

Action Research

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Articles should be between 5,000 and 7,000 words inclusive.

The journal publishes quality articles on accounts of action research projects, explorations in the philosophy and methodology of action research, and considerations of the nature of quality in action research practice.

All papers submitted ought to link theory and practice, in whatever way the author deems appropriate. It is assumed that the author, in seeking to share their work more broadly will consider the issue of how their contribution builds upon and advances the theory and practice of action research. In most cases we prefer to see theoretical and practical insights intertwined.

The journal includes:

- A strong editorial comment column
- An Open Forum for readers to initiate and sustain debate (see also the [Action Research Community blog](#)).
- Peer reviewed articles that contribute to the practice, theory and method of action research

Choicepoints for quality

The journal's seven quality choicepoints articulate our understanding of action research. We use these for assessing and developing articles. In sharing them we make the review process more transparent.

The quality choicepoints invite a combination of objective, intersubjective and subjective elements that are needed in action research that empowers us to impactfully shape and catalyze the world of our aspirations.

At first an action researcher might read the seven choicepoints as a sequence of priorities; a more seasoned scholar-practitioner may also see the integrative and impactful interdependence. Because action research is constantly evolving, these choicepoints continue to evolve as well.

1. Quality of intention and transformative purpose

This choicepoint refers to the extent to which the action research insights are significant in support of transformation and – over time – contribution to a more sustainable, democratic, and equitable world. The goals of the research and the manuscript should be clearly stated. Relevance to the flourishing of persons, communities, and the wider ecology is invited alongside critically reflecting in detail on how (rather than that) the action research approach and process made a difference. We seek papers that help our thinking about processes of social justice which can serve as a guide toward mitigating global inequity, stimulating wellbeing, and promoting our collective resilience and thriving on this planet.

2. Quality of partnership

This choicepoint refers to the extent to, and means by which, stakeholders' or system actors' engagement and participative values are evident. We understand that partnership exists on a continuum from consultation with system actors to stakeholders as full co-researchers. We look for clarity on the relational component of research with its choices about partnership as reflected in issues of power/empowerment, learning and collaboration. We expect authors to explicitly reflect on the appropriateness of the depth and breadth of participation of different stakeholders in the design, implementation, and outcomes of their action research. We look also for the strategies and methods that support system actors to develop a strong and authentic sense of evolution in their lives, their understandings, their practices, and thus transformation - from disruption of dynamics that perpetuate exclusion, violence, oppression - toward beneficial influence on the situations in which they practice.

3. Quality of contribution to action research theory/practice

This choicepoint refers to the extent to which authors build on and create explicit links to previously published work, so that they extend practice, knowledge, and theory. We encourage authors to read extant publications and note the variety of exemplars that may inform your work. We ask in particular, what is the transformational impact of this paper for the field of action research and the global community of action researchers?

4. Quality of participative methods and processes

This choicepoint refers to the extent to which the action research approach is clearly articulated. We look to see multiple ways of knowing-for-action that ensures room for questions of “whose knowledge counts?” In addition, we look at the extent to which papers expand the palette of innovative - including digital and creative - methods and data considered appropriate to their intentions and objectives.

5. Quality of sustaining

This choicepoint refers to the extent to which the action research offers new ideas whose related practices can endure and spread as appropriate, helping to expand and deepen action in response to the urgency of transformations needed. We ask in particular, what is the author doing to ensure that the benefits discovered or created do not simply end? What is a next horizon for scholar-practitioners looking to move beyond limited, local knowledge creation to creating social impact, e.g., through networking, scaling, emergence etc. We therefore consider how experiments can increase sustainable endurance, impact, depth, breath and/or scope and scale of work described.

6. Quality of learning as developmental reflexivity

This choicepoint refers to the extent to which authors include a personal, involved, and self-critical stance on their role, their inquiry and their power/empowerment throughout the action research process, addressing the context of their research, their own identities and biases and how they might be received by participants, and what led to their involvement in this research. We invite authors to reflect on what they've learned and acknowledge the role of participants, relationships, and experiences in contributing to their own knowledge and transformation. The subjectivity of personal reflexivity is not for its own sake; we ask how it clarifies interpersonal (intersubjective) processes and impersonal/objective claims that the work allows.

7. Quality of writing

This choicepoint refers to the extent to which the language used in the article engages the interested practitioner. In particular we expect voices of participants in the research to be included. We invite illustrations that “show” and not just “tell.” Note we welcome inclusion of non-traditional and unconventional formats such as art, poetry, practitioner reflections, dialogues, etc.

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