Community-Engaged Research

Community-engaged research and how it happens at UVic is explained below.

Summary of Community-Engaged Research

Definition of community-engaged research (CER): CER is often used as an umbrella term for various action-oriented and participatory approaches to research, including community-based research (CBR), participatory action research (PAR) and a number of other traditions and terminology described below. CER is a collaborative process between researchers and community partners with the aim of creating and disseminating knowledge with the goal of contributing to the discipline and well-being of the community. The degree of community engagement in the research process is often conceptualized on a spectrum (figure below), ranging from low levels (‘inform’) to high levels (‘co-creation’) of engagement. Research that reaches into the more engaged areas of the continuum may be described as community-based, which is designed to enable engagement in all aspects of the research process, including shared decision making power and ownership. The glossary of terminology below describes these traditions along the continuum (adapted from Etmanksi et al, 2014) and provides some examples at UVic.

Key aspects of community-engaged research (from Wiebe & Taylor, 2014)

- **Partnerships**
  - Community relevance
  - Flexibility
  - Co-creation of knowledge
  - Questions originate in the community
  - Long-term

- **Research Design**
  - Building the research team
  - Clarifying responsibilities
  - Collaborative problem definition

- **Process**
  - Equitable participation
  - Recognizing community expertise
  - Participatory methods

- **Outcomes**
  - Action
  - Change and knowledge
  - Skills development and resource transfer
  - Integrated knowledge mobilization

Spectrum of engagement:

- **Inform:** Provide objective information to assist in understanding the problems and solutions.
- **Consult:** Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- **Involve:** Work directly with community throughout the process to ensure community issues and concerns are understood and considered.
- **Collaborate:** Partner with communities in each phase of the research including decision making and data analysis.
- **Co-Create:** Community and academics co-create knowledge. Decision making and financial power is equal.

Low engagement and reciprocity

High engagement and reciprocity

Glossary of community-engaged research at the University of Victoria

**Action Research (AR):** AR is a reflective process that allows for inquiry and discussion as components of the “research.” Often, action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems (Stringer, 2007). AR is often used in fields such as Organizational Development (Lewin, 1958) and Leadership Studies (Weisbord, 2012) with the underlying assumption that if people are active in decisions affecting them, they are more likely to adopt new ways.

**Arts-based Research:** Arts-based research can be defined as the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies (Knowles and Cole, 2008)). A number of terms are used to define the coming together of the arts and research, including visual methodologies, performance inquiry, image-based research, installation art-as-research, story-work research, or lyric inquiry (Clover, 2014). Emerging from the qualitative paradigm, arts-based research grew out of the practice of creative arts therapy taking place in the fields of psychiatry and psychology. Arts-based research occurs across many disciplines, and often brings together a mixture of disciplinary lenses. The last few decades has seen a marked growth in understanding and using the power and potential of the arts as tools in adult education and learning (Clover & Stalker, 2007).
Glossary of community-engaged research at the University of Victoria (cont.)

**Arts-informed Research:** Arts-informed research is a mode and form of qualitative research that is influenced by, but not based in, the arts. The methodology infuses the languages, processes, and forms of literary, visual, and performing arts into scholarly inquiry for purposes of advancing knowledge. The primary purposes of arts-informed research are to enhance understanding of the complexities of the human condition through alternative processes and representational forms of inquiry; and to reach multiple audiences by making scholarship more accessible. Within education this movement of methodological innovation gained momentum and inspiration from Elliot Eisner in the 90s, who speculated about the future of educational research witnessing an expanding array of research methods to acknowledge and account for the range of forms and modes of understanding that comprise human development.

**Citizen Science (CS):** CS is scientific research conducted, in whole or in part, by amateur or nonprofessional scientists. This is sometimes referred to as ‘public participation in scientific research’, or ‘participatory monitoring’. The term, coined by Irwin in the mid-1990s describes CS as “developing concepts of scientific citizenship which foregrounds the necessity of opening up science and science policy processes to the public.” He describes two dimensions of the relationship between citizens and science: 1) that science should be responsive to citizens’ concerns and needs; and 2) that citizens themselves could produce reliable scientific knowledge. A few examples of CS at UVic include a coastal radioactivity monitoring program which included citizens to collect seawater samples monthly from 14 locations between Victoria and Haida Gwaii in 2011, and Ocean Networks Canada Digital Fishers program, inviting citizens to help researchers gather ocean data from video.

**Community-based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR):** CBPR is a collaborative research approach that is designed to ensure and establish structures for participation by communities affected by the issue being studied, representatives of organizations, and researchers in all aspects of the research process to improve health and well-being through taking action, including social change. This involves: co-learning and reciprocal transfer of expertise by all research partners with particular emphasis on the issues being studied with CBPR methods; shared decision-making power; and mutual ownership of the processes and products of the research enterprise. Used predominately, although not exclusively, in the health sector.

**Community Mapping (CM):** CM is a group-based qualitative and cartographic research method that gives participants freedom to shape discussion on a given topic, often used as a learning and planning process. Maps visually represent world views and knowledge and therefore have unique spatial power. Community mapping assumes that ordinary people and communities can make maps to express the stories about their lives and home places (Lydon, 2003). This process can generate a rich understanding of the connections between people, places and organizations over space and/or time. CM can also be referred to or used in conjunction with asset-based mapping, in which communities provide information about the strengths and resources of their community which can help uncover solutions. Several units at UVic use Community Mapping as a primary technique in their research and engagement such as the Community Mapping Collaboratory in the Department of Geography, or the Ethnographic Mapping Lab in the Department of Anthropology.

**Community-University Research Partnerships (CURP):** CURP describes the arrangements between post secondary institutions and community organizations to collaborate in research and knowledge mobilization. In this context ‘community’ is used broadly to include industry, for-profit and public sector organizations. There is evidence of an impressive array of impactful knowledge creation and mobilization through community university research partnerships in virtually every sphere of public activity to improve social, economic, health and environmental conditions and outcomes. The establishment of structures in higher education institutions to support CURP has become a common mechanism to strengthen the institutions commitment to civic engagement (Hall et al, 2015). There are CURPs in almost every academic unit at UVic, based on individual and/or institutional level relationships often built over many years of collaboration. The Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization (RPMK) unit at UVic functions as a knowledge broker for CURPs.

**Collaborative Inquiry (Cl):** CI is a process in which participants come together to examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully using techniques of research. The emergence of collaborative inquiry was driven by the co-inquirers need to create a space where there were no pre-established parameters to guide their process. This distinction is the primary difference between cooperative and collaborative inquiry (Bray, Lee, Smith and Yorks, 2000). This approach is commonly used in Leadership Studies, and Educational Psychology.

**Co-operative Inquiry:** The major idea of cooperative inquiry is to “research with’ rather than on’ people.” It emphasizes that all active participants are fully involved in research decisions as co-researchers. Cooperative inquiry creates a research cycle among four different types of knowledge: propositional knowing (as in contemporary science), practical knowing (the knowledge that comes with actually doing what you propose), experiential knowing (the feedback we get in real time about our interaction with the larger world) and presentational knowing (the artistic rehearsal process through which we craft new practices). The research process iterates these four stages at each cycle with deepening experience and knowledge of the initial proposition, or of new propositions, at every cycle. (Heron, 1996)

**Decolonizing Methodology:** Decolonizing methodology situates the development of counter-practices of research within both Western critiques of Western knowledge and global Indigenous movements. Informed by critical and feminist evaluations of positivism, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) urges researching back and disrupting the rules of the research game toward practices that are more respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful vs. racist practices and attitudes, ethnocentric assumptions and exploitative research.

**Engaged Scholarship (ES):** Also sometimes referred to as community-based research or community-engaged research, ES recognizes that community-based scholarship is founded on an underpinning of mutual respect and recognition that community knowledge is valid and that sustainability is an integral part of the partnership agenda (Fitzgerald et al, 2010).
Glossary of community-engaged research at the University of Victoria (cont.)

**Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR):** FPAR refers to a participatory and action-oriented approach to research that centers gender and women's experiences both theoretically and practically. In the academic and non-academic literature FPAR is referred to as a paradigm, a theory, a research framework, a conceptual framework, a research approach, and a research methodology. Most commonly FPAR is understood as a conceptual framework that enables a critical understanding of women's multiple perspectives and works toward inclusion and social change through participatory processes while exposing researchers' own biases and assumptions (Maguire, 2001).

**Indigenous Methodology:** Indigenous methodologies flow from tribal knowledge, and while they are allied with several western qualitative approaches, they remain distinct. Some of these characteristics include Indigenous epistemologies, decolonizing theory, story as method, situating self and culture, Indigenous methods, protocol, meaning-making, and ethics (Kovach, 2009).

**Knowledge Democracy:** Knowledge democracy acknowledges the existence of multiple epistemologies or ways of knowing, including organic, spiritual and land-based systems, frameworks arising from social movements, and the knowledge of marginalized and excluded people everywhere — or what is sometimes referred to as "subaltern knowledge." In this approach, knowledge is both created and represented in multiple forms including text, images, numbers, stories, music, drama, poetry, ceremony, meditation and more. Also explicit is the conviction that knowledge is a powerful tool for taking action to deepen democracy and struggle more effectively for a fairer and healthier world. Knowledge democracy intentionally links the values of democracy in action to the processes of creating and using knowledge (Santos, 2007, Hall et al., 2013).

**Knowledge Mobilization (KM):** KM can be described as getting the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time, so as to influence decision-making. This includes dissemination, knowledge transfer and knowledge translation. "Mobilization" emphasizes the multi-dimensional, longer-term and often political nature of the work in comparison to terms that seem to imply a one directional and linear move from research to practice (Levin, 2008). In thinking about research impact, Nutley et al. (2007) put it: “The use of research is a varied and complex phenomenon, and what it means to use research can be defined in many different ways. Identifying different models or types of research use highlights the multiple and often subtle ways in which research can be used” (p. 58).

**Participatory Action Research (PAR):** PAR, having its roots in PR, has emerged as one of the most common terms for this type of research. It is a qualitative inquiry that is considered democratic, equitable, liberating, and life-enhancing and which remains distinct from other qualitative methodologies, particularly concerning the roles played by the researcher and the participants. Fals-Borda (2001) first coined the term P(A)R following the historic meetings in 1977 in Cartagena, Colombia. Like PR, theoretical similarities can be seen with the ideas of Paulo Freire who spoke of ‘Thematic investigation’ in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970). In PR and PAR there is a belief that critical reflection is crucial for personal and social change. Some examples of units at UVic that use PAR include the Community-based Research Lab (CBRL) in the Department of Geography or the recently established Centre for Indigenous Research and Community Led Engagement (CIRCLE), among many others.

**Participatory Evaluation:** Participatory and collaborative approaches to evaluation have grown in popularity in recent years, as program contexts increasingly require more culturally responsive and inclusive approaches to addressing complex community, program and organizational needs. Whilst the participatory approach has taken on myriad meanings over time, with significant blending and mixing of methods across diverse program settings, what distinguishes it from other approaches is the specific focus on the collaborative partnership between evaluators and program community members. (Jackson & Kassam, 1998).

**Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA):** PRA aims to incorporate the knowledge and opinions of rural people in the planning and management of development projects and programs. PRA has sources in activist participatory research, agro-ecosystem analysis, applied anthropology, field research on farming systems, and rapid rural appraisal (RRA). Participatory methods include mapping and modeling, transect walks, matrix scoring, seasonal calendars, trend and change analysis, well-being and wealth ranking and grouping, and analytical diagramming. PRA applications include natural resources management, agriculture, poverty and social programs, and health and food security.

**Research as Ceremony:** Indigenous researchers are knowledge seekers who work to progress Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing in a modern and constantly evolving context. Indigenous research is the ceremony of maintaining accountability to these relationships. For researchers to be accountable to all our relations, we must make careful choices in our selection of topics, methods of data collection, forms of analysis and finally in the way we present information (Wilson, 2008).

**Scholarship of Engagement:** Scholarship of engagement involves discovery, integration or synthesis, and application of knowledge in ways that connect it to understanding and solving pressing social, civic and ethical problems or to aesthetic or celebratory projects (informed by Boyer 1996).
References


