



# SCHEDULE OF PAPERS

Friday June 27th 2025

## Action Research Group Ireland

The theme of the 13th Annual International Action Research Colloquium is Action Research for Learning and Education. This document contains all the abstracts being presented on Friday June 27<sup>th</sup>.

**TSI Building Maynooth University**

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## Colloquium Schedule Friday June 27th

Friday 27th June					
09.00 - 09.30	Registration				
09.30 - 09.40	Opening / Introductions				
09.40 - 10.40	Keynote presentation: "Action Research for Learning and Education". Professor Kiran Trehan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Enterprise, Partnerships and Engagement, University of York				
10.40 - 11.00	Tea / Coffee break				
Paper / Workshop Presentations					
	Chair	Session A Mary Casey		Chair	Session B Mary Brydon-Miller
11.00 - 11.20		Helena Kettleborough	Six learning practices for holistic thinking rooted in action research	Valentina Paolucci	From silence to policy: An Action Research case study of fertility support in Irish workplaces
11.25 - 11.45		Brigid Russell	The unfolding practice of learning in the messy collaborative space between co-participation, co-facilitation, and co-research	Elizabeth Doyle	Jigsaw's Youth Research Council: Embedding youth perspectives in research
11.50 - 12.10		Denise O'Leary	Negotiating gendered barriers to entrepreneurship: the experience of "Hue women"	Kate Hall	Unspoken words and silent voices: inquiring into the impact of power in NHS leadership
12.15 - 12.35		Michelle Clancy	Discovering novel interaction spaces in a technological community	Debbie Grey	Finding Myself Through Action Research: Exploring Connection and Belonging
	12.35 - 13.30 Lunch, Pugin Hall, South Campus				
	Chair	Session C Paul Ellwood		Chair	Session D Vivienne Brady
13.40 - 14.00		Kai Boschmann	Flow as a Therapeutic Practice for Flourishing: Building Resilience through Action Research	Catherine Moylan	Uncovering and Nurturing a Creative Identity Through Action Research
14.05 - 14.25		Jouke Kruijer	Working With and Against the Grain of Action Research: Learning Through Artful Inquiry	Simon Brennan	Becoming Transformative Educators: Cycle 1 Findings from an Action Research Study of Philosophical inquiry in Global Citizenship Education
14.25 - 14.45	Coffee break				
	Chair	Session E Denise O'Leary		Chair	Session F David Higgins
14.45 - 15.05		Mary Brydon-Miller	Come Hell or High Water: Participatory Action Research to Address Flashflood Response in Eastern Kentucky through the FLASH Initiative	Mary Casey	Assessing quality of action research studies using the QUARC tool: A narrative review
15.10 - 15.30		Mairéad O'Donnell	Urban Green Space Narratives: Action Research in Urban Wild Spaces	Kisito Futonge Nzembayie	AI in Action Research: Implications for Human Interiority and Reflexive Knowing
15.35 - 15.55		Kate Darmody	Action Research in Diverse Educational Contexts	Paul Ellwood	Loneliness of the action research doctoral candidate
	Keynote presentation: "On becoming an action research scholar-practitioner" by Professor David Coghlan, Professor Emeritus at the Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin				
16.00 - 16.55	Closing Remarks				
16.55 - 17.00					

## Session A

### Abstract 1: Dr Helena Kettleborough

#### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Six learning practices for holistic thinking rooted in action research

#### **ABSTRACT:**

Action research can be seen as a research methodology to be used by policy makers, researchers and teachers, to an orientation towards inquiry which individuals can use in their lives, in their paid and voluntary work and with family and friends. The world in 2025 is full of challenging situations, from human politics, to biodiversity loss and the climate emergency, The solutions to these challenges exist but often require a change in thinking and practice which is hard to achieve both on a personal level as it might mean altering habits of a lifetime or on an organisational level changing established norms and practices, to taking on powerful systemic forces in society.

This paper considers how action research methodology can be used to help individuals, students and community members develop understanding of more holistic paradigms. It considers six practices in different types of learning situation and how they can each help develop a more holistic approach to thinking and being. The five hopeful paradigms help to locate the individual in a wider sense of community - of the human and more-than-human, within the sacred (however understood), within our living planet and awesome cosmos and within emerging participatory paradigms.

The six learning practices each relate to one of these paradigms and explore different learning methods. The learning contexts explored include learning in a higher education classroom, outdoors in a local park, online workshop and at a national science festival. The paper offers a critical appreciation of the learning practices presented.

The aim of the paper is to share with others the experience of teaching these practices and offer guidelines which participants at the presentation can take away and develop in their own individual learning settings.

Dr. Helena Mary Kettleborough

Manchester Metropolitan University

## Abstract 2: Mrs Brigid Russell

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

The unfolding practice of learning in the messy collaborative space between co-participation, co-facilitation, and co-research (Brigid Russell, doctoral candidate on EDOC programme at HULT Ashridge)

### **ABSTRACT:**

The leadership pathway for people with lived experience is a co-created approach to doing leadership development differently and being in a learning community. Collectively, we (eight participants, a sponsor, and me as co-facilitator) have been learning alongside each other for over a year, questioning what leadership feels like and what enables and frustrates collaborative working across the third and public sectors in Scotland. While co-developing and co-facilitating the leadership pathway, I am also engaged in a doctorate programme in which I am inquiring through action research what it means and what it takes to be alongside in collaborative work and learning.

Through working as part of this group, I have come to appreciate even more how essential it is to be 'doing the work' on ourselves, i.e. the practices of self-reflection and self-reflexivity, so that we are able to learn alongside each other. Co-participating in this way takes intentional effort and sustained attention for all involved. Each contributes to the learning of all of us as equal members of the group, thus blurring the distinction between participant and facilitator. This represents a challenge to prevailing power dynamics about what constitutes leadership and how it is enacted.

The pathway group is in the middle of a conversation about 'what next?' including the possibility of engaging in participatory action research. Our inquiry is likely to be how to find practical ways of working more collaboratively across 3rd and public sector organisations and communities, drawing on all our diverse connections, and bringing in the knowledge of people with lived experience more meaningfully and inclusively.

This is a proposal to the Action Research Colloquium for me to share more of what it actually feels like to be alongside in the messy space between co-participation, co-facilitation, and (emerging) co-research.

## Abstract 3: Dr Denise O’Leary

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Negotiating gendered barriers to entrepreneurship: the experience of "Hue women" -  
Denise O’Leary, Geraldine Gorham, Fernanda Lima Rabelo, Lien Tran Thi Ngoc

### **ABSTRACT:**

Although entrepreneurship has sometimes been described as a gender-neutral route to career success, the reality is often different, with women entrepreneurs facing gendered barriers arising from the social and cultural contexts within which they operate (Strawser et al 2021).

This paper gives an overview of experiences of participants in an action research project to support Vietnamese women through an entrepreneurship mentoring programme. Engagement in the action research project helped empower them to recognise and begin to overcome some of the gendered barriers they face.

In the paper, we draw on the socio-culturally constructed concept of the “Hue woman”, as it is understood within the local context. Hue women were described by project participants as adherent to traditional values, family focused and ‘soft and gentle’ but also as strong and driven. The construct provides not only a useful lens for examining the barriers faced by the participants on their entrepreneurial journeys as women, but also a lens through which we as authors could explore our own research reflexivity.

Some of the gendered barriers faced by participants included cultural and social norms, work-family conflict, self-confidence and male-dominated business networks. These barriers have been described in the literature (Kamran et al., 2025), and we explore them further from the perspective of women living and working in an environment characterised by traditional gender roles. We also explore some of the facilitators to entrepreneurship which the participants ascribed to the characteristics of Hue women

As a team of three Western-based authors and one Vietnamese-based author, the concept of the Hue woman also provided a focal point for discussion with each other and with participants on the socio-cultural context of the study. This allowed us to reflect on and unpick our views and assumptions about our subjectivity and contextual influences.

## Abstract 4: Dr Michelle Clancy

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Discovering novel interaction spaces in a technological community - Dr. Michelle Clancy, Dr. Eugene Crehan, Dr. Thomas O'Toole

### **ABSTRACT:**

This study investigates the novel interaction spaces occupied by technological entrepreneurs in an Irish microcity during dyadic social relationship initiation which, if the relationship is successfully initiated, lays the groundwork for future collaboration. Practical action research (AR) is used to investigate a 'real world' issue identified but not clearly defined by participants during the reconnaissance period: concerns of a lack of social interactions.

Three iterative cycles are deployed over a 25-month period to address the foreshadowed research question of 'how' and 'where' new relationships are initiated, and 'how to' improve the situation. Local technology meetups are used as a point of entry to the community, semi-structured interviews with 58 participants to inductively explore the phenomenon, and grounded theory to analyse data at the evaluation stage of each cycle. Two meso (community) level interventions are made, at the start of cycles 2 and 3, with multiple micro(individual) interventions during Cycle 3.

Through the analytic lens of social exchange theory, four interconnected metaphorical 'rooms' where early interactions occur are inductively identified and conceptualised. AR takes place within these 'rooms', with the researcher required to negotiate and adopt multiple roles at various points in these 'rooms' that simultaneously straddle the 'action' and 'research'. Reflective journaling is used to offset concerns of embeddedness and objectivity.

Traditionally, AR is carried out in a single organisation or at multiple distinct sites observing different groups. Little has been written on how to conduct AR across multiple cases and less still on using multiple sites involving the same group of participants. This study makes a novel methodological contribution by conducting multi-site AR as a conceptually distinct variant of AR within these four 'rooms', with the researcher conducting the research concurrently from 'inside' each of these four 'rooms'. This provides rich insights and leads to greater coverage in a naturalistic environment.

## Session B

### Abstract 5: Dr. Valentina Paolucci

#### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Discovering novel interaction spaces in a technological community - Dr. Michelle Clancy, Dr. Eugene Crehan, Dr. Thomas O'Toole

#### **ABSTRACT:**

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## Abstract 6: Ms Elizabeth Doyle

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Jigsaw's Youth Research Council: Embedding youth perspectives in research

### **ABSTRACT:**

Title: Jigsaw's Youth Research Council: Embedding youth perspectives in research

Authors: Elizabeth Doyle, Dr. Siobhan O'Brien, Alison Warren-Perry, Niamh Petrie, Síofra McCrum, Sophie Kathryn, Dr. Jeff Moore.

All authors are affiliated with Jigsaw – The National Centre of Youth Mental Health

Alison Warren-Perry, Niamh Petrie, Síofra McCrum and Sophie Kathryn are Youth Advocate volunteers

Niamh Petrie is a PhD student with Maynooth University

### Context

Jigsaw – The National Centre for Youth Mental Health provides mental health support to young people aged 12-25 years. To ensure that our work is relevant and useful we work with volunteers (Youth Advocates) aged 16 years and older. In 2020 the Research and Evaluation team and Youth Advocates created the Youth Research Council (YRC).

### What were you trying to change?

While the involvement of young people in research has many benefits, providing systematic, formal pathways can be challenging. The YRC aims to ensure that young people's voices are at the centre of research on youth mental health. This two-way process allows professionals to connect directly with young people who are passionate about this topic and allows young people to be involved in research in a variety of ways and strategically inform actions.

How did others shape the action taken? Where did power to influence direction lie?  
What knowledge was generated?

The YRC have informed how we collect data from young people attending Jigsaw services as well as numerous youth mental health research projects exploring topics

such as peer support and online digital support. Young people have been involved throughout the research process from developing questions, data collection methods and disseminating the findings. This has ensured that youth voice is at the heart of these mental health projects and that studies are effective.

Since 2020, the YRC has undergone changes as we have learned the best way to engage with young people, promote meaningful participation and gained a better understanding of how members want to benefit. For example, researchers update the YRC on how their involvement has shaped mental health projects to ensure the feedback loop is closed and advocates can see their impact. Ultimately, the learning from the YRC helps to enhance our youth mental health supports and knowledge.

## Abstract 7: Mrs Kate Hall

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Unspoken words and silent voices: inquiring into the impact of power in NHS leadership

### **ABSTRACT:**

At the heart of my research is a career long interest in the phenomena of power and its impact on leadership behaviour, specifically within the English NHS.

Throughout a thirty-year career working for and alongside the English NHS, I have experienced and observed many leaders feeling constrained when it comes to having transparent conversations, often framed as ‘speaking up’ (to power). Voices remaining ‘silent’ in formal settings, despite being ‘loud’ in informal settings, and a resigned acceptance around challenging the status quo, the ‘unspoken’ understanding as to the consequences if they do.

Through cycles of action and reflection, both personal and with others, I have realised how multifaceted a phenomenon this is. Leadership within the NHS is complex; it is one of the largest organisations and most diverse employers in the world and highly concerned with maintaining a positive public image. The dichotomy between reputational management and personal integrity seems a key factor.

I hold the tension of believing what the NHS stands for, whilst also being critical of its leadership. I am an ‘insider’, yet feel more like an ‘outsider’, a ‘tempered radical’ as described by Meyerson and Scully.

In this presentation I share learning to date; exploring power through an emerging lens, including the moments of significant discomfort when I realised that I am the people of whom I can be so critical. Whilst quick to condemn others, I needed to look closer to home.

I am interested in generating dialogue with others’ around personal experiences of the impact of power, both theirs and within workplaces.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power / Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* C.Gordon (Ed.). Vintage Books

Lukes, S. (2021). *Power: A Radical View*. 3rd Edition. Macmillan.

Meyerson, D.E., and Scully, M. A. (1995). *Tempered Radicalism and the Politics of Ambivalence and Change*.

## Abstract 8: Debbie Grey

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Finding Myself Through Action Research: Exploring Connection and Belonging

### **ABSTRACT:**

Debbie Grey

David Higgins

University of Liverpool Management School

Chatham Building Chatham Street University of Liverpool L69 7ZH

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Purpose - As societal structures have evolved, so too have the ways in which people seek meaning, purpose, and social connection (Baumeister & Leary 2017). Work plays a fundamental role in modern life, shaping both individual well-being and organisational success yet a Harvard Business Review (2019) found that over 40% of the workforce feel isolated. Within the workplace, leaders and employees engage in complex relational dynamics that can significantly influence their sense of connectedness, belonging and overall performance (Filstad et al., 2019). The paper seeks to explore the nature of employee connectedness and belonging in the workplace addressing leaders' influence. Feelings of belonging are critical to enable and support both employee identity, job satisfaction and performance (Lovell et al., 2021).

Methods – The paper utilises action-oriented methodology, drawing on living and appreciative inquiry developing a self-reflexive discussion on the distinction between connection and belonging in the workplace. AR as a mode of inquiry supports the researcher in drawing emphasis to the fundamental human need for meaningful relationships and the risks associated with exclusion. AR naturally lends itself to methodologies which are appreciative of action, in order to experience and capture events as they emerge over time, enabling one to be immersed in events. While holding the researcher's capacity to introspectively and retrospectively exercise their ability to develop meaningful intervention.

Implications for Practice – Research shows that when employees experience a strong sense of belonging, companies see significant benefits. High levels of belonging have

been associated with a remarkable 56% boost in job performance, a 50% decrease in turnover risk, and a 75% reduction in absenteeism (Harvard Review 2019), raising job satisfaction and ensuring higher engagement at work. Cohen (2022) expresses great optimism, asserting that individuals possess a “superpower” emphasising that incremental actions can lead to meaningful transformation.

## Session C

### Abstract 9: Ms Kai Boschmann

#### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Flow as a Therapeutic Practice for Flourishing: Building Resilience through Action Research

#### **ABSTRACT:**

This presentation explores how flow, initially defined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi as a state where challenge and skill align, can cultivate professional and recreational flourishing as a therapeutic tool to help build resilience.

Grounded in Action Research, this inquiry investigates how flow fosters resilience through reflective and participatory practices. Drawing on interpretivist and constructivist epistemologies, it addresses the dynamic, context-dependent, and subjective nature of flow, positioning it as both an individual experience and a relational process.

In my own transformational practice, flow has become vital for managing stress, adapting to adversity, and renewing energy in personal and professional contexts. Through first-person inquiry, I have peeled back societal and corporate layers to rediscover my authentic self, with a focus on self-care. Flow is explored through embodied practices such as yoga, piano, and creative arts, emphasising the ongoing process of becoming, situated in the interaction between the individual, their task, and their environment.

My research also extends to collaborative work with colleagues and mentees, sharing the practice of flow to foster well-being in the workplace. This aligns with process and relational ontologies. The fluid, situated understanding of flow supports a social phenomenological perspective, where intersubjective meanings emerge through practice and dialogue.

Within these paradigms, I seek to generate actionable insights for a flow-enabled transformation.

Via characteristic Participatory Action Research cycles and self-reflexivity, I uncover the therapeutic potential of flow, as a method of self-renewal and consequently as a catalyst for broader organisational and community flourishing.

This study acknowledges the dilemmas inherent in researching subjective, embodied experiences within a sociological context, questioning how personal, lived experiences can generate meaningful insights. There is tension between flow being subjective and trying to represent such a phenomenon objectively.

I would welcome discussion on how flow experiences can be theorised and turned into actionable insights, and what ethical or methodological challenges arise when researching deeply personal and embodied experiences like flow?



## Abstract 10: Jouke Kruijer

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Working With and Against the Grain of Action Research: Learning Through Artful Inquiry

### **ABSTRACT:**

This paper contributes to Action Research by reflecting on how artistic methods (Seeley & Thornhill, 2014) and post-qualitative approaches to research (St. Pierre, 2021) expand our understanding of both knowledge generation and learning.

I work as an artist in organisational change. My PhD research began with a first-person, art-based inquiry involving painting a thousand pieces of my old work white. I called this project Back to White. I wanted to explore how artful practice shapes learning in facilitation practices.

Initially, I situated my inquiries within the Action Research paradigm. Over time, I found the predominance of the reflexive, interpretative knower and its position in extended epistemologies (Heron & Reason, 2008) limiting. It simply did not account for the way I experienced myself—as a researcher—an unwitting agent in the unknowable process of becoming that shaped my experiments and writings.

To suspend propositional sense-making and allow meaning to be expressed from the aliveness of my research material, I used ‘thinking with theory’ (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). This method allowed me to reimagine artful knowing as an ontological presence—something emergent, relational and multi-modal.

Working ‘With and Against the Grain of Action Research’ proved a vitalising method of exploring the creative potential of my research and generated outcomes that moved and surprised me.

Through a series of workshops and performances in the second-person realm of inquiry, I developed from this method three contributions to new understandings of facilitation:

- Ontological events — conversations as creative acts of becoming
- Mad maps — non-representational artefacts that evoke unspeakable experience
- Process as a creature — agency dispersed across human and non-human actors

This paper shares my journey of methodological reinvention and discusses how art-based research supports deep personal learning and the generation of actionable knowledge in complex living systems. It invites others to reflect on their own entanglements with knowing, making, and facilitating in times of disruption.

## Session D

### Abstract 11: Ms. Catherine Moylan

#### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Uncovering and Nurturing a Creative Identity Through Action Research

#### **ABSTRACT:**

This presentation explores how creativity can be uncovered, nurtured, and developed within the traditionally analytical fields of accounting and finance.

The profession of an accountant is often associated with logic, structure, and left-brain thinking, leaving little room for the expression of creative identity.

However, through personal exploration and engagement with various forms of "little c" creativity, I realised that these small, scattered acts were not enough to bring true fulfilment.

As part of my action research, I documented my own creative experiments—ranging from an art therapy summer school to painting a mural with my neighbour—analysing their impact on my professional identity.

Through this process, I discovered that the biggest challenge wasn't a lack of creativity, but rather the tendency to suppress it due to industry norms and workplace expectations.

Intuition has played a powerful role in my journey, driving me to embrace and cultivate a more creative mindset.

This presentation poses the question: Can we learn to move beyond small, hidden moments of creativity to achieve a more harmonious balance between the Artist and the Accountant?

Is this shift necessary, and if so, how can it be realised? Ultimately, I am curious about how others perceive their own creativity—especially those who identify as creative yet feel compelled to conceal it in their professional lives.

#### **Sources:**

Beghetto. R. (2014). Creative mortification: An Initial exploration. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/A0036618>

James C. Kaufman and Ronald A. Beghetto. (2009). Beyond Big and Little: The Four C Model of Creativity. *Review of General Psychology*, Volume 13(1), 1–12.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi-org.mtu.idm.oclc.org/10.1037/a0013688>

Thwarp, Twyla. (2006). *The Creative Habit: Learn it and Use it for Life* (Vol. 1). Simon & Schuster.

## Abstract 12: Mr Simon Brennan

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Becoming Transformative Educators: Cycle 1 Findings from an Action Research Study of Philosophical Inquiry in Global Citizenship Education

### **Abstract:**

This Research Ireland-funded PhD action research self-study explores the use of philosophical inquiry (PhI), situated as a form of critical pedagogy (CP), to cultivate critical consciousness in preservice teachers. It aims to empower them to meaningfully teach Global Citizenship Education (GCE) by critically problematising its complex and contested concepts.

The study contributes to three interconnected fields, philosophy, CP, and GCE, by demonstrating how PhI can be used to explore real-world challenges and nurture transformative educators through a dialogical, problem-posing pedagogical model. Furthermore, it aligns with the goals of the Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021–2025 by proposing and evaluating a participatory teaching method that deepens practitioners' engagement with GCE.

Grounded in the CP principle of collaboration, this qualitative self-study adopts an action research design in which third-year B.Ed students, enrolled in GCE-specific modules, take an active role as both co-inquirers and facilitators of philosophical inquiries. Rather than being passive recipients of knowledge, they engage in facilitated philosophical dialogues that encourage them to reflect critically on assumptions, challenge dominant narratives, and explore the ethical and political dimensions of teaching for global justice.

The research comprises two major cycles. Data were collected through recordings of the inquiries, focus group interviews, and a reflective journal informed by dialogue with critical friends. Thematic critical discourse analysis is used to examine how power, ideology, and knowledge are constructed and contested within both the researcher's reflections and the participants' discourse.

This paper presents emerging findings from Cycle 1, where the philosophical inquiries focused on teacher identity, power, privilege, anti-racism, and diversity, offering early insights into how PhI can contribute to transformative GCE practice.

## Session E

### Abstract 13: Prof. Mary Brydon-Miller

#### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Come Hell or High Water: Participatory Action Research to Address Flashflood Response in Eastern Kentucky through the FLASH Initiative

#### **Abstract:**

Come Hell or High Water: Participatory Action Research to Address Flashflood Response in Eastern Kentucky through the FLASH Initiative

Mary Brydon-Miller, University of Louisville

In July 2022 communities in Eastern Kentucky were devastated by flashflood events that resulted in over forty deaths and the destruction of homes and businesses across an area already facing environmental challenges resulting from decades of irresponsible coal mining and logging, both of which exacerbated the impacts of the floods.

I'm currently working with colleagues from the Speed School of Engineering, the Kent School of Social Work and four other universities, together with local co-researchers on a Participatory Action Research project to help communities monitor flood risk and develop responses to future flood events.

In this presentation, I'd like to celebrate the multiple ways in which people are coming together to share their knowledge and rebuild their communities. This is a story of sharing food, making music, and finding joy together.

It's also an account of the power of community-based transdisciplinary research to tackle one of the most challenging issues caused by climate change. And it's a personal reflection on the importance of continuing to learn and grow as an action researcher—even after many years in the field.

## Abstract 14: Ms. Mairéad O'Donnell

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Urban Green Space Narratives: Action Research in Urban Wild Spaces

### **Abstract:**

Urban Green Space Narratives: Action Research in Urban Wild Spaces

Mairéad O'Donnell<sup>1</sup>, Mel Pineda Pinto<sup>2</sup>, Erik Andersson<sup>3,4</sup>, Marcus Collier<sup>1</sup>

1 Discipline of Botany, School of Natural Sciences, Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin, Ireland.

2 Melbourne Centre for Cities, Faculty of Architecture Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

3 Faculty of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Ecosystems and Environment Research Programme and Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science, University of Helsinki, Finland.

4 Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University, Sweden.

This action research project explores how participatory, experiential methods can shift dominant narratives around urban green space management, from control-focused approaches to relational, multispecies understandings. Conducted as part of my PhD in the ERC-funded NovelEco project, the study is grounded in action research principles: co-learning, reflexivity, and shared inquiry.

In collaboration with community members, ecologists, and urban practitioners, we designed and facilitated workshops in urban wild spaces (UWS) that employed multisensory and creative methods: wild transect walks, storytelling, and multispecies role-playing. A social-ecological traits lens framed these to support participants in exploring their perceptions, values, and embodied experiences of place.

Initial narratives often reflected disconnection or a desire for order. However, as participants engaged their senses and shared memories, such as childhood play or

sensory experiences, new narratives began to emerge. These shifted toward themes of coexistence and care.

Faced with challenges such as managing uncertainty and differing expectations, we adapted facilitation methods in response to participant feedback and group dynamics. The process generated valuable insights into how embodied, creative approaches can foster learning, empathy, and more inclusive urban ecological practices.

This research contributes to a growing body of educational practice that sees nature not just as a backdrop, but as a co-participant in learning, suggesting new pathways for inclusive, community-led urban wilding.

## Abstract 15: Kate Darmody

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Action Research in Diverse Educational Contexts

### **Abstract:**

Encompassing research and praxis aimed at promoting educational equity, facilitating empowerment, building resilience and sustainability in our community, the Early Learning Initiative's (ELI) grassroots Community Action Research (CAR) initiatives and capacity building efforts empower individuals, nurtures inclusive education and builds resilient families and communities.

ELI's programme strands of home visiting and parent support, community services programmes and capacity building represent diverse educational contexts. CAR is the primary methodology used in the development and evaluation of all programmes in ELI in its nearly 20 years. The action reflection cycle of observe, reflect, act, evaluate and modify informs the development of ELI's programmes and ensures plans are implemented. ELI's CAR approach collects the voices of participants, including children, young people, parents, family members, staff and corporate volunteers through a variety of methods.

Data gathered has enabled transformational learning and supports the evolution of the programmes. Findings have enabled us to respond quickly to evolving needs of the community. That said, organisational, community and societal changes have presented challenges to ELI's practice.

This presentation will address the challenges and learning that have come with engaging in action research in diverse educational contexts.



## Session F

### Abstract 16: Prof. Mary Casey

#### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

Assessing quality of action research studies using the QuARC tool: A narrative review

#### **Abstract:**

Assessing quality of action research studies using the QuARC Checklist

Mary Casey<sup>1</sup>, David Coghlan<sup>2</sup>, Aine Carroll<sup>3</sup>, Diarmuid Stokes <sup>4</sup> and Tom Buckely<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Systems, University College Dublin, Dublin 4, Ireland

<sup>2</sup> Trinity Business School, University of Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland

<sup>3</sup> UCD School of Medicine, Dublin, Dublin 4, Ireland

<sup>4</sup> College Liaison Librarian, College of Health & Agricultural Sciences, Dublin, Dublin 4, Ireland.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Wakil School of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney, NSW, Australia

**Aims** To explore the effectiveness of the QuARC checklist in assessing quality in action research.

**Design:** A hybrid narrative review.

**Review Methods:** Study selection was performed independently by two researchers. The eligible studies were reviewed to identify the quality factors Using the Quality Assessment Action Research QuARC). A data extraction table was designed and applied to the included studies. Data synthesis was undertaken using a narrative analysis. Methodological quality of the studies was evaluated using a Likert scale of 0 for the absence of the criterium, 0.5 for the partial mention, and 1 for the complete address of the item as related to each of the four factors. This scale was added to the QuARC checklist.

**Data Sources:** SCOPUS was searched to locate author self-identified Action Research Studies between January 2020 and 22nd March 2024.

Results: 31 Studies which used action research were included. Most studies reported on all quality criteria.

Conclusion: There is a lack of uniformity and consistency in various elements of quality criteria in action research studies. More importantly, there appears to be a lack of understanding about the unique factors that constitute an action research study and hence, sometimes there is no mention of any action-taking, resulting in a qualitative study being erroneously presented as action research.

## Abstract 17: Dr Kisito Futonge Nzembayie

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

AI in Action Research: Implications for Human Interiority and Reflexive Knowing

### **Abstract:**

Authors: Kisito F. Nzembayie & David Coghlan,

- Affiliation: Trinity College Dublin/Business School

Action Research (AR) is a participatory and cyclical methodology rooted in collaborative inquiry and the pursuit of actionable knowledge. Central to AR is its emphasis on reflexivity—critical, cognitional processes through which actors examine assumptions, make sense of experiences, and co-generate knowledge. However, the rapid emergence of advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as Gen AI and agentic AI—autonomous systems capable of adaptive reasoning and proactive engagement—raises profound questions about the future of reflexive and relational knowing in AR.

Unlike traditional AI tools, agentic AI can function as quasi-participants, influencing inquiry by independently identifying patterns, proposing hypotheses, and adapting strategies in real time. While such capabilities offer significant promise for enhancing AR, they also introduce ambiguity regarding the authenticity and ownership of knowledge generated through AI-mediated processes.

Thus, we pose the central question: How does the presence of an advanced AI in AR influence the human processes of knowing that are central to interiority and the co-production of authentic, actionable knowledge?

This question explores how the integration of AI into AR contexts may reshape the human processes of knowing, deemed foundational to reflexivity. Specifically, it examines the impact of AI on how co-inquirers direct attention, interpret data, exercise judgment, and arrive at decisions in human-machine co-inquiry.

Drawing on theoretical perspectives from organizational studies, technology, and epistemology, we argue that the co-presence of increasingly agentic AI requires rethinking established notions of co-agency, reflexivity, and the constitution of authentic knowledge in AR. We critically assess how AI might augment or attenuate the depth and quality of human interiority, and consider its implications for the trustworthiness of outcomes in AR.

## Abstract 18: Prof Paul Ellwood

### **ABSTRACT TITLE:**

The Loneliness of the Action Research Doctoral Candidate: Problematifying identities, pedagogies and practices

### **Abstract:**

Much research on the supervision of doctoral candidates has been motivated by widespread interest in articulating what constitutes 'good supervision' to improve both student experience and completion rates. In this paper we identify and address a more fundamental problem with doctoral supervision, namely that it is overly informed by the narrow concerns and practices of the Academy. We argue that current supervisory practices may be failing doctoral candidates by neglecting to sufficiently prepare them for professional practice of any kind.

Our aim is to develop a pedagogy of doctoral study which addresses three gaps we have identified as significant. First, a pedagogy of doctoral study needs to fully recognise and incorporate the role of practice for all doctoral researchers and especially the professional doctorate. Secondly, it must fully recognise and account for the complex nature of doctoral identity formation and identity work. Thirdly we seek to expand or supplement the root metaphors for supporting and facilitating doctoral candidates, beyond the notion of 'super-vision'. We will do so primarily by drawing on identity work theory and especially identity work in relation to liminality, and on existing models and theories of doctoral supervision. Our intended contribution is thus to develop a pedagogy which, through reflecting the embeddedness of practice in scholarship, better prepares and supports candidates for using their acquired skills in scholarship within practice contexts, and which articulates and justifies the value of doctoral programmes beyond the mere production of more highly academically qualified individuals.