

WHAT MIGHT BE : USING
COLLABORATIVE ARTS-BASED
METHODS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE
RESEARCH

Public participation in transitions Webinar

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PLAN

Unpacking the title :

- 1) Arts-based research (research-creation)
- 2) Collaborative methods in social sciences

1 + 2 = 3

- 3) Commonalities and some examples to inspire



CREATIVE ENQUIRY (RESEARCH- CREATION)

Not so much “new” as newly recognized

Variety of terminology

Research-creation (Chapman & Sawchuk 2012) - accent on research and creation are articulated to one another and mutually constitutive

A form of INTERVENTION, not art for art's sake



DIFFERENT ARTICULATIONS

- Artistic practice as research *creation as research*
- Arts as means for enabling exploration of a lived reality (psychology, art therapy – questions of identity, subjectivities – ex social work). *research-from-creation*
- *Creative presentations of research*

Presence of several categories simultaneously – example:
Vero Leduc « C'est tombé dans l'oreille d'une Sourde » (It fell on deaf ears) <https://vimeo.com/221637869>



THE POTENTIAL

Research-creation has a strong potential as a form of intervention precisely due to its often *experimental, processual nature*. Generating *situated* forms of knowledge, combined with *new ways of developing and disseminating that knowledge*, research-creation helps reveal different contexts and methods for cultural analysis. (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012)

Other ways of knowing (experiential), attention to nonlinear, nonanalytic thought and experience

Transformative experiences



AND FOR SOCIAL GOALS OR COMMUNITY ACTION?

Insights into “what matters”, “what is interesting”, the complexities of an evolving situation

Materiality can help orient social relations, makes things tangible - heightens visibility

Facilitates playfulness and the acknowledgement of multiple perspectives



COLLABORATIVE/PARTICIPATORY METHODS

Cooperative enquiry – research *with* and *for* people rather than *on* them (Peter Reason, 1995)

A mindset rather than a method or series of methods

Accent on producing knowledge through community dialogue, education, raising consciousness, mobilizing for action. This implies paying attention to needs, demands and critiques as they are formulated “on the ground”



TRANSFORMATIVE PRAXIS (Fals-Borda, 1991)

Shared ownership and community analysis of issues with an orientation towards action (devising solutions to pressing community issues) (Reason & Bradbury, 2006)

Helping people to "name," and, consequently, to change their world (Beder, 1991)

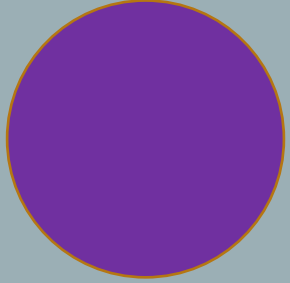


A GROUP PROCESS

Sharing experiences, perspectives helps turn isolated opinions into a springboard for collective reasoning

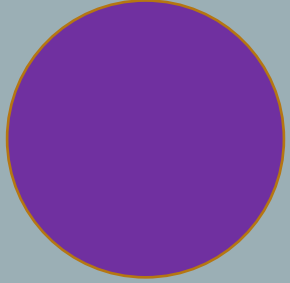
Giving visibility to experiential, presentational and practical ways of knowing. The knowledge produced is socially heard, legitimized and becomes part of a group's collective knowledge

Collective empowerment : greater awareness of both the socio-cultural realities that shape lives and communities, and their capacity to transform that reality



WHEN ARTS-BASED METHODS MEET COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

“Arts-based and collaboration forms of research are particularly suited to working with participants who may not respond to the more verbal methods of survey forms, interviews and focus groups. While working with arts-based collaborative inquiry does not necessarily change the power differentials between researchers and participants, many observers have noted the potential of these methods for ethical relationships and social change” (Laimputtong and Rumbold, 2008, p. 3)

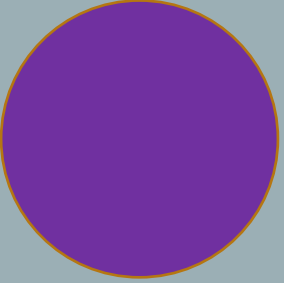


STRENGTHS ...

Arts-based approaches provide opportunities to conduct research that liberates voice and embraces a pluralist community of inquiry (Bradbury & Reason, 2008). This type of work provides “an organizing system that informs by eroding predeterminations, un-naming categories, and swamping the pretense of objectivity” (Rolling, 2010, p. 108).

Holistic and transdisciplinary – appropriate for complex problems

Emotionally and politically evocative

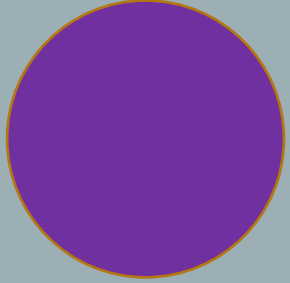


.... AND CHALLENGES

Relations of authority/power – who is leading, accountability and responsibility

Iterative, fuzzy process requires tolerance for uncertainty, openness to discovery, possibly even changing the research focus

Assessing the research – Is there fit between methods and question ?; social significance – does it produce new knowledge, is it transformative? ;To what extent are aesthetic criteria important?



MIXING AND MATCHING MEDIA/MEANS

Stages of the research process:

- Initial - to uncover problems or determine priorities,
- Body of project - to gather data (accent on content,) increase awareness (accent on process and empowerment)
- Dissemination – public performances, exhibitions, dissemination on TikTok, etc

Media used

- Visual – photography and Photovoice, collage, drawing, sculpting, etc.
- Sound – radio, music
- Text – poetry, fiction or fictionalizing
- Performance – dance, theatre, poetry slams....

THE BIG RETHINK – CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN A UNIVERSITY FACULTY (U.K.)



<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2013/08/16/bournemouths-big-rethink-project/>

PHOTOVOICE: WHAT DOES YOUR GARDEN MEAN TO YOU? (CANADA)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDM5pYMZLjs>



I GET MORE EXERCISE



"We can grow our favorite organic vegetables that are good for health and help save money as well. In addition, it helps us to remain active when we do something in the garden everyday. When I miss my brother and sister I feel loneliness, so I go to my garden and enjoy gardening."



Photographer: Khaga Bhadr Rai | Country: Bhutan/Nepal | Garden: Mosaic



NAME:
DHAN MAYA CHHETRY

COUNTRY:
BHUTAN/NEPAL

GARDEN:
MOSAIC



"MY FAMILY IS BORN ALL OVER THE WORLD. MOST OF THE TIME WHEN I FEEL ALONE AT WORK I WORRY ABOUT THEM AND I GET DISTRACTED. AFTER I GOT THIS GARDEN, I STARTED TO PLANT THOSE VEGETABLES THAT I MISS FROM MY COUNTRY. THEY HELPED ME NOT TO WORRY. I GO TO THE GARDEN, WATER THE PLANTS AND TALK WITH MY FRIENDS FROM THE COMMUNITY. IT IS VERY RELAXING."



"THIS IS MY GARDEN AT MESAIC CHURCH. THE FAVORITE PART ARE PEPPERS AND BRUSSELS SPROUTS. I COULDN'T GET THE SEEDS OF THE BRUSSELS TO GROW THE FIRST ONE NEXT YEAR. THE GARDEN HAS RELEASED MY HAPPY FEELING, AS I WANT TO KEEP THIS MEMORY OF THE TIME I SPENT IN THE GARDEN. IT REMINDS ME OF MY EAST IN NEPAL, AS THAT'S WHY I HAVE THE NEPAL FLAG."

MAGNIFICENT RUBBISH (BELGIUM)

SARA COEMANS, KU LEUVEN

SETTING UP COLLABORATION

INVENTARISATION: walking exercises (photowalks, soundwalks, artefact walks)

CREATION: collaborative upcycling with materials from the neighborhood

DISSEMINATION: an exposition

EVALUATION

“a feeling of recognition.. of ‘look, all these people just come here to see us, because we participated in this project’”





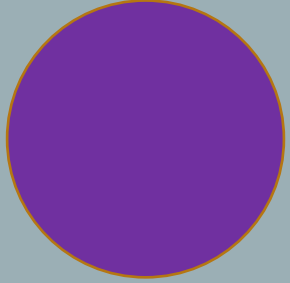
Photo credits: Aleksander Antonijevic, 2019

THE RADICAL HOPE PROJECT (GALLAGHER AND COLLABORATORS)

...what we perceive may be transformed if the way we pay attention changes.

(Isabelle Stengers, 2008, p 5.)

- civic engagement - who am I, relative to others, and what compels me to act upon my world*



CONCLUSION – THE POTENTIAL

The appeal of arts-based research results from the capacity of the arts to “...promote autonomy, raise awareness, activate the senses, express the complex feeling-based aspects of social life, illuminate the complexity and sometimes paradox of lived experience, jar us into seeing and thinking differently, and transform consciousness through evoking empathy and resonance” ((Chilton and Leavy (2020 p. 601) .

Critical arts-based research makes intentional use of imagination. It is a performative research methodology that is structured on the notion of possibility, the *what might be*, of a research tradition that is postcolonial, pluralistic, ethical, and transformative in positive ways (Finley, 2017 p. 561)

THANK YOU!

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