Editorial

Action Research Journal’s Seven Quality Choicepoints for Transformations.

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Action Research Journal (ARJ) continues to embrace many paradigms of inquiry. Given the call of our time, we have increased our commitment to emphasizing Action Research for Transformations (ART) and, in the process of doing our work, to develop and convene a global community of practice under the larger umbrella of AR+ Foundation (www.ActionResearchPlus.com) which provides resources for all on the ART path. Because of our decision to emphasize Action Research that is transformative, we have refreshed the journal’s seven “quality choicepoints.”

ARJ for ART’s sake.

Civilizational, structural transformation -- transforming our social, political and economic systems -- is now urgent. The Associate Editors at ARJ, i.e., those charged with developing papers for publication, have issued a call to action researchers to better tie efforts, practice and inquiry, to this challenge. Action Research for Transformations (ART) helps articulate the heart of the ART (Bradbury et al, 2019). ART means that ARJ’s knowledge creation:

- Has, as its purpose, the support of our collective thriving on this planet.
- Includes and transcends individualistic rationalist empiricism because we acknowledge whole selves who are relational beings.
- Starts with stakeholders’ felt experiences and a joint willingness to tackle unilaterally held power that divides us.
- Embraces multiple ways of knowing-for-action.
- Integrates personal/reflexive, interpersonal/relational and impersonal knowledge; all three are needed to empower us to shape the social world of our aspirations.
- Adopts a critical view of transformation itself: for whom, from where, in what specific form, and with what permanency?

We do not look to an individual paper to be perfect in all choicepoints. We do however ask that authors reflect deeply on their work through the lens of the following choicepoints. Our ultimate aim is to advance work that builds on what has gone before it and that the action research we make available contributes - over time - to a more sustainable and equitable world.

1. Clarity and Significance of Purpose and Objectives.

The extent to which the insights are significant, in content and process, in support of transformation. Important here are the UN’s 17 sustainable development goals: they serve as guardrails and mileposts for lasting change that mitigates global inequity, stimulates individual wellbeing, and promotes our collective thriving on this planet. By significant
content we mean having meaning and relevance beyond their immediate context in support of the flourishing of persons, communities, and the wider ecology by generating both local and public knowledge. By process we mean involvement of stakeholders through strategies and methods that connect people and knowledges in ways that help them develop a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their practices, their understandings of their practices, and the transformation of the situations in which they practice.

2. Quality of Partnership.

The extent to, and means by which, participative values are evident in the relational component of research. Partnership exists on a continuum from consultation with stakeholders to stakeholders as full co-researchers. It embraces multiple ways of knowing-for-action and ensures room for questions of “whose knowledge counts?” We expect authors to explicitly reflect on the appropriateness of the depth and breadth of participation of different stakeholders in the design, implementation and outcomes of the action research.

3. Contribution to action research theory/practice.

Authors build on and create explicit links to previous work, and contribute to and extend a wider body of practice, knowledge and theory. Beyond this, scholarship should specifically address the question, “What is the author doing to ensure that the benefits discovered or created do not end with the project?” Scholarship must look at ways of moving beyond limited, local AR to creating social impact through networking, scaling, or other creative methods.

4. Participative methods and process.

The extent to which the action research approach/methodology and related methods are clearly articulated as providing for increasing participative interactivity and transformative potential and intent. In addition, the extent to which papers expand the palette of innovative (including digital) and creative methods and data considered appropriate for contribution to ART.

5. Actionability.

The extent to which the action research conveyed through the paper provides new ideas to guide action in response to the urgency of need and nature of transformations needed.


The extent to which authors take a personal, involved and self-critical stance on their role throughout the action research process, addressing the context of their research, their own identities and biases and how they might be received by participants, and what led to their involvement in this research. We invite authors to reflect on what they’ve learned and
acknowledge the role participants, relationships, and experiences in contributing to their own knowledge and transformation.

7. Practitioner Relevance and Engagement.

The extent to which the language used in the article engages the interested practitioner. This may range from illustrations that “show” and not just “tell,” e.g., including voices of participants in the research, to offering more practitioner friendly work. Reaching practitioners with new practices that lead to sustained transformation promotes scaling of our efforts as action researchers.

Reference:


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