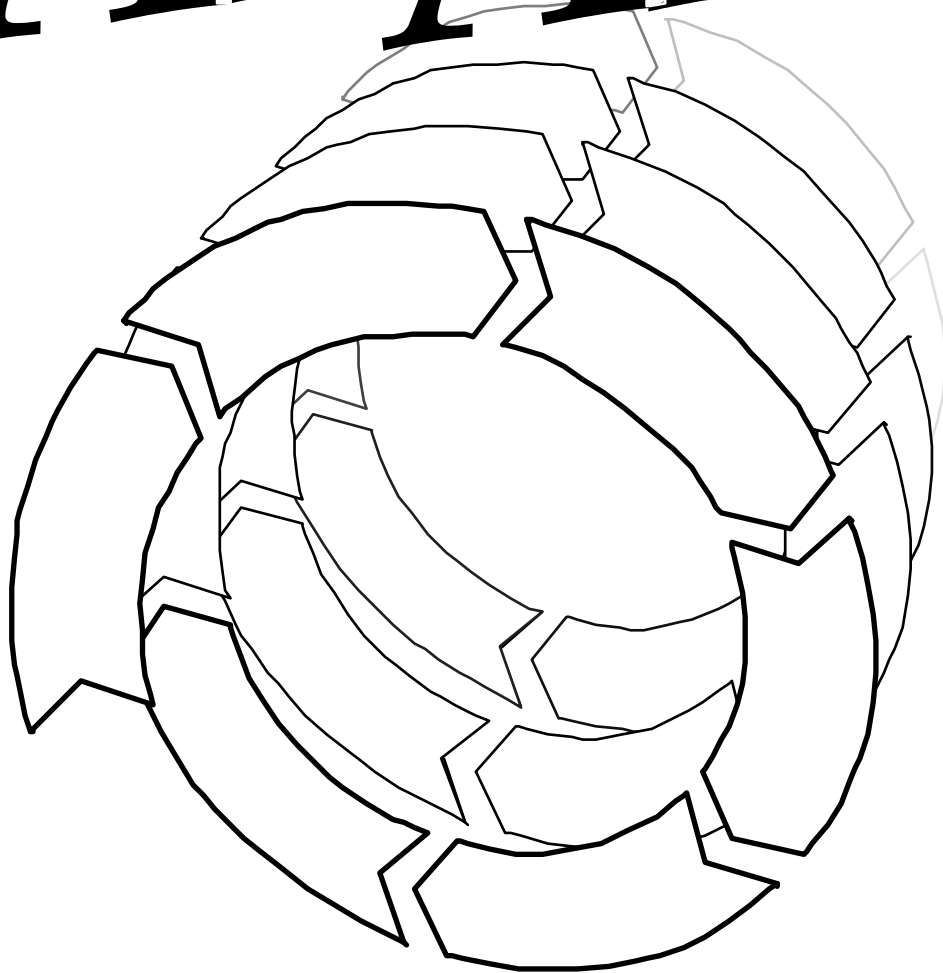


# ALAR



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*Volume 1 No. 2 December 1996*

# **ALAR Journal**

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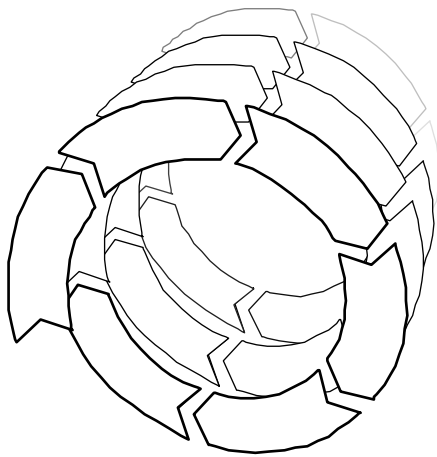
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## Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of the ALAR Journal, an international journal focused on exploring issues and developments in action learning and action research.

In this issue, Eileen Piggot-Irvine (New Zealand) discusses ways in which she uses the literature, “critical friends”, and intensive reflection to change and improve her practice in teaching action research. In the second paper, Ron Passfield describes action learning as a paradigm whose time has come.

We introduce Eileen Heywood in “People” and in “Networking” we announce the 1997 retreat for action researchers in New Zealand (9-10 May).

In “Noticeboard” we bring you news about World Congress 4 on Action Learning and Action Research. For people from Australia embarking on this adventure, we invite you to contact ALARPM so that we can put you in touch with other travellers and investigate the possibility of a discounted group booking.

We also provide in “Noticeboard” information about three new action learning Masters.

Two new publications are announced in “Bookshelf”, the first, edited by Tony Carr, emphasises practical insights and experiential gains in action research. The second, edited by Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, focuses on emancipatory or critical action research.

A warm welcome is extended to those who have become members of ALARPM since the last ALAR Journal in July.

# Reflection: the key to change in teaching action research - Eileen Piggot-Irvine

## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper discusses the way in which I have used the literature on teaching action research, my "critical friends" and my own intensive reflection, to change and improve my teaching of this topic. An outline of the literature, the changes I have made, and the background to the types of courses taught, are all described.*

*During this period of teaching action research, I have accumulated many questions, which have provided not only a guide to my reflection, but also, recently, an approach to evaluating my courses. These questions are included in the paper.*

## **Introduction**

Teaching action research in an institutional setting is described by Altrichter (1991) as a "tensionful activity". My own experience confirms this conclusion - with gusto! In 20 years of teaching, in a broad range of fields, I have never felt so challenged by the ambiguous, unpredictable, and contradictory nature of a subject area. Conversely I have never, also, felt my Irish determination so stimulated to rise to such a challenge.

## **Background to action research course taught and participants**

The reflections outlined in this paper relate to my involvement, over a period of four years, in teaching adult students in a action research module (60 hour credit bearing), which constituted part of the Diploma in Adult and Tertiary Education (DipATE). This Diploma was the principal polytechnic tutor training programme in the

northern part of New Zealand up until 1996. Participants on this programme ranged from newly appointed tutors through to those with several years experience.

In the action research module participants were required to complete a substantial action research proposal, a project report, and a personal diary of reflections concerning their involvement in the action research process.

### **Changes to my teaching of action research**

*In the beginning...*

During the first action research course that I taught, at the beginning of my four years teaching on the programme, I was committed to using inquiry-centred instructional methods described by McBeath (1992) as encouraging critical inquiry, supporting creativity and collaborative problem solving. My hope was that this would lead to the then widely supported “deep approaches” to learning outlined by Gibbs (1992) as resulting in students focusing their attention on the overall meaning, relating ideas together and constructing their own meaning. In reality, I now realise that, my practice differed somewhat, in fact drastically, to that which I espoused.

There were several reasons for this espousal - practice gap. At the time, I had personal feelings of ambiguity and confusion resulting from the contradictory and divergent interpretations of this nebulous thing called action research. This ambiguity, combined with some degree of insecurity about teaching in a new area, resulted in my reversion to teaching the course in a fairly teacher dominated, didactic way, with some group collaboration thrown in to lighten the impact. For example, in my anxiety to share with the participants all of the interpretations of action research, I presented several lectures, at the beginning of the 60 hour course, methodically outlining differing models, the history of action research, and the research methods which could be employed to triangulate data. Participants had little time to

assimilate or interpret this information in a way that might apply to their own context, nor did they have an opportunity to pace their learning to their own stage of readiness.

Additionally, research proposals and subsequent completion of projects occurred largely as an individual effort.

Student evaluation of this first course was very positive in terms of participants enjoying the course itself - this was not a surprise - most of the participants had been to courses of mine before and we had established a nice cosy relationship. This did not mean, however, that they learnt anything, or changed their thinking or practice! My own deeply held feelings of paranoia that these latter things had not occurred was confirmed when the evaluations revealed that most students were extremely confused about action research and how to apply it for transformational ends. Perhaps an even better indicator of this was that 40 percent of the group did not submit a report on their project - a very possible sign of their frustration and confusion.

As a staff developer with a reputation for clarity, I found the feedback pretty difficult to accept and my immediate response, predictably, was to defensively blame the confusion on the contradictory nature of the field of action research itself ... you know, the usual thing that we do when the course doesn't go well, that is blame the difficulty of the subject matter!

*Later...*

In the following six months period between the first and second action research courses that I ran, my own practice as a budding supporter of Argyris' (1990) work on Model I and Model II approaches forced me to review this defensiveness. I subsequently made contact with two other staff developers whom I knew I could use as critical friends to assist me to challenge the way that I was teaching the course.

To sum up a long story, the result was that I began to intensify the constant critical reflection on my practice as a

teacher of action research. The changes I made to my teaching, were substantial (the essential elements have been summarised in Table 1). Most of these changes enabled me to more actively practice an inquiry-centred approach, and to therefore close some of the gap between my espousals and practice.

There is one change that I made, however, which was at odds with a purist inquiry-centred approach. At the beginning of my courses I presented my own interpretation of a simple structural framework which could be followed in action research (see Figure 1). Participants were introduced to the way in which this framework could be applied to their proposal presentation, projects and report writing. I clearly communicated that there was no requirement that they adopt this framework, but that it was intended to provide an overview, or support, for those who felt confused by the differing interpretations of action research. This approach seemed to provide enough security for most participants to then investigate alternatives and this has been confirmed in later research on the role of the framework (Piggot-Irvine, 1995). Additionally, the non completion rate of projects dropped to about 5 percent (approximately the norm for other staff development courses) since the introduction of the framework.

### **Questions for reflecting on teaching action research**

In the process of changing the way in which I facilitated these action research courses I began to collate a list of questions which have guided and supported my reflection on my practice. Many of the questions prompted the changes described above. In order to determine whether I had effectively implemented these changes, I also implemented an approach to seeking student feedback based on these questions.



**Table 1: Evolution of action research teaching**

<b>CHANGE FROM:</b>	<b>CHANGE TO:</b>
No pre-course material distributed	Pre-course material encourages participants to come prepared with a clear idea about the issue they wish to work on. Material on clarification included in pre-course readings
Lecturer totally responsible for checking issue and proposal development	Peer (triads) review of issues and proposals
A wide range of models presented at beginning of course	One simple model outlined in order to provide structural framework upon which other models could be hung
Lecturer as primary knowledge source	Student self-direction, knowledge and ownership of issues encouraged. Eg. group work used for mini presentations on history and models of AR; interest groups formed for specific research methods etc. (a wide range of materials is supplied)
Emphasis on theory early in course	Refining of issues focus early in course
Lecturer directed sequence	Participant readiness acts as prompt for pace of information presentation
Projects often ignored underlying political and social issues, and this was left unchallenged	Projects which examine underlying issues encouraged
Little examination of whether participants have linked reflection and action	Projects examined to determine whether participants have taken action as change agents, or have represented reflection-in-action
Reflective diaries unexamined	Participants verbally answer questions to indicate that diaries have been kept
Assessment guidelines aimed at determining whether participants have met credits	Assessment guidelines signal importance of demonstrating improved practice
Apart from end of course evaluation, little on-going evaluation	Evaluation occurs at end of each teaching day in order to provide guidelines for following sessions. Long term (6 months after course completion) evaluation now occurring in order to determine effectiveness of projects in long term change
Limited reflection on my	Increased reflection on my role, using a 'critical

own role as facilitator	friend' - a fellow teacher of action research
-------------------------	---

**Figure 1:** Action research model

The reader will probably discern from these questions that I have developed several strong philosophies of what constitutes "effective" teaching of action research. Two of these concern the need for participants to have a degree of clarity relating to the principles of action research, and the second the importance of the teacher modelling the ideals of the approach.

### **Questions**

*What set of beliefs do I hold about teaching action research? Have I clearly articulated these beliefs to the participants on my courses?*

*What are the real aims of my course? Do they try to keep alive the action research ideal that transformative work on the educational issue is important (Altrichter, 1991:23)?*

*In the assessment guidelines for my course, do I encourage transformative ideals (primarily that of improved professional practice), or do I signal the importance of meeting the credits to pass the course, or that the academic audience is more important than the audience of the researcher's institution?*

*In asking participants to generate research questions, as a focus for their projects, am I narrowing them into a scientific approach? Should I instead, follow Lomax's (1994:118) example and substitute "questions" with "intentions", in order to demonstrate the educational aims of the research?*

*Does the approach employed on my course encourage intrinsic motivation (an element emphasised in action research) by ensuring that participants own the research, and are they encouraged to tackle issues of their own choice, at their own pace? Or, do I, as Altrichter (1991) suggests include strategies which show some flexibility in negotiating format and features of assessment, but in practice prescribe the sequence and pace of the work?*

*Am I monitoring the degree to which I act as a "manipulator" on my courses (someone regarded as having superior knowledge by participants, Johnston, 1994:43)? Do I rationalise and obscure this by suggesting that I have openness as a facilitator, but in practice am unwilling to expose power relationships to critical inquiry?*

*Does my course encourage projects which focus on the “process” (methodological and technical) issues and discourage those which attempt to address substantive underlying concerns; in other words, do I navigate participants to avoid operating at the “empowering” level of action research?*

*Do I encourage participants to operate collaboratively with a peer group, but discourage organised collaboration in the course?*

*Do I bother to find out if participants are being absolutely open with their peers about their research? Altrichter (1991) suggests that they often keep their research a secret, thereby violating a range of ethical principles.*

*Do I place unrealistic expectations on the participants (all full time professionals with already stressful workloads) in terms of the pace at which they are expected to proceed in the research?*

*Is the short time frame (average six months for project completion) inducing researchers to “side-step onerous and time-consuming ethical procedures” or to “subjugate the actual action research process to the pace of an ideal one, thus artificialising it” (Altrichter, 1991:28)?*

*Is the participant’s knowledge the centre of attention in my course? Am I implementing the “inductive” features of action research?*

*How can I establish enough trust for participants to perceive me in the resource person and participant role on the course rather than simply in the lecturer role?*

*Do I include knowledge giving (concerning research methods and strategies, history and philosophy) too early in the course, instead of waiting until participants ask for this in ways which have relevance to their own knowledge?*

*Am I allowing participants to learn to design research “by messing about in it...to raise their own questions and form hypotheses and engage in social constructions of their own research designs, data collections, analyses, and write about their own discoveries” (Hollingsworth, 1994:52)?*

*Do the research reports, produced at the end of the course, reflect that students have individually constructed their own meaning of*

*teaching as research, or have they employed only my suggestions, or that of other authors?*

*In assessing research reports do I place an emphasis on the transparency of the research process and the authenticity of the research claims - both considered to be key criteria by Lomax (1994:119).*

*Can I implement a form of evaluation at the end of each day's session which will allow us to be guided as to our next steps in the course? Am I flexible enough in allowing this to happen?*

*How can I gain some understanding of how participants have reflected upon their experiences without reading their confidential reflective diaries? Can I ask them to write a written response to the type of question which McKernan (1994:105) posed to his students, "What did you learn/gain from this project?", as a way of summarising their diaries?*

*Is there evidence within the research reports that these participants are taking action as change agents in their classrooms, organisations, or communities?*

*Am I signalling to participants that I want them to demonstrate a link between reflection and action in their reports?*

*Am I constantly questioning whether I, or anyone, is competent to judge action research reports within formal assessment arrangements?*

*In the long term do participants apply the principles learned on the course to their professional practice? How can I investigate this?*

*How effectively am I critically reflecting on my own role as facilitator of my course (including examining my political and ethical agenda)? Should I carry out this reflection more frequently with my "critical friends" - fellow teachers of action research? What prevents me from doing this? Am I avoiding this?*

## Conclusion

In summary, I have now used both current literature concerning teaching action research and my “critical friends” to guide constant reflection on my own teaching of action research. Student feedback suggests that this has resulted in rewarding outcomes. The process, however, is certainly not conclusive. Like all action research the spiral continues in an on-going and evolutionary journey.

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Our next issue of the ALAR Journal, will cover:

- Action research and social ecology
- Action learning and organisational change
- Managing the energy of thesis writing
- Project reports, new books and more...

# Action Learning: a paradigm whose time has come - Ron Passfield

## ABSTRACT

*In this article, I present action learning as a paradigm by exploring the culture of action learning on four levels - artefacts, norms, values and assumptions.*

*Much of the discussion about action learning tends to focus on "form" - the composition of groups and the choice of processes. This preoccupation with "form" rather than "substance" often leads to an inadequate understanding of action learning and consequent deficiencies in the design of action learning interventions.*

*In researching and practicing action learning over a number of years, I have come to the conclusion that action learning, as proposed by Revans (1982), represents a paradigm. At its core, are the values of "integrity" and "honesty" and the fundamental assumption of "evolutionary interdependence". Underlying the paradigm of action learning is a basic belief that we can transform our lives, our workplaces and society if we act with integrity in concert with others and with nature.*

*The paradigm as presented here provides an integrated model that allows fluidity in form while encouraging fidelity to the essence of action learning.*

*If we focus on the essence, we can recognise action learning as a paradigm whose time has come. Ehrenfeld (1993), for example, argues that our preoccupation with knowing doing and consuming in the 20th Century has led to the pollution of our work, our society, our environment and ourselves. His call for social*

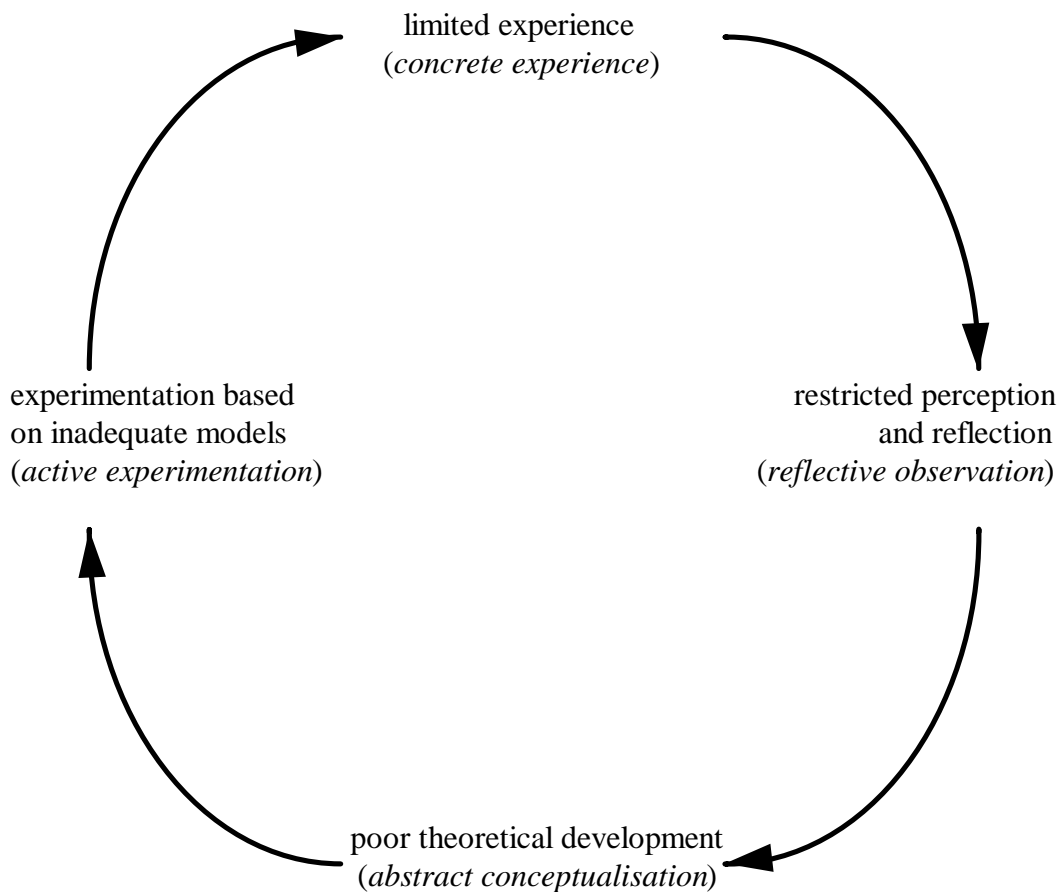


*transformation through integrity, honesty and recognition of our “evolutionary interdependence”, is echoed in recent literature on success in business, personal living and career management.*

*Action learning can help us to align our life and work with our deepest intuitions about what it means to be human and enable us to have a positive influence on the quality and sustainability of the emerging global community.*

## **PREOCCUPATION WITH “FORM” RATHER THAN “SUBSTANCE”**

It is my contention that many people who engage in action learning have an inadequate concept of what action learning is. The consequences of this deficiency can be explained by reference to Kolb’s (1984) model of learning in which he identifies four stages of the learning process - *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation*. The inadequate conceptualisation of action learning and the development of inadequate models (*abstract conceptualisation*) leads to poor design of action learning interventions (*active experimentation*). These design deficiencies in turn restrict the experience of action learning on the part of both the designers and the participants (*concrete experience*). Such deficiencies also lead to inadequate observation and reflection (*reflective observation*) which in turn feeds back into poor conceptualisation of action learning (*abstract conceptualisation*). These deficiencies reinforce each other and are exported to new contexts as program designers implement action learning in different contexts (*active experimentation*). The net result is what Senge (1992) and Hampden-Turner (1990) describe as a “vicious circle” (Figure 1 refers).



**Figure 1:** The vicious circle of non-learning  
(based on Kolb, 1984)

Revans does not help us too much in our quest for clarity about the nature of action learning (see for example, Revans 1982). He was reluctant to define action learning and even more reluctant to say what form it should take in a particular system (Revans, 1991). He did, however, provide an extended definition which is rarely read but which gives something of an insight into the richness of the concept of action learning (Revans, 1982:626). I will allude to parts of this definition in my subsequent discussion.

Pedler (1991) expresses his frustration that even in Revans' (1983) definitive book, *The ABC of Action Learning*, the author addresses what action learning is not, rather than the basic question, "What is Action Learning?" In response to this

omission, Pedler (1991, xxiii) attempts his own definition of action learning:

*Action learning is an approach to the development of people in organisations which takes the task as the vehicle for learning. It is based on the premise that there is no learning without action and no sober and deliberate action without learning. On the whole our education system has not been based upon this principle. The method has been pioneered in work organisations and has three main components - people, who accept the responsibility for taking action on a particular issue; problems, or tasks that people set themselves; and a set of six or so colleagues who support and challenge each other to make progress on problems. Action learning implies both self-development and organisation development. Action on a problem changes both the problem and the person acting upon it. It proceeds particularly by questioning taken-for-granted knowledge.*

This is a very useful, descriptive definition but it still does not tell us **what action learning is** - it is more about form than substance. It is, however, a widely accepted definition of action learning. Hence you will find in the literature and e-mail discussion groups, endless debates about whether an action learning "set" should be an intact, work group or a mixed group - this represents a fixation with form rather than essence.

On reflecting over the years on my own experience of action learning and listening and talking to Reg Revans, I have come to the conclusion that action learning as Revans speaks about it is really a paradigm - **a paradigm** whose time has come (Passfield, 1996).

## ACTION LEARNING AS A PARADIGM

Kuhn (1970:175) defines a “paradigm” in its sociological sense as: “the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by members of a given community”. He suggests that the resultant matrix includes common language/symbols, shared beliefs in particular models, shared values and exemplars (Kuhn 1970:182). “Beliefs” involve shared commitments and also determine for the group what are the “preferred or permissible analogies and metaphors” (Kuhn 1970:184).

Kuhn’s (1970) definition of “paradigm” is very similar to Lundberg’s (1985) definition of organisational culture. If we adopt a cultural perspective (Ott, 1989), we can gain more insight into the nature of the action learning paradigm. Lundberg (1985:171-177) suggests that there are four levels to the concept of culture (paradigm) each of which reflects a different level of awareness:

1. **artefacts** - the observable or surface level which finds expression in language, behaviour, stories, slogans, mission statements and rituals
2. **perspectives** - norms and rules that govern behaviour (some of which are unwritten)
3. **values** - deeply held beliefs which are sometimes difficult to articulate
4. **assumptions** - the deepest, out-of-awareness level of basic assumptions (cf. Schein, 1983).

If we apply this framework to the concept of action learning we can develop the paradigm of action learning as illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1:** The Paradigm of Action Learning (adapted from Passfield, 1996)

---

**Artefacts:**

- “sets” - work teams, mixed teams, inter-organisational teams
- “problem” - projects, placements, personal challenges
- “people” - teachers, educators, trainers, students, street kids, managers, housewives, executives, nurses, academics
- “field of action” - immediate work area, unrelated area, different organisation, the street.

**Norms:**

- advice, challenge, and support
- challenging assumptions
- questioning insight
- treat each others as peers
- admit what we do not know and what is not working well
- take a system perspective
- accept responsibility for own actions and own learning.

**Values:**

- inclusiveness and respect for diversity
- honesty and integrity
- collaboration
- relationships are important

**Assumptions:**

- $L = P + Q$  (learning equals programmed knowledge plus questioning insight)
- current knowledge and skill are born of lived experiences occurring in a previous time and space and, in that sense, are environmentally relative
- past experience can generate misconceptions, not only because our perceptual capacity is limited, but also because the past is different from the present and the future
- learning can be defined as **“our ability to adapt and change with such readiness that we are seen to change”** (Revans, 1981:136)
- people learn with and from each other when they acknowledge their common ignorance and vulnerability
- learning is a social process involving collaborative reflection on action

- “you can’t hope to understand anything before you have been required to apply it reasonably” (Revans, 1982:655)..

## Artefacts of action learning

One of the more obvious “artefacts” of action learning is the “set”. Historically, in Revans early work, this involved homogeneous groups such as mine managers, nurses and industrialists who were drawn from a number of different organisations. Hence, these sets were inter-organisational in character. Today, of course, we have intact work teams and heterogeneous or mixed groups, some of which are facilitated by a “set adviser” (a role performed by Revans himself in his own work but which appears as an invisible role in his own writings). Pedler (1991) reports that Revans was surprised by the effectiveness of mixed sets containing managers and non-managers.

Other key artefacts have to do with what Pedler described above as two components of action learning - the “problem” and “people”. The problem can be addressed through projects or placements or focusing on personal challenges in learning groups of friends or colleagues. Another important artefact relates to what Revans calls the “field of action” - which could be the participants’ immediate work area, an unrelated area in a different organisation or even the street. Decisions need to be made in any action learning activity in relation to these artefacts - who should make up the set? what problem(s) should the set focus on? who should facilitate the set? should the set be facilitated at all? The context and purpose of the action learning activity should determine these decisions about structure and process (Carroll and Passfield, 1992). Revans (1982:626), however, suggests that the real benefits of action learning accrue when the participants are engaged in “responsible involvement in some real, complex, stressful problem, to achieve intended change sufficient to improve his (sic) observable behaviour henceforth in the problem field”.

## Norms of action learning

The norms of action learning are frequently mentioned by Revans but usually in a dispersed manner. The norms relating to **advice, criticism and support** in learning sets are clearly articulated by Revans (1982:626) when he reports that: “in most of the action learning programmes developed by the writer, subjects learn with and from each other by mutual support, advice and criticism during their attacks on real problems”.

He was also insistent that members of action learning sets **challenge each others basic assumptions** because misconceptions arise through “ingrained mental schemata” (1968:33) and “through the enticing distortions and deceitful recollections of their past triumphs and rebuffs” (Revans 1991:12). He describes this process of challenge in his extended definition of action learning:

*The learning achieved is not so much an acquaintance with new factual knowledge nor technical art conveyed by some authority such as an expert or teacher (although such fresh acquaintance is not ruled out), as it is the more appropriate use, by reinterpretation, of the subject's existing knowledge, including his recollections of past lived experiences. This reinterpretation is a social process, carried on among two or more learners who, by the apparent incongruity of their exchanges, frequently cause each other to examine afresh many ideas that they would otherwise have continued to take for granted, however false or misconceived. Action learning particularly obliges subjects to become aware of their own value systems, by demanding that the real problems tackled carry some risk of personal failure, so that the subjects can truly help each other to evaluate in what they may genuinely believe. (Revans 1982:626)*

A core norm of action learning is “**questioning insight**” - the willingness to ask fresh questions “in conditions of ignorance, risk and confusion, when nobody knows what to



do next' (Revans, 1990). This norm resonates with Argyris' concept of the need to discuss the "undiscussable". In this environment of questioning no one presumes to be the "expert" and, in consequence, members of sets **treat each others as peers**, irrespective of their relative hierarchical position or presumed competence in the area under discussion. Revans reinforces this peer norm by describing members of action learning sets as "comrades in adversity" (Revans, 1982).

Revans was insistent that the greatest impediment to learning was the presumption of expertise - he was scathing in his attacks on experts who presumed that they knew all that there was to know about a particular subject area (Revans, 1982, 1990). He stressed the need to **admit what we do not know and what is not going well** with our work (Revans, 1990). His emphasis on the contextual nature of knowledge is reiterated in more recent times by Argyris (1993:3) who argues that "the richness and uniqueness of a concrete situation" creates a gap in our knowledge:

*There will always be a gap between our stored knowledge and the knowledge required to act effectively in a given situation. In order to fill the gap, learning about the context in the new context is required.*

Revans, in 1969, stressed the importance of **taking a system perspective** and, in fact, was one of the earliest writers to talk about the "learning enterprise" or the learning organisation. He saw the need to develop organisations as "autonomous learning systems" in which:

*outstanding persons should be encouraged to develop themselves to the limits of their capacities and ought not to be restricted entirely by ingenious mechanistic programmes devised by quickwitted experts trained not to ask questions outside their own fields. (1982:285)*

He was particularly critical of management educators who failed to take a system perspective on the development of individual managers:

*...teachers of management should study the improvement of organisations as living (self-modifying) systems more deeply than they have been studying them in the past; a traditional concentration on the individual as the object of educational endeavour has prevented us from seeing as clearly as we ought the inefficiencies with which he (sic) is confronted...(Revans 1982:238)*

Underpinning these norms is a pattern of values that give a deeper insight into the nature of action learning.

### **Values of action learning**

Despite his continued use of the male gender in his writing, Revans sought **inclusiveness** and respected the value of **diversity**. He argues for example that nurses who have to deal with dying children are better placed to resolve their day to day problems than some Professor of Nursing from a nearby university (Revans, 1990). He argues consistently that those who carry the final responsibility for an action should be the ones involved in making the relevant decisions.

Revans (1982:633) describes action learning as “development of self by the mutual support of equals” and stresses the need for someone from a different culture to question our motives, repudiate our assumptions and to search our conscience. In my own research of an action learning program over five years, respect for diversity emerged as a core value (Passfield, 1996).

**Honesty and integrity** are also core values and are reinforced by Revans insistence that we should not pretend to be what we are not (Revans, 1990). He reinforces these

values when he recounts the experience of the participants on the Inter-University Programme:

*If it was in the external world of their projects that the fellows first learned to pose the question: "What is an honest man?; it was soon afterwards that the necessities of responsible action led them to be asking in the inner worlds of their own selves: "And what must I do to become one? (Revans, 1982:632)*

The insistence on mutual challenge and support and the social nature of reflection highlights the **collaborative ethos** of action learning. Action learning involves learning with and from others involved in the same "mess". It brings together experienced people to discuss here and now problems for which they have real responsibility. Individually, they take charge of their own learning; collectively, they share their questions and challenge each other constructively (Revans, 1990).

Action learning builds **trust and relationships** through the foundation of the other values of inclusiveness, respect for diversity, honesty, integrity and collaboration. Again my own research confirms that relationship building is a key goal and outcome of action learning interventions (Passfield, 1996).

### **Assumptions of action learning**

The assumptions underpinning action learning are numerous and require much fuller exploration and articulation than I can hope to achieve in this article. The foregoing discussion about artefacts, norms and values reinforce the following list of assumptions identified by Limerick, Passfield and Cunnington (1994:35).

- *Current knowledge and skill are born of lived experiences occurring in a previous time and space and, in that sense, are environmentally relative*

- *Past experience can generate misconceptions, not only because our perceptual capacity is limited, but also because the past is different from the present and the future*
- *Learning can be defined as “our ability to adapt and change with such readiness that we are seen to change” (Revans, 1981:136)*
- *People learn with and from each other when they acknowledge their common ignorance and vulnerability*
- *Learning is a social process involving collaborative reflection on action.*

I would add to these Revans core assumption about the nature of **knowledge**, “you can’t hope to understand anything before you have been required to apply it reasonably” (1982:655), and the nature of **learning**, “ $L=P+Q$  (learning equals programmed knowledge plus questioning insight)” (Revans, 1990).

The artefacts, norms, values and assumptions described above give us some insight into the paradigm of action learning. There are many indications that it is paradigm whose time has come.

## **A PARADIGM WHOSE TIME HAS COME**

From the foregoing discussion it can be seen that the “being” level of learning is fundamental to the action learning paradigm. Revans (1991:10) suggests that action learning involves doing “something effective about something imperative” while willingly submitting our actions to the constructive scrutiny of persistent but supportive colleagues. He argues that in this way we get in touch with why we say the things we say, do the things we do and value the things we value. In other words, through action learning we come into contact with *Who We Are* - we engage in deep, lifelong learning.

This theme of developing personal integrity through our actions and reflection on those actions is a constantly recurring theme today. It resonates with Covey's (1991) concepts of "principle centred leadership" and "inside-out" change; Cohen's (1991) challenge, "Dare to Be Yourself"; and Chin-Ning Chu's (1995) exhortation to develop "spiritual insight", "self-observation" and "self-knowledge".

Jarow (1995:5) claims that recent books on success and motivation "reveal a groundswell of aspiration toward purposeful work". He offers a step-by-step process, which links action with meditative reflection, as a way of "creating self-sustaining conditions that resonate with our deepest levels of integrity, passion and purpose" (Jarow, 1995:6). He suggests that we will never be able to be satisfied "without a basic, personal integrity and heartfelt energy associated with our work" (Jarow, 1995:8).

Jarow (1995:8, 6) concludes that:

*...we have arrived at a point in our social evolution where being the artist of our own lives, creating lives that are authentic instead of accepting or assuming ready-made models, is requisite for entry into the coming century... As we move into the new millennium, what was possible for one may now be possible for many - for anyone, in fact, who is willing to challenge the life-negating suppositions of the current workplace and dare to become a force in the transformation of our world.*

## CONCLUSION

The advent of the 21st Century challenges us as educators, consultants, managers, trainers and teachers to engage in lifelong learning at a deep level and to make a positive difference in our society, our workplace and our physical environment. Action learning provides one road for this journey into honesty, integrity and evolutionary interdependence. There are many action learning pathways

- learning partners, peer learning groups, mixed groups, formal programs and informal learning sets.

Whatever our path and field of action, Revans' (1982) penetrating questions challenge us to start the journey:

- 1. What am I really trying to do first and last?**
- 2. What is stopping me from doing it?**
- 3. What can I contrive to do about it?**
- 4. Who knows what is the line of action that we are trying to implement?**
- 5. Who cares about getting this line of action implemented?**
- 6. Who can actually contribute towards getting it implemented?**

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE:**

This article is an edited extract from a keynote address given at the 6th. National Vocational Education and training Conference, Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, Australia (30 September - 1 October, 1996). The full text of the address and other papers are available in the edited proceedings from:

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## People

### Eileen Heywood

Eileen Heywood is a research consultant, based in Byron Bay. Her clients include academics based at Southern Cross University, and private sector organisations ranging in size from individual practitioners to companies employing over 100 staff. Eileen's mission statement is to make information previously inaccessible outside the hallowed grounds of academia, available to the wider community.

Eileen's passion outside her business is to utilise the action learning framework within community groups and environmental projects. Some of the community projects which have benefited from this approach include a local LETS (Local Energy Transfer System) network and a project by an environmental group to ensure continued protection of rainforest from the onslaught of development. She hopes to find time to write up these projects in the near future. Eileen was also involved in writing and presenting an action research project paper which outlined community participation and student involvement in the local planning process in a suburb of Brisbane (see references at which refer to this project).

Within her consultancy business Eileen has three passions. The first is writing grant applications for talented people and

worthy projects. Her experience ranges from academic grants, to community grants and she is currently working on a grant for a private sector organisation. The second is helping academics who have files upon files of interesting 'not quite there' work to get their ideas to the publication level. The third, is helping individuals, practitioners and organisations access data on natural therapies, in an aim to increase the scientific base of this important area

She has also worked closely with a management program for women and the Equity Section at Queensland University of Technology. Eileen completed her undergraduate degree in politics at the University of Queensland and her Masters degree in Womens' Studies at Griffith University. She can be contacted on email (eheywood@scu.edu.au).

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***ALARPM is a strategic network of people interested or involved in using action learning or action research to generate collaborative learning, research and action to transform workplaces, schools, colleges, universities, communities, voluntary organisations, governments and businesses.***

## Networking

“Networking” is a regular feature in which we bring you news about communities involved in action learning and action research. There are many such communities around the world, some of them isolated from their immediate colleagues by their different interests. In the interests of bringing them closer together, we are inviting people to describe their local action learning/action research communities to you.

### **New Zealand Action Research Network Retreat 1997**

This is an early announcement of the 1997 retreat for action researchers in New Zealand. In the past two years these retreats have been semi-formal gatherings aimed at providing an opportunity for reflection and sharing in quiet surroundings. The 1995 and 1996 retreats have been extremely successful in meeting these aims. These reflection and sharing aims will still be upheld in the 1997 retreat but we intend to extend our program to two days and to provide a program of workshops, plenary sessions, and keynote speakers. Some initial ideas for themes for workshops might include:

- practitioner accounts of action research
- facilitating and teaching action research
- writing up action research
- postgraduate study using action research
- enhancing reflection
- action research for professional development

- creating a learning organisation through action research
- action research as a culturally inclusive approach to research
- and any other emerging issues.

The location will be the Geyserland tourist capital of New Zealand - Rotorua. We are deliberately putting a strong Maori emphasis on this retreat, with some of the retreat being located in the Maori *marac* (meeting house). Overseas and local participants will have an opportunity to experience Maori protocol and traditions associated with such a meeting (or *hui*), including sleeping over if they wish (alternative accommodation will also be offered).

We have timed the retreat (Friday 9th and Saturday 10th May) to allow people to take a long weekend break in Rotorua.

We will be circulating fliers, and calling for offers of workshops, in January/February 1997.

## Noticeboard

In "Noticeboard" we bring you information about impending activities or resources, such as conferences, courses and journals. We welcome member contributions to "Noticeboard".

### **World Congress 4 on Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management**

World Congress 4 in Cartagena is shaping up to be a very special event. It has been designed collaboratively at an international level to provide a unique experience for all who

participate. Exploration of the central theme “Convergence in Knowledge, Space and Time” will include formal presentations, round tables, panels and small group discussions.

The cultural environment will be enhanced by the introduction of an “information market”. There will be a room containing music inspired in people’s struggles, a room where historic films and video tapes on action research will be shown, and a reading room with national and international materials published since the 1960’s. There will also be a picture gallery-museum of pioneers and leaders in the use of participatory forms of action and research.

Early in the evenings on each day parallel encounters will be held with international personalities. Those already confirmed are: Gabriel García Márquez, Paulo Freire, Immanuel Wallerstein, Agnes Heller, Eduardo Galeano, Albert O. Hirschman, Stephen Kemmis, Alain Touraine, Rodolfo Stavengagen, Humberto Maturana, and Robert Chambers. Others expected are: Ruth Cardoso, Peter Checkland, Manfred Max-Neef, and Herbert de Souza.

Popular concerts and events will be held later in the evenings on the Esplanade at the Centre.

To assist you in making the most of this adventure, we invite those in Australia who are going, or thinking of going, to contact ALARPM. We will put you in touch with other travellers and keep you informed of the latest developments. There is also a possibility that we can arrange a group booking with discounted airfares.

*ALARPM's vision is that action learning and action research 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 and sustainable society.*

## **MBA & DBA by Action Learning** **- Northern Territory University**

### **Senior Executive Master of Business Administration (MBA)**

The Senior Executive Master of Business Administration is designed to meet the special needs of senior managers to enhance knowledge and skills for sustainable improvements in their own performance and that of their organisations.

The program recognises previous relevant learning obtained through formal professional or management education and uses formal coursework and action learning methods to identify areas of managerial competence which need to be improved and which can be enhanced. The undertaking of a major action learning project in a real organisation provides candidates with the opportunity to enhance their intellectual, investigative, analytical, problem solving and communicative abilities.

### **Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)**

The professional Doctor of Business Administration combines the rigour of a PhD with a focus on contemporary international management issues, to develop well-rounded professionals with specialised knowledge and managerial competencies.

The first year is based on the Master of International Management coursework units. In the second year candidates undertake a unit in Action Research and Management Consulting which involves working on a major organisational change project in action learning sets. This project requires a corporate sponsor (a senior manager who is prepared to give the student access to the organisation), a problem owner (someone who is experiencing an organisational problem which the student is working on)

and a set advisor (someone who facilitates the meetings of the set). The corporate sponsor assists with the evaluation of the student's work. During the third year candidates undertake research on a significant issue, leading to the production of a written thesis.

Enquiries about these programs should be addressed to:

The Director (Admissions)  
Senior Executive MBA Program  
Graduate School of Business  
Northern Territory University  
DARWIN NT 0909  
Australia.

Telephone: 61-89 46 6447

Fax: 61-89 46 6513

## **Master of Management Learning - Gibaran Action Research Management Institute**

The Master of Management Learning is a research degree offered by Gibaran Action Research Management Institute (Gibaran), a private institution based in Adelaide.

The Master's program is designed to enable candidates to identify work-based management issues; develop a capacity to apply interdisciplinary approaches to such work-based management issues; and use the action research method to address and resolve a specific workplace strategic or functional issue.

Entry to the program is available to candidates with a recognised Honours degree or Graduate Diploma acceptable to Gibaran.

The program is to be completed full-time over 12 months or part-time over 24 months, and comprises a one-week

research methods seminar, and a research dissertation not exceeding 60,000 words.

For further details please contact:

The Registrar  
Gibran Action Research Management Institute  
PO Box 581  
BRIGHTON SA 5048

Telephone: 61-8 8377 0738

Fax: 61-8 8377 1864

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MBA by Action Learning</b> <b>- IMC &amp; University of Surrey, England</b></p>
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The International Management Centre (IMC) was established as a multinational business school in 1964. During this time it has provided programs in over 30 countries, giving management development and qualification on an open, in-company and consortium basis. From November 1996 the IMC MBA by action learning also gains the concurrent award of MBA from the University of Surrey in England. The joint venture with the University of Surrey ensures recognition throughout the British Commonwealth and European Union. The concurrent award also receives accreditation from the British Accreditation Council and the Distance Education and Training Commission in Washington DC. This latter accreditation gives formal recognition with the Department of Education in the USA.

The principles of action learning require all participants to use both their theoretical knowledge and practical experience to learn how to ask the question that will help solve the real problems, tackle the real issues in their own organisations and thereby advance their personal careers. During the 24 month program participants must remain in-post because core studies will focus on the better



understanding of managerial challenges faced in their workplace. Their MBA dissertation must be on a topic of strategic significance to the organisation.

The program features extensive use of the Internet as a resource and to enable discourse with managers across the globe. Through IMC's Internet site, managers on the program gain access to the leading management journals and are able to retrieve and print full text for research use.

To celebrate Reg Revans' 90th year and the 10th anniversary of IMC's MBA programme in Australia. IMC is offering Revans' Action Learning Scholarships worth \$A 8,000.

Enquiries about these programs should be addressed to:

Pat James  
Regional Registrar  
IMC Pacific Region  
PO Box 336  
TOOWONG Qld 4066  
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#### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Please note that ALARPM has moved. We also have a new email address.

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## The bookshelf

### *Broadening Perspectives in Action Research* edited by Tony Carr

The chapters in this book draw on the experiences of authors who have conducted technical, practical and emancipatory action research. They detail many success stories and problems experienced along the way. Contributions include interesting and varied examples with emphasis on practical insights and experiential gain. The focus on practical and emancipatory action research highlights participants' willingness to explore the complex and difficult, alongside the more common and known organisational problems. The experiences in Columbia and Europe are in direct contrast to the Australian examples.

This book is structured into three parts. Part 1 provides some examples of applied research in education. Part 2 presents five reflective examples of action research in management. Part 3 focuses on broader perspectives in the community. All have theoretical and practical bases, making it a must for managers, teachers and other practitioners interested in action learning and research.

### Contents

**Introduction**      *Tony Carr*

#### **PART ONE      Action Research in Education**

1    From empowerment to innovative research methods: Two workshops with a critical approach to emancipatory research

*Franz Kroath*

- 2 An action research approach to action learning:  
Empowering individuals and organisations

*Ron Passfield*

## **PART TWO      Action Research in Management**

- 3 Action learning as an effective change process

*Robert Burke*

- 4 Dilemmas experienced in conducting emancipatory action  
research

*Cliff Bunning*

- 5 The development of an academic staff appraisal system  
through action learning

*Joe Zarb*

- 6 Emancipating scientists through action research

*Pam Swepson*

- 7 Turning experience into learning: Guidelines for graduate  
action research Masters and PhD candidates

*Tony Carr*

## **PART THREE      Action Research in the Community**

- 8 Action learning and community economic development

*Paul Wildman*

- 9 Learning about people's participation and action research

*Marc Lammerink*

The book "Broadening Perspectives in Action Research" is being jointly published by ALARPM Association Inc., Prosperity Press and Interchange Pty Ltd. It will be available through ALARPM Association Inc. and has been included in the Catalogue order form at the end of the journal. The recommended retail price is \$A36.50 for paperback. Discounts apply for ALARPM members.

***New Directions in Action Research***  
edited by Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt

Action research - the research into practice by practitioners - has been established as a very useful research paradigm for educational, professional, managerial and organisational development. This book brings together leading action researchers who have critically reflected on their theory and practice with a focus on *emancipatory* or critical action research, based on the Frankfurt School of Critical Studies.

This book is divided into three sections. The first section deals with models, principles and procedures for critical action research. The second raises some common problems and offers a variety of suggested solutions to overcoming these problems and barriers to change. The third section relates critical action research to current thinking on postmodernism.

This well-written and eminently coherent book will be an essential tool for action researchers in education, higher education, management education, and for consultants involved in organisational change and development.

Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt is Professor and Director of Graduate Studies and Research in the Faculty of Education, Work and Training, Southern Cross University, Australia. Her research interests are higher education and management education, including workplace learning, action research and process management.

## **Contents**

### **PART I INTRODUCTION**

1 Introduction: New Directions in Action Research

*Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt*

## **PART II      PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR CRITICAL ACTION RESEARCH**

- 2    Some Principles and Procedures for the Conduct of Action Research

*Richard Winter*

- 3    Reflexivity in Emancipatory Action Research: Illustrating the Researcher's Constitutiveness

*Susan Hall*

- 4    Got a Philosophical Match? Does it Matter?

*Mary Jane Melrose*

- 5    Collaborative, Self-critical and Reciprocal Inquiry Through Memory Work

*Michael Schratz*

## **PART III      PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**

- 6    Emancipatory Action Research for Organisational Change and Management Development

*Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt*

- 7    Towards Empowering Leadership: The Importance of Imagining

*Shirley Grundy*

- 8    Emancipatory Action Research: A Critical Alternative to Personnel Development or a New Way of Patronising People?

*Richard Weiskopf and Stephan Laske*

- 9    Becoming Critical of Action Research for Development

*Graham Webb*

**PART IV      POSTMODERNISM AND CRITICAL  
ACTION RESEARCH**

10 Exposing Discourses Through Action Research

*Leonie E Jennings and Anne P Graham*

11 Managing Change Through Action Research: A  
Postmodern Perspective on Appraisal

*Jack Sanger*

12 Emancipatory Aspirations in a Postmodern Era

*Stephen Kemmis*

13 Issues for Participatory Action Researchers

*Robin McTaggart*

The book "New Directions in Action Research" is published by The Falmer Press (A member of the Taylor & Francis Group). Falmer Press, 1 Gunpowder Square, London, EC4A 3DE, UK. Falmer Press, Taylor & Francis Inc., 1900 Frost Road, Suite 101, Bristol, PA 19007, USA. This book is available in Australia through the

University Co-operative Bookshop  
Southern Cross University  
PO Box 157  
Lismore NSW 2480  
Australia

Phone: 61-66 214484  
Fax: 61 66 222960  
Email: [coop@scu.edu.au](mailto:coop@scu.edu.au)

The recommended retail price is \$A32.95 for paperback. The book is also available in hardcover.

## New members

Welcome to those who have become members of ALARPM since the last ALAR Journal. You may wish to use this list as an update to your networking directory.

### AUSTRALIA

#### *Northern Territory*

**JONES MERRICK**

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Graduate School of Business

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Australia

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**INTEREST:** DBA & MBA Degrees by Action Research

**NETWORKS:** Action Learning, Action Research, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development, Organisational Change & Development, Process Management, Team Learning & Development.

*We welcome profiles of people engaged in action learning or action research. You could submit your own or offer to write one on behalf of someone you know.*

*New South Wales*

**JARVIS WALTER PATRICK**

Principal, Wal Jarvis Consulting  
22 Findlay Avenue  
Roseville NSW 2069  
Australia

*HOME PHONE:* 02-9419 6835

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*INTEREST:* I would like to incorporate action learning into my management education programs. I am looking for models of best practice for management development.

*PROJECT:* Implementing change, leading change, workbased learning.

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Action Research, Evaluation, Human Services Practice/Change, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development, Organisational Change & Development, Process Management, Quality Management, Social Justice, Systems Methodologies.

**YEATMAN ANNA**

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*INTEREST:* Practitioner-oriented research, professional education and management for change

*PROJECT:* Review of the Commonwealth - State Disability Agreement 1995-96

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Evaluation, Higher Education, Human Services Practice/Change, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development.

**WINTER BARBEL**



Community Development Worker for the Brain Injury  
Association  
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*PROJECT:* Action research into outcomes for people involved  
in self-help and support groups for people who have had a  
brain injury.

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Action Research, Community  
Action, Gender Issues, Organisational Change &  
Development, Rural Community Development.

**BOOTH PHILLIP**

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*INTEREST:* Facilitated praxis; organisational change

*PROJECT:* PhD research method plus praxis in my  
learnscaping consultancy

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Action Research, Community  
Action, Learning Organisations, Organisational Change &  
Development, Teacher Development - Higher Education,  
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*INTEREST:* organisational learning

*PROJECT:* University Academic Staff Performance Appraisal

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Action Research, Higher Education, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development, Organisational Change & Development, Rural Community Development, Systems Methodologies, Teacher Development - Higher Education, Team Learning & Development.

*Victoria*

**GRIME KRAIG**

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*INTEREST:* Linking responsibility to personal actions which address process and performance improvement which then in turn links to business outcomes.

*PROJECT:* Developing a process production window which links process to business outcomes; intergroup behaviour.

*NETWORKS:* Human Services Practice/Change, Manager & Leadership Development, Organisational Change & Development, Process Management, Team Learning & Development.

## *Queensland*

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**INTEREST:** education, action learning

**PROJECT:** project development

**NETWORKS:** Action Learning, Action Research, Community Action, Education, Evaluation, Gender Issues, Higher Education, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development, Method, Organisational Change & Development, Process Management, Quality Management, Rural Community Development, Systems Methodologies, Teacher Development, Teacher Development - Higher Education, Team Learning & Development, Vocational Education.

**MARSHALL ROGER**

Resource/Support Teacher/Cleveland SHS

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**INTEREST:** Community development/process management/action learning

**PROJECT:** School improvement/effective learning and teaching/professional development for teachers and ancillary workers in schools

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Action Research, Community Action, Education, Gender Issues, Human Services Practice/Change, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development, Method, Organisational Change & Development, Process Management, Quality Management, Social Justice, Systems Methodologies, Teacher Development, Team Learning & Development.

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*HOME PHONE:* 07-3348 6690

*E-MAIL:* duttonj@citec.qld.gov.au

*PROJECT:* organisational effectiveness

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Action Research, Education, Evaluation, Higher Education, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development, Method, Organisational Change & Development, Process Management, Systems Methodologies, Team Learning & Development, Workplace Reform.

**FAIRFIELD** RAY

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*INTEREST:* Organisational and cultural changes involved in quality management implementation.

*PROJECT:* Still developing

*NETWORKS: Action Research, Manager & Leadership  
Development, Process Management, Quality Management,  
Systems Methodologies.*

**WILLET** ANTHONY MICHAEL  
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MS 483

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*WORK PHONE:* 074-830041

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*E-MAIL:* Willett@dpi.qld.gov.au

*INTEREST:* The DPI Training Centre delivers training courses in forest management, fire management, chainsaw operations and workplace trainer and assessment programs

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Quality Management, Teacher Development - Higher Education, Vocational Education.

### *Western Australia*

**HARTLEY** DIANA

Senior Consultant, WA Dept of Training

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*WORK FAX:* 09-235-6055

*HOME PHONE:* 09-381-4238

*E-MAIL:* hartdi@devetwa.edu.au

*INTEREST:* Managing and facilitating action learning, Change Management

*PROJECT:* Managing funds for action learning projects, facilitating action learning, action learning as a staff development process

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development, Vocational Education.

**PALMER MARILYN**

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*WORK FAX:* 097-80-7813

*HOME PHONE:* 097-21-8148

*E-MAIL:* m.palmer@cowan.edu.au

*INTEREST:* Teaching and learning methods. Collaborative research. Community based organisations eg. social welfare, environment

*PROJECT:* Collaborative self directed learning in tertiary education. Collaborative group inquiry methods in social work.

*NETWORKS:* Community Action, Gender Issues, Higher Education, Human Services Practice/Change, Organisational Change & Development, Rural Community Development, Workplace Reform.

**GRAHAM ERIC**

Director of ETAS (WA) P/L

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*HOME PHONE:* 09-246-3516

*HOME FAX:* 09-246-9516

*INTEREST:* Delivering Graduate Certificate in Action Learning

*PROJECT:* Associated with Graduate Certificate

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Action Research, Community Action, Evaluation, Higher Education, Human Services Practice/Change, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development, Method, Organisational Change & Development, Process Management, Quality Management, Rural Community Development, Systems Methodologies, Team Learning & Development, Vocational Education.

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*WORK FAX:* 7564447

*HOME PHONE:* 7338331

*HOME FAX:* 7327731

*E-MAIL:* weelig@pacific.net.sg

*INTEREST:* Developments and methodological issues in large-scale change management and process consultation.

*PROJECT:* Doctoral work using action research methodologies to help a large retail chain develop and sustain high service standards

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Action Research, Evaluation, Learning Organisations, Manager & Leadership Development, Method, Organisational Change & Development, Process Management, Quality Management, Systems Methodologies, Team Learning & Development.

## ENGLAND

**OLIVER CAROL**

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*E-MAIL:* Carolo@mcb.co.uk

*INTEREST:* Action learning programmes and how the Internet affects students behaviour/learning patterns.

*PROJECT:* Implementing action learning programs on the internet

*NETWORKS:* Action Learning, Learning Organisations.



# Guidelines for contributors

## Contributions to this journal

Through the ALAR Journal, we aim to promote the study and practice of action learning and action research and to develop personal networking on a global basis.

We welcome contributions in the form of:

- articles (up to 10 A4 pages, double spaced)
- letters to the editor
- profiles of people (including yourself) engaged in action research or action learning
- project descriptions, including work in progress (maximum 1000 words)
- information about a local action research/action learning network
- items of interest (including conferences, seminars and new publications)
- book reviews
- report on a study or research trip
- comments on previous contributions

You are invited to base your writing style and approach on the material in this copy of the journal, and to keep all contributions brief. The journal is not a refereed publication, though submissions are subject to editorial review.

## Contributed case study monographs

Contributions are welcomed to the Action Research Case Study (ARCS) monograph series. The case studies in this refereed series contribute to a theoretical and practical understanding of action research and action learning in applied settings. Typical length is in the range 8,000 to 12,000 words: about 40 typed A4 pages, double spaced.

Types of case studies include (but are not limited to):

- completed cases, successful and unsuccessful
- partial successes and failures
- work in progress
- within a single monograph, multiple case studies which illustrate important issues
- problematic issues in current cases

We are keen to develop a review and refereeing process which maintains quality. At the same time we wish to avoid the adversarial relationship that often occurs between intending contributors and referees. Our plan is for a series where contributors, editors, and referees enter into a collaborative process of mutual education.

We strongly encourage dual or multiple authorship. This may involve a combination of experienced and inexperienced practitioners, theoreticians, clients, and authors from different sectors or disciplines. Joint authors who disagree about some theoretical or practical point are urged to disclose their differences in their report. We would be pleased to see informed debate within a report.

You may have interesting case material but may be uncertain of its theoretical underpinnings. If so, approach us. We may

offer joint authorship with an experienced collaborator to assist with the reflective phase of the report.

Another option is to submit a project report initially for the ALAR Journal (1000 words) with a view to developing the report into a full case study.

Detailed guidelines for case studies are available from the editor, ALAR Journal. The first case study in the series, by Vikki Uhlmann, is about the use of action research to develop a community consultation protocol.

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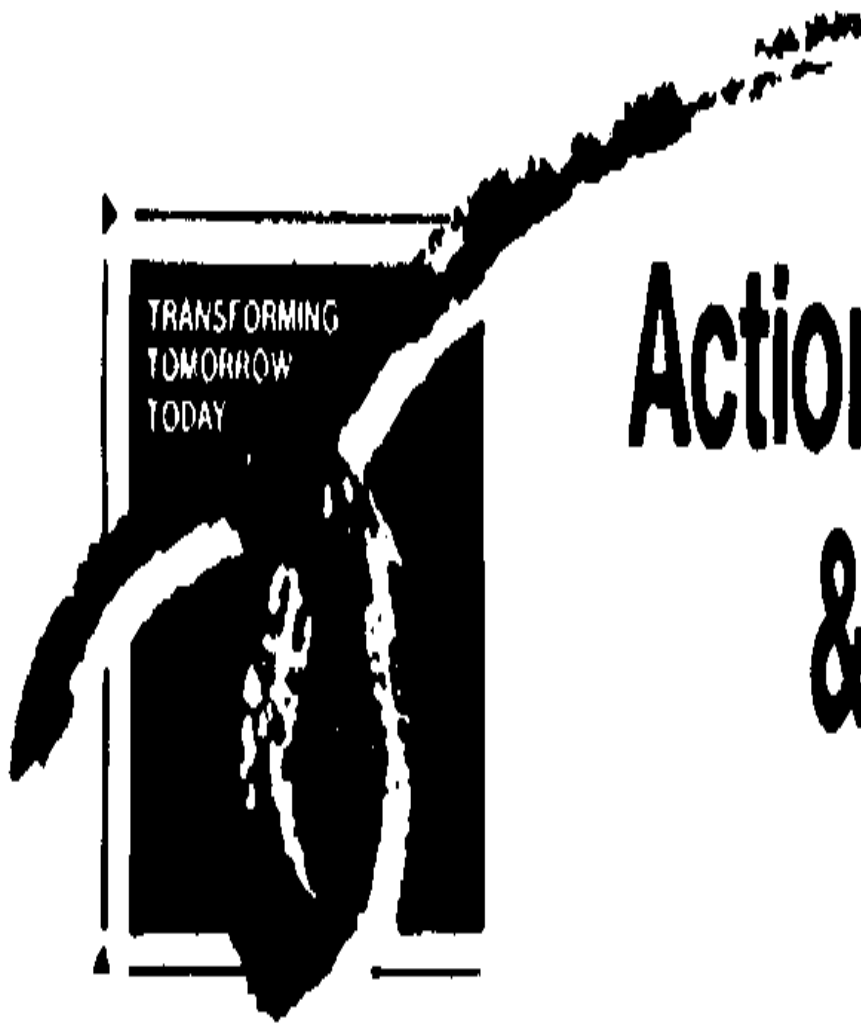
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