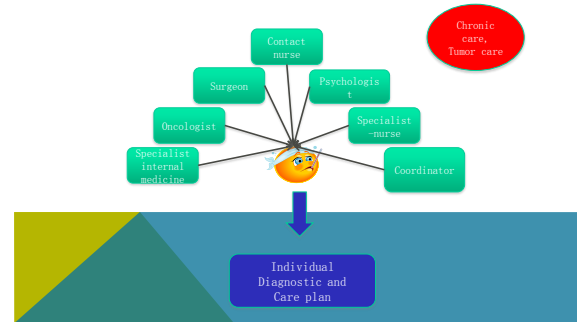


Center for Health Improvement, Chalmers, Sweden Shares Action Research Knowledge.

HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTION: COMPLETE CARE: LIFECYCLE + UPSTREAM.....

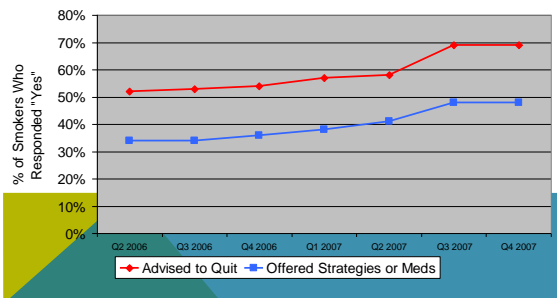


(ONE-STOP) SOLUTION WORKSHOP PATIENT CENTRIC



SMOKING CESSATION REGIONAL TREND.

ACTION RESEARCH PEER ADVISORY GROUPS WIN



3rd person action research/"for them"

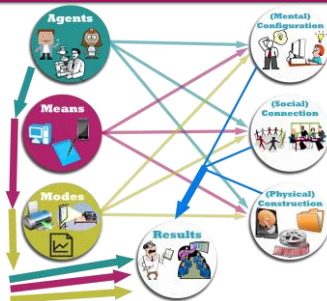
- Refers to action research that moves through *populous networks*
 - publication and peer review is key for potential to inform other distant efforts.

Exemplar: Bjorn Gustavsen's work in Scandinavia on democratic workplaces

- Including employees in the design of work
- Evolved to socio technical systems



Socio-Technical Networks: Only connect!

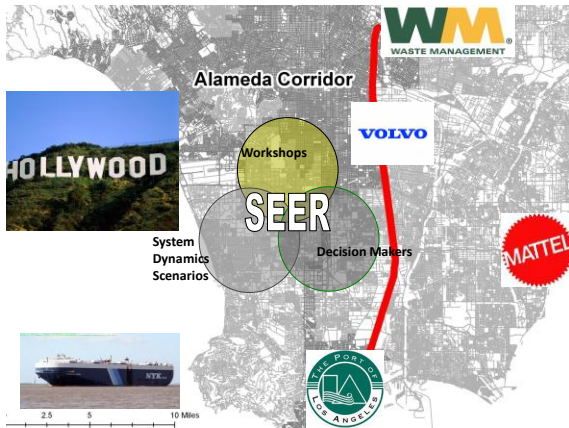


Sustainable Enterprise Executive Roundtable (SEER)

SEER enabled organizational learning among business leaders using the Port of LA, so that more sustainable practices (and better kids health) result.

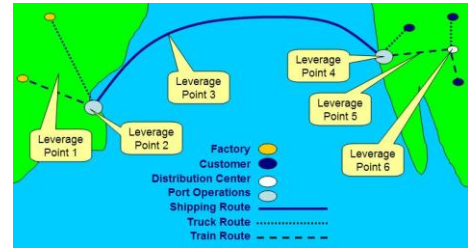
Follow up reading: Bradbury-Huang, H., 2010. Sustainability as Collaboration: The SEER Case. *Organization Dynamics*, 39(4).





Leverage Point...carbon reduction

Systems intervention for carbon reduction
Counterintuitive insights about



1st person action research/"I/me"

- Refers to action research with the self that hones self insight and capacity for choiceful action.

Estimates the self as an instrument of understanding and change, committed to self development.



Most taboo of all? The taboo against knowing who you are.

- Key foundations: Heron's development of humanistic inquiry; relational inquiry; Wilber's Integral theory.

Mindfulness and Palliative care

- Palliative care team
- 12 weeks, daily mindfulness practice with individual and team coaching.
- 100% "highly satisfied."
- Positive impact at personal and patient and organizational levels.
- Unexpected benefits

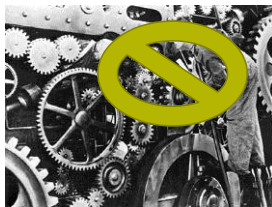


Brookbury-Huang, "being seated in my Selflessness, toward an experiential understanding of my 'responsive self' in a care-giving context. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*.



What approach to science supports your vision of a sustainable world?

Action research offers an 'integrating, transformative science' in support of a more sustainable world.



"We can describe, in ever finer detail, the world we have now, or we can foment a (peaceful) revolution."

— Paraphrasing Dana Meadows on sustainability.