

**PH 219C**  
**Participatory Action Research in Public Health**  
**Spring 2002**

Instructors: Meredith Minkler  
Units: 2-3\*  
When offered: Thursdays 10-12  
Location: 2301 Tolman  
CC#: 76797

Participants: Enrollment limited to 25 doctoral and advanced master's degree students in the Schools of Public Health and Social Welfare. Other students to be admitted pending space availability.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) and related methodologies have received growing attention in fields like public health over the past several decades. Defined as "systematic investigation, with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for the purposes of education and taking action or effecting social change," PAR is not a research method but an approach to research partnerships and applications. It has roots in popular education in Third World nations of Asia and Africa, and has been applied in the US, Canada and elsewhere in disciplines including social psychology, anthropology, and adult education. Participatory research approaches including PAR have been effectively employed in action-oriented studies of work and health, the prevention of alcohol and other drug related problems, youth issues, homelessness, HIV/AIDS prevention and other areas.

### **Purpose and Structure of the Seminar**

The goal of this seminar is to provide doctoral and advanced masters degree students with an understanding of theories, principles and strategies of PAR, an appreciation of advantages and limitations of this approach and skills necessary for participating effectively in community based PAR projects. The class will meet once a week for two hours. Although some lectures will be presented, the course's primary format will reflect PAR's philosophical commitment to co-teaching and co-learning as opposed to more didactic pedagogical approaches, and critical group discussion will be emphasized. Case studies of PAR projects will be presented to complement and illustrate academic discussions of principles, issues and challenges raised.

### **Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify three theoretical perspectives that have shaped the development and evolution of community based PAR and describe the contributions of each.

\*Third unit for Academic Service-Learning component only.

- List and describe at least four major principles of PAR and illustrate their relevance with case study data.
- Identify and analyze race, gender and class dimensions of participatory research.
- Identify and discuss three means of addressing validity and rigor issues in PAR.
- Describe the spectrum of what gets labeled participatory research in public health and related contexts.
- Describe four to five stages in an empowering participatory approach to evaluation and how each compares and contrasts with steps in traditional evaluation research.
- Identify three advantages and three limitations of community based PAR as a method for approaching study and action to address public health problems.

## **Readings**

Reader is available at Copy Central, Shattuck Square and University (tel. 848-7034).

## **Assignments and Grading**

In keeping with the philosophical orientation of the course, a heavy accent will be placed on high quality class participation, with all students regularly engaged in critiquing readings and in other ways contributing to group learning experience.

Class members who are concurrently engaged in the conduct and/or planning of PAR additionally will be asked to share their experiences and insights to facilitate group learning. Class participation will account for 25% of the final course grade.

## **Midterm**

Students each will read and critically review a community-based participatory research case study provided by the instructor, discussing (1) ways in which it met or failed to meet PAR principles, (2) how utilization or non-utilization of these principles influenced project processes and outcomes, and (3) how validity and other methodological issues were addressed or not addressed. Each paper will end by providing at least 3 methodological, ethical, or other research related lessons from the field gleaned through the case study. Papers should be 8–10 pages in length, excluding references, and will be due during the 7<sup>th</sup> week of class (**March 7th**).

## **Final Project**

The final project, due on **May 2nd**, may take 1 of 3 forms:

1. Prepare a 12-15 page paper (excluding references) describing and analyzing some aspect of PAR (or an actual PAR project) with which you wish to achieve greater familiarity. The paper may draw on literature reviews, interviews with key informants, etc., and should be analytical in nature.

2. Students currently engaged in a PAR project may submit an analytical field notebook in which they utilize concepts and readings from class to critically evaluate the project and study day-to-day issues arising in the course of implementation. New opportunities for involvement in a start up or ongoing community based PAR project also may be available for students choosing option #2.
3. Develop a retrospective analysis carefully critiquing a community-based PAR project in which you were involved, integrating relevant literature and concepts from class.

## **Session Outline**

### **January 24**

#### **Introduction**

Hagey RS. Guest Editorial: The Use and Abuse of Participatory Action Research. Chronic Disease of Canada Vol 18 No 2 pp 1-4 1997

Hall B. From Margins to Center? The Development and Purpose of Participatory Research. American Sociologist, Winter 1992 pp. 1528

Green, L. W. Can Public Health Researchers and Agencies Reconcile the Push from Funding Bodies and the Pull from Communities? American J of Publ Hlth, December 2001, Vol 91, No. 12

### **January 31**

#### **PAR in Context: Historical and Theoretical Framework and Underlying Values, Assumptions and Principles**

Cornwall A, Jewkes J. What is Participatory Action Research? Soc Sci Med Vol 41, No 12, pp 1667-76, 1995

Yeich S, Levine R. Participatory Research's Contribution to a Conceptualization of Empowerment. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 1992, 22, 24, pp 1894-1908

Israel B.A., Schulz A. J, Parker E.A., Becker A.B. Review of Community Based Research: Assessing Partnership Approaches to Improve Public Health. Annu Rev Public Health. 19:1730-202, 1998

Sohng SSL. Participatory Research and Community Organizing. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare. December 1996, Vol 23, No 4, pp 77-97.

Recommended:

Weiler K. Freire and a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference. Harvard Educational Review. Vol 61, No 4, pp. 434-438, November 1999

**February 7**

**PAR in the context of alternative participatory research strategies**

Maguire, P. Uneven Ground: Feminism and Action Research. In P. Reason and H. Bradbury, Handbook of Action Research. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 2001, pp. 59-69.

Reason P. Three Approaches to Participative Inquiry. In Denzin AK & Lincoln YS, Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Pub, 1998, pp. 261-291.

Fals-Borda O. Some basic ingredients. Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research. Fals-Borda O and Rahman MA (Eds.) New York: Apex Press 1991

**February 14**

**Case Studies of PAR for Health.**

**Guest: Pam Tau Lee, Labor and Occupational Health Center (LOHP): PAR and Immigrant Hotel Workers**

Alvarez, AR and Gutierrez, LM Choosing to do participatory research: An example and issues of fit to consider. Journal of Community Practice 9 (1): 2001.

Minkler M, Fadem P, Perry M, Blum K, Moore L, and Rogers J. Ethical Dilemmas in Participatory Action Research: A Case Study from the Disability Community. Health Education and Behavior, Vol 29 (1): 13-28 (February 2002).

Harper GW, Carver LJ. "Out of the Mainstream" Youth as Partners in Collaborative Research: Exploring the Benefits and Challenges. Health Education and Behavior. Vol 26, No 2, April 1999, pp 250-256

**February 21**

**Initiating and maintaining effective relationships with communities: Role(s) of the community and the "outside" researcher (Part I)**

Hatch J, Moss N, Saran A, Presley-Cantrell L, Mallory B. "Community Research Partnership in Black Communities" Racial Differences in Preterm Delivery: Developing a New Research Paradigm: American Journal of Preventive Medicine Supplement to Vol. 9, No. 6, Nov/Dec 1993, pp. 27-31

Dressler WW. Commentary on "Community Research: Partnership in Black Communities." Racial Differences in Preterm Delivery: Developing a New Research Paradigm: American Journal of Preventive Medicine Supplement to Vol 9, No. 6, Nov/Dec 1993, pp. 32-34

Roe KM, Minkler M, Saunders FF. Combining research, advocacy & education: The methods of the Grandparent Caregiving Study . Health Educ Quarterly. 22(4): 458-475.

## **February 28**

### **Initiating and maintaining effective relationships with communities: role(s) of the "outside" researcher (Part II)**

Stoecker R. Are Academics Irrelevant? Roles for Scholars in Participatory Research. American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 42, No. 5, February 1999, pp. 840-854.

Kone A et al. Improving Collaboration Between Researchers and Communities. Public Health Reports, Vol 115, Nos 2/3, 2000, pp. 243-248

LeCompte M. Some Notes on Power, Agenda and Voice: A Researcher's Personal Evolution toward Critical Collaborative Research. Critical Theory and Educational Research. State U of New York Press 1995, pp 91-112

## **March 7     MIDTERMS DUE**

### **Selecting issues and conducting issue analysis with communities Photovoice case study**

#### **Guests: Cheri Pies and Maggie Gaddis, Contra Costa County MCH Division**

Minkler M. and Hancock T. Community-driven identification and issue selection: Overview, illustrative approaches and considerations for practice. In M. Minkler and N. Wallerstein. (Eds.) Community Based Participatory Research for Health (in press).

Schulz A, Parker E, Israel B et al. Conducting a Participatory Community-Based Survey for a Community Health Intervention on Detroit's East Side. J Public Health Management Practice 1998. 4(2), 10-24.

Wang C, Cash J, Powers L. Who Knows the Streets as Well as the Homeless? Promoting Personal and Community Action Through Photovoice. Health Promotion Practice. January 2000. Vol. 1, No 1, 81-89

Wang C. and Redwood Jones Y. Photovoice Ethics: Perspectives from Flint Photovoice. Health Education and Behavior. Vol. 28 (5): 560-572, October 2001.

Recommended:

Smith S, Pynch T, Lizardi AO. Participatory Action Research for Health. World Health Forum Vol 14 1992 pp. 319-321

**March 14**

**Using PAR in quantitative research: case studies from the environmental justice movement**

Brown P. Popular Epidemiology and Toxic Waste Contamination: Lay and Professional Ways of Knowing. Journal of Health and Social Behavior 1992, Vol 33, Sept, 267-281

Wing S. Whose Epidemiology, Whose Health? International Journal of Health Services, Vol. 28, No 2, 241-252, 1998.

Wing S, Grant G, Green M., Stewart C. Community based collaboration for environmental justice: south-east Halifax environmental awakening. Environment and Urbanization. Vol 8, No 2, Oct 1996, pp 129-140

**March 21**

**PAR with hidden populations.**

**Case study: The Transgender Community Health Study**

**Guests: Kristen Clements, DrPH, and others. AIDS Office, San Francisco Health Department.**

Clements K. Working with hidden populations: Participatory research methods of the San Francisco Transgender Health Study. In M. Minkler and N. Wallerstein. (Eds.) Community Based Participatory Research for Health (in press).

Schensul J. Organizing Community Research Partnerships in the Struggle Against AIDS. Health Education and Behavior. Vol 26 (2): 266-283 (April 1999)

Recommended:

Lather P. Research as Praxis. Harvard Educational Review. Vo. 56. No. 3. August 1986

**March 28-- NO CLASS--Spring Break**

## **April 4**

### **Issues of power and empowerment in participatory evaluation**

**Guest: Lyn Paleo, Evaluation Consultant and DrPH Student**

Springett J. Participatory approaches to evaluation in health promotion. In I. Rootman et al. (Eds.) Evaluation in Health Promotion. WHO Regional Publications., European Series, No. 92, 2001, pp. 83-105.

Wallerstein N. Power Between Evaluator and Community: research relationships within New Mexico's healthier communities. Social Science and Medicine 49 (1999) 39-53

### **Recommended:**

Students who have not taken Community Organizing should additionally read:

Coombe C. Using Empowerment Evaluation in Community Organizing and Community-Based Health Initiatives, Chapters 18, pp 291-307 and

Roe K et al. Community Building through Empowerment Evaluation: A Case Study of HIV Prevention Community Planning, Chapter 19, pp 3028-322

Both in Minkler M (Ed.) Community Organizing and Community Building for Health. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers U Press, 1997 (on reserve in public health library)

## **April 11**

### **PAR in International Settings**

Torres CA. Participatory Action Research and Popular Education in Latin America. Chapter 13 in McClaren PL and Giarelli JM (Eds.) Critical Theory and Educational Research. Albany NY: State U of New York Press, 1995, pp. 237-256

Lykes MB Activist Participatory Research Among Maya of Guatemala: Constructing Meanings from Situated Knowledge. Journal of Social Issues, Vol 53, No 4, 1997, pp. 725-746

Chataway CJ. Examination of the Constraints of Mutual Inquiry in a Participatory Action Research Project. Journal of Social Issues. Vol 53 No 4 1997 pp. 747-765

## **April 18**

### **Issues of research quality and rigor in participatory research**

Ratcliffe, J and Gonzalez-del-Valle, A. Rigor in Health-related research: Toward an expanded conceptualization. International Journal of Health Services, 18(3): 1988 pp. 361-392

Reason, P. Issue of validity in new paradigm research. In P. Reason and J. Rowan (Eds.) Human Inquiry. John Wiley and Sons, 1981, pp 239-250

Maracek J, Fine M, Kidder L. Working Between Worlds: Qualitative Methods and Social Psychology. Journal of Social Issues, Vol 53 No 4, 1997. pp 631-644

## **April 25**

### **Getting to Action: PAR and Social Change**

Themba M and Minkler M. Getting to action: Influencing Policy Change Through Community Based Participatory Research. In M. Minkler and N. Wallerstein. (Eds.) Community Based Participatory Research for Health (in press)

Mergler D. Worker Participation in Occupational Health Research: Theory and Practice. International Journal of Health Services. Vol 17, No 1, 1987

Sclove R. Research by the People, For the People. Futures., Vol 29, No 6, pp 541-549, 1997

## **May 2**

### **Conclusion**

George MA, Daniel M, Green LW. Appraising and Funding Participatory Research in Health Promotion. Intl Quarterly of Community Health Education. Vol 18(2): 181-197, 1998-99

Gaventa, J. and F. Ansley. 1997. "Researching for Democracy & Democratizing Research." *Change*. January–February.