

AN EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION GLOSSARY

ACTIVE LEARNING: “a process whereby learners are actively engaged in the learning process, rather than "passively" absorbing lectures. Active learning involves reading, writing, discussion, and engagement in solving problems, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.” In active learning, the instructor facilitates rather than directs learning and students generate rather than simply receive knowledge. Active learning is usually contrasted with the straight lecture method. Activities range from paired or “buzz groups,” (in which two students discuss material during a short pause in a lecture) to more extensive engagement methods such as case studies, role playing and group projects. Active learning often (though does not necessarily) involves collaboration with other students in the course. In some circles, also known as cooperative learning (See Cooperative Learning, below).

Sources: <http://www.active-learning-site.com/>,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active_learning

APPLIED (vs BASIC) RESEARCH: term (from natural science) to describe “research designed to solve practical problems of the modern world rather than to acquire knowledge for knowledge’s sake.” Examples of applied research: investigations to treat or cure disease, investigations into ways to improve the energy efficiency of homes, offices, etc. See <http://www.lbl.gov/Education/ELSI/research-main.html>

BASIC (vs. APPLIED) RESEARCH: (aka fundamental or pure research) a term used in natural science to describe research which is driven by a scientist’s curiosity or interest in a particular scientific question (such as how do slime molds reproduce?) See <http://www.lbl.gov/Education/ELSI/research-main.html>

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING (CBL): a set of teaching/learning strategies that enable students to learn by applying knowledge and analytic tools gained in the classroom to pressing issues that affect local communities. Some variations emphasize mutual change on the part of students and community organizations, others, social change, still others, the problem-solving nature of the enterprise. See especially <http://www.princeton.edu/~cbli/>

COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH: Research project(s) involving partnerships and/or beneficiaries at local and/or regional levels of community and society. Such projects have immediate or short term possibilities to help solve problems that affect the citizens of the locality or region.

COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH: "a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community, has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve... outcomes."(from the WK Kellogg Foundation Community Health Scholars Program) See the Community-Campus Partnership for Health at <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/index.html>

COOPERATIVE LEARNING: a pedagogical method in which students work in groups to maximize the learning of all individuals in the group. Typically, students work in small groups (usually 3-5 people) on an assigned project or problem under the guidance of a teacher or trainer who monitors the groups to make sure students stay on task and come up with the correct answers (to the extent there is/are correct answers).

http://higher.mheducation.com/sites/0072486694/student_view0/glossary.html Key pedagogical elements include: positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability, social skills use and development and attention to group process. (From David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, Karl A. Smith. *Active Learning: Cooperation in the College Classroom* (Edina, MN: Interaction Book Co., 1991), 1:19-20.)

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: “learning undertaken by students who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and feelings in an immediate and relevant setting. Experiential learning thus involves a ‘direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it’ (Borzak 1981: 9 quoted in Brookfield 1983 cited at <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm>).

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION: “a set of [research](#) strategies which aim to gain a close and intimate familiarity with a given group of individuals (such as a religious, occupational, or subcultural group, or a particular community) and their practices through an intensive involvement with people in their natural environment, often though not always over an extended period of time.” Methods include “informal interviews, direct observation, participation in the life of the group, collective discussions,” etc. “Observable details (like daily time allotment) and more hidden details (like taboo behaviour) are more easily observed and understandable over a longer period of time. A strength of observation and interaction over long periods of time is that researchers can discover discrepancies between what participants say -- and often believe -- should happen (the formal system) and what actually does happen, or between different aspects of the formal system.” Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participant_observation *a b* DeWalt, K. M., DeWalt, B. R., & Wayland, C. B. (1998). "Participant observation." In H. R. Bernard (Ed.), *Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology*. Pp: 259-299. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH: Referred to as PAR, a multi-cycle collaborative social science and education research methodology designed to ensure that those who are affected by the research project have a voice in it. PAR “is not just research which is hoped will be followed by action. It is action which is researched, changed and re-researched, within the research process by participants. Nor is it simply an exotic variant of consultation. Instead, it aims to be active co-research, by and for those to be helped” (Wadsworth, Y. (1998) <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html>). Cycles of a PAR project may include participants helping with any or all of the following: a) formulation and/or assessment of the research problem, b) determination, implementation and/or assessment of the intervention. Multiple research

methods are often used with PAR, including (but not limited to) surveys, focus groups, interviews, observations, etc.

PRACTICUM: “A college course, often in a specialized field of study, designed to give students supervised practical application of a previously studied theory. “Practica are common for social work and education majors. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Practicum>)

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING: “Problem-based learning (PBL) is focused, experiential learning (minds-on, hands-on) organized around the investigation and resolution of messy, real-world problems. PBL curriculum provides authentic experiences that foster active learning, support knowledge construction, and naturally integrate school learning and real life.” Key elements include: 1) student responsibility for own learning, 2) Problem simulations must be “ill-structured” and allow for free inquiry, 3) learning should be integrated from a wide range of disciplines or subject
Students have responsibility for their own learning, 2) Problem simulations must be ill-structured* and allow for free inquiry, 3) Learning should be integrated from a wide range of disciplines or subjects, 4) Collaboration is essential, 5) What students learn during their self-directed learning must be applied back to the problem with reanalysis and resolution, 6) assessment of learning should include self and peer assessment

*”ill-structured” is understood as designed to allow students free inquiry through observation, interview, and review of records or documents in order to obtain information needed to support or verify hypotheses.

Source: From *Problems as Possibilities: Problem-Based Learning for K–16 Education*, 2nd Edition (pp. 15–16), by L. Torp & S. Sage, 2002, Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

SERVICE-LEARNING: a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity changes both the recipient and the provider of the service. Service is combined with structured opportunities that link the work to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills and knowledge content. (from National Service Learning Clearinghouse, www.servicelearning.org)

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