

Participatory Action Research: An Outline of the Concept¹

Action research is essentially participatory research. Findings and new recommended actions cannot be imposed (as often those of formal research are - with generally disastrous consequences). They must be accepted by the researched. Hence the researched must be involved every inch of the way. They must see it as their research, in their interests, and as something they can effect so it works better for them. (Yoland Wadsworth²)

The Beginnings of Action Research

Carter (1959³) was an early exponent of Action Research. He was a community development theorist. He identified four essential characteristics of Action Research:

1. The problem for research must be generated from a recognised community need.
2. The community members to be affected by the outcomes of research must be involved in the study process.
3. A team work approach amongst all involved in the research process is essential to effective outcomes.
4. The research results must be in the form of recommendations for action or social change.

If this model is to be applied to a specific community (eg. a target group of young people, the involvement of this group is therefore paramount.

Since Carter, many different approaches have been taken in the name of Action Research. There are two main *streams* of thinking:

- An approach based in Liberation Theology that has emerged from the work of Friere and others, and has gained popularity in the Third World. This is a very participatory, locally owned style. All stakeholders are seen (and treated) as

¹ © Copyright Suzi Quixley 1999 & 2008 (revised). This article draws heavily on a handout developed in 1987 (revised 1995 & 1998) entitled *Participatory Action Research: A Brief Outline of the Concept* (4pp) and two documents produced for the Prime Ministerial Youth Homeless Taskforce:

- Quixley, Suzi (1997) **Working from Your Strengths ... The Action Research Resource Kit**, Commonwealth Department of Health & Family Services, Canberra.
- Quixley, Suzi (1998) **A Commentary on the Process of Implementing Action Research in the Youth Homelessness Pilot Program: Learnings and Future Applications**, Evaluation Committee, Prime Ministerial Youth Homeless Taskforce, Canberra.

² Wadsworth, Yoland (1984) **Do It Yourself Social Research**, Victorian Council of Social Service & Melbourne Family Care Organisation, Melbourne, p44.

³ Sorry ... I can't find source details. I know it's a blue canvas-bound hardback book!

experts, with the capacity to engage at all stages in the research process. Models based in this approach are generally described as **Participatory Action Research**, to distinguish them clearly from the models that have emerged from academic settings.

- An approach based in Social Sciences departments in Western universities. These models are less readily distinguished from other forms of academic research. In my view, rather than seeking ownership by all stakeholders, they tend to simply value **consultation** and anecdotal data more than other conventional researchers. Often, these approaches value the ideas of professionals more highly than those of other stakeholders. In some disciplines, clients are not even seen as stakeholders!

However, some models described as *participatory* share more in common with conventional research than action research. It is therefore important to examine the underlying values and practices of each model before implementing it at a local level.

The following basic assumptions underlie most Action Research approaches:

- All research is influenced by values.
- Effective research must acknowledge, legitimise and promote the importance of values in its development.
- The social value of research isolated from its subjects is negligible.
- For research to be effective it must be integrated with development.

Clearly, the extent to which they are applied varies from model to model.

Why Use Participatory Action Research (PAR)?

PAR is a useful developmental tool in non-government community services. The flexible range of approaches, methods and structures which can be integrated into PAR, make it suitable for application across a diverse range of projects, services and models.

PAR provides an opportunity to address the *big questions* often missed in the course of constant service provision. It challenges workers and services to examine the meaning and context of their work. PAR proposes that the underlying question ***Why are we here?*** is asked, as a matter of routine, every day. It enables you to be constantly clear about your individual and organisational values framework. It encourages you to identify and address those questions that will most help make your work relevant to you, your clients and other stakeholders.

PAR functions to genuinely empower stakeholders, including service participants and flanking agencies. Those affected by organisational or project decisions are directly involved in the process. It can build trust at a local level, through demonstrating that an organisation is willing to listen and act on the advice of stakeholders. This can lead to enhanced ongoing collaboration between community members and groups.

PAR helps organisations and staff consciously improve their practice, through enabling innovation and learning. It provides an opportunity, and permission, for service providers to pose questions, reflect, generate ideas and test alternatives - that is, to create a culture of *continual learning*. This includes learning from both what did, and didn't, work. PAR insists you take *time out* to reflect on what you do and generate/test alternatives. This means staff get to work in a stimulating environment of exploration and thinking ... and organisational participants get the benefits of this development.

PAR gives a focus to the things you would be doing anyway. It has the potential to integrate everything your organisation, or service, does into a single, holistic, multi-faceted system. Rather than creating a whole raft of tasks, it provides a framework for what you do already. PAR can draw together all areas of agency functioning - service provision, monitoring/evaluation/review, planning, needs analysis, publicity/promotion, coordination/management, documentation/reporting and administration/accountability.

PAR is a useful way to increase organisational and individual worker efficiency. It provides benchmarks for priority setting - a clear rationale for saying *no* - a context for constantly assessing what is more/less important to focus on - an ongoing mechanism for deciding what you *can and can't do* within the resources available! PAR has the capacity to respond to multiple problems simultaneously. It can recognise the complexity and inter-relatedness of diverse issues, and generate sophisticated responses to these. It can improve service efficiency (and effectiveness) by inviting links to be made between different elements of a project, between the project and other organisational activities, and between the project and external stakeholders.

PAR makes doing evaluation easier ... and more fun! Whilst some people enjoy *number-crunching* and report writing, in my experience, most human services workers would prefer to be having interesting conversations and thinking creatively. That's why you chose to work with people! The material generated through PAR can add colour, character and culture to the process of evaluation. It can provide comments and case studies to *back up* your evaluation findings. It enables groups of people to contribute to critique of your services, rather than workers having to think through ideas in isolation. It also helps you reach target group(s) that are difficult to define and/or access. It can therefore provide information which might not otherwise be available. In other words, PAR can *add value* to more formal evaluation mechanisms. This includes providing qualitative dimensions (a *human face*) and/or offering a more detailed/sophisticated understanding of social needs and the strategies required to address them.

PAR values your *hunches*, and helps you explore them in a relevant, useful way. How many great ideas have you had at work, which you've never had the opportunity to investigate? How often have you thought *If only we could do ... parents would respond so differently or, If only the local secondary school offered ... young people would be more thoughtful about leaving home?* PAR legitimises exploration of these ideas, and, if appropriate, helps you justify modifications you make to your service in order to provide a better service.

Ultimately, PAR can assist organisations to develop a more multi-faceted, holistic, locally relevant approach to service provision.

What is Participatory Action Research (PAR)?

Participatory Action Research ...

- Encourages stakeholders to reflect on and seek to improve services through tightly inter-linking their reflection and action in a public, documented way;
- Enables stakeholders to participate in identifying questions, answering them and making decisions about action;
- Involves stakeholders in gathering data about **their own** questions;
- Works in a collaborative, less hierarchical way, that shares power with all stakeholders;
- Encourages stakeholders to take responsibility for **their own** critical analysis, evaluation and management;
- Supports stakeholders to learn progressively and publicly by testing action ideas (... and possibly making mistakes along the way); and
- Progressively enables stakeholders to ask and answer *bigger* questions.⁴

PAR is collaborative, critical, participatory, and developmental. It focuses on enabling key stakeholders to address problems they see as important. It is concerned with research *alongside* stakeholders, rather than doing research *about* them. It is concerned with achieving ongoing improvements, rather than *once-off solutions*. It links theory and practice, and calls for rigorous critical thinking on the part of all involved. **PAR aims for ownership of the whole development process by agency stakeholders.** It argues that each specific change should be determined by those who will be affected by it.

The systems employed by PAR to achieve this are transparent, public and systematic. Ongoing documentation of the entire process of development is crucial to achieving this level of openness. Emerging collaborative understandings are constantly recorded, and made accessible. **The ability for stakeholders and others to scrutinise and respond to emerging data is seen as critical to development and the gaining of *insights* throughout the process.**

The approach used when conducting PAR is culturally appropriate, flexible, open-ended and dynamic. The process operates at two levels - looking at specific issues/questions (content level) and *on-the-job* learning about PAR (process level). The processes and techniques used must be culturally suited to the particular stakeholders

⁴ This **working definition** is based on one developed by participants at the National Symposium on Action Research, held in Brisbane in 1989, as cited in: Altrichter, Herbert et. al. (1990) *Defining, Confining or Refining Action Research?* in Zuber-Skerritt, O. (ed) **Action Research for Change and Development**, Centre for the Advancement of Learning & Teaching, Griffith University, Brisbane.

involved in each situation. They are designed to accommodate participants' *comfort zone/norms*, rather than those of whoever is conducting the process. Planned approaches should be abandoned, adapted or modified readily, in line with the feedback of participants. **Approaches are designed to enable stakeholders to contribute both to the content and the process of PAR.**

PAR has as much to do with attitude/values/culture, as with planning/structure/strategy. Some values which underlie PAR are that:

- A culture of inquiry, learning and change is essential to achieving best practice.
- Every stakeholder is of value and has ideas to contribute to service development.
- Service participants have special expertise related to service focus, priorities and design.
- The extent of influence of different stakeholders should be commensurate with the effects of the outcomes on them.
- Those affected by the outcomes of research should be involved throughout the whole process.
- All research is influenced by values - to be effective, research must acknowledge, legitimise and promote the importance of values in its development.
- Having a clear values base to service provision is critical to quality of service
- For research to be effective, it must be integrated with development.
- The problems/questions for research must be generated from a recognised stakeholder need.
- A collaborative approach amongst all involved is essential to achieving optimum outcomes in the long term

These values need to be taken into account when designing PAR processes.

Alternate Approaches to Action Research

To some extent, the above values are addressed through any responsive/participatory approach to organisational development and service delivery. However, the nature and extent of stakeholder power varies according to the approach taken to Action Research.

Over time, the definition of *Action Research* has become increasingly hazy⁵. There are now many different understandings of *Action Research*, and the language used to describe different schools of thought within this broad descriptor varies. In particular, *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) and *Technical Action Research* (TAR) reflect totally different emphases. Many different models of practice have emerged - some even contradictory of the original basic tenets of Action Research as outlined above. The following diagram describes the way key terms are used within this article. **When this article uses the term PAR, it refers to the PAR Process:**

⁵ Personally, I would argue that the term has been co-opted to describe processes which do not genuinely transfer decision making power to those most affected by decisions.

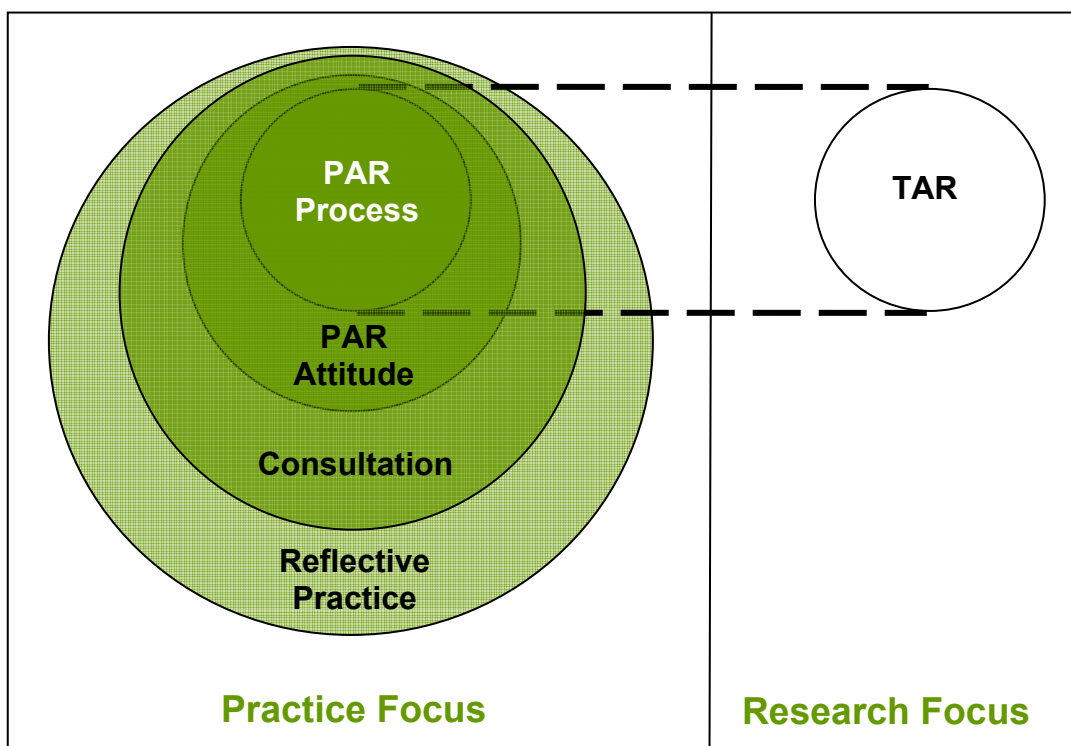


Diagram 1: Conceptual Relationship between Different Approaches to Action Research

In those approaches cited as a **Practice Focus**, Action Research is an implicit element of practice, and is generally integrated into day-to-day work. A **Research Focus** may equally impact on practice, however it functions as an external (rather than internal) influence. As with all conceptual models, on occasion these two broad foci are not as discrete as indicated here.

Reflective Practice - is a way of working that includes ongoing critical thinking, and sees service provision as an evolving process. It may, or may not, include stakeholders beyond workers in the agency in implementing research and decision-making during this process.

Consultation - is one way to do Reflective Practice. It enables stakeholder ideas to broadly influence or inform organisational decisions about service development and delivery. Consultation:

- Tends to address broad questions.
- Any or all stakeholders may be involved in responding to any or all questions about the agency.
- The agency has a high level of discretion as to whether to adopt the ideas of stakeholders.

PAR Attitude - is another way to do Reflective Practice. It is an open, inclusive style of working which actively values the feedback and ideas of stakeholders. It sees engagement of service participants and others as important to the overall process of service improvement. It enables specific stakeholders to become involved in decisions

about those aspects of service development and delivery that directly affect them. A PAR Attitude:

- Tends to address more specific questions.
- Encourages those stakeholders most affected by particular questions to respond to these.
- The agency allows a higher level of involvement and power by stakeholders in each question.

PAR Process - is a specific way to implement a PAR Attitude. It involves applying a structured process (the AR Cycle) as a means of generating a higher level of stakeholder ownership than the more consultative approaches used when implementing a PAR Attitude. By following a cyclic model, and involving stakeholders in every stage, a PAR Process ensures that stakeholders are directly involved in decision making. The questions for research are typically generated by stakeholders in the service. A *PAR Process* enables specific stakeholders to own decisions about those aspects of service development and delivery that directly affect them. This is an improvement oriented model of practice, which is usually implemented by practitioners. A PAR Process:

- Addresses very clear, specific questions in a structured way.
- Integrates those stakeholders most affected by each particular question in the full process of research and decision making about this question.
- The agency proportionally allocates decision making power between stakeholders according to the level of affect of the answer to each question.

TAR - Technical Action Research also follows the AR Cycle. Beyond its' cyclic nature, this is a conventional research process undertaken separately from practice. It may, or may not, involve (selected) stakeholders. **Stakeholders are seen as informants, rather than participants**, in the research process. The questions for research are determined by the researchers. Stakeholders do not have any guarantee of power in the research process or decision making. TAR is generally undertaken by an independent party.

The Role of Stakeholders in Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Stakeholder = A person or group directly affected by the answer to a specific question.

Each specific PAR Question explored is likely to have different stakeholders, or similar stakeholders but with different proportions of stakeholding in different questions.

In other words, who the stakeholders are depends entirely upon the question being asked. There are not a single group of stakeholders for whom the outcomes of every question will have an equal impact. Therefore, each PAR Question requires the input of different stakeholders. For example:

Type of Question	Possible Stakeholders	Possible % of Stakeholding
Collaboration between Local NGO's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flanking community organisations ▪ Your agency workers ▪ Your Management Committee ▪ Funding body/bodies 	50% 30% 10% 10%
A Specific Improvement in Direct Service Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clients in this service area ▪ Potential clients in this service area ▪ Their friends ▪ Their families ▪ Your agency worker(s) in this service area ▪ Your agency workers in general ▪ Your Management Committee 	30% 30% 10% 5% 15% 5% 5%
Organisational Policy Affecting Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Auspicing Organisation's Management Committee ▪ Project Management Committee ▪ Auspicing Organisation Staff ▪ Project staff 	25% 25% 25% 25%
An Internal Project Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project staff ▪ Auspicing Organisation Staff ▪ Your Management Committee 	90% 5% 5%

The Role of Questions in Participatory Action Research (PAR)

PAR focuses on the collaborative asking and answering of questions designed to progressively achieve the best possible practice in a project or agency. Ultimately, PAR seeks to enable stakeholders in different aspects of the organisation to determine the questions being addressed. However, usually, staff generate initial practical *starter questions*, to get the process moving. (This can be important as a means of demonstrating quickly that the agency genuinely intends to hand over power to stakeholders, because people experience their decisions being firmly adopted and acted on.)

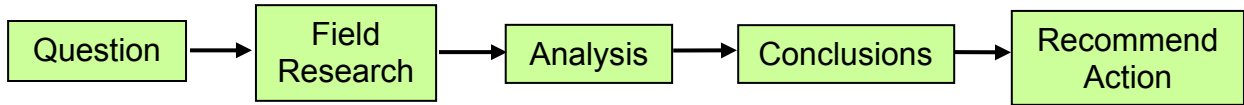
The types of questions asked can vary:

- **Macro Questions** tend to look at big questions such as the appropriateness of your service delivery approach, or its effectiveness/efficiency, barriers/gaps in service provision, what constitutes good practice, intra-agency policy or inter-agency coordination/collaboration.
- **Micro Questions** tend to look at smaller, practical questions such as opening hours, publicity mechanisms or adjustments to specific aspects of service delivery.

In other words, PAR provides a mechanism for framing any practical issue or idea as a question for research. It ensures that these are processed in a thorough, accountable, astute way.

What does Participatory Action Research (PAR) Look Like?

Do you imagine research being similar to this?



- A process which is determined and managed by the researcher(s)?
- Which moves from *Point A* to *Point B* - beginning with a question and ending with an answer?
- Where the only involvement of stakeholders is in providing data at the *Field Research* stage?
- Where the end is the production of recommendations, with no guarantee of action arising from these?

PAR is a fundamentally different kind of research. It is concerned with establishing processes where stakeholders are vitally involved throughout. **Action** is seen as an integral part of the research process ... part of an ongoing cycle of action and learning from these activities. **Rather than functioning in a single, straight line, it is an ongoing, fluid, process that can continue for the life of your service.**

The high level of flexibility in PAR makes it very difficult to describe simply. The following diagram attempts to describe PAR. Because of the flexibility of PAR, this can only serve as an example of how a particular process might work:

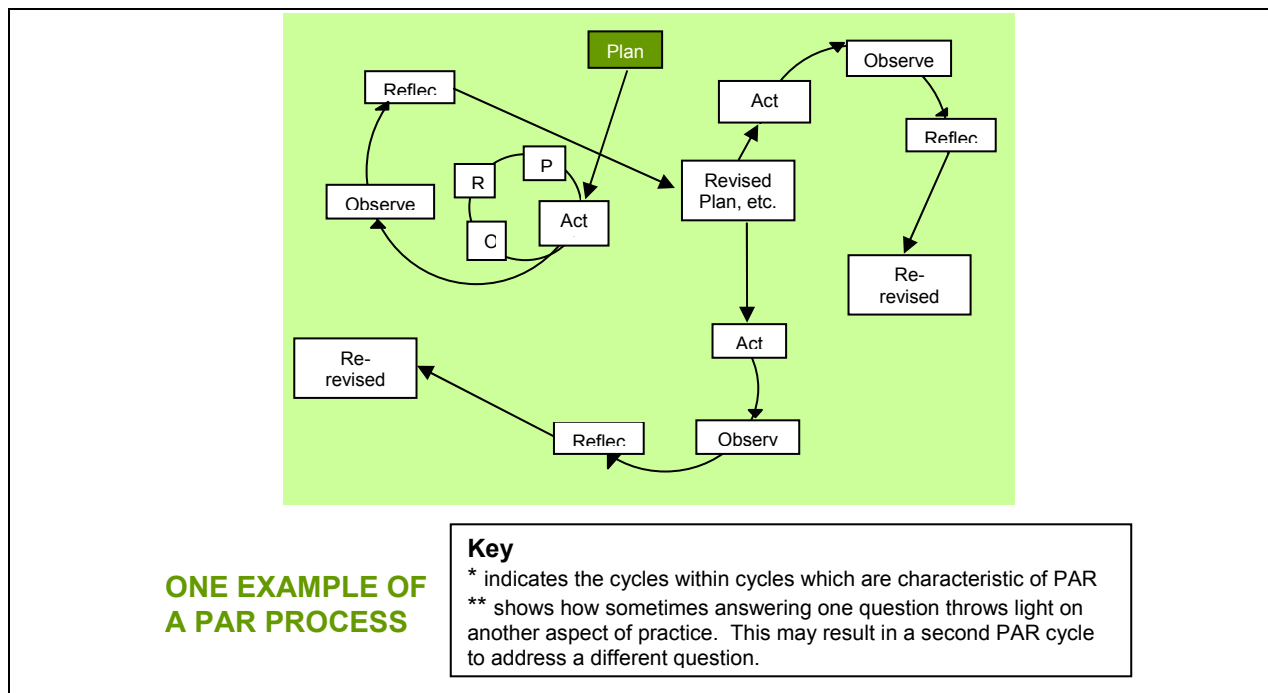


Diagram 2: An Example PAR Process⁶

⁶ Based on ideas from Jenny Chadwick & Phil Crane

The starting point to the process is shaded. Please note that a cycle does not necessarily begin with Planning. It could begin with any of the other processes - Acting, Observing or Reflecting. **Regardless of where you start, it is critical that you clearly define the question you are seeking to address through the PAR process.**

The process is a dynamic, constantly evolving one. *Circles can overlap one another. Side questions (which may end up becoming key questions when further explored) can be generated or emerge at any point in the process.*

A Working Simplification of the PAR Process

You will note that the same 4 steps are constantly repeated, throughout the process. So, the following is a simplified version of the model, to make it easier to talk about specific steps and processes. It can be entered at any point:

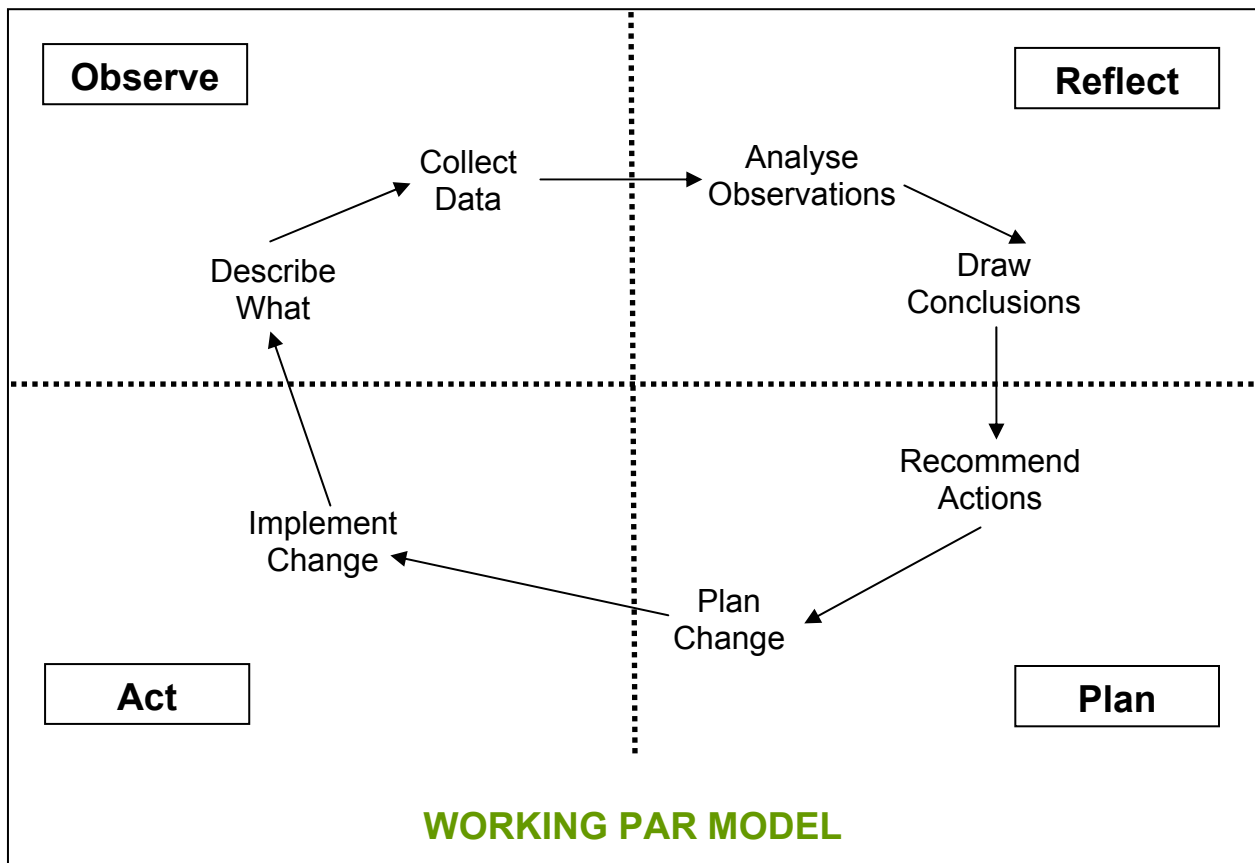


Diagram 3: Working PAR Model⁷

⁷ This model draws heavily on Wadsworth1984:44. Wadsworth, Yolanda (1984) **Do It Yourself Social Research**, Victorian Council of Social Service & Melbourne Family Care Organisation, Melbourne (particularly pp 28 & 44).

Depending upon whether you are addressing Macro or Micro Questions, **a cycle can take anything from a few hours, to a few years, to complete.** Accordingly, several cycles might be occurring simultaneously within an organisation.

The following is a brief outline of some of the possible steps involved with each Stage in the quadrant.

The Planning Stage

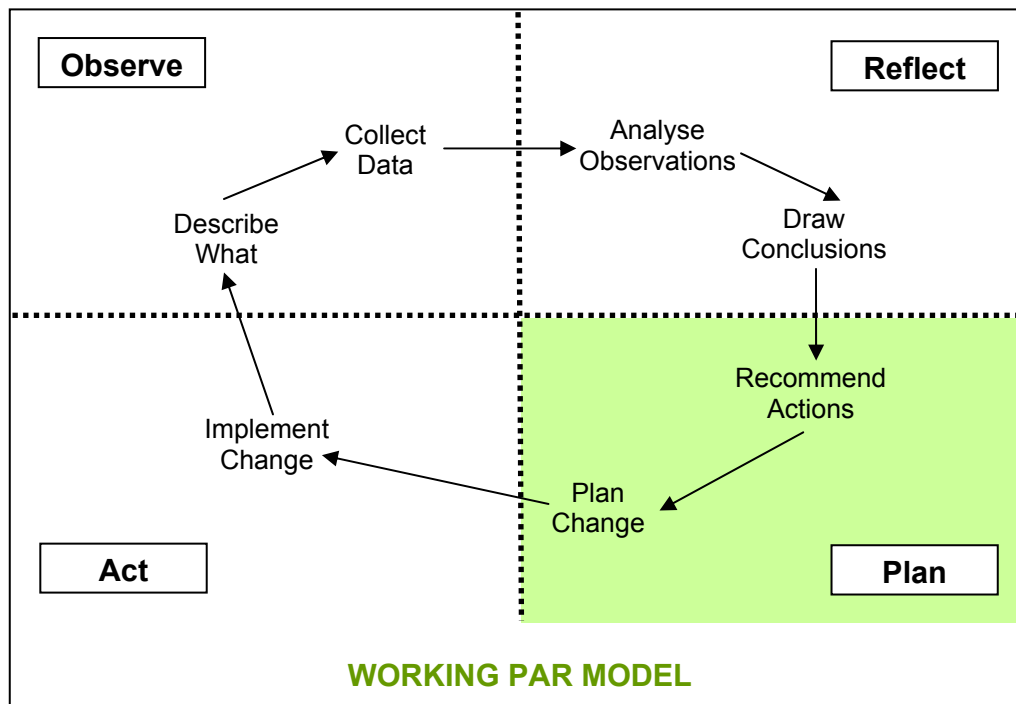


Diagram 4: The Planning Stage

Key tasks during the Planning Stage are:

- Return to the outcomes of your *Reflection Stage* (if you've been around the cycle once), and use these as the basis for recommending specific action, and designing your change process.
- Look forward to implementation of your plan, and constantly consider the consequences of your planning for practice.

Assuming you've been through the cycle once, during the Reflection Stage you developed theory about what you had observed. This Stage is about translating broad generalisations into your own, very practical, setting. The ease with which you work through this stage is dependent on the Reflection Stage being fully completed, and the findings being supported by stakeholders in the issue.

The following is one example of a step-by-step process you could go through when planning for change:

- 1 What are all the possible actions that could arise from your thinking at a theoretical level?

Test your answers with as many stakeholders in this question as you can, to ensure that as **many ideas as possible** are included.
- 2 What is the most widely preferred order of priority of the ideas? Which would stakeholders most like to see implemented?

Seek feedback from as many stakeholders in this question as possible, to ensure that you've taken account of the **full range of preferences**.
- 3 What would be the resource implications (eg. money, time) of pursuing, for example, the *top 3* ideas? Could they be undertaken in addition to existing tasks - or would they need to replace something?

Engage stakeholders in this question throughout this exploration process, so they can extend your thinking in this area, and make an informed choice when revisiting priorities.
- 4 So ... given the resource implications, do the priorities need to be reviewed?

Again, **fully** involve stakeholders in this question at this stage ... this is a point where they can have real power in the direction of your service.
- 5 What would it take to be able to implement the ultimately preferred action ideas? What strategies need to be explored and implemented?

Many people enjoy this stage of the planning process most!
- 6 Timetable the changes.

Whilst this might look an arduous process, it needn't be. There are a range of methods you can use to check out stakeholder views. The steps are not time-bound ... and, in the case of some *Micro Questions*, could be worked through in a single *sitting*.

The Action Stage

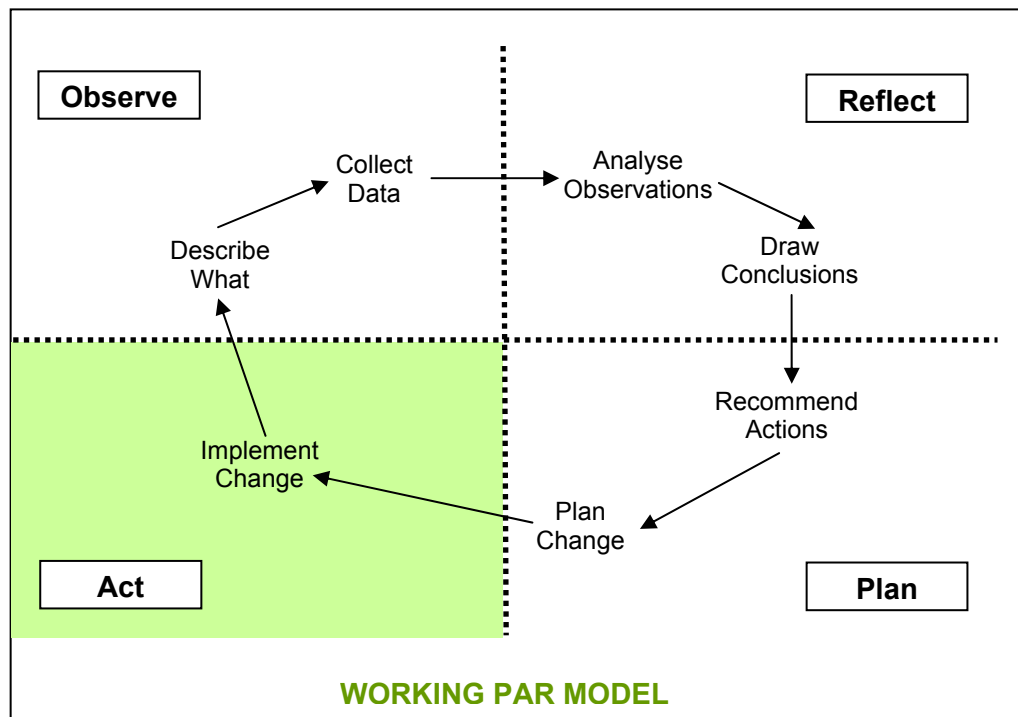


Diagram 5: The Action Stage

It is really important, in a PAR context, not to see the Action Stage as separate from research. You are concerned here with testing Questions through action, rather than words. **So ... your actions must be deliberate and critically informed.** This is the stage where stakeholders can *vote with their feet* ... often providing a clearer indication of their interests than they might, verbally. (Non-verbal *feedback* is at least as valid as verbal feedback.) It is a particularly useful time to undertake *micro* processes, to test stakeholders' responses to their ideas in practice, and generate modified questions and directions.

In *real life*, it is difficult to separate the Action Stage from the Observation Stage. In the Observation Stage, you are required to *Describe What Happened*. This will be easier to do later, if you have maintained detailed documentation throughout the implementation process. It will be almost impossible to document later, if you are not conscious of the importance of observing what's happening now!

Key tasks during the Action Stage are to:

- Look **back** to the plans developed during the *Planning Stage*, and monitor the extent to which these are being implemented and/or modified.
- Look **forward** to the *Observation Stage*, and remain conscious of the importance of noticing what's happening, and micro-processing this as appropriate with other stakeholders.

Some key questions in this stage might be: *Are changes to the Action Plan a result of ongoing learning ... or are you simply not doing what you said you'd do! Have you brought stakeholders in this question 'along with you'? Are you keeping the kind of documentation you will require to be able to document detailed outcomes accurately in the next stage?*

The Observation Stage

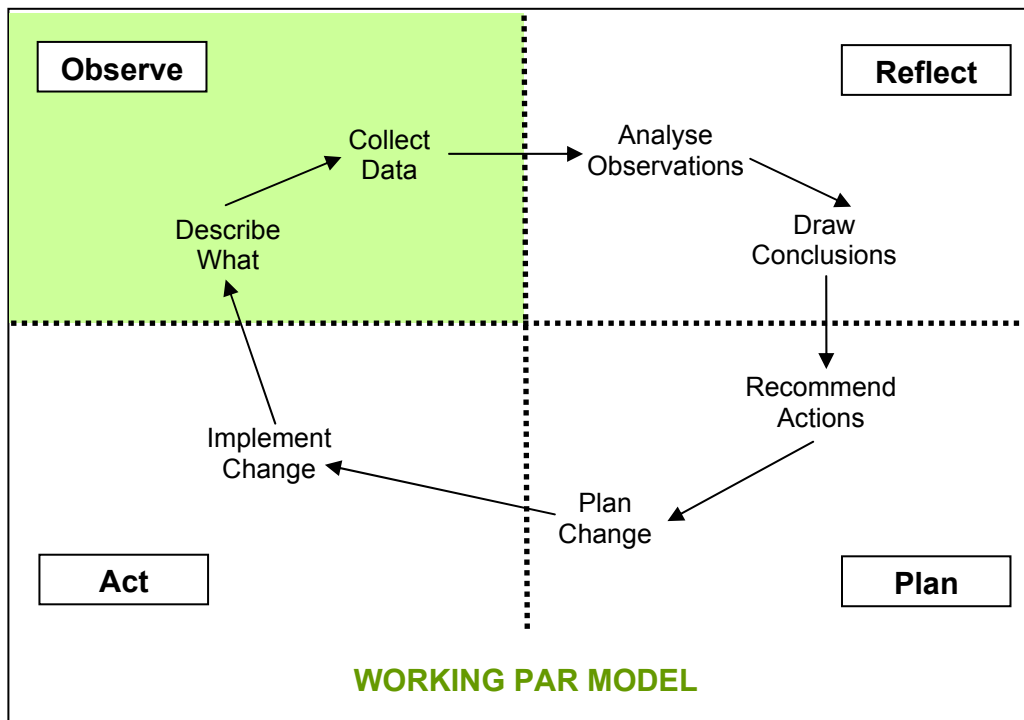


Diagram 6: The Observation Stage

Articulating what actually happened during a process, can be at least as controversial as interpreting it! Everyone involved with the process has experienced it from a different perspective. Each is likely to have their own version of the story to tell - whether they were directly involved, or in an external observation role.

It is particularly critical that all key stakeholders in the question being explored are involved during this stage. If not, you run a serious risk of having later stages sabotaged (albeit unintentionally). Every time that someone refers back to the findings from this stage, another stakeholder is likely to take the discussion *off the track* by wanting to review or challenge the findings.

This stage is not only concerned with *describing what happened*. You may well find that happenings do not adequately answer the question you were pursuing. It is valid, during this stage, to *fill in the gaps* with data from sources such as client data

sheets, stakeholder meetings, internal meeting minutes, interviews, report proforma or focus groups.

The documentation produced during this stage is the key to allowing critique of your analysis and conclusions.

Key tasks during the Observation Stage are to:

- Look **back** at the *Action Stage*, and recall as many pertinent details as possible.
- Look **forward** to the *Reflection Stage*, and ensure you provide a sound base for reflection through facilitating a widely-accepted understanding of what actually happened.

This stage can be a rich resource for both your internal development and meeting your accountability and reporting requirements. Collecting stories adds character, colour and *heart* to your organisational thinking and formal documentation.

The Reflection Stage

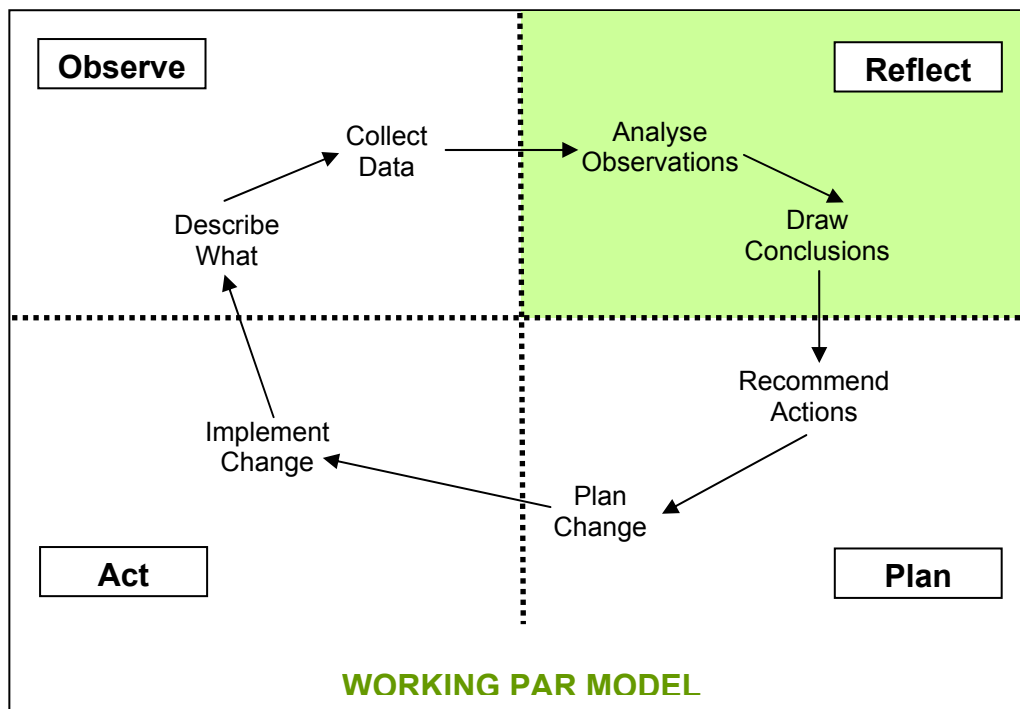


Diagram 7: The Reflection Stage

Reflection is not simply a process of loosely thinking about what people have said. It is quite a rigorous (though not really difficult, once you've got the hang of it!) process of developing theories⁷:

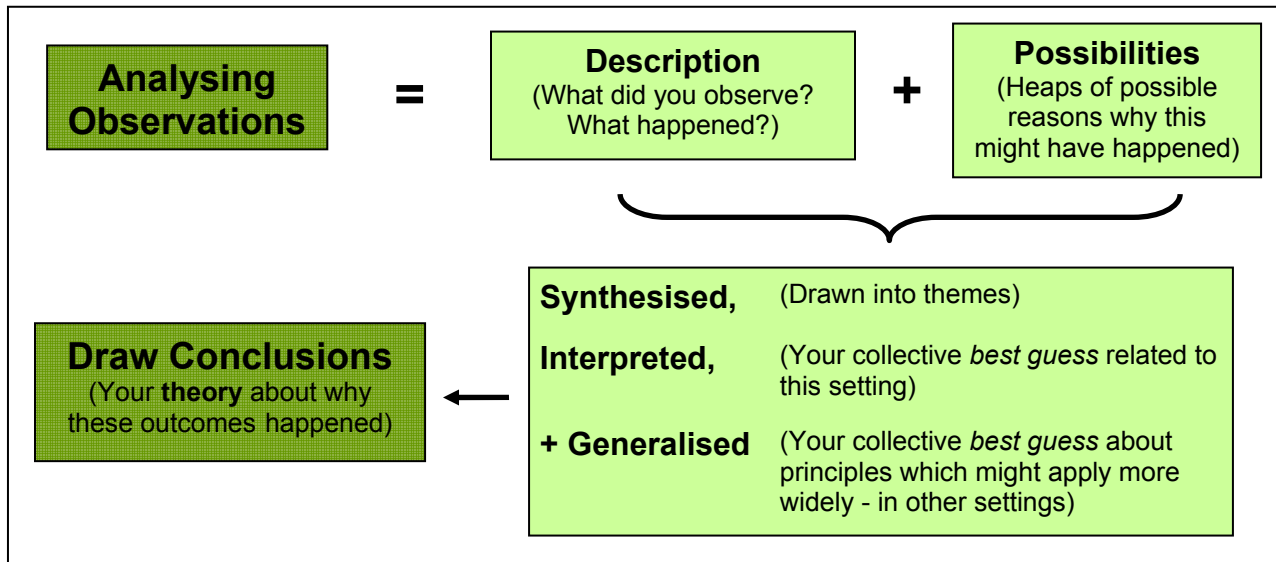


Diagram 8: The Process of Developing Theories

Key tasks during the Reflection Stage are to:

- Look **back** at data collected during the *Observation Stage* and make sense of it.
- Look **forward** to the *Planning Stage*, and generate sound theories which form a basis for planning change, or affirm current approaches.

You don't need to undertake this alone. In my experience, many people enjoy the process of theory development, once it is demystified. Realising that people who are developing theories are really only making their *best guess* on the evidence available (ie. an *informed guess*) can be a very liberating experience! Undertaking the process collaboratively has 3 key advantages:

1. You are more likely to come up with a range of possibilities throughout the process.
2. You have the opportunity to constantly test the accuracy of your findings - *Is your **description** accurate? Has your **analysis** taken account of all the possible reasons why? Has your **synthesis** included everyone's ideas? Is your **interpretation** legitimate - does it take account of a variety of possible perspectives? Would your **generalisation** apply under a range of circumstances?*
3. It continues to legitimise the *ownership* of the process of service development by a wider group with an interest in the outcomes.

⁷ This model is based on: Quixley, Suzi (1988) **Community Development and Youth Work**, WA College of Advanced Education, Claremont, WA (p15).

There's nothing like a few very *down to earth* people and a hearty constructive debate, to help you review your theory development process!

Essentially, this stage asks you to explore *What is the meaning of what's happened?* It is about making judgments. Your answers to this question will be based in participants' individual and collective values.

Thorough completion of this stage is particularly critical to legitimising use of PAR data as the basis for service development and change.

Why Learn More about Participatory Action Research?

Quite apart from the political advantages, this approach offers incredible efficiencies. Its ongoing nature and the constant integration of observation, reflection, planning and action have many practical advantages. Rather than evaluation or report writing being a big annual *accountability* exercise, both activities are going on constantly ... in a manner designed to be accessible to the target group! Similarly, planning is an ongoing, rather than discrete exercise ... and, so is information gathering/research ... and so is reflection and analysis ... etc.

Maybe this is the practical and viable means of *empowerment* the community services industry has been looking for? PAR provides a mechanism for continuous learning and improvement, which treats service users in a respectful manner. Clients are seen as *experts* on their own preferences and needs. It provides a tool for integrating their insights with those of other stakeholders, in a coherent, legitimised way. It can readily be reframed as a quality assurance mechanism!

In terms of *needs analysis*, this model also has some particular advantages. Because of its cyclic nature, you can begin at any point in the circle. Maybe, you do start conventionally, with a survey and some planning. **But** you might also start by trying a response (action), and enabling people to respond to something practical (rather than consultation as the starting point yet again!). Alternately, you might start with finding out about other attempts to meet a particular need, and involve the target group in analysing this, drawing their own conclusions, recommending action and testing out an idea.

Participatory Action Research provides optimum opportunities for disadvantaged community members to become **collectively empowered**, and have a genuine experience of **ownership** of developments affecting their lives.

Conclusion

If Participatory Action Research is fundamental to the character of your service, you will see opportunities for implementing it constantly. PAR values the process of development at least as much as its outcomes, because of its key role in enabling ongoing service improvement.

Further, more specific, handouts written by Suzi Quixley about Action Research are:

- *A Possible Role for Resource Groups in Action Research Settings (2pp)*
- *Recording and Storing of Participatory Action Research Data (4pp)*
- *Applying Existing Competencies to Participatory Action Research (7pp)*