

Participatory Action Research as Method.

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Aims of presentation.

- Definitions.
- Philosophy of method.
- Key features.
- Advantages and Disadvantages.
- Specific considerations.
- Example

Philosophical perspectives.

- Schon (1987) questions value of much “traditional” research as:
 - Removed from practical utility
 - Fails to provide basis for problem solving demands of ‘real world’

Philosophical perspectives.

- Knowledge generation is explicitly political, socially engaged and democratic practice.

Human systems can only be understood and changed if the members of the system are involved in the inquiry process itself.

Definition

- Action research is a period of inquiry that describes, interprets and explains social situations while executing a change intervention aimed at improvement and involvement. It is problem focused, context specific and future orientated.

(Waterman et al., 2001)

Key Features

- *‘Action research cannot be understood through intellectual argument but only by doing it’!* (Waterman 1995)
- Intervention
- Location in a specific context and situation
- Change

Key Issues

- A group activity
- Critique of existing social situations
- Partnership and collaboration between researchers and participants
- ‘Spiral’ framework through action and evaluation (Hart & Bond 1995)

(Coghlan & Brannick, 2001)



Advantages.

- *Creativity:*
- pertinent client-based research questions, user-friendly instruments, acceptable interventions, broader data analyses and effective dissemination strategies.

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- A collaborative research approach which purports to increase the relevance of research while maintaining the standards of scientific rigour (White et al 2004).
- “An integrated activity that combines social investigation, educational work and action” (Hall 1981).
- “ An emerging paradigm of cooperative experimental inquiry in which research is conducted *with and for* people rather than *on* people (Reason 1988).

What makes PAR (apparently) different from Action Research?

- Total Partnership –
- Theory generation from people in study
- Power relations are critically examined
- Consciousness raising process mutually educative generating theory and data
- Goal political action or social change

(Henderson 1995)

Palliative Partnership for Action project.

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Aim of Intervention.

- To explore concerns and needs relative to professional nursing practice.
- Identify strategies to facilitate change.
- To move to a stronger sense of ownership.

Organizing framework for PAR

1. Entry into dialogue with community
2. Group Formation.
3. Data gathering
4. Data analysis and feedback to community
5. Implementation of action plan
6. Evaluation of the results
7. Ownership of the data

(Bailey 1992)

Partners.



- Galway Hospice Foundation.
- Health Services Executive Western region. Including service users.
- Palliative Care services directorate
- The National University of Ireland, Galway.

Data collection methods.

- Broad.
- Multiple perspective approach.
- Flexible.
- Experience in group facilitation/dynamics.
- Tried and Tested tools.

Eclectic methods.

Enabling:

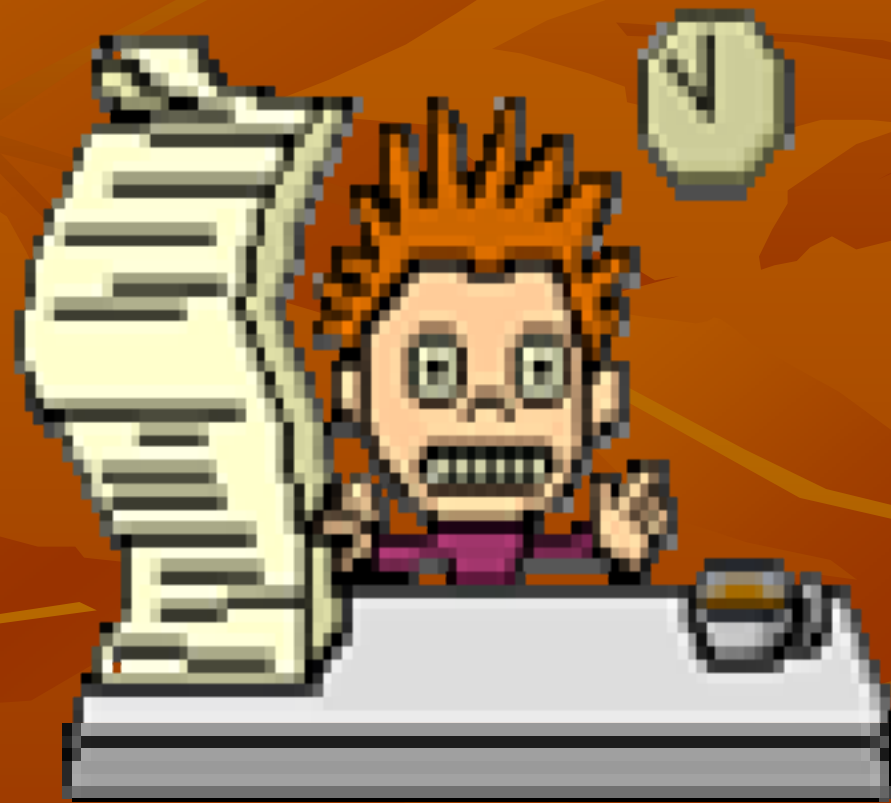
- Interdisciplinary Staff briefings.
- Joint management/staff forum.
- Peer-led Clinical Supervision programme.
- Review of national and international literature on nursing roles.
- Focus groups for service users.
- Individual interviews with wider nursing groups - community, hospital. Nursing Home.

Regional Meeting.

- All Key Players invited.
- Identify common themes.
- Value interdisciplinary working.
- Clarify respective roles.
- Create a cohesive voice for nurses within the wider context of service delivery.

Evaluation.

- Evaluate progress every three weeks.
- Team evaluation.
- Individual evaluation.
- Written submissions through Blackboard



Critique

- Action research is always a work in progress.

(Brydon-Miller et al., 2003)

- Insider/outsider relationships

- Ethical considerations (Williamson & Prosser 2002)

- Political considerations (Williamson & Prosser 2002)

Insider action research

- Pre-understanding.
- Role duality. Who do you represent?
- Organizational politics.
- Complex pattern of relationships.
- Framing and re-framing the project.

Ethical and Political Considerations.

- Process application of informed consent.
- Confidentiality and anonymity.
- Implication of Non-participation.
- Protection from harm.
- Confrontation.
- Risk of exploitation.
- Micro-politics and personalities.
- Insider/outsider ? “double-act”
- Political acumen.
- Who holds the power to change?

Disadvantages of PAR.

- Application of method is rather vague.
- Difficult to apply and Situation-specific..
- Broad involvement can make establishing common ground more difficult.
- Can power-dynamics be truly resolved?
- Results can be SLOW!

Conclusions.

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THAT OTHER PAINKILLING METHOD IS OF COURSE A LOT MORE EXPENSIVE

References.

- Coghlan, D. (2005): Doing action research in your own organization. London. Sage.
- Reason, P. (2001): Handbook of action research: participative inquiry and practice. California US. Thousand Oaks.