Title of Session: Action Research
Moderator: Diane Painter
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Room: Action Research Group

DianeDP: Hi Roberta! Thank you for joining us!

DianeDP: Roberta- we have BJ from PA and Dianne from Australia with us tonight. Roberta is from SU in VA, too

RobertaM: Hi Diane. This is a good activity for a cold, snowy evening.

DianeDP: Tonight I thought we would talk a bit about matching questions to data. Yes, a good thing to do on a snowy eve!

RobertaM: Could you give an example?

DianeDP: I was sharing with my class last week that I think I am getting a grant to teach faculty at SU to use Thinkfinity resources with Softchalk, a web-based lesson builder. Now I need to come up with a question. I thought I would begin with a what happens when approach..

DianeDP: What happens when faculty learn to build interactive, web-based lessons to present content material to college-aged students.

DianeDP: Hi, Dan- where are you from?

DanS: University of Hawaii :-)

DanS: (sorry about the snow)

RobertaM: Wow! I don't think you'd like the weather in D.C. right now, Dan.

DianeDP: Well, we have two from sunny places- Dianne from Australia and Dan from HI. The rest of us are snowed in - in the mid-Atlantic USA!

BJB2 nods solemnly

DianneA grins having gotten over the rain of the last week

DianeDP: Dan- we were going to try to cast and re-cast some action research questions. Then brainstorm how we might collect data to match those questions.

DianeDP: Do you see my question? Anyone have a question they want to share?

BetsyKD joined the room.

DianneA: I see your 'what happens when ...?' question ... good for the start to gather descriptive data

BetsyKD: Hi All!

BJB2: welcome, Betsy

BetsyKD: Thanks!

RobertaM: I want to help one of my Civics and Econ classes better understand concepts and also take ownership of their learning. I'm thinking of using more technology and a variety of vocab strategies to do it. So, my question might be "What happens to student self-efficacy and performance when technology and vocab strategies are used regularly?"

BJB2: This is Diane's question: DianeDP: What happens when faculty learn to build interactive, web-based lessons to present content material to college-aged students.

DianeDP: Hi Betsy- welcome. We have folks from HI, Australia and the east coast of snowy USA. Where are you from?

BetsyKD: George Mason University, VA

RobertaM: Is anyone currently working on an AR project?

DianneA: I am always working on an AR project ... but not sure when it will get to the publication stage

DianeDP: It looks like Roberta is trying to determine what happens to students'

self-efficacy and academic performance when she incorporates technology and vocab strategies. Is that about right?

RobertaM: Yes, that's it.

DianeDP: Betsy from GMU's IET! Welcome!

BetsyKD: Thanks! Glad to be here.

DianeDP: Betsy- we are casting and re-casting questions and then will try to match data sources.

BetsyKD: Sounds good.

DanS: (This works better in Safari than Firefox: now I see all the controls.)

DianeDP: Dan, are you working on an action research project?

AntoinettR joined the room.

BJB2: welcome, Antoinette

DanS: No, actually I was part of a professional development project with teachers and am curious what people are doing with action research.

DianeDP: Hello Antoinette- we are casting and re-casting AR questions and trying to match data sources.

AntoinettR: Yes thank you, I did not mean to interrupt . I was just trying to familiarize myself with all sorts of studies. I am currently conducting a case study on the educational outcomes of using web-based eboards in an elementary curriculum. However, I understand that action research requires a teacher to conduct professional development at the conclusion of the study. Is this correct?

DianeDP: I would like to work with college faculty to help them learn to use Thinkfinity resources with Softchalk to create web-based lessons to present content to college students. Roberta teaches an 8th grade civics class and would like to employ vocabulary strategies and more technology with her students. So, let's consider this, Roberta, what would you like to see happen as a result?

DanS: So is your question "given I have these action research questions about my teaching, what data do I gather to answer them"?

DianeDP: Antoinette- do you see the whiteboard here in AR? It states AR'ers: Share their findings with students, colleagues, and members of the educational community.

RobertaM: I would like students to feel more comfortable with the material and to learn strategies that will help them succeed in high school.

DianeDP: Sharing can result in professional development initiatives, or publication, or it may even mean setting the scene for a broader research project or grant proposal.

AntoinettR: yes I see it on the whiteboard, thank you

DianeDP: Can you define "feel more comfortable?"

RobertaM: These students are very tentative and needy. They struggle with the concepts. It may help them to experience success.

DianeDP: They are not making connections to new material because they lack prior experiences related to the new concepts? Do you have any specific strategies in mind and how do they relate to vocabulary development?

PeggyGst3 joined the room.

BJB2: welcome, Peggy

DanS: **RobertaM**, I am wondering how the technology relates to vocabulary strategies ... (reading Diane's summary of your objectives above).

DianeDP: Hi Peggy- welcome. We are casting and re-casting AR questions and will try to match possible data sources to those questions. Right now Roberta is thinking about her research question and will try to determine some sub-questions.

RobertaM: I have in mind introducing new vocabulary every day and having students create some visual that they can add to. Then, they might complete a PowerPoint project using all of the vocab in a unit. Also, I would like to try incorporating summarization on a regular basis.

DianeDP: Anyone familiar with multi-modal vocabulary building using technology?

DanS: Just what I was thinking: Roberta is having them use vocabularies in multiple modes.

RobertaM: Hi Dan, I tried to think of ways to engage students as well as help them understand the text. I thought I could combine a couple of different strategies.

AntoinettR: Presenting vocabulary through the use of various forms of technology ?

DianeDP: Yes- so they can build connections- UDL principle #1- multiple means of representation

DanS: In terms of action research, is your question about whether multiple modes help? What modes help them be more comfortable? all of the above? I wonder how one would figure out what is working among all the things ...

DianeDP: Anyone had any experience with this?

DianeDP: There are other considerations, too. Presenting vocabulary in multi-modal means, but engaging students to help them make those connections, too. Could that be turned into two sub-questions?

DianeDP: Betsy- any thoughts?

RobertaM: I like the idea of making connections as a primary theme.

DianeDP: That is very good- now how do we define connections?

DanS: Yes, it could be that it isn't the media per se that matter, but what they do with it and how engaged they are in that doing. A better way to frame the question, not just 'media effects'

DianeDP: I think you are on to something there, Dan

DanS: Brainstorming 'connections': between different ideas? between the academic

content and their lived experience? between people?

RobertaM: What happens when students use media and vocab to make connections to content-area concepts?

BetsyKD: I would focus on how you might get the students engaged in the process of constructing strategies. I've learned that the more students are engaged in the process, the more likely they'll be to take ownership of their learning.

DianeDP: It could be that they will show those connections if they are asked to represent new vocabulary through multi-modal means. Then it could be evident in their work- what do you think?

RobertaM: You're right, Betsy. That's exactly what I had in mind with the technology.

DianeDP: Ah- so that could be another sub-question? Taking ownership of their own learning?

DanS: and another sub-question is that expressing new vocabulary multi-modally forms connections between different understandings of the vocab.

RobertaM: Yes, there is quite a bit in the literature about engaging students through technology. That's a means to an end, which is mastery of the content.

RobertaM: Good thought, Dan.

DanS: The medium does not determine things but it is not irrelevant either: each technological medium helps bring out different aspects of understanding the new vocabulary.

DianeDP: ooh.. that is what she could be looking for too- connections between vocabulary and the broader concepts presented in the content that is being taught!

RobertaM: That's really the key, Diane.

DianeDP: In what ways does the use of technology demonstrate students' understanding of new vocabulary?

DanS: I can imagine examining student work under the theme of 'connections' to

see what connections are made between their different uses of the vocabulary, and connections to everyday life, and possible other forms of connections. It's a theme that helps you look at your evidence n different ways.

DianeDP: Very good, Dan

DanS: I wonder whether others see how they could apply that idea in practice?

DianeDP: FYI- The nice thing about doing a chat like this is getting different perspectives and in the end, a recorded transcript will be sent to you via email.

DianneA: Dan are you a fan of the idea of 'abduction' for making connections?

DianeDP: abduction?

DanS: Hadn't thought about it in this context ... a way of generating hypotheses.

DianneA: yes, different from deduction or induction

DianneA: I tend to see abduction being related to how we relate to one another's experience via stories

DanS: (Is there a way to get a transcript of the parts I missed? (before I came and after leaving?) I have to go now and am sorry to miss it ...maybe I'll just leave this running so I can read it later.)

DianneA: of course choice of vocabulary in telling stories might include some people and exclude others

RobertaM: Thanks for your input, Dan.

AntoinettR: Yes Dan thanks

DianeDP: Bye Dan

RobertaM: Dianne A, I'm not sure what you mean; could you elaborate?

BetsyKD: Just looked it up: Abductive reasoning starts when an inquirer considers of a set of seemingly unrelated facts, armed with an intuition that they are somehow connected. The term abduction is commonly presumed to mean the

same thing as hypothesis; however, an abduction is actually the process of inference that produces a hypothesis as its end result [1]. It is used in both philosophy and computing.

DianneA: Roberta .. I am sort of keeping a watching brief on the discussion ... and Dan was asking about 'connections' .. that rang bells for me about abduction the way we relate to one another and the stories we tell of our experience

DianneA: the focus you are after Roberta is with vocabulary ...

DianneA: it is interesting to explore the vocabulary that a person uses to tell their story ..

RobertaM: Yes, I wondered what you meant about stories excluding some people.

DianeDP: Ah- that is most interesting! Roberta reasons that the use of technology with multi-modal learning strategies may result in students making better connections to the vocabulary and content concepts being presented in her civics classes?

DianneA: by the way one way of engaging a person is to ask them to tell their story and to listen to what they say, and I regret I am not demonstrating that capacity as well as I might today as I have another commitment that I need to prepare for

DianneA: Gregory Bateson calls a 'story' a 'knot of relevance' - something that is significant for the individual

DianeDP: Each student would need to convey those connections- telling the story as they say- to determine those connections

DianeDP: Yes- for each individual

DianneA: Bateson and Dewey then talk about 'abductive processes' .. where there isn't the 'logic' of induction or deduction, but a logic of multiple connections

DianneA: a metaphor is an example of an abduction

DianneA: Mezirow claims that the formation of metaphoric descriptions is evidence of reflective thinking, which is an aspect of action research

DianneA: I may be taking you away from the focus of this discussion, however

DianeDP: can you give an example of a metaphoric description?

DianneA: 'the moon was a ghostly galleon ...

DianneA: at this point I tend to get caught up in the perception that all words are metaphors ...

DianneA: not the thing itself but a word for connecting with the thing

DianneA: sorry, I think I am taking the discussion off topic

DianeDP: Well, Roberta- what's on your mind now?

RobertaM: I'm wondering if I'm trying to include too much in the AR.

AntoinettR: I'm still thinking about what constitutes reflective thinking (metaphoric descriptions). That was a good point anyway thanks

DianneA: most starters have too much ..

DianneA: and one of the rounds of AR is to move from more fuzzy to less fuzzy ... ie sort of narrowing the investigation to manageable dimensions

DianeDP: Yes- that is where you'll need to narrow the question.

DianeDP: I like that- less fuzzy!

DianneA: Bob Dick's term

DianneA: Roberta reverting to civics ...

RobertaM: I have to sign off....thanks to everyone for your ideas.

DianneA: do you notice that partisan language excludes?

DianeDP: Well- our hour is up. I have enjoyed the conversation- meet next month online? BJ- have a date?

DianneA: and as much by the emotion as the meaning

RobertaM left the room (signed off).

BJB2: March 10

BJB2 . o O (second Wednesday of the month)

DianneA: thanks Diane

DianeDP: OK- see you then Thank you everyone. DP

DianneA: apologies if I shifted the ground too far

BetsyKD: Good discussion. Thanks!

BJB2 waves goodnight.

DianneA: goodnight all