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Organizational Learning through Action Research

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Abstract:

Organizational Learning
through Action Research

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Key words
Action research, dialogue, organizational learning, management learning, tacit knowledge.

Introduction
This abstract presents the framework concerning a forthcoming paper based on an action research project where we discuss to what extent and how action research can support organizational learning and change processes in relation to organizational knowledge building and knowledge sharing.
The project draws on the dialogue tradition within action research (Coghlan et al.; 2010; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Ripamonti et al 2016) and social constructionist ideas (Cunliffe 2002, 2004; Gergen 2003, 2015; Gergen & Thatchenkery (1996); Cunliffe & Shotter, J. (2006), Shotter 2013; McNamee 2014, Ripamonti et al 2016).

Organizational context

The project was developed and carried out in close collaboration between The Center for Deafblindness and Hearing Loss, CDH and Aalborg University. CDH is a national, comprehensive service for both children, young people and adults with either deafblindness or hearing loss. The center is located in Northern Denmark.

Aims of the project
Because of on increased focus on, and demand for, knowledge production and knowledge sharing within the organization the overall aim of the project is to examine and discusses if and how action research can offer a frame for reflexivity, learning knowledge production and knowledge sharing across the organization. How can action research support and sustain organizational change and an identity as a "knowledge based organization" through the active involvement of employees and

managers in reflexive conversations?

Through the active engagement of employees and managers the projects seeks to build bridges between practice and theory and pay special attention to the verbalization and externalization of tacit knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Polanyi, 2009).

Research question: The research is based on the following overall question: How can we share and co-create knowledge through dialogical and reflexive processes in a collaborative setting for organizational learning through the active involvement of employees and managers, including as well the sharing of knowledge throughout the organization? In addition, we are curious to examine whether action research as an inquiry for learning and change can act as an alternative to the New Public Management paradigm. In NPM focus usually is kept on top-down implementation of evidence-based knowledge in pedagogical practice.

Findings and concluding remarks
Our preliminary findings show that there is a great potential in working with action research for organizational knowledge building and bridge building between practice and theory, because this inquiry actively involves participants in experimenting, exploring and verbalizing their own professional practice. Furthermore joint action, mutual inspiration and knowledge sharing through reflexive dialogues inspire participants to seek knowledge from relevant literature and research within their professional field.

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