Chat from 1st Saturday SIG Session: Action Research, August 17, 2019 from 11:00 – 12:45 ET
(Private Chats removed, no spelling corrections)

11:12:56 From Gary Smith: Not being exactly clear on AR. I was in the same situation. I find this which seemed a good description. Action Research

Action research can be defined as “an approach in which the action researcher and a client collaborate in the diagnosis of the problem and in the development of a solution based on the diagnosis”[1]. In other words, one of the main characteristic traits of action research relates to collaboration between researcher and member of organisation in order to solve organizational problems.

Action study assumes social world to be constantly changing, both, researcher and research being one part of that change.[2] Generally, action researches can be divided into three categories: positivist, interpretive and critical.

Positivist approach to action research, also known as ‘classical action research’ perceives research as a social experiment. Accordingly, action research is accepted as a method to test hypotheses in a real world environment.

Interpretive action research, also known as ‘contemporar

11:13:47 From Gary Smith: https://research-methodology.net/research-methods/action-research/

11:17:34 From Barbara Schmidt-Abbey: Hi everyone, unfortunately I have to go soon (sorry, I'm in Dublin, Ireland). Just to chip one thing here from my perspective: I'm looking at Systemic Action Research now as part of a methodological framework I'm developing for my doctoral probation (at OU in UK). What I'm finding really helpful here is the distinction between traditional AR and Systemic Action Research:


11:21:04 From Marc Pierson: The role of the expert (the “researcher” in her context with its own goals separate from the “client”) is hugely limiting and very very difficult to overcome in community action. My own academic though leader is Chris Argyris. My practical though leaders of choice are Paulo Freire and Miles Horton. My practical current practitioners work together in Jonkoping County Council, Sweeden, where they have organized the development of the entire medical system as a multifaceted multitrack approach to community learning and change. They have gradually opened to the “patients” citizens to designing and managing their own hemo dialysis. My main professional and personal goal in life is bring self-organizing (self-learning) into communities in the US (a hard case) and elsewhere.

11:31:34 From Marc Pierson: Having met Bill Smith, and completely buying into his AIC (Appreciation, Influence, Control) framework, it becomes much easier to displace the unhappy bias of the expert in community learning and change.
From Marc Pierson: The researcher is a big problem. Perhaps the biggest problem to learning.

From Deeanna Burleson: Role of researcher while being deliberate to give participants (those often without voice or input) a voice.

From Marc Pierson: The researcher is a big problem, perhaps the biggest problem to community learning and change.

From Deeanna Burleson: Yes, if the researcher is a typical reductionist researcher?

From Allenna Leonard: The role of the researcher is very context based. Some are done in an academic context where there are beginning situations or hypotheses and others are in less formal situations where there is still an attempt to document and learn from how the process has gone. Also, sometimes the researcher is only able to follow the effects for a short period of time.

From Allenna Leonard: There are many situations that fall between the poles of coercive and emancipatory extremes such as when peers (including the researcher) come together to solve problems.

From Rick: Welcome friend

From Marc Pierson: Paulo Freire is essential reading to understand the depth of the problem of the researcher. Miles Horton’s work at Highlander Research and Education center from the late 20’s until his death is an account of how to displace the expert and keep the community member in the front. The civil rights movement in the US was born and nurtured at Highlander.

From Gary Smith: Situations always change, so I would guess the researcher also needs to be adaptable and agile to this?

From Deeanna Burleson: Reference: Donald Schon’s, Reflective Practice

From Marc Pierson: The Reflective Practitioner describes an unsolvable paradigm—the needed openness runs against the position and economic position of “expertise”. When people can become grandparents to others then expertise is completely sublimated to the situation of the grandchild—in the best case.

From Allenna Leonard: Donald Schon also has a good book about frame reflection.

From gmobus: So far a lot of information about action research per se but I am interested in results in systems science (or practice).

From Rick: It is good to listen

From Deeanna Burleson: George, please bring up your request.

From Jennifer Makar: George—what do you mean by results in systems science or practice? Do you mean measurable outcomes?

From Rick: I think that a good computer programmer can and has to be objective

From Jennifer Makar: Got it, thanks

From Gary Smith: Coming to the other part of the reason for this session - what interactions/exchanges are there with the "Organisational Transformation and Social Change", also "Human Systems Inquiry" SIGs. These seem to be in the same kind of practice space. Also is there or should be closer ties with the Operations Research organisation?
In Bill’s AIC approach the “researcher” is a facilitator of three types of explorations.

Gary, please bring that up next…?

I think when we get to those three SIGs on the schedule we can address that question?

I think there is an opportunity to advance knowledge of systems using action research as I now understand it. Is anyone here using action research in this way?

of course - in Mary Edson’s book on Systems Research we link it to a general theory of whole systems.

Thanks for the reminder John. That is another book I need to buy :)

Marc, please post a reference on your work. thx

Jamei has very good observations, ask him to say more

I recommend that we extend the duration of these calls to 90 minutes.

Thanks everyone.

Need to head off now. Thanks everyone.

Right on

Rick, I am going to ask Roelien to provide us a one slide to demonstrate Action Research.

Generative conflict—politics—influence—for participation.

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Do we have a metalanguage group?

Super interesting, thank you all very much.