

Prepare for Action!

An Implementation Guide for Facilitators of Participatory Action Research



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About the Collaboration Council

The Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families was established in 1993 as the Local Management Board (LMB) for Montgomery County. Local Management Boards throughout the State of Maryland serve as a local catalyst where agencies and other groups collaborate to achieve positive results in the community. In 2004, the Collaboration Council became a quasi-public non-profit organization. It has a 21-member Board of Directors appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. The Board is comprised of 21 voting members: nine private and 12 from the public sector.

The Collaboration Council's mission is to promote the well-being of children, youth and families through collaborative partnerships. The Council convenes partners, plans strategies, implements solutions, evaluates community investments, and shares knowledge to guarantee that all children are ready to learn, ready for work, and ready for life.

For more information about this guide, contact the Collaboration Council at info@collaborationcoucnil.org or 301-610-0147



CLARA PARKER

About Clara Parker

Clara is a trainer and researcher whose work focuses on education and human development. She is Director of the Global Justice Institute at El Puente, an organization committed to human rights and social justice in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Clara speaks, trains, and writes on Participatory Action Research (PAR), arts for social change, curriculum design, school advisories, cultural organizing, and more. Clara received her M.S. Ed in 2012 from Bank Street College of Education in Leadership in Community-Based Learning. Her integrative master's thesis, Leadership at the Threshold, focuses on the role of the arts, voice and agency, and mentoring relationships in providing opportunities for "enhanced participation" in areas that lead to the development of leadership capacity. She received her B.A. in 2004 from NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study in Community Education, Latin American Studies, and Studio Art.



WELCOME to Prepare for Action!

Prepare for Action! is a guide for implementing PAR in your organization. We are so glad you are here and interested in bringing the transformative power of PAR to your youth participants and organization. This guide will prepare you to facilitate and implement PAR with your participants. It is a useful tool in developing a course of inquiry based on what youth feel are most important and allow them to be authentic leaders with your support.

This guide is designed for use by members of the PAR Training for Practitioners. As a participant in the training, you will be introduced to all parts of the guide so you can take lessons learned back to your programs and participants. You will learn PAR by doing PAR, and then turnkey that learning back to your organization.

The lessons in this guide are designed to lead you step-by-step through implementing PAR with your participants, allowing for authentic youth voice, innovative youth development practices, and contribution to the wider field of youth development research in the process.

This guide was written by Clara Parker, a specialist in Participatory Action Research and Youth and Professional Development, with support from Cheryl Jenkins, Data and Research Director, and Elaine Johnson, Community of Practice Director from the Collaboration Council. The development of the guide and Train the Trainer Intensive came out of the 2016 Collaboration Council PAR workshops with a dedicated Youth Research Team, guided by Maria Alejandra Salas Baltuano and Eric Macias of Marylnd Multicultural Youth Center, along with young adult leaders and providers Brandon Johns, MANUP and Jennifer Gauthier, Lead4Life.

This guide is formatted into four main sections. *Overview:* provides an introduction to PAR and will prepare you to implement PAR in your organization; *Lessons:* nine lessons, each one guiding you step-by-step in facilitating each component of PAR; *Handouts:* materials to be used as part of the lessons; and *Resources:* a glossary of terms, resources on PAR, inspiration from the field, and reflections from conducting past PAR projects. You will find sections in the guide for notes, reflections, and ideas that come up along the way. Our hope is that you will make this guide yours - adapting and creating as suits your youth participants' and program's needs!

In powerful participation,

The Participatory Action Research: Prepare for Action! Team

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OVERVIEW



Introducing PAR to the Collaboration Council

The Collaboration Council selected Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the method of choice to respond to the Maryland Governor's Office for Children (GOC) charge to each LMB to expand their data collection efforts and improve their assessment of local needs among vulnerable children and families. With technical assistance funds from GOC in FY2016, PAR helped the Collaboration Council enhance its capacity to plan and identify the best ways to improve outcomes for disconnected youth by working directly with this population.

The Collaboration Council's planning efforts involve taking the time to clarify the County's purpose for action by hearing from young people about their needs and issues related to their experiences in the County so that the community could better determine what gaps exists and how the County could leverage services to achieve greater success for this population. The goal was to allow youth to tell their stories in a safe and welcoming space so there would be a richer understanding of systemic problems and policies that hinder re-engagement.

The Collaboration Council also champions Participatory Action Research as an authentic way to engage with young people—one of the Council's core values. "Youth Engagement" is a best practice for reducing disconnection and improving outcomes for youth. The Collaboration Council saw this as funding opportunity as a chance to learn how PAR can be used as a tool for improving youth voice locally.

Our hope is that PAR will help other organizations engage young people in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and integrate youth voice into the creation of strategies and policies in a meaningful way. And youth who become PAR participants see the power in using their voice for action!

Disconnected youth in Montgomery County

Disconnected youth are teenagers and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor in school. Some are ready to work but unable to find a job, while others need to work but face significant barriers, such as transitioning from foster care or juvenile justice facilities, homelessness, early parenthood, or other challenges. The consequences of disconnection are severe. The failure to transition into the adult workforce results in an increased likelihood of living in poverty, poorer physical and mental health, and higher costs to society.

Around 8,520 youth in Montgomery County are disconnected or weakly connected to school or work. Youth of color, African American or Latino youth, are three times as likely as their peers to be disconnected from school or work. Low academic achievement is one of the leading causes of disconnection. A shrinking labor market compounds the crisis for these youth.



Lesson Progression and Delivery

The guide is separated into three main sections (1) on the background and foundations of PAR, (2) lessons designed to immerse you and your participants in the PAR cycle of inquiry, and (3) handouts and additional materials in an appendix. Each lesson will open will some background on Participatory Action Research and then lead you through an exploration of one of the steps of the PAR cycle. Because you will first be trained in the material and then facilitate it to your own participants, there are spaces in the guide for you to write notes, ideas, and adaptations for how you will facilitate it yourself.

Format of Lessons

Each lesson opens with a green box that contains some details you will use for planning. Most contain an opening activity, some context setting discussion, a hands-on activity, a closing activity, and a homework assignment. Handouts used in the lessons are available as an appendix.

Terms Used

You will find these terms used throughout the lessons:

DURATION: How long this lesson will take to facilitate. Given as a range from 60-90 min, so you can stretch over longer sessions or split between multiple shorter sessions.

OBJECTIVES: The top 2-3 expected outcomes you will achieve in this lesson.

GUIDING QUESTIONS: Designed to give facilitators and participants a course of inquiry in each lesson.

FORMAT: The kinds of facilitation used in the lesson (i.e. lecture, discussion, presentation, hands-on activity).

MATERIALS: The supplies needed for the lesson beyond this guide (including chart paper, markers, and sticky notes). Handouts will be provided in the appendix.

FACILITATOR NOTES: These will offer suggestions for how to adapt the curriculum in different settings.

SPACE SET UP: This describes how to set up the space, technology, and components that will help facilitate the lesson. All lessons can be delivered in a regular classroom/meeting room, with minimal if any adaptation.



OPENING: This might include a short icebreaker, a short lecture or discussion, or another kind of hands-on activity.

CONTEXT SETTING: This provides essential background information that will help ground activities and discussion that will follow.

SCRIPTED TALKING POINTS: You will find some of the introductions, context setting, and activities written out in script form. This is to provide you with a narrative for teaching the lesson, from beginning to end.

ACTIVITY: This is a step-by-step guide through a hands-on segment of the lesson. *Reflection, Discussion, Sharing* are additional categories that will appear within lesson plans and are designed for teachers to help guide students through the flow of the session.

CLOSING: Most lessons will end with brief but intentional activities that create a space for participants to share insights and feelings they have gotten out of the experience.

ADDITIONAL TERMS:



We are so glad you are interested in becoming a PAR practitioner! To get the most out of this guide and the associated training, the creators expect that:

Facilitators will arrive with:

- Experience in youth development work
- Passion for providing youth opportunities to lead
- Desire to engage youth in social action
- Curiosity for new ideas and desire to bring innovation to programming

Facilitators will leave with:

- Concrete tools, methods, and principles of PAR to incorporate into programming
- Comprehensive understanding of PAR as a practice to increase genuine youth voice and decision making
- Excitement to continue PAR in their programs

Youth Participants arrive with:

- Some level of involvement and commitment to your program
- An openness to learning new things
- A willingness to participate fully



Youth Participants leave with:

- Concrete skills that can translate to workplace readiness such as:
 - Research, documentation, critical thinking, interview, problem-solving, public speaking, writing, video recording and team-building skills
- Heightened awareness of social issues and the capacity to address them
- A newfound sense of power and ability to change the world around them



What is your goal in bringing PAR to your organization?

Many groups initiate PAR because there is something they want to find out, a problem they want to solve, or a new direction/action they want to take. The following categories might overlap, however, it is helpful to be clear about how you are entering the research process:

Assessment: Are you initiating a PAR project to assess an existing program? Many organizations use PAR for exactly this purpose. BEAT Global (Bridging Education and Art Together), a youth organization that uses the elements of Hip Hop to accomplish a range of youth development capacities, engaged in a year-long PAR process in 2016 to find out exactly which capacities youth were building and what tools instructors were using to develop those capacities. The result was the development of a new training program where their team trains new instructors in their most impactful practices. PAR enabled BEAT Global to understand what they were doing well and how they were doing it, eliminating ineffective practices and replicating effective ones.

Professional Development: Using the methods outlined in this guide, PAR can be an illuminating tool to examine your own practice and competencies, individually, as a team, or as an entire organization. Practitioners can develop PAR investigations to focus on their own service delivery and performance.

Problem Solving and Solution Building: In PAR, affirmative inquiry leads researchers away from simply posing problems and toward identifying solutions. For example, one teacher used PAR to develop a focus question related to the issue of respect among students. Witnessing a pattern of students calling out over each other, one teacher asked, "How can I inspire my students to be respectful of one another?" and set out in a PAR study looking for evidence that could create a solution.

Action for Change: The goal of PAR is to create change through action. This starts with asking a question. At El Puente-- a community-based human rights and social justice organization in Brooklyn, NY--a group of community-based artists facing rising rents and rampant gentrification formed an inquiry about how they as Latino artists could gain more visibility and opportunities. The group decided to hold a street festival in the neighborhood to celebrate Latino artists in the community. El Puente's ¡Wepa! Festival has become an annual event drawing bigger crowds with each year.



Who will lead your PAR inquiry?

Consider your organization. Will you implement PAR with a group of participants from an existing program? With a group of fellow providers from one program or different organizations? A mix of the above? There are benefits to each. An existing group of participants or providers from one program will likely have set meeting times, aligning schedules, and access to meeting space in a common location. By starting with an existing group, you can eliminate a lot of hassle and coordination that needs to happen before starting. You can also easily build a PAR project into an existing activity or class as opposed to starting something brand new. On the other hand, working with a group of participants and/or providers from different programs will give you a much broader range of experiences and thus, data sources. There is also an increased opportunity to uncover findings and take actions that will have an impact beyond one program.

How will you implement PAR into your organization?

The following chapters outline steps and activities for starting a PAR project. The list is not exhaustive! Feel free to be creative with what you try and who you try it with. Whether working within an existing program or starting fresh with a new group, you will find useful tools here.

Examples of PAR used in a variety of ways

BEAT Global implemented a yearlong PAR project with their team of arts instructors. They collected data with participants during class and used existing professional development time to form their inquiry, analyze data, and decide on a course of action.

El Puente developed a Youth-led PAR project that was built into their afterschool visual art class. Youth members formed questions and examined how they as art-makers could create social change.

El Puente youth in a **Summer Environmental Justice Program** used PAR to investigate how they could get their peers to care and participate in a movement for environmental justice.

The Collaboration Council initiated a PAR process with a team of young adults. The facilitator, Maria Alejandra, started by building trust within the group because the group was not an existing one. After Collaboration Council staff used the graffiti wall data collection method to a convening of providers to gather perspectives on the issue of disconnected youth. These reflections were later used by the Participant Research Team as new data.



Facilitator Preparation

Before delivering any of the lessons in this guide, allow yourself time in advance to prepare (at least one hour per lesson). You will want to:

- Read through the entire lesson to familiarize yourself with the content.
- Make notes and changes to the script.
- Check that you have all necessary materials.
- Prepare any chart papers and handouts.
- Prepare ongoing material needs, such as chart papers you will use throughout the lessons.
- Set up the space you are working in.

Facilitator Reflection

After each session, allow yourself time to reflect on the lesson. What went well? What do you want to change for next time? What will you need to review or complete next time? Write these notes down while it is still fresh in your mind.

Facilitation Tips

Facilitating PAR is not very different from other projects you may have facilitated with youth. The principles of Youth Development will aid you here—including the principle that young people see adults valuing them, that youth are resources and given useful roles, that adults have high expectations for them, and that youth take a lead in planning and decision making.

See the Search Institute's "40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents" in the reading list at the end of this guide.



Meet your team where they are at. It is always important to emphasize that your team should be at the center of the research. What are they most curious about? What do they lie awake thinking about at night? The topics and questions that are already on people's minds make for the richest research. For example, in the Collaboration Council PAR project, young adult participants raised the issue of homeless youth as extremely important to them and one they wanted to focus on.



Stay positive. PAR at its core is an affirmative process, meaning that beyond just identifying problems, PAR is all about solution building and forming inquiries that open up possibilities. With PAR, you ask the questions you want to answer in action.



Time and Pacing

It can be hard to time a lesson perfectly, so prepare to be flexible! You may find you need more time than planned to complete each lesson. If that is the case, make a plan to spread out material over multiple sessions. If you have time to spare, you can:

- Incorporate any of the teambuilders listed in this guide (or ask your participants to lead one they know).
- Have participants journal around one of the guiding questions listed at the top of each lesson.
- You can also look ahead to next lessons (especially if you are working in longer sessions with your group).
- As you start collecting and analyzing data, you can use sessions as work time to go through material.
- Pacing is key. It is more important to make sure everyone has grasped each part of the lesson before moving on to the next idea. Check for understanding throughout the lessons. Ask participants to review what they have learned so far and put into their own words.

Space, Location, and Other Considerations

All lessons can take place in any basic classroom or meeting space. Most lessons are designed to take place with everyone (facilitator and participants) in a circle of chairs or around a table. If you have a dedicated space you can leave chart papers up in from lesson to lesson, that will save you time. Otherwise, plan to save chart papers from each session to post up again in the next session. A few lessons will require the use of a computer/projector to show videos, so make sure to check the 'materials needed' ahead of time.

Involving Youth

We recommend that you start with an existing, committed group of youth participants so that your group can both have consistency and build off the work you have already done together. This guide is geared toward facilitating PAR with adolescents and young adults (16-24).

Looking Beyond Your Initial Project

While your PAR project may have to begin and end in a certain time frame, there are several ways the inquiry you start can continue after the culminating sharing/action. You may find ways to continue the research as part of other program projects. Certainly the skills developed by you and youth participants can extend to other areas of your program and lives.

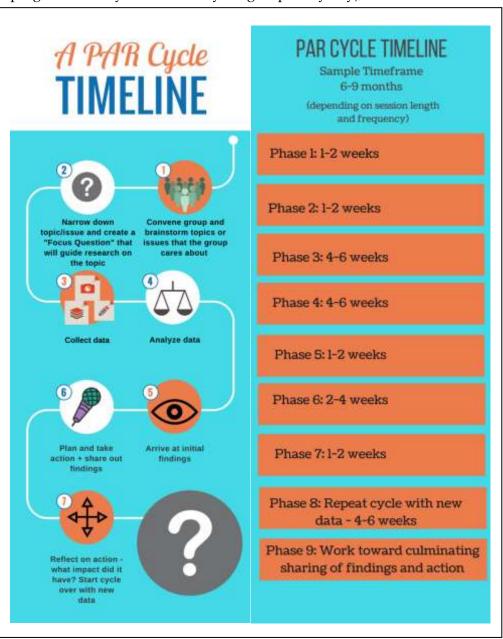


Sample Project Timeline

How much time you can spend on each phase will depend on (1) how much time you have for the project (one semester, an entire program year, or one summer) and (2) how often you are able to meet with your group. If you are meeting once a week, a longer timeframe is recommended. For projects that are intensive (like a summer program where you meet with your group every day), a shorter timeframe

will work for you. The goal of PAR is to take action based on what you discover in your research. You will repeat the cycle as many times as you have time for with your group. However, it is wise to plan ahead for a culminating action, including sharing the research, which matches your program schedule. That way, you will have a clear end date to finish by. Although, you will be able to plan for midproject actions that build toward a culminating action.

A typical time frame is between six to nine months. The infographic on right breaks down the main phases of a PAR inquiry.





"Those who are the closest to the experience should be closest to the research."

Background and Methodology of Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an interactive process for planning, facilitating, and assessing programs & community initiatives based on a cycle of observations, inquiry forming, data collection, data analysis, and action. PAR is an ongoing process that involves all major players (youth included!) In PAR, the process is the product, and findings are based on qualitative data - including personal experiences, opinions and reflections.

Participatory Action Research was founded as an "alternative paradigm" to classic subject-object research (Fals-Borda)¹. PAR founders aimed to flip the power imbalance of traditional research in their quest for social justice. PAR relates directly to the principles of Education for Liberation and the work of Paulo Freire, whose Methodology "See, Analyze, Act" was a cornerstone of Catholic Activism in Brazil in the 1960s².

With PAR, the conductors of the research are the subjects themselves, investigating issues that matter to them and in which they are the experts. The result of PAR is a powerful set of findings that can guide stakeholders to move in a different direction, take actions based on what was discovered (including sharing findings and making policy recommendations), and invest in areas that contribute to the most desired outcomes.

While this facilitator's guide outlines several methods and strategies for conducting PAR, what is more important is that PAR is a set of principles about the nature of knowledge, learning, and power.

¹ Orlando Fals Borda was a strong proponent for Participatory Action Research in Colombia in the 1970s. He emphasized community action, social justice, and grassroots knowledge to be incorporated into research.

² Also related to PAR is the work of Augusto Boal (Forum Theater), and Luis Moll ("Funds of Knowledge"), and principles for practicing community-based art (i.e., art that is for the people, by the people, and of the people). See more literature on PAR in the bibliography.



In your own implementation of PAR, you might develop new strategies and adapt ones in this guide to suit your team. What should stay the same is the principle that those who are the closest to the experience should be closest to the research. In the case of youth and young adult development work, this includes the participants themselves and the providers who work with them.

Many of the methods outlined in this guide will feel familiar to youth development practitioners, including:

- Finding out what really matters to young people and designing programming around it is core to meaningful youth participation, and
- Meaningful innovation and change is the result of engaging young people as resources, not recipients.

You might use very similar strategies to make group decisions, brainstorm around topics that matter to your participants, and discover what people already know about a topic or issue before starting to study it. PAR is based on principles of critical consciousness, whereby individuals/students are active agents in their learning and come to the table with full experiences and knowledge before beginning, as opposed to being empty containers where educators can "bank" information in a deposit.³ Essential principles in PAR include that feelings, thoughts, opinions, personal experiences, and stories are all qualitative data. Reminding PARticipants of this continually reinforces the significance of being both researchers and 'subjects⁴' of the research.

Youth-Adult Partnerships

According to Advocates for Youth, "A true [youth-adult] partnership is one in which each party has the opportunity to make suggestions and decisions and in which the contribution of each is recognized and valued. A youth-adult partnership is one in which adults work in full partnership with young people on issues facing youth and/or on programs and policies affecting youth." PAR is a perfect way to build true youth-adult partnerships.

³ The "banking" system of education was described by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as a manner by which education and schools serve as a tool of oppression.

⁴ You may discuss with your group some of the negative connotations of the word 'subject' as it applies to people in research studies and decide if you want to use that word or not.



PAR and Social Justice

PAR is especially significant in working with young people, communities of color, and people from poor/low-income neighborhoods. The idea that you don't need an outside researcher/expert is central to PAR's origins in self-determination, equity, and empowerment. PAR has been used in several public health studies where the research relies on community members collecting data based on their concerns and in areas where they have more direct knowledge.

In the youth development field, PAR builds upon development capacities like leadership, critical thinking, and creativity. PAR aligns with the tenets of sharing knowledge central to Hip-Hop. The set of principles guiding PAR run counter to the culture of high-stakes testing so many young people are subjected to - where "correct answers" are not only hidden behind bubbles but intentionally obstructed from view in tests that are designed to trick their takers! Through PAR, young people and adults get to make statements about their own experiences and be the expert in those statements.

A Definition of Participatory Action Research

PARTICIPATORY: The conductors of the research are the subjects themselves, investigating issues that matter to them and in which they are the experts.

ACTION: The purpose of the research is not simply to accumulate data and write a report. The ultimate goal of PAR is to engage people in real live social change as they do the research.

RESEARCH: At the heart of PAR is the aspect of inquiry and investigation. Participants ask questions they feel passionate about and address issues they are affected by. However, they do not stop at making guesses. Participatory Action Researchers ask inquiry questions, make observations in a variety of settings, interview people who are affected, make connections to similar examples of research, and record their own reflections throughout the process.



From the Practitioners: What is PAR?

Ernest T. Stringer, in his book *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners*, wrote that "Action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (Stringer, 1996).

Orlando Fals Borda, widely recognized as one of the founding practitioners of Participatory Action Research wrote in *The Application of the Social Sciences'*Contemporary Issues to Work on Participatory Action Research this impassioned rationale for taking research out of the realm of academia and into the hands of everyday people:

"A gulf has been created between the "learned" and the "learner," as if the latter were minors without judgment and basic common sense about cause and effect...many of us who know that knowledge is multidimensional felt that we were missing much of importance from ignoring the accumulated experience and knowledge of the common people. Hence our general principle of the "summation of knowledges," which has certainly opened the eyes of many technicians and experts who thought they had a clear monopoly on knowledge."

In his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, **Paulo Freire** wrote:

"For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other."

"In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation."

Freire touches on several principles of PAR including the significance of inquiry, the power of individuals to see, understand, and change the world around them, and a process of doing so based in identifying problems and forming questions. Freire's simple yet powerful cycle of See \rightarrow Analyze \rightarrow Act is the basis for the PAR cycle you will be introduced to later in this guide.





THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT

PAR

AND HOW PAR CAN BENEFIT
YOUR YOUTH PROGRAM!



IT'S A CYCLE

PAR is conducted as a cycle: It combines observation, inquiry, analysis, reflection, and action in a repeating process.



PROCESS = PRODUCT

With PAR, the process is the product. PAR can be integrated into many learning, art-making, and organizational processes, not separated from them.



YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

In youth development settings, Participatory Action Researchers can include youth and adults working together.



QUALITATIVE DATA

PAR uncovers qualitative data. Examples of qualitative data include participants' personal experiences, opinions and reflections.



INQUIRY + CURIOSITY

PAR begins with curiosity, passion, and most importantly, a focus of inquiry that leads to other questions.



RESEARCHERS ARE THE SUBJECTS

Participants are both researchers and subjects, engaging themselves and others in a process of investigation and action that will directly impact them



SIMULTANEOUS PRACTICE

PAR offers a process of simultaneous practice, inquiry, investigation, reflection and action that can be infused into existing programs and projects.



FROM SMALL TO LARGE SCALE

PAR can be conducted in a single class, an organization, or at a community-wide level.



PAR AS PD

PAR is often used as a professional development strategy. What better way to improve your practice than by researching it and taking action based on what you find?



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LESSONS

Lesson 1: Setting the Stage

Lesson 2: Introduction to PAR Research and Practices

Lesson 3: Developing a PAR Inquiry

Lesson 4: Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Lesson 5: Gathering Data from People Who Matter

Lesson 6: Data Analysis Methods

Lesson 7: Arriving At and Sharing Findings

Lesson 8: Taking Action

Lesson 9: Reflecting On Success



LESSON 1

Setting the Stage

Lesson Description: This initial lesson will guide you through building community with a new or established group, setting goals and expectations, and starting to brainstorm issues that matter to the participants.

Lesson Format: Hands-on, movement, discussion, pair share, journaling

Duration: 60-90 min

Objectives:

- Build community in the group and get to know each other
- Establish group norms for safe space ("common grounds") that will be agreed upon in this session and referred to as you proceed in the project
- Start to think about topics participants are already curious/passionate/concerned with

Guiding Questions:

- What does this group need to start working together effectively and powerfully?
- What can we share about ourselves that will help guide a project based in what we are most curious and passionate about?

Materials Needed: Poster paper, pens/pencils, markers, chart paper

Space Set Up: Space to move around for icebreakers, chairs/desks in a circle with chart paper taped to wall or easel so everyone can see.

Introduction (3 min)

"Hi everyone. As you know, we are going to start working on a special project together that combines research, documentation, and most importantly, our own expertise in issues that matter to us. Before we dive into the main course, I want us to warm up with some energizers to get us familiar with each other."



Setting the Stage

Icebreakers and Teambuilders (10 min)

As any facilitator knows, a great way to start working with any group (youth and adults alike) is to build community and to introduce yourselves to each other. Because a PAR investigation like the one undertaken by the MCCC Research Team has individuals referring to personal experiences, it is important to set up a space that is safe for sharing, being open, and meeting everyone where they are at. Here are a few sample activities designed to build community with your group before you start. You may know several more icebreakers and teambuilders and can use them instead of these, and you may want to try out different ones at the beginning of the first few sessions.

Clusters

In this icebreaker, members of the group (whether they know each other or not), will divide into a few groupings based on a series of prompts. In each grouping, they will be given a second prompt or question to ask each other. The goal is to get to know each other on a deeper level.

Cluster 1: Get into a group with people who have the same favorite season. Share full names (including middle names, nicknames, etc.) + any story that goes with those names.

Cluster 2: Get into a group based on family order (i.e. oldest, youngest, middle, only child). Share names + how the role you play at work/with friends/at school is similar or different to the role you played in your family (i.e., the peacemaker, the clown, the leader).

Cluster 3: Get into a group based on favorite time of day. Share names + most powerful memory of starting something new.

Cluster 4: Get into a group with people with same birth month (one group can be people who didn't find a match). Share names + what each person uniquely bring to this group.

Handshakes

(For groups that know each other better or are comfortable with physically touching). Handshakes is similar to clusters, but instead of grouping based on prompts, everyone finds a partner and shakes their hand before responding to the same prompts as in clusters. After sharing responses, neither partner lets go after they are done introducing themselves – they each have to find a new partner to shake hands with but neither can let go of their old partner until BOTH have found a new partner to shake hands with. With small groups, repeat until everyone has shaken hands with every person in the group.



Setting the Stage

The Cold Wind Blows

Make a circle of chairs with one less chair than people. The facilitator stands in the middle to model first round and says "The cold wind blows if..." announcing a category they believe will apply to all or some of the people in the circle. If the category applies, the person must stand up from their seat and find a new seat (not directly to the left or right of them). "Hurricane" means everyone must get up. The person left without a seat stands in the middle of the circle and calls out the next category. Use the game to get to know who is playing! Categories should get more in depth as the game goes on. For example "The cold wind blows if you took the metro today," to start, "The cold wind blows if you are passionate about helping others," as you proceed.

Daily check-in

This can start off every session, with a simple invitation for everyone in the group to "check-in" before diving into the session agenda. This can be open or centered around a specific question, i.e. "What is one thing you want to celebrate today?" or "What is one thing you want to leave behind today?" This allows for everyone to feel acknowledged and fully present, despite any challenges they may have faced before.

Common Grounds (10 min)

Take the time to establish a safe, productive space with your group by agreeing upon common grounds.

"Because we are going to be working together closely, it is important that we set some common grounds as we start to work together. What are common grounds?"

Take 2-3 responses

"Great, thank you. Common grounds are like our group norms that we agree upon together. They are not quite rules, though whatever rules already exist in this space will still be there. These are an agreement we will make together for this space, as we work together."



Setting the Stage

Ask for some examples of common grounds from the group. You may come with your own that you would like to ask for, such as, "Be open to new experiences and material."

Ask for a participant to chart the common grounds so everyone can see.

"How does this list look? Is anything missing? Does anything need to be explained?"

Take a minute to discuss and fine tune any common grounds to get the wording to a place everyone agrees to.

"Does everyone agree with all these ideas?"

If so, have everyone sign or initial the chart paper. If not, discuss until agreement is reached.

Example of common grounds agreed to by the PAR youth at the Collaboration Council:

- We are equal learning partners (no one has more authority than anyone else in regards to what we explore together)
- Honor multiple truths (beliefs and perspectives differ because life experiences differ)
- Participate! (Step up if you find you are being quiet, step back if you talk a lot! A good rule of thumb is "2 before me": meaning wait until 2 people speak after you before you speak again)
- Speak from our own experiences (our personal experiences are powerful and we are the best people to share them. By all means, also share stories we have been told, i.e. by family members)
- Understanding = Love (Be compassionate with others and yourself).

Opening Discussion: "What are you most curious/passionate/concerned about?" (10 min)

Because PAR is all about investigating personal experiences based on what people are most passionate about, a great way to start is to respond to the question:

"What are you most passionate about?"

By starting with this question, you can later remind people that the point of PAR is to uncover solutions and take action in an area they are most passionate/concerned about! For groups that don't know each other, this can be added onto a go around of names + roles in their organization.

Allow people the time to fully share what they are most curious/passionate/concerned about. If you think your group will be reluctant to start, start with your own example or identify another staff member or participant ahead of time to start.

Ask for a participant to take notes or chart responses.



Setting the Stage

Journaling: What brings you here? What do you bring? (10 min)

Chart the 2 questions ahead of time.

"Now that we have set some foundations for our work as a group, we are going to take a few minutes to reflect on what brought each of us here (to the PAR group or to the program in general). Take out a piece of paper."

Facilitator's Note

You may decide that each participant has a designated journal or folder for this project, where all writing for the project will be kept together.

"In addition to answering what brings us here, respond to the question, what do you uniquely bring? This might include experiences, characteristics, and/or skills."

After 5 min of journaling, divide into pairs for sharing. Then, ask for a highlight or gem from each pair and reflections on the process.

"Did we hear similar things from different people? What did we learn from each other?"

Brainstorm: Identifying issues to focus on (15 min)

"Earlier in this session, everyone shared about one thing they are most passionate or concerned about. The goal of our work together is to find a topic or issue we all care about so that we can take action around it! This will be a process, but for today let's start a brainstorm."

"Take out a piece of paper."

"Because we want everyone to feel open, we are going to keep this anonymous. On your paper, write down any issue(s) that you feel is significant to young people your age. This can be an issue you have direct experience with, someone you know has direct experience with, or something that you have seen and are concerned about."

Give people a few minutes to write down their ideas. Then, ask everyone to crumple up their paper into a ball and throw into the middle of the floor. Pick up all the balls and read out the issues. Ask for a volunteer to chart for you.



Setting the Stage

Once all the issues are on the chart:

- Ask if any of the topics can be combined (i.e. if there are repeats or similar topics). Circle these together.
- Ask for clarification if any topics are not clear
- Ask for more specifics if any are too broad, i.e. "Teen issues" or "School"

"This is a great start. We will return to this list next time and in our homework."

Closing - One word takeaway
(2 min)

"Everyone, please share one word that signifies what you are taking away from today's session."

Homework Lesson 1:

- Write down the list of topics (or take a picture)
- Journal around one or several of the topics: "Why is this issue important to you?" Make sure to date all journal entries.



LESSON 2:

Introduction to PAR Research and Practices

Lesson Description: Now that the ice is broken, your group is feeling comfortable with each other, and you have started brainstorming issues that matter to everyone, it is time to get excited for diving into PAR!

Lesson Format: Hands-on, movement, discussion, presentation of video examples

Duration: 60-90 min

Objectives:

- Continue to build community in the group
- Introduce key components of PAR
- Connect examples of PAR projects to topics brainstormed in Lesson 1

Guiding Questions:

- How is PAR research different from other kinds of research we are familiar with?
- What would we like to use PAR to focus on?
- What kind of project do we want to work on?

Materials Needed: Poster paper, pens/pencils, sticky notes, markers, chart paper, video examples:

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School & The University of St Thomas Youth PAR Project researching first generation college students and the challenges they face: youtu.be/IQIGIdL95Dc

El Puente Summer Youth Employment Program researching: "How can we make ourselves and our communities excited and aware about Environmental Justice?": vimeo.com/197535215

Handouts:

- A Definition of Participatory Action Research
- 9 things to know about PAR
- See \rightarrow Analyze \rightarrow Act cycle + PAR cycle

Space Set Up: Chairs in a circle with chart papers taped to walls or easels. Projector set up with videos cued.



Introduction to PAR Research and Practices

Entry Activity:

"What is a question, concern, or idea you have about..."

(5 min)

Write on the top of a chart paper:

"What is a question, concern, or idea you have about any of the topics we brainstormed last session?"

Have the chart paper with the topic brainstorm from Lesson 1 posted up.

Participants should respond to this prompt as they walk into the room, writing their response on a sticky note and attaching to the chart paper. Have them write their initials on the sticky note so they can retrieve them later.

Have everyone write on a sticky note their responses to the question above. Let them know you will return to these questions later.

Opening Discussion: What is Research? (5 min)

Before introducing Participatory Action Research, use this activity to distinguish PAR from other kinds of research.

Using a word map or list on chart paper, collect responses to the question:

"What do you think of when you hear the word research?"

Example responses might include: "Google," "Library," "Books," "Theory," "Scientific Method"

"All of these are true. However, the kind of research we are going to explore is one where **you can research yourselves**, **your experiences**, and **your thoughts and ideas**, in addition to other people who are close to the issue. I will share some examples with you of how young people, educators, and community members can use PAR to look not just to external resources to find answers to their questions, but to investigate how **they feel about these things**, **how their opinions change**, and **what they perceive to be problems and solutions.**"



Introduction to PAR Research and Practices

Get acquainted with PAR (10 min)

"Does anyone in the group have any experience with research? With PAR? Write down a list of ideas people already have about it."

Refer to handout: A Definition of Participatory Action Research and chart this:

• The definition of Participatory Action Research and breakdown of each word

Refer to:

- Some or all of the 9 fun facts from handout: 9 things to know about PAR
- Some or all of the quotes about PAR from BACKGROUND, page 5

Sharing the background and genesis of PAR is important because it illustrates the principles at the center of PAR, that it is not research conducted by outside "experts," but by the people closest to the experience who are the experts of that experience.

"What is resonating with you so far? What appeals to you?"

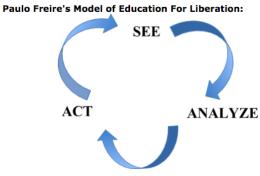
Lecture: Paulo Freire's Model of Education for Liberation (10 min)

Understanding and discussing the work of Paulo Freire is a great way to introduce PAR, because so much of PAR is based in principles he developed.

Refer to handout: See \rightarrow Analyze \rightarrow Act cycle + PAR cycle

Review the context setting below ahead of time so you are familiar with the material and don't have to read it all off the page.

Chart this:





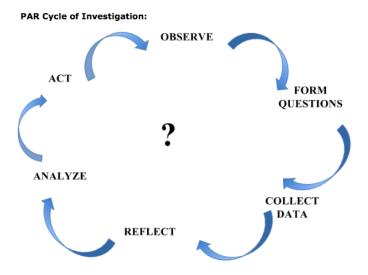
Introduction to PAR Research and Practices

"Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator who led literacy campaigns in rural Brazil from the 1940s to 1960s (literacy was a requirement for voting). He believed that everyone has knowledge of their own life experiences, regardless of the formal education they receive. He wrote about all this in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

Show the SEE
$$\rightarrow$$
 ANALYZE \rightarrow *ACT chart paper*

Freire's cycle of **See**, **Analyze**, **Act** is the basis for PAR. For Freire, everyone could **see** the world around them and identify problems, **analyze** the situation to figure out where the problems come from/how to solve them, and take **action** based on what they find. This is important in any kind of inquiry-based learning: You can start with something you know very little about and become experts in your experience with it!"

Chart this:



"PAR is based in a cycle of investigation that is very similar to See \rightarrow Analyze \rightarrow Act, with more steps."



Introduction to PAR Research and Practices

Discussion: Cycle of investigation (10 min)

Use the following question to guide your discussion.

- "How does the See → Analyze → Act cycle show up in your life? How could it?"
- "Why do you think these two diagrams are in a cycle and not a line?"

Examples of PAR (10 min)

Show examples of other PAR projects that give a wide range of possibilities (i.e. Youth PAR, provider PAR, projects conducted in school, after-school, voluntarily or as part of a program), and with finished projects ranging from written reports to visual art pieces.

Prepare to show the following two videos.

"Here are two examples of Youth PAR projects:

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School & The University of St Thomas Youth PAR Project researching first generation college students and the challenges they face.

youtu.be/lQlGJdL95Dc





El Puente Summer Youth Employment Program researching: "How can we make ourselves and our communities excited and aware about Environmental Justice?"

vimeo.com/197535215

"What/who did you notice in the video? What were people talking about? What stuck out to you? Can you identify ways people were collecting information? What kind of information were they collecting?"



Introduction to PAR Research and Practices

Discussion: Narrowing down our topic (10 min)

"Your homework was to journal around the topics/issues we brainstormed last time. We also started today's session by writing questions and concerns about these same topics. Let's start a new chart paper with any new words or ideas that came up today."

The goal here is to get closer to a topic/issue that you will focus on as a group.

Ask for input from people's homework journaling and/or what they wrote on the sticky notes.

After hearing from everyone:

"Are there any major topics/issues that seem to encompass many of these ideas?"

Narrow down list into as few categories as possible.

"From these few major topics, are there any in particular that we want to focus on?"

If your group can decide through discussion, you can pick one here. If not, you can either vote or come up with a new topic that is broad enough to include a couple different topics (this can get narrowed down later).

Closing (2 min)

"We covered a lot of ground today - and I hope you are all excited about the possibilities for what we can do together! Let's close with a go around of one thing you are looking forward to coming out of this group."

Homework Lesson 2:

Write down the topic/issue that the group chose in your journal. As you go through your
daily routine over the next week, where do you see this topic come up? What do you see
that reminds you of it? Where do you hear it being talked about/referred to? Jot down
notes of every time it comes up. Remember to date all journal entries.



LESSON 3:

Developing a PAR Inquiry

Lesson Description: Now that you have covered the background and principles guiding PAR, you are ready to start collecting data and forming your focus question(s).

Lesson Format: Discussion, hands on, pair share, graffiti wall

Duration: 60-90 min

Objectives:

- Develop focus questions that are relevant, open-ended, and affirmative
- Generate initial information the group already has about the topic

Guiding Questions:

- What do we already know and think about the topic?
- What questions can we answer in action through our research?

Materials Needed: Chart papers with prompts from *Graffiti wall round robin activity*, markers, chart papers + sticky notes from past sessions

Handouts:

- Gathering initial information
- Getting Started: Developing focus questions
- Observation-Analysis T-chart

Space Set Up: Chairs in circle, chart papers spread around the room for graffiti wall activity



LESSON 3 Developing a PAR Inquiry

Opening Discussion:
"What is qualitative research?"
(5 min)

"Last session we narrowed down the issue area we want to focus on as a group. Today, we are going to work on developing a question or questions that will guide our research."

"Before we do that, I want to take us back to our conversation last time around research."

Refer back to the word map or chart paper list created for Research.

"In research, when we collect information, we call it data. Data can be numbers-based. That is referred to as *quantitative data*. We can also collect data that cannot be quantified. What is the mood in the room? Are people looking sleepy? Are people excited about starting a PAR inquiry? That kind of information is referred to as *qualitative data*. Both are legitimate! Even when you collect data about yourselves and each other! PAR is widely used and accepted in fields like community organizing, education, and Public Health. That doesn't mean that quantitative data is not valuable - It is still valuable and it will support your qualitative findings. If we conduct any surveys, we will want to record that data because it can support the other data you collect."

"All of this work begins with questions, and now is the time to get back to those questions everyone wrote in response to the question *'What is a question, concern, or idea you have about the topics we came up with?'* You will now collect some initial data before finalizing those questions."

Activity: Graffiti Wall Round Robin (15 min)

The goal of this activity is to begin with the knowledge and assumptions people already have about the topic. The following are prompts to get the group thinking and discussing what they *already* know and feel. The initial data generated in this initial session can become the basis for data you will continue to collect and new questions you will develop.

Place chart papers around the room, each with one of the following categories on them. Return people's sticky notes with their focus questions on them (from previous session).



Developing a PAR Inquiry

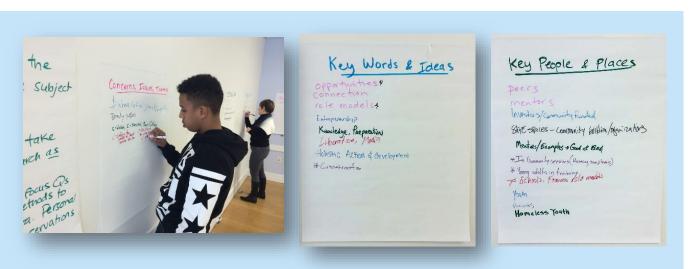
Refer to handout: Creating a Graffiti Wall for Getting Started

Have everyone walk around the room with markers responding to each category:

- 1. Concerns, Issues, Themes, Problems
- 2. Key Words
- 3. Assumptions
- 4. Initial Observations
- 5. Key People & Places

When people are finished, have them stand by something written on the chart papers that sticks out to them (it can be their own idea or someone else's). Have a few volunteers read out these ideas (in small groups, everyone can read one).

"What sticks out to you? What surprises you? What do you agree/disagree with?"



Photos of the "Initial Observations" Graffiti Wall Round Robin from first training with Collaboration Council in January 2016.



LESSON 3 Developing a PAR Inquiry

Discussion: Question forming (10 min)

"Now we are ready to turn back to our questions, to decide if they are questions we really want to investigate!"

Facilitator's Note

This is an opportunity for the entire group to come up with a question or questions they want to research together. While you may start with several questions, in discussion, try to narrow it down to 1-3 main questions.

The crux of PAR (and all research, really) is arriving at a question that really matters to you and your team. You will spend a lot of time and energy answering the question you develop, so it should be one that you really want to answer.

That said, your question might change as you start gathering data, and this is OK.

In PAR, you want to ask a question you can ANSWER IN ACTION!

How do you know when you have landed on the right question? A good question should elicit some emotional response in your team. It should already be on everyone's minds, already "bubbling" beneath the surface. It should come from everyone's day-to-day experiences and begin an investigation you will be committed to conducting. If it's not interesting your team, move on. This lesson has some tips and an activity for getting started with your inquiry.

Instead of trying to find the "right" question, think about what is the "ripe" question for you and your team.

Refer to handout: Getting Started: Developing Focus Questions

Ask for volunteers to read from handout:

"The key to developing focus questions that will sustain a meaningful inquiry is coming up with questions that are:"



Developing a PAR Inquiry

Relevant: Questions should...

- ➤ Be significant to those involved (Youth participants, staff members, families, etc.)
- "Spring from the source" and result from conversations with those involved.
- ➤ Be "sticky" i.e. the questions should be on everyone's mind already!

Open-ended: The best questions will lead to further inquiry and be...

- ➤ Open-ended questions that start with "How," and "Why," such as "How do young people experience leadership development at our program?"
- ➤ Not be close-ended questions that do not lead to further inquiry: "Are young people in our program prepared to be leaders in their community?" is a close-ended question because it can be answered by a *yes* or *no*.

Getting Started: Developing Focus Questions

Questions should be...



RELEVANT

- Significant to those involved
- "Spring from the source"
- Be on everyone's mind already



OPEN-ENDED

- Lead to further inquiry
- Can't be answered by "yes" or "no"
- May start with "how" or "why"



AFFIRMATIVE

- Focus on the potential, not the problem
- · Can be answered by taking action

Affirmative: While inquiry often starts with people identifying a problem and attempting to solve it, the best inquiry questions...

Aim to focus on the *potential* in a situation, <u>not</u> the negative.

An inquiry into bullying at a school/program might start with a question like, "How are young people asserting their voice and power with peers and adults?" or "What is the experience of young people developing their identity and leadership in our program?" A real-life inquiry into lateness at one high school in New York asked the question, "What are the arrival experiences of young people at this school?" The study found that when students had gym first period, they were late far more often than when they had a class they liked or homeroom with a supportive adult mentor.



Developing a PAR Inquiry

Facilitator's Note

Below are some examples of how focus questions have changed in their development:

Why are so many kids late to school?

What are the arrival experiences of students like at school?

Why do my students keep talking over each other?

How can I inspire my students to treat each other with respect?

A Note on Language: PROBLEM SOLVING VS SOLUTION BUILDING With PAR, you want to ask the question you will answer through action. It's about potential, not problems; about possibilities, not barriers. A question that asks "why something isn't happening" will help you identify a problem. A question that asks "how can something happen" can begin to identify a solution. It is a simple shift, and a powerful one!

Remember that the PAR process is cyclical. While this guide is laid out linearly, taking action is not the last step because the cycle is continuous. This means you can prepare for action throughout your PAR project. Ideas for action can be incorporated into the entire process. Even the questions you form should inspire action!



Developing a PAR Inquiry

Activity: Re-working your focus question so you can answer it in action (10 min)

Hand out the sticky notes people wrote their questions/ideas/concerns on. Break group up into pairs or groups of three.

"Given these three guidelines and the initial data just collected on the chart papers, how does your question change?"

Guiding questions:

Relevant: Are the questions significant to young people and practitioners? Did they "spring from the source" and result from conversations with young people? A question's "stickiness" is important. The questions used should be on everyone's mind already!

Open-ended: The best questions will lead to further inquiry. Open-ended questions might start with "How," and "Why." Close-ended questions do not lead to further inquiry - could be answered with a yes or no.

Affirmative: While inquiry often starts with people identifying a problem and attempting to solve it, the best inquiry questions aim to focus on the *potential* in a situation, <u>not</u> the negative.

Discussion: Share out questions (10 min)

Ask each pair or small group to share out their newly formed questions. Have one volunteer write these down on chart paper.

"From the questions that were shared, do we hear any main questions that can guide our whole group?" Try to narrow down to 1-3 main questions, adapting questions as necessary to include others.



Developing a PAR Inquiry

Closing: Sticky note wall (5 min)

Write your new focus question(s) on a piece of chart paper <u>that you can keep using in later sessions</u>. Ask each person to write a response to the question(s) on a sticky note and post on the chart paper. Make sure each person writes their name or initials and the date.

Ask for 2-3 people to share what they wrote:

"What came up in this process? How does our thinking about the issue change based on this process?"

Homework Lesson 3:

Using the focus question(s) as a guide, find a setting to make observations (school, after-school program, home, etc.), taking in as much as possible. With qualitative data collection, everything you observe is data! You can document your observations by:

- Keeping a journal of all their observations
- Writing an email to yourself with all your observations.
- Use the *Observation-Analysis T-Chart* handout to separate your observations from analysis of what you think is going on.

Focus Question: Write in focus question here Setting: What are you observing?				
Observation	Analysis			
Write observations in this column - stick to facts you see and hear	Write what you think is going on, opinions, feelings, assumptions here			
Ex: 2 Students in math class are talking and not paying attention. These are the same 2 students that have been absent several times this year.	Ex: I think they don't know what is going on with the material - they fell behind missing classes and now haven't been able to catch up.			



LESSON 4:

Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Lesson Description: This lesson will walk you through several qualitative data collection methods that you can use in your group's research.

Lesson Format: Discussion, hands on

Duration: 60-90 min

Objectives:

- Introduce and get excited about new ways to collect data
- Think creatively about how to collect data in this group

Guiding Questions:

- What methods have we used so far to collect data?
- What methods of data collection will get us the information we want?

Materials Needed: Chart paper, markers, sticky notes, chart papers from earlier sessions

Handout:

• Data collection methods

Space Set Up: Chairs in circle, chart papers from previous sessions on walls



Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Opening Activity: Add onto sticky note wall (5 min)

Ask for people to take out the observations they made for homework (either as journal entry or observation/analysis T-chart).

"Take a couple minutes to refresh your memory about what you observed for homework. Using a new sticky note, write a new response to our focus question on the sticky note wall. Did any key ideas come up from what you observed? If so, add those ideas to your new note. As always, put your name or initials and date on the sticky note."

"Can 2-3 people share what they wrote? What came up from your observations?"

Opening Discussion (5 min)

"What have we been doing together so far in this project?" Chart a list of everything people can think of including: forming questions, brainstorming around topics, making observations, etc.

"Great, everything you just listed fits into our PAR research cycle." Refer to PAR cycle chart paper.

"Today we are going to learn about additional ways to collect data. The good news in today's session is that we have already been introduced to a few ways of collecting data! The **graffiti wall round robin**, **the observation/analysis t-chart**, and **journaling/emailing to self**, even our own **sticky note responses** to our focus question in last session and today are all data we have collected. Remember that in PAR, people's experiences, stories, memories, feelings, observations, and opinions are all data. This includes us. Remember also that in PAR, the people closest to the experience are the best ones to include in the research! These principles will guide how we proceed to collect qualitative data."



Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Lecture: Introducing data collection methods (20 min)

Pass out **Data collection methods** handout, ask for volunteers to read each one. Take the time to ask and answer questions about each one.

"Here is a list of qualitative data collection methods:

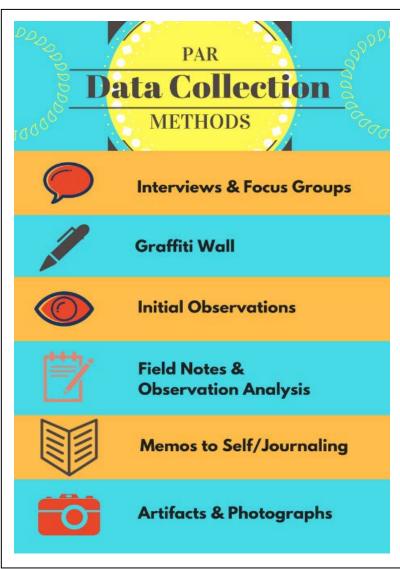
- Interviews and Focus Groups
- Graffiti Wall
- Initial Observations
- Field Notes
- Observation Analysis
- Notes to Self/Journaling
- Collection of Artifacts
- Photo documentation
- Surveys

"Which ones have we used already? Which ones sound interesting?"

Get Creative!

You can also introduce the idea of developing your own method of qualitative data collection. Some examples of creative responses to focus questions include:

- Visual art
- Poetry
- Dance
- Music
- Theater





Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Get Social!

Social media can give you access to valuable data (especially in youth- and young adult-led research

with their peers). You could try:

- Posting focus question(s) on Facebook and tagging people to respond to it like a virtual graffiti wall
- Posting a photo or image, quote, or question Instagram or Twitter and asking for comments and responses
- Creating a Facebook or Google survey using either app to share a collection of questions with a group of people
- Creating a blog or website to collect and share out our data as we go." (This can be a great way to collect all your data in one place, and a visible medium to share out findings at the end.)

Innovative Practices:

➤ BEAT Global uses its Facebook page to collect data from youth participants AND adult instructors about their own growth and as a tool for immediately assessing trainings and workshops.



This drawing created by a member of the 2016 Collaboration Council Research Team shows his initial thoughts about the group's topic: how young people of color are seen and treated in schools, organizations, society and in the world.

➤ The young adult research team from the Collaboration Council brainstormed ways to use Facebook to reach out to peers they might not be able to locate in person (this included homeless/"couch-surfing" peers whose location changed from day to day or week to week).

Using existing data

Some existing data can help support your research. See what you can find in:

- Surveys
- Census data
- Participant data



Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Small groups: Data collection planning (25 min)

Divide the group into small groups of 3-4 people. Have each group choose a data collection method that you just discussed (or pick a few to choose from) and create a plan for collecting data that way.

Refer to the chart papers from the Graffiti wall round robin for initial information and answer following questions. Each group should take notes and share back to the rest of the group.

Ask the group the following questions:

"The next step is think about the data collection methods we discussed and create a plan for collecting data that way. In your small group, choose a data collection method and ask yourselves the following questions:

- 1. Who will you collect data from?
- 2. What do you y want to find out?
- 3. What questions will you ask?
- 4. What additional *materials* do you need? (i.e. sample surveys, recording equipment for interviews, access to a computer/internet for a Facebook post)."

Closing: What to continue (5 min)

"We'll go more in depth with these methods next session. For now, let's have everyone share, what would you like to see continued from what your group or another group started today?

Homework Lesson 4:

 Try out one of the data collection methods introduced today and bring back the data you collect next session.



LESSON PLANS

LESSON 5:

Gathering Data from People Who Matter

Lesson Description: This lesson is all about setting up interviews and focus groups with people who have important information about the topic

Lesson Format: Discussion, hands on

Duration: 60-90 min

Objectives:

- Introduce interviewing as a major tool in PAR
- · Practice interviewing as useful skill in PAR and beyond

Guiding Questions:

- Who can give us valuable information about our topic?
- What questions can we ask beyond that will give us data for our focus question?

Materials Needed: Chart paper, markers, sticky notes, chart papers from earlier sessions, camera(s), tripod(s), and audio recording device(s)

Handouts:

• *Interview tips*

Space Set Up: Chairs in circle, chart papers from previous sessions on walls

Additional Preparation: Because you will practice interviewing in this lesson, you might invite "key people" ahead of time to be interviewed.



Gathering Data from People Who Matter

Opening activity: "What new data did you collect?" (10 min)

"The homework from last time was to try out a new data collection method. What did you discover? What surprised you?"

After discussion, have people post a new sticky note to the wall, responding to the focus question(s) with the new data they collected. Remind them that the sticky note wall is a major source of data that your group is collecting!

Lecture: Introduction to Interviewing (10 min)

Refer to chart paper "Key People and Places"

"One-on-one interviews and small focus groups will provide us with vital data in our project. Remember the Graffiti wall round robin activity where we gathered initial information? The prompt for "Key People and Places" will come in handy here. Who is listed under key people?"

Ask for someone to read list.

"Now that we have been doing some research, are there any people we should add to this list?"

"Remember the idea is that those who are closest to the experience should be the closest to the research."

If not on the list already, point out that people in the group could also be included!

Experience from the Collaboration Council

The list of people included in "Key People and Places" during the PAR work at the Collaboration Council included the participating young adults themselves, in addition to mentors/providers, and peers. When it came time to collecting data through interviews, the Research Team started by interviewing each other, and then moved out to peers and provider mentors.



A guiding idea with the Collaboration Council Research Team was being "experts in their own experience." By claiming that title for themselves, individuals who implement PAR feel empowered to be the sources of information! For a project aimed at increasing youth voice, this was a huge moment in the PAR training.



Gathering Data from People Who Matter

Activity: Practice Interviewing (35 min)

"Today we are going to practice interviewing each other, asking questions that will get us valuable data about our focus question. Before we start, what do you think is important to do in an interview?"

If anyone has experience interviewing, ask them to share about their experience. Chart any ideas that come up.

Pass out Interview tips sheet

"Let's take a look at some tips for conducting an interview."

Have your group pair up or divide into groups of 3 with someone that has real answers to their focus questions!

If your group includes providers and participants, this is a great opportunity to have them ask questions of each other. If your group is only providers or only participants, fear not, this is the chance for sharing and going in depth with people who are closest to the experience. Let everyone know that this is real data they are collecting now! If you have audio/video recording devices handy (i.e. smart phones) they can record the interviews.

- In a group of 2, divide into interviewer and interviewee
- In a group of 3, divide into interviewer, interviewee, and recorder/notetaker



Photo of the "Practice Interviewing" with Collaboration Council Research Team Members

"Starting with our focus question(s), let's take a few minutes to craft 3 questions we can ask our interviewees that will give us some data. We want to follow interview tips (i.e. Open-ended questions) to get interviewees to go deeper: "Why do you think that is? What allows that to happen? What do youth experience..." Try to get specifics. When interviewing, take notes of important ideas and themes."



Gathering Data from People Who Matter

Facilitator's Note

Interviewers should take notes as best they can, but participating in the exchange is their top priority. If recording, notes should refer to the times in the recording and key words that come up.

If you have enough time, have partners switch so everyone can try out interviewing, being interviewed, and/or taking notes.

Reflection:

"What did you learn about interviewing?" (10 min)

"What was that like for interviewers? For interviewees? For notetakers? What came up? What did you learn in this interview that you didn't know before? What surprised you? How was your focus question answered? What new questions did it give you? What would you do differently in your next interview?"

Closing: Sticky note wall (5 min)

"Add any new data that came up from today's interviews to the sticky note wall."

Homework Lesson 5:

• If you recorded the interview, listen to or watch the interview later that day and write an email "note to self" or journal entry about what you heard. If you did not record it, look over your notes and write the same email "note to self" or journal entry about what came up in the interview.



LESSON PLANS

LESSON 6:

Data Analysis Methods

Lesson Description: This lesson will take your group through the process of analyzing your data, as you collect it.

Lesson Format: Discussion, hands on, multi-media

Duration: 60-90 min

Objectives:

- Analyze all the data you have collected so far
- See how focus question is being answered or changed

Guiding Questions:

- What are our data telling us?
- How is our focus question being answered? What new questions are coming up?

Materials Needed: All data collected so far, including interviews, notes, observations, initial data graffiti walls, and journal entries; chart paper, sticky notes, computer for viewing videos/listening to audio

Handouts:

- Data analysis guide
- Interview analysis guide

Space Set Up: Chairs in circle for discussion, separate data "stations" for data clearinghouse activity, chart papers from previous sessions on walls

Opening activity: Sticky note wall (5 min)

"What has come up since last time? You listened to and/or took notes on your interview from last time. Did any new or recurring ideas come up? Put them on a sticky note."



LESSON 6 Data Analysis Methods

Lecture: About data analysis (10 min)

"In PAR, just as those closest to the experience are the ones who are at the center of forming questions and collecting data, they are also at the center of analyzing that data and making a declaration about what that data tell us. While qualitative data analysis might seem *subjective*, this makes sense given that its researchers are also the subjects! This is also why *Triangulation*, or relying on more than one kind of data, is so important."

"We practice triangulation when we...

- Talk to more than one person, from more than one setting or group
- Compare what we find in our research to similar studies in different places
- Get different perspectives (i.e. youth participants, providers, families, etc.)
- Refer to our quantitative data to see if a drastically different story is being told, or if some similar themes emerge."

"When similar themes come up in a variety of data sources, we know we are onto something."

"And guess what, we have already started analyzing our data through:

- Individual journaling
- Memos
- Notes to self"

"And today we are going to learn some other ways to analyze data:

- Group data analysis methods + clearinghouse
- Individual interview data analysis."



LESSON 6 Data Analysis Methods

Activity: Data analysis clearinghouse (40 min)

Pass out and refer to handouts:

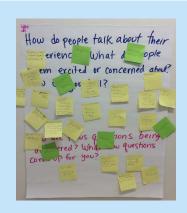
- Data analysis guide
- Interview analysis guide

With larger groups, divide the data listed in "Materials Needed" into "stations" (i.e. 1 station with video interviews, 1 station with initial graffiti walls, 1 stations with journals, etc.). Depending on group size, divide into smaller groups (3-4 people) so each group can look at different data.

On chart papers, write the following data analysis prompts:

- 1) What do people talk about? What words/ideas/themes keep coming up?
- 2) How do people talk about their experience? (i.e. with joy, apprehension, loudly, in a soft voice, etc...) What do people seem excited/upset/concerned about? How can you tell?
- 3) What do you notice that sticks out to you/seems important?
- 4) How is our focus question(s) being answered?

These questions are a guide, you can also come up with your own. The goal is to sift through a lot of data and to pull out the most prominent and most recurring ideas.







Photos from "Group Data Analysis" with Collaboration Council Research Team Members



LESSON 6 Data Analysis Methods

Round One:

Each group makes its way to each set of data (rotating through stations) responding to data analysis prompts on sticky notes and filling up chart papers with sticky note responses.

Round Two:

In a different color sticky note, groups move through 4 chart papers responding to round one responses:

"What do you see coming up a lot?"

Whole Group Discussion:

Chart this:

"What have we discovered so far? What are our data telling us?"

"Based on what we analyzed so far, what more do we want to find out?"

Facilitator's Note

In ongoing PAR projects, data analysis sessions should happen multiple times. This will make the process of analyzing data more manageable and not leave you with overwhelming amounts of data. Ongoing data analysis can also allow for:

- New questions to emerge and original focus questions to change
- New ideas about who to include in research and what information to ask from them

Closing: Circle up reflection (5 min)

"We did a lot today! I hope everyone is feeling very accomplished! Let's close by checking in on how we are each feeling about our progress so far, one word or a phrase."

Homework Lesson 6: Go back and re-read an early journal entry, memo to self, or observation you made. Using a sticky note or a different color pen in the margins, take notes on:

- What sticks out to you that seems important now?
- How does this early data answer our focus question?
- What have we learned since this early entry?



LESSON PLANS

LESSON 7

Arriving At and Sharing Findings

Lesson Description: This lesson will take your group through the process of declaring initial findings based on the data you have analyzed so far. It will lead you into the next lesson, "Taking Action" about promoting, communicating, and celebrating change.

Lesson Format: Discussion, hands-on

Duration: 60-90 min

Objectives:

- Arrive at findings as a group, making a declaration about what came out of the research
- Plan for ways the group will share the findings

Guiding Questions:

- What story are we telling through this research?
- How has our focus question(s) been answered?
- How has our thinking changed throughout this project?

Materials Needed: Notes and chart paper from all data analysis conducted so far

Space Set Up: Chairs in circle for discussion, chart papers from previous sessions on walls

Opening activity:
"The story we are telling is..."
(5 min)

"Today is all about declaring our findings and making a statement about what we discovered in our research. To warm us up to that idea, I will ask everyone to complete the following sentence with whatever comes to mind about our research:"

'The story we are telling is...'



Arriving At and Sharing Findings

Lecture: Arriving at initial findings (25 min)

"Arriving at findings isn't just about coming up with an answer at the end. Findings have been emerging for us at every stage of our research process. Arriving at findings in our research is all about how to make sense of the data we collect and communicating that understanding in compelling manner."

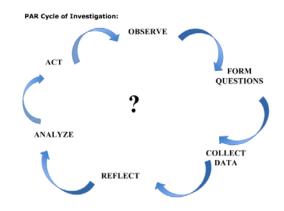
Refer to PAR cycle chart paper

"Remember the PAR cycle from chapter 3?"

"That's right, it doesn't have a definite end point."

"Today, we are pausing this cycle to ask,

- What are our data telling us?
- What story are we telling?
- How has our thinking changed?"



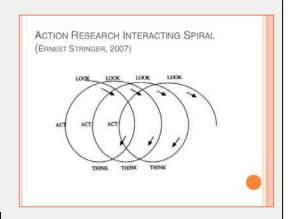
Ask for a volunteer to chart responses to those three questions. Then, group any answers that are similar or connected until you have a list that looks complete.

Facilitator's Note

Questions are important in every aspect of the PAR process. The PAR cycle is designed to go deeper and deeper into your inquiry. The strategies outlined in this guide will allow for thorough interrogation and re-interrogation as you go further with your research.

Images like the one on the right help visualize what this ongoing process is like the following "Action Research Interacting Spiral" from: Ernest T. Stringer (2007). *Action Research* (Third Edition). London: Sage Publications.

Be prepared to be surprised by your findings! If you had the answer when you set out, there would be no need to conduct the research in the first place. Oftentimes with PAR you end up in a place you never expected, and your findings will open up more courses of inquiry. If you find yourself in that position, you are doing everything right!





Arriving At and Sharing Findings

Activity: Sharing our findings (25 min)

In small groups of 2-3, have participants plan a creative way to share out the group's findings.

Some ideas are:

- A website/blog entry
- A video or slideshow
- A Facebook or Instagram post
- In an article that can be posted to social media or submitted to a publication
- In a live event or meeting
- In an artistic creation using theater, dance, poetry, visual art, music, etc.

Have each group report back on their idea. They can follow up on these in the next session when you prepare to take action.

Closing activity: Sticky note wall review (5 min)

"Take a minute to look at all the sticky notes we've added to our wall. Looking back on the earliest notes, what has changed the most?"

Homework Lesson 7:

Write a journal entry about how your own thinking has changed throughout this PAR
project and how the group's thinking has changed.



LESSON PLANS

LESSON 8

Taking Action

Lesson Description: In this lesson you will prepare your group to take action based on their research.

Lesson Format: Discussion, hands-on

Duration: 60-90 min

Objectives:

- Identify ways the group has already taken action
- Plan for a culminating action

Guiding Questions:

- What actions have we already taken in this project?
- What did we find out as a result of those actions?

Materials Needed: Notes on findings and data analysis from past sessions

Handout:

• *Project planning tool*

Space Set Up: Chairs in circle, chart papers up on walls

Opening discussion: Taking action (10 min)

"Today we are going to start planning what action(s) we will take based on what we have researched. What actions have we already taken in this project?"

Ask for a volunteer to chart responses.

"What did we find out as a result of those actions?"



Taking Action

Facilitator's Note

Action steps, big and small, can take place throughout your PAR project, so that you can gather data *about* the action. The teacher who asked "How can I inspire my students to respect each other in the classroom?"—as opposed to asking, "Why do my students keep talking over one another?"—developed creative ways for his students to take turns talking, including creating a puppet character that acted as an animated talking stick. This teacher was able to collect data based on the action step he took.

How you take action with your research will depend on the nature of the inquiry, the desires of your team, and of course the goals and ideas of those closest to the experience. This is where the steps in the PAR cycle start to blend into each other, AND where youth participants have the chance to use their creativity to make a statement about what they have found out in their PAR investigation.

"Action steps include sharing out data findings to draw attention to the research and see how different audiences react to what we share."

Planning for action (40 min)

"What kind of action do we want to take together as a group?"

Chart ideas

Example actions include:

- Holding a press conference
- Attending a city council or community board meeting
- Hosting an arts/cultural event with a specific message as a focus
- Sharing findings on social media
- Creating a multi-media (photo, video, artwork) product that would articulate findings
- Attend or organize a demonstration, rally, or march
- Host a forum or conference and invite key people to participate

Experience from El Puente

During the PAR project conducted by El Puente's Public Art Class, youth decided to share out the findings to their research about creating art for social change through a visual art piece that collected additional data through audience participation.

Through their PAR inquiry on visibility for Latino Artists, members of El Puente CADRE (Community Artists Development and Resource Exchange) decided to take action by producing a (now annual) street festival highlighting local Latino artists.



Taking Action

Either as a whole group working on one action at a time, or in small groups planning multiple actions, come up with a plan for the action(s) the group will take.

These might build off previous actions taken, especially with sharing out findings.

Pass out and refer to handout: Project Planning Tool

Here are some questions to reflect on when deciding on action steps:

- ➤ Who is our audience?
- ➤ Whose mind do we want to change?
- Who has the power to make a decision that could put your recommendations in action?
- ➤ When and when will the action take place?
- ➤ What outreach is needed?
- What additional materials and support do we need?
- ➤ Who in the group is responsible for what part of the planning?

Facilitator's Note

Sharing out findings and making recommendations in a compelling way IS a form of action. You can be creative about how you do it and even integrate it into an already planned event/publication/activity. Just as existing activities and programs present opportunities to collect data, they may also present opportunities to take action.

Have each group share back to the larger group. Chart the next steps each group needs to take.

Closing: Acknowledgement circle (5 min)

"We have been working very hard together as a team. Let's take this time to acknowledge each other. When it is your turn, you can shout out another person in the circle for anything you are proud of them for, today and/or another time in the project."

Homework Lesson 8:

• For this session and the next few sessions while planning for your action(s), homework should be related to specific tasks each person is responsible for in planning.



LESSON PLANS

LESSON 9

Reflecting on Success

Lesson Description: This lesson is designed to use to reflect after a culminating event or action at the end of your project.

Lesson Format: Discussion, journaling

Duration: 60-90 min

Objectives:

- Assess how the project went as a group and individually
- Discuss how aspects of the PAR project could continue in your program

Guiding Questions:

- What have we learned from this project?
- Where were we successful?
- What were our challenges?

Materials Needed: Chart paper, markers, and journals

Space Set Up: Chairs in circle, chart papers up on walls

Journaling (10 min)

"In your journals, take ten minutes to respond to the following questions."

Put on music as people are journaling, let them know to get comfortable.

Set up chart papers with the following questions:

- 1. What the biggest highlight of the project for you?
- 2. What did you learn in the course of the project? (both skills and about the topic)
- 3. What are you most proud of yourself for?
- 4. What are you most proud of the group for?
- 5. If you could go back and do anything differently in the project, what would it be?



LESSON 9 Reflecting on Success

Pair share (10 min)

In pairs, have each person share what they journaled. (5 min each)

Group reflection (30 min)

Set up four chart papers with the following headings: Highlights, Proud, Learned, and Do Differently

Ask for each pair to share something that they discussed from their individual journaling, charting in the categories listed above. Then ask the group:

- 1. What impact have we made?
- 2. What has worked for us? What would we do differently in the future?
- 3. What aspects of this project do we want to continue working on?
- 4. If we had 3 more months to continue this research, what would we want to do? What haven't we tried yet but could? What could we continue doing?

If this is a group that will continue working together, decide if there are any aspects you will keep working on as a group. If not, use this as a chance for each person in the group to share what it is they will be taking from this experience with them.

Closing: Reflection (10 min)

Have each person say one word or phrase completing the following prompts.

"As we close, how would you complete the following:

I am most proud of myself for...

I am most proud of this group for..."

Facilitator's Note

This is your chance to make a statement as facilitator about what and who you are proud of! If possible, tell each person in the group what you are proud of them for. (With large groups, you can keep this succinct and write notes to each person ahead of time so they can read later).



Prepare for Action!

An Implementation Guide for Facilitators of Participatory Action Research

HANDOUTS

Lesson 2: A Definition of Participatory Action Research

Lesson 2: 9 Things to Know About PAR

Lesson 2: See \rightarrow Analyze \rightarrow Act cycle & PAR Cycle

Lesson 3: Getting Started: Developing focus questions

Lesson 3: Observation-Analysis T-chart

Lesson 4: Data Collection Methods

Lesson 5: Interview Tips

Lesson 6: Data Analysis Guide

Lesson 6: Interview Analysis Guide

2: A Definition of Participatory Action Research



Participatory Action Research

PARTICIPATORY:

The conductors of the research are the subjects themselves, investigating issues that matter to them and in which they are the experts.

ACTION:

The purpose of the research is not simply to accumulate data and write a report. The ultimate goal of PAR is to engage people in real live social change as they do the research.

RESEARCH:

At the heart of PAR is the aspect of inquiry and investigation. Participants ask questions they feel passionate about and address issues they are affected by. However, they do not stop at making guesses. Participatory Action Researchers ask inquiry questions, make observations in a variety of settings, interview people who are affected, make connections to similar examples of research, and record their own reflections throughout the process.

2: 9 Things to Know About PAR



THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT

AND HOW PAR CAN BENEFIT (





PAR is conducted as a cycle: It combines observation, inquiry, analysis, reflection, and action in a repeating process.

PROCESS = PRODUCT



With PAR, the process is the product. PAR can be integrated into many learning, art-making, and organizational processes, not separated from them.

YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS



In youth development settings, Participatory Action Researchers can include youth and adults working together.

QUALITATIVE DATA



PAR uncovers qualitative data. Examples of qualitative data include participants' personal experiences, opinions and reflections.

INQUIRY + CURIOSITY



PAR begins with curiosity, passion, and most importantly, a focus of inquiry that leads to other questions.

RESEARCHERS ARE THE **SUBJECTS**



Participants are both researchers and subjects, engaging themselves and others in a process of investigation and action that will directly impact them

SIMULTANEOUS PRACTICE



PAR offers a process of simultaneous practice, inquiry, investigation, reflection and action that can be infused into existing programs and projects.

FROM SMALL TO LARGE SCALE



PAR can be conducted in a single class, an organization, or at a community-wide level.

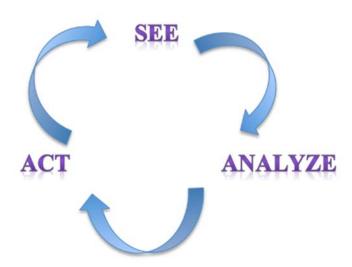
PAR AS PD



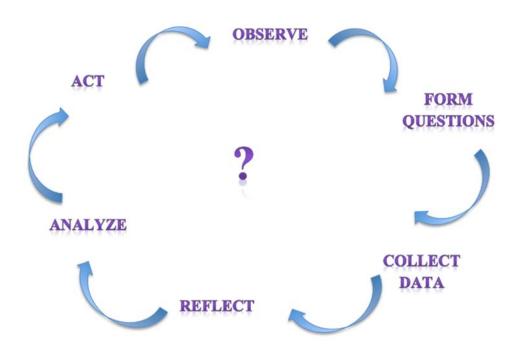
PAR is often used as a professional development strategy. What better way to improve your practice than by researching it and taking action based on what you find?

2: See→Analyze→Act Cycle & PAR Cycle

Paulo Freire's Cycle $\mathbf{SEE} \to \mathbf{ANALYZE} \to \mathbf{ACT}$



PAR Cycle of Inquiry & Investigation



3: Getting Started: Developing Focus Questions

Getting Started: Developing Focus Questions

Questions should be...



RELEVANT

- Significant to those involved
- "Spring from the source"
- Be on everyone's mind already



OPEN-ENDED

- Lead to further inquiry
- Can't be answered by "yes" or "no"
- May start with "how" or "why"

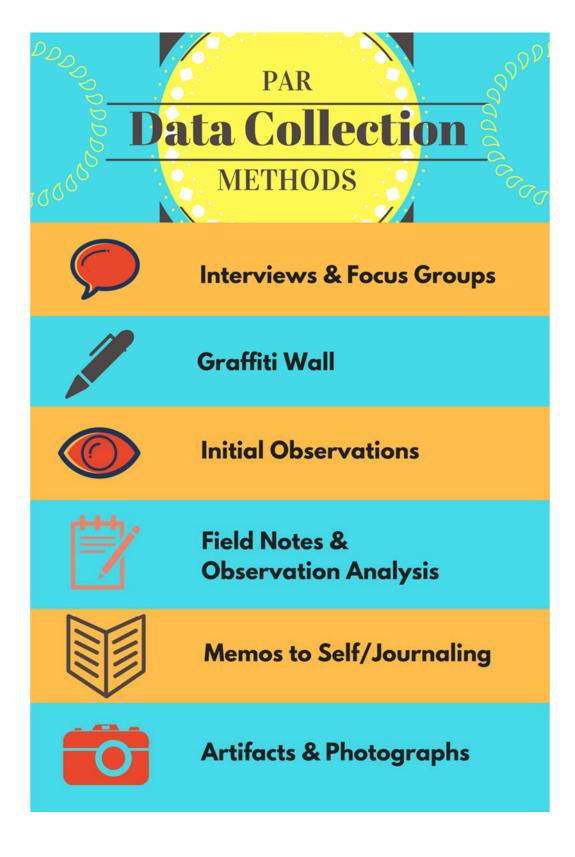


AFFIRMATIVE

- Focus on the potential, not the problem
- Can be answered by taking action

4: Observation-Analysis T-Chart

Focus Question: Write in focus question he	ere
Setting: What are you observing?	
Observation Write observations in this column: stick to facts you see and hear	Analysis Write what you think is going on: opinions, feelings, and assumptions



Interviews & Focus Groups

For interviews and focus groups, start with your focus questions. What do you want to discover? What experiences can that person or group of people share with you that are unique to them?

Come up with a list of questions that will lead from your focus question to other areas that will support what you want to find out. Any prompts you can lead people with will help them greatly!

Sample interview prompts:

- ➤ "Tell me about (an experience you know fits into your question)..."
- "Can you describe..."
- "Tell me more about that..."
- In interviews and focus groups, make sure to use open-ended questions vs. yes/no questions. "How" and "Why" questions tend to go deeper than "What" questions.
- Starting with basic questions like name, age (for young people), position (for adults), and "What are you working on?" can get people talking and feeling comfortable before diving into meatier questions around your focus questions.
- As the interviewer, your job is to make your interviewee feel comfortable and open! This should be a pleasant, joyful experience where the interviewees get to share things they are really excited about!
- Let them do the talking. Allow for pauses while the interviewee(s) think about their responses, figure out what they are trying to say, or just remembering something.
- Smiling and nodding go a long way to moving the conversation along without getting your voice in the recording!

Tips for recording your interview/focus group with a camera

- 1. Choose a quiet, well-lit, private space. Have the light source shine on your subject (i.e. the camera should be between a window and the subject).
- 2. Take some notes of key words and ideas as the discussion rolls. Include video times in your notes (this will be *very* helpful afterwards).
- 3. Limit conversation to 30-45 minutes. It might take 15-20 minutes to get really rolling, but you want your interviewees to walk away while they are still having a good time.
- 4. If possible, have someone help you with the camera *or* get a tripod so you can focus entirely on the interviewee(s).

Graffiti Wall

A graffiti wall is cooperative strategy to promote brainstorming and can help motivate individuals who are creative but shy when it comes to actively participating and expressing their ideas out loud. The goal is to generate ideas by physically moving around the space - responding to the prompts on the chart papers *and* to other people's ideas.

This is a data collection method you can use in an ongoing way. You may use it to get started with the PAR process but it will also be useful for reflection, re-energizing activities, or for summing up the day's work. It can also help keep attention on your focus question: What is your focus question and other related questions that you want people to keep thinking about?

Cover the walls of your space with chart paper – this is your Graffiti Wall! Have markers in many colors nearby.

Post them up in a public place and ask for feedback regularly. Have people date and initial their responses so they can see the change in their thinking over time.

Initial Observations

Below are prompts for generating "initial observations" as you start your PAR inquiry. Sharing and recording initial observations at the beginning of an investigation allows the group to see what they think about the topic at the start of your research. Hold onto these chart papers, you will refer back to them as you continue your research.

- Concerns, Issues, Themes, Problems
- Key Words
- Assumptions
- ➤ Initial Observations
- ➤ Key People & Places

Field Notes & Observation Analysis

Field notes are an ongoing tool for collecting data on what you notice about your focus question on a daily basis. Keep a log of your observations noting both the descriptive information and reflective information you see and hear.

- ➤ **Observation**: descriptive information that accurately documents actions, behaviors, and the environment that you observe. Stick to the facts that you see and hear.
- Analysis: reflective information that describes what you think and how you feel about what you are observing. You may record your opinions, ideas, questions, concerns, or assumptions during the process.

For example, you can divide your observations and analysis into a T-chart:

Observation	Analysis
Older kids in afterschool program help get dinner ready for younger kids. They ask to do this on their own.	Older kids understand importance of mentoring, taking care of younger kids in our program - this family feeling is key to our success as an organization that transforms community.

Analysis should occur as they are being written and while you are conducting your observations. This fosters self-reflection and helps to give meaning to your observations. Themes also begin to emerge and will lead to more ideas for further investigation.

Memos & Journaling

Memos can be in the form of a journal, emails to the group, or a collection of notes to yourself.

- ➤ What are you seeing?
- ➤ What are you hearing?
- What words keep coming up?
- How is your focus question being answered?
- What new questions are coming up?

These memos serve as mini write-ups about how you think the process is going and what you are learning. It provides an opportunity to reflect about what you are seeing in the data. They can summarize your findings along the way or provide an outlet for what else would be helpful to collect.

It can be helpful to start off the PAR process writing note to yourself and get in the habit of journaling.

Artifacts & Photographs

Artifacts are anything people make and use. They may be texts, documents, or images. We have artifacts and images (signs, media, posters, and people) all around us that can give us valuable information! Collecting artifacts in the observed environment serves as a useful tool to understand beliefs, values and behaviors.

Collect some artifacts physically or by taking pictures to help answer your question and tell a story. Like observations, you can follow the same model for data collection and record your analysis of what the artifacts may mean for your focus question as further field notes.

Photovoice, a recognized PAR data collection method, is where people take photographs illustrating their research topic and important themes it brings up. Photovoice is a way to show your perspective, opinions, and values on a topic. For more information visit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photovoice and http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-andresources/photovoice/main.

5: Interview Tips

- 1. Your job as interviewer is to make the interviewee feel **relaxed** and **comfortable**. The more comfortable they are, they more they will open up! Smile! Have fun! An interview is more formal than a conversation but the feeling should be like you are just sitting down to listen to their story.
- 2. Let the interviewee know ahead of time/before you start recording what the interview will be about and what key questions you will ask. This will help **narrow the focus** and give you the information you are looking for.
- 3. Use **closed-ended questions** to gather basic information:

What, where, when... ex: "Where were you born?"

4. Use **open-ended** questions to get rich, longer responses:

How...Tell me about...Can you describe...Why... Tell me about growing up in this neighborhood"



- 5. **Be a good listener!** Let the interviewee talk. When recording an interview, a nod or smile is better than "mhmm" or "oh" because we won't hear it on camera!
- 6. **Silence is OK**. Sometimes a little silence is necessary for the interviewee to gather their thoughts. If you think the interviewee has said too little about a topic, use prompts such as: "Can you tell me more about..." "Go on..." or another open ended prompt from above.
- 7. **Ask for details**. It can be easier for interviewees to talk about something when they use specific examples, stories, and descriptions. "Do you have a favorite memory of..." or "Can you remember a time when..." are some prompts to get specific examples.
- 8. **Document the interview**. Record the name of the interviewee, date, time, and place of the interview. Take notes during the interview of any key ideas you want to go back to later. If possible, write down the time on the video, i.e.: "Talks about moving to NYC from D.R. in 1960s 12:34" (12 minutes 34 seconds into interview).
- 9. **Closing**: **Thank your interviewee!** Before ending, ask if they have anything else they would like to share.

Date/time:
Program/location:
Focus Question:
Data Collected:

1. What do people talk about? What words/ideas/themes keep coming up?

2. *How* do people talk about their experiences? (i.e. with joy, apprehension, in a soft voice, et.)

§ 6: Data Analysis Guide

3. What do people seem passionate, excited, concerned, or upset about?

4. How are our focus questions being answered?

6: Interview Analysis Guide

Date/time:	
Location:	
Focus Question:	

Person Interviewed:

As much as possible, you should jot down notes during interviews (even if you are recording them). When key ideas do come up in the interview, if you are recording on video or audio, you can write down the time they said it, so it is easier to go back to later.

Other important pieces of information to write down during the interview are: The person's full name and their connection to the research, the time and date of the interview, and the location.

Time on Recording	What the Interviewee is Saying	Observations and Key Themes

6: Interview Analysis Guide

Time on Recording	What the Interviewee is Saying	Observations and Key Themes

8: Project Planning Tool

	Name of Action:	
	Location:	
	Description:	
	Date of Action:	
	Target Audience:	
1.	What are your goals	for the project/action?
2.	What materials and r	esources do you already have to make this happen?
3.	What additional mate	erials and resources do you need?
4.	What outreach and p	ublicity is needed? How will you outreach and publicize?
5.	What is your estimate	ed budget?

8: Project Planning Tool

Tasks and Accountability

What is the specific task?	Who is responsible?	By when?

8: Project Planning Tool

Timeline

For each section below, describe what steps will be taken to develop the action project and how much time it will take. (i.e. Initial steps: Planning project, 2 weeks (February 1-14); Midway steps: Outreach to participants and recruiting volunteers, 3 weeks (February 14 - March 7); Final steps: Securing materials, setting up space, sending out reminder email blast, 1 week (March 7 - 14).

Stages	Activities	Time Frame	Dates
Initial Steps			
Midway Steps			
Final Steps			



Prepare for Action!

An Implementation Guide for Facilitators of Participatory Action Research

RESOURCES

PAR Glossary of Terms

PAR Reading List

Lessons Learned from the Field

PAR Glossary of Terms

Affirmative

Framed in a positive way vs. negative.

Analyze/Analysis

How you make sense of the data you collect, paying attention to what ideas keep coming up.

Close-ended

Referring to questions that can only be answered in a single response, i.e. "Yes" or "No."

Cross-case Analysis

Using data collected from various sources (i.e. different case studies) and comparing the data you collect to see if it is consistent across sources.

Data

All of the information and evidence you collect throughout your PAR project.

Emergent Themes

The most prevalent, repeating ideas that come out of all your research.

Field Notes

Notes you make during or after observations you make as a researcher.

Findings/Initial Findings

What you and your group discover in the research that answers your focus question(s). Initial findings describe what you discover early on in research that might change as you repeat the PAR cycle.

Focus Group

A formal, prepared exchange between one person interviewing and more than one person answering questions to get information valuable to your research. It may be recorded in notes, video, or audio.

Focus Question

Your overall, essential/research question guiding your course of inquiry.

PAR Glossary of Terms

Grounded Theory

Refers to the process of identifying a new theory based on data collected and analyzed (vs. using data as evidence for an existing theory).

Inquiry

Your overall curiosity - what you want to explore and find out.

Interview

A formal, prepared exchange between two people (one asking questions, the other answering questions) to get information valuable to your research. It may be recorded in notes, video, or audio.

Memos

The note you make after any type of data collection (observation, interview, focus group, etc.) where you can immediately analyze the data and make connections to emergent themes or key ideas coming up in your research.

Observation

What you see, hear, or otherwise take note of in any setting that gives you information about your inquiry - removed from any assumptions or analysis.

Open-ended

Referring to questions that have many possible responses.

Qualitative Data

All of the written, recorded, or otherwise collected evidence you gather from observations, reflections, interviews, focus groups, and artifacts.

Quantitative Data

All of the evidence you collect that is numerical in nature (including from surveys and existing research).

Relevant

Having a sense of urgency, importance, or relation to the group's experience.

PAR Glossary of Terms

Research

All of the question forming, data collecting, analysis, and findings you will make.

Survey

A way to collect information from many people, usually in the form of a document with several questions that can be copied and shared in person, or created digitally and shared in email or via social media.

Triangulation

The process of capturing and analyzing data from multiple (two or more), distinct sources to show your data does not apply to a single, distinct group or setting. Triangulation also includes relating your research to existing research to demonstrate consistency in what you find.

PAR Reading List

Participatory Action Research: Contributions to the Development of Practitioner Inquiry in Education

Brydon-Miller, Mary and Maguire, Patricia *Educational Action Research*, v17 n1 p79-93 Mar 2009.

A Social Justice Epistemology and Pedagogy for Latina/o Students: Transforming Public Education with Participatory Action Research3

Cammarota, Julio and Romero, Augustine F. *New Directions for Youth Development*, n123 p53-65 Fall 2009.

The Application of Participatory Action-Research in Latin America

Fals-Borda, Orlando *International Sociology* v2 n4 p329-347 Dec 1987.

Participatory (Action) Research in Social Theory: Origins and Challenges

Fals-Borda, Orlando

Handbook of Action Research; Participative Inquiry and Practice. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury, eds. p. 27-37 2001.

A Brief History of the Participatory Action Research Collective

Fine, Michelle

Institute for Participatory Action Research and Design at the City University of New York Graduate Center. Retrieved from: http://web.gc.cuny.edu/che/p.htm

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Freire, Paulo

New York: Continuum, 2000.

The Power of Youth and Adult Partnerships and Change Pathways for Youth Work

Search Institute

W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Retrieved from: http://www.search-institute.org/system/files/KelloggExecSummary 0.pdf

Action Research and Teacher Research

George Washington University, Graduate School of Education

Action Research. Retrieved from: https://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr-action
Teacher Research. Retrieved from: https://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr-definition

PAR Reading List

From Voice to Agency: Guiding Principles for Participatory Action Research with Youth

Rodriguez, Louie F. and Brown, Tara M. *New Directions for Youth Development*, n123 p19-34 Fall 2009.

40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents

Search Institute

Minneapolis, MN. Retrieved from: http://www.search-

institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18

Critique: Where Art Meets Assessment

Soep, Elisabeth *Phi Delta Kappan*, v87 n1 p38 Sep 2005.

Action Research

Stringer, Ernest T.
Curtin University of Technology 2014.

YPAR Hub

University of California, Berkeley

Berkeley, CA. Retrieved from: http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/

The Y.R.N.E.S. Report

Youth Researchers for a New Education System

New York City, 2008. Retrieved from: http://icope.org/documents/yrnes.pdf

PAR as Assessment

When PAR is used especially for the assessment of programs and projects, you might find you are finding what you hoped you would find, not much new. That is OK too! What is significant with PAR is that now you have *evidence supporting your claims*, which can be valuable for reporting to program funders and officers. As you dig deeper into what works and why, you will also find that this evidence can help you fine tune your programs, putting more energy, time, and money into what is most effective, and re-tooling what is not as effective.

Voice and Perspective

One unexpected finding from the 2016 Collaboration Council PAR training was that language matters! Members of the Research Team identified a lot of negative, deficit-based language in data collected from adult providers. Words like "disconnected," "lack," "drop-out," and "obstacle" showed up in the data collected from adults who work with and literature about disconnected youth. One finding and potential action identified by the young adult research team was that redefining/renaming some of these labels would be empowering for them and a way to take on their own experience as experts. Another finding was that having a space to work together and connect to other youth/young adults who did not finish high school was helpful and could lead to change in how individuals see themselves and their experience. A third finding emerged during the course of setting up the Research Team, and at first seemed like an obstacle to getting the PAR project started. Members of the Research Team had trouble getting started as a group because of challenges like conflicting schedules (some had part-time jobs), transportation (there was no one meeting place that worked for everyone), family obligations, and the balance between the stipend offered by participation in the Research Team and the need for many of its members to find more sustainable employment. Ironically, these challenges are the same as many youth and young adults face in completing school and securing steady employment to begin with.

During the PAR project conducted by El Puente's Public Art Class, youth decided to share out the findings to their research about creating art for social change through a visual art piece that collected additional data through audience participation.

Taking Action Through Programming

Through their PAR inquiry on visibility for Latino Artists, members of El Puente CADRE (Community Artists Development and Resource Exchange) decided to take action by producing a (now annual) street festival highlighting local Latino artists.

Reflections on Facilitating the 2016 PAR Research Team

In 2016, the Collaboration Council brought together participants and providers from three organizations - Montgomery County (Maryland Multicultural Youth Center (LAYC), Lead for Life, and Making a New United People (ManUP) - to learn about and initiate PAR in their programs. In a timeframe bookended by two in-person training sessions, a team of seven young adult researchers and a youth development facilitator, Maria Alejandra Salas Baltuano, convened to take on Participatory Action Research for the sake of giving young adults more of a voice in decisions that impact them directly. In the first two months, the Research team:

- Got to know each other and build a safe space to talk through issues, biases, and prejudices affecting young people of color
- Interviewed each other about their personal experiences
- Collected data from interviews, journal exercises, and discussions about their own opinions and experiences

The research team's focus:

A common theme that emerged in the group was the idea that young people were often left out of the conversations about them. Because of this recurring theme, it was significant that the Research Team themselves be the ones to frame their own research questions ask questions and decide ways they could take action.

A main focus of the Research Team's research was looking at the ways support systems impact young people's experiences finishing school. Within the group, most had not graduated high school, and a common experience was not having support in different part of their lives such as stable housing and support from family members. One finding was that because of this lack of support while in school, many did not know where to go after they graduated. Many felt their only option was to work, which led to them feeling it was easy to drop out of high school.

A major finding in the group was that if they had gotten more guidance and support in school, they may not have dropped out, because they would have expanded ideas about what to do after high school. These feelings are illustrated in the following excerpts from interviews: "Going out into the world without any support I didn't know what to do next," and "I knew I had to go to college but then I didn't know what to do once I got in."

Highlights from the research team

One highlight in the early stage of the process was the team opening up to each other and sharing their own stories. In the words Maria Alejandra:

"It was amazing to see throughout the time together how they grew with each other. They were able to really see and hear each other. They created a safe space for themselves and each other to be able to share experiences, struggles, laughs and tears. As the organizer, I was moved to be able to be a part of their emotional growth. To be able to give space for them to figure out what they need as well. They also developed their critical analysis on receiving information and owning that they are experts of their own experience."

After the second in-person training, the team came out feeling empowered and energized to keep collecting and analyzing data on their experiences as young people, moving from naming problems to working toward solutions with the guiding focus question: "How can a group of young leaders who are experts of their own experience work together to create solutions for change?" a question that they could apply to the issues examined: dropping out from school, youth homelessness, lack of support, and discrimination.

Reflection from the facilitators

In reflecting on the entire process, Maria Alejandra commented:

"This question was a huge success to get to with the PAR team. It was a breaking moment in their process as a team. They felt more sure of their own questions and answers. They were more confident in asking and owning the statement of we are the experts of our own experiences! It was a defining moment throughout, This is what empowerment looks like and feels like."

Highlights

Another highlight was towards the end of the PAR project when the research team was able to put into practice all the skills they learned through PAR. MMYC shared news that an important grant - one that supports the GED program that serves a large youth population in Montgomery County - would not be approved for the new fiscal year. The research team decided to take action and bring light to the issue, by sharing what MMYC means to them and how it provides necessary support for them. The group created a video campaign highlighting the importance of having a support system like MMYC.

Maria Alejandra: "This was the biggest highlight! To be able to see them put everything they learned to action. Overall, this process has opened up space for Montgomery youth to speak on their experiences and know that their voice will be heard. Young people have the power to create solutions for change but not all have the opportunity to do so. We created an opportunity for them to explore their voice, to hear it, and believe in it. We not only supported their own growth but we gave them the tools to create it for themselves - building a community of young powerful leaders who ask questions, get answers and mobilize towards action."