PAR for the Course: A Congruent Pedagogical Approach for a PAR Methods Class

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In the past two years, three graduate students and a senior faculty member have co-taught a participatory action research (PAR) course to undergraduate and graduate students. In this article the co-teachers advocate a set of pedagogical principles and practices in a PAR-oriented classroom that establishes congruency with community PAR projects in which students participate. PAR in the classroom parallels, supports, and amplifies PAR lessons students learn in their community partnerships.

We stepped back to look at our collective effort. Together, the students, the community partners and we, the co-teachers of the class, had made a fish and boulders mural that displayed answers to the question we had put to ourselves: "What are the benefits and barriers of university students and community partners working together for successful participatory action research projects?" After we talked about the results of the activity, we sat in a circle, and the core stakeholders of the community organizations working with students on PAR projects shared their insights and answered questions about their ongoing work in the community. Inviting all the community partners to class that day was a highlight of the course. It was yet another way to bring PAR into the classroom.

The authors are four co-instructors of a two-year old participatory action research (PAR) course offered to undergraduate and graduate anthropology students.[1] As co-originators and co-teachers of the PAR course, we focus on ways participatory action research can be infused *within the classroom*, supporting and modeling the work of students with their community PAR partners. Our group includes Joyce, a tenured faculty member, Maria and Jason, graduate students who co-originated and first co-taught the course with Joyce, and Rowenn, a graduate student who holds the unique position of having been one of the enrolled students during the first year who then became a co-teacher the second year.

In this article we explore a number of classroom pedagogical approaches based on the PAR principles that model and support the community work in which students engage. Specifically, we discuss student-generated course content, democratic classroom management, and co-teaching by faculty and graduate students. We also reflect on the PAR cycle as a dynamic process of learning and consider some of the challenges and outcomes of our pedagogy.

PAR can be succinctly described as an approach to research that aims at transformative actions based on questions raised by community members. In this regard, PAR has always concerned itself with epistemology and can trace its earliest articulations to the critical pedagogies of John Dewey, Paolo Freire, Kurt Lewin, and Myles Horton and the Highlander Folk School. PAR purposefully blurs the traditional distinctions between teachers and students. In PAR, everyone has knowledge to share and everyone has lessons to learn. In short, everyone takes the role of both teacher and student.

PAR and community service learning share several commonalities, including: community-based learning, actions that affect community members, and an emphasis on reflective thought. Increasingly, the two are similar in advancing the goal of creating more connections between educational institutions and community (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003; Troppe 1994). PAR offers a method of engaging students in research and actions that can change social systems and improve lives. Furthermore, PAR can extend the aims of service-learning by challenging the traditional practices of research in colleges and universities.

Perhaps because PAR questions and redefines the traditional teacher/learner relationship, relatively few institutions of higher education have linked college students with community-based research projects, despite the mutual gains for students and community members, as recently explored by Kinnevy and Boddie (2001), Martin (1997), McNicoll (1999), Meulenberg-Buskens (1996), and Tolley and Bentley (1996). We concur with Strand et al. (2003) who contend that while community-based research

...may well be a potentially transformative educational strategy, in fact remarkably little about it has been written for academics who are drawn to this sort of work or for others — community members, administrators, funding agencies, students — who might want to know more about it. (p. xxi)

While nearly any facet of students' involvement in community-based research needs greater attention (e.g., Willis, Waldref, & Stockmann, 2003), we wish to focus on the classroom component of PAR courses since there is so little available about the challenges and rewards of creating PAR classrooms (but see Elvemo, 1997 for a notable exception). Most articles about PAR courses mostly discuss the work developed between students and community partners. While student/community relationships are central to any PAR course, the almost exclusive concern with this aspect of PAR courses in the current literature offers little in the way of acknowledging the experiential learning and supportive work that can occur in PAR classrooms. By positioning the classroom solely as a location to manage and debrief projects (Kinnevy & Boddie, 2001; Lewis, 2004) or by neglecting to discuss the classroom experience at all (Benson, Harkavy & Puckett., 1996; Couch, 2004; Reardon, 1994, 1998), the potential for PAR as a teaching and learning process for college students in *all* facets of a PAR course is attenuated.

In agreement with Malvicini (2003, p.125) who calls for greater connections between pedagogy and practice, we maintain that PAR principles should be integrated into as many aspects of the course as possible for optimal learning. Specifically, we aim to contribute to a better understanding of ways that the classroom and community experiences can inform and strengthen one another. Our experience shows that pedagogical practices in the classroom can support the PAR work that students do in the community by modeling and extending it. We believe that guiding students' work in the community should be congruent with a classroom environment organized according to PAR philosophy and methodology. A PAR course should be infused with PAR principles, actions, and outcomes in all its facets, including the classroom experience. We assert that "PAR for the course" can be realized within the classroom to fundamentally deepen students' understanding of PAR. A strong infusion of PAR in the classroom guides, strengthens, and enhances students' community work. Conversely, bringing community work into the class leverages students' learning in the community.

Classroom Components

There are three significant classroom components that create a dynamic process of exchange between the classroom and community that results in a mutually-reinforcing learning experience for students:

Classmate Peer Teaching

Students teach each other core lessons through dialogue, sharing what they are learning in their individual PAR experiences in the community. This classroom process parallels the community process of sharing and co-constructing knowledge, thus reinforcing students' interdependent learning between classroom and community.

Pedagogy for Active Learning

Everyday PAR pedagogical practices in the classroom model and replicate PAR processes in the community. They also serve to reinforce the principles of PAR practice in the community.

Instructor Co-Teaching

Co-teaching by a faculty member and graduate students who act as "near-peers" to enrolled students models the co-equal relationships ideal in PAR work. Co-teachers as facilitators further models facilitator roles for students in their community PAR work.

After describing the development and launch of our PAR course, each class component will be discussed to explain how they model and congruently support students' PAR work with community partners. Included are some of the challenges and difficulties encountered when infusing PAR into the classroom. We also include how we have sought to overcome or draw lessons from problematic situations. True to the spiraling nature of the PAR process, we revisit and deepen a discussion of the dynamic process of the PAR learning cycle. There we expand on some of our introductory remarks and further expound on the epistemological rewards of using PAR as a pedagogical method for classes that support students' participation in community PAR work. Finally, we conclude with some thoughts on the outcomes and challenges of teaching PAR and the reasons we find using PAR in the classroom compelling as a congruent approach to the reflection, reinvestment, renewal, and re-visioning of all PAR work.

Course Development and Launch

As with any PAR undertaking, our course began when we asked a question to investigate answers and make plans to lead us to action. Graduate students Maria and Jason teamed with faculty member Joyce to seek answers to the question: "How can

community service learning help students apply anthropological methods and insights in ways that benefit the community and serve students' needs for preparing for future opportunities?"

While there are a number of models describing the reiterative PAR process that begins with one or more research questions (Fernandes & Tandon, 1981; Smith, Willms, & Johnson, 1997; Stringer, 1999), a well known paradigm is that of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) with the flexible stages of: plan, act/observe, reflect, and then — in light of the reflections — plan for the next cycle. Our original and ongoing co-construction of the PAR course draws upon the PAR process detailed in various PAR models.

At the 2003 Society for Applied Anthropology meetings, we attended participatory action research panels and workshops that proved catalytic. They inspired us to seek individual paths for engaging with PAR in summer 2003.[2] These, in combination with the conference offerings, background reading, and our discussions prepared us to design and launch a new course in 2004.

We decided early on that in addition to its inception through collaboration, the course should be co-taught by one or more graduate students and a faculty member.[3] This teaching approach is part of the PAR message and one of many ways to ensure that PAR principles are modeled for students.

In designing the PAR class, we opted to provide students with opportunities to engage in PAR work with organizations that Strand et al. (2003, p. 72) refer to as "in the middle," which are one step removed from grassroots groups or the clientele of organizations. The advantages, as detailed by the authors, are that these organizations are more accessible to students because they already have a structure in place with staff and leadership easily identified. They include volunteer groups, social service organizations, community development corporations, and government agencies. Students select organizations based on their interests from our pool of participating organizations. Because our course enrollment is small (10-12 students), we have found it manageable to let each student link with a different organization, thus providing a rich diversity of PAR projects, people, and experiences.

The first year the course was offered, we established a precedent that students would first build knowledge, rapport, and trust with the community partners in a precursor 10-week, grounded theory anthropology fieldwork methods course that was already an established curriculum offering. This mitigated what Keene and Colligan (2004, p. 10) identify as "...the simple logistics of short-term class projects which work against the kind of sin-

cere relationship-building that allow [students] to be more of than in the community..." Not only does this provide each student with more time to get to know the organization and develop rapport with the people, but it also allows other students in the class to gain familiarity with the context for each student's PAR work in the subsequent PAR class. The fieldwork methods course culminates in ethnographies, presented to students' community partners, which demonstrate students' understanding of the organization and their cultures.[4] In the PAR course, which immediately follows the fieldwork methods course, students become co-researchers with community partners of the same organization in new or ongoing PAR projects.

Both years we have offered half- and full-day workshops to community partners and students to bridge the transition from the first-term fieldwork to the second-term PAR. Other meetings between students and their community partners familiarize both groups with our PAR course expectations. In most cases, community partners and students begin to formulate PAR research questions together before the PAR term, but sometimes students enter into an already ongoing PAR process begun by an organization previous to the students' involvement. Meeting dates and a project schedule are also pre-planned before the PAR course.

Once the PAR term is underway, students meet twice weekly in class to study PAR theory and method, to learn (usually through practice) about PAR tools, and discuss the collaborative work in which they engage. Students spend three hours a week in class and six hours a week working in the community. In the second year, we invited community partners to join us for a class at midterm for activities and discussion investigating the challenges organizations face in serving the community and ways the PAR class and community partners might better work together. Both years, the term has culminated with a celebration of all involved — students, co-teachers, and community partners — along with support staff from The Center for Service-Learning[5] and invited community and campus guests. The class purposively hosts the gathering at a location in the heart of the community.

Classmate Peer Teaching

Students are eager to go into the "real world" to use their skills and knowledge in working collaboratively with others on participatory action research projects. Throughout the term, they come to class full of worries, stories, and insights about their community experiences to share. In their co-construction of knowledge about community organizations and participa-

tory action research, many students also get a much clearer idea of what one student called "the value of myself."
                    Joyce Hammond, faculty co-teacher

Lessons that students learn from their involvement in community PAR projects are at the heart of the PAR course and constitute the most important educational classroom element. Because each student selects a community partnership that fits his/her interests, the class as a whole benefits from learning about many PAR projects. What each student brings to the class in the way of their individual background experiences, influences, likes, and dislikes shapes their choices of PAR partners and, by extension, those PAR experiences that become part of course content.

Students are typically very enthusiastic about their community partners' organizations and PAR projects, which results in animated class contributions. One student, for example, who worked with a midwifery project, significantly raised awareness for all us of the difficulties midwives can face in coordinating services with the established medical community; she and her community partners entered into research and action that revolved around the question "How do we facilitate better communication, respect, and collaboration between the medical community and midwifery community? Other PAR projects' research questions ranged from "How can we collect data to effectively show the positive effects of equine-assisted therapy?"[6] to "How do people envision the Bellingham Public Library in 2020 and beyond?"

What students are learning individually and collectively is utilized in the class to deepen the lesson of how the PAR process values individual contributions in co-constructing knowledge for group action. As students share their insights, pose questions, offer supportive listening and advice, and actively help one another complete tasks in and out of class, they become a learning classroom community that mirrors and supports the organizations' communities of inquiry and practice in which students take part.

There are several ways students bring community-based lessons into the classroom. Discussion prompts — participatory tools that elicit lessons learned in the community — and readings that stimulate comparisons between students' work and others' efforts in PAR facilitate classroom peer learning. Oral and written prompts introduced every other week, respectively, facilitate students' reflections and stimulate class discussions. An example of an oral prompt was, "What was the most difficult aspect of doing PAR this week and what was the most satisfying?" Similar to oral prompts, written prompts are designed to help students take account of (a) what they and their partners have accomplished toward their stated aims, (b) what remains to be done in their inquiry and action plans, (c) what they believe they are learning, (d) comparisons of their experiences to those of practitioners whose writings they read for the course, (e) reflections on what inspires, concerns, surprises and discourages them, and (f) what they need in the way of help from instructors, their classmates, and their community partners. We usually include one prompt to encourage them to create their own question to answer. Sometimes we urge them to write a poem, create a drawing, or find a photograph that reflects some aspect of PAR. All check-in activities, written and oral, are designed to help the students process what they are experiencing/learning and to share their comprehension with each other. Although it is impossible to discuss everything in class, the check-in responses are an endless source of material for class sharing and learning.

Not surprisingly, students' understanding of PAR processes changes over time. With the progression of their own experiential learning and collective learning from classmates' projects, students become aware that they are gaining more from the readings. They often articulate their insights in the observation that readings of methodologies and case studies make "more sense." Early course lessons and discussions on ways to take and distribute meeting notes, facilitate meetings, and adapt PAR approaches to many kinds of circumstances begin to resonate with students, as they and their partners enter into different phases of PAR. Experimenting with new research techniques, finding out what works and does not, and responding to unexpected turns of events are all part of the PAR experiences students share with each other.

Among the course requirements is the expectation that students learn about and relate information on different tools for facilitating participatory inquiry and action that their community partners might find useful. When students take ideas to the community about participatory research tools such as a graffiti wall, a fish and boulders mural, photo elicitation, or the use of an inquiry matrix,[7] they often report back on ways partners adapt the tools to particular purposes. They also reflect on how well particular research strategies and tools functioned for a group's research, communication, action, and/or assessment goals.

Students also bring community partners' practices to the classroom. Predictably, this has the invigorating effect of providing us with more examples of ways PAR processes can work in specific contexts. In one class we heard how skits involving horses are a means for troubled teens to

understand themselves better (and the horses, with which they are matched for therapeutic purposes). Another time we learned about elementary children who identified their personal values by using the Open Question Circle, a tool which elicits people's most optimistic and creative thinking about outcomes for different situations. Students have also informed us about an interactive method that involves people holding signs to indicate goals and arranging themselves in relation to one another to clarify their organization's priorities. These are lessons students brought to class that came directly out of their community involvement. Because students share such lessons with others in the classroom, the learning and co-construction of knowledge is leveraged. As the community PAR projects progress throughout the term, students reflect on similar characteristics of each PAR undertaking and come to recognize its unique challenges, strengths, and outcomes.

Students learn about each community group's research questions, the larger context of a group's work, the obstacles organizations face, the setbacks they may encounter, and the actions they pursue. In addition, the lessons students share about community PAR projects inform them of the processes of building group consensus, exchanging ideas, and completing tasks. These lessons are reinforced within the classroom as students themselves enter into similar processes as a learning community. While students in our class are not clustered as team members with the same community partner in a fashion utilized by many community-based courses, our students have frequent opportunities to cooperatively transmit information and resources; offer advice, suggestions, and encouragement to one another; and, at times, even help one another with tasks in their respective community projects. Like their community partners, students experience a shared sense of purpose. They visit one another's community partners' open houses and other activities, and help each other prepare materials for PAR tools to be used in the community. This cooperative work mirrors much of their community partners' work. In the classroom and the community, students engage in the parallel activities of brainstorming ideas, offering resources, being accountable to the whole group, and providing ongoing support.

At the end of the term, students provide community partners with a succinct presentation of the PAR work and a carefully prepared portfolio for their partners' use, which includes a summation of the inquiry process, conclusions drawn, actions conducted or planned, as well as recommendations for ongoing and future efforts. Portfolio sharing allows students to view and give feedback on each other's work-in-progress near the end of the term. Because each project is unique, the portfolio's organizational structure remains flexible, and students are supported in their decisions to combine sections or create new ones in response to the guidelines. Portfolio creation is another example of students contributing course content, because they respond to each other's format choices and discuss their different ways of approaching sections. By viewing one another's portfolios, they are exposed to multiple PAR case study reports which influence their own work.

During the two occasions in which all students and community partners gather face to face (the midterm class and culminating celebration), there is an opportunity for *all* to share thoughts and insights about the PAR process and how our collective work is succeeding, needs revising, or might be strengthened. End-of-the-term written evaluations completed by students and community partners amplify and add further insights. As co-teachers we also enter into discussions with one another, students, and community partners that yield ideas about ways the course might be improved and community partners' goals better served.

As the article's beginning vignette indicates, the class meeting with community partners introduced new learning from the community. Working together with community partners to explore facets of the collaborative PAR process is a significant way to expand the PAR lesson of constructing knowledge for practical purposes. In an atmosphere of open discussion where mutual interest and respect is clearly established, students not only learn from the ideas that flow between themselves and community partners, but also gain new knowledge from hearing the exchange of ideas among community members themselves.

Students teach the core lessons in the PAR class; they rely on their community partners, each other, and themselves for those lessons. As in the community setting where students come to realize they can make individual contributions valuable to the community partners, so too in class students learn to take themselves and fellow students seriously as co-constructors of the learning they create. As Strand et al. (2003) observed, "Students involved with community-based research seem exceptionally motivated to learn. They are invigorated by their accountability and a heightened sense of purpose" (p. 126). Our students' energy and commitment testify to their feelings of increased worth.

Pedagogy for Active Learning

To me, the importance of PAR centers on empowering individuals to create new knowl-

edge for themselves and with others by valuing each individual's experiences and observations. The structure of the class encourages us to use and create knowledge as opposed to merely absorbing it. Learning becomes tangible and active through democratic dialogue and action with others. Really, it boils down to becoming active participants in community whether that is the classroom community or the larger surrounding community.

Maria Hicks, graduate student co-teacher

In our PAR classroom meetings, we draw heavily upon pedagogical practices that use the investigative, action, and reflection aspects of a PAR cycle to prepare and support students as academic contributors to their community partners. We purposefully infuse class time with situations in which students work cooperatively on tasks. These run the gamut from "jigsaw" reading/discussion groups and group work with PAR tools, to planning activities for special class meetings with partners and working out criteria for self-evaluations. It is a rare class meeting that does not involve some kind of small group work that is collectively shared afterward with the whole class.

As co-teachers, we met at least weekly to plan the following week's activities and discussion topics. In the first year, we would develop an outline of which theoretical, historical, or practical aspects of PAR we would cover, and we would identify which PAR tools would be discussed and/or modeled with the group. We inevitably found that by halfway through the following class, our well-crafted outline would look like a football game play with arrows from one topic to the next, crossed-out lines and notes to "move things back" to next week. We could never fit in everything we had hoped for each week. What we learned was that the students mediated what would be covered and helped us to understand what they needed from us to succeed.

During one memorable class, we discussed a particular tool used to set goals. The students could not relate to it or understand how it could be used with their community partners. Such situations necessitated thinking on our feet. In this particular situation, Jason devised a different way of using the tool — one that involved ice cream. By using a humor, he was able to communicate how the tool could be used, as well as diffusing the frustration that had arisen. It can be unsettling to unexpectedly switch gears in the middle of a class period. Flexibility and humor became invaluable strategies in our classroom and in overcoming our own fears.

Tools are presented to the PAR students early in the course so that they can introduce them to their community partners as possible ways to further a group's pursuits. The tools are a means to involve people in thinking about questions and ways to formulate actions. Creative and fun, they also foster greater participation and are well suited to promoting personal interactions and group work. As nonconventional means of eliciting information (they definitely help people break away from questionnaires and outlines), the tools facilitate thinking outside the box, thus encouraging people to frame questions and answers in different ways.

Many of the collective discoveries in the PAR classroom occur when students work together with the same PAR tools they can share with their community partners for advancing various facets of PAR projects. Students have many opportunities to learn more about what it means to be involved in community PAR projects through our approach of guided inquiry using numerous PAR tools. For example, when introducing the "Tree of Knowledge," we ask students to work together in small groups to assemble construction paper trees with written words and statements inscribed on the trees' roots, branches, and leaves to represent elements of community partners' strengths, efforts, and visions as students understand them. We emphasize that this tool and every other can be modified to allow different questions to be explored and to fit different group processes.

We also develop PAR tools that allow students to explore their own feelings, challenges, and triumphs in engaging in community-based research. Weekly use of a "temperature gauge" stimulates reflection and discussion of students' PAR experiences. Students graph on newsprint a short line from one week to the next around an imaginary "neutral" midsection line. Once the weekly line is drawn, students explain the reason the line appears as it does for that week. Not only can students impart the high and low points of their experiences and then receive feedback, encouragement, and suggestions from others, but they also see that other students have dips and highs in their PAR work. Predictably perhaps, the stress of other commitments, other course workloads and the knowledge that the term will swiftly draw to a close usually results in significant dips, particularly in the midsection of the temperature gauge when students often feel exasperated with not being able to accomplish more in the short period of a 10-week term. Each year, however, students have ended on a comparatively high note as they bring closure to their work.[8]

We introduce skits as a PAR tool so that students can communicate challenges they face with their PAR projects. The skits of the second-year group revealed a strong theme about the challenges of

effective communication with their partners. One group's exaggerated actions of trying to communicate on string-and-can telephones depicted in comic form the frustrations many students were experiencing in trying to communicate effectively with community partners. The skit elicited a litany of frustrations: crossing e-mails, scheduling conflicts, misunderstandings, and missed meetings. This exercise highlighted a pattern in student experiences that, in turn, led to the "act" phase of a PAR cycle as students worked out more effective ways to stay in touch with their community partners that were better adapted to particular community partners' circumstances. The week we introduced fish and boulders (with cutouts of fish that symbolized goals and boulders that stood for obstacles), students used the tool to answer their question: "What are our desired outcomes for pursuing PAR with community partners?" By using the same tools that they can present to the community, students not only gain practice in teaching a tool to their partners or suggesting it for particular purposes but also witness the efficacy of the tool by using it themselves. The reflexive learning that occurs when students try out the PAR tools is one way the pedagogy of the PAR classroom mirrors and extends students' PAR learning in the community.

Another way our pedagogy models a PAR approach is through democratic decision-making processes that guide the course goals. When planned class activities for the day do not meet students' need for support of their PAR projects, the teachers adapt the day's plan. After the first year, we found another way to involve students in course construction through the use of a self-evaluation assignment. As instructors, we supply the students with a list of our own intended lessons and skills we hope they acquire during the course. However, students are responsible for creating a group self-evaluation form with questions they identify and respond to at the end of the course. This has led to students probing into the motivations behind their learning, and asking each other questions such as: "Why did we sign up for this course? What do we want to learn?" and "How will we know learning has taken place?" Although we, too, ask clarifying questions or offer suggestions during the discussion, we maintain the position of equal participants and withhold any authoritative control over the final outcome. We find that when students take time in class to confer with each other about what *they* want to get out of the course, student ownership of the learning experience is deepened.

Community-based research, as Strand et al. (2003) have pointed out, validates many types of knowledge that come with true collaboration. In the classroom as well, pedagogy can recognize "...multiple sources of expertise: abstract, generalized knowledge of the professor [and co-teachers], detailed hands-on experiential knowledge of community members, and the fresh perspective brought by students ..." (p. 5). As co-teachers, we submit that everyday pedagogical approaches that honor these diverse kinds of knowledge are the classroom practices that best match students' PAR community work. They highlight the construction of knowledge, create innovative approaches, and value students' unique and collective contributions.

Instructor Co-Teaching

Cooperative teaching encourages us to consider multiple perspectives in every aspect of class management, not only when we are in the classroom. When we ask students to work together as a group, we can support them more effectively if we demonstrate group problem solving ourselves. The diverse backgrounds and opinions that we represent remind students that truth is relative and knowledge is constructed.

Rowenn Kalman, graduate student co-teacher

Our PAR course combines the three pillars of university life: teaching, research, and service. For graduate students and the faculty member these are realized though involvement in the course and classroom. Given that teaching in a PAR class is collaborative with students, it is also true that students engage in all three 'pillars' as well. Because our class is co-taught by a senior faculty member and graduate students, the relationships in the classroom mirror the democratic relationships students cultivate with their community partners. Co-equal relationships are fostered within the classroom by positioning the teachers as facilitators rather than as knowledge-bearers. As instructors, we model the facilitation skills which students may also encounter in the community and which they themselves are often called upon to use within the community. When we collaborate with one another in team teaching, we provide students with a model for entering into the roles of facilitator and team player simultaneously.

Within the classroom, co-teachers enact many roles as one team with multiple sets of ideas and resources (Gray & Halbert, 1998). For example, during a class period in 2005, Joyce (the professor) facilitated discussion on how the course could be improved for 2006 and Rowenn (the co-teacher) took notes on the board for everyone to see. The previous week, Joyce had taken notes while Rowenn had facilitated students' planning for an

end-of-the-term celebration. At other times, students are encouraged to volunteer for such tasks within the classroom. Because students working with community partners assist with plans, often take meeting notes, and are expected to contribute in the process of asking questions, stimulating discussion or generating ideas, we want to give students opportunities to observe how their instructors use these skills.

As co-instructors, we strive to be nonjudgmental toward students' ideas and reactions, offering our suggestions while allowing students to reach their own conclusions. Our facilitation techniques include posing questions, challenging assumptions, and remaining silent as students puzzle out best practices for different situations, similar to the "learning coach" teams recognized by O'Neil and Lamm (2000). We use a consensus model when making changes to class plans, both with one another and with the students, in the hopes that the students will be encouraged to do the same within their respective PAR projects.

Team teaching helps us to break away from the "pedagogical solitude" identified by Shulman (2004) which disconnects instruction from learning communities. In PAR, our learning communities encompass not only academia but also those of local, engaged citizens. When we teach as a team, we demonstrate through our partnership the interdependence between communities that PAR acknowledges. Since PAR allows us to have multiple roles, both faculty and graduate students can be equals in the teaching process, drawing from our different experiences and areas of expertise, while at the same time acknowledging that, as a faculty member, Joyce is a mentor for the graduate students who are learning to be teachers.

We agree with Strohschen and Heaney (2000) that team teaching allows instructors to rely on each other and thus take more risks and experiment. Having one or more co-instructors to devise plans and debrief classroom outcomes makes the instructional process more stimulating for instructors and furthers growth. In our course, Joyce and the co-instructor graduate student(s) meet regularly to plan the course, divide work, and discuss pedagogical approaches. Other than assigning grades, the co-instructors are involved with all tasks. The graduate students learn what goes into creating, planning, and offering a course with a service-learning component. The course provides invaluable on-the-job training, rarely afforded by the routine tasks of most teaching positions. We also benefit from other campus groups who are supportive of the class, such as the Center for Service-Learning, because we are able to network with more resources which enrich our education.

Students in the course also benefit from the co-teaching. As a teaching team, we generate more ideas and greater excitement for the students. They hear our different perspectives in discussions and our different approaches in the experiential activities. Students have a choice as to who to consult with outside of class and receive more comments on their written work, sometimes from different perspectives. We try to bypass frustrations students might feel if they received very different remarks on their written work by reading one another's comments on students' papers before appending our own. We have also been able to provide students with more input and support about ways to meet such challenges as how to facilitate a research tool in a limited amount of time, or how to manage a focus group so as to respond to a PAR research question. We also offer more office hours.

Collaboration within the classroom during co-teaching serves as an inspirational model from which students may draw. In accordance with PAR philosophy, students see a "power with" rather than a "power over" relationship (Kreisburg, 1992; Shor, 1996). The graduate student co-instructors also occupy a unique position as "near peers" (Whitman, 1988). As students themselves, the graduate student instructors have the advantage of the insider's perspective. This special status enables them to be perceived as more accessible to students.

Reflections on the PAR Learning Cycle

The cycles are what make PAR exciting and fulfilling. With PAR you are always learning and acting to learn . . . the next experience is always just around the corner and leads to new insights for everyone.
     Jason Miller, graduate student co-teacher

We began the second year in the iterative PAR cycle (planning, acting/observing, and reflecting) with our widened network of students and community partners as we shared insights and suggestions in a reflective stage. Acknowledging that we had successfully answered the initial question that launched the course, we sought to better understand why PAR in the classroom provided congruency to students' learning in the community and to expand on those dynamics. Part of our reflection process delved into analyses of recent pedagogies which allowed us to reaffirm reasons for the success of certain approaches. This helped us to extend our understanding of ways to increase student achievement.[9]

Key to our pedagogy is disrupting the traditional classroom environment of single instructor as sole

authority who disseminates knowledge to passive students. The rich interweaving of learning relationships among students themselves, between students and co-instructors, and among co-instructors and everyone in the class is an important way that the traditional hierarchical pattern of knowers and learners is supplanted by the new "Learning Paradigm" which emphasizes learning-centered pedagogies instead of instruction-centered ones (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Boggs, 1998).

Pedagogies that emphasize student-centered learning, interaction, engagement, and democratic learning processes offer rich sources of inspiration because they parallel PAR principles of honoring each participant's contributions, draw from the strengths of experiential learning, and channel change through engagement and democratic participation. Of particular value, given their attention to shared goal setting, reflections, and actions, are cooperative and collaborative learning pedagogies (Bruffee, 1993; Goodsell, Maher, & Tinto, 1992; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991; Matthews, 1996; Menges, Weimer & Associates 1996; Slavin, 1990; Tinzmann, Jones, Fennimore, Bakker, Fine, & Pierce, 1990), as well as constructivist pedagogies (Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Fosnot, 1996; von Glasserfeld, 1996). Both have philosophies and methods that work collaboratively with the principles of PAR.

Many studies indicate that students learn more when they are part of cooperative learning groups. Aspects of such groups, as detailed by Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991), include positive interdependence, individual accountability, heterogeneous membership, shared leadership, responsibility to one another, an emphasis on task completion and maintenance, social skill building, and group processing (p. 25). We have found that in *and* out of the PAR classroom (many students spend a lot of time talking to one another and us about their PAR work in e-mails, hallway conversations, and at social gatherings), all these characteristics emerge.

Throughout the term, students practice collaborative learning (Matthews, 1996), rooted in the social construction of knowledge, by bringing ideas and experiences to the learning situation that advance and enrich understanding for everyone. They explore what they learn about PAR processes together in the democratic, participatory, active classroom climate. Learning from one another, students expand their understanding and realize that each of them has important contributions to make in the classroom. We teach that knowledge is *not* the sole prerogative of instructors.

The constructivist approach to knowledge is premised on the idea that people construct their realities and knowledge. The PAR classroom embodies this approach to knowledge. Students' learning comes from a variety of sources: assigned readings on PAR theory and examples; issues raised by students about community organizations and their contributions; applications of participatory inquiry, assessment, reflection, and action tools; community members' direct input in classroom visits; and co-instructors' insights from PAR experiences. However, it is primarily through the combined knowledge of students' work with PAR in the community that students learn some of the most significant lessons about PAR and communities. It is knowledge created through collaborative and contextualized understandings that occur in both the community and classroom. We strive to foreground this dynamic for the students so they become consciously aware of the origins and nature of their knowledge. As instructors, we use the class to draw attention to epistemological concerns. We strive to support students' learning about the construction of knowledge by setting up experiential learning situations in classroom space and time. It is in this climate that students are encouraged and supported to influence the class direction, decide whether to spend more time on certain activities and discussions, suggest topics to explore which are relevant to their work with community partners, create evaluation questions, and offer up course and classroom critique. Not surprisingly, students are willing participants on all these tasks.

It might seem counterintuitive that a class emphasizing group cooperation and collaboration would honor the individual for her/his unique contributions. However, in the PAR paradigm of valuing everyone's contributions, the individual's unique perspectives and experiences contribute to the collective learning and action of the group. Each student's perspectives on PAR are informed by every student's contributions which are, in turn, derived from PAR work with a particular community organization. Therefore, each student plays an important role in co-constructing the classroom learning environment. Every student becomes a teacher about his/her own community partner's project, just as every student learns more about PAR from other students.

Being the only student engaged in a PAR project with a specific group of community partners requires each student to hold him/herself accountable to community members as well as classmates. If PAR is taught in a traditional one instructor-directed model and students constitute part of a student cohort in a community PAR project, individual students may exercise the role of a learner without being held to the same level of accountability or without deriving a greater internalized under-

standing of the PAR process. Students' PAR work within the community more closely mirrors the kinds of experiences students will likely encounter post-graduation when they enter unfamiliar environments in which they are required to develop and extend contacts and resources. Being an individual student contributor among their community partners also encourages the student to identify community members as resources and experts.

Rather than creating a classroom of disparate, unconnected students self-involved in their own projects, we have found that community PAR participation in the classroom contributes to the development of a student learning community. Students become experts within the classroom on their particular experiences. Similarities of experiences are discovered by students as co-learners, and together students discover commonalities, patterns, and unique aspects of different in PAR processes. Similarities translate into major course themes and clarify PAR processes.

The self-reliance each student must cultivate and greater self-confidence every student gains from being the only one working with a given organization are qualities which are enhanced within the classroom. Students cooperatively share their experiences in free-flowing, facilitated discussions and gain support from classmates and co-instructors in talking through difficult or challenging situations, brainstorming approaches for different circumstances, and modifying practices to better suit community needs. This work constitutes part of the reflection process cultivated within the classroom which reinforces the reflection process in the community. As a reflection process, different dynamics result compared with students' individual reflections, which are equally valuable.

Outcomes, Challenges, and Conclusions

In written and oral comments elicited throughout the term and in final course evaluations, students have been candid about some of the doubts and difficulties they experienced throughout the course. They also expressed benefits they had witnessed accruing for others and themselves by engaging in PAR.

Prevalent challenges for students include: time commitments and scheduling, doubts about their roles working with partners, fears they will not be able to adequately rise to partners' expectations, or that their contributions will not be significant and of sufficient quality. In the early stages of the course, students sometimes feel inadequate in their grasp of what PAR "looks like," even though we spend some time discussing PAR, and students enrolled in the PAR course attend a six hour workshop before the course begins. There have been

some challenges if community partners look to students to undertake most of the research. Unexpected occurrences that remove key stakeholders from PAR projects, leaving students without adequate support, have also happened. As co-teachers, we have learned how to better select community organizations and prepare partners with course expectations and ways to avoid probable pitfalls and challenges they could face working with students. We have clarified expectations for one or more key stakeholders to work with students as both co-researchers *and* mentors. We have also learned a great deal from community partners' evaluations of students and ways the course has impacted their work.

In true PAR fashion, we have twice followed a PAR spiraled cycle, drawing lessons from the previous year's offering to seek improvements for the course and make adjustments to strengthen student and community groups' interactions in PAR. In the second year, the portfolios' contents were revised to allow for more personalized community partner uses. Class time was added, enabling students to meet twice each week for more consistent support, instead of one longer meeting. The ties between community organizations and course instructors continue to be strengthened through workshops, ongoing communication, and advanced planning.

Not surprisingly, we found some difficulties students identified in the first year did not arise in the second year, and probably would not have occurred even without adjustments. Instead, unanticipated difficulties emerged. One compelling revelation in the second year was the enormous burden facing nonprofit organizations to secure funds to carry out their goals. As a consequence, students suggested that in retrospect they could have benefited from more readings and targeted discussions about the nature of nonprofit organizations. Different personalities, research questions, and unforeseen events will always introduce elements of surprise, calling for flexibility and on-the-spot learning.

We are heartened by the positive learning students report in written comments from check-in writes and final evaluations. As Strand et al. (2003) assert, a variety of "positive attitudinal, interpersonal, and academic learning outcomes" results from community-based service-learning "done right" (p. 120). Overwhelmingly, students express positive outcomes for their PAR training, even as they note the challenging aspects. A few examples from student assignments follow.

> I found out that though you can organize a project as perfectly and efficiently as possible, no amount of organization can prepare you for what may happen.

I've learned that it is unrealistic for an anthropologist, or anyone for that matter, to come in and offer services along with a vision and a plan for the project. PAR is truly a collaborative process. I have realized that collaboration must first occur on a small level, with the core stakeholders.

I liked the use of PAR tools in class and the way the PAR collaborative process was incorporated into the class structure. This made the PAR process more tangible and gave first hand experience that was beneficial for us to use at our sites.

[PAR] can spark an interest in the student to continue working towards social change in a different way that is truly grassroots, as I have experienced over the course of the quarter. And ... it shows the community that there are ways of establishing connections with academia ... and utilizing the resources students are able to contribute to their organization.

Students learn and/or apply a wide variety of skills: working collaboratively, creating a research design, gathering and analyzing data, reporting orally and in written form on findings, and planning actions. They also learn about community organizations, their purposes, and the wider context of their organizational challenges.

Due to time constraints, students have often expressed frustration that they couldn't "do more" or experience a complete PAR cycle. We remind them that their contribution is an integral part of the larger, ongoing stages of planning, acting/observing, and reflecting, and thus may include only one or two stages. Partly as a result of students' input, organizations consider new questions and approaches.

For the faculty member Joyce, there was initial concern about whether the research results and actions students could *and would* accomplish in 10 weeks would be considered sufficiently productive for community partners. This anxiety has been eased by the project outcomes, partners' evaluative remarks, and their enthusiastic interest in working with future students. The few students who struggle with their responsibilities and do not fully rise to course expectations still seem to make appreciated contributions and benefit from their experience. However, information about the PAR course provided to students prior to their enrollment, combined with former students' shared information of what to expect, play a role in students' self-selection for the course. Friendly peer pressure from classmates fosters continual commitment. Community

partners provide constructive written feedback on questionnaires and work with us to develop more effective systems of checks and balances.

The midwife was a particularly useful metaphor that Maria devised in the first year of the PAR course to help both the students and instructors to think about our contributions. The metaphor of student as midwife helped us to explain to students that the projects they were working on were not their own, despite the fact they helped to guide the projects' emergence or continuation. Students' roles were to assist, seek information, make observations, and lend their energies to making the PAR processes of their community partners more viable. Just as a midwife may justifiably take pride in the crucial assistance and advocacy s/he provides birthing parents, s/he is always aware that the baby is not her/his own. This became humorous as the short 10-week term often left students remarking they felt as if they were "having the baby." The midwife metaphor is apt for our role as the co-teachers of the course. The students' knowledge and personal growth is their own. As teachers, we facilitate and support their learning. As the midwives, it is gratifying for us to see students recognize and fully own their own knowledge.

As co-teachers working with students and community partners, we seek congruency as we follow the fluid and changing PAR cyclic process. No PAR class will ever be the same as former classes, not only because students' unique choices and experiences shape every class and community partners' projects change over time, but also because every PAR cycle influences the next. As with any democratic process in which questions that matter to people are investigated, where actions are taken which are predicated on identified goals, and where people reflect on what they have learned in order to proceed with next steps, the cycles of questioning, planning, acting/observing, and reflecting yield unique experiences.

Each year, students may challenge some previous ways of doing things, modify aspects of the course, and make suggestions for the subsequent year's class. The input of new co-teachers, students, and community partners (many organizations second-year students chose were different) ensures the course benefits from an infusion of fresh perspectives. Sharing responsibility for the course with other enrolled students, student co-teachers, and a faculty member means all students can take greater ownership of the course.

Because every group of new students has different needs and personalities, the course necessarily changes along a nonlinear trajectory. Achieving an idealized "end product" would terminate the

process, shattering the PAR nature of the course. Should the course and classroom periods cease to change, they would become lifeless and fail to replicate and support viable PAR processes at the heart of the class and course. We — that is to say, whoever becomes a co-teacher, an enrolled student, and members of the community groups working on PAR projects with students in any given year — will constantly be co-constructing the PAR course and class, using PAR as the model from which our work originates. We will rethink what kinds of community connections work most advantageously for all involved, what kinds of readings best serve our purposes, what kinds of activities and PAR tools might be most suited for PAR community purposes, and what goals, actions, and reflections are important to the PAR projects. All participants will undertake this reworking. By applying a PAR sequence to the ongoing construction of the course, we seek the beneficial outcomes of cycling through the PAR process. Following the process enables us to pursue desirable changes. Using the PAR process as a plan of action also ensures that changes can occur over time that will reflect the altered circumstances and needs of *all* involved with the course. As a participatory action research project in itself, the PAR course and its classroom create PAR cycles of their own from year to year because they are inspired by and model the PAR work that students do within the community.

Notes

[1] In 2004, the course received recognition by Western Washington University's Center for Instructional Innovation as one of four showcased courses centered on the theme of Faculty/Student Collaboration. Titled Teaching PARtnership for Community Action, the Web site authored by Joyce D. Hammond, Maria Hicks and Jason Miller is located at: http://pandora.cii.wwu.edu/showcase 2003/hammond/default.htm

The Web site contains more information about our first class and offers suggestions for those interested in pursuing similar course offerings. http://pandora.cii.wwu.edu/cii/default.asp

[2] After deciding to launch the course in winter 2004, we made individual plans to become more knowledgeable about PAR. We reasoned that our varied personal experiences would enrich our work together and strengthen the class. Accordingly, we went our separate ways to work on PAR-related projects and reunited in the late summer of 2003 after engaging in experiences through the University of British Columbia Field School among the Stó:lô (Jason), in Peru at the Center for Social Well Being (Maria), and in Ottawa, Ontario, with Mosaic International (Joyce). As in all PAR work, the individual contributions and strengths all three of us brought to developing a PAR course were valued.

[3] Given the benefit of Jason and Maria's PAR background gained through their respective field school experiences with PAR the summer before our course began, we agreed that for the second and subsequent times the course was offered, that a co-teacher would need the qualifications of having taken the class or having gained substantial PAR experience in other ways (Rowenn, as well as Maria, attended the field school of The Center for Social Well Being prior to her co-teaching experience). The structural plan of having Joyce continue to teach the course from year to year gives stability to the course (and credibility in the University's eyes) that might not be present otherwise.

[4] Student ethnographies have sometimes been used by organizations to further their goals. For example, one student's ethnography was used as a written introduction for new volunteers to an organization.

[5] WWU's Center for Service-Learning provides resources to facilitate quality educational experiences through community-based service-learning that include training and technical assistance to students, faculty, and the community. In doing this, the Center advances Western Washington University's goals of quality, diversity, and community service.

[6] Animals as Natural Therapy is an organization that provides a number of therapeutic programs for youth and adults.

[7] Many of the tools we use for PAR seem to have a wide circulation in adult or popular education circles. In our course preparation we have drawn from tools that were presented in workshops and field schools. A large number of these and other tools can be found on the Internet. A graffiti wall is a large sheet of paper or poster board on which a question is written near the top and participants are encouraged to write and/or draw responses to the question. The fish and boulders activity centers around participants using construction cut outs (or drawings) of a river with fish and boulders that culminates in a lake with desired outcomes. The fish symbolize goals, the boulders symbolize obstacles. Additional symbols such as "fish food" can be included to take into account helpful factors. Photo elicitation centers on participants creating their own photographs to explore questions, reflect on realities, and consider actions to take for positive change. The process of creating the images is one important component; another is sharing the meaning-making of the images with others. Matrices can be used to elicit participants' responses on a wide range of issues or in measuring inputs of various sorts. They can be used for collecting information, measuring activity levels, and assessing outcomes, as well as other purposes. For example, participants might mark all the activities they wish to see offered at a community center by using marks or stickers to indicate those activities that are of greatest interest.

[8] Both years, most students continued to work with their PAR organizations after the close of the quarter. Their commitment to their community partners echoes Strand et al.'s (2003) declaration, "Those of us whose students do CBR are dazzled time and time again by their energy, creativity, and conscientiousness" (p. 126).

[9] Writing this paper is a part of our reflection, as it is one of the many cooperative tasks to analyze where we have been and where we might go.

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