CYCLES and EPICYCLES of ACTION RESEARCH

for EDUCATIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL and PERSONAL CHANGE

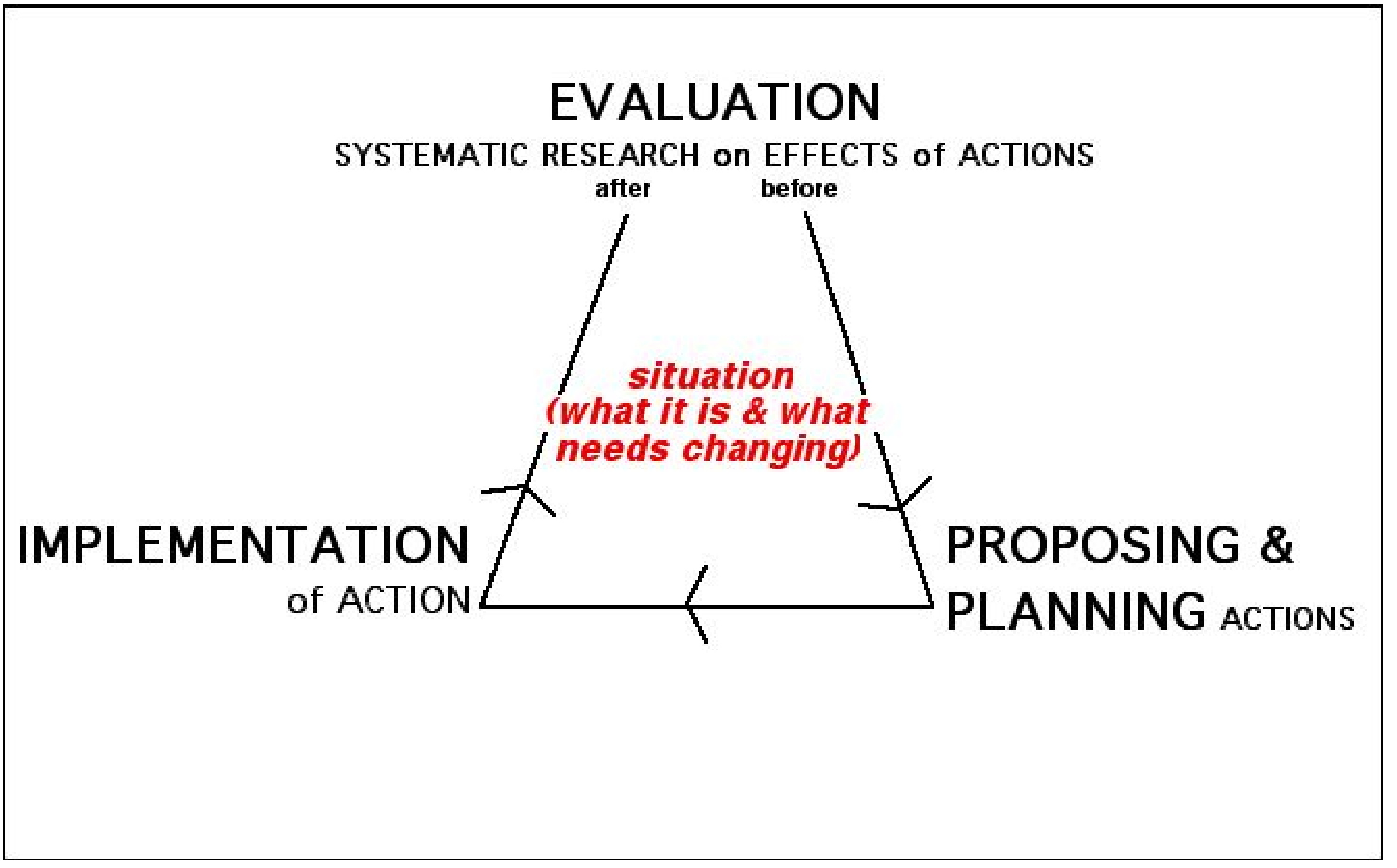
Peter Taylor 4/03, rev. 3/06, 6/08, 6/09, 5/10

Overview

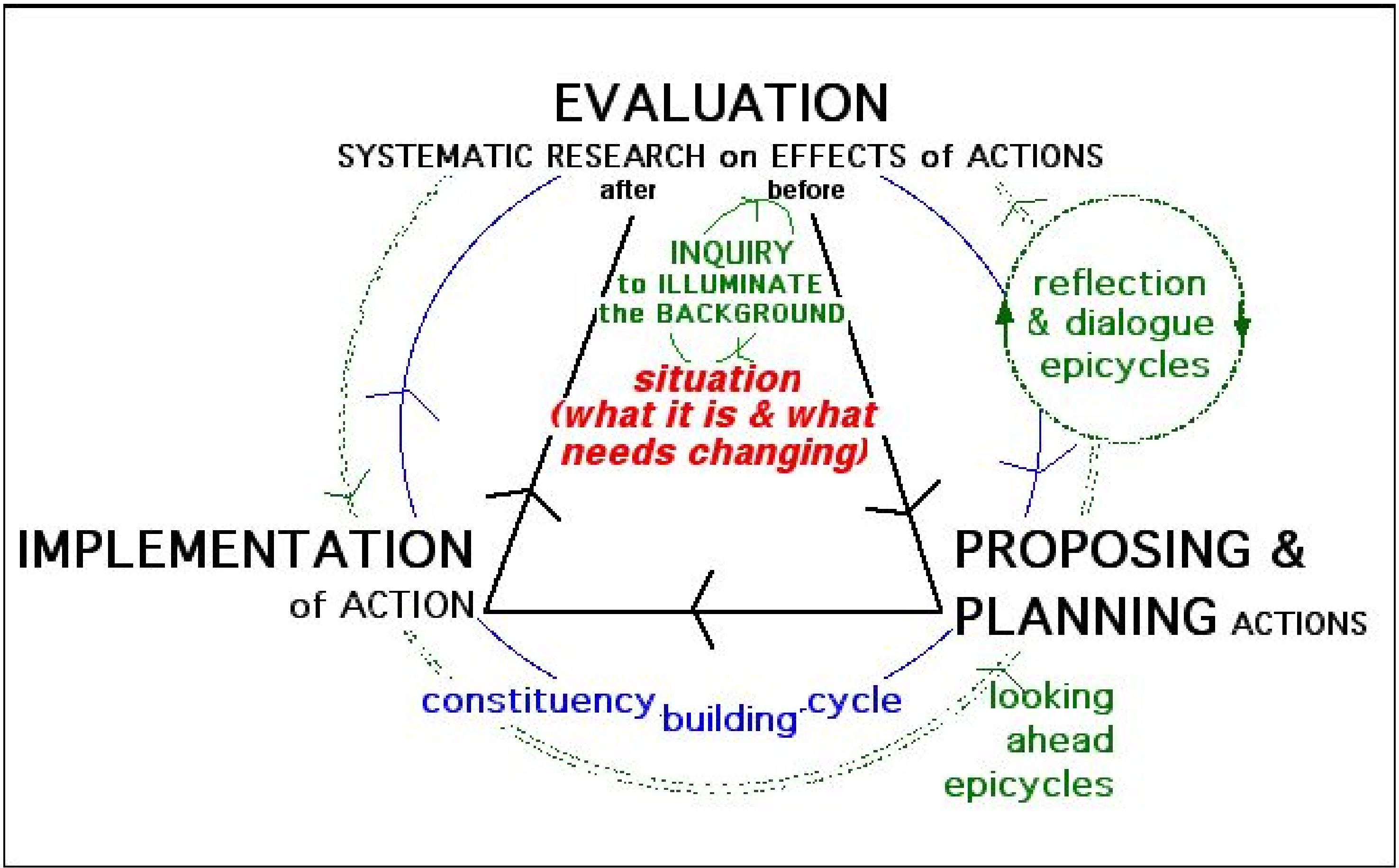
Action Research begins when you (as an individual or as a group) want to do something to change the current situation, that is, to take action.

- "Action" refers to many different things: a new or revised curriculum; a new organizational arrangement, policy, or procedure in educational settings; equivalent changes in other professions, workplaces, or communities; changes in personal practices, and so on.

Action Research then progresses through stages of Planning and Implementing some Action to Evaluation of its Effects, that is, Research to show what ways the situation after the action differs from the way it was before.



To this traditional cycle of Action Research we can add reflection and dialogue through which you review and revise the ideas you have about what action is needed and about how to build a constituency to implement the change. Your thinking about what the situation is and what needs changing can also be altered by inquiring into the background (e.g., what motivates you to change this situation?) as well as looking ahead to future stages. Constituency-building happens over time like the basic cycle of Action Research, so we can think of this a second cycle. The other additions, however, often make us go back and revisit what had seemed clear and settled, so we can call these the “epicycles” (i.e., cycles on top of cycles) of action research.



In what follows, we expand on this brief introduction, then elaborate on the key **Aspects of Action Research**, then list the **Tools** useful in the different aspects of Action Research. This text is deliberately brief--a summary more than a detailed guide--because it is primarily through experience conducting Action Research and practice using the tools that the interplay between the cycles and epicycles will become clear. (See also a step-by-step presentation of this framework).

Again, Action Research begins when you (as an individual or as a group) want to do something to change the current situation, that is, to take action. To move from a broad idea of the action you think is needed to a more refined and do-able proposal, you may need to review evaluations of the effects of past actions (including possibly evaluations of actions you have made) and to conduct background inquiry so you can take into account other relevant considerations (e.g., who funds or sponsors these kinds of changes and evaluations). You also have to get people—yourself included—to adopt or adapt your proposals, that is, you have to build a constituency for any actions. Constituency building happens when you draw people into reflection, dialogue, and other participatory processes that elicit ideas about the current situation, clarify objectives, and generate ideas and plans to take action to improve it; when people work together to implement actions; and when people see evaluations of how good the actions/changes were in achieving the objectives. Evaluation of the effects of a change or action can lead to new or revised ideas about further changes and about how to build a constituency around them, thus stimulating ongoing cycles of action research.
These cycles are not a steady progression one step to the next. Reflection and dialogue "epicycles" *at any point* can lead to you to revisit and revise the ideas you had about what change is needed and about how to build a constituency to implement the change. Revision also happens when, before you settle on what actions to pursue, you move "backwards" and look at evaluations of past actions and conduct other background inquiry. Revision can also happen when you look ahead at what may be involved in implementing or evaluating proposed actions and

building a constituency around them. Such looking ahead is one of the essential features of planning.
In summary, action research involves evaluation and inquiry, reflection and dialogue, constituency building, looking ahead and revision in order to clarify what to change, get actions implemented, take stock of the outcomes, and continue developing your efforts.
Of course, as is the case with all evaluations and research more generally, there is no guarantee that the results of Action Research will influence relevant people and groups ("stakeholders"), but constituency building--including dialogue and reflect on the implications of the results--provides a good basis for mobilizing support and addressing (potential) opposition in the politics of applied research and evaluation.

Elaboration on the Aspects of Action Research

(Tools useful in the different aspects of Action research are described in the links below.)

Evaluation is the systematic study of the effects of actions. You use the results of evaluations -- of actions taken before you got involved or in another setting as well as actions you implement -- to design new or revised actions and to convince others to implement equivalent actions in other settings. To establish the specific effect of a specific action a comparison is needed of a situation in which the action is taken with one in which it is not, with nothing else varying systematically between the two situations. Such a comparison may be hard to find or achieve. In any case, tightly focused evaluations need to be complemented by broader **Inquiry** to clarify what warrants change and action in view of what is known about this situation and others like it and to clarify what a potential constituency is.

Constituency building involves getting others to adopt or adapt your action proposals, or, better still, enlisting others to become part of the "you" that shapes, evaluates, and revises any proposals. Adoption/adapatation is helped by succinct presentations to a potential constituency of action proposals and the evaluations and inquiry that supports them. Enlistment is helped by facilitation of “stakeholder” participation in the initial evaluation and inquiry, in formulation of action proposals, and in planning so as to bring about their investment in implementing the proposals. If the actions are personal changes and the constituency is yourself, you can still facilitate your own evaluation and planning process to ensure your investment in the actions. Indeed, constituency building begins with yourself. In order to contribute effectively to change, you need to be engaged—to have your head and heart together. You need to pay attention to what help you need to get engaged and stay so.

Reflection and dialogue are valuable for: ongoing revision of your ideas about the current situation; for generating action proposals; and for drawing more people into your constituency. Through reflection and dialogue you can check that the evaluation and inquiry you undertake about the current situation and past actions relate well to possible actions you are considering and constituencies you intend to build. You can check that the results of your evaluations and inquiry support the actions and constituency building you pursue. You can review what actually happens when an action is implemented and it effects are evaluated and then generate ideas for the next cycle of action research.

Planning involves looking ahead at what may be involved before you settle on what actions to pursue. Planning is strategic when action proposals respect the resources—possibly limited—that you and others in your constituency have and elicit investment in implementation of those actions.

Illustration of aspects of the cycles and epicycles of Action Research is given by a semester-long project by Jeremy Szteiter on designing Collaborative Play by Teachers in Curriculum Planning.

Tools useful in the different aspects of Action Research

- RD = Reflection and Dialogue
- CB = Constituency building
- EI = Evaluation and Inquiry
- P = Planning

	……..	……..	……..	……..
CheckIn	RD	CB		
ClosingCircle (CheckOut)	RD	CB		
Critical Incident Questionnaire			EI	
Dialogue Process	RD	CB		
Evaluation Clock (review of past evals)			EI	
Evaluation Clock (planning future evals)			EI	P
Focused Conversation	RD	CB		
Gallery Walk	RD	CB	EI	
Guided Freewriting	RD			
Historical scan	RD	CB		
Jig-saw discussion of texts	RD		EI	
KAQF	RD		EI	P
One-on-one consultations in a large group	RD	CB		
+Δ Feedback	RD	CB	EI	
Small group roles	RD	CB		
Statistical Thinking			EI	
Strategic Participatory Planning	RD	CB		P
Strategic Personal Planning	RD			P
Supportive listening	RD			
Think-pair-share	RD			

University of Massachusetts at Boston
College of Education and Human Development
Critical & Creative Thinking Program

Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change

CrCrTh693
Fall 2010
Syllabus

Instructor: Peter Taylor, Critical & Creative Thinking Program
Email: peter.taylor@umb.edu
Phone: 617-287-7636
Office: Wheatley 2nd floor, room 157
Class meetings: Tuesdays 6.45-9.15pm, September 7 -December 7 (exc. Oct. 12) in Sc 4-64
Office/phone call hours: Monday 2.40-3.40; Tuesday 3.20-4, 5.30-6.30pm by sign up (http://ptaylor.wikispaces.umb.edu/PTOfficeHours) or by arrangement
Websites: http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/693-10.html and links
Private wikispace for assignment submission: CCT-xx.wikispaces.umb.edu (where xx is your last name; username & password as for your @umb.edu email)
Course wikipage for sharing work for peer commentary: crcrth693.wikispaces.umb.edu/peershare
Listserv/discussion forum: Emails sent to cct693@googlegroups.com will go to everyone in the course
Annotated bibliography and WWW bookmarks: http://groups.diigo.com/group/actionresearch

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers techniques for and critical thinking about the evaluation of changes in educational practices and policies in schools, organizations, and informal contexts. Topics include quantitative and qualitative methods for design and analysis, participatory design of practices and policies in a framework of action research, institutional learning, the wider reception or discounting of evaluations, and selected case studies, including those arising from semester-long student projects.

- Consider the central motivation for the course in the CCT curriculum: "If you have good ideas how do you get others to adopt and/or adapt them?" -- in other words, how do you build a constituency around your idea? This concern can lead you into evaluating how good the ideas actually are (with respect to some defined objectives) so you can demonstrate this to others. It can also lead you to work with others to develop the idea so it becomes theirs as well and thus something they're invested in. Action Research, in the "Cycles & Epicycles" framework taught in this course, involves group facilitation, participatory planning, and reflective practice, as well as systematic evaluation.
- In this spirit, in this course you:
  - experience, learn, and practice various ways to promote participation and reflective practice (including your own participation);
  - examine critically the evaluations of others (or the lack of the appropriate evaluations); and
  - undertake a project in an area of your particular concern in which you design (and, optionally, carry out) an Action Research process.
- Students from a variety of programs should find this course a suitable vehicle to enhance your interests in educational, professional, or personal change.

PREREQUISITES: Nothing formal; only an interest in some aspect of Educational, Professional, and Personal Change. **For CCT students, this course is best taken after Processes of Research and Engagement,** but this sequence is not mandatory.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center (287-7430). The student must present these recommendations to each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus in personal files for use when applying for certification, licensure, or transfer credit.
This syllabus is subject to change, but workload expectations will not be increased after the semester starts. (Version 4 September 2010; changes after the start of the semester are marked in blue)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sections To Follow In Syllabus

Texts and Materials
Electronic organization and competencies
Requirements
Schedule of Sessions, Preparation and related handouts, Assignment due dates

Links to specific Sessions on the web version of the syllabus: Session 9/7, 9/14, 9/21, 9/28, 10/5, 10/19, 10/26, 11/2, 11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/7

Bibliography

TEXTS and MATERIALS

Required: Calhoun, E. F. (1994). How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
Schmuck, R. (either 1997 or 2006). Practical Action Research for Change. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight. (Used copies of old editions may be available via amazon.com)

Recommended to help with writing: Daniel, D., C. Fauske, P. Galeno and D. Mael (2001). Take Charge of Your Writing: Discovering Writing Through Self-Assessment. Boston: Houghton Mifflin ("new" copies available well below list price on amazon.com)
(See also Conlin; Elbow; Kanar; Perelman, et al.)

Recommended if you are interested in the larger approach to research and engagement that informs this course: Taylor, P, J. Szteiter (2010ms.) Taking Yourself Seriously: A Fieldbook of Processes of Research and Engagement, http://cct.wikispaces.umb.edu/TYS3, viewed 10 July '10
Recommended if you are interested in facilitating group process: Schuman, S., Ed. (2006). Creating a Culture of Collaboration: The International Association of Facilitators Handbook. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
Readings for the course consist primarily of individual articles and book chapters, most of which can be downloaded from password protected site.

ELECTRONIC ORGANIZATION and COMPETENCIES

All course materials can be accessed via the online version of this syllabus together with your personal CCT-xx.wikispaces.umb.edu/693checklist wikipage for assignment submission (where xx = your last name). You should create a bookmark to: 1. the table of contents for this syllabus (http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/693-10.html#TOC); and 2. your CCT-xx 693checklist wikipage, then use these as your portals to any other course materials.

> Students who prefer to refer to hard copies should download and print out the pdf compilation (at http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/693-10.pdf) of the syllabus, 693checklist wikipage, and course materials linked to both of those webpages.

Note: The checklist page has links that take you to course-related notes on the assignments, which then link to more detailed (and publicly-accessible) guidesheets on using the tools, including templates where relevant. Be prepared to click through these steps and read the notes and guidesheets before getting to the to-do part of the assignment.

The specific technological competencies you will need for this course are described at http://crcrth693.wikispaces.umb.edu/693Tech. Students in face-to-face sections should note, however, that non-technological alternatives to the wiki and diigo can be arranged if you find the technologies to be consuming time and attention that would be better used for the engaging with the central learning activities of the course. (Learning new technologies--or getting frustrated by them--is not a primary course objective.)

REQUIREMENTS

Your 693checklist wikipage (and links to it) provide details about the assignments, expectations, and rationale. (The same details can also be viewed via http://crcrth693.wikispaces.umb.edu/693checklist (and links to it).)

Written A. Action Research written assignments and work-in-progress presentations (2/3 of grade)

Project = Design and report on (1500-2500 words) an Action Research Process related to an action or intervention in a specific classroom, workplace or personal teaching/learning practice, an educational policy, an educational institution, or a social policy. Your design should include all the aspects of the Action Research Cycles and Epicycles (ARcycling2.html), including:

- how you will learn from evaluations of past changes or interventions like yours,

- how you would facilitate the reflective and/or collaborative process in which a constituency comes to join with you in shaping a change or intervention (or at least supporting your efforts), and
- how you would evaluate the outcome with a view to expanding further the constituency for adopting/adapting the change or intervention.

Carrying out the design is applauded, but not required. If you carry out the design (or some of it), you should report on what you have actually done and how you would proceed differently if you were to do it over. It is important that you do not let implementing your action/intervention eclipse attention to designing the other aspects of the Action Research.
The project is developed through a sequence of assignments:

A1. reflection on introductory action research in sessions 1&2, A2. initial description (based on strategic personal planning), A3. KAQ, A4. evaluation clock, A5. initial work-in-progress presentation with notes on research and planning, A6. narrative outline, A5revised. updated work-in-progress presentation (taking into account comments on initial version and notes), A7. complete draft report, and A7revised. final (1500-2500 words) report.

Initial submissions of all assignmentsdue on the dates given in the Schedule of sessions below (as well as in your assignment checklist). At least five, including the complete report, should be revised and resubmitted in responses to comments until OK/RNR (=OK/ Reflection-revision-resubmission Not Requested).
If the complete report is not OK/RNR by the date for submission of grades an incomplete may be submitted (see link on assignment check-list for policies about incompletes).

Participation and contribution to the class process (1/3 of grade)

B. Building learning community through prepared participation and attendance at class meetings(=13 items) and B2. "syllabus quiz" submitted in session 2 and B3. Weekly buddy check-ins (see D1, below) (=3 items for 12 check-ins).
C. Summaries on diigo (or revisions to existing summaries) of readings for sessions 9, 10, and 12 (=3 items)
D. Personal/Professional Development (PD) Workbook compiled throughout the semester (7 items), including:

D1. Weekly entries, perused at first conference or before mid-semester break, on a. possible application of tools to your project and b. weekly buddy check-ins (2 items)(see also D3)

D2. worksheeton PD workbook and research organization submitted in session 6
D3. Whole PD workbook ready for perusal (in hard copy or on wiki) at the end of the semester (session 13)
D4. Annotated bookmarks to "Clippings" on diigo(2 items for 6 postings before session 13)
D5. Process review on the development of your work (due session 13)

E. Minimum of two in-office or phone conferences on your assignments, PD workbook, personal wikipage, and project -- one before session 6; the other by session 10 (=2 items)
F. Peer commentary on your buddy's work in each 4-week period and on another student's draft report (with copy posted on peer share wiki) (=4 items)

Students should aim for all writing and presentation assignments submitted on the due date and 5 OK/RNR (=OK/ Reflection-revision-resubmission Not Requested), including the complete report, as well as 27 participation items fulfilled.
If you reach or exceed this amount, you get 80 points (which gives you an automatic B+) and the following rubric is used to add further points.

For each quality "fulfilled very well" you get 2 points or 1 point if you "did an OK job, but there was room for more development/attention." You get 0 points if "to be honest, this still needs serious attention."
1. A sequence of assignments paced more or less as in syllabus (and revisions timely),
2. often revised thoroughly and with new thinking in response to comments.
3. Project innovative, well planned and carried out with considerable initiative, and
4. indicates that you will be able to move from design to implementation in your specific situation.
5. Project report clear and well structured,
6. with supporting references and detail, and professionally presented.
7. Active contribution to and reflection on process of learning from session activities around Action Research and semester-long projects.
8. Ability to shift between opening out and focusing in as required to complete full Evaluation clock
9. Active, prepared participation and building the class as learning community.
10. PD workbook shows: Consistent work outside sessions,
11. deep reflection on your development through the semester and
12. map of the future directions in which you plan to develop.

If you don't reach the automatic B+ level, your points = 10 for each writing assignment (or presentation) that is marked OK/RNR + 3 for each other writing assignment initially submitted by the due date + 1 for each participation item fulfilled up to a maximum of 80.

Overall course points are converted to letter grades as follows: The minimum grade for A is 95 points, for A- is 87.5, for B+ is 80, for B is 72.5; for B- is 65; for C+ is 57.5; and for C is 50.
(In theory it is possible for a student to earn 104 points, but this would still be awarded an A.)

Plagiarism: Using another person's ideas or material you did not write without citing the source is plagiarism and is unacceptable (see library guide and Academic Honesty policies).

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

Session 1 (9/7) Introduction to Action Research Cycles and Epicycles, I

Preparation:
Purchase course texts
View video introduction
Review instructor's portfolio and past evaluations for the course
Begin to get set up technologically
Session:
The framework of Action Research Cycles and Epicycles is introduced through a compressed example performed by the class members during this session (following this guidesheet).
Critical Incident Questionnaire
Follow-up:
Read and make notes on the Action Research Cycles and Epicycles framework, which you will need to revisit several times over the course of the semester to appreciate fully.
Set up tasks, a.k.a. "Syllabus quiz"
Sign up for buddy for each of the 4-week periods
Buddy check-in before session 2 should involve peer assistance in items on the Syllabus Quiz, especially getting set-up technologically, finding your way around the course materials, and articulating questions to get the help you need.
Set up your PD workbook.
Sign up for first conference (to which you should bring your PD workbook).
Send questions to the course email listserv if you need help. In particular, don't spend more than about 5 minutes confused by the wikis.
Look ahead to what preparation is needed for the next session.

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

Session 2 (9/14) Introduction to Action Research Cycles and Epicycles, II

Preparation:

Read Schmuck, 1997, p. vii-29; 2006, p. ix-29. Think about the relationship between his systematic treatment of the topic and your experience in session 1.

Read one or two final projects by alums of the course: Jan Coe, Alyssa Hinkell, Marie Levey-Pabst, John Quirk

Session:

Feedback on Critical Incident Questionnaire I

Questions on Syllabus, course mechanics, uploading assignments to wikis and other technological competencies

Use AR cycles & epicycles framework and guidesheet to:

- Interview an alum of the course, Marie Levey-Pabst, about her experience developing an Action Research process.
- Review and analyze final projects by alums of the course, Jan Coe, Alyssa Hinkell, Marie Levey-Pabst, John Quirk

Focused Conversation on Action Research experience to date (handout)

Follow-up:

Reading on Focused Conversations: Stanfield, 6-29; (optional) Nelson, .. Focused Conversation for Schools

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

Work due this session:

B2. Syllabus quiz (uploaded to your CCT-xx 693 checklist wikipage)

Session 3 (9/21) Strategic Personal Planning,

applied to initial formulation of a course action research design project so it incorporates your wider personal and life concerns (and thus recruits you firmly into your constituency)

Preparation:

Read Spencer, chaps. 5 & 7, Weissglass, "Constructivist Listening,"

Review Project reports from previous semesters (online using password protected site.)

For a preview of clustering and naming of clusters (which is part of Strategic planning), peruse vision charts from the course as a whole.

Session:

Supportive Listening (a variant of constructivist listening) on one's hopes/fears/ideas/questions re: educational, professional, and/or personal change

Strategic personal planning workshop (about the educational/organizational/personal change you want to facilitate/promote)

In-Session drafting of initial description of AR design project
Follow-up:
(for those interested in Strategic Participatory Planning, of which Strategic Personal Planning is a variant) Materials from ICA Facilitators Manual, CEDAC, Our Economy, Taylor, "Epilogue," 204-210, Schmuck on "cooperative" action research
Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.
Work due this session:
A Asmt. A1: 1st Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers in relation to the Considered Formulations from Other Sources (in ths case, the prescribed readings so far from Schmuck)

Session 4 (9/28) Examining the background and evaluations of previous actions before pressing forward,
using tools and interactions with others to open up problems and focus in on needed inquiry
Preparation:
Read Entin, "Reflective Practitioner," Greenwald, "Learning from Problems."
Session:
Use of KAQ framework.

Follow-up:
Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.
Work due this session:
A Asmt. A2: Initial Paragraph Overview of Project (revised in response to PT's comments by email on in-Session draft)

Session 5 (10/5) Formulating informative comparisons as a basis for evaluations, I
Preparation:
Arrange new buddy for the next 4-week period
Read Goode Clipping on the effects of a smoking ban; Overview of relationship of evaluation to facilitation of change; Guide to the Evaluation clock
Session:
Use the Comparison steps (2-4) of the evaluation clock to

- analyze published evaluations of past actions (e.g., smoking ban clipping), then
- design evaluations that may be part of students' projects

Follow-up:
Re-read guide to the Evaluation clock
Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.
Work due this session:

A Asmt. A3: KAQ assignment

10/12 No Session

Session 6 (10/19) Formulating informative comparisons as a basis for evaluations, II

Preparation:

Topic for buddy check-in: Using the comparison steps (2-4) in the evaluation clock to design evaluation as part of your project (Asmt. 4a)

Session:

Introduction to statistical formulations of comparisons and background assumptions

Peer coaching on Evaluation clock assignment and its extension to students' Projects, wiki use, KAQ, and PD workbooks.

Follow-up:

Schedule second conference by session 10 to discuss your projects and use of evaluation clock

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

Work due this session:

A Asmt. A4a. Use the comparison steps (2-4) in the evaluation clock to design evaluation as part of your project

A E1. First conference must be completed before session 6 to discuss your Action Research ideas, the course thus far, and your PD workbook (bring to conference)

A D2. Submit worksheet on PD workbook and research organization

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Session 7 (10/26) Work-in-progress presentations, I

Preparation:

Work-in-progress Presentation I on Project

Session:

Work-in-progress Presentation I on Project

Follow-up:

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

Work due this session:

A Asmt. A5a, initial: Work-in-progress Presentation I on Project and A5b. Notes on Research and Planning for Student Projects

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Session 8 (11/2) Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers with the Considered Formulations from Other Sources, II

Preparation:

Read Schmuck, pages 29-146, Calhoun, How to Use Action Research (especially chapters 1-3), Weiss, chapter 1, and (optional) Weiss, chapters 2 &4.

Preview Small group work roles.

Session:

Video on work in heterogeneous groups.
Small group work on two activities: a) guidelines for small group work with adults and b) comparison of PT's and Calhoun's frameworks for Action Research
Critical Incident Questionnaire II on course to date
Follow-up:
Submit to course listserv your guidelines from session activity a) and comparison from activity b).
(optional) Read other accounts of Action Research: Madison Metropolitan School District, "Classroom action research," Spina, "Six key principles," Winter, Learning from Experience
Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.
Work due this session:
A Asmt. A4b due: Use the full evaluation clock to design the evaluation part of your project.

Session 9 (11/9) Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers with the Considered Formulations from Other Sources, I
Preparation:
Arrange new buddy for the next 4-week period
Read at least three from Hitchcock & Hughes, Chap. 3, "Access, ethics, and objectivity," Chapter 5, "Designing, planning and evaluating Research"; Greenwood & Levin, Chaps. 8 & 11, "Action research cases," & "Action science and organizational learning"; Rokovich, et al., "Implementing change"; Jenkins, "Action learning"; CEDAC, Our Economy; Greenwald, Science in Progress; Madison Metropolitan School District, "Classroom action research" (and linked pages), study of CIT
Session:
Feedback on Critical Incident Questionnaire II
Dialogue Process session on engagement and ethics in Action Research
Follow-up:
Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.
Work due this session:
Nothing (so catch up on any overdue submissions)

Session 10 (11/16) Influences of Political Context on Evaluation and Educational Research
Although it is not expected that your projects tackle the larger political context of making changes in education (broadly construed) or draw on sophisticated theories about evaluation and educational change, this Session put these areas on your maps.
Preparation:
Read at least one of:
Woodhead, "When psychology," Hunt, "The dilemma," Metcalf, "Reading between the lines." Muir, "Science rules OK," Rokovich, San Jose School

District
Session:
"Jig-saw" digestion and discussion of readings
Follow-up:
Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.
Work due this session:
A Asmt. A6: Narrative Outline for Project Report

Session 11 (11/23) Work-in-progress presentations, II (taking into account comments on previous presentation & notes on research & planning)
Preparation:
Work-in-progress presentation (taking into account comments on previous presentation & notes on research & planning)
Session:
Work-in-progress presentations
Titles of Projects

TBA

Follow-up:
Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.
Work due this session:
A Asmt A5, updated: Work-in-progress Presentation II on Project
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Session 12 (11/30) Generating politics from below in relation to Educational and Action Research
Preparation:
Read at least two of:
Carr & Kemmis, <u>Becoming Critical</u>, CEDAC, <u>Our Economy</u>, Couto, " The promise," Greenwood, "Action science and organizational learning," Taylor, "Epilogue," McLeod, et al., "Changing how we work," Senge et al., "Fostering communities"
Session:
Video segment on Myles Horton and the Highlander Center, a longterm source of educational and social change, followed by reflective exercise.
Dialogue Process session on participatory action research and theory in relation to action (incl. reflective practice)
Follow-up:
Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.
Work due this session:
A Asmt. A7: Complete Draft of Design Project (on peer share wikipage as well as your CCT-xx 693 checklist wikipage)

Session 13 (12/7) Taking stock of course & of change: Where have we come & where do we go from here?

Preparation:
Read Cashin, "Student ratings of teaching"
Review samples from previous years)
Read (selections TBA and optional): Stanfield, Courage to Learn, Stanfield, The Workshop Book, Tuecke, "Creating a wall of wonder,"
Session:
Selected taking stock activity, either Historical Scan (aka Wall of Wonder) or Process Review or Practical Vision of Future Personal and Professional Development (TBA)
CCT course evaluation
College of Ed. course evaluation
Follow-up:
Review previous semesters' evaluations *Work due this session:*
A D3. PD workbook brought to session (hard copy or on wiki) for perusal, including D5. Process review
A F. Make comments on draft design project of another student (not necessarily your buddy); upload comments back to the peershare wikipage and email the author that you have done so.

One week after session 13
Work due:
A Asmt. A7 revised: Final Project report

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(readings [except those marked not PPR] online using password protected site.)
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CCT693 Assignment checklist, with links to instructions & examples *(replica of CCT-xx drop boxes)*

Upload assignments in the relevant box to submit or resubmit them. *Rename any revised assignment to indicate its date before uploading, e.g., 693Ass1rev22Feb09.doc.* Please scan anything that you have written by hand. No submissions by email.

This wikipage allows you to keep track of your own progress so that interaction with the instructor can focus on dialogue around written work. *See also Assessment to assign grades above B+ and incomplete policy.*

Action Research Written Assignments & Work-in-progress Presentations

2/3 of grade

Initial attempts for all assignments, however sketchy, should be submitted on the day of the session indicated (for online sections: on the ***first*** day of session). (Dates of sessions for current semester)

At least 5 of these assignments, including A7, should be revised and resubmitted in responses to comments until "OK/RNR" is received (=OK/ Reflection-revision-resubmission Not Requested).

Session 13 = Final date for submissions & revisions (except revisions of A7).

	DATE SUBMITTED/RESUBMITTED, with links to uploaded files	Instructor Comments
example	21Nov09693TestAsmt.doc	
A1. due Session 3 1st Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers (examples)		
A2. Sess. 4 Initial Paragraph Overview of Project (ex.)		
A3. Sess. 5 KAQ (ex.)		
A4. Eval. clock, part a--Sess. 6, part b--Sess. 8 (ex.)		

A5. Sess. 7 work-in-progress presentations (ex.) & Notes on research and planning (ex.); update Sess. 11		
A6. Sess. 10 Narrative outline of project report (ex.)		
A7. report, Sess. 12 complete draft; one week after sess. 13 final revised report (ex.) *Complete draft of A7 required before moving on to final report*		

Participation and contribution to the Class Process

1/3 of grade

	Insert date when item is completed unless otherwise indicated	Instructor Comments
B. Prepared participation and punctual attendance at class meetings (13)	missed classes/arrived late/ came unprepared on...	
B2. Syllabus quiz, session 2 (ex.)		
B3. Weekly buddy check-ins (see also D1, below) (=3 items for 12 check-ins)		
C. Summaries posted on diigo (or revisions to existing summaries) of readings on sessions 9, 10, 12 (=3 items) (ex.)		

D. Personal/Professional Development (PD) Workbook, incl. D1. Regular PD entries on possible application of tools to your project, perused at 1st conference or before mid-semester (ex.)		
D2. Worksheet on PD & research organization submitted by Sess. 6 (ex.)		
D3. Whole PD workbook ready to be perused at the end of the semester (Sess. 13) (ex.)		
D4. Annotations on diigo for web-"Clippings" (6 postings for 2 participation items)(ex.)		
D5. Process review on the development of your work (Sess. 13) (ex.)		
E. Minimum of two in-office or phone conferences on your assignments and projects, before Sess. 6	date =	
by Sess. 10	date =	
F. Peer commentary on your buddy's work in each 4-week period and on another student's draft report (with copy posted on peer share wiki-face2face, online) (=4 items) (ex.)		

Assessment to assign grades above B+

to be completed at the end of the semester

Use the following system to make your own self-assessment for each quality below

- [= "fulfilled very well"],

OK [= "did an OK job, but room for more development/attention"], or
- [= "to be honest, this was not my strength in this course"]

	student	instructor
	(optional)	(if different)
1. A sequence of assignments paced more or less as in syllabus (and revisions timely),	....	
2. often revised thoroughly and with new thinking in response to comments.		
3. Project innovative, well planned and carried out with considerable initiative, and		
4. indicates that you are ready to move to implementation in your specific situation		
5. Project report clear and well structured,		
6. with supporting references and detail, and professionally presented.		
7. Active contribution to and reflection on process of learning from Action Research (initial example as well as class activities around semester-long projects)		
8. Ability to shift between opening out & focusing in as required to complete full Eval. Clock		
9. Active, prepared participation, conscientious buddy work, and building class as learning community.		
10. PD workbook/wiki incl. process review show: Consistent work outside class,		
11. deep reflection on your development through the semester and		

12. mapping out of the future directions in which you plan to develop		

If there are big discrepancies between the student's and the instructor's assessments, we should discuss the discrepancies and try to come to a shared agreement about them.

Incompletes and Completions

1. Final date for submissions & revisions (except revised final report) = Last session.

2. Final grade will be based on work submitted and work completed (i.e., marked OK/RNR) by the date for submission of grades.

3. Exceptions to the 1 & 2 require a completion contract to be submitted by the student and approved by the instructor by the last session. Use your assignment checklist to indicate (in red) contracted dates for specific assignments. Note: The process review (D5) is the only participation item that can be made up after the end of classes. (Reason: It does not contribute to the class interactions for you to make up any of the others.)

4. If you don't get around to submitting a completion contract and haven't got up to a passing grade, the instructor may submit an incomplete anyway. I will, however, take into account additional submitted written assignments (and process review) only to get you up to a C. To improve on that grade, the course must be taken again when it is next offered.

5. Please don't expect instructors to work with you over the summer and winter breaks to complete your assignments. (We need you to respect that we have professional "incompletes" that we need to try to make up during these periods.) In other words, do what you can by the day when grades are due and then take a break from "dialogue around written work" until the new semester starts. Please write your completion contracts with this in mind. Even in the new semester, be patient because instructors have to give higher priority to responding to students from the current semester.

6. Please note that the desired learning rarely takes place during standard on-your-own incompletes, despite the best intentions of student and istructor. There is no substitute for the development of teaching/learning interactions that happens with peers and regular week-by-week sessions. Expect that comments made on work for incompletes will be brief.

7. If you do not get OK/RNR on the revised final report by the date for submission of grades, participation in a writing support group next semester is recommended. The group is planned

for Tuesdays from 5.30-7.30pm. All students in CCT classes are welcome, even if you complete the course on time.

Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change

NOTES ON TEACHING/LEARNING INTERACTIONS

(last update 28 August 10)
including

- guidelines for written assignments and presentations
- guidelines for participation and contribution to the class process
- other processes used in the course

Refer also to

- Schema and Overview of Action Research Cycles and Epicycles
- links to examples of previous students' work

Stages of development for Action Research Design project

From the course syllabus:

- Project = Design and report on (1500-2500 words) an Action Research Process related to an action or intervention in a specific classroom, workplace or personal teaching/learning practice, an educational policy, an educational institution, or a social policy. Your design should include all the aspects of the Action Research Cycles and Epicycles (http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/ARcycling2.html), including:
- how you will learn from evaluations of past changes or interventions like yours,
- how you would facilitate the reflective and/or collaborative process in which a constituency comes to join with you in shaping a change or intervention (or at least supporting your efforts), and
- how you would evaluate the outcome with a view to expanding further the constituency for adopting/adapting the change or intervention.

Carrying out the design is applauded, but not required. If you carry out the design (or some of it), you should report on what you have actually done and how you would proceed differently if you were to do it over. It is important that you do not let implementing your action/ intervention eclipse attention to designing the other aspects of the Action Research or to redesigning the AR steps you have already taken.

The design project should not be seen as a "final term paper," but as a process of development that involves:

- i) dialogue with the instructor and other students and
- ii) revision (re-seeing) in light of that dialogue.

To facilitate that process, there is a sequence of seven assignments with the goals described below. The general expectation for these assignments is that you will pull together the work you have done and reflect on the experience in ways that fit the tasks you take on and your own situation and style. *You should submit an initial version of the assignment, however sketchy, on the due date.* Instructor responses will then help you develop your contribution to the AR still remaining. Examples of previous students' work are linked here as well as to the specific assignment on the assignment checklist wikipage and the notes to follow. The examples can be consulted to indicate the range of ways students tackle an assignment; they are not models to be copied. (If the link does not work, the example has not yet been uploaded.)

Assignments

Each assignment will count if marked OK/RNR (=Reflection-revision-resubmission Not Requested) meaning you have met almost all of the guidelines summarized below, but Revision and Resubmission will be requested if you have not. Comments made as part of Dialogue around written work provide guidance tailored to each student's specific interests and needs.

1. 1st Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers

350-500 words that relate your experience to some points in the reading from Schmuck. Comment on what we did that was or was not covered by him and what he advocates that we didn’t do.
(examples)

2. Initial paragraph overview

Building on your in-class strategic personal planning, compose an initial overview of your design project. This overview may, several revisions later, end up setting the scene in the introduction of your project. In one or two *prose* paragraphs (*not* disconnected points a.k.a. "bullets"), an overview should convey the action (i.e., the change or intervention) that you would be interested in making and how you envisage addressing each of the aspects of Action Research, http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/ARcycling2.html. (Carrying out the design is applauded, but not required. If you carry out the design (or some of it), you should report on what you have actually done and how you would proceed differently if you were to do it over. It is important that you do not let implementing your action/intervention eclipse attention to

designing the other aspects of the Action Research.)
Previous semesters' projects are available for viewing through a password-protected link.
(examples)

3. KAQ (a variant of KNF)

Using the worksheet and instructions, work through the whole KAQ (and F) for each point and use the additional questions in parentheses (perhaps with another student as sounding board) to check your thinking. The expectation for this assignment is that use of this tool won't come naturally and you will need coaching to tease out and then tighten your thinking.
(examples)

4. Evaluation clock

Before attempting the assignment, read the guide to the Evaluation clock. At the end of the guide are the templates for the full clock and the stripped-down clock. For 4a, scroll down to the stripped-down clock and use the comparison steps 2-4 of to identify a specific action (i.e., the change or intervention) and its effects to evaluate. Answer the questions carefully for each step. For 4b, complete the full clock spelled out with actual or plausible steps that relate to the specific comparison. But move on to 4b only when you have got the hang of 4a. The expectation for the Evaluation clock assignment is that you will not get it right the first time, but will need coaching to produce the focused comparison steps and the recursive full clock.
(examples)

5a. Work-in-progress presentations

Preparing presentations, hearing yourself deliver them, and getting feedback usually leads to self-clarification of the overall direction of your project and of your priorities for further work. In this spirit, 10-15 minute presentations of your work-in-progress are scheduled early in your projects and a bit later on – they are necessarily on work-in-progress. Convey the important features of work you have already done and, to elicit useful feedback during 3-5 minutes of Q&A, indicate also where additional investigation or advice are needed and where you think that might lead you. In the second presentation highlight the work you have done since the initial presentation, especially any rethinking made in response to comments made on the initial presentation, notes on research and planning, and narrative outline. (Reread short description of design project to remind yourself that your presentation should show how you would design all the aspects of Action Research even if you don't get to carry them out.)
(Note: Your presentation time includes setup, 3-5 minutes of Q&A, and packup.)
(examples)

5b. Notes on research and planning

Pull together notes on your reading and your thinking and present it in a form organized so it can elicit useful comments from a reader (in this case, me). To show your planning, you should submit an updated paragraph overview (see #2 above) and an outline and/or evaluation clock. (Reread short description of design project to remind yourself that your notes should address how you would design all the aspects of Action Research even if you don't get to carry them out.) To show that you are finding out what others have been doing in your area of interest, which includes evaluations of past changes or interventions like yours, you should include annotated bibliography of readings done or planned. Record the full citations for your sources, including those from the WWW. I recommend using a bibliographic database—Endnote can be downloaded for a 30 day trial from http://www.endnote.com; Refworks is free through the library.

(examples)

6. Narrative outline

A narrative outline is an outline or plan of your report of the design project with explanatory sentences inserted at key places:

- i) to explain in a declarative style the point of each section;
- ii) to explain how each section links to the previous one and/or to the larger section or the whole report it's part of. The object of doing a narrative outline is to move you beyond the preliminary thinking that goes into a standard outline or even a nested and connected table of contents. Insertion of explanatory sentences helps you check that your ideas and material really will fit your outline.

(examples)

7. Project report

1500-2500 words, plus bibliography of references cited.

Whatever form your report takes, make sure you explain why you have designed this Action Research. You should also include material that conveys your process of development during the project and personal/professional development plans for the future. The report should not be directed to the instructor, but conceived as something helpful to readers like your CCT student colleagues. The report shoold "GOSP" readers--Grab their attention, Orient them, and move through Steps so that they appreciate the Position you have led them to and how it matches the subject of your project.

For the report to be counted as final, you must have revised in response to comments from

instructor and peers on a complete draft. (The draft must get to the end to count as complete, even if some sections along the way are only sketches.) Allow time for the additional investigation and thinking that may be entailed.
(examples)

Participation and contribution to the class process (33 items)

B. Building learning community (17 items)
Prepared participation and punctual attendance at class meetings are expected, but allowance is made for other priorities in your life. You are not required to give excuses for absence, lateness, or lack of preparation. Simply make up the 80% of participation items in other ways (C-G). One item fulfilled for each class attended except NOT if you arrive late and have been more than 10 minutes late once or more before and NOT if you are clearly unprepared/un-participating and have been so once or more before.
For online section only: If you cannot attend a WIMBA meeting, you should view/listen to the recording of the meeting (on WIMBA) and upload the makeup notes to the session participation box on your personal 693checklist page. The makeup notes required may be specified on the discussion thread. If not, identify one point from the start, another from the middle, and one from the end that was new to you, or that was unclear to you, and explain what you thought about it, or what you need to understand to get clear about the point.

B2. In order to get oriented to the various course materials and mechanics, complete the "syllabus quiz" and submit week 2.
(examples)

B3. Weekly buddy check-ins (=3 items for 12 check-ins) (instructions & signup: face2face section,online section)

C. Summaries of Readings (3 items)
These summaries of issues raised by the readings in weeks 9, 10, and 12 should be thought of as resources you are providing for other students (current and future), who might not have time to read the article OR who might need stimulation/guidance about what they decide to make time to read. You may post a revision of an existing entry to improve its informativeness or indicate a difference of interpretation. (Posting your summaries or revisions to diigo is new in '10. Diigo will link you to previous summaries which were posted to a wiki, but you are not being asked to post summaries to a wiki. Instead, use the comment feature on diigo to add your summary or revision directly to any item tagged "693itemC".)

(examples)

D. Personal/Professional Development Workbook (7 items)
In your workbook and/or personal wikipage keep records or products of homework, Action Research tasks, and buddy check-ins, preparation for assignments, weekly journal-type reflections on the course and classes, notes on readings, clippings, e-clippings. Explore, when appropriate, the relationship between, on one hand, your interests and possible projects and, on the other hand, the readings and activities.
You can choose to keep your Personal/Professional Development workbook on your CCT-xx wiki (with homepage at cct-xx.wikispaces.umb.edu/693PDworkbook). *Only attempt this if you are comfortable editing wikis.* The alternative is to keep your PD workbook in a word file and upload that file to your 693checklist wikipage from time to time.
(examples)

D1. For each new tool that is introduced during classes, make an entry in your PPD workbook on possible applications of the tool to your project. Also include notes on weekly buddy check-ins (2 items). Have this perused during the 1st conference or before the mid-semester break.
If you are using the workbook effectively, it should convey your developing process of preparing to practice the tools and of critical thinking about course readings, activities, and discussions. Those of you who find it hard to make space for journaling/reflection should stay 10 minutes after class and write while your thoughts are fresh. When you first show me the PD workbook for perusal, I will let you know if you need to show more processing and organize the workbook better.
(examples)

D2. The worksheet submitted in week 6 will allow me to make further suggestions about your PD workbook and research organization.
(examples)

D3. During the last class I peruse the PD workbooks (on the wiki or in hard copy). Bind together pages with post-its or otherwise indicate which bits you do not want me to look at. One item fulfilled if it shows you have responded to suggestions and been working consistently between classes.
(examples)

D4. (2 items) web-"Clippings" -- To keep up with current developments—and get you into the habit of this for your lifelong learning— look for articles related to educational, professional,

and personal change in newspapers, magazines, journals, and websites. Find the article on the web and use http://groups.diigo.com/group/actionresearch to bookmark it and add it to the actionresearch group. Annotations should convey your own reflections on specific points in the article and say enough to allow others to judge whether they want to follow the link and read more. Include link to the annotations in your online PD workbook or a printout in your hard copy PD workbook. Aim for one every 2 weeks. (3-5 postings makes 1 item; 6+ makes 2 items).
(examples)

D5. Process review -- Before the last class, identify 4-6 examples that capture the process of development of your work and thinking about Action research for educational, professional, and personal change. Journaling, freewriting, drafts, etc. may be included, that is, not simply your best products. Explain your choices in a 250-500 word cover note (included also on your wikipage) and through annotations (large post-its are a good way to do this for hard copy version). Submit with your PD workbook.
(examples)

E. In-office or phone Conferences (2 items)
for discussion of comments on assignments (see Dialogue around written work), ideas for course projects, your PD workbook, and the course as a whole. They are important to ensure timely resolution of misunderstandings and to get a recharge if you get behind. Appointments missed without notifying instructor in advance count as a participation item not fulfilled.

F. Peer commentary on your buddy's work in each 4-week period and on another student's draft report (with copy posted on peer share wiki) (=4 items)
After the draft report is completed, you should comment on another student's draft. Send me a copy of your comments by email and/or include it in PD workbook. Keep Elbow, Writing with Power, chapters 3 & 13 and Varieties of responses in mind when you decide what approaches to commenting you ask for as a writer and what to use as a commentator. In the past I made lots of specific suggestions for clarification and change in the margins, but in my experience, such suggestions led only a minority of students beyond touching up into re-thinking and revising their ideas and writing. On the other hand, I believe that all writers value comments that reassure them that they have been listened to and their voice, however uncertain, has been heard.
(examples of commentary on draft reports; peer commentary on your buddy's work is new in 2010)

Other Processes in the Course

Submission of Writing in a Professional and Instructor-friendly manner

Dialogue around written work

Rationale for the Assessment system

The different assignments are commented on then "graded" either OK or revise & resubmit. An automatic B+ is awarded for 80% (approx.) of written assignments OK/RNR and participation items fulfilled. The rationale for this system is to keep the focus of our teaching/ learning interactions on your developing through the semester. It allows more space for students and instructor to appreciate and learn from what each other is saying and thinking. My goal is to work with everyone to achieve the 80% satisfactory completion level. Students who progress steadily towards that goal during the semester usually end up producing work that meets the criteria in the syllabus for a higher grade than a B+.

Use the Assignment Check-list to keep track of your own progress. To gauge whether you are on track for at least a B+, simply note whether you have submitted 80% of the assignments by the dates marked and attended 80% of the classes. If you are behind do NOT hide and do NOT end the semester without a completion contract. You are free to do more than 80% of the assignments and fulfill more than 80% of the participation items, but it does not hurt your grade to choose strategically to miss some in light of your other work and life happenings. Ask for clarification if needed to get clear and comfortable with this system.

Technological competencies you will need for this course.

- **Note on wiki expectations** All you have to do in this course using wikis is:
  - a) upload files to your assignment checklist (a.k.a. dropbox) on your CCT-xx wiki and to the peer share page (face2face, online) on the course wiki; and
  - b) record on the peer share page who your check-in buddy is for 4-week long periods.

In addition, you can choose to keep your Personal/Professional Development workbook on your CCT-xx wiki (with homepage at cct-xx.wikispaces.umb.edu/693PDworkbook). Only attempt this if you are comfortable editing wikis.

Learning Community and email group/list

Individually and as a group, you already know a lot about educational, professional, and personal change. You can learn a lot from each other and from teaching others what you know. The email group or list (i.e., emails sent to cct693@googlegroups.com) can be used to help the community develop.

Activities for "self-affirming" learning
Students already know a lot. If this knowledge is elicited and affirmed, they are more able to learn from others. Activities such as freewriting bring to the surface students' insight that they were not able, at first, to acknowledge. Over the course of the semester, students are encouraged to recognize that there is insight in every response and share their not-yet-stable aspects. The trust required takes time to establish.

Tools for Action Research Process
Each week introduces a different tool or practice for aspects of the Action Research process, which, in brief, involves evaluation and inquiry, reflection and dialogue, planning, and constituency building in order to get actions implemented, take stock of the outcomes, and continue developing your efforts. Handouts on the tools are linked to the course website and this wiki when they are ready.
Tools that are introduced for

- Evaluation: Critical Incident Questionnaire, Evaluation Clock, Basic logic of statistical analysis, +∆ Feedback (appreciation, thing to be developed);
- Inquiry: Inquiry based on Q of KAQ;
- Reflection: Freewriting, KAQ, Focused Conversation, Supportive listening, Strategic Personal Planning, Historical scan;
- Dialogue: Wiki-based probing of KAQ, Small group process, Focused Conversation, Jig-saw discussion of readings, Historical scan
- Planning: KAQ, Evaluation Clock, Strategic Personal/Participatory Planning

Guided freewriting

Think-pair-share

Taking stock
during semester ("formative evaluation")

- Through activities, such as the Critical Incident Questionnaire, I encourage students to approach this course as a work-in-progress. Instead of harboring criticisms to submit after the fact, we can find opportunities to affirm what is working well and suggest directions for further development.

at end of semester

- This involves multiple angles on course evaluation, including written evaluations during class, Process reviews and planning for your ongoing PD. With the aim of:
  - a) feeding into your future learning (and other work), you take stock of your process(es) over the semester;
  - b) feeding into my future teaching (and future learning about how students learn), I take stock of how you, the students, have learned.

Development of an Action Research Project on Collaborative Play by Teachers in Curriculum Planning

This case illustrates the Cycles and Epicycles of Action Research as it was experienced by someone learning to use the framework. The case is written to draw readers into the process, not to try to convince them that the framework works by cutting to the chase and describing some outstanding final outcome.

Novice Reflection | **Paragraph Overview** | **KAQ** | **Evaluation Clock** | **Presentation Outline and Notes** | **Narrative Outline**

Background and Motivation

When I first started this project, I had been working at a local community center as the multimedial instructor at a preschool/afterschool program, responsible for developing curriculum that integrated core subjects (reading literacy, number and math skills, science and nature, social skills, and cultural awareness) with technology resources such as computer software, web-based learning materials, and digital photo/video equipment. Each student was part of one of five groups, where groups 1-4 were preschool levels of representing ages 2.9 - 6 years old, and group 5 was an afterschool level representing ages 6 - 12. Before my arrival, no such multimedia instruction was included in the curriculum.

When I first arrived, I noticed that each of the 5 groups was somewhat independent of the other - one or two head teachers were responsible for a given group, and other than some very general monthly themes that were supposed to span across curriculums, teachers were generally independent in terms of how they planned activities for the students and were able to focus on the needs of the students in their own group. When a multimedia component was developed, I realized that my role was initially perceived as yet another independent grouping, that is, toward a learning experience that was relatively isolated from what the groups were doing in their group classrooms. At the same time, I saw that my responsibility was to introduce the tool of technology in a new way in support of what was already being done in the classrooms with the core subjects, not simply to teach "computers for computers' sake". This meant that my own teaching, lesson plans, and curriculum would need to use these technology resources as a means to another end - particularly school readiness (for the preschool groups) and reinforcement of school lessons and opportunities for creative expression (for the afterschool group).

Very quickly, I found that the idea of cross-group planning had room for expansion, and started to consider how the teacher planning process might be developed to create a culture of greater collaboration in planning and do so in a way that was more enjoyable for teachers rather than seem like another administrative meeting for a group of teachers who were otherwise faced with all of the demands of supervising and teaching young children. While I considered that the greatest need would involve the preschool groups, I also considered that I might like to pursue this idea to some extent with the afterschool group as well.

Because of my long-term interest and perspective on adult education, I finally decided that my own action research might involve the idea of the use of play in the teacher planning process. How could play be used to develop integrated lesson plans that represented the experience and needs of multiple teachers? What kinds of play would be acceptable to adult teachers in a formal setting of needing to decide and document classroom lessons and curriculum? How might the use of play in planning mirror the learning style and environment of the youth classroom? Within a short period of time in the action research process, I realized that I needed to settle upon a slightly more modest question, as those above contained a large assumption that play would already be a natural part of the planning process. Because of this, I started with process with an initial question of "In what ways might collaborative play be introduced into the teacher planning process?" I would focus on getting play to happen at all and leave its ultimate effect as a later concern. Could my personal actions, attitudes, and behavior translate into actually using some form of collaborative play in teacher planning, to what extent might this happen, and what forms of play might be manifested through this process?

Novice Reflection

Notes: at this stage in the course, I was coming to understand two particular aspects of the action research cycle. First, after relating the main stages of action research to my own work, I was starting to get insight into the idea of the process as a cycle - that is, I was able to let go of planning the entire scope of my project, realizing that I would need to evaluate the results of initial action plans in any case and therefore have future chances to revise - I did not need to think of my work with a single, monolithic result of high-level change. Rather, my planning now could aim to develop my actions as a collection of small steps rather than large ones. Second, I had just started to see far ahead enough to know that collaboration would become a part of my process in the form of comments and discussion with classmates. This understanding helped to motivate me to find small ways to test and explore my ideas about *using play in the collaborative curriculum planning process - apart from insights that might directly help my own action research, the anticipation of collaborating with classmates nudged me to start to take action in my workplace, so that at the least I would have something substantive to share by the time I arrived at the class each week.*

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:

- 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
- 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

oth 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 to 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".

<u>Paragraph Overview</u>

I would like to continue my ongoing exploration of adult learning and what it means for learners to include a greater sense of fun and play throughout the process. An emerging goal of this examination is to more clearly understand how actions that I take contribute to making a group learning opportunity more enjoyable and engaging others in play along with me. For an action research plan, I would like to consider the way that I approach my own behavior around personal learning opportunities with respect to the following “Core Actions”:

1. what actions I take to prepare myself for the upcoming learning opportunity: how can I use play to prepare for the learning opportunity?
2. what actions I take during the learning opportunity: how can I play while I’m actually involved in learning discussion and activities?
3. what actions I take to build upon the learning opportunity after it is over: how can I play during my reflection of the recent learning experience?

Although I am involved in a number of adult learning situations, I have found that one may be particularly useful as a reference point in thinking about collaborative play. In my work at a youth center, my role is to assist lead teachers by developing educational materials and activities for preschool (ages 3-5) and afterschool (ages 6-12) students. Specifically, I help the teachers to integrate multimedia and information technology into their lessons, since I am knowledgeable in that area, and the teachers are knowledgeable of the learning topics and goals of the students, and we must share and combine our knowledge to create activities that utilize both. I would like to explore in what ways I might define the Core Actions such that our planning interactions are improved, as these do not typically involve collaborative play.

Evaluation might include comparing a number of variables observed between the planning interactions that do and do not use collaborative play. These include the level of enjoyment experienced by myself and the teachers, whether or not humor is embraced into the planning process in a new way, whether or not teachers agree to engage in collaborative play, whether or not planned actions for collaborative play actually happened and why, whether or not the later learning experiences of the students were enhanced by through activities that were conceived through planning that used collaborative play, and whether or not my own and the teachers’ understandings of each others’ areas of expertise were deepened through the experience of collaborative play. Iterations through the action research process should then shape my “Personal Engagement Plan” - a practical recipe that I could use to guide myself into the actions that make the learning opportunity more playful for myself and others before, during, and after it takes place. Developing my constituency would then include the other teachers with whom I was working, administrators/directors of the center, the students who would eventually be influenced by the results of the lesson planning, and other educational supporters who might suggest ways of play that would enhance the process.

KAQ

What do we **K**now?	**A**ction: What could people do on the basis of this knowledge?	**Q**uestions for Inquiry: What more do we need to know - in order to clarify what people could do or to revise/refine knowledge?	How to **F**ind this out?
-Children naturally engage in play in their learning -Play involves deviating from the direct path from question to answer and requires experimenting, imagining, and having fun	-Adults may take a point of view in learning that embraces curiosity, naiveté, and openminded exploration -Seek out learning opportunities that are flexibly structured and involve understanding of ideas beyond just acquisition of skill	What has other research/ experience shown about how to embrace play in learning experiences?	-Ask adults about which learning experiences they have found to be fun (and recall personal examples) -Research examples of successful play in learning settings

-Using play in learning may help relieve tension about “being wrong” or “knowing the answer already”.	-Play can be used at the beginning of a learning situation to help learners become more comfortable with each other and establish a safe, nonjudgmental environment. -Learning situation can be explicitly structured as a forum of encouraging experimentation and even failure.	In what ways does collaborative play improve learning? How does play influence the understanding that is sought in learning experiences?	-Describe ways that collaborative play might be used and test in various learning situations. -Review studies of types of play in learning. -Reflect upon and keep a record of new understanding that I gain in the course of play.
-I have not frequently considered how direct actions that I take individually effect the collaborative play of learning. -The actions that I take might actually influence the collaboration of the group in learning - this is not wholly determined by the “teacher” or the	-Observe actions that I take before, during, and after learning experiences. -Create a specific plan to take action before, during, and after learning. -Develop a learning environment that is student-, rather than teacher-, driven. -In any learning experience, take on the role of “teacher”	How do the individual actions that I take influence the collaborative play of the group?	-Create a plan to take certain types of actions before, during, and after learning. -Seek experiences in everyday life in which no “teacher” is defined and treat them as a “bona fide” learning opportunity. -In my own role as a teacher or student, expose my intentions to play and make my

interpersonal dynamics of the group.	myself and guide others to engage in collaborative play.		experiments transparent, and observe reactions of myself and others.
-Factors beyond my personal control may influence the success of my learning. -Adults in learning situations may not agree to collaborate or engage in play.	-Set small-scale learning goals for play. -Allow the meaning of “collaborative play” to be understood broadly and include many types of play.	What might prevent me from taking planned actions in establishing collaborative play?	-Record and observe how and why planned actions did not get done. -Ask others to review my planned actions and provide explicit support or clarify why my actions may not be realistic.
-Play relates to fun in learning and might be observed through facial expressions, laughter, or direct verbal communication. -Collaborative play means that multiple learners are engaged in the same activity of play.	-Develop fun learning activities that are designed to be inclusive of all learners in a group. -Notice that I am enjoying my learning through metacognitive reflection of my learning while it is happening.	What do I need to observe in adult learning situations to determine when collaborative play is actually happening?	-Consider the range of emotions and responses that I express during a learning experience. -Note instances in which are adult learners are engaged with each other how their specific actions relate to their ways of communicating/ involving others.

-There are organizing groups who already use the notion of play in learning. -Several personal colleagues already express openness for play, including children in my afterschool/ preschool and the CCT community.	-Use my own teaching experiences (preschool) and student experiences (CCT program) to seek support and permission in play activities.	Who are my potential allies, partners, or assistants in the course of designing, implementing, participating, and observing play?	-Research groups/ workshops that seek to provide practice/training in play in learning. -Explicitly define different roles that supporters might take in play - observer, participant, idea-generator, etc.
-Theater principles help people to take on behaviors of other people with foreign/unfamiliar points of view. -Theater principles help people to develop/imagine conceptual realities that are not as obvious to the everday authentic self (empathy). -Theater involves a type of "game" of agreement between actors to temporarily accept the existence of a common fantasy	-Take theater classes to explore the notions of character, dialogue, and empathy. -Engage in role-play. -Invent ways of perceiving through another's point of view and try them out during learning.	What specific principles of the theater perspective might relate to allowing play to happen?	-Create a Personal Action Plan that utilized theater exercises to prepare me for upcoming collaborative learning situations. -Use theater methodologies to play with ideas or find humor in learning content, and employ these during the learning experiences and observe the results. -Discuss and explore options with others already using integrated theater/

situation.			education concepts.
-Lifelong learning may involve finding specific learning opportunities but also taking an attitude of recognizing long-term learning goals and needs. -Collaborative play may encourage learners to take a long-term view of learning by relieving the “chore” of education.	-Develop a long-term, continuous plan for what learning experiences one wishes to have. -Find ways to focus on the play of learning with others primarily while considering learning outcome of be secondary at times.	How does collaborative play support ongoing, lifelong learning?	-Commit to developing a cycle of planning, implementing, and observing in my own learning. -Ask other adult learners to reflect upon their lifelong learning wishes. -Along with allies, develop a learner’s group for developing and experimenting with collaborative learning ideas.

Evaluation Clock

Notes on changes made from version 1 to version 2: while version 1 considered a scenario where some “naïve” participants were not told that research was happening, this version has been modified to allow that all participants are able to be aware of the project. This time, there are “direct” participants who are actively taking action to develop the use of collaborative play in teacher planning meetings, “indirect” participants who are part of the planning group but are not asked to take such actions, and “observers” who are not part of the planning group but openly observe the process and take notes that will be used for evaluating the results.

0a. The "change" (action/program/policy/curriculum/practice/treatment/difference/etc.) whose effectiveness needs to be evaluated is...

The practice involves taking action that will introduce the use of collaborative play in teacher planning in order to better prepare teachers to create more effective lesson plans and activities for students. My suggestion is that in situations when teachers have an opportunity to work together to create lesson plans and are structured to do so anyway, they use collaborative play as a methodology to help them 1) learn from each other's strengths and teaching styles, 2) develop lesson plans and activities that are creative in the sense that they involve combining ideas of diverse practitioners that might not be considered by one teacher doing own planning in isolation, and 3) they allow lesson plans and activities to be developed which exhibit greater continuity across different classes, since the plans would be reflective of multiple teachers and the process of creating them would allow teachers to become more aware of each other's goals and needs, which could help support consistent environments for students between different classrooms.

0b. Interest or concern in the effectiveness of the change arises because...

In many "collaborative" teacher planning meetings, I have noticed that this planning very often manifests in the form of a discussion, involving a cycle of brainstorming, evaluation, and decision, where the teachers themselves do not participate in direct experimentation but instead theorize "best practices" and then commit to lesson plans without further inquiry. Particularly in many of my past teaching situations, I feel that use of collaborative play would have helped me to learn and reflect more about what I was actually doing while allowing the practical work to get done.

1a. The group or person(s) that sponsors the evaluation of the change are...

I am the main sponsor within my own environment, which is too small for a statistically significant sample, but within a larger institution, the administrators/directors might be the main sponsors as they seek to improve the collaboration of teachers in the school or center.

1b. The people they seek to influence with the results are...

I seek to influence primarily the other teachers in my school environment (in my specific case, this might be the team of teachers responsible for planning toward youth education). A secondary influence would ideally occur with the students, who are the beneficiaries of the teachers who do use collaborative play.

1c. The actions/decisions/policies those people might improve or affirm concern...

The teachers might improve or affirm the need for scheduled and organized planning, the role of facilitation in teacher planning, and the allowance for developing ideas that need not always be fully worked out at the end of a specific planning session.

2a. General Question: The comparison needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the change is between two (or more) situations, namely a. a comparison of...

The two situations being compared are the teacher planning sessions in which no member of the group takes particular interest in collaborative play, and those sessions in which at least one person does take interest in collaborative play and attempts to integrate it into the planning approach.

b. with respect to differences in the general area of…..

In the latter situation in which some planning group members do advocate use of collaborative play, the main action to be considered, planned, and evaluated is the taking of steps that encourage collaborative play to happen. For example with my specific situation, I would consider what actions would I need to take before, during, and after teacher planning with certain groups, and I would not take such actions with the "control" groups. As well as the actual actions taken by teachers, another difference would be that some outside person or party would be present to observe the interactions of the teachers during planning and note observations that could be used to help the evaluation of collaborative play integration.

3. Specific observables: To undertake that comparison, the effects of the change will be assessed by looking at the following specific variable(s) in the two (or more) situations...

Across a large number of teacher planning groups, "control" groups would go on as always, and "treatment" groups would be the ones to utilize collaborative play. Within the treatment group, there would be "direct participants" who are actively involved in introducing collaborative play into the planning sessions, and then “indirect participants” who do not specifically plan for collaborative play. The direct participants would adhere to a set of common "collaborative play" actions that they would take before, during, and after teacher planning, and they would not necessarily reveal that they are doing to others in the whole group. At first, these collaborative actions might be developed in a common form by those actually implementing them, although it seems likely that the flexibility would be need to be allowed for them to evolve. The "before" and "after" actions would help the direct participant him- or herself prepare for and reflect upon collaborative play individually, and the "during" actions would involve more direct collaborative play while actually engaged in the teacher planning. Alternately, the treatment group might contain all direct participants and no indirect participants, meaning that the entire process would be transparent to all involved, and everyone would be taking the actions to invoke play. This might necessitate forming groups that don’t typically meet with each other for planning. In more “natural” planning groups, teachers in a same grade level or teaching a similar subject might typically meet, and in these cases, it might be realistic that only certain members of the group are open to acting as direct participants.

Variables would include the following:
1) The number of planned actions that were either taken or not taken by the direct participants
2) The expressions of acceptance or resistance made in response to the collaborative play actions "during" the teacher planning (as made by the indirect participants) in a planning group
3) Over time, the number of instances when indirect participants start to introduce collaborative play approaches themselves
4) Time spent and actions taken during periods of collaborative play, i.e., when experimentation of proposed learning activities is happening between teachers such that they are expressing enjoyment and finding freedom to explicitly and personally try the activities without expectation of specific results.

4. The methods to be used to produce observations or measurements of those variables are... (survey, questionnaire, etc.)

Methods would require that third-party observers take notes during teacher planning meetings and actually record the instances of the variables above. Part of the observations would be to note a quantitative count of instances of particular behavior as mentioned above, and part of the observation would be to provide a narrative account of the sense of play observed. In order to avoid creating anxiety of the teachers in the face of being "scrutinized" by the observers, the observers might have to be present in the role of being simply note-takers on the collaborative play experiment. Some observers would remain with the same group over successive planning sessions. Some observers would alternate between sessions either within the control groups, or within the treatment groups. Some observers would alternative between sessions and also between the control and treatment groups. In my specific case of teacher planning for example, I might ask for a center director of administrator to participant to join in under the role of a person taking notes on behalf of the rest of us.

5a. The people who will be observed/measured are...

The teacher groups will be observed, and this would include both the control and treatment groups. With the control groups, the observers will measure the same variables, determining when these things happen spontaneously, since those groups will not have any direct participants.

5b. The observing/measuring is done in the following places/situations... or derived indirectly from the following sources...

The observations will be made during the structured teacher planning meetings that have been previously established. Separate observations might be made in the form of individual interviews of the various teachers by one of the third party observers or by another administrator.

6. The observations/measurements will be analyzed to determine whether the two situations are significantly different in the following manner...

With respect to the variables above, variables 1,2, and 3 will be directly compared over several months of time to quantitatively determine whether collaborative play is successfully being introduced into the teacher planning. The final variable might depend upon a more qualitative analysis of how collaborative play seems to develop differently in control and treatment groups.

7a. Given that people who will interpret (give meaning to) the analysis are...

Those interpreting the meaning of the analysis might be school administrators and other teachers who are not participating in any collaborative planning groups.

7b. the analysis will be summarized/conveyed in the following form...

A summary will be created which indicates which of the "before","during","after" actions seem to be most closely related to the emergence of collaborative play. These will be made available to teacher and administrator groups who are developing future guidelines for planning sessions. Also, a summary of specific instances of collaborative play will be compiled as a resource for demonstrating to teachers different kinds of alternatives for ways of behaving in their planning.

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When the results are available, the following steps can be pinned down. In the design stage, you should lay out different possiblities.

8a. The results show that what has been happening is...

Possibilities include that the "before","during", and "after" activities each show some amount of influence on the increase in collaborative play used during teacher planning. For each level of activity, it is also possible that it shows no effect on the level of collaborative play, or even is shown to be detrimental to collaborative play. Results might be inconclusive altogether because of other factors not observed in the teacher planning, such as the influence of personalities or differences in interpreting "play" by the direct participants or observers.

8b. This will be reported through the following outlets...

This will be reported in institutional annual reports, new staff orientation materials, and individual meetings between teachers and administrators.

9. What has been happening is happening because...

Will be determined by the study, but one possibility is that collaborative play is shown to be possible in teacher planning and an acceptable use of time and effort, meaning that the school as a whole might become more willing to create the environment that allows play to happen and encourage all teachers to develop the "before","during", and "after" actions that are useful.

10. The lessons learned by sponsors of evaluation are that...

Lessons to be learned might include a deeper evaluation of why collaborative play does not happen more often, such as lack of time, feeling of apprehension, or lack of real and practical benefit. Also, the specific "before,during,after" actions might be appropriate only under certain circumstances and might need to be customized very specifically to each teacher planning group in a way that is appropriate. Future cycles of action research would likely pay great attention to the fine-tuning of the actions and even framing them in a way that allows them to evolve through the direct decision of the teachers actually carrying them out.

11. What the sponsors should now do differently is...

One possibility is that sponsors should consider how to expose the benefits of collaborative play mores teacher planning process and consider different presentations of these ideas as a way of allowing teachers to view them in ways that are most acceptable. For example, if certain teachers resist the very notion of "play" in a rigid way because they believe that it allows for silliness and makes them appear to not be serious about their work, the idea of play might be presented in alternate form, such as as "experiential planning".

Presentation Notes - How Will I Describe My Progress to Others Such That Effective

<u>Feedback Can Be Given?</u>

Evaluation and Inquiry Stage:

When considering my own various experiences in adult learning, I have considered that most learning opportunities have a "feel" of work, meaning that the effort to participate fully is noticed, and there is some absence of play, experimentation, and enjoyment that might be a natural part of the process. Through my interest in collaborative play, I have wondered how I might take action to help establish a tone of collaborative play in learning opportunities and use collaborative play as a support system for allowing learning to be enjoyable.

In my background research, I have found a number of resources that describe notions such as what it means for adults to play or directions toward building collaborative learning opportunities for adults. I'm still working through these, but the ones that I have read show a general consistency in suggesting that play can be a valuable way for adults to engage with learning. One definition of play is the following: "Play: state of being that is intensely pleasurable. It energizes and enlivens us. It eases our burdens, renews a natural sense of optimism…". Many descriptions of play that I have found are similar in the way that they describe play without really defining it in a completely concrete way.

Reflection and Dialogue Epicycle:

In my own learning experiences, I have noticed that many of them have taken the form of proposing a specific goal and then indicating the path to be taken to reach that goal and then taking that path and reaching the goal. I considered that when I most enjoyed learning, there was an element of play in the situation in which I was allowed to deviate from that path and spend time on an activity which had an uncertain outcome. In a simple example, I recall a high school math teacher asking us students to try to figure out how to use a graphing calculator. There was no answer sought, just an expectation that we would discover something of use along the way. In another example, I took a continuing education class in beginning piano. The teacher interrupted the lesson to ask us to think of a song that we liked. She then asked us to try to find the correct notes to the beginning of the song on the piano keys, even when we had not yet learned note names. In both of these situations, we played. After reflecting upon this, I considered that in my ongoing adult learning settings, I might be even more rewarded if the play was collaborative – if the learners were all playing in this way but doing so in a coordinated way which we had a shared experienced that supported the development of a relationship between learners, beyond the more isolated play of the examples above. By playing, I found a very satisfied feeling from the idea that I had actually created some knowledge for myself, not simply given it directly or even prompted to find it from an external source.

Proposing and Planning Actions Stage:

After starting with a more general idea about taking action to add collaborative play to adult learning, I found new meaning during a period of much struggle and uncertainty about the purpose of my ideas. My thoughts were that play could serve as the mechanism for creating an alternative in learning to any structure that was imposed upon a group of people. In other words, play could serve as a legitimate way to support the learning itself while allowing the learners to break free from the structure that had been placed on the situation or that they had adopted for themselves. Further, I was having difficulty in defining how collaborative play could be generally placed into a situation, so I had to change my overall framework of thinking. Rather then figuring out how to build collaborative play into “any” learning opportunity as a functional action, I started to see that what I wanted to happen was for myself and other learners to simply become more sensitive to times in which play could be used to break up the structure of the learning and restore a sense of fun in learning, when appropriate. In other words, I recognized and acknowledged that I did not want to figure out how to increase the collaborative play in any situation. Instead, I realized that my hope for collaborative play was that it could be understood by learners to be an option for their style of learning at a particular time and develop the capacity to recognize this and use it. I started to understand that a slightly more narrow approach to my own action research was in order, so I renewed my focus on the specific issue of planning classroom lessons with other teachers at a preschool/afterschool center where I work. This seemed to be a natural match, since we were tasked with collaborating in order to create lesson plans and activities for students that were enjoyable for them and allowed them to play. Meanwhile, I observed that we were never really playing ourselves in the journey to accomplish this.

The general course that I took to create a plan for action took the following form.

Overview of project:
• use of collaborative play as a way to enhance learning experience for adult learners
• play = activity that has uncertain outcome which encourages experimentation, surprise, humor, and personal enjoyment
• collaborative play = play that is done by group of people in the same learning experience, such that their actions are interdependent – an act of a person during collaborative play may be a response to that of another or a prompt to further action

1. Initial thoughts

a. My interest in adult education focuses on lifelong learning and what it takes to encourage myself and other adults to develop a positive view of ongoing learning, engage in learning with a spirit of enjoyment, curiosity, and excitement, and consider how learning with others can be rewarding and create change, while at the same time taking many forms that may not be available in traditional classroom settings or educational institutions

b. First considerations – how to create an action research plan in which collaborative play is introduced into adult learning settings such that it results in an enhancement of the learning experience. Issue: could this “enhancement” be a quantifiable property?

c. Next steps – I considered what it might mean to use myself as a guinea pig in my action research. The change that I would be introducing would focus on actions that I would take, I would inquire into the way that I have been acting and how others have approached this question, and I would then evaluate the change based on my own actions and those of others.

d. Primary action research idea: - I would focus on how to develop a “Personal Engagement Plan”. This would be a recipe for actions that I would take relative to three periods when encountering a learning opportunity. The idea is that prior to an upcoming well-defined learning opportunity, I would be able to create a customized Personal Engagement Plan with “before”, “during”, and “after” actions that I could take and then actually carry out the actions that encouraged the use of collaborative play. Evaluation would be based on determining whether or not a certain result was noticed to be different between situations that involved collaborative play, and those that didn’t.

e. Emerging idea – I would focus on using my own work as a teacher to help think about how to create a Personal Engagement Plan. In my work with a youth education program, I am responsible for helping teachers develop curriculum and lesson plans for preschool and afterschool students that involve using multimedia and information literacy (primarily using computers as tools for these). The lead teachers are responsible for a level of student based on age, and this is then associated with learning goals that reflect certain subjects (reading, math, creativity, etc.). I am knowledgeable about the multimedia resources, and teachers are knowledgeable about the core topics. Neither of us understand very well each others’ areas, so we must work together to create integrated activities and lesson plans for the students that account for both. Based on this need, I considered that area for possible collaborative play was in the way that I and the other teachers could learn from each other and collaborate to plan for the activities for the students. Drawing upon the notion of collaborative play, how could I create a Personal Engagement Plan that would help to make our planning sessions more successful?

Constituency Building Epicycle:

In the development of this plan, I have been noticing that the constituency building process has evolved somewhat naturally from the requirements of the plan itself. Primary constituents include the teachers and directors at the youth center and the students themselves. Secondary constituents include others who might observe the play that is happening in the planning sessions and those assisting me to develop the ideas for play that can be brought to the group.

A few practical areas in which this might be used realistically in the near future:
1. Preschool – upcoming planning to develop a science activity fair with the teachers to engage the kids to gain a sense of wonder and excitement about science and space
2. Afterschool – upcoming planning to develop a project that would engage the kids in creating a digital story of their personal lives

Implementation Stage:

Example of a possible Personal Engagement Plan:

To be clear, the focus is collaborative learning during the lesson planning process with teachers, not during the actually carrying out of the lesson plans with students. The following activities are those that would be done by me relative to these planning sessions.

“Before” activities:
1. observe students at play in a classroom during a more unstructured time and note specific instances in which play seems to lead to inquiry or insight
2. ask teachers for a list of possible topics that will be addressed in their classes within the following weeks
3. build a simplified prototype of a game or fun activity that might be used during a student lesson
4. find one joke, humor article, comic strip, or interesting image that is directly relevant to topics at hand or teaching
5. find a “toy” that might be relevant or interesting to the teachers

“During” activities:
1. present the joke/comic/etc. to the group
2. briefly offer the “toy” (#5 above) to the teacher group during planning and ask them to “test” it for use with the students
3. mention to the other teachers that I intend to approach our planning from a playful point of view, meaning that I would like to play with any idea before judging its value or making a

decision based on it
4. make a suggestion to teachers that we play with the prototype game “as if” we were the students, and then do so if possible
5. write down suggestions made by the teachers on how to improve or clarify the game
6. ask teachers (and myself) to reflect upon the personalities of individual students and tell a story about times when they seem to be having fun
7. brainstorm ideas for an alternative game that might be developed

“After” activities:
1. make suggested changes to the prototype game
2. create additional prototype games as suggested, as possible, and present these in future planning sessions
3. make an entry in a reflective journal that describes particular moments of play between myself and the other teachers

Evaluation and Inquiry Stage:

As a matter of practical evaluation of the plan, I start with a type of checklist of outcomes. The questions below highlight issues that might be changed through the introduction of collaborative play, and these generally whether or not a specific change can be observed after collaborative play has been used.

Outcomes to be measured:
Possible evaluation would occur by answering the following questions:
1. Did the other teachers explicitly agree to engage in play or be open to the idea?
2. Did I experience a level of enjoyment beyond the norm for teacher planning sessions?
3. Did any other teachers express that they were experiencing enjoyment during the planning session?
4. How many times was laughter elicited during the planning session?
5. Did all of my planned actions in my Personal Engagement Plan actually take place? If not, what prevented it?
6. Did the teachers and I form a concrete lesson plan for a specific period of time?
7. Did the number of interactions between the teachers and I increase between the planning session and the following one?
8. Did my understanding of the teachers’ original intentions for lesson topics become more clear after the planning session? Did their understandings of my resources become more clear?
9. Over time, do the other teachers take any more initiative at bringing/suggesting new ways

of play into the planning sessions?

Narrative Outline

From Personal Action to Collaborative Play: Creating a Personal Engagement Plan for Adults that Creates a Rewarding Group Learning Experience

I. Introduction: My Perspective on Adult Learning and the Value of Play
(ties into: Evaluation of my own past scenarios, Inquiry to Illuminate the Background, Reflection)

In my own experiences in adult learning, I have become particularly interested in the idea that play may be used as a tool that might enhance the learning process by opening up the possibilities of _experimentation_ in learning. I consider this to be an important part of the learning process such that it may, when used at appropriate times, remove the boundaries of "right" and "wrong". When this happens, an opportunity for learning occurs that provides space for novel or "strange" ideas to be considered; this may not happen if learning activity is purely goal-driven, since that may require that such novel ideas are ignored if they do not directly or obviously relate to the goal. Further, if play happens in a collaborative way, this means that learners may be performing the same experiments together, finding ways to enjoy the experience, and increased sharing between them. I will reflect upon learning experiences of my own in which collaborative play did happen and work effectively as well as some that lacked such play but that might have shown a benefit from having it. Also, I will describe some initial assumptions that I made at the start of the action research.

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the Introduction provides motivation and rationale for wanting to engage in the project and follow through on exploring the Background
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II. Background Wisdom from the Minds and Experience of Others
(ties into: Inquiry to Illuminate the Background, Dialogue)

I will summarize my review of the literature concerning the ideas of others regarding the meaning of "play" and "collaborative play" and consider how they have been defined and related to the childhood and adult worlds of interaction. Because no single idea of play claims to be the most useful or only correct one, I will present some themes that emerge from comparing a variety of perspectives on play, and note some key contrasts. Further, I will provide some example cases of the use of play in learning situations that primarily involve adults.

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the Background uncovers aspects of play as more legitimate, concrete, and realistic part of adult interaction, which suggests that change is possible in my Current Situation
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III. My Current Situation and the Need for Change
(ties into: Evaluation of my current situation, Dialogue, and Constituency-Building)

I will describe the target setting of my role as a curriculum developer and teacher in a preschool program, where I need to work with a group of core preschool teachers to develop lesson plans and activities that both integrate multimedia and help meet learning standards for the students (such as literacy and science awareness). The area for change focuses on this teacher planning process itself and how collaborative play might be included in the process and used more effectively as a tool to enrich our planning, with an inner-most constituency group being these teachers.

Two central issues surround the planning process. One is that I have specialized knowledge (multimedia, technology, and information resources) and the teachers have specialized knowledge (educational standards for preschoolers and more personal knowledge of the students themselves). In order for planning to become more effective, we must learn from each other's knowledge and experience so that our plans account for all of it as much as possible. Another central issue is that planning has traditionally occurred in the form of a "decisional discussion" - a general discussion that aims to simply find agreement on a decision about what activities to use in the student classes. This means that there currently is no play between the members of the teacher planning group, even though we are attempting to create learning experiences for the students that involve high levels of play. In typical teacher planning so far, we have not really tried activities ourselves or even imagined "out loud" how they might work. My action research plan will focus on what actions I may take that can introduce the possibility of collaborative play into the teacher planning. This will be a primary area of interest in my current project.

Future cycles of action research cycle might then seek to refine how the change takes place:
• Phase 2: how to do this in such a way that the collaborative play that happens actually increases the mutual cross-learning between teachers
• Phase 3: how to do this in such a way that the collaborative play, that leads to mutual

learning, also leads to more playful and well-defined student lesson plans and activities
• Phase 4: ....leads to increased engagement/enjoyment of the preschool students themselves

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along with having deeper understanding of my Current Situation with respect to desired outcomes and options for achieving them, knowledge of the Background helps to point toward a path of action through the development of an Action Research Plan
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IV. Developing an Action Research Plan for Change: The "Personal Engagement Plan" in Defining How Personal Action Relates to Increased Collaborative Play
(ties into: Proposing and Planning {what actions}, Implementation {strategies, logistics for action})

I will describe an idea for how to plan my actions and suggest how others might do the same across an imagined larger system of teacher planning throughout a school. My main idea is that I would create a "Personal Engagement Plan" for myself. This would be a list of actions that I would plan to take before, during, and after a teacher planning session that I propose might help to introduce collaborative play into the planning process. "Before" actions might include those that might help me to individually develop a playful attitude ahead of time and prepare materials that might be used in playful planning. "During" actions might include those that directly communicate suggestions for play to other teachers during planning and those that lead to planning activities that are themselves playful in a way that matches appropriate with the current interactions of the planning session. "After" actions might be those that allow me and others to reflect on our play and collect feedback from the observers of teacher planning.

Part of the Personal Engagement Plan will certainly require me to make attempts to define actions in the first place that I think are likely to lead to collaborative play, so I will also discuss how I might think about this. The actions might draw upon my own direct teaching and learning experiences as well as perspectives related to life experiences, such as some of my recent training in theater and kind of play that happens in sports and games.

Further, because the Personal Engagement Plan starts with myself but includes many others, I will describe how my I imagine the growth of my constituents to work over time, with respect to direct participants (myself and the other teachers), indirect participants (preschool administrators and preschool students), and allies (teachers in other schools, playful people, idea-providers, Action Research class colleagues). This description will include how I might ideally frame the constituency in a holistic way, such that I am able to offer support to constituents as they do so with me, and such that communication/relationship-building might occur not only between me and individual constituents and constituent groups, but between constituents themselves. Because collaboration and play lie at the foundation of the change that I envision, constituency-building will also involve specifically seeking out skeptical people who can help me to consider objections to the use of collaborative play or areas in which play in general might be met with resistance.

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reflecting on the Development of an Action Research Plan, helps to uncover a starting point of actual small- and medium-scale actions that I might employ as a first attempt of a Personal Engagement Plan
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V. Example Personal Engagement Plan
(ties into: Implementation, Reflection, Constituency-Building))

Because the Personal Engagement Plan is the primary vehicle for supporting the actions taken to create change, I will provide a suggestion for an initial plan while considering how this might work in my own situation, as well as proposing how it might also apply to an imagined situation in a larger environment where multiple teacher planning sessions might be happening, where collaborative play is sought not only as a tool for in-group teacher planning but also as a new element of school/institution culture. I am now considering that My own Personal Engagement Plan might involve the integration of several elements: 1) lists of "before", "during", and "after" actions that I take, 2) conditional statements/priorities that regulate when certain actions need not or may not be taken relative to a particular teacher planning session, and 3) time-based and systems-thinking considerations that influence overall implementation of the actions, i.e., does implementing a given action disrupt some other part of the system of the preschool that otherwise appears to exist outside of teacher planning sessions?

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the perspective of a concrete Personal Engagement Plan suggests how change may be measured through the specific guidelines of a explicit Evaluation
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VI. Evaluation of the Personal Engagement Plan
(ties into: Evaluation, Dialogue, Constituency-Building)

Consideration of the Personal Engagement Plan will also include description of how this can be evaluated. Because collaborative play might not be equally meaningful or perfectly well-defined across all teachers, evaluation will depend not only upon my own reflection but also on feedback/commentary given directly by other teachers, notes on observations made by third-party observers, and other quantitative and qualitative measurements of my own and others' behavior both during and outside of the teacher planning sessions.

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the results of the Evaluation will may help to refine the Personal Engagement Plan not only in terms of specific actions but also in terms of how all of the specific actions work together, and revised actions may then propel the action research toward Future Cycles
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VII. Imagining Further Iterations of the Action Research Cycles
(ties into: Evaluation, Inquiry {unanswered questions related to Personal Engagement Plan})

The primary focus of the action research during the first phase will be to introduce collaborative play into the teacher planning process in some form, as a way of discovering which actions that I take might catalyze the collaborative play interactions that take place. This not only means injecting "instances" of collaborative play into the formal teacher planning sessions, but also hopefully taking the actions that help to establish that the overall environment allows for collaborative play where it might even become more spontaneous outside of the formal planning. Future directions of the action research might then address the types of implied changes that are suggested under Phase 2, 3, 4, and beyond, as mentioned previously under the "Current Situation" section.

Check-in

During a **check-in** at the start of a session, everyone is given a limited time, say, 1 minute, to speak to a prompt given by the session leader. A participant can pass and be given a turn at the end. If someone finishes speaking well under the alloted time, the leader can repeat the prompt, which usually elicits more thoughts by the participant.
The prompts need not be directly related to the agenda of the session; the important point is that every participant begins to participate and have their voice heard.

Examples of Prompts

"Something new and good since the last session. (It doesn't have to be about the project/course.)"

"Progress and insights gained since the last session. (Do not say what you did not do, but mention what you did do and share any insights you gained about getting things done from this point on.)"

Closing Circle (Check-out)

During a closing circle at the end of a session, everyone takes a turn to speak to a prompt given by the session leader. A volunteer starts, then that person is asked to pass it to their left or their right, and things then proceed round the circle (or group) in that direction. A participant can pass and be given a turn at the end.
The prompt should request that the responses are short, even telegraphic. The leader can gently cut someone off if they speak too long, go beyond the prompt, or start to repeat themselves. The important point is that every participant takes stock of the session and/or their plan for the time ahead and has this heard (witnessed) by the rest of the group.

Examples of Prompts

+∆ review of the session

One thing I am planning to do differently this week.

One thing that I plan to do this week and one thing I'm taking away to chew on from this session.

Critical Incident Questionnaire

Example

Please take about 5 minutes to respond anonymously to each of the questions below about tonight's class. Using carbon paper, make one copy for yourself and put the other by the door as you leave. I'll digest the responses, report back to you next week about them, and try to make changes to
respond to your responses.

1. What incident/comment/reaction/quote stands out from tonight's class?

2. At what moment did you feel most:
a. engaged with what was happening?

b. distanced from what was happening?

3. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took did you find:
a. most helpful or affirming?

b. most puzzling or confusing?

4 (Optional). Other comments?

Rationale

The Critical Incident Questionnaire is adapted from Brookfield, S. D. (1995). Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 115. The five minute limit means that: a. this feedback can be fitted in to almost any session; and b. each person's responses are necessarily partial -- there's no pressure to sum up the whole experience.

The sequence of questions above borrows from the ORID process of the Institute for Cultural Affairs, which moves from the Objective (concrete things, actually observable by all), through Reflective (associations and feelings) and Interpretive (meaning and significance) to Decisional (implications for the future).

The instructor or session leader can collate the responses onto a single sheet (using check marks to indicate repeats of similar responses) and annotate the results, e.g., highlighting repeated responses, linking items in tension (i.e., when respondents said opposite things), summarizing a manageable subset of issues to address next time. This compilation can be scanned and sent by email with a cover note or distributed the next session with a short recap of the highlights.

Another example, for mid-way during a semester

1. What concrete incidents/comments/reactions in tonight's class caught your attention?

2a. What excited you?

b. What frustrated you?

3a. What trends do you see emerging in the classes?

b. What are the implications of these for your learning and thinking?

4a. What might be your next steps as a learner-participant in this course?

b. What support would you like in taking those steps?

Dialogue Process

Detailed and streamlined scripts for a Dialogue Process Session in which the participants learn about the process as we go. Peter Taylor, borrowing from Allyn Bradford (2001); see also Isaacs, W. 1999. Dialogue. NY: Currency.

Detailed Script

Facilitator speaks: Dialogue Process Session on *facilitator fills in topic*

Phase A

Pass this sheet around, each person reading one paragraph of guidelines from from Allyn Bradford, then Peter Taylor.

In the Dialogue process "meaning" evolves collectively through mutual understanding and acceptance of diverse points of view.

To master the Dialogue process requires learning a variety of communication skills including a tolerance of paradox (or opposing views), the suspension of judgment and empathic listening. It also requires making the entire thought process visible, including tacit assumptions. In this process, instead of imposing our views on others, we invite others to add new dimensions to what we are thinking. We also learn to listen to the voice of the heart--our own and others--and strive to find ways to make that voice articulate.

The purpose of Dialogue is neither to agree nor to determine who is right. Rather, the purpose is to discover the richness of diverse perceptions that create a shared meaning that emerges from a group through inquiry and reflection. The meaning that evolves is dynamic as it moves through many diverse phases. If others contradict, the challenge is to learn from what they have said.

The origin of Dialogue goes back to the ancient Greeks. It is also found among preliterate Europeans and Native Americans. More recently David Bohm, the renowned physicist introduced the Dialogue process into the scientific quest for knowledge and also used it to address social problems. Bohm said that "when the roots of thought are observed, thought itself seems to change for the better." Dialogue he said, "is a stream of meaning flowing among and through and between us". Dialogue is now being used in schools, corporations and government to develop rapport, resolve conflict and build community.

Guidelines for Dialogue

1. You don't have to agree. Listen with the expectation of learning; that is, assume that the speaker has something new and of value to contribute to your comprehension and then stretch your mind to find out what that is.

2. None of us has the whole truth. Seek to comprehend the many facets of meaning that emerge from the group. Appreciate how the diversity of perceptions enriches the quality of the dialogue. In your responses do not problem solve, argue, analyze, rescue, nit pick or give advice. Rather, try to understand how the diverse views connect with each other.

3. Pay attention to your listening. Listen for the "voice of the heart" as well as the mind--yours and others'. Tune into the language, rhythms and sounds. Listen as you would to hear the themes played by various instruments in an orchestra and how they relate to each other. That's what makes the music. In Dialogue, that's what makes the collective meaning.

4. Free yourself up from a rigid mindset. Stand back and respond, rather than reacting automatically or defensively. Balance advocacy (making a statement) with inquiry (seeking clarifications and understanding). In advocating do not impose your opinion, rather simply offer it as such. In inquiry seek clarification and a deeper level of understanding, not the exposure of weakness.

5. Communicate your reasoning process, i.e. talk about your assumptions and how you arrived at what you believe. Seek out the data on which assumptions are based, your own and others. Bring tacit (hidden) assumptions to the surface of consciousness.

6. Suspend, rather than identify with, your judgements. Hold these away from your core self, to be witnessed or observed by yourself and made visible to others.

Additional Guidelines, from Peter Taylor

Confidentiality

Don't speak afterwards about what's said in the dialogue by attributing it to anyone, even if you don't name the person. Instead, simply talk about what you are thinking/inquiring about as a result of having been in today's session.

If you speak to anyone from this group about what they said, follow the same genuine inquiry you practice here.

Turn taking

The overriding idea: Keep focused on listening well. If you're thinking about whether you'll get to talk next, you won't listen well. Ditto, if you're holding on tight to what you want to say. So take a numbered card when you feel that you'd like a turn, but keep listening. When your turn comes, show your card, and pause. See if you have something to follow what's being said, even if it's not the thought you had wanted to say. You can pass.

Another idea: There's no need for questions to be answered right away. If the question relates directly to someone, they can pick it up when they next take a turn. This differs from usual conversations, but think of questions as inquiries that you're putting into a shared space.

Final idea: Try to make the turn-taking administer itself so the facilitator can listen well and participate undistracted. When you finish speaking (or if you decide to pass), put your card on the stack of used cards so the person with the next card knows that they can begin. The facilitator's role becomes simply to recharge the unused stack of cards when needed and gently remind people to follow the guidelines.

Phase B. Check-in

Go around the circle with each person saying one thought that’s at the front for you as we go into the session.
Stop passing the sheet around at this point, and take turns in checking-in.]

Facilitator speaks:

Phase C. Turn-taking dialogue about the topic at hand for the time available minus 5+ minutes

Facilitator reminds group of the topic

Phase D. Check-out

Go around the circle with each person saying one thought that you’re taking away to chew on after this session.

Streamlined Script

Dialogue Process Session on *facilitator fills in topic*
Phase A Pass this sheet around, each person reading one paragraph of guidelines from Allyn Bradford and Peter Taylor

The Dialogue Process is an opportunity to listen—not only to the thinking of others, but also to our own thoughts and feelings that had been below the surface of our attention.

When a group does this together over a period of time, "meaning" emerges and evolves collectively through mutual understanding and acceptance of diverse points of view. In this short session, however, we cannot expect this to be the dominant experience.

The Dialogue Process works well when participants tolerate paradox and opposing views, suspend judgment and listen empathetically, and try to make their entire thought process visible, including tacit assumptions. Instead of imposing our views on others, we invite others to add new dimensions to what we are thinking, and strive to find ways to make un(der) expressed voices articulate.

In this spirit, balance advocacy—making a statement—with inquiry—seeking clarifications and understanding. In advocating do not impose your opinion, rather simply offer it as such. In inquiry seek clarification and a deeper level of understanding, not the exposure of weakness.

The Dialogue Process requires structured turn-taking. The overriding idea is to keep focused on listening well. If you're thinking about whether you'll get to talk next, you won't listen well. Ditto, if you're holding on tight to what you want to say.

Take a numbered card when you feel that you'd like a turn, but keep listening. When your turn comes, show your card, and pause. See if you have something to follow what's being said, even if it's not the thought you had wanted to say. You can pass.

There's no need for questions to be answered right away. If the question relates directly to someone, they can pick it up when they next take a turn. This differs from usual conversations, but think of questions as inquiries that you're putting into a shared space.

Try to make turn-taking administer itself so the facilitator can listen well and participate undistracted. When you finish speaking (or if you decide to pass), put your card on the stack of used cards so the person with the next card knows that they can begin. The facilitator's role becomes simply to gently remind people to follow the guidelines.

Phase B. Check-in
Go around the circle with each person saying one thought that’s at the front for you before we go into the session proper. This need not be about the topic of the session.

Stop passing the sheet around at this point, and take turns in checking-in.

* * * * *

Facilitator reminds participants of the topic, then we move to
Phase C. Turn-taking dialogue about the topic for the time available minus 5+ minutes.

* * * * *

We keep the last 5+ minutes for

Phase D. Check-out
Go around the circle with each person saying one thought that you’re taking away to chew on after this session.

Evaluation Clock

The Evaluation Clock (adapted from Pietro, D. S. 1983. Evaluation Sourcebook. New York, American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service) unpacks the "evaluation or systematic study" component of the Action Research cycle. It indirectly addresses the "planning component•by making you look ahead to consider which people might be influenced by the results and what they could do based on the possible outcomes.

The ultimate goal of using the Clock framework is that you can use it to design your own evaluation or systematic study mindfully, working both:

- sequentially—addressing the whole range of considerations (moving from steps 0 to 11); and
- recursively—adjusting your plans for the earlier steps in light of thinking ahead about possibilities for the later steps.

In particular, evaluation and planning/design should be inextricably linked. For example, when you think about what could be done differently (step 11) on the basis of the specific measurements/ observations you include in the evaluation (step 3), you may refine your measurements/observations, or even decide that you need to separate out two or more different sub-issues within the overall issue (steps 0-2), each requiring a different evaluation. As Pietro (1983, 23) says: "The clock marks time in an unusual fashion, since it does not necessarily move in a clockwise direction, but rather jumps from one number to another until all the questions have been struck." It has been suggested that the clock is more like a combination lock on a safe. Working sequentially and recursively is analogous to Action Research, except that with the Evaluation Clock each step might require tight, self-conscious method (e.g., statistical analysis).

Comparisons

When an evaluation is a systematic study of effects of some intervention/engagement, there is always a comparison involved. The comparison might be before vs. after some intervention is made, or it might be a comparison of one situation (with a particular curriculum, treatment, etc.) vs. another situation (without that curriculum, etc.) (steps 2 & 3 of the clock). Did it have the intended effects? Was it better than other approaches? The idea of comparison can also be applied to continuous data, e.g., on the incidence of violent crimes in relation to unemployment rate. This is, more or less, like asking is there more (or less) violent crime in times of high unemployment than in times of low unemployment?

In valid comparisons all other factors are supposed to be equal or unchanged. If they are not, then the comparison is suspect. Perhaps it needs to be broken into a number of comparisons, e.g., before vs. after for wealthy schools, and before vs. after for poor schools. When an evaluation is a systematic study of what has already been happening, it may only involve collecting information about one situation, e.g., finding what % of adults are able to read competently. The formulation of the evaluation criteria and interpretation of the results depends, however, on an implicit comparison with a desired situation, e.g, one of full adult literacy.

In order to get acquainted with the Clock, the comparison at its heart, and the sequential and recursive aspects of using the Clock, it is helpful to reconstruct an evaluation that has been conducted. When you do this you have to put yourself in the shoes of the group or person(s) who conducted the evaluation and fill in the steps they appear to have taken.
In order to get the hang of comparisons, focus on steps 2 and 3 for a simple case (e.g., the smoking in bars clipping). Steps 0, 4 and 5 may help you as well. (See "stripped down clock" appended after the full clock.)

When you have the hang of the comparison idea, work on the sequential and recursive aspects of the Clock:
The **sequential** part of this reconstruction means that the answers at each step are logically related to the previous ones, especially the immediately preceding one. For example, the lessons in step 10 are lessons learned from the reasons (step 9) for what is happening (step 8a). Similarly, the outlets (step 8b) should take into account the sponsors goals/audience (step 1). Sequentiality also means that the key issues of the evaluation (step 2) are not the issues that emerge after the results (steps 8-12). The key issues are the ones that the evaluator saw needed studying before they knew the actual results.

The **recursive** part of this reconstruction means that when you think about what the evaluator or their sponsors did with the results (steps 10 & 11), or could conceivably do with them, you might go back and revise your interpretation of what decisions/ policies/ actions were at stake (steps 0 & 1). For example, an evaluation that points out that a low % of NY City high school students are passing the Regents exam says little about causes of the low% or about ways to improve education in the school system. We might then suspect that what concerns the sponsors of the evaluation (step 0) was to discredit public education. This would have to be checked out, but someone wanting to improve public education would want to design a quite different evaluation.

When you try to make sense of evaluations that others have done or are proposing, you may see that parents, teachers, administrators, and policy makers want different things evaluated,

even if they've been mixed into one "soup." For example, in high-stakes standardized tests evaluations of the following different things are mixed together:
• students' knowledge • new curricular frameworks as a means to improve students' knowledge
• performance of teachers • performance of schools; and • performance of school districts.
You have to separate the different kinds of evaluation for any issue you choose, and address each appropriately.
More generally, you should add notes from your own critical thinking about what others have done: Why evaluate in this situation? Why this evaluation and not another? What theories are hidden behind the intervention that was implemented? What supports are given to people to make the intervention?

A note on working from clippings: In using the clock to reconstruct an evaluation that has already been conducted, you have to put yourself in the shoes of the group or person(s) who conducted the evaluation and fill in the steps they appear to have taken. You should not answer the earlier steps with information that the people did not have until after they had conducted the evaluation. Often a newspaper clipping will not give you information for every step in the clock. In that case, fill in the step with what you would do as someone in the corresponding position, i.e., designing an evaluation (for the early steps), interpreting it (for the middle steps), or deciding on proposals to make (for the later steps). Deciding what you would do is a matter, as is the case in Action Research, of making proposals that follow from research results and presenting the proposals to potential constituencies who might take them up if the research supports them.

April 08: In describing what is to be evaluated, the word "intervention" was substituted for the word "change" in order to eliminate the ambiguity that arises because the effect of an intervention is also a change.

FULL CLOCK

[Copy and paste the clock into a word file to allow room for your responses.]

0a. The "intervention" (action/program/policy/curriculum/practice/treatment/difference/etc.) whose effect/effectiveness needs to be evaluated is...
0b. Interest or concern in the effectiveness of the intervention arises because...

_
1a. The group or person(s) that sponsors the evaluation of the intervention are...

1b. The people they seek to influence with the results are...
1c. The actions/decisions/policies those people might improve or affirm concern...

_
2. General Question: The comparison needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention is between two (or more) situations, namely a. a comparison of...

b. with respect to differences in the general area of…..

_
3. Specific observables: To undertake that comparison, the effects of the intervention will be assessed by looking at the following specific variable(s) in the two (or more) situations...

_
4. The methods to be used to produce observations or measurements of those variables are... (survey, questionnaire, etc.)

_
5a. The people who will be observed/measured are...
5b. The observing/measuring is done in the following places/situations... or derived indirectly from the following sources...

_
6. The observations/measurements will be analyzed to determine whether the two situations are significantly different in the following manner...

_
7a. Given that people who will interpret (give meaning to) the analysis are...
7b. the analysis will be summarized/conveyed in the following form...

_
When the results are available, the following steps can be pinned down. In the design stage, you should lay out different possiblities.
8a. The results show that what has been happening is...
8b. This will be reported through the following outlets...

_

9. What has been happening is happening because...

_
10. The lessons learned by sponsors of evaluation are that...

_
11. What the sponsors should now do differently is...

_

STRIPPING DOWN THE "CLOCK" TO FOCUS ON THE COMPARISON INVOLVED IN EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF ANY EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

[Copy and paste the clock into a word file to allow room for your responses.]

0. The "intervention," i.e., action/program/policy/curriculum/practice/treatment/difference/etc. whose effectiveness needs to be evaluated is...

_
2. The comparison needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention is between two (or more) situations, namely comparing...

_
3. To undertake that comparison, the effects of the intervention will be assessed by looking at the following specific variable(s) in the two situations...

_
4. The methods to be used to produce observations or measurements of those variables are... (survey, questionnaire, etc.)

_
5. The people who will be observed/measured are...
This is done in the following places/situations... or derived indirectly from the following

sources...

(Original page by -  pjt Jan 13, 2008 12:15 pm)

Focused Conversations

Main source: Stanfield (1997)

Sample Script, Connection to Other Frameworks,References

Focused conversations s a four-stage process led by a facilitator who asks questions to elicit responses that take a group from the surface of a topic to its depth. It addresses the problem that people tend to be selective in the data they deem relevant and then jump to premature conclusions based on that selective data (Ross 1994).

WHO is it for? – Access the wisdom of the group who needs to make a decision or review where they have come.

WHY use this method? - Using this process creates authentic involvement in making decisions and taking action. Participants are invested in the outcome they helped generate and are more likely to follow through with the results

Overview

Focused conversation is a tool used to explore many facets of a question in order to design the most effective solution. A group of people work together to answer questions on four different levels. The conversation can be led by a facilitator or by a group member. The wisdom of each member of the group is accessed and together the group creates an answer to the question.

Stage 1 – The Objective Level

- Questions in this stage focus on facts and external reality. They are designed to gather specific, observable information that pertains to the conversation. In our natural decision making process this would be manifested as observing a situation about which you will be making a decision.

Stage 2 – The Reflective Level

- Questions in this stage focus on emotions and memories. Participants in the conversation are asked to reflect on the data they have just discussed during the objective level of the conversation. This piece of the process allows participants to acknowledge how they feel about a situation. Validation of personal feelings, moods, associations and memories is liberating and enables participants to move forward in the conversation. Without this opportunity participants will feel frustrated and may vent their feelings outside the meeting, which is counterproductive. In our natural decision making process, the reflective level of questioning is the emotional response.

Stage 3 – The Interpretive Level

- The third stage of the Focused Conversation Method is the interpretive level. Questions in this stage get at the meaning of the topic for the group. Higher-level thinking skills are used to define the implications of the data for the group. The questions are often “why” questions and include questions pertaining to the value of the conversation and how it affects the participants outside the conversation. In the human decision-making process thinking through immediate options would reflect this stage.

Stage 4 – The Decisional Level

- The fourth and final stage of the process is the decisional level. Questions in this stage are designed to make the conversation relevant for the future. As its name suggests, in this level the group makes decisions regarding implications of the conversation for the future.

Sample Script

You have quite a challenge before you for the rest of the semester... But I think you can be pleasantly surprised by looking at how much you have learned already through...

To do that, I'm going to lead you in a focused conversation. This is a series of questions that begin with concrete things you observed and move through feelings and associations, on to interpretations and finally get to the overall implications. The idea is to avoid jumping to conclusions or holding on to preformed opinions; instead stay open to forming new conclusions on the basis of hearing everyone's contributions— including your own—to the earlier questions. So try not to answer a question that hasn't yet been asked.

This is not a conventional discussion. Instead of directly addressing what someone has said before you, the idea is to contribute to a pool of responses and to gain insight from listening to what others contribute. We want each person to be heard, so keep your answers to the questions short and pithy—even telegraphic. No speeches or disputing particular speaker's contributions.

I'm not the teacher now, but a neutral facilitator, so don't look to me for endorsement of answers.

Instead listen to what others say. Provided you're responding to the question that was asked, there are no wrong answers—there is insight in every answer.

Objective Questions = concrete things, actually observable by all

- What are the main parts of the Action Research process?
- What are useful tools in the Action Research process?

Reflective Questions = associations and feelings

- What was relatively easy for you to do?
- What felt difficult?
- What similar experiences come to mind?

Interpretive Questions = meaning and significance

- What skills and resources did you bring to the project?
- What skills and resources were you missing?
- What issues need to be resolved?

Decisional questions = implications for the future [on board or flip chart]

- What tasks do you plan to undertake this week?
- What guidance will you seek?

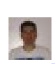
Closing: I'm always impressed with what happens when people combine their insights. I'll type up the notes and email them to you by tomorrow.
But for now, let's close this conversation and call it a day.

Connection to Other Frameworks

Focused Conversation has affinities with several different schemas for thinking about learning and/or group process, such as, Kolb's learning styles and Jungian/ Myer-Briggs personality types (see thought-piece on the connections).

References

Ross, R. (1994). "Ladder of Inference," in Senge, P., A. Kleiner, C. Roberts, R. Ross, and B. Smith. (1994) The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook. New York: Currency, 242-246.
Stanfield, R. Brian, ed. (1997) The Art of Focused Conversation. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs.

(Original page by Mary Frangie; additions by -  pjtpjt)

Gallery Walk

ice breaker ctivity for a group's first meeting that introduces participants to each other and acknowledges that they already know a lot about the topic at hand

As participants in a course or workshop arrive at the first meeting, they can be grouped in 2s or 3s, given marker pens, asked to introduce themselves to each other, and directed to one of a number of flip chart stations. Each flip chart has a question. Participants review the answers already contributed by any previous groups, add their own, then move on around the stations.
When the first groups returns to where they began, volunteers are asked to summarize the main themes and contrasts on one of the flip charts. They present these to the whole group, with the aid of an overhead transparency or simply as they stand by the flip chart in question. A sheet listing the questions can be distributed for participants who want to take notes.

This activity exemplifies the principles that people already know a lot, including knowing what they need to learn, and, if this knowledge is elicited and affirmed, they become better at learning from others.

Example 1: Gallery Walk Questions for Class 1 of Evaluation of Educational Change

- 1. What changes (big & small) are being pursued in teaching, schools, and educational policy?
- 2. What kinds of experience prepare teachers, administrators, and policy makers to pursue change in constructive ways?
- 3. What things would tell us that positive educational changes had happened?
- 4. What do you hope will come from this semester's experience?

Example 2: Gallery Walk Questions used at the start of a year-long professional development course for math and science educators to promote inquiry and problem-solving in a watershed context.

- 1. What factors (big & small) are involved in maintaining healthy watersheds?
- 2. What watershed issues might translate well into math. and science teaching?
- 3. What pressures & challenges do you see facing teachers wanting to improve math. and science teaching?
- 4. What has helped you in the past make improvements successfully (+), and what has hindered you (-)?
- 5. What things would tell you that positive educational changes had happened?
- 6. What kinds of things do you hope will come from this course/ professional

development experience?

The reasons in more detail for using the Gallery Walk in courses include the following points, most of which are relevant to participation in a group:

- 1. Breaks the ice and introduces students who might otherwise never interact.
- 2. Begins the community-building process so central to cooperative learning and emphasizes the collaborative, constructed nature of knowledge.
- 3. Suggests to students their centrality in the course, and that their voices, ideas, and experiences are significant and valued.
- 4. Allows for both consensus and debate - two skills essential to knowledge-building - and facilitates discussion when the class reconvenes as a larger group.
- 5. Enables physical movement around the room, an important metaphor for the activity at the course's core.
- 6. Depending on the gallery walk questions, provides one way for the instructor to gauge prior knowledge and skills, and identify potentially significant gaps in these.
- 7. Depending on the gallery walk questions, provides a way to immediately introduce students to a central concept, issue or debate in the field.
- 8. Through reporting back, provides some measure of closure by which students can assess their own understandings.

Source: A 1999 STEMTEC workshop (http://k12s.phast.umass.edu/~stemtec/)

Freewriting

Freewriting is a technique that helps you clear mental space so that thoughts about an issue in question can emerge that had been below the surface of your attention--insights that you were not able, at first, to acknowledge. (Supportive Listening is another means to that end.) Peter Elbow (in Writing With Power. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) presents freewriting on the creative side of the necessary interplay of the creative and the critical in thinking and writing.

In a freewriting exercise, you should not take your pen off the paper. Keep writing even if you find yourself stating over and over again, "I don't know what to say." What you write won't be seen by anyone else, so don't go back to tidy up sentences, grammar, spelling. You will probably diverge from the topic, at least for a time while you acknowledge other preoccupations. That's OK--it's one of the purposes of the exercise. However, if you keep writing for seven-ten minutes, you should expose some thoughts about the topic that had been below the surface of your attention--that's another of the aims of the exercise.

In a guided freewriting exercise, you continue where a sentence provided by the instructor leaves off (examples follow).

At the start of a project

- "I would like my work on X to influence Y to make changes in Z..."
- "I often/ sometimes have trouble getting going until..."
- "The differences between investigating ... and investigating .... might be that..."
- "There are so many aspects to my topic. I could look at..... and...."
- "If I was given more background in how to analyze..., I would be better able to..."
- "From my past experience, the kinds of issues or aspects of research I tend to overlook or discount include..."

Early on in a project

- "When I think about sharing my incomplete work, what comes up is.... And this means I should....."
- "It may be very premature to lay out the arguments involved in my research, but it may help me define where I am going, so let me try..."
- "Incorporating regular freewriting into my research practice is (difficult? wonderful? a not yet achieved ideal?)..."
- "In the next two months what I most want to see happening in my project is... What is

blocking me realizing this vision is...."

- "Usually when I try to plan my work, what happens is.."
- "Some aspect of research I'd like to be able to explain clearly for my project is.."
- "If I had to state a question that keeps my subject, audience and purpose most clearly in focus, I would say..."

When you begin to draft a report

- "My ideal report would lead readers to see... I would grab their attention by... and lead them through a series of steps, namely....."

Historical Scan

A Historical Scan is a variant of Focused Conversation used either to review a group's progress or evolution over time or to set the scene in which a project is to be undertaken.
In Focused Conversations (Stanfield 1997) a group, which could be a class, a grass roots activist organization, or a business, addresses some challenging or difficult situation by proceeding through four stages:

- 1. Objective (getting the facts)
- 2. Reflective (eliciting feelings and associations)
- 3. Interpretive (consider the meaning and significance)
- 4. Decisional (formulating a decision, an action, or a shared picture)

Participants who jump quickly to a decision or interpretation are encouraged to spend more time on the earlier stages, to be careful to separate facts from feelings, and to recognize at each step the differing assessments other participants have. The result is not necessarily a consensus, but because the group shares a common pool of experiences of the situation, the result is larger than what any one person had beforehand, and there is a firmer basis for extensions of the group's work, either as a group or, in the case of a class, by group members in other settings.

In a Historical Scan, as in a Focused Conversation, the facilitator should, as neutrally as possible, lead the group through a series of questions. Answers should be telegraphic, to allow for as wide a pool of contributions as possible. To give the 4-step process a chance to have its effect, participants should try to answer the question asked and not jump ahead, even if others do, to give their overall conclusion.

For the end of a group project or course a sequence of questions appropriate to a Historical Scan might be:
"As this project/course draws to a close, let's look back at the experiences we've had, from the time you heard of this project/course on *insert project/course topic* until today.
Take a moment to jot down specific concrete things that struck you, e.g., *insert range of examples*,....
Now choose 5* of them and write them in on the large post-its in as large block letters as will fit.
Select one from early on. [Put them on the board, consulting the class to keep them in order]
... from the middle... from the later part of the project/course.... others [including those covering the whole period]
When were you excited?....discouraged?

What do these experiences remind you of?
When were there transitions?
If this were a book, what name would you give for the "chapters" between the transitions?
...name for the whole "book"?
What have you learned about a diverse group of people coming together to "read this book"?
[Remind participants to be telegraphic -- avoid speeches.]
What have you learned about facilitating planning and action/thinking and learning as they relate to *project/course topic*?
How shall you translate the learning to future situations?"

(* Adjust this number to ensure 40-60 postits for the group as a whole.)

For setting the scene in which a project is to be undertaken a sequence of questions appropriate to a Historical Scan might be:
"As you consider your involvement in this project, let's paint a picture of the context in which we will be operating. Let's think about this context having a past and a possible future and operating on three levels: "local," "regional," and "global."*
Take a moment to jot down significant events at each of the levels over the past xx years or a future event that you hope will be in the yy years ahead.
Now choose 5* of them and write them in on the large post-its in as large block letters as will fit.
Select one from early on in this period. [Put them on the board, consulting the class to keep them in order]
... from the middle... from the later part of the period.... others [including those covering the whole period]
When were you excited?....discouraged?
What do these events remind you of?
When were there transitions?
If this were a book, what name would you give for the "chapters" between the transitions?
...name for the whole "book"?
What have you learned about a diverse group of people coming together to "read this book"?
[Remind participants to be telegraphic -- avoid speeches.]
What have you learned about the context in which your planning and action/thinking and learning will take place?
How shall you translate the learning into what you will do?"

(* As described in Tuecke (2000), the "global" is the largest view relevant to the project, which may be the world, but may also be the profession. The "local" is the personal perspective gained in the immediate unit [family, workplace, ...). The regional is the specific arena in which the project operates, e.g., the management of water resources [in an environmental context] or the state educational system [in the context of improving school outcomes].)

References

Tuecke, Patricia. 2000. Creating a wall of wonder with the TOP environmental scan. International Association of Facilitators, Toronto, Canada, April 27 - 30 (http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/tuecke00.pdf).

Jig-saw discussion of readings

This method allows all members of a group to get up to steam on issues raised by a set of readings without everyone having read every reading in depth.
If there are R readings and N people in the group, each reading should be assigned to X = N/R people to read it in depth. The activity works best, of course, if people read more than the one reading assigned to them.

Preparation

When reading the articles, identify items to highlight for someone who hasn't concentrated on reading the article -- these may include questions for clarification or debate. Imagine having to convey the significance of the case study/ theory/ conclusions to someone who had not heard of them before.

In the group meeting (class)

The articles in each group will be discussed in two steps:
1. In groups of X people who concentrated on reading the same article, discuss the article and identify the key points and issues you need clarified. (If X > 5, break into groups of 2-4 people.)

2. In groups of R people who read different articles, describe the key points and issues your first group wanted clarified or subject to debate.

The discussion in groups may follow the guidelines for small group work, with roles merged to meet the number of people in the group.

KAQF for Action Research

The first phase of the Action Research cycle is evaluate the effects of past actions (or learn about the evaluations others have done) and inquire more broadly so as to fill in relevant background. The KAQF framework helps you organize your thinking and research keeping an eye on what you might do/propose/plan on the basis of the results.

Print out the chart below (or make a replica of the table in a word file to give you more room). Start with a Knowledge claim *OR* with a proposed Action *OR* with a Question for inquiry you wish to consider. Then fill in the rest of the KAQF that connects with that starting point. E.g., if you entered a proposed Action, then write down what knowledge claim(s) this Action is based on. Then move forward to identify Questions for Inquiry that follow and how you would Find out the answer to the Question.

Use the additional questions in parentheses and another person as your sounding board to check your thinking. E.g., is the research you are formulating related to the problem(s) behind your Action Research, including developing a constituency to act on any findings or proposals you come up with? If the connection isn't clear, go back and revise.

When you have completed this sequence as well as you can for one starting point, draw a line and start another. Do not mix KAQFs from different starting points into one omnibus sequence because that doesn't help you keep clear how a K matches an A matches a Q matches an F.
Similarly, start another sequence as additional Knowledge claims, Action proposals, or Questions for inquiry occur to you and emerge from checking your thinking on the previous sequences.

After you have many KAQF sequences, prioritize the research you need to do (that is, your F) and start it—or plan how you would do it.

(See Framework for Exchange and Inquiry for elaboration of the KAQ framework.)

KAQF chart

What do we **K**now?

- (Q: How do you Know that? -- What's the evidence, assumptions, and reasoning?)

Action: What actions could people pursue on the basis of accepting this knowledge?

- (Q: Which people or group?)

Questions for Inquiry: What more do we Need to know—in order to clarify what people could do or to revise/refine the knowledge

How to **F**ind this out? (Methods, Steps..)

- (Q: Will your method of research best enable you to Find this out?)

One-on-one consultations for a group that meets over an extended period

(aka Workshop “Office Hours”)

This activity can be slotted into a meeting or workshop when there is 45-60 minutes to spare. It may be repeated with a new sign up sheet for each time.

Rationale

• Provides opportunities to solicit advice one on one.
• It can be enlightening to see who asks you for advice and what you find yourself able to say.

Instructions about Signing Up

(Before circulating this sign-up sheet, the coordinator of this activity fills in the left-hand column with everyone’s names.)
• You can sign up to consult with other people by putting your name on their line for a time slot that is empty for both of you. Then put a cross on your own line for that time slot (which prevents someone signing up to consult with you at the same time).
• Give everyone a chance to sign up once before you sign up for a second or third consult.
• If you want to sign up to consult with a person who is already signed up to consult with you, sign up in a separate time slot for a consult with them. (That is, don’t assume that you can split the original time with them.)

Person to be consulted (below)	Time Slot 1	Time Slot 2	Time Slot 3

More Logistics/Guidelines

• If two people do not have a consultation for any time slot, the office-hours coordinator will pair them up and they will split the time in mutual support. Suggested “supportive listening” guidelines can be provided before the office hours start.

• There will be N/2 “stations” consisting of a pair of chairs. (These stations will be spaced widely to minimize distractions from other conversations). At the start of the time slot, find the person you signed up to consult with and move to a vacant station. Then start consulting!

(- pjt, rev. 1/08)

+∆ ("Plus-Delta") Feedback

Feedback that begins with an appreciation (+) makes any subsequent suggestion for change (∆) more likely to be heard and taken up.
It also has an effect on the people giving such feedback, which is to make them into collaborators or supporters of the recipient's ongoing development instead of consumers or critics.

+∆ Feedback can be given verbally and quickly--thus more regularly--at the end of sessions in a go-around or check-out in which each person contributes only one item in each category.

+∆ Feedback can also be used for self-evaluation, provided you have a set of objectives for each of which you can do + (something you did well) and ∆ (some way to improve/develop).

Roles and phases for

Small group activities

(version 4/08, Peter Taylor w/ formatting assistance by Jan Coe)

There are many ways for teachers/leaders to assign roles when they ask students/participants to collaborate in small groups. The virtues of the system below are that:

- a) the roles don't divert participants from participating in the activity; and
- b) everyone has to reflect and synthesize what happened.

Roles: Includer, Orienter, Phaser, Process Reporter

Phases of Small Group Activity:

Phase	Roles active during the phase
1) Getting Together to begin activity	Includer, Orienter, Phaser
2) The main part of the Activity	Orienter, Includer, Phaser
3) Synthesis and Reflection	Includer, Process Reporter, Phaser
4) Reporting	Process Reporter

Phase I - GETTING TOGETHER to begin activity

- **Includer (to ensure participation)**
  - Choose a space and set up chairs so everyone can face each other and hear comfortably.
  - Bring everyone into the group, not off to one side or facing the group on an angle.
  - Make sure everyone in the group is introduced to others they might not know.
  - Establish how you will take turns (e.g., raise hands to be recognized, take a card from a stack, etc.)

- **Orienter (to get/keep the Activity on track)**
  - Check that everyone knows their role.
  - Check that everyone has read their roles for the activity & understands which phases it applies to.

- Ask everyone to read (or reread) the activity.
- Give your version of the activity and goals, and then invite others to adjust or clarify your version.
- Check that everyone knows what’s going on and why. If it’s not clear after that, call for instructor’s attention.

INSERT DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY HERE

- **Phaser (to move group from one phase to the next in a timely manner)**
  - Remind people of how much time there is for the phases ahead.

Phase 2 – Main Part of the ACTIVITY

- **Orienter**
  - Remind everyone that they should take notes to aid synthesis (of content) and reflection (on process).
  - Initiate discussion of how to proceed so as to fulfill the goals of the activity.
  - Watch for uncertainty or disagreement about how the group is proceeding.
  - Call for instructor/leader's attention when group needs more guidance about where they are going.
  - Gently interrupt if you think the group is diverging from the activity.

- **Includer**
  - Ensure everyone gets a chance to speak.
  - Bring people back into the group when they have withdrawn (on their own or in a 1on1 discussion).
  - Ask for time out for a check-in when withdrawal recurs/persists.
  - Do something about distractions (e.g., a noisy cell phone user outside the classroom)

- **Phaser**
  - Watch time, prompting group to move onto next task of the activity and ensuring that clear time is left for the synthesis and reflection phase.

- **Everyone**

    - Make notes to aid synthesis (of content) and reflection (on process).

Phase 3 – SYNTHESIS and REFLECTION (when group members take stock of what they have learned during the activity, about both content & process)

- **Everyone**
    - Digest the content and process of the discussion, make notes on your own conclusions and open questions, and prepare for reporting or contributing to the report from the activity (if one is required).

- **Includer**
    - Check in quietly with anyone who has stalled in their synthesis and note-making.

- **Process Reporter (to synthesize stock-taking on the *process*)**
    - Ask everyone to mention one highlight/appreciation from the activity. Make notes.
    - Ask everyone to mention one issue needing further work/improvement from the process of the activity. Make notes.
    - Prepare to report back on what you have noted – about the process, not the report (if required) from the activity.

- **Phaser**
    - Remind people to be brief in their spoken feedback on the process.

Phase 4 – REPORTING -- either spoken to the class/large group or given to instructor/leader (as requested)

- **Randomly chosen person (not Process Reporter)**
    - Make presentation or draft a written report (if required)

- **Everyone**
    - Provide additions or modifications.

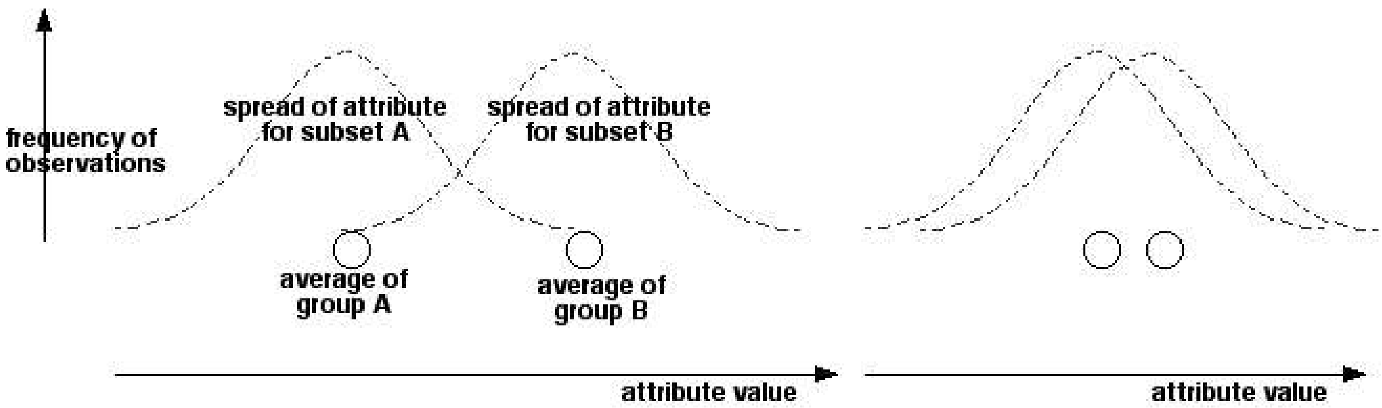
- **Process Reporter**

- Report back on what you have noted about the process of the activity (highlights/improvements needed).

Statistical thinking, the basic idea

Understand the simple chain of thinking below, then enlist or hire a statistician who will use the appropriate "recipe" for the data at hand.

1. There is a population of individuals. (Population = individuals subject to the same causes of interest. There may also be background, non-manipulatable causes that vary among these individuals.)
2. For some measurable attribute the individuals have varying responses to these causes (possibly because of the background causes).
3. You have observations of the measurable attribute for 2 or more subsets ("samples") of the populations.
4. Central question of statistical analysis: Are the subsets sufficiently different in their varying responses that you doubt that they are from the one population (i.e., subject to all the same foreground causes)? Statisticians answer this question with recipes that are variants of the comparison between the subset averages in relation to the spread around the averages. That is, for the figure below, you are more likely to doubt that subsets A and B are from the same population in the left hand situation than in the right hand one.



5. If you doubt that the subsets are from the same population, investigate further, drawing on other knowledge about the subsets, with a view to exposing the causes involved and then taking action informed by that knowledge about the causes.

Strategic Participatory Planning

Strategic Participatory Planning can take many forms. The basic propositions of a Strategic Participatory Planning workshop process developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs and an illustration of that process are presented elsewhere. The actual process can be learned directly through training or by reading Stanfield, B. (Ed.) (2002) The Workshop Book: From Individual Creativity to Group Action. Toronto, Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs. (See useful excerpts on googlebooks.) .

Strategic Personal Planning

1. In order to complete a satisfying project you need to focus on something tight and do-able. Strategic Personal Planning allows you to find this focus paradoxically by first opening out and acknowledging a wide range of factors and wishes that your work could (should?) take into account.

2. Strategic Personal Planning is based on the Strategic Participatory Planning workshop process developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA). The basic propositions of the ICA workshop process include:

- Notwithstanding any initial impressions to the contrary, everyone has insight (wisdom) and we need everyone's insight for the wisest result.
- There is insight in every response. (There are no wrong answers.)
- We know more than we are, at first, prepared or able to acknowledge.
- When a person is heard, they can better hear others and hear themselves. This causes us to examine decisions made in advance about what the other people are like, what they are and are not capable of.
- The step-by-step workshop process thus aims to keep us listening actively to each other, foster mutual respect, and elicit more of our insight.
- Your initial conclusions may change -- be open for surprises.
- What we come out with is very likely to be larger and more durable than what any one person came in with; the more so, the more voices that are brought out by the process.
- In particular, we will be engaged in carrying out/carrying on the plans we develop.
- In sum, the workshop process aims for the "greatest input, with greatest commitment and the least confusion, in the least time."

3. Adapting these principles to Strategic *Personal* Planning means you should hope to come out with a plan for your project that is richer, deeper, and has more dimensions than what you came in with. The more angles on yourself that are brought out by the process, the more likely you are to create something you did not anticipate. The experience of that creativity, in turn, leads you to be more likely to carry out the plan you arrive at.

4. The Strategic Personal Planning Process begins with the Practical Vision stage. This is meant to generate a larger vision of your work, something that informs the specific project you are doing (e.g., for a course or degree). In that spirit, do not focus specifically on your

project topic. Instead, consider a more global question: What is needed for your Personal & Professional Development in [insert general area required to be addressed by the project]?

Steps

Post-it brainstorming

4.1. Imagine yourself some time after the project is over looking back with a sense of accomplishment on how far you have come in the area of [insert general area required to be addressed by the project]. (Construe *accomplishment* broadly so it can include your own reflection and growth.) What happened to make this so?--What different kinds of things do you envisage having gone into or contributed to that personal and professional development? To prepare for this brainstorming, note:

- These things can span the mundane and inspiring; tangible and intangible; process, as well as product; relationships as well as individual skills. (By mundane, think of all the different tasks on your plate -- over and above those for this project -- that potentially affect your ability to carry out your project in a way that is satisfying.)
- Reread any externally-dictated context and requirements for the project (e.g., the description, objectives and expectations given in a course syllabus).
- For other ideas-but feel free to depart from these-review handouts from previous post-it brainstorming by students in a course on Action Research and Educational Evaluation.

4.2. Keep in mind the question in 4.1 above, brainstorm your 3-5 word answers onto post-its in block letters.

- (Alternatively, on your computer, you can make "virtual" post-its that you can move around; see worksheet).

4.3. Pair up and get more ideas from hearing about the kinds of things the other person came up with. Make more post-its.

Clustering

4.4. Once you have about 30 post-its

- Move the post-its around into groups of items that have something in common *in the way they address the question*
- Describe the groups *using a phrase that has a verb in it* or, at least, indicates some action. For example, instead of "Holistic Artistic Survival Project," an active name

would be "Moving holistically from surviving to thriving as artists." (See more examples of clustering and naming.)

- Group the groups in pairs or threes and give these larger groups descriptive active names
- Group these groups and name them, until you arrive at a descriptive active name for the practical vision post-its as a whole.

4.5. Pair up again and discuss your overall vision.

4.6. After the session, redraw the groups in a neat form (without the original post-its) so you can refer back to it as you define and undertake your project.

Translate Strategic Personal Planning into a concrete research and engagement design

5.1 Quick option: Freewrite (for 7-10 minutes) on the specific actions you might take so as to complete a project that fulfills your practical vision as well as any more specific objectives and expectations. Keep these action ideas in sight, together with your practical vision, as you plan the remainder of your work.

5.2 More time-consuming option: Pursue the other three stages of Strategic Personal Planning, starting with brainstorming on the obstacles to your realizing this vision. Re-vision those obstacles (perhaps with peer or advisor interaction) until you see the underlying issues and a gateway through to new, strategic directions, and then to specific actions that follow those directions.

Original page by Peter Taylor, 4/03, rev. 12/07

Supportive Listening

- Split into pairs. Each person has half the time available to be listened to and simply paid attention to even if not talking.
- The listener may offer supportive words, but should not interrupt or bring in their own experience. It is enough just to be listening attentively and non-judgmentally.
- Being listened to in this way helps you move through what is distracting you from being clear. It is a way of moving you on to being able to take initiative in new ways.
- Just having someone listen to you with no strings attached can bring up strong feelings. Although this can be scary, it's a positive experience. Try not to be embarrassed.
- This is done in absolute confidentiality. Afterwards, the listener must not refer to what is said to anyone, not even to the person who said it.

Source: http://www.faculty.umb.edu/peter_taylor/supportivelistening.html

Think-Pair-Share

After preparing your thoughts on your own (in response to guidelines given by the group leader/instructor), you pair up with another person, and, through sharing ideas verbally, you refine them and prepare to share a key part of your ideas with the whole group, which you then do.

Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change

(CCT685, Sp 99, CCT693, Sp 00, 01, 02, 03, 07, 08, 09) (previously Seminar on Educational Evaluation, then Seminar on Evaluation of Educational Change)

(9/99 -- see appended 9/01 update and 9/05, 5/06. 7/10 updates)

Initial Goals

Although I had experience in social research and statistics, evaluation of educational change was a new area for me as a teacher. I designed the course so that I learn as much as possible by leading students to digest the texts for themselves and for each other, coaching the students in mini-projects, and facilitating participatory planning and other group processes. This last aspect would serve two functions: the syllabus could be adjusted according to students' background and interests, and students would be introduced to the larger endeavor of working with other people in implementing and improving educational changes. In this spirit, I chose texts that emphasized the relationship between evaluator and sponsor from the formulation of questions onwards needed if outcomes are to be taken up in changes in practice and policy.

The mini-projects were based on clippings and short articles I had collected concerning evaluations undertaken or needed.

I decided not to schedule a sequence of classes on quantitative methods but to encourage students to formulate questions based on the articles they were reading and to coach them in securing statistical advice from skilled practitioners.

Challenges and Responses

Future Plans

I have mentioned some of my future plans in the preceding section. I have a larger "to do" list stimulated by the formative and summative evaluations of students in the course, and their participation in revising the course as we went. My other major goals for the future are to:
--expand some of the clippings into well developed cases, especially in the areas of science education;
--consult with other GCOE faculty with a view to differentiating the evaluation and research courses we offer; and
--build on the mini-project of one student last spring to push for more productive forms of course evaluation in GCOE.

Update
(9/01)

I have continued to experiment and develop this course in the direction of evaluation being not an end in itself, but as a tool of educational change-or, for the non-educators in CCT, of organizational change. The students learn and practice tools for facilitating groups and building constituencies for the educational changes the students want to evaluate or propose. This development is evident in the changing syllabus-especially the extended course overview-and in the course evaluations I used to focus student input on those changes.

In spring 2000, I inserted a participatory planning process before the middle of the semester, with the goal of students "support[ing] each other to get competent and comfortable in evaluating and facilitating educational change." It challenging for me to cede control to the students, and it proved difficult for the students to take responsibility for the tasks planned by the task forces. From an email exchange at the start of the process:

Date: Tue, 7 Mar 2000
From: peter.taylor@umb.edu (peter j. taylor)
Subject: for CCT693: ex-captain's log, stardate 7 Mar. 5.45am EST

Journal entry:
Woke early with lots of suggestions for the feedback, clarity & coordination task force, especially re: getting other task forces to be clear about who is responsible for making their proposed actions happen and providing the clear rationale for them.
Impressed by the seriousness and energy of the taskforces last night.
Excited by this, but also noticed myself (as teacher) wondering if you'll cover what "needs" to be covered in a credible course and whether it'll fit together in a way that satisfies everyone. In short: Yikes -- I'm not in control!
Peter

From: "joelle barton"
To: "peter j. taylor"
Subject: Re: for CCT693: ex-captain's log, stardate 7 Mar. 5.45am EST
Date: Wed, 8 Mar 2000

Hello Captain: I think it would be okay to pull back some on the control, after all you do outrank us. Seriously, CCT supports works in progress for the students, why not for the teacher, too? Joelle

Students' responses to the experiment were vocal and varied (see written comments on course evaluation). Interestingly, the Leadership in Urban Schools doctoral students were most in favor of an explicit and settled syllabus. What I experienced most strongly was the difficulty of alternating between teaching and facilitating. Even when I literally changed hats, students saw my facilitation through the lens of knowing that I was also their teacher and leader (see "Alternating...," conference paper, 2000). The ideal would be to bring in an outside facilitator, so I could become another participant.

At the International Association of Facilitators meeting in April 2000 I learned about an approach to collaborative problem-solving called Action Learning. At the end of the semester, I floated a proposal to begin the course with anAction Learning project on a case of interest to all the students, and then, against the background of that shared and messy experience, introduce texts and explicit frameworks. This proposal was seen positively by the students (see written comments), but one student was perceptive in asking what I would do if I "see a dysfunctional team or individuals being left behind?"

The topic I chose was "Extending the impact of CCT beyond its formal program of study. as begun by an outreach organization, "Thinking for Change." I had arranged some alums to help facilitate the initial Action Learning sessions, but unfortunately was not able to make time to train them beforehand. The group process could certainly have been smoother, yet the students in retrospect were impressed by the creativity and productivity of their groups' reports (see new exhibits). There was also some grumbling about my setting the problem, even though the groups took it in directions I didn't anticipate (they focused on the CCT program of study and suggested more internships and practical experience be built into it). In the future I plan to: a) precirculate the topic, framed in the spirit of Problem-Based Learning as an ill-defined problem that is open to their own definition of the problems to pursue; b) train the facilitators and provide guidelines to smoothe the process within groups.

During the spring 2001 course two other issues became clear that I hope will provide a clear and stable scaffolding for students in future offerings of the course:
i) I referred more explicitly to the Action Research cycle or spiral than before and elaborated on this as experiences emerged (see new exhibits). After recognizing that the Action Learning teams had focused on proposals, not on connecting with a constituency to implement them, we incorporated that into the framework. We also noted the importance of reflection and dialogue for defining the educational change desired or the relevant criteria for evaluating it.
ii) This led to my contrasting the exploratory, opening up character of the spiral with the focus provided by the Evaluation Clock (as rewritten by me to reduce the misreadings of the steps) in disciplining evaluation into measurable criteria.

Of the three plans from 9/99 listed above, I have continued to collect clippings, but the Participatory planning and Action Learning projects have taken the place of discussion of well developed cases and I have had almost no students in the area of science education. I have consulted with other GCOE faculty about the evaluation and research courses we offer, but the different programmatic needs means that, at least for now, the courses will follow their own separate paths. I still seek a suitable text for the course. Finally, my goal of more productive forms of course evaluation in GCOE was eclipsed by the work of the Evaluation task force in Fall 2000. To gain the feedback I need on my teaching and curricular innovations, I plan to continue to have students complete a second evaluation of my own design. This course, I expect, will continue to be a work in progress.

Update
(9/05)
After two years not teaching this course (given my grant-funded course release) I am planning to structure the whole course in spring '06 around the framework I had evolved by the end of the 2003 offering, namely "cycles and epicycles of action research." This provides a coherent and inclusive framework for evaluation and action research as approaches to addressing the question, "How do we get others to adopt/adapt our ideas?"

(5/06)
The syllabus for spring 2006 focused more on the cycles and epicycles framework, but the revised syllabus for next spring is completely structured around that framework (which has been further refined).

(7/10)
The name of the course was changed a few years ago to convey the emphasis on Action Research. The 2009 end-of-the-semester evaluation asked students to make queries and suggest improvements re: the text and diagram for the cycles and epicycles of action research framework; see revised text and diagram that resulted. In fall '10 the course will be observed for a Harvard GSE research project on action research, which should stimulate further improvement and clardification of distinctive features of the framework.
In preparing an online version of the course, the syllabus and linked items have been polished up. The required technological comptencies have been spelled out, streamlined, and supplemented (e.g., using diigo for sharing and annotating webpages.)

Contents pages for: <--Previous Course | this Course | All courses | the Next Course-->

Critical Incident Questionnaire*

Please take about 5 minutes to respond anonymously to each of the questions below about tonight's class. Keep one copy for yourself and put the other by the door as you leave. I'll digest the responses, report back to you next week about them, and try to make changes to respond to your responses.

1. What incident/comment/reaction/quote stands out from tonight's class?

2. At what moment did you feel most:
a. engaged with what was happening?

b. distanced from what was happening?

3. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took did you find:
a. most helpful or affirming?

b. most puzzling or confusing?"

4 (Optional). Other comments?

*Adapted from Brookfield, S. D. (1995). Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 115.

Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change, CrCrTh693

Links to examples of previous students' submissions on Assignments & Participation Items

Notes

- See http://crcrth693.wikispaces.umb.edu/693Notes for description of the assignments.
- Because the course has evolved over time, the example might not exactly match the current assignment. In any case, they are meant to be consulted to indicate the range of ways students tackle an assignment; they are not models to be copied. (If the link does not work, the example has not yet been uploaded.)

Written Assignments & Presentations

1. 1st Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers

    Jeremy Szteiter, 2008
    Tara Tetzlaff, 2008

See also

    Reflections later in the course on Experience as Novice Action Researcher
        Elizabeth Naylor, 2007
        Marie McIlwrath, 2006
        Rob Norris, 2003
    Mini-Action Research projects
        Anna Yangco, 2003
        Rob Norris, 2003

2. Initial paragraph overview

    Jeremy Szteiter, 2008
    Tara Tetzlaff, 2008

3. KAQ (a variant of KNF)

    Jeremy Szteiter, 2008
    Josh Reyes, 2007

4. Evaluation clock

    Jeremy Szteiter, 2008

5a. Work-in-progress presentations

    John Quirk, 2007(see powerpoint link at the bottom)

5b. Notes on research and planning

    Jeremy Szteiter, 2008

Jan Coe, 2006
John Quirk, 2007

6. Narrative outline

Jeremy Szteiter, 2008

7. Project report

Marie Levey-Pabst, 2009
Carissa Baquiran, 2009
Alyssa Hinkell, 2009
Jeremy Szteiter, 2008
John Quirk, 2007
Jan Coe, 2006

Use instructor-supplied password to see online copies of other reports

Participation and contribution to the class process

B. Building learning community

C. Summaries of Readings

See bookmarks tagged 693itemC among diigo annotations. (These bookmarks link back to archived versions on a wiki, but note that diigo not a wiki is where students now post summaries or revisions.)

D. Personal/Professional Development Workbook

D1. Entries in your PD workbook on possible applications to your project of each new tool that is introduced during classes.
Jeremy Szteiter, 2008
D2. Worksheet submitted in week 6 on PD workbook and research organization.
D3. Perusal of the PD workbooks.
D4. "Clippings"
Jeremy Szteiter, 2008
D5. Process review
Andy Reyes, 2008
John Quirk, 2007
Jan Coe, 2006
Melissa Moynihan, 2003
Heidi Straghan, 2003
Senait Fesseha, 2003

E. Conferences

F. Peer commentary

Jeff Craig, 2008
Anna Yangco, 2003
Melissa Moynihan, 2003

You have quite a challenge before you for the rest of the semester—designing your own Action Research process. But I think you can be pleasantly surprised by looking at how much you have learned through the compressed AR activity and analysis of this process and previous students' reports using the Cycles & Epicycles framework.

To do that, I'm going to lead you in a **focused conversation.** This is a series of questions that begin with concrete things you observed and move through feelings and associations, on to interpretations and finally get to the overall implications. The idea is to avoid jumping to conclusions or holding on to preformed opinions; instead stay open to forming new conclusions on the basis of hearing everyone's contributions—including your own—to the earlier questions. So try not to answer a question that hasn't yet been asked.

This is not a conventional discussion. Instead of directly addressing what someone has said before you, the idea is to contribute to a pool of responses and to gain insight from listening to what others contribute. We want each person to be heard, so keep your answers to the questions short and pithy—even telegraphic. No speeches or disputing particular speaker's contributions.

I'm not the teacher now, but a neutral facilitator, so don't look to me for endorsement of answers. Instead listen to what others say. Provided you're responding to the question that was asked, there are no wrong answers—there is insight in every answer.

Objective Questions = concrete things, actually observable by all

What are the main parts of the Action Research process?

What are useful tools in the Action Research process?

Reflective Questions = associations and feelings

What was relatively easy for you to do?

What felt difficult?

What similar experiences come to mind?

Interpretive Questions = meaning and significance

What skills and resources did you bring to the project?

What skills and resources were you missing?

What issues need to be resolved?

Decisional questions = implications for the future [on board or flip chart]

What tasks do you plan to undertake this week?

What guidance will you seek?

Closing: I'm always impressed with what happens when people combine their insights. I'll try to type up the notes and email them to you by tomorrow.
But for now, let's close this conversation and call it a day.

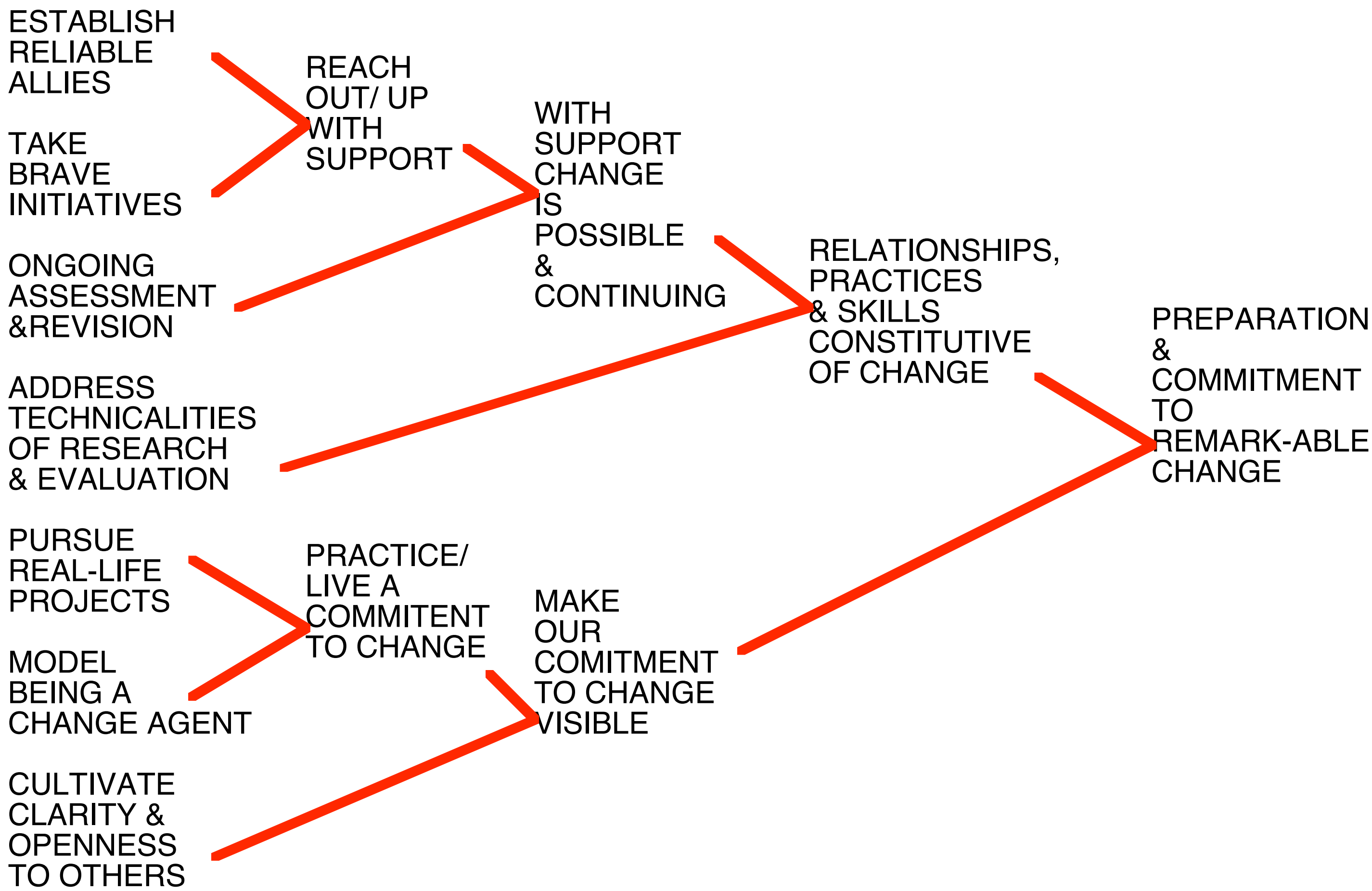
Stanfield, B. (Ed.) (1997). The Art of Focused Conversation. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs. Available via www.icacan.ca

Themes and clusters generated by PT from cardstorming by students at the end of CCT693, Spring '01 concerning what's needed for their

Personal & Professional Development in Educational Change & Evaluation

```
Look to develop
Purpose to Life                       |
-----------------       ---------     | Changing
Attitude of Openness                  | with Others
to Change             | Value Others  | can give    |
---------------       | because this  | Life        | Be Open &
Interest in           | can Change    | a Purpose   | Make Effort
Contributions of      | You                         | Needed for
Others                                              | Personal    |
-----------------       ----------      --------    | Change      |
Persist in Self-                                    |             | Openness
Reflection Activities | Bring Out                   |             | —within
---------------       | one's Voice   | Through     |             | and to
Develop Skills in     | and Others'   | Discipline  |             | others'
Working with Others                   | Voice &                   | creativity
-----------------       ---------     | Competency                | —
Maintain Focus                        | Emerge                    | &
(within complexity)   | Competency    |                           | Disciplin'd
---------------       | in/and Focus                              | Focus
Practice Using Tools  |                                           | need to be
-----------------       ----------      ---------     -------     | Combined
Seek out good           Build                                     | to become
Facilitation of Group | Supportive                                | an Agent
Work                  | Connections,                              | of Change-
---------------       | incl.                       | Look for    | in-
Build Supportive      | Facilitation                | Support &   | Collabor-
Connections             for Group                   | Opportun-   | ation
                        Work                        | ities to    |
-----------------       ----------      --------    | Collaborate
Experience              Positive                    | &
Participation         | Experience      Take up     | Participate
Positively            | for oneself- | Opportun-   |
---------------       | in-           | ities that  |
Tap into one's        | collaboratn. | might give
Creative Energies                     | Experiences
-----------------       ---------     | in Real-Life
Engaged in real                       | Situations
(workplace) Situations
```

From 2006 Class



COURSE OVERVIEW and OBJECTIVES
presented in a form that keeps evaluation in the center
(composed at the end of Spring '01)

A long version of the course title might be "Engagement in Educational Change with Evaluation as a Tool," where
"Education" is construed broadly to include not only school curricula, but also educational policies and institutional arrangements, and training, coaching, and the conduct of workshops in any setting;
"Evaluation" stands for the systematic study of i) what has been happening before; and ii) of the effects of any changes you implement, presumably changes designed in response to evaluating what had been happening before; and
"Engagement" denotes that the course is not only about evaluating past situations or any future changes, but also about collaborating with other people in several ways:

to design and bring about constructive change, which includes-
to reflect on what change you really desire;
to undertake the evaluations;
to dialogue and reflect on the implications of any results; and
to ensure that the results of the evaluation have an influence on the relevant people and groups, i.e., the potential "stakeholders."

"Engagement" also reminds you that, in order to contribute effectively to change, you need to be engaged yourself—to have your head and heart together. The course, therefore, provides tools for personal reflection on your practice.

Evaluation related to Engagement in Educational Change can be summarized in an "Action Research" spiral:

Systematic study of what has been happening ->
Reflection & dialogue ->
Design an action/change/engagement ->
Implement this action ->
Systematic study of effects of the action ->
Reflection & dialogue ->
Revise the action to improve it and/or Promote its wider adoption ->
etc.

As the course unfolds you should come to appreciate the following flow of thought:
0. Suppose you are concerned about some educational practice or policy or institutional arrangement, or the equivalent in some other setting.

1. In order to influence/change what is going on, it is important to study systematically what:
   a. has been happening; or
   b. is about to happen (e.g., under a new mandate); or
   c. could happen given a change you or someone else is designing. (Reflective practice—the goal of the CCT Program—implies that we evaluate the effects of any changes we make and learn from that evaluation.)

2. "Study systematically" means to evaluate the effects of changes in practices/ policies/ institutional arrangements, either by comparing before vs. after the change, or the changed situation vs. a unchanged control.

3. Evaluation of changes help you to
   a. Promote their wider adoption, or
   b. Revise the changes, or advance new courses of action

4. Whether anyone pays attention to the evaluation depends its political use/fulness for mobilizing support and addressing (potential) opposition. The politics of evaluation and educational change more generally could be a course in itself, but for now note that:

a. If you build evaluation into your proposals for change, it shows your preparedness to learn from the effects of the change, and this might increase support for making changes (3b) or promoting their wider adoption (3a); and
b. If you identify the different stakeholders and look ahead to what the research results could allow them to do, this can enter into the process of designing the change and its evaluation.

5a. Action Research typically starts with 1a, focuses first on studying what has been happening, but inevitably gets drawn into issues of constituency building or "stakeholder buy-in."
b. The Evaluation Clock (introduced in mid-semester) helps you keep an eye on the buy-in of sponsors or stakeholders in deciding what and how to evaluate, how to analyze results, etc.
c. Participatory Action Research (PAR) achieves buy-in through participation of stakeholders in the designing changes, implementing them, and evaluating them.

6. Participation is enhanced by facilitation, other group processes, and reflective practices that bring out and acknowledge the different participants' voices.

7. In this course you develop your ability to go from concern about some educational (or related) practice/ policy/ institutional arrangement to influencing what is going on. To this end you:
a. experience, learn, and practice various ways to promote participation and reflective practice (including your own participation);
b. examine critically the evaluations of others (or the lack of the appropriate evaluations); and
c. undertake a project in an area of your particular concern in which you design and perhaps carry out a pilot version of Action Research, which likely includes i) an evaluation of a change and ii) facilitating participation in change or facilitating reflective practice.

CrCrTh693, Small group activities (using Roles and Phases from http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/SmallGroupWork.html)

Activity 1
Assume roles according to alphabetical order of **first** names.

Time available = 9 minutes for phase 1,
18 for phase 2 (main part of activity),
8 for phase 3 = 40 minutes within the small group. **The first part of each phase will be for everyone to read the roles that apply to that phase**.
Then phase 4 will give 8 minutes for each subgroup's presentation to the whole class.

Main activity: Sensitized by viewing the video and drawing on your own experiences, create guidelines for making co-operative work in small groups of adults effective.

The guidelines should more or less be established by the end of phase 2, but will be presented to the whole class during phase 4. A randomly selected person will be called on to state the guidelines as they understand them, then the other members of the group will provide additions or modifications.

Activity 2
Assume roles according to alphabetical order of **last** names.

Time available = 5 minutes for phase 1,
25 for phase 2 (main part of activity),
5 for phase 3 = 40 minutes within the small group, then
8 for each subgroup's presentation to the whole class.

Main activity: Imagine that high-school or college teachers have asked you to compare and contrast Calhoun's view of Action Research and that described in PT's "cycles & epicycles" handout. A draft of a one-page handout and verbal presentation is required.

The content of the handout should more or less be established by the end of phase 2, but will be presented to the whole class during phase 4. Everyone will prepare and submit their own draft of the one-page handout (based on group discussion). A randomly selected person will be called on to do the verbal presentation, then the other members of the group will provide additions or modifications.

Dialogue Session

Phase A. Pass this sheet around, each person reading one paragraph.
In the Dialogue process "meaning" evolves collectively through mutual understanding and acceptance of diverse points of view.

To master the Dialogue process requires learning a variety of communication skills including a tolerance of paradox (or opposing views), the suspension of judgment and empathic listening. It also requires making the entire thought process visible, including tacit assumptions. In this process, instead of imposing our views on others, we invite others to add new dimensions to what we are thinking. We also learn to listen to the voice of the heart--our own and others--and strive to find ways to make that voice articulate.

The purpose of Dialogue is neither to agree nor to determine who is right. Rather, the purpose is to discover the richness of diverse perceptions that create a shared meaning that emerges from a group through inquiry and reflection. The meaning that evolves is dynamic as it moves through many diverse phases. If others contradict, the challenge is to learn from what they have said.

The origin of Dialogue goes back to the ancient Greeks. It is also found among preliterate Europeans and Native Americans. More recently David Bohm, the renowned physicist introduced the Dialogue process into the scientific quest for knowledge and also used it to address social problems. Bohm said that "when the roots of thought are observed, thought itself seems to change for the better." Dialogue he said, "is a stream of meaning flowing among and through and between us". Dialogue is now being used in schools, corporations and government to develop rapport, resolve conflict and build community.

Guidelines for Dialogue
1. You don't have to agree. Listen with the expectation of learning; that is, assume that the speaker has something new and of value to contribute to your comprehension and then stretch your mind to find out what that is.

2. None of us has the whole truth. Seek to comprehend the many facets of meaning that emerge from the group. Appreciate how the diversity of perceptions enriches the quality of the dialogue. In your responses do not problem solve, argue, analyze, rescue, nit pick or give advice. Rather, try to understand how the diverse views connect with each other.

3. Pay attention to your listening. Listen for the "voice of the heart" as well as the mind--yours and others'. Tune into the language, rhythms and sounds. Listen as you would to hear the themes played by various instruments in an orchestra and how they relate to each other. That's what makes the music. In Dialogue, that's what makes the collective meaning.

4. Free yourself up from a rigid mindset. Stand back and respond, rather than reacting automatically or defensively. Balance advocacy (making a statement) with inquiry (seeking clarifications and understanding). In advocating do not impose your opinion, rather simply offer it as such. In inquiry seek clarification and a deeper level of understanding, not the exposure of weakness.

5. Communicate your reasoning process, i.e. talk about your assumptions and how you arrived at what you believe. Seek out the data on which assumptions are based, your own and others. Bring tacit (hidden) assumptions to the surface of consciousness.

6. Suspend, rather than identify with, your judgements. Hold these away from your core self, to be witnessed or observed by yourself and made visible to others.

http://www.cct.umb.edu/tfcfb-TOC.html, viewed 9/5/01; see also Isaacs, W. 1999. Dialogue. NY: Currency

Additional Guidelines (Peter Taylor)

Confidentiality

Don't speak afterwards about what's said in the dialogue by attributing it to anyone, even if you don't name the person. Instead, simply talk about what you are thinking/inquiring about as a result of having been in today's session.

If you speak to anyone from this group about what they said, follow the same genuine inquiry you practice here.

Turn taking

Overriding idea: Keep focused on listening well. If you're thinking about whether you'll get to talk next, you won't listen well. Ditto, if you're holding on tight to what you want to say. So take a numbered card when you feel that you'd like a turn, but keep listening. When your turn comes, show your card, and pause. See if you have something to follow what's being said, even if it's not the thought you had wanted to say. You can pass.

Another idea: There's no need for questions to be answered right away. If the question relates directly to someone, they can pick it up when they next take a turn. This differs from usual conversations, but think of questions as inquiries that you're putting into a shared space.

Final idea: Try to make the turn-taking administer itself so the facilitator can listen well and participate undistracted. When you finish speaking (or if you decide to pass), put your card on the stack of used cards so the person with the next card knows that they can begin. The facilitator's role becomes simply to recharge the unused stack of cards when needed and gently remind people to follow the guidelines.

Phase B. Check-in

Go around the circle with each person saying one thought that’s at the front for you as we go into the session.

Phase C. Turn-taking dialogue about the topic at hand for the time available minus 5+ minutes

Phase D. Check-out

Go around the circle with each person saying one thought that you’re taking away to chew on after this session.

move to here

Dialogue Process Session on [*facilitator fills in topic*]
Phase A. Pass this sheet around, each person reading one paragraph.

The Dialogue Process is an opportunity to listen—not only to the thinking of others, but also to our own thoughts and feelings that had been below the surface of our attention.

When a group does this together over a period of time, "meaning" emerges and evolves collectively through mutual understanding and acceptance of diverse points of view. In this short session, however, we cannot expect this to be the dominant experience.

The Dialogue Process works well when participants tolerate paradox and opposing views, suspend judgment and listen empathetically, and try to make their entire thought process visible, including tacit assumptions. Instead of imposing our views on others, we invite others to add new dimensions to what we are thinking, and strive to find ways to make un(der)expressed voices articulate.

In this spirit, balance advocacy—making a statement—with inquiry—seeking clarifications and understanding. In advocating do not impose your opinion, rather simply offer it as such. In inquiry seek clarification and a deeper level of understanding, not the exposure of weakness.

The Dialogue Process requires structured turn-taking. The overriding idea is to keep focused on listening well. If you're thinking about whether you'll get to talk next, you won't listen well. Ditto, if you're holding on tight to what you want to say.

Take a numbered card when you feel that you'd like a turn, but keep listening. When your turn comes, show your card, and pause. See if you have something to follow what's being said, even if it's not the thought you had wanted to say. You can pass.

There's no need for questions to be answered right away. If the question relates directly to someone, they can pick it up when they next take a turn. This differs from usual conversations, but think of questions as inquiries that you're putting into a shared space.

Try to make turn-taking administer itself so the facilitator can listen well and participate undistracted. When you finish speaking (or if you decide to pass), put your card on the stack of used cards so the person with the next card knows that they can begin. The facilitator's role becomes simply to gently remind people to follow the guidelines.

Phase B. Check-in
Go around the circle with each person saying one thought that's at the front for you before we go into the session proper. This need not be about the topic of the session.
[Stop passing the sheet around at this point, and take turns in checking-in.]

*** * * * ***

Facilitator reminds participants of the topic, then we move to
Phase C. Turn-taking dialogue about the topic for the time available minus 5+ minutes.

***   *   *   *   ***

We keep the last 5+ minutes for
Phase D. Check-out
Go around the circle with each person saying one thought that you're taking away to chew on after this session.

(Peter Taylor, borrowing from Allyn Bradford, http://www.cct.umb.edu/tfcfb-TOC.html, viewed 9/5/01; see also Isaacs, W. 1999. Dialogue. NY: Currency)

Dialogue around Written Work

From the instructor to student (advisor to the advisee):

- I try to create a dialogue with each student around written work, that is, around your writing, my responses, and your responses in turn. For each assignment I make comments on a cover page that aim to show you your voice has been heard and to reflect back to you where you were taking me. After the overall comments I make specific suggestions for how to clarify and extend the impact on readers of what was written. I usually ask you to revise and resubmit the assignment. The idea is not that you make changes to please me as the teacher or to meet some unstated standard, but that you as a writer use the eye of others to develop your own thinking and make it work better on readers. I may continue to request revision when I judge that the interaction can still yield significant learning. Such a request does not mean your (re) submission was "bad"—even when the first submissions of written assignments are excellent, angles for learning through dialogue are always opened up.

- I hope my comments capture where you were taking me and that my suggestions help you see how to clarify and extend the impact on readers of what you have written. After letting my comments sink in, you may conclude that I have missed your point. In that case, my misreading may stimulate you to revise so as to help readers avoid mistaking the intended point. However, if you do not understand the directions I saw in your work or those I suggest for the revision, a face-to-face or phone conversation is the obvious next step—written comments have definite limitations when writers and readers want to appreciate and learn from what each other is saying and thinking. Please arrange to meet with me without delay if you do not see how you are benefiting from the whole "Revise and resubmit" process. I recognize that this process departs from most students' expectations of "produce a product one time only and receive a grade." And I know that most students are uncomfortable at first exposing their work and engaging in extended dialogue over it. So I continue to look for ways to engage students in this process that take into account your various backgrounds and dispositions and my own.

CrCrTh 693-- Dates of sessions for current semester

On your assignment check-list insert these actual dates (as against session number) when assignments are due

Face2face sessions for Fall 2010:
1 on 9/7, 2 on 9/14, 3 on 9/21, 4 on 9/28, 5 on 10/5, 6 on 10/19, 7 on 10/26, 8 on 11/2, 9 on 11/9, 10 on 11/16, 11 on 11/23, 12 on 11/30, 13 on 12/7

Online sessions for Fall 2010:
1 starts Monday 9/13, 2 starts 9/20, 3 starts 9/27, 4 starts 10/4, 5 starts 10/11, 6 starts 10/18, 7 starts 10/25, 8 starts 11/1, 9 starts 11/8, 10 starts 11/15, 11 starts 11/22, 12 starts 11/29, 13 starts 12/6

Paragraph Overview

In a single prose paragraph—not a set of bullet points—orient potential readers to your project. That is, tell them where you are going in three senses: the broad steps in your investigation; the knowledge or shift of perspective you want to lead your intended audience towards; and biographical or background information that makes you want to address the issue. (Your topic may seem worthy, but what makes **you** a person to address it?) In orienting readers, you are also conveying your audience, subject, purpose: Who you want to reach? What you want to convey to them? Why do **you** want to address them about that? The Governing Question can be woven into the paragraph or even lead it off.

(see Phase A)

Narrative outline

This is an outline or plan of your report with explanatory sentences inserted at key places:

- to explain in a declarative style the point of each section;
- to explain how each section links to the previous one and/or to the larger section or the whole report it is part of.

Insertion of the explanatory sentences helps you move beyond the preliminary thinking that goes into a standard outline, which looks like a table of contents. For some people a standard outline has some value. It does not, however, ensure that, when you write, your ideas and material really will fit your outline and the draft will flow from your "pen" (keyboard). To help make this happen, you should take two steps beyond a standard outline. The first is to turn the standard outline into a "nested and connected table of contents":

- nest or indent subsections inside sections, and sub-subsections inside subsections; and
- indicate with arrows and annotations how each section or subsection connects with the previous one, and how each connects with the larger whole (including the paper) of which it is a part.

The second step is to turn the nested and connected table of contents into a **narrative outline** by inserting the explanatory sentences (see above).

(See Phase G)

GOSP

A report on your project should:
GRAB the audience's attention. (It's often helpful for listeners/readers to hear/read something that explains how you personally got involved in this, or what it means to you.)
ORIENT the audience to

- the direction of movement in your project, and
- where your talk/paper will take them.
    - In the spirit of orienting the audience to what you are working towards, verbs are important. E.g., Instead of a report title such as "Lack of funds for girls sport," consider "Convincing Corporations to fund girls sport."

STEPS = the overall argument/progression that leads your audience to the
POSITION you want them at least to appreciate, whether or not they agree with your concluding Propositions.

(see Phase H)

SUMMARY OF KINDS OF RESPONSES
from
Peter Elbow & Patricia Belanoff, A Community of Writers: A Workshop Course in Writing
McGraw Hill

Here is an overview of eleven different and valuable ways of responding to writing- and a few thoughts about when each kind is valuable. After you have tried them out, you can glance back over this list when you want to decide which kind of feedback to request.

1. SHARING: NO RESPONSE

Read your piece aloud to listeners and ask: "Would you please just listen and enjoy?" You can also give them your text to read silently, though you don't usually learn as much this way. Simple sharing is also a way to listen better to your own responses to your own piece, without having to think about how others respond. You learn an enormous amount from hearing yourself read your own words-or from reading them over when you know that someone
else is also reading them.

No response is valuable in many situations: when you don't have much time, at very early stages when you just want to try something out or feel very tentative, or when you are completely finished and don't plan to make any changes at all-as a form of simple communication or celebration. Sharing gives you a nonpressure setting for getting comfortable reading your words out loud and listening to the writing of others.

2. POINTING AND CENTER OF GRAVITY

Pointing: "Which words or phrases or passages somehow strike you? stick in mind? get through?" Center of gravity: "Which sections somehow seem important or resonant or generative?" You are not asking necessarily for the main points but rather for sections or passages that seem to resonate or linger in mind or be sources of energy. Sometimes a seemingly minor detail or example-even an aside or a digression-can be a center of gravity.

These quick, easy, interesting forms of response are good for timid or inexperienced responders-or for early drafts. They help you establish a sense of contact with readers. Center of gravity response is particularly interesting for showing you rich and interesting parts of your piece that you might have neglected-but which might be worth exploring and developing. Center of gravity can help you see your piece in a different light and suggest ways to make major revisions.

3. SUMMARY AND SAYBACK
Summary: "Please summarize what you have heard. Tell me what you hear as the main thing and the almost-main things." (Variations: "Give me a phrase as tide and a one-word title-first using my words and then using your words.") Sayback: "Please say back to me in your own words what you hear me getting at in my piece, but say it in a somewhat questioning or tentative way-as an invitation for

me to reply with my own restatement of what you've said."

These are both useful at any stage in the writing process in order to see whether readers "got" the points you are trying to "give." But sayback is particularly useful at early stages when you are still groping and haven't yet been able to find what you really want to say. You can read a collection of exploratory passages for sayback response. When readers say back to you what they hear-and invite you to reply-it often leads you to find exactly the words or thoughts or emphasis you were looking for.

4. WHAT IS ALMOST SAID? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO HEAR MORE ABOUT?

Just ask readers those very questions.
This kind of response is particularly useful when you need to develop or enrich your piece: when you sense there is more here but you haven't been able to get your fingers on it yet. This kind of question gives you concrete substantive help because it leads your readers to give you some of their ideas to add to yours. Remember this too- what you imply but don't say in your writing is often very loud to readers but unheard by you-.and 6s an enormous effect on how they respond.

Extreme variation: "Make a guess about what was on my mind that I didn't write about"

5. REPLY

Simply ask, "What are your thoughts about my topic? Now that you!ve heard what I've had to say, what do you have to say?"

This kind of response is useful at any point, but it is particularly useful at early stages when you haven't worked out your thinking yet. Indeed, you can ask for this kind of response even before you've written a draft; perhaps you jotted down some notes. You can just say, "I'm thinking about saying X Y, and Z. How would you reply? What are your thoughts about this topic?" This is actually the most natural and common response to any human discourse. You are inviting a small discussion of the topic.

6. VOICE

(a) "How much voice do you hear in my writing? Is my language alive and human? Or is it dead, bureaucratic, unsayable? "What kind of voice(s) do you hear in my writing? Timid? Confident? Sarcastic? Pleading?" Or "what kind of person does my writing sound like? What side(s) of me comes through in my writing?" Most of all, "Do you trust the voice or person you hear in my writing?"

This kind of feedback can be useful at any stage. When people describe the voice they hear in writing, they often get right to the heart of subtle but important matters of language and approach. They don't have to be able to talk in technical terms ("You seem to use lots of passive verbs and nominalized phrases"); they can say, "You sound kind of bureaucratic and pompous and I wonder if you actually believe what you are saying."

7. MOVIES OF THE READER'S MIND

Ask readers to tell you honestly and in detail what is going on in their minds as they read your words. There are three powerful ways to help readers give you this kind of response. (a) Interrupt their reading a few times and find out what's happening at that moment. (b) Get them to tell you their reactions in the form of a story that takes place in time (c) If they make "It-statemente ("It was confusing"), make them translate these into "I-statements" ("I felt confused starting hereabout. . . ").

Movies of the reader's mind make the most sense when you have a fairly developed draft and you want to know how it works on readers-rather than when you're still trying to develop your ideas. Movies an the richest and most valuable form of response, but they require that you feel some confidence in yourself and support from your reader, because when readers tell you honestly what is happening while they are reading your piece, they may tell y1bu they don't like it or even get mad at it.

8. METAPHORICAL DESCRIPTIONS

Ask readers to describe your writing in terms of clothing (e.g., jeans, tuxedo, lycra running suit), weather (eg., foggy, stormy, sunny, humid), animals, colors, shapes.

This kind of response is helpful at any point. It gives you a new view, a new lens; It's particularly helpful when you feel stale on a piece, perhaps because you have worked so long on it. Sometimes young or inexperienced readers are good at giving you this kind of response when they are unskilled at other kinds.

9. BELIEVING AND DOUBTING

Believing: "Try to believe everything I have written, even if you disagree or find it crazy. At least pretend to believe it. Be my friend and ally and give me more evidence, arguments, and ideas to help we make my case better." Doubting: "Try to doubt everything I have written, even if you love it. Take on the role of enemy and find all the arguments that can be made against me. Pretend to be someone who hates my writing. What would he or she notice?"

These forms of feedback obviously lend themselves to persuasive essays or arguments, though the believing game can help you flesh out and enrich the world of a story or poem. Believing is good when you are struggling and want help. It is a way to get readers to give you new ideas and arguments and in fact improve your piece in all sorts of ways. Doubting is good after you've gotten a piece as strong as you can get it and you want to send it out or hand it in but first find out how hostile readers will fight you.

10. SKELETON FEEDBACK AND DESCRIPTIVE OUTLINE

Skeleton feedback: "Please lay out the reasoning you see in my paper: my main point, my subpoints, my supporting evidence, and my assumptions about my topic and about my audience." Descriptive outline: "Please write says and does sentences for my whole paper and then for each paragraph or section." A says sentence summarizes the meaning or message, and a does sentence describes the function.

These are the most useful for essays. They are feasible only if the reader has the text in hand and can take a good deal of time and care-and perhaps write out responses. Because they give you the most distance and perspective on what you have written, they are uniquely useful for giving feedback to yourself. Both kinds of feedback help you on late drafts when you want to test out your reasoning and organization. But skeleton feedback is also useful on early drafts when you are still trying to figure out what to say or emphasize and how to organize your thoughts.

11. CRITERION-BASED FEEDBACK

Ask readers to give you their thoughts about specific criteria that you are wondering about or struggling with: "Does this sound too technical?" "Is this section too long?" "Do my jokes work for you?" "Do you feel I've addressed the objections of people who disagree?" And of course, "Please find mistakes in spelling and grammar and typing." You can also ask readers to address what they think are the important criteria for your piece. You can ask too about traditional criteria for essays: focus on the assignment or task, content (ideas, reasoning, support, originality), organization, clarity of language, and voice.

You ask for criterion-based feedback when you have questions about specific aspects of your piece. You can also ask for it when you need a quick overview of strengths and. weaknesses. This kind of feedback depends on skilled and experienced readers. (But even with them you should still take it with a grain of salt, for if someone says your piece is boring, other readers might well disagree. Movies of the reader's mind are more trustworthy because they give you a better picture of the personal reactions behind these judgments.)

Submission of Writing in a Professional and Instructor-friendly manner

No need for a cover page. Your name, course number, assignment name, and date of writing or revising must appear on the first page at the top right. (Changge the date if you submit a revision.) Subsequent pages must contain your name and the page number.

Use 1" margins, a standard 10- or 12-point font such as Geneva or Times New Roman, respectively, and (preferably) one and half line spacing.

Proofread your work for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and coherence of paragraphs--Each paragraph should have one clear topic that is supported and/or developed by what is in it.

If you submit work electronically, rename your file so it begins with the course number then your initials. (Otherwise, it can get lost in the typical morass of files on the instructor's computer.) Do not submit it as .docx unless you are 100% sure that the instructor and fellow students who might comment on it use WORD 2007 (or a more recent version).

If writing is difficult for you, arrange assistance from a fellow student, the Graduate writing center (S-1-03, 287-5708) or a professional editor -- do not expect the instructor to be your writing teacher.
Recommended:

- as guides to writing and revising: Elbow, Writing with Power; Daniel, et al. Take Charge of Your Writing; Kanar, "Improving your paragraph skills"; Conlin, "The basics of writing" (on password-protected site, using password provided by instructor)
- as a guide on technical matters of writing scholarly papers: Turabian, A Manual For Writers (in library's reference section).

Framework for Exchanges and Inquiry

Use of this framework is intended to highlight the interplay between knowledge, inquiry, and ideas about possible social actions.
In the simplest case (see other variants), one person begins an exchange by making a

Knowledge claim

then other participants formulate responses to this knowledge claim using one or both of the following pair of prompts:

Actions that follow from the Knowledge: What change could people pursue if they accept the Knowledge claim?

Questions for further Inquiry: What more do you want to know in order to—

- clarify what people could do (thus feeding back -> Actions).
- clarify which people are interested in that action (thus feeding back -> Actions).
- understand more (and revise/refine the knowledge claim, thus feeding back -> Knowledge claim).

Questions invite inquiry, which may elicit further Knowledge claims or develop through notes and drafts into a more detailed **Summary or Substantive Statement** on a topic or set of resources (including bibliographies).

linkedQs

All contributors should provide **References** to cited publications and links to other **Resources.**

Instructions

Alternative Starting Points for Exchanges

- People introduce not only a knowledge claim, but also their ideas about Actions and Questions for further inquiry.
- People introduce a proposed Action, then they or other participants "backfill" by identifying what knowledge claim(s) this Action is based on.
- People introduce a Question for inquiry, then they or other participants backfill by identifying the Action or Knowledge claim that this question clarifies.

- An instructor or facilitator of exchanges contributes a Scenario, then other participants extract Knowledge claims from this and use it as a basis for proposing Actions and identifying Questions for further inquiry.
- Ditto after people present a Summary of Substantive statement on a topic (or their notes and drafts).

Subsequent Phases of the Exchange

(These phases may overlap.)

- Brainstorming before participants identify specific issues and directions they are interested to focus on.
- **KAQ** worksheet for participants to think carefully through the K-A-Q connections (and identify ways or methods to investigate each Q).
    - These worksheets may be completed off-line (or in interaction only with the instructor/facilitator) before being exposed to the other participants.
    - The simplest contribution to an exchange is to add an Action or Question to a Knowledge Claim made by another participant.
- **Probing** each others' thinking (as well as one's own) by asking about
    - Knowledge claims: "How do you Know that? -- What's the evidence (e.g., from a Scenario used to initiate an exchange), assumptions, and reasoning?"
    - Actions: "What knowledge claim(s) does this Action follow from?" "What problem raised in the Scenario does that Action relate to?" "Which people or group would be pursuing this Action?" "Which people or group would this Action seek to change?"
    - Questions: "How will you investigate this question?" "Will your method of research best enable you to find this out?"
        - If your thinking needs to be clarified or spelled out, go back and revise accordingly.
        - If there is a knowledge claim stated or implied in your response or in anyone else's that warrants an exchange of its own, state the claim explicitly and succinctly. You may compose the initial version of the new page or indicate in parentheses that a new page is needed. In the latter case, you or someone else can compose the initial version of the new page later. Similarly, indicate if you think a topic warrants a Summary or Substantive statement.
- **Periodic summary of new developments** by the instructor/facilitator (without which it may be difficult for participants to keep track of each others' contributions).

- **Inquiry** or investigation so as to find answers for some of the questions.
- Individual or collaborative **development of Summaries and Substantive Statements**.
    - Don't be intimidated by the label "Substantive Statement" -- this may start as notes or a draft, which only later gets revised into a well-organized and referenced information on the topic.
    - If these are shared at an early stage as notes, then more than one participant can contribute to their development into a polished form (following the model of wikipedia|wikipedia entries).
- **Presentations** of the outcomes of inquiry.

Instructions for exchanges on a listserv, threaded discussion, or face2face setting

- To help others refer back, identify the page and the specific Knowledge claim, proposed Action, or Question to which you are responding.
- Indicate what kind of response you are making. (Using the prefixes k., a., q., s. helps make this clear.)

Instructions for exchanges on a wiki

- Use the sandbox to experiment and refer to further instructions on using wikispaces.
- Identify your contributions by placing in parentheses your wikispaces username or your real name or guest.
- When you make your first contribution, add yourself to the contributors page (optional).
- If your contribution is probing someone else's thinking (see above), indent this directly below the point you are probing.
- If you have an answer to a question, you may include it EITHER indented after the question (if it is short) OR as a new Knowledge claim (which allows others to respond to your claim) OR as a Summary/Substantive Statement (if you have notes on a topic or have developed them into a well-referenced guide to this topic). The 2nd & 3rd kind of answer require a new page.
- When you create a new page, give it an abbreviated name of **25 characters or fewer** that conveys your Knowledge claim. If you develop your thinking first on a personal, unlinked wikipage, then rename this page when you "go public." Add the page to the Index of Pages related to the set of exchanges or unit in a course.

Identify yourself at the bottom of the page as the originator of the page.

- When you have more detailed findings on a topic, make a link to a new page on which you present a Summary or Substantive statement OR to a file that you upload to the wiki.
- When you refer to an existing or new Knowledge claim or to a topic of a Summary or Substantive Statement, make a link to it.

(original page by - pjt)