COMMENT

An ongoing discussion about validity and quality in action research

Mohd Syafiq Aiman Mat Noor,[1*] iD Yoon Sook Jhee,[2] iD & Muhammad Zulfadhli Kamarudin[3] iD

[1]School of Education, University of Leeds, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom
[2]Faculty of Education, Languages, Psychology & Music, SEGi University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
[3]Sekolah Kebangsaan Taman Merdeka, Melaka, Malaysia

ABSTRACT
This article unfolds a discourse on action research, illustrating its multifaceted perspectives, and engaging with the persistent debate about its validity and quality. Drawing on insights from a keynote presentation given by Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson, renowned scholars in the field, at ICAR 2022, the article describes six possible positions within action research, from full insider to complete outsider, illuminating the potential for collaboration and transformation at each level of insider-outsider involvement. The article underscores the importance of establishing credibility, trustworthiness, and validity within action research, despite the scepticism it is often met with. It acknowledges the marginalisation of action research in academia and other organisational contexts and calls for its recognition as a rigorous methodology capable of generating context-specific knowledge and fostering change. This article serves as a critical examination of the unique dynamics of action research, its potential for impact, and the ongoing discourse surrounding its validity and quality.

Introduction

The evolving field of action research has continually prompted discussions on its validity and quality (see Dadds, 2008; Dosemagen & Schwalbach, 2019; Feldman, 2007; Norris, 1997; Winter, 2002). This article encapsulates the insights drawn from a keynote presentation given by Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson, both esteemed scholars in the realm of action research, at the virtual International Conference on Action

Research (ICAR 2022) on September 7, 2022. Their seminal work, The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty (Herr & Anderson, 2015), has served as a foundational guide for postgraduate students employing action research in their dissertations, thereby shaping current understanding of this unique research methodology.

The article delves into the nuanced positions that can be adopted within action research, ranging from a complete insider role to an absolute outsider stance. It illuminates the diverse pathways through which collaborations can unfold in this field, emphasising the potential for profound learning and transformation.

Central to this discussion is the exploration of credibility, trustworthiness, and validity in action research. Despite the scepticism and marginalisation this methodology often faces in academia and other organisational contexts, Herr and Anderson underscore the critical need to establish its rigour and validity. They advocate for a reconceptualisation of validity in line with the distinct characteristics and goals of action research, championing its role in not only generating knowledge but also fostering change, consciousness-raising, and transformation within the research context.

This article serves as a journey into the heart of action research, shedding light on its unique dynamics, its potential for impact, and the ongoing discourse surrounding its validity and quality. As we navigate the insights shared by Herr and Anderson, we invite scholars and practitioners to reconsider their understanding of action research and recognise its indispensable role in the broader landscape of research methodologies.

The old research paradigm wars and a 'new paradigm'

Kathryn Herr began the keynote presentation by discussing the concept of action research as a new paradigm in education. According to Herr, traditional exposure to research in doctoral and Master's classes typically covers areas such as quantitative research, qualitative research, critical theory, and post-structuralism. This research approach is what she refers to as the 'old research paradigm' and is familiar to students and academics.

However, Herr and her colleagues wanted to offer another option and wrote the book, The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty, to do so. Action research is seen as a big umbrella that holds different terminologies that fundamentally shift the role of the researcher. Instead of just being an observer, the researcher becomes an active participant in the research process, working with others to achieve a common goal.

This approach is dialogical, meaning that the researcher is in constant conversation and collaboration with others, and it involves a dynamic interplay between theory and practice. The researcher is not just a passive collector of data but an active participant in the research process, with the goal of bringing about action and change.

One of the key differences between the traditional and action research paradigms is the shift away from an extractive research model to a model where the researcher is researching with others. This means that the researcher and the participants are fellow travellers on a journey to figure out where the spiral of inquiry and action will take them.

Herr pointed out that in action research the roles of the researcher can change over time due to the ongoing cycles of inquiry and action. This is part of the complexity of the paradigm, as the researcher must continuously reflect on their role in the research process and ask themselves, "Who am I right now, and what am I doing?".

Herr stated that action research is more complicated to carry out than traditional qualitative research, but highlighted that ultimately it is worth it, as it allows for a more dynamic and evolving research process. It transforms the researcher from being a passive observer to an active participant and enables a more collaborative and dialogical research approach.

The democratisation of knowledge and professional practice: Reclaiming our knowledge

Gary Anderson continued the keynote speech by elaborating on the democratisation of knowledge through the lens of action research. Anderson began by discussing the concept of action research and how it can play a role in democratising knowledge. He explained that action research is different from traditional research methods in that it is a collaborative process that is done with, rather than on or for, participants. This concept was developed further throughout the keynote.

Anderson then turned his attention to the challenges faced by action researchers in attempting to gaining legitimacy for these new approaches within the academic community. He cited a 1988 article by a Stanford professor who was concerned that new research methodologies, such as qualitative research and ethnographic research, would replace positivistic quantitative research. Ironically, by 2002, the National Research Council in the United States declared experimental designs with random assignments to groups as the gold standard of research, further entrenching positivistic quantitative research as the dominant methodology.

Anderson also noted that the field of public health has been successful in using participatory action research – also known as community-based participatory research – and has received significant funding for such research. However, in the field of education, despite some progress in integrating action research into teacher education programmes, there is still resistance to legitimising it within the academy.
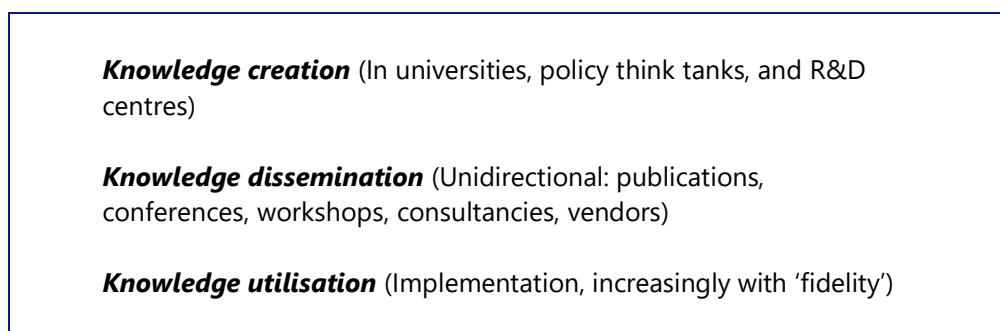
Anderson then addressed the importance of democratising knowledge in the current political climate, where authoritarianism and populism are on the rise, and the need to democratise not just the academy but other social institutions, including the family and schools. He explained that the traditional notion of technocratic knowledge (see Figure 1), where knowledge is produced in universities and then disseminated to practitioners, has cast teachers as resistant to reforms and imposed scripted practices on them, taking away their professional judgement.
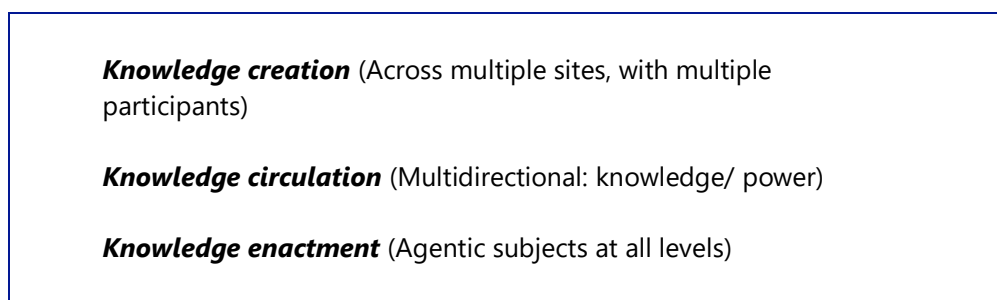
Anderson proposed a new knowledge framework, called a participatory knowledge framework (see Figure 2), where knowledge can be created through a more dialogical process involving multiple participants, including teachers, community members, and academics. The knowledge created in this way would circulate among these groups, rather than being disseminated from above. This approach would give teachers and other practitioners a voice in producing and using knowledge, thus promoting a more democratic process.

In this section, Anderson emphasised the potential of action research to democratise knowledge and professional practice, and the importance of recognising the value of the knowledge produced by teachers and other practitioners. He called for a more inclusive and democratic approach to knowledge production, dissemination, and utilisation, where the voices of all participants are heard and equally valued.

Figure 1
The technocratic knowledge framework: A linear framework

Knowledge creation (In universities, policy think tanks, and R&D centres)

Knowledge dissemination (Unidirectional: publications, conferences, workshops, consultancies, vendors)

Knowledge utilisation (Implementation, increasingly with 'fidelity')

Figure 2
The participatory knowledge framework: A dialogic process

> ***Knowledge creation*** (Across multiple sites, with multiple participants)
>
> ***Knowledge circulation*** (Multidirectional: knowledge/ power)
>
> ***Knowledge enactment*** (Agentic subjects at all levels)

Positionality and power

Herr explored the concept of positionality in action research, emphasising the importance of considering one's identity and role in relation to the research being conducted. She highlighted the need to reflect on various aspects such as gender, race, and professional position, acknowledging the dynamic nature of these identities. Herr shared her personal experience of working with African American male students in a participatory action research group, where she navigated being an outsider while also recognising shared goals for change. She acknowledged the complexities of her own positionality as a white woman and academic, including tensions and considerations arising from multiple identities. Herr introduced the idea of a continuum of positionality but acknowledged its limitations in capturing the full complexity of these dynamics.

Herr discussed the six different positions within action research: insider studies own practice, insider in collaboration with other insider, insider in collaboration with outsider, reciprocal collaboration, outsider in collaboration with insider and outsider studying insider. The first position involves studying one's own practice as an insider. She shared her personal experience of conducting a study on institutional racism, initially motivated by the desire to improve her role as a school social worker. Herr highlighted that teachers often embark on action research by questioning and seeking ways to enhance their classroom practices. Although researchers may feel in control as

insiders, Herr emphasised the need for action research studies to be contextualised within a larger setting. She provided an example of inviting her students to track her interactions with male and female students, leading to unexpected consequences, as the study extended beyond her own classroom. This illustrates the potential ripple effect of questioning and research within an institutional context, even when initially focused on one's own practice.

Herr then discussed the second position in action research, where insiders collaborate with other insiders. She shared the example of a student who formed an inquiry group with fellow teachers to study the changing population of their school, specifically the increase in second language learners. This collaborative approach allowed them to collectively explore and improve their instructional strategies. The student's initiative not only became the basis for her dissertation but also gained support from the school administration due to its relevance to a larger issue within the institution. Herr emphasised the advantages of this collaborative position, as it provides a sense of companionship and facilitates shared inquiry, collaboration, and meaning making.

Herr also discussed two additional positions in action research: insiders collaborating with outsiders and the formation of insider-outsider teams. In the former, insiders invite outsiders to contribute their unique skills and perspectives to the research. Herr shared her experience of collaborating with a school facing perplexing data related to the management. The fourth position involves forming teams consisting of both insiders

and outsiders, thus creating an ideal scenario for shared learning, expertise, and collaborative research. Herr emphasised the benefits of combining insider knowledge with external perspectives, highlighting the dynamic exchange of knowledge and comprehensive outcomes that result from such collaboration.

Anderson emphasised the significance of reciprocal collaboration as an ideal form of collaboration, where parity exists between insiders and outsiders in a research team. He shared an example of a study in Chicago, where a university professor and a community organiser from different backgrounds worked together for a year to build trust and address mutual interests. This collaboration involved community members, a community organisation, and a university, resulting in transformative changes and the legitimisation of action research. Anderson acknowledged the challenges involved in achieving reciprocal collaboration but recognised its potential for producing knowledge that is informed by the experiences and perspectives of teachers or community members.

Herr concluded her discussion by presenting the final two positions in action research: the fifth position of an outsider collaborating with an insider, and the sixth position of an outsider studying insiders. In the fifth position, she explained how doctoral students often engage with communities and seek collaboration with insiders to explore research questions. She provided an example of a Senegalese woman studying in the United States who teamed up with members of a Senegalese community to understand and interrupt the practice of female genital mutilation. In the sixth position, Herr highlighted the role of an outsider studying insiders, which shifts away from action research and aligns with qualitative research paradigms.

This summary underscores the diverse possibilities for collaboration and knowledge generation within action research across a range of contexts and communities. The positionality of action research is shown in Table 1 below:

Anderson discussed the challenges faced by committees with limited knowledge of action research and their tendency to position students as outsiders in their dissertations. He critiqued the imposition of a third-person perspective on action research, which he believes compromises the subjective nature of the approach. He emphasised the importance of avoiding hybrid dissertations that blend action research with third-person narratives. Anderson also highlighted the imposition of validity criteria that may not align with the nature of action research, urging a reconsideration of how rigour and validity are conceptualised in this context. He hinted at the need for further discussion on alternative perspectives of validity and rigour in action research as compared to other research methodologies.

Herr acknowledged the importance of considering power dynamics within each of the research positions previously discussed. She emphasised that power operates in all collaborations, including when teachers engage in research with their students.

Herr viewed power dynamics as a given and invited further exploration of how to address them. She considered it a methods question, focusing on the ways to promote reciprocity, equity and flatten hierarchical structures. Herr urged researchers to actively consider power dynamics and incorporate strategies to invite greater fairness and balance into their research endeavours.

Validity, trustworthiness and credibility

Anderson emphasised the need to establish credibility in action research and discussed the development of validity criteria. He acknowledged the scepticism surrounding action research, which involves active participation at the research site. Anderson highlighted the importance of explaining the rigour, validity, trustworthiness and credibility of action research to overcome doubts. He emphasised that action research not only focuses emphasised that action research not only focuses on knowledge production but also aims to bring about change, transformation, and consciousness-raising. The development of validity criteria serves

Table 1

Continuum and implications of positionality, extracted from Herr and Anderson (2015, pp. 47-48)

Insider (1)_____(2)_____ (3)_____ (4)_____(5)_____ (6) Outsider		
Positionality of Researcher	Contributes to	Traditions
(1) Insider (researcher studies own self/ practice)	Knowledge base, improved/ critiqued practice, self/ professional transformation	Practitioner research, autobiography, narrative research, self-study
(2) Insider in collaboration with other insiders	Knowledge base, improved/ critiqued practice, professional/organisational transformation	Feminist consciousness-raising groups, inquiry/ study groups, teams
(3) Insider(s) in collaboration with outsider(s)	Knowledge base, improved/ critiqued practice, professional/organisational transformation	Inquiry/ study groups
(4) Reciprocal collaboration (insider-outsider teams)	Knowledge base, improved/ critiqued practice, professional/organisational transformation	Collaborative forms of participatory action research that achieve equitable power relations
(5) Outsider(s) in collaboration with insider(s)	Knowledge base, improved/ critiqued practice, organisational development/ transformation	Mainstream change agency: consultancies, industrial democracy, organisational learning, radical change: community empowerment (Paulo Freire)
(6) Outsider(s) studies insider(s)	Knowledge base	University-based, academic research on action research methods or action research projects

to address potential concerns and objections, despite some individuals finding them problematic.

Anderson highlighted the democratising nature of action research, which enables the inclusion of voices often overlooked in mainstream research to generate new knowledge from 'below'. He used the example of teaching to illustrate the difference between action research conducted by teachers in schools and traditional research produced by academics. While traditional research focuses on identifying gaps in the existing literature, action research carried out by teachers addresses the problems and inequalities they encounter in their own schools, aiming to improve teaching practices and promote equity. This approach generates a distinct body of knowledge that reflects the unique concerns and dilemmas of practitioners. Anderson suggests that collaboration between teachers and academics can enhance the development of context-specific knowledge. Action research allows for the inclusion of marginalised voices and fosters the production of relevant knowledge that directly addresses

practitioners' needs. The validity criteria are outlined in Table 2 below.

Anderson briefly discussed the validity criterion of outcome validity in action research. He highlighted that practitioners in action research choose their research questions based on problem-solving within their own context. The focus is on the extent to which the problem is addressed and the knowledge gained through the process. Anderson acknowledged the ongoing nature of action research, with cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Rather than a singular outcome, each cycle triggers new questions and drives ongoing research. He emphasised the practical problem-solving aspect that distinguishes action research from traditional research. The knowledge generated through action research aligns with practitioners' applied perspectives, complementing the knowledge produced by academics. Outcome validity centres on practical problem-solving and the continuous generation of knowledge through an ongoing research spiral.

Dialogic validity in academic research refers to the necessity of subjecting research reports to peer review before they can be published in academic journals. Moreover, many academic journals facilitate opportunities for researchers to participate in debates and discussions regarding their research, fostering a point-counterpoint exchange. This approach is also starting to be embraced by action research communities, where numerous groups are being formed across North America, as action researchers seek to engage in dialogue with their peers. Additionally, there has been a substantial increase in refereed publishing outlets for action research over the last decade, which holds particular importance for individuals conducting action research dissertations, as publishing their work becomes vital when pursuing academic positions.

Anderson highlighted the powerful role of catalytic validity in action research, emphasising that it can enable transformative learning and aid researchers and participants in developing a critical consciousness. He explained that action research aims to go beyond knowledge production and seeks to create change in both researchers and participants. Drawing on Paolo Freire's notion of 'limit situations', Anderson described how action research allows individuals to surpass their perceived limitations and envision new possibilities. By challenging existing perspectives and fostering personal growth, action research facilitates transformative experiences for all involved. In summary, catalytic validity centres on its ability to catalyse change and personal growth in researchers and participants alike.

Anderson also discussed the concept of democratic validity in action research, which involves two key dimensions. Firstly, it emphasises the importance of including the perspectives of those affected by the research, such as students in the case of teachers conducting action research on teaching methods. This inclusivity ensures that the research benefits all stakeholders involved. Secondly, democratic validity emphasises the resonance of research findings with the local knowledge and context of the community under study. This resonance can be achieved by involving community members in the research process and valuing their voices. In summary, democratic validity emphasises inclusion and relevance by incorporating diverse perspectives and aligning research findings with local knowledge.

Lastly, Anderson discussed process validity in action research, which focuses on the rigour of the research process itself. He provides an example of two doctoral students—one conducting a traditional interview study in New York City and the other engaging in an action research project involves extended engagement and dialogue, leads to a more rigorous research process compared to a one-time interview. He highlighted the importance of trust-building and data collection over time. In summary, process validity emphasises the rigour and effectiveness of the research process in action research.

Anderson discussed the validity of action research as a distinct form of knowledge generation. He highlighted that action research produces unique understanding and knowledge that cannot be replicated through other methodologies. While acknowledging the limitations of different research approaches, such as decontextualised data in quantitative research and challenges of replication in qualitative research,

Table 2

Anderson and Herr's Goals of Action Research and Validity Criteria, extracted from Herr and Anderson (2015, p. 68)

Goals of Action Research	Quality/ Validity Criteria
1. The generation of new knowledge	Dialogic and process validity
2. The achievement of action-oriented outcomes	Outcome validity
3. The education of both researcher and participants	Catalytic validity
4. Results that are relevant to the local setting	Democratic validity
5. A sound and appropriate research methodology	Process validity

Anderson argued that each methodology has its own strengths and limitations. He emphasised the need to recognise and understand the unique qualities of action research in order to establish criteria for its validity. Anderson acknowledged other scholars' ongoing development of validity criteria and encouraged an honest assessment of both the strengths and limitations of action research. In summary, Anderson emphasised the validity of action research and the importance of recognising its distinct qualities within the broader research landscape.

Why is action research still marginalised in the academy, schools and other organisations?

Action research remains somewhat marginalised in academic institutions, universities, schools and professional organisations. Historically, the dominance of quantitative research and limited practice of qualitative research has contributed to this marginalisation. While action research has gained traction in teacher education programmes, it continues to face challenges in being recognised as a legitimate form of knowledge production at university level. It is often perceived as practical, context-specific knowledge, and as a tool employed by practitioners to solve problems within their specific settings. This perception hinders its broader acceptance and recognition as a rigorous research methodology.

Anderson discussed the influence of Kurt Lewin, known for advocating theory-building through problem-solving in practical contexts. Action research, often associated with Lewin, challenges established research orthodoxies. However, Anderson highlighted the obstacles faced in studying and implementing action research within academia, including its potential threat to individuals' professional identities and the limited training offered as part of traditional doctoral programmes.

Anderson addressed the existence of a status hierarchy within the academic realm, where academic knowledge is often deemed superior to practitioner or community-based knowledge. However, he emphasised the significance of practitioner and community knowledge in applied fields such as schools, social service agencies, and hospitals. Understanding and incorporating community and practitioner knowledge is essential for effective job performance in these contexts. Anderson highlighted the practical utility of this knowledge, which surpasses the abstract and theoretical nature of academic knowledge, particularly for practitioners.

Anderson highlighted the impact of a research council report that influenced funding agencies to prioritise quantitative and positivist

studies, thereby limiting support for ethnographic, qualitative and participatory research. However, progress was made in securing funding for these alternative research approaches prior to the year 2000. Public health, in particular, recognises the value of such research in promoting healthy behaviours and addressing issues like diabetes or HIV. The catalytic ability of action research is evident in its potential to involve community members and lead to positive outcomes, including behavioural change. Different fields and sectors, such as international development, also recognise the importance of participatory research in addressing community problems with the assistance of external expertise.

Anderson discussed the emerging influence of metrics, markets, and managerialism in professional schools, highlighting sociological literature that examines professionals' shift in control from immediate supervisors to distant evaluators. This new dynamic is characterised by the use of metrics and high stakes testing, shaping the actions and decisions of professionals such as police officers, nurses and teachers. The increased reliance on quantifiable data and performance metrics poses challenges to teachers' professional judgement and autonomy compared to the past. The impact of these changes on professional practices is a subject of ongoing investigation.

Herr and Anderson emphasised the need to increase the visibility of action research and reduce its marginalisation. They suggested publishing action research findings in venues that are respected by academics, such as the Educational Action Research journal, as well as other mainstream journals. By demonstrating the rigour and value of action research through well-written articles, researchers can contribute to the knowledge base and challenge sceptics. Herr and Anderson also encouraged those who have conducted action research dissertations to publish their work in international or local journals. Disseminating action research findings is seen as crucial for establishing its credibility and impact within academia.

Herr emphasised the importance of recognising that action research may not always be welcomed or embraced within organisational contexts. She acknowledged that organisations, like academia, may not readily accept the disruptive nature of action research, as it challenges the status quo and established norms. It is crucial to acknowledge that the status quo serves the interests of certain individuals who may resist change. Therefore, Herr cautioned against assuming that action research will be readily embraced in various organisational contexts.

Furthermore, Herr noted that organisations often face pressures to find quick fixes to problems, whereas action research is a process that requires deep understanding and does not provide immediate solutions. The messy and uncertain nature of action research may therefore clash with organisations' desire for stability and efficiency. Herr stressed the need for realistic expectations when engaging in action research, recognising that the journey towards change is difficult and complex. This is true not only within the academic realm but also within other organisational contexts.

Moreover, Herr acknowledged the challenging policy contexts that exist in the United States, which can further complicate the implementation of action research. However, she emphasised that the work of action research lies in navigating and addressing these difficulties. Herr highlighted the necessity of persevering through the complexities and continuing the practice of action research despite the inherent challenges faced in both academic and organisational settings.

Herr highlighted the challenges of time and energy constraints when conducting action research in school settings. She emphasised the need to recognise that not everyone has the capacity to engage in every aspect of the research process equally. Collaboration and flexibility were encouraged, allowing individuals to contribute in ways that align with their abilities and circumstances. Herr shared her own experiences of involving students in the research process while being mindful of their existing commitments. By acknowledging and adapting to these practical constraints, action research can be conducted effectively in educational contexts.

Anderson highlighted the intrinsic value of teachers inquiring about their own teaching using action research, as this enhances their teaching

practices and professional identity. In this way, teachers can view inquiry as essential to their work and find it worthwhile despite the additional time and effort it requires. Furthermore, Anderson emphasised that action research serves as a means to address and challenge existing inequities and injustices within educational contexts. It offers an avenue for change, allowing teachers to channel their energy towards creating a more just and equitable learning environment. While critical theory may not be a prerequisite for engaging in action research, Anderson noted that many practitioners in this field demonstrate a deep concern for social issues, such as poverty and inequality, and view their research as a commitment to bringing about positive change in the lives of students.

Herr acknowledged the common expectation for action research to yield a perfect solution and bring about significant improvements. However, she emphasised that the action research process is ongoing and iterative, with the potential for multiple cycles of inquiry and intervention. Even if the desired outcomes are not achieved, Herr encouraged practitioners to view it as an opportunity for further exploration and understanding. She highlighted the importance of considering contextual limitations and recognising when efforts have reached their potential within a particular setting. Herr shared an example of attempting to change the school curriculum but facing resistance, leading the group to adapt their approach and establish an after-school informal curriculum instead. Despite not always attaining the desired outcome, Herr suggested that the action research process invites continuous learning and adaptation within the constraints of the context.

Conclusion

The keynote presentation by Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson provided an overview of the dynamic field of action research, its unique positions, and its integral role in enhancing practical knowledge and promoting change. The six action research positions, ranging from full insider to full outsider, illustrate the breadth and diversity of this research methodology. They underscore the potential for meaningful collaboration, mutual learning, and transformation at varying levels of insider-outsider involvement.

Furthermore, the presentation emphasised the importance of credibility, trustworthiness, and validity in action research. Despite the scepticism it often faces, action research is a rigorous and robust methodology that not only contributes to knowledge production but also fosters change and transformation in the research context. By appreciating and adhering to the specific validity criteria of action research, researchers can ensure the rigour of their studies and address potential concerns effectively.

However, despite its strengths, action research remains somewhat marginalised in academia and other organisational contexts. This is due to the historical dominance of quantitative research, a status hierarchy within the academic realm, changes in levels of control among professionals, and the complexities involved in conducting action research. Yet, as Anderson and Herr argued, the value of action research is undeniable, particularly in its capacity to address real-world problems, include marginalised voices, and promote equity and change.

Ultimately, Herr and Anderson's presentation calls for a renewed appreciation of action research. It is a reminder that action research is not merely a tool for problem-solving but a powerful means of facilitating change, challenging established norms, and contributing valuable insights to our collective knowledge. While challenges persist, the potential of action research to bring about positive transformation, within and beyond academia, is a testament to its enduring relevance and potency.

Looking forward, we should continue to recognise, promote, and uphold action research. Whether we are practitioners, academics, students, or members of a community, we can all play a part in this mission – by conducting action research with rigour and integrity, by disseminating our findings and experiences, and by advocating for action research in our respective fields and institutions. In doing so, we will be contributing to

a richer, more inclusive, and more equitable landscape of knowledge and practice.

About Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson

Kathryn Herr is Professor of Educational Foundations at Montclair State University in the United States. With a passion for qualitative and action research methods, she has made significant contributions to the field of education. Her most recent study, which focused on the effects of single-sex academies in a public middle school, has garnered widespread recognition. Additionally, her research interests also include youth, youth violence, and the relationship between diverse youth and educational institutions.

Alongside her impressive research accomplishments, Professor Herr has also co-authored a seminal work in the field of action research, titled Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty, with Professor Gary Anderson. This book offers a comprehensive and practical guide to students and faculty in the field of action research. It helps to demystify the unique challenges associated with action research dissertations, including validity, positionality, design, write-up, ethics, and dissertation defence.

Gary Anderson, Professor Emeritus of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, is a researcher in the field of education. His interdisciplinary research interests span a wide range of topics, with a particular focus on the tension between theory and practice in applied fields such as education. Through his extensive work, Professor Anderson has made substantial contributions to the understanding of knowledge production in applied fields.

As a leading expert in the field of action research, Professor Anderson has co-authored two books on the subject, and has published widely on issues of educational leadership. His work draws upon critical and post-structural theories, including the works of Marx, Habermas, Bourdieu, and Foucault, to refocus the field of education and bring new perspectives to bear. In addition to his work in education, Professor Anderson has also conducted research on organisational micropolitics and the impact of global neoliberalism on education, as well as receiving two Fulbright awards to conduct research in Argentina and Mexico.

ORCID

Mohd Syafiq Aiman Mat Noor (iD)
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4123-7357
Yoon Sook Jhee (iD)
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0412-4732
Muhammad Zulfadhli Kamarudin (iD)
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9670-9791

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