

At this point in my CCT career, I feel that I have enough experience with the style of the program to have become much more comfortable and certainly even excited about our class sessions. I have developed a sort of mantra in my mind in preparation for any class session, consisting of the two following expectations:

1. it's perfectly ok to spend a little time in class not yet completely understanding what is happening or why what is happening is important
2. I trust that whatever does happen in class and as the result of the class will somehow expose more potential for making use of my experience as fully as possible

Both of these expectations were met during my first experience with my novice experience in Action Research through exploring the issue of refreshments and snacks. At a few moments during our first two class sessions, I found myself cringing during a few times when another student expressed some anxiety about the specifics of an assignment in terms of "what has to be done" in terms of meeting the official requirements, such as the length of a paper. When I reflected on why such questions from others cause me to be a little uncomfortable, I found that my feelings stem from my own motivation to get past such logistical details as quickly as possible so that I can focus my attention to thinking about how to make the work as personally meaningful as possible.

A connection seemed to form between this realization and to some of the initial illustrations and descriptions of the action research process and to Professor Taylor's explanations of the cycles and epicycles. Through our activity, I have started to see how our treatment of the refreshments issue provided an opening for my to more greatly explore why and how certain issues are most important to me. This did not mean getting things to be the

way that I wanted, but it did have something to do with permitting myself to pay greater attention to my own motivations and wants during the process itself. Several times, I found myself doing what Schmuck referred to as “catching myself in the act of behaving”, which mostly occurred in the form of remembering past experiences with refreshments in previous class situations, most particularly in the ways that I thought our process for refreshments might have been better. I “caught myself” by noticing that my responses and questions in many ways reflected memories of past cases of handing refreshments. Had I not noticed this, I don’t believe that I would have then considered that my level of satisfaction about the refreshments was based on the more deep-seeded value of inclusion and sharing among class members (rather than nutrition, scheduling, or how to distribute responsibility).

As far as Schmuck also describes Action Research as involving what the research is doing personally and the way that the cycles are truly continuous by reflecting, planning, and evaluating change, I’m also starting to relate the compressed action research to my overall interests in adult learning. One idea for future exploration is my underlying motivation to improve my own lifelong learning because of the disappointment that I feel about the way that the potential of my formal childhood schooling was never met. In a way, many of the actions that I take now and perspectives of learning may be manifestations of me reacting to this unresolved issue of the past. Through the process of considering refreshments, the obvious thought that came to mind was that the process was helping to strip away more generic issues to discover the issues of refreshments with finer levels of granularity. The less obvious thought that emerged later was the idea that the process was also stripping away my own more generic interest in knowledge to uncover the finer layers of my personal interest in the issue. Schmuck

discusses the levels of concern in research in which one focuses on self, then on others, then on results, and our activity reminds me that it is all too easy for me to skip directly to the focus on others.

Finally, the focus of our Action Research on improvement rather than correctness has helped me to become more inspired about how my thoughts might develop in my current work situation in which I develop educational resources and classroom activities for a preschool and afterschool program. Although my primary interest is in adult learning, I had decided to spend the current school year in childhood education, thinking that it would inspire some insight about what it means to enjoy learning and feel free about one's natural curiosities and willingness to experiment in learning. In this work so far, there is constant planning of new ways to engage the students and evaluate and then reflect upon the results. Admittedly, I have occasionally worked through this process with the intention that I could eventually "get it right" and therefore not need to repeat the cycle, perhaps even seeming to indicate that I had failed at times. Through our initial classwork so far, I have started to change my mind and trust that this pattern is not only expected but a very positive indication that progress can happen in rewarding ways without concern for being "finished".