PARTICIPATORY AND ACTION RESEARCH METHODS
Action Research
Arguments for Action Research

- Context-centered
- Addresses real world problems
- Taps into knowledge and insights of participants
- Leads to action/implementation
- Can generate new knowledge, new meanings
- Questions that need resolution
  - Are all participants equal?
  - Does everyone have the same knowledge?
  - Who learns? Who benefits?
People-Place Relationships

Socio-Behavioral Environment

Organizational Environment

Physical/ Built Environment
Characteristics of young people, including their perceptions, attitudes, competencies

Relationships between young people, youth and adults

Activities, Activity patterns

Informed by theories and models in environmental psychology and behavioral geography

Formal and informal rules that govern young people’s behaviors and actions

Institutional structures governing youth action, youth advocacy, and youth engagement

Informed by theories and models in organizational behavior theory, laws (e.g., zoning) as well as religious and cultural norms

Socio-Behavioral Environment

Objects
Buildings
Streets
Abandoned areas
Neighborhoods
Ambiance
Scale
Complexity

Informed by theories of architecture and urban design (e.g., theories of city form, space syntax, defensible space)

Organizational Environment

Physical/Built Environment
Develops the capacity of participants to organize, analyze and discuss concepts related to the particular endeavor.

Engages participants in every aspect of the research/investigation, i.e., from goal setting to assessing outcomes.

Develops techniques to incorporate participants views and participant generated data in explaining findings.

Returns data to participants.

In other words, PAR establishes clear linkages between knowledge production and knowledge use.
PAR Process

- Research and Action Goals
- Methods of Community Engagement
- Outcomes and Evaluation
- Tools/Techniques
- Process Design

PARTICIPANTS
Gathering/Learning from Data

- Observing and recording
  - Physical Traces
  - People’s Behavior
- Poring through Archives
- Asking People Questions
Gathering/Learning from Data

Verbal Descriptions and Diagrams
Precoded Checklists
Behavior Maps
Photographs
Videotapes & Movies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESIDENT ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitting, null behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standing, null behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitting, looking around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitting, solo activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standing, looking around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standing, solo activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watching T.V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talking to self</td>
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<tr>
<td>talking to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talking to staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitting, talking to self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitting, talking to other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sitting, talking to staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standing, talking to self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standing talking to other</td>
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<tr>
<td>standing, talking to staff</td>
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<td>walking with another resident</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>eating/drinking independent</td>
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<tr>
<td>eating/drinking with assistance</td>
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<td>toileting/bathing independent</td>
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<td>toileting/bathing with assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>physical aggression</td>
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<tr>
<td>agitated behavior/verbalization</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive part, small group activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active part, small group activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive part, large group activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active part, large group activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observing/Learning from Physical Traces

Recording Observations
- Annotated Diagrams
- Drawings
- Photographs
- Checklists

Advantages
- Minimal cost and time
- Do not have to be present
- No particular expertise required

Disadvantages
- Durability
- Activities that do not leave a trace
- Needs to be supplemented with other research techniques

Observing/Learning from Behavior

People and Activities

Who?
What?
With whom?
Observations can include:

- Physical Traces
- Leftovers
- Erosion
- Messages
- Adaptations
- Presentations of Self
- Missing Elements
Acquiring/Disseminating Data

- Formal and Informal Interviews
- Advisory Groups
- Polls and Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Visioning
- Charettes

- Participatory Research is always interactive