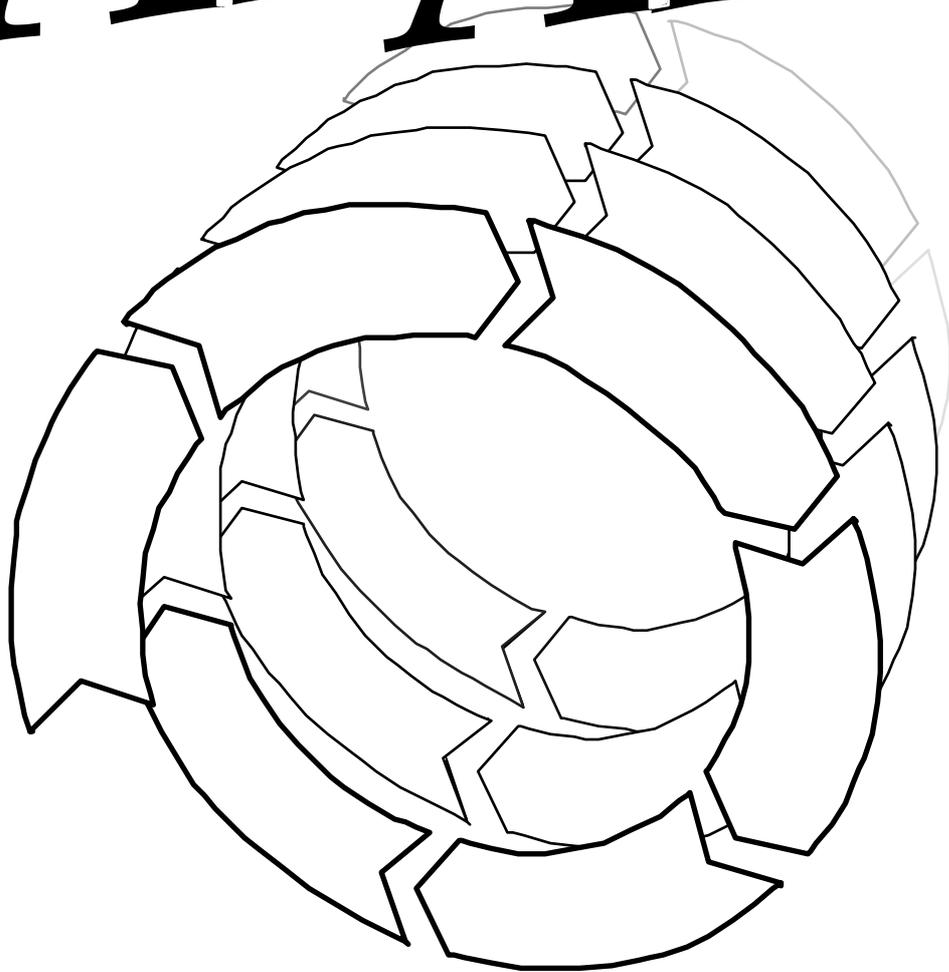


ALAR



Action learning action research journal

Volume 6 No. 1 March 2001

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ALARPM's vision is that action learning and action research will be widely used and publicly shared by individuals and groups creating local and global change for the achievement of a more equitable, just, joyful, productive and sustainable society.

ALAR Journal

Vol 6, No 1, March 2001

ALAR Journal is jointly published by the Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management (ALARPM) Association Inc., Interchange and Prosperity Press.

It is an international publication incorporating ARCS Newsletter and ALARPM Newsletter.

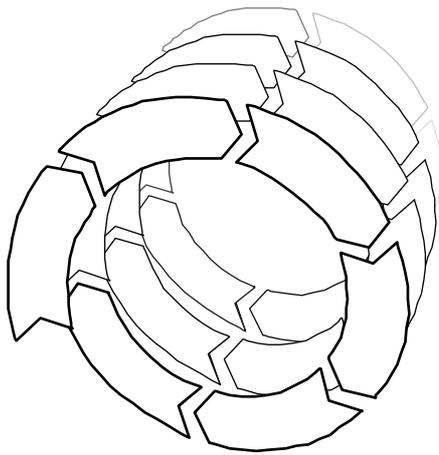
Editor: Lyn Cundy
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ALAR Journal

**Volume 6 No 1
March 2001**

ISSN 1326-964X

CONTENTS

Editorial.....	2
Educational Cabaret	
Geof Hill	3
Using an EDP - supported logbook in preparing PhD dissertations	
Ralph Brinkman.....	13
People	24
Projects	45
Networking.....	50
Guidelines for contributors	52
Publication order form.....	55
Information for subscribers	59

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Editorial

Welcome to the tenth issue of the ALAR Journal. This issue brings you two excellent articles and is packed full of interesting reading. The first article explores the theme 'being a reflective practitioner' and uses educational cabaret as the genre for academic discourse. The second article provides a practical approach to managing an EDP-supported logbook that will enhance the research process.

In "People" we get up close and personal with Professor Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, through an interview conducted by Jim Murphy, Associate Professor, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Ortrun, as a founding member of ALARPM, was one of three people to receive life membership at the AGM held during the World Congress in Ballarat, Australia last year. Paul Inglis and Orlando Fals Borda also received this honour and will be profiled in coming issues of the ALAR Journal.

ALARPM's long term plans to grow the organisation and encourage broader international participation received a real boost at the AGM and throughout the Congress. We are pleased to include in "People" the contact details of our significantly expanded International Management Committee.

In "Projects" we report on a project being conducted by the Social Development Network. They are asking readers to contribute some Australian stories for inclusion in a publication. A second project reports on an Australian – South African Links project titled *Leadership Development of Academic Women Through Action Learning and Action Research*.

In "Networking" we bring you information on how to join the New Zealand Action Research Network (NZARN).

Educational Cabaret - Geof Hill

Introduction

In February 2000 I had the opportunity to present a cabaret on the theme of 'Being a Reflective Practitioner'. I am not too sure how many, if any, other people are working in this genre of academic discourse and for me the *raison d'être* was to find out whether it was possible!

At the heart of my desire to explore this path of educational deviation, is a belief that education is enjoyable. This belief applies as much to my being on the receiving end of education, as it is to my being a catalyst for other's education. Since my arrival into the field of adult education some twenty years ago, I have sought to make education interesting and enjoyable for my students. Having said that, it is also part of my education paradigm that 'fun' alone is not sufficient for quality learning. I am continually adding other factors to my emergent paradigm that are grounded in the literature pertinent to the topic of presentation and enhanced by my understanding about adult learning.

I came to educational cabarets from a background in theatre and in particular musical theatre. As far back as I could remember I had been using lyrics of songs to convey some of the theory or the content in the education programs that I was delivering. I had attended professional cabarets and seen how powerful they were as a medium for facilitating my own reflection about a host of issues. I began to consider that cabaret was potentially a cutting edge of adult education that I needed to explore.

With the (ALARPM 2000) February cabaret under my belt, so to speak, and two previous cabarets, only one of which was

performed, I feel now that the time is ripe to articulate some of what I consider is the theory underpinning this particular discourse. A theory drawn distinctly from my own reflection on my practice as a cabaret writer and facilitator/performer.

An educational cabaret is educational content delivered through the lyrics of songs in a musical medium of cabaret, and discussion and reflection on that content in the patter that accompanies the singing. It represents a boundary spanning between the higher degree communication fields of the lecture or conference presentation and the musical genre of cabaret.

As I developed material for this most recent cabaret, I have I laboured over what I would call the emergent product. While I have used the working title of 'academic discourse' my fear is that that might limit the potential for this form of communicating and potentially exclude people who do not see themselves as communicating in an academic arena. Conferences are daily being held on a range of topics, with a great variety of speakers. Many of these speakers would not consider themselves academics but consider themselves practitioners talking about their work. There is also a large population of people who are employed in university settings and who regularly present at conferences. By choosing a descriptor of 'educational cabarets' I intend to address both populations.

The cabaret that prompted the writing of this article is the third such cabaret I have constructed. The first drafted cabaret remained unperformed in that the conference for which it was booked was cancelled at the last minute. That cabaret was entitled 'Where is the cutting edge of Education and is Experiential Learning at it?' It was commissioned by a group called ACEE (The Australian Consortium of Experiential Education). The second cabaret was addressing concepts of 'Hospital Accreditation' and was privately booked for a Christmas party by a company that specialised in Accreditation consultancy. The third cabaret was

commissioned by ALARPM (Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management) and was titled 'Being a Reflective Practitioner'.

In this article I want to address two key issues:

1. Are educational cabarets educational or just entertaining?
2. What are some of the teaching strategies for an educational cabaret?

1. Are educational cabarets educational?

I expect that people who attend my educational cabarets will find them entertaining. For me the more important question is 'whether they find them educational?'

I believe that they are and I believe that this question can be addressed from the point of view of Gardner's (1983) 'Multiple Intelligences', as well as from a point of view of naming likely competencies which result from an educational cabaret.

Multiple Intelligence theory proposes that people use at least several relatively autonomous intellectual capacities - each with its own distinctive mode of thinking - to approach problems and to create products. In the Musical or Rhythmic Intelligence, Gardner (1983) suggests that people may make up songs or rhymes to help them learn. Despite the bulk of the songs from an educational cabaret being composed and performed by the performer as distinct from the audience or learners, the exposure to this genre, I believe, still activates a learner's musical intelligence. When the cabaret also incorporates opportunities for rhyme writing, as mine do, I believe that this is the form of learning that Gardner is referring to in his description of this particular intelligence.

A second method for assessing whether people have learnt from an educational cabaret is by adopting a competency framework to identify the competencies that have potential to be addressed through this medium. In this we can look at

educational outcomes from the point of view of knowledge, skills and attitudes. My preference for this model of competency theory is that it includes attitudes and I believe these to be an important part of learning.

The lyrics of songs are a variation on articulation of knowledge. Association of content with a particular well known song can enhance people's ability to remember content in the same way as we remember the products associated with certain jingles in successful advertising campaigns.

The skill that I believe is most practiced through experiencing an educational cabaret is the skill of reflectiveness. The lyrics combined with music create an atmosphere of listening to the lyrics and being affected by them. When the cabaret also includes activities of the audience writing their own lyrics, this additional skill of composing reinforces what people have learned.

The attitude that an audience can acquire about a given topic is promoted by the performer's own enthusiasm for the topic because it has been presented in a different medium. The novelty of the medium has potential to recharge people whose attitude about the topic may have flagged, or to turn around a negative attitude.

In pursuit of debate surrounding this particular question I sought responses from members of the audience of my most recent cabaret and below are some of their responses.

*"You may recall Shakespeare had similar questions about his own work, as drama and in particular comedy was THE educational medium of the Elizabethan era. As an "ex" speech and drama/phys-
eder, I have always personally believed "fun" or entertainment is a form of learning that is "seamless". No one can see the lines where it became integrated into ones repertoire. It's just there because 'it is'. Counselling is a similar learning phenomenon. The problem always seems insurmountable until one day its just not there anymore and most clients are never really sure why. Does one really need to know why if it works. Life learning is like that. There*

are a lot of educational theories that support Cabaret as a learning medium. Perhaps the real question is one of 'Which educational discourses (positivist paradigms) will collude and compete to discredit Cabaret as legitimate educational work?' This is a thesis in itself. I for one see it as a refreshing and very welcome breath of fresh air in an otherwise dull and uninteresting lot. Many others will feel the same."

"I had a wonderful evening, and enjoyed the experience of learning through song, the chant being a very useful part for me."

"I did learn a lot from the experience but I would need a few minutes to come up with the different things I learnt. Off the top of my head, the comments about needing high self-esteem stuck in my mind."

2. What are some of the teaching strategies for an educational cabaret?

When I use the term teaching strategies I am using it in the sense of things teachers do to enhance students learning. This whole area is one which I believe can be explored with much more detailed reflection on practice, both by myself as practitioner and by my audience as observers of that practice. One strategy that readily springs to mind is the way in which songs are selected or developed for inclusion in a cabaret.

The educational cabaret, as distinct from the entertainment cabaret, starts with the body of theory relevant to the cabaret topic. When I am making choices about songs to use to convey the body of literature I think about the songs in five categories: generic cabaret songs; theme specific songs; audience participatory songs; audience driven songs; and purpose composed songs.

A generic cabaret song addresses the process of the cabaret. These songs include introductory songs that welcome an audience; explanatory songs that tell them what the cabaret will involve and concluding songs that draw the material

into some action that an audience can follow through. Two different examples of these songs include songs in which the lyrics are unaltered, and songs that are rewritten for the purpose of the cabaret.

The tune of 'Getting to Know You' from 'The King and I' can underscore the early part of the cabaret, as the performer seeks to learn about their audience.

Using the basic lyrics of 'Magic to Do' from 'Pippin' provides a good welcoming song for the opening of the cabaret

*'Join me, leave your fields to flower
Join me, leave your cheese to sour
Join me, come and take an hour or two.'*

and by changing the lyrics (italics) to include

*'I've got magic to share, just with you
I've got interesting tales to relay
I've got songs to perform and hearts to warm,
paradigms to take by storm, as we go along our way.'*

the specifics of this particular cabaret are introduced.

Another example of rewriting the lyrics to address the specifics of the topic of the cabaret is the song 'Comedy Tonight' from 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum'.

A second type of song is the cabaret theme specific song, that is chosen because of its specific relevance to the cabaret theme.

Within a cabaret on 'Reflective Practice' one of the bodies of theory addresses the notion of 'critical friend'. The 'critical friend' is a person who works in the interest of the practitioner, and in that regard is considered a friend; and they also adopt a critical stance to the practitioners discussion of their practice, to help them to identify anomalies and themes in their reflection of their practice, and thereby enable them to identify paradigms and become critically reflective about their practice. The song that I chose

to comment on this particular notion was 'Old Friends' from 'Merrily we roll along' with lyrics.

'Hey, Old friend,
are you okay Old Friend,
what do you say Old Friend?
Are we or are we not unique?
Time goes by,
everything else keeps changing,
you and I,
we get continued next week.

Another example addresses the section of the theory that discusses the outcomes of 'Reflecting on Practice' and acknowledges that as a result of reflection we come to understand our good and bad habits. The song that I chose to comment on this notion is 'Bad Habits' by Billy Fields.

Can't help myself,
bad habits.
I'm running wild,
lost control.
It's a shame to see,
that a boy like me,
has got so many,
bad habits.

As with the generic cabaret songs, there are examples within this category of songs that are altered to emphasise the content being delivered.

An explanation of Havelock's theory of innovation diffusion (1969) that is presented to enable those people facilitating change in practice to others in their organization, to identify some change management strategies, is described using a rewriting of 'Razzle Dazzle' from 'Chicago'. Part of the Havelock theory describes a group of people in an organization who are most resistance to an innovation. Havelock (1969) describes them as 'Laggards'.

*Give them an out that's so persuasive.
Razzle Dazzle them.
Show them a means to let them go away
far from the pressure of your changing ways.
Read them the riot act that's certain
make it very clear.
No-one can hang around who doesn't change.
When all the numbers are on your side
Let the 'Laggards' know their place is on the outside.
Razzle Dazzle 'em. Razzle Dazzle ' em.
Razzle Dazzle 'em and they'll make you a star.*

A third category of song type is the audience participatory song. In this type of song the audience are encouraged to sing along with lyrics with which they are familiar, or to write lyrics that can be used to create a song.

The method I have used for this type of song is one that I have adapted from the teaching strategies of Paulo Friere. In his literacy work in Nicuaragua, Freire is reputed to have reinforced the language learning in his students by encouraging them to write rhyming stanzas. I have dubbed this strategy 'Frierian Refrains' and use the technique at the end of Act 1 of a Cabaret to encourage the participants to think about the type of reflection that the songs and discussion have engendered. At the beginning of Act 2 the audience call out their chants, one after another, until the chants adopt a rhythm. It has become my 'Frierian Refrain' trademark to conclude this segment with a rendition of 'Do you hear the people sing' from 'Les Miserables'

*Do you hear the voices sing.
Singing Frierian Refrains.
It is the music of the people
who will not be slaves again.
When the beating of your heart
echoes the beating of the drum
there is a life about to start
when tomorrow comes.*

The fourth category of song that I will call audience driven songs, is as the name suggests an audience participation song. While I have not performed this type of song, it was written in to the draft for the 'Where is the cutting edge of Education, and is Experiential Learning at it?' cabaret, to promote greater audience participation. The audience is encouraged to generate ideas around a topic and as ideas are submitted the performer responds with excerpts from songs.

In the 'Where is the cutting edge of Education, and is Experiential Learning at it?' cabaret, the audience are asked to suggest indicators for an educational cutting edge. A little forethought prior to the conference, contemplating the sorts of suggestions they might make, enabled the accompanist and I to rehearse segments from a range of songs that would be used to respond to audience suggestions. For example, in response to an audience suggestion that the cutting edge of Education was money, we could respond with 'Money' from 'Cabaret'; if they suggested that the cutting edge was the way in which stakeholders worked together we could respond with 'The little things you do together' from 'Company'.

Obviously in this type of audience involvement segment the presenter needs to have a command of the body of literature so that they can predict what issues might arise and have rehearsed a number of songs. With a gifted accompanist who has a wealth of musical knowledge, it is also possible to run this type of segment without lyrics but with just signature tunes. The accompanist makes comment on the statements that the singer/facilitator elicits from the audience.

The fifth type of song that impacts on this genre of educational discourse is the purpose composed song. It is an area that my experience with educational cabarets has not as yet required me to indulge in, but I expect with a growth in the popularity of this genre and a consideration of some of the copyright dilemmas of rewriting other composers' lyrics, this seems an inevitable direction.

Two songs that are on the drawing board for a soon to be released cabaret on 'Undertaking a Doctoral Degree' are 'The Citation Tango' which deals with the dilemmas of citing ones references in the 'correct' method; and 'Where is Truth?' a Sate-esk exploration of the research paradigm of ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs.

As I suggested at the beginning of this paper, the genre I suspect is relatively new. By beginning to articulate some of the grounded theory related to it I hope that a debate will be generated and other practitioners will begin to address the same cutting edge.

I welcome comments and debate around this topic. Please contact Geof Hill at Geof@bigpond.com

My thanks to Tricia Weeks for her helpful critical friendship in reading the first draft of this paper.

Reference to music and literature

'Pippin' Music and Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz (1972)

'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum' Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim (1962)

'Merrily we roll along' Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim (1981)

'Chicago' Music John Kander and Lyrics by Fred Ebb

'Les Miserables': Music by Claude-Michel Schonberg and Lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer.

'Company' Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim (1970)

Gardner, H. (1983) *Frames of the Mind. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences.* New York. Basic Books

Havelock, R.G. (1969) *Planning for Innovation through Dissemination and Utilisation of Knowledge.* Centre for research on Utilisation of Knowledge. Institute of Social Research. University of Michigan. Mich.U.S.A.

Using an EDP¹-supported logbook in preparing PhD dissertations

- Ralph Brinkman

Introduction

A useful approach to conducting a PhD study is to use a targeted logbook throughout the study. In the following discussion I explain why this is so, drawing on my experience in preparing a dissertation project titled 'The Implementation of Selected International Standards on Auditing (ISA) issued by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) into German, Italian, UK and US Auditing Standards'.

A logbook encourages four behaviours that are instrumental for students in preparing their PhD dissertation. I call these logbook targets.

Logbook Targets²

Learn from experience	Develop learning processes
Take appropriate action	Become more effective

I have worked with planning instruments both during my university studies and in my professional life as an auditor³. These planning instruments have the potential to serve as a logbook⁴, yet since I neither prepared these instruments according to the principles of the logbook technique, nor

applied them systematically, I could not derive full value from using these planning instruments.

*A Guide to Completing the Logbook*⁵

a. Definition of Significant Events	e. Form of notes and actions
b. Weekly review / monthly review	f. Using fellow students as resources
c. Content	g. Database system/search terms
d. Immediate write up	h. Monthly summary of top logbook entries to provide a cross-referenced logbook using most effective learning practice (best practice concept)

Since completing the Privatissimum ‘Qualitative Research Methods in the Social and Economic Sciences’ in May 1999,⁶ I have used my planning instruments supported by electronic data processing (EDP) to observe logbook techniques. Within a very brief period of taking up this approach, I was able to improve the efficiency of my actions that concern my dissertation project.

a. Definition of Significant Events

Defining which events should lead to a logbook entry *ex ante* enables a more targeted analysis of the entries and therefore contributes to the achievement of logbook targets. For my dissertation project I use the category ‘Significant Events’ with numerous subcategories that lead to a ‘**Proposed Logbook Entry**’ (PLE).⁷ These subcategories include:

Discussion with the dissertation supervisor
Discussion with the likely second expert on the dissertation
Notes resulting from the dissertation seminars
Assigning references to the literature on each of the dissertation’s structure topics

Discussion with other PhD students (networking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PhD students in other fields⁸ 2. PhD students in the same field⁹
Discussion with representatives of organisations or institutions who are interested in the audit results.	<p>Addressees of the audit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Institutional investors (banks, investment funds, investment companies) 2. Private investors 3. Securities and exchange commissions 4. Courts (in cases of liability) 5. Stock exchange (as a part of international capital markets) 6. International auditing companies 7. Rating agencies and financial analysts 8. Internal controlling bodies of multinational enterprises 9. Professors in the field of audit
Discussion with relevant professional organisations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International Federation of Accountants 2. <i>Institut der Wirtschaftsprüfer (IDW) and Wirtschaftsprueferkammer (WPK) (Germany)</i> 3. <i>Consiglio Nazionale dei Dottori Commercialisti e dei Ragionieri (Italy)</i> 4. Institute of Chartered Accountants (UK) 5. American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) (US)
Suggestions for improvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discourse preparation 2. Analysis of literature 3. Skills in certain fields
Discussion with colleagues while working in my occupation as an auditor in an auditing company with international operations	

Discussion with international operating members of the auditing profession (differentiated by countries whose auditing principles I examine in my dissertation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members of the International Federation of Accountants 2. Members of the profession in Germany (<i>Wirtschaftsprüfer</i>) 3. Members of the profession in Italy (<i>revisori contabili</i>) 4. Members of the profession in UK (<i>chartered accountants</i>) 5. Members of the profession in US (<i>certified public accountants</i>)
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During the planning phase of my dissertation project, the category 'Discussion' is at the beginning of the fieldwork section and has two subcategories 'General Discussion' and 'Planned Interviews'. The logbook can then be used to analyse the results of the applied qualitative research methods (for example qualitative interviews, expert interviews or open questionnaires) before the results of the analysis are taken up in the first draft of the dissertation.¹⁰

b. Weekly Review

A regular survey of notes is needed to ensure that one reaches the targets of the logbook. During my weekly review I am able to make connections between the entries within one category or between different categories of 'Significant Events'.¹¹ EDP allows me to record these connections by generating electronic links. The weekly review also provides the opportunity for me to delete results of what I had registered initially as 'Significant Events' but after critical review I recognise to be irrelevant for the dissertation project. These materials that I find to be irrelevant during my weekly review I call '**Deleted Logbook Entry**' (DLE). I transfer these DLE from the databank to a wastepaper basket by logical cancellation.¹² Those material that I find to be relevant for my dissertation project during my weekly

review I call '**Final Logbook Entry**' (FLE). I transfer these FLE into the archive of the databank so that they continue to serve the logbook user (myself and network members as I discuss below) as a data and experience resource.

c. Content

The content of registrations in the logbook should be adjusted to the individual needs of the logbook user.¹³ The registrations should be constructed so that the above-mentioned targets of the logbook technique can be achieved (for example, contents concerned with results, actions or knowledge). With every logbook entry I check whether I have to take further action connected with the entry.¹⁴

d. Immediate Write Up

The maximum value of the 'Significant Events' classification can be obtained only if the entries are made as soon as the 'significant event' is over. Where possible, using a mobile laptop computer facilitates this procedure through the hardware component of the logbook.¹⁵ However, especially for coincidental 'Significant Events'¹⁶ and for 'Significant Events' where the use of a notebook is not allowed¹⁷ or does not appear to be appropriate,¹⁸ a regular paper notebook should be used. The entries made in the paper notebook can be transferred later into the electronic logbook. Another alternative for recording 'Significant Events' is to use a dictating machine for orally recording useful information as soon as you are able.¹⁹

e. Form of Notes and Actions²⁰

Using an EDP-supported logbook obviates the need to either manually partition between records (A) and action instructions or action demands (B) to emphasise 'action points' for verification, or to record the learning effects of the respective actions. At any time it is possible to combine (A) and (B) if they were at first registered separately within the database, or to separate (A) and (B) if they were at first registered together. An EDP program called 'Action Points'

can be used as an alternative. It may also be useful to add distinguishing markers such as special characters, loud colours or the like. There is no need to leave space at the start of the logbook for comments on the learning effects of the actions carried out since information can be inserted into the EDP at any time.²¹

*f. Your Fellow Students as Resources*²²

The importance of teamwork with other PhD students cannot be overestimated.²³ PhD students who are working in fields outside yours may be well placed to offer constructive feedback on the form of the dissertation²⁴ and more generally on academic research methods. PhD students who share your research field can also be very helpful, for example with reviewing critically the technical content of your dissertation. In my EDP-supported logbook I have recorded the teamwork I have undertaken with PhD students working in my field through an email network called the '**International Knowledge Sharing Dissertation Network**' (IKSDN).²⁵ The address book for network members is stored in the logbook as a folder in the category 'Significant Events' and is called 'Discussions with 1) PhD students in my field; 2) other PhD students'.

The network's purpose is technical exchange of members' experiences while preparing their PhD dissertations.²⁶ The IKSDN was begun on 1 June 1999. We are currently working to implement IKSDN standards to regulate and optimise the knowledge transfer between members. As well as an ethical standard that limits general use of the transferred knowledge to within the network,²⁷ another standard is planned that will oblige PhD student members to report to other members at specified intervals (quarterly) on the progress of their dissertation project. This will require students to provide proof of their progress to all network members.²⁸ On receiving material proving a member's progress, other members are obliged to review this progress and offer their opinion on it within a certain period of time (one month).

Sanctions are planned for members who do not fulfil their obligations to review.²⁹ This strategy of pressuring oneself to complete dissertation work increases the probability that all members of the network will reach the milestones of the dissertation project according to their schedule.

To overcome the impediment of excessive anonymity among network members, meetings of members are planned around members' geographical location. Network members who live in the same country are slated to meet every six months and European meetings are to be held annually. A meeting between European and non-European members is not yet feasible due to financial expense, and future moves on this issue await further development of the network. Such an intercontinental meeting would surely be beneficial to members if it can be arranged.

We expect that the IKSDN will considerably enhance members' ability to reach their logbook targets mentioned above, especially 'Learning from experience' and 'Becoming more effective'. The network also contributes in a very positive way to mitigating students' feelings of isolation or alienation that are sometimes referred to as the 'lonely researcher syndrome'.

g. Database Function/ Search Terms

An EDP-supported logbook gives users another immense advantage through the search function. Database functions that are implemented in the application software³⁰ allow the whole logbook to be searched for any needed information by keying in search terms. One of the planned topics of my dissertation is the standard setting of the International Auditing Practice Committee (IAPC), which is a Standing Technical Committee of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). I will search all logbook files for entries connected to this topic, using search terms such as 'IAPC', 'standard setting' and so forth. This investment in erecting an EDP-supported logbook will save vast amounts of time in the longer term while also enabling production of

comprehensive and highly accurate research results. An EDP-supported logbook is thus a more effective working method than a system that does not provide valuable access to others' logbook work.

h. The Best-practice Concept

In my monthly review of each week's FLEs I store the most important entries concerning the success of my dissertation as 'best-practice logbook entries' (BPLE), keeping a copy in a 'best practice archive'. This archive serves as a highly useful reference source. It also functions as the main thread connecting optimal learning processes, optimal methods for certain 'Action Points' and very important technical information for the dissertation project.

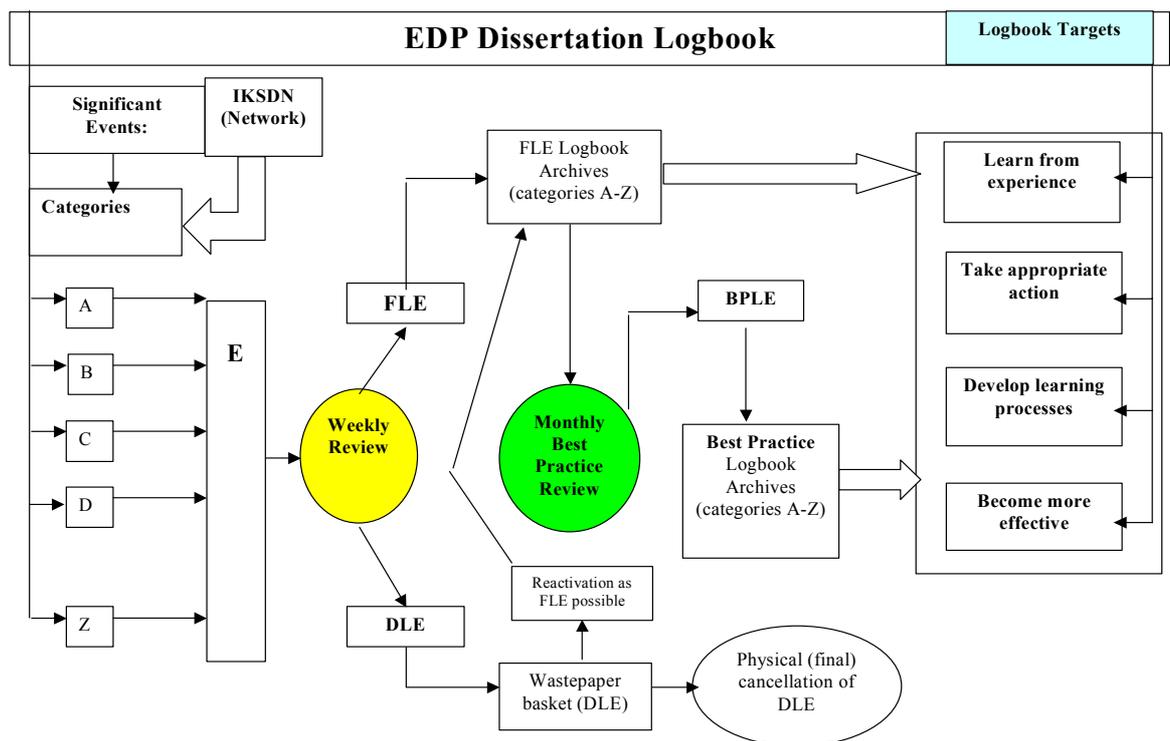


Figure 1: Illustrates in a flow chart showing how I use my EDP-supported dissertation logbook.³¹

-
- 1 Electronic Data Processing
 - 2 See Zuber Skerritt, *Starting Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences: Book of Resources*, Second Edition, compiled by Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun, Lismore 1998, p. 184–5.
 - 3 For example, the electronic data processing and time-management systems Lotus Notes, Access, Microsoft Outlook and Time System.
 - 4 Other than using an EDP-supported logbook, one can also use a manual logbook. I prefer an EDP-supported logbook for a complex dissertation project since EDP allows one to store and analyse electronically large amounts of data. The EDP's electronic reminder system can automatically remind the logbook user to take certain actions on certain dates (for example, in Lotus Notes, by using the commands 'action required by date' and 'remind', the user is automatically requested to execute a certain pre-defined action on a given date. The description of the action is shown automatically on the cathode-ray tube (CRT).
 - 5 For more detail on the topics a to f, see Zuber Skerritt, *Starting Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences: Book of Resources*, Second Edition, compiled by Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun, Lismore 1998, p. 184–5. I have supplemented Zuber Skerritt's model with topics g and h as structural set-up and application elements in my personal EDP logbook.
 - 6 The Privatissimum is a preliminary requirement as a stage in PhD candidature in Germany and Austria. The Privatissimum was held by Prof. Zuber-Skerritt at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, as a one-week intensive course.
 - 7 This list of categories is not conclusive. I have devised the category 'Significant Events' and its subcategories based on my understanding that the logbook technique is a dynamic process. New categories yet to reach my attention will be added during the course of the dissertation as I gain experience. Some categories that I have already compiled may in time overlap with others or become redundant, so frequently streamlining the categories is essential. An EDP-supported logbook enables me to maintain this essential flexibility with minimum effort.
 - 8 Aimed at exchange of information concerning the general application of scientific research methods.
 - 9 Aimed at exchange of information about the concrete application of certain scientific research methods in the specialised field of auditing and about the content of the dissertation.
 - 10 Using an EDP-supported logbook has the great advantage that the data registered in the logbook can be connected with all other known computer programs (for example, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Micrografx Flow Chart, Microsoft Powerpoint, Microsoft Orgchart). These programs can be used for graphical, mathematical, tabular and other analyses of the logbook files. The analysed files can be stored in the logbook databank (for example, in the category PLE 'analysis/questionnaires', giving the action notice 'Draft / final data to come / follow-up action required by data').
 - 11 For further discussion see Zuber Skerritt, *Starting Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences: Book of Resources*, Second Edition, compiled by Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun, Lismore 1998, p. 184. With my dissertation theme, for example, statements about a certain topic made by members of professional organisations in the auditing profession can be connected by linking various statements made by the addressees of the audit (for example Securities and Exchange Commissions, Institutional

-
- Investors). The reasons for differing opinions and what these mean for the expectation gap that I discuss in my dissertation can be examined later.
- 12 This works to minimise possible misjudgement. The ‘deleted logbook entries’ (DLE) stored in the wastepaper basket are deleted logically but not physically from the recording medium using EDP. Until they have been deleted finally, these DLE can be logically restored and put back into the logbook.
 - 13 For further detail see Zuber Skerritt, *Starting Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences: Book of Resources*, Second Edition, compiled by Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun, Lismore 1998, p. 184.
 - 14 Examples of these actions include reporting to one’s dissertation supervisor after discussion (PLE under the category ‘Significant Event: Discussion with Dissertation Supervisor’), writing up minutes of a meeting where there has been discussion with other PhD students (PLE under the category ‘Significant Event: Discourse with Other PhD Students’), analysing the receiving quota of questionnaire actions (PLE under the category ‘Significant Event: Questionnaire to XY’) and improving interview techniques (PLE under the category ‘Significant Event: Suggestions for Improvement / 1. Preparation for Discussion’).
 - 15 Necessary EDP-software and data for the logbook can be installed on the laptop (respectively, Notebook) and any necessary instruments (printer, scanner) can also be connected. In this way a permanent PC can be used interchangeably with a laptop.
 - 16 For example, one may meet unexpectedly a person who is important for the dissertation project during a professional conference that is unconnected with the dissertation or one may encounter such a person in some private context without being prepared for the opportunity to discuss dissertation issues.
 - 17 For example, if the conversation partner does not allow you to note his or her comments simultaneously into an EDP system (for reasons that could involve confidentiality).
 - 18 For example the short time spent in discussion with one’s dissertation supervisor or with other highly skilled, apposite people should not be wasted by recording information simultaneously into the laptop. In these cases it is advisable to concentrate on the conversation and record the results immediately afterwards.
 - 19 I use a dictating machine alternative during long car rides (for example from my residence in Mannheim, Germany, to Innsbruck and back) to record thoughts that occur to me after presenting seminars but that are most probably no further developed after my five to six hour car ride). This is an effective use of time that may be otherwise lost. For safety reasons the dictating machine needs to be installed in the vehicle like a vehicle- installed mobile telephone.
 - 20 On this matter see Zuber Skerritt, *Starting Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences: Book of Resources*, Second Edition, compiled by Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun, Lismore 1998, p. 185.
 - 21 For example, the functions ‘Insert Line’ and ‘Insert Column’ in Microsoft Excel.
 - 22 On this matter see Zuber Skerritt, *Starting Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences: Book of Resources*, Second Edition, compiled by Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun, Lismore 1998, p. 185.
 - 23 I speak here of my experience at the University of Innsbruck but I believe this to apply for PhD students irrespective of the university or other institution in which they are enrolled.

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- 24 These PhD students can well observe the keeping of guidelines for scientific work.
- 25 I was inspired to establish the IKSDN after my experience preparing for the Privatissimum ‘Qualitative Research Methods in the Social and Economic Sciences’. In May 2000 the network has 41 members comprising PhD students from the audit area of Germany (21), Austria (1), Italy (7), US (11) and Switzerland (1). The network is planning to extend membership to PhD students working in other fields. However, finding the contacts for these people is quite difficult. Further, the interest of many PhD students in an inter-disciplinary network is (still) weak since these students tend to believe that network membership requires their valuable time while offering what they perceive to be little personal benefit.
- 26 The network benefits from having a few members who are in advanced stages of their PhD studies and therefore have a breadth of experience to offer other network members who are less advanced in their studies. The network is open for further participants and I expect that I will be able to share my experiences with newer PhD students as I progress on my dissertation.
- 27 Other interested people are always welcome to participate in the network to gain from the exchange of experiences but they must consent to the networks’ regulations and accept certain obligations.
- 28 For example, students send other participants parts of the first draft of their dissertation as an email attachment.
- 29 With 41 members, the network presents no significant danger of overwork for its members. Recognising potential problems as the network expands, however, there are plans to form sub-groups to avert the requirement of members for excessive review and comment. In this case a network supervisor will be elected to whom all emails (including those with sections of dissertation and review results) must be sent. In this way the functioning of the network can be supervised and punishments can be given if necessary. Sub-network supervisors of each sub-group will send the network supervisor a copy of materials circulated within the sub-group. The elected positions of network supervisor and sub-network supervisors will be limited to six months duration to avoid excess stress from these extra responsibilities, i.e. a rolling system.
- 30 For example in Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel.
- 31 See Figure 1.

We invite people to submit reports of work-in-progress or information about completed projects – so that we can all become aware of the wide variety of options available to us.

People

At the Annual General Meeting, three people were awarded life membership of ALARPM, the first to receive this honour in our history to date. We are pleased to announce that the three life members are:

Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt - one of the founding members of ALARPM, the Convenor of the First World Congress, still current Vice-President (International) and long-term contributor to action research and action learning. Ortrun is profiled below.

Paul Inglis - also a founding member of ALARPM, Vice-President until his retirement a couple of years ago, instigator of the networking process which began in the lead up to the Second World Congress and has continued to this day and contributor to action research in the community and for students. Paul will be profiled in the following issue of the ALAR Journal.

Orlando Fals Borda - the Convenor of World Congress 4/8 in Cartagena, Colombia, international leader for the Participatory Action Research community and long-term supporter of ALARPM. Orlando will also be profiled in the next issue of the ALAR Journal.

ALARPM wishes to thank these people for their contribution to ALARPM and to enacting the vision of a world where action learning and action research can be widely used and publicly shared by individuals and groups creating local and global change for the achievement of a more equitable, just, joyful, productive and sustainable society.

Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt - An interview by Jim Murphy

Introduction

Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt has enjoyed a distinguished career. Her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees are from the University of Kiel (Germany), her first PhD in Literature from the University of Queensland, her second PhD in Higher Education from Deakin University, and a Doctor of Letters (DLitt) in Management from the International Management Centre, Buckingham, UK.

Based on over twenty years experience in higher education research and development in Australia, she has successfully conducted major programs for improving learning, teaching and management in Queensland universities and universities in other states. Her reputation established, she has worked with academics in New Zealand, Hong Kong, South Africa and Europe (Germany, Austria, Holland, France, Sweden and UK).

Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt is rightly credited with helping to popularise action learning and action research in higher education, industry and government. Her development of this work is found in the books she has authored titled *Professional Development in Higher Education: A Theoretical Framework for Action Research* and *Action Research in Higher Education: Examples and Reflections* (both published by Kogan Page, 1992) and a large number of publications, including her edited books on *Action Learning for Improved Performance* (Aebis Publishing, Brisbane, 1991), *Action Research for Change and Development* (Gower-Avebury, Aldershot, UK, 1991; 1996) and *New Directions in Action Research* (Falmer Press, London, 1996). Her work warrants learning more about the person behind the writing that has influenced so many of us.

Interview

JM: Ortrun, thanks for agreeing to this interview. Perhaps we could start with your active retirement and ask how you got to where you are now, your origins, and what kind of professional career have you enjoyed?

OZS: For the first eleven years of my career, I was a high school teacher in Germany and briefly in Australia, teaching Human Movement Studies, English, German and French as foreign languages, literatures and cultures. Then I became a tutor in the German Department at the University of Queensland, earning exactly half the salary of a high school teacher (with a Masters degree). However, I used this chance to complete my PhD part-time in three years.

On the basis of my doctoral qualification, I was appointed lecturer at Griffith University, also in Brisbane, which had just started in 1974. It was a very exciting place to work in, because it was an alternative university, teaching interdisciplinary courses. The mission was to be relevant to society, to be problem-based in their curriculum, student-oriented, learner-centered - all new ideas at the time. This attracted me and I was thrilled to get a lectureship in the new Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT) where you and I met a few years later.

I got there just before the students arrived. I was in a team who designed the curriculum for the four foundation schools. First I was mainly working with academic staff in the School of Humanities, and then in Asian and International Studies. It also meant that I had changed my direction and disciplinary field from foreign languages and literatures to curriculum and academic staff development in higher education. So I

had to catch up with a new literature in higher education research and development, to which I contributed with a second doctorate.

JM: This was some time later?

OZS: That was in the 80s and I got my degree in 1986.

JM: How is it that you came to Australia as a secondary teacher? What brought you here?

OZS: I had an assistant teacher in Germany who was from Southport, with a young wife. They showed me photos and told me about the Gold Coast. It sounded interesting to me because in those days I was very keen on sport. So after a divorce, I visited them and loved it so much that I decided to migrate to Queensland in 1971 with my son who was then five and a half years old.

JM: So you had a career here, starting at secondary level, then you moved into universities, working in what, at that time, must have been right at the beginning of academic staff development in this country. So you were able to see it right from the establishment stage until its maturity today.

OZS: Yes, and what a journey that has been too!

JM: You've survived well! Whom have you worked with during that time and who has influenced your thinking most strongly?

OZS: When I first started, I caught up with the traditional, positivist research literature at that time, mainly from America and Britain. But I soon found that that was not what I intuitively believed in. The first major influence came from the Canberra College of Advanced Education (now University of Canberra) where scholars, such as Fred Emery, Alastair Crombie and Alan Davies, developed alternative paradigms and adult learning theories which were more in line

with my thinking than the traditional theories of knowledge transmission from expert to novice, the predominant paradigm in those days, even at Griffith University.

JM: Among the teaching staff and among the staff developers themselves?

OZS: Yes. There were exceptions but the majority of staff were still standing in front of the class and lecturing to the students. Of course they had tutorials and discussion groups but it was a traditional method of teaching.

JM: This search for personal meaning that features in your work - was this something you were doing as an individual at that time, or were you working with a group of people?

OZS: Both. At first I read a lot myself, because I was new in the field. Other colleagues knew some of the literature or were also trying to grapple with it from scratch, like me. We all were new and the academic staff development field was ill defined. My colleagues also came from different disciplines - from philosophy, from teaching English in high schools, and of various science backgrounds. So for all of us, the field of higher education was new and we each did our best to catch up with the literature and learn to talk to each other in a language of learning and teaching that we could understand in common.

JM: So initially, the influence you experienced in higher education was simply through reading the research literature. Did you have personal contact with these researchers whose ideas attracted you?

OZS: I met them at conferences, had discussions with them, and they gave me their unpublished papers, because they were only discussion papers at that time. A bit later on I was influenced by Action Research in the

Faculty of Education at Deakin University in Victoria. I had read about their work with teachers in high schools and primary schools, and I wondered whether that model could also be used in higher education. So I visited Deakin University and had discussions with several professors and senior academics, such as Stephen Kemmis, Robin McTaggart, John Smythe and Colin Henry. They did not know, but they speculated the approach could work. As a result, I enrolled in a second doctorate at Deakin University with Stephen Kemmis as my formal supervisor. I developed a new model of learning, teaching and professional development using action research in higher education, described and discussed in my two companion books on Action Research in Higher Education and Professional Development in Higher Education (see references above).

JM: At the time when you were working on this, to your knowledge, were others in other places trying to make similar applications of the action learning paradigm?

OZS: No, not in universities. Not at that time - that was in the early 80s.

JM: So your colleagues in the former CCAE (now University of Canberra) and Deakin University influenced your direction and approach. There must have been other people with whom you worked with who helped consolidate and expand your thinking processes and your understanding of the parameters of the field. So who might these people have been?

OZS: I worked with colleagues in the School of Modern Asian Studies at Griffith and am lucky I did. They were my co-action researchers. They were all people who were forward thinking, creative and innovative, for example, Colin Mackerras, Nick Knight, Mary Farquhar, Colin Brown and many others.

On the other hand, some of our colleagues felt threatened by our progressive ideas because they felt they also had to do new things - and they did not want to change. Colleagues who felt this way - not all of course - were happy and satisfied with things as they were. They had just established themselves in a new university and they did not appreciate our approach and ideas because it seemed to mean for them having more work, challenges and demands.

So it was not easy for us to develop innovations in learning and teaching. But we were a group who understood the terrain, who were fired up by the same ideas, and we complemented each other. We all had different talents, knowledge bases and skills; and we achieved synergies by working together, which we couldn't have achieved on our own. Systems thinking achieved great results that the students especially appreciated. We then published our action research in international refereed journals and that is how action research became accepted in the university.

My PhD thesis was probably the first one in higher education using action research and this helped action research become more acceptable. From then on it was easier. From the mid 80s, for all of us, it was easier to talk about and do action research in higher education. We got letters from all over the world from people who wanted to do similar things and asked us for advice. They requested copies of our papers and materials that we had developed. Gradually, the circle grew.

JM: Initially, the people who contacted you were people who had similar problems and interests in different institutions around the world. What kind of difficulties presented themselves with getting established, then gaining success and enjoying success within your own institution?

OZS: I remember once when I gave a 'Work in Progress' CALT seminar, I was ridiculed, criticised, personally attacked - in a very unfair way. That was a very negative personal experience - especially if you are a sensitive person. But when the circle of friends and colleagues grew, I didn't feel alone. In the beginning I was very much isolated and full of self-doubt. When I worked with colleagues in Modern Asian Studies, I had their support. I invited them to CALT seminars and they supported me from the audience. Eventually, with their help, I experienced that some of my critics had turned into critical friends and supported my endeavours. I never thought it would happen.

In the beginning debates were very hot, because the underpinning philosophies contrasted so strongly. The positivists were in the majority. Later on interpretists and then critical theorists began to challenge them. Many of our colleagues did not understand the paradigm in which their work was located. The word paradigm was very new in those days and they didn't have knowledge of the variety of philosophies and research paradigms that existed. Today it is much easier and we are aware of the differences. Many academics can now locate themselves and argue from their paradigm base. But in those days it was very different and this led to bitter experiences.

JM: Several years ago I attended a conference where an influential figure, summarising the day's progress, said that it was his belief that action research was a hammer some people were using inappropriately at times in trying to pin down research problems. He likened it to using that hammer to pound jelly to the wall with a nail. That was a neat summary, I thought, of combative and critical comments that some people make about action researchers.

OZS: And rightly so, because action research has often been used inappropriately; or people have called action research what is just shoddy research. That is why action research, with some people, has a bad reputation. I also think that you can't use action research and apply it in all situations and circumstances. It is most appropriate to use it when there are people involved, groups of people or whole organisations, and when the research problem and the particular situation are very complex. However, if you deal with natural science research questions, which can be answered by 'yes' or 'no', by refuting or confirming a hypothesis, then it is better to use traditional research methods. But if you intend to address complex human or social problems, then action research is more appropriate, in my mind, than using quantitative methods and statistics.

JM: What are the trickiest or most problematic moments for an action researcher?

OZS: When someone tries to go into an organisation as an external researcher with a pre-conceived idea of what the focus of action research should be, instead of finding out first what the major issues, concerns and problems are in that organisation and who would be willing and able to join the collaborative action research team. In other words, the research problem must be owned and the solution(s) worked out by the people themselves who will eventually be affected by the research results and their implementation. If they are not, people may only pay lip service to the research recommendations, but not really be committed to action and transformative change.

JM: Where is action research headed?

OZS: In the next five to ten years action research will become one of the most appropriate methodologies in professional and organisational development, and

most relevant to all sectors of society, because of the increasingly rapid change in all spheres of life. Instead of relying on external experts and knowledge in books (too quickly outdated), organisations will have to rely more and more on their own people's collaborative abilities to solve problems fast, to network, to anticipate change and actually to be faster than change.

Action learning and action research have been proven to develop transferable skills and lateral, critical, analytical, creative and innovative thinking, needed in a fast changing and competitive global world.

The best examples and evidence of success can be found in a recent book by David Dotlich and James Noel, entitled *Action Learning: How the World's Top Companies are Re-creating their Leaders and Themselves* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1998). The authors' action learning programs in big multi-national companies not only improved their productivity and bottom line, but they also became 'learning organisations'; and their leaders and managers developed life-long learning skills which equipped them to deal with change and totally new problems in new situations on a continuing basis.

JM: Let's move on a little bit and ask you to reflect more broadly on your career. What do you see as your chief contributions?

OZS: I think my contributions have been in three different fields. Firstly, in Australian drama; secondly, in higher education, especially in academic staff development; and thirdly, in the integration of action learning, action research and process management, not only in higher education but also as applied to professional and organisational development in industry, business, government and community.

JM: I think the first of the three areas you've nominated wouldn't be familiar to many of your colleagues. What can you tell us about your contribution to Australian drama?

OZS: Many don't know that I came from a literature background. When I came to Australia in 1971, I became very interested in the 'new wave' Australian drama and theatre and I thought it was really original and dynamic, full of energy and vibrancy, much livelier and more powerful than any other modern drama I had known before.

I flew to Sydney every fortnight and went to the theatre there and to Melbourne and met the actors, actresses and playwrights. I went to playwrights' conferences, which in those days were mainly held at the Australian National University in Canberra. On my first study leave in 1976, I was a Visiting Professor at the Universities of Frankfurt and Giessen in Germany. I was asked to give a course on Australian drama. I was able to get the primary texts from Currency Press in Sydney, but there was no secondary literature, no books on Australian drama in the libraries. It was then when I got the idea of producing materials for students and staff, especially overseas, to help them understand these works.

So I applied for a Griffith University research grant and got the funds to produce video programs and books. I invited the best academics specialising in a particular author/playwright. I selected the six most popular and best known playwrights and matching academics and invited the pairs, in turn, to the TV Studio at Queensland University. I designed the main framework questions which all video interviews had in common and which prompted the playwrights to talk about their life and work, but each interviewer was then free to ask specific questions relevant to the

particular playwright. I also edited a series of books on the life and work of these playwrights to accompany the videos.

Rodopi in Amsterdam published the books, and the Australian Film Institute in Melbourne distributed the videos. So there had been a gap in the literature on Australian drama, which I started to fill. Now most Australian universities and state libraries have my books and videos, and quite a few libraries overseas, too.

My great weakness is that once I have produced something I am not interested in promoting my work, but I go on to new things. So the distribution and marketing of the books haven't been successful. Rodopi used Heinemann in Australia as a distributor, but it has always been very difficult to get hold of the books; and I think they could also be out of print by now.

JM: In the work that you've done in higher education and management, what are two or three things that you would nominate that would make you most satisfied?

OZS: One is the staff development program on postgraduate research training and supervision. I received four major government grants to conduct these programs. The first one was an affirmative action program at Queensland University in 1992 for women academics.

When I got complaints from Heads of Departments at Queensland University, because men were not included, I applied for and received a second grant for a similar staff development program for male as well as female academics in all seven universities in Queensland.

The third program funded by a government grant was particularly for staff in the new (post-1987)

amalgamated university campuses, many of whom had to supervise postgraduate students, whilst being enrolled in PhD programs themselves.

The fourth program was on the specific topic of 'Supervising Postgraduates from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds'. These last two programs were for selected representatives from nine universities, i.e. the seven universities in Queensland plus Southern Cross University and the University of New England.

So these were the major programs and the feedback was very positive. We had keynote speakers as well as workshops in which people were actively engaged. As a result, the participants in these programs were committed and qualified to design and conduct similar workshop programs with colleagues and postgraduates in their own faculties or campuses; so there was a multiplier effect. To support them, we produced materials (in total 33 video programs, four books and four manuals for conducting workshops on postgraduate supervision) which are briefly described on the WoRLD Institute's Website (see <http://www.ortrun.com>) and which are now used in other universities in Australia and also overseas, for example in Hong Kong, South Africa, Singapore, Austria, Holland, Germany and the UK.

JM: And what was your third contribution?

OZS: My third contribution was in my role as the convenor of four major action learning programs, called QUAL (Queensland University Action Learning) programs from 1991 to 1993 when I was an Associate Professor in the Tertiary Education Institute and in charge of professional and organisational development in the University of Queensland. Two of these programs were my initiatives and funded again by major grants from the Federal Government, one of which was the

DEUE program (Departmental Excellence in University Education). The grant was distributed to nine departmental teams of academics addressing a major problem of learning and teaching in their department. The other one was the DEMIQ (Departmental Excellence in Managing Institutional Quality) program for senior academic and administrative staff. Again teams could apply for money on a highly competitive basis by submitting a detailed proposal. There were more proposals than we could fund, so the selection procedures were similar to those for research proposals in universities.

The Vice-Chancellor and Heads of Departments were very supportive. For example, the Vice-Chancellor opened the suite of QUAL programs and also came to the final Presentation Day when he publicly announced that he would grant \$100,000 for the continuation of QUAL for the next year from his own funds and, as far as I know, his grant was renewed every year until recently and QUAL is still running.

To sum up, we started QUAL in 1991, got the grants in 1992 and 1993, and the University has continued with one action learning program, for both academic and administrative staff, all these years. I think QUAL has also had a multiplier effect, and teaching and management became more recognised, similar to research. I was astonished that that was possible in a traditional university, but it was, with the support of senior management.

JM: With the things you've described, drama, higher education, staff development, you also became involved in management education and development and that's taken up a lot of time and energy. How did that begin and what have you done there that is satisfying?

OZS: It began when Jim Kable from the International Management Centre, Pacific Region, invited me to conduct an action learning program with a group of engineers at the Queensland Main Roads Department in 1989. I realised then and argued later in my third doctoral thesis (awarded in 1993 by the International Management Centres, Buckingham, UK, as a DLitt - Doctor of Letters) that you can transfer skills and knowledge from education or higher education to management education and organisation development.

At that time, I was also part of a group in Queensland called 'Process Management Group'. We were interested in exploring and facilitating processes through which employees could work out problems themselves, rather than relying on external consultants.

In that same year (1989) I initiated and convened the First International Symposium on Action Research in Higher Education, Industry and Government, because I wanted to find out whether action research could work in industry and government, as it did in education and higher education. I invited the big names in higher education and we worked hard for two days and came up with a generic definition of action research. We met with invited representatives from industry and government for one day to discuss our findings and our models. They confirmed that action research was not only appropriate to industry and government, but very much needed too. The delegates encouraged me to organise a bigger international event. So in 1990 my associates and I organised the First World Congress on Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management (ALARPM) in Brisbane.

In the First World Congress, we brought the three methodologies of action learning, action research and process management together and invited people from education, higher education, government, industry, business and the community.

In 1992 we held the Second Congress, again in Brisbane. At that Congress we launched the ALARPM Association, now a worldwide movement. The members of ALARPM are consultants, teachers, trainers, human resource managers, academics, the whole lot - anybody who is interested in management, professional, educational, organisational and/or community development.

JM: When you reflect on the kinds of things that you have thought about and done, do you tend to consider yourself an educational theorist or practitioner?

OZS: I try to be both. I have a theoretical framework to guide me in what I am doing, but I am basically a practitioner.

JM: Where do you see yourself going in the future? Where will most of your effort be?

OZS: I think I will always integrate theory and practice, research and development. That is what action research is all about. You do not create knowledge for the sake of knowledge creation, but you try to improve practice at the same time. That is the main aim of action research: To make a difference, to have an impact, to improve practice, to gain insight and knowledge, and to learn for the future.

JM: If you had a choice piece of advice for a budding lecturer, in any academic field, what might it be?

OZS: The process of my own learning over the years has convinced me that experience is the key to effective learning, and moreover, the constant process of

reflecting on experiences, whether good or bad, successful or unsuccessful. This has always been at the heart of my learning and that is what I would recommend to every professional - academic, executive manager or leader in industry, someone in government or a newly appointed teacher in a university: Becoming a 'reflective practitioner' and a 'personal scientist' and making one's (and each other's) tacit knowledge explicit.

Everyone has to develop his or her own theoretical framework and this framework cannot simply be copied or transmitted from one person to another. It depends on and must be founded in our values and worldviews. Everyone builds and lives in a very individual house.

JM: Exploring your life and experience, thoughts and contributions, has been a great pleasure. Thank you.

Source: This is an edited version of a paper first published by *Action Research International* (2000). You may read the full version at: <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-jmurphy00.html>

The author: Jim Murphy is Associate Professor, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He can be contacted at jmurphy@nie.edu.sg

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

ALARPM Management Committee - Contact Details

The Annual General Meeting was held at the World Congress in Ballarat in September last year. Our long term plans to grow the organisation and encourage broader international participation received a real boost at this meeting and throughout the Congress.

Some history - ALARPM began with a Management Committee based in Brisbane, Australia. About 6 years ago, membership of the Management Committee began to expand to include people from other States in Australia and from New Zealand. After reflection on past experiences, our planned strategy this year was to aim to include two people from each Australian State. It was hoped that this would help build a critical mass of interested people who might develop ALARPM activities and events in each location. This strategy was reflected in nominations prior to the AGM with two people nominated from Western Australia, two from South Australia (plus the President), two from Victoria and two from Queensland (in addition to those with special roles - Secretary, Treasurer and Vice-President International). The Vice-President National was based in New South Wales.

At the AGM last year, there was a dramatic shift. Pieter du Toit from South Africa was nominated prior to the meeting. At the meeting, Pip Bruce-Ferguson from New Zealand and Winston Jacob from Papua New Guinea also volunteered their services and were elected to the committee. After some serious networking over dinner, Susan Weil from the UK, Betsy Crane from USA and Sition Gion from Papua New Guinea also agreed to be co-opted onto the committee. In addition, two other Australian based people volunteered to be included as well - Jo Murray from Tasmania and

Christine King from rural Queensland. The new Committee is large and diverse and is working to develop processes which build participation, creativity and productivity. Our contact details are below:

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Projects

In “Projects”, we provide reports of work-in-progress or information about completed projects. There are many ways to use action learning and action research and many different disciplines and locations in which a project can be pursued. We invite people to provide reports so that we can all become aware of the wide variety of options available to us.

Social Development in Australia - A request for some Australian stories

Dear ALARPM Friends

At our meeting of the Board of Nurturing Evolutionary Development held at Guthega on 30 January, we decided that there would be value in getting members of Social Development Network (SDN) and other ‘social developer’ contacts to put together and publish personal stories of their work. The stories would convey an idea of the complexity and diversity of the professional approaches used by paid and unpaid social developers, and the endless possible goals in this field, at the same time illuminating the unifying social philosophy which is expressed in each case.

David Purnell has kindly offered to take on the task of engaging with what people come up with, editing the material and compiling the publication. I would like to ask you to consider contributing to this task, and will offer to provide back up to David by corresponding with any of you who wish, about the questions that arise for you as you reflect on and review your experience. David’s introductory letter is below.

Sincerely, Ned Icton

Dear Colleagues

I have been encouraged to undertake a project to gather stories about effective social development processes, and to edit and publish them in a suitable form. It is hoped that this will promote 'models of good practice' in social development in Australia, and be a form of outreach for NEDNet and SDN members.

I invite you to send me stories, drawn from your personal experience, or initiatives that are socially developmental.

Details that might be covered include:

- the factors that led you to be involved in a particular issue/venture;
- what the aim of the project was and to whom it was directed;
- how you began the project and who worked with you;
- which government or other agencies were involved, and in what way did this influence the project (eg re funding and accountability);
- problems you encountered along the way, turning points or crises, and how these were handled;
- outcomes of the project;
- lessons learned (for you as a person, and for the group or community or organisation);
- how your strengths and weaknesses as a social developer were affected by the experience;
- any principles of social development that you identified.

You may also wish to comment on what you see as the main roles you are involved in and what skills you bring to those roles, and any critical points along the way and how you have handled them. These points are a guide only. I suggest that 2000 words would be an appropriate length for a story.

Any material I receive will be considered for inclusion in the final publication.

Some SDN members have found that the experience of attending a SDN workshop has made a major impact on their approach to personal and social development. If this is the case, the story might reflect that experience as well as, or possibly instead of, describing a particular project.

There is no definite time frame for responses, but it would assist me if, in the next few months, you could let me have your story or at least an indication of intention to prepare something and an outline of the topic of the project. Material can be sent in an e-mail (rich text format), so long as a hard copy is sent also. Contact information is as follows:

Sincerely, David Purnell

Contact: David Purnell
10 O'Sullivan St
Higgins ACT 2615
Fax: 61-2-6254 6797
Phone: 61-2-6254 1111
E-mail: larkspur@cyberone.com.au

Contact: Ned Icton
Convener
Social Developers' Network (SDN) and
Nurturing Evolutionary Development
1/2 Schultz Avenue
Armidale NSW 2350
Phone: 61-2-6772 3523
Email: sdn@bluepin.net.au
Web: <http://home.bluepin.net.au/sdn/NED>

Cross-cultural links in higher education

- Australian and South African women academics in partnership

Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Education, Griffith University, was successful in achieving funding for an innovative and far reaching Australia – South Africa Institutional Links Project entitled: **Leadership Development of Academic Women through Action Learning and Action Research.**

Other Griffith University female academics are leaders in the project: Professor Marilyn McMeniman, Dean of the Faculty of Education, and Associate Professor Mary Farquhar, Faculty of International Business and Politics.

This exciting project is funded at \$154,100 by the Australian Government's overseas aid program through the Agency for International Development (AusAID) and is managed by IDP- International Development Projects. The Program is being undertaken in both South Africa and Australia over a two year period (2000-2001). It aims to develop leadership skills of academic women in six technikons in Gauteng. This aim is pursued through training and support for staff development personnel and other senior academic staff of the institutions, to conduct collaborative Action Learning programs within and across institutions.

Project activities commenced with a Residential start-up workshop in Gauteng to introduce key trainers to the Action Learning and Action Research approaches and skills for implementation. Staff developers then undertook action learning activities including training of other women academics in the six technikons, with regular monthly progress review meetings.

Key participants attended a Leadership program in Australia during which time each was “shadowed” by a senior Australian female academic, acting as a mentor. Together with senior leaders at Southern Cross University, headed by Professor Sandra Speedy (Director of the Graduate College of Management), Professor Angela Delves (Pro-Vice-Chancellor) and Professor Angele Cavaye, the Griffith University team will travel to South Africa to undertake workshops for the local participants.

Benefits emphasise Leadership and Professional Staff Development of women academics in the six technikons, with participants gaining confidence and skills for further action learning and innovatory initiatives. Project activities will develop the women academics’ understanding, experience and skills of action learning. These concepts and skills will then be incorporated into regular teaching programs in the technikons for wider dissemination. Project benefits will also include increased professional linkages, publications and networking of women academics in the two countries.

For more information about the project please contact:

Professor Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt
49 Chanel Crs
Eight Mile Plains Qld 4113, Australia
Phone: 61-7-33410151
Fax: 61-7-33410152
Mobile: 0418-150183
Email: ortrun@one.net.au
Website: <http://www.ortrun.com>

We invite people to submit reports of work-in-progress or information about completed projects – so that we can all become aware of the wide variety of

options available to us.

Networking

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

New Zealand Action Research Network(NZARN)

Aim of NZARN

To provide members with a means of:

- Maintaining links with other Action Researchers
- Receiving a mail-out three times per year, containing:
 - A newsletter with information about networkers and our Action Research Centre initiatives
 - Recent journal articles/other publications on topics of Action Research
 - Advice about useful publications
- Sharing information and experiences through an annual conference (being held in Auckland in 2001)

To achieve this aim it would be appreciated if networkers could:

- Pay an annual administration fee of \$30
- Inform us of newsworthy items and especially news of networkers
- Alert us to useful articles and publications
- Draw our attention to special issues related to Action Research
- Advise us of ways in which we can increase our ability to meet networkers' needs. For example, it is hoped to introduce a chat room during 2001 which would enable networkers to communicate quickly and easily about matters of concern and interest

Who belongs?

The Network has members with interests in early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education; educational consultants; people with advisory and accrediting bodies. We'd like to extend the network to include those working in commercial organisations, social work and agriculture also, as action research is occurring in those areas both in New Zealand and throughout the world.

How do I join the network?

Send \$30(NZ) annual administration fee to:

Eileen Piggot-Irvine
Network Co-ordinator
P.O. Box 1590
WHANGAREI
Phon: 64-9-432 2512
Fax: 64-9-432 2438
Email: epi@igrin.co.nz

Guidelines for contributors

Contributions to this journal

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

We welcome contributions in the form of:

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

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

Contributed case study monographs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The cost of *Consulting on a consultation protocol* is listed in the following Publication order form.

*I would like to receive more information about the
ALARPM Association and its activities*

Email: alarpm@uq.net.au

Name:	Please send me more information about: <input type="checkbox"/> membership of the Association <input type="checkbox"/> other publications related to action learning and action research <input type="checkbox"/> the next World Congress on action learning and action research <input type="checkbox"/> other conferences, workshops, seminars
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Information for subscribers

ALARPM membership subscription

The ALAR Journal can be obtained by joining the Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management (ALARPM) Association. Your membership subscription entitles you to copies of the ALAR Journal and a reduced price for Action Research Case Studies.

ALARPM membership also provides you with discounts on other publications (refer to attached Publication order form) special interest email networks, discounts on conference/seminar registrations, and a membership directory. The directory gives details of members in over twenty countries with information about interests and projects as well as contact details. The ALARPM membership application form is enclosed.

ALAR Journal subscription

A subscription to the ALAR Journal alone, without membership entitlements, is available to individuals at a reduced rate. Subscription rates for institutions and libraries are also invited. The ALAR Journal subscription form follows the ALARPM membership application.

Overseas subscriptions for ALARPM membership or the ALAR Journal can be paid by credit card (as indicated); payments by cheque, money order or bank draft should be in Australian dollars drawn on an Australian bank

NEW MEMBER SUBSCRIPTION FORM

❖ *I wish to apply for membership of the Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management Association Inc.*

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<i>given names (underline preferred name)</i>		<i>family name</i>
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❖ *Do you wish to be linked with a world network of people with similar interests and have your information included in our database and appear in our annual networking directory?*

Yes *No*

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To apply for ALARPM membership, which includes ALAR Journal subscription, please complete the information requested overleaf and the payment details below. You do not need to complete the ALAR Journal subscription form.

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ALARPM Association Inc.

PO Box 1748

Toowong Qld 4066 Australia

Phone: (61-7) 3345 7499

Fax: (61-7) 3273 5707

Email: alarpm@uq.net.au

