Looking to Provide Students with Extra Support in their Studies about Collaborative and Participatory Approaches to Learning and Research?

An Information Package for Educators

This information package explores how educators can support students in their studies, about participatory processes to learning and research, with an online LinkedIn discussion group created by the Action Learning Action Research Association Ltd (ALARA).

ALARA is a network of people interested in using action research and action learning to generate collaborative learning, research and action to transform workplaces, schools, colleges, universities, communities, voluntary organisations, governments and businesses. ALARA's vision is that action research and action learning will be widely used and publicly shared by individuals and groups creating local and global change for the achievement of a more equitable, just, joyful, productive, peaceful and sustainable society. To find out more about ALARA please visit https://www.alarassociation.org/

The Association has created a free online Tertiary Education Community on LinkedIn for students and educators interested in collaborative and participatory approaches to learning and research. In particular, the Association aims to partner with educators who teach units / subjects that are focused on participatory learning and research processes and/or which engage in these processes with students in their classes. Specifically, the Association aims to provide these educators with an opportunity to engage the students they work with, into the LinkedIn online education community. This community has over 140 members from research, education and practitioner backgrounds ready to engage in online conversations about participatory based inquiry and evaluation processes. Thus, this group can provide extra support, beyond the scope of an existing educational institution, for students in their studies, projects or assignments about participatory learning and research processes. For example, current students in the group have the opportunity to post new discussion topics, ask questions of group members, or join in on existing online conversations.

In the past, ALARA has partnered with Dr Phil Crane and the students at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) about Participatory Action Research (PAR). The student's questions raised increased activity and reflection in the online group. Here is what Phil has had to say about his experience:

> *"… Environments where people can bounce around ideas in a supportive [way] seem to be very important spaces. In terms of this online community I think there is great benefit in connecting students and practitioners together in a way that is less hierarchical and remote*"

If you are an educator who teaches in a field related to collaborative and participatory process of inquiry and evaluation and you wish to take up this opportunity please read the information below about

how you can partner with ALARA and about how you engage students in the online ALARA Tertiary Education Community.

How you can invite students into the ALARA Tertiary Education Community as part of the unit / subject / course / seminar you teach.

1. Seek permission from your educational organisation to offer students in your learning program the opportunity to engage in the online community

2. Create a LinkedIn account or sign into your existing one by accessing: https://www.linkedin.com/

3. Join the Action Learning, Action Research Association Ltd (ALARA) Tertiary Education Community on LinkedIn, which can be accessed via the following link: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4914977 or search for " Action Learning, Action Research Association Ltd (ALARA) Tertiary Education Community " in the LinkedIn group directory

4. In that online group, post a discussion thread which includes information about:
   a. The tertiary learning program you are teaching
   b. Where the learning program is being taught
   c. The main learning aims and objectives of the learning program
   d. What the students have been asked to do as part of the learning program
   e. An indication that students in your program will be forwarded an invitation to participate in the online community
   f. Any further information you think is relevant for inclusion in your discussion thread about the learning program

5. Consider inviting your teaching colleagues and peers to engage with the online group

6. Forward the students you engage with a copy of the invitation in this package. It contains details about the ALARA online group, how they can engage and participate in discussions and how to locate the online etiquette of the online community

7. Continue to moderate the discussions in the ALARA Tertiary Education Community on LinkedIn on a daily basis

8. At the end of the year, consider participating in an evaluation survey about your experience with the LinkedIn community. This will support the organisation to make improvements to the online learning concept, processes and experience. A discussion thread will be posted in the group about how you, peers and students, can participate in this evaluation.

9. If you wish to engage any other students you work with, or will work with, in the group – why not consider becoming an official moderator of the community. If you would like to do so, please contact admin@alarassociation.org with such a request.

Disclaimer
ALARA provides the LinkedIn group in good faith to promote discussion amongst students, educators and practitioners about collaborative and participative processes to learning and research. Information entered into this LinkedIn group are the opinions of the authors, and do not represent the views of ALARA, its Board or Members. Persons or organisations may contact ALARA via its website: https://www.alarassociation.org/?q=about-us/contact-us to request that a particular entry or series of entries be removed from this LinkedIn group. Such approaches must include the full details of the person making the request (including contact details), details of the offending entry(s) and the reason(s) for the request before ALARA will be able to investigate the request.