

October 2006

ARC News

University of Cincinnati Launches the *Action Research Center*

Inside this issue:

- **Development of the Action Research Center**
Page 1
- **Harmony Garden Opens for Business**
Page 2
- **CASTL Leadership Program**
Page 2
- **Graduate Student Spotlight**
Page 3
- **Around the Community**
Page 3
- **Grant Awards**
Page 4
- **Upcoming Seminars & Lecture Series**
Page 4

Inviting all Action Researchers!

You may be an action researcher and not even know it! Often when I describe action research to faculty colleagues, students, and community activists, they tell me that they've been doing this all along, but just didn't know what to call it. So, what is *it*? Action research most broadly defined is a research method that is democratic, participatory, and problem-oriented. It's a way to generate new knowledge that involves community members as equal partners in the research process by using cycles of action and reflection aimed at finding workable solutions to social problems. Action research has been used in many different disciplines including education, public health, organization development, psychology, sociology, literacy studies, and nursing to name just a few. It has been used to study everything from AIDS prevention in South Africa, to employment discrimination against older workers in Norway, to Aboriginal educational policy in Australia.

Here at the University of Cincinnati, a group of faculty and students from six different colleges came together last year to create the Action Research Center. The mission of the Center is to provide a "focal point for educational and community-based participatory research efforts by scholars from across the University interested in exploring ways of making research more relevant in promoting social justice and in addressing critical problems and concerns both locally and globally."

Our first major project was to sponsor the first North American Action Research Summit meeting, held at UC last Spring with the generous support of the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services (not to mention a delicious home-cooked lunch provided by Dean Larry Johnson!). This meeting brought together over thirty action researchers from across the United States and Canada and led to the creation of the North American Action Research Alliance with plans for a second summit meeting to be held next Spring in Toronto Canada.

This year the ARC looks forward to hosting a series of guest lectures with funding from a grant from the Faculty Development Council. The first of these guest speakers, Dr. Patricia Maguire, Dean of the Gallup Research Center of Western New Mexico University will be visiting UC **October 10th**. Dr. Maguire is an internationally recognized scholar whose work in feminist theory and action research was published in the Handbook of Action Research. Dr. Maguire's topic will be "Defining the Spectrum of Action Research". This presentation, and all other sessions planned as part of this lecture series, are open to all those interested in learning more about action research. Topics of future events include an introduction to classroom-based action research, a discussion of grant-writing for action research projects, and a discussion of ethical issues related to action research.

In addition to these guest lectures, the ARC will be sponsoring a brown bag lunch program. These sessions, to be held in the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning (CET&L) in 480 Langsam Library, will provide an informal opportunity for ARC members and others interested in learning more about Action Research to come together to discuss works-in-progress or to explore issues of common interest and concern.

So if you think you might be an action researcher already, or you'd like to learn more about action research, please plan to join us for one or all of this year's exciting events. Or consider joining the ARC. You can find out more about membership by contacting Dr. Helen Meyer at helen.meyer@uc.edu.

Harmony Garden . . . Growing Healthy Girls!

Harmony Garden, a community research and education center, opened its doors September 1, 2006. The Harmony Garden aims to connect with community residents and organizations that serve girls around promoting and sustaining the health of girls. It is in this spirit of connection that we intend to build partnerships and community relationships to carry out action research projects that empower girls to achieve their full potential.

The PULSE:Study of the Status of Women and Girls culminated with four imperatives for improving outcomes for the region's females, through a strategy based on partnerships between community organizations and academic institutions. One of the four imperatives is "grow strong girls." Harmony Garden is a response to this imperative. One of the lessons learned from PULSE is that there are tremendous health disparities between girls living in the city of Cincinnati and those living outside of the city. The long-term goal of the Harmony Garden is to catalyze a collective community vision and action plan to achieve and sustain the health of girls in our region from birth through adolescence and to eliminate health disparities for low socioeconomic urban and rural girls.

The Harmony Garden is housed in the Hamilton County Business Center (HCBC) in Norwood. For more information about Harmony Garden, please contact **Executive Director, Lisa Mills, Ph.D.** at (513) 366-2490, email: lmills@harmony-garden.org

UC to be included in the Carnegie Foundation's CASTL Leadership Program

One new framework for some of our action research will be our inclusion in the Carnegie Foundation's CASTL leadership program. Inclusion in the program is a highly competitive process and gains us valuable guidance from the Carnegie foundation as well as high-profile recognition.

The program involves a three-year commitment to a set of activities related to our thematic focus. In our case, that focus is "Liberal Education – Core Curriculum." Wayne Hall is the main UC contact person for this program, with Ruth Benander, Ellen Lynch, Pam Person, and Amy Pettigrew as the other members of UC's "core team."

Our emerging identity as the new urban research university was a key unifying theme in our application. More specifically, our work on Integrated Core Learning was a key feature of that application, along with attention to what we've done with the General Education Program, the CET&L, FYE/Learning Communities, the Center for Access and Transition, the new Action Research Center, Problem-Based Learning, Nursing's attention to SoTL, and the University Libraries' focus on support for classroom teaching.

This web site provides more information, such as a link to the Carnegie site that describes the program as well as a complete list of the 87 institutions, councils, centers, and other organizations throughout the world that were also selected for this CASTL program this past summer. --
http://www.uc.edu/cetl/pedagogy/SoTL/SoTL_links.html

Graduate Student's Plans to Facilitate Knowledge-Sharing Among Social Justice Groups

Thembi Carr is a 4th year graduate student *in action* at University of Cincinnati in the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Service. Currently, Thembi is working on her dissertation and plans to graduate June of 2007. Her dissertation, entitled, *Examining Student and Organizational Intersectionality in the Urban University* is designed to facilitate knowledge sharing among social justice groups by using qualitative methods and PAR tools. The first phase of her study will involve interviewing students within student organizations to obtain their understanding of intersectionality and apply their understanding to their organization's mission. Thembi plans to use photovoice in the second phase of the study to elicit the student's understanding of intersectionality. In the final phase, she proposes to conduct jigsaw focus groups to identify the commonalities between the students and hopes that the commonalities will help to build coalitions among the student organizations in the future.

Thembi, a Cincinnati native, is working on her dissertation proposal and says, "It is a steady grind. Remaining motivated and disciplined is a challenge, any day you can wake up and say, 'Why am I doing this? I can go and get a job.' Everyday I have to do some work. If I write one sentence, then I've done something." In her spare time she enjoys catching up on sleep and dining at her favorite Indian restaurant. She enjoys teaching and in the future would like to obtain a faculty position in Educational Foundations.



Around the Community—Art in the Market

The **Art in the Market** program is celebrating ten years of ongoing activities using arts-based participatory action research to create community-based art in the Findlay Market District, in Over-the-Rhine. To honor the program's legacy postcards will be designed, showcasing past projects and their creators, as well as new community-based work.

Art in the Market employs at-risk youth to work with artists

in the creation of public works of art installed in the Findlay Market District of Over-the-Rhine. This program uses art as a catalyst for promoting inside-out changes and capitalizes on the human and material assets available in the local community. Art in the Market supports community development through job training and investment in "aesthetic infrastructure." Year-round com-

ponents of the program provide academic and artistic enrichment for the participating youth.

The program is administered by the Art Education Program and involves partnerships with many community organizations, such as Memorial Inc. and Keep Cincinnati Beautiful.

For more information, visit www.findlaymarket.org/art.htm

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
ACTION RESEARCH CENTER

Steering Committee:

Flavia Bastos
Ruth Benander
Kathy Burklow
Christina Carnahan
Thembi Carr
Wayne Hall
Stephen Kroeger
Robin Lightner
Helen Meyer
Mary Brydon-Miller
Lisa Mills
Francis Penrose Russell
Carrie Schneider

Membership Invitation

We are now seeking faculty, students, staff, and community partners interested in joining us as members of the ARC. Membership provides opportunities to:

- Participate in Center sponsored programs and workshops related to action research.
- Receive information about available grants, conferences, and publications.
- Develop collaborative relationships with colleagues and partners across the university and with community partners.

There is no membership fee required, just an interest in learning more about action research and a willingness to contribute to the Center's mission. If you are interested in joining us, or in learning more about the Center, please contact our membership coordinator:

Helen Meyer, Membership Coordinator
helen.meyer@uc.edu

Grant Awards

The ARC was awarded The Faculty Development Council Grant—
Congratulations!!

Upcoming ARC Lecture Series

October 10— 4:00-5:30

Dr. Patricia Maguire—Gallup
Research Center Western
New Mexico University

Brown Bag Lunch Series

November 27: Wayne Hall:
CASTL Leadership Program

January 29: Lisa Mills and
Kathy Burklow: Development
of an action research project

February 26: Helen Meyer:
Supporting students in action
research

March 26: Thembi Carr:
Dissertation project –
*Examining Student and Or-
ganizational Intersectionality
in the Urban University*