

HumAct

Humanitarian Action

Humanitarian Action: Climate Change and Displacements

Construction of knowledge in Humanitarian Action: Pedagogical Issues

Lisbon 25-26 October, 2021

- 9.30 - 10.15 Participatory Action Research in Social Interventions and Transfer to Teaching
 - 10.15 - 11.15 Group work
 - 11.15 - 11.35 Coffee Break
 - 11.35 - 13.00 Plenary
 - 13.00 - 15.00 Lunch break
 - 15.00 - 17.00 The Greek experience of Action Research shared by Greek students
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The pedagogical approach in designing graduate courses in the area of humanitarian action, aiming to develop:

- ✓ Students' research capacity
- ✓ Students' ability for social intervention

Linking theory to action

Design is not limited to the subject matter comprising the specific course (knowledge output, theories, concepts, cognitive gains); it is directly related to the way knowledge is linked to:

- the social context within which knowledge is embedded and which students have to be able to read and unpack
 - social action, enabling thus students to intervene
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Methodological approach

- The methodological approach draws from Participatory Action Research
 - It includes theoretical concepts and methodological tools (in research techniques, in taking action, and in methods of analysis), allowing for the:
 - ✓ analysis of needs and understanding the field of intervention;
 - ✓ definition of the goals informing the design and delivery of specific interventions;
 - ✓ analysis of action and engagement in reflective practices
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- **Humanitarian Action** addresses key problems engaging people and communities, with the potentiality of creating positive change at a small or bigger scale. It aims at empowering individuals and social groups.
- **Critical pedagogy** (Paulo Freire, 1921-1997) contributes to educational transformation, equally aiming at empowering learners, liberating them from the culture of silence and obscurity of ignorance.



Both are political acts in the sense of a shared commitment to democratic change

Both Humanitarian Action and Learning concepts:

- start from the needs and the problem of the recipient and not from the solution,
 - are based on linking ideas/theory to practice or vice versa,
 - promote critical thinking and develop critical awareness that help people improve their lives and take responsibility for them,
 - attempt to transform oppressed people and prevent them from being objects of aid/or of education, into subjects of their self-governance and emancipation,
 - aim at constructing a more just and equitable society,
 - both benefit from an Action-Research approach
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Action research

- A methodology for intervention, development and change within groups and communities
 - Challenges traditional social science
 - Moves beyond accumulation of knowledge created from outside experts to a dynamic inquiry **with** active theory building.
 - Knowledge **through** action and **for** action
 - Research informed by social action and leading to social action (Kurt Lewin, 1946).
 - The process as important as the outcome
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graph TD; A[Identification of problem/ Initial Proposition] --> B[Action Planning and Implementation]; B --> C[Fact finding/ Evaluation/ Reflection by collaborative multi-disciplinary team of academics and non-university stakeholders]; C --> D[Reformulation of the problem/ Decisions on next steps]; D --> A;
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ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE

Identification of
problem/ Initial
Proposition

Action Planning
and
Implementation

Fact finding/ Evaluation/
Reflection by collaborative
multi-disciplinary team of
academics and non-
university stakeholders

Reformulation of the
problem/ Decisions on
next steps

- Participative communities of inquiry where change is achieved **with** others instead **for** others
 - Communities of inquiry and action addressing issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers/co-learners.
 - Active participation in the change process
 - Shared learning and shared process
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Disconnection between higher education and the ‘public good’

Action Research provides knowledge generation, capable of producing ‘public goods’ through:

- ✓ concrete and practical problem solving
 - ✓ shaping deeper reflection processes
 - ✓ transdisciplinarity
 - ✓ knowledge produced in the context of application much of which is external to the university itself
 - ✓ broad stakeholder participation in research-based discourses
 - ✓ teaching as apprenticeship to problem-oriented AR teams
 - ✓ bringing about more liberated, solidary, fair and sustainable social situations
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