



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

**Certificate in
International Perspectives in
Participatory Research**

Instructional Guidelines for Learners

International Perspectives in Participatory Research

Course Overview

“Knowledge is power”. In an increasingly post-industrial world today, information and knowledge are two key resources of development. Ownership and control of information technologies and communication have led to the growth of knowledge elites who represent and institutionalize them. The knowledge of experts/elites delegitimises popular knowledge. The subversion of popular knowledge eventually subordinates common people; excludes and devalues their concerns and participation from society, politics, rules, practices and institutions. The struggle for justice and equality, therefore, has to be simultaneously carried out at the cognitive level.

The challenges of poverty, inequality, and exclusion mandate that people’s reality be understood from their vantage point. The local community knowledge would not only increase understanding of the complex interactions among economic, social, political and behavioral factors that contribute to disparities but also inform the design of interventions aimed at reducing these disparities. Participatory research, as an approach to social change, researches *with* and *for* people. There is a growing recognition of the importance and promise of perspectives on participatory research and evaluation to support ownership of local communities and to ensure relevance and sustainability of development.

Responding to the above educational need, PRIA has launched a Certificate in International Perspectives in Participatory Research in collaboration with Adult and Continuing Education Programme of Continuing Studies, University of Victoria (UVic) Canada in a distance education mode. The course is designed and prepared by a partnership of PRIA and UVic to share the insights of practitioners and academia. This certificate course is designed to acquaint the part-time learners with participatory research perspective, which links research with social change. It unravels nuances of the term participation through the study of participatory research (PR).

Assignments

- a) Assignment 1: Reflection Paper
- b) Assignments 2 & 3: Quizzes
- c) Assignment 4: Project Paper

You may submit your assignments 1 & 4 in the respective forums. For assignments 2 & 3 which are quizzes you may click on the same to attempt the quiz online.

ASSIGNMENT 1: Reflection Paper

Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to give the instructor(s) a sense of your existing experiences with research and social action, and your understanding of the Participatory Research framework. Note that you will not be graded on the extent of your experience in research, participatory or otherwise. Rather, you will be evaluated according to how thoroughly you respond to the following instructions.

Instructions:

Think of an example of research in which you have taken part. This could mean that you initiated the process, or you were somehow asked to participate in it. Examples can come from a variety of places: your workplace, your community, or at a regional or national level in your country, e.g. an employee satisfaction survey, a census, a programme or course evaluation, or a decision to move your office to a new location. Provide a brief (1-2 pages) summary of this research or evaluation process, and then discuss the following questions:

- Who initiated this process and why?
- Who benefited from this process and how?

International Perspectives in Participatory Research

- In what ways, and how much control did you have over this process and the knowledge generated through it?
- What are some strengths and weaknesses of the process you have described?
- Given what you have learned about PR, how would you describe the quality and levels of participation of yourself and others in this process?
- How do you suppose the process and outcomes might have changed had it been done in a more (or less) participatory manner?

Length: *Please ensure that your paper is not less than 2500 and does not exceed 3000 words. The paper must be in 12-point, Times New Roman font and in 1.5 spacing format.*

Value: *25% of your final grade.*

ASSIGNMENT 2 & 3: Individual Quiz

There will be a total of two quizzes that each learner is expected to participate in. The first quiz is based on course contents, including readings, from Units I-III and the second quiz is based on Units IV-VI.

We shall upload the first quiz on the 31st March – it shall remain open until 13th April. The second quiz shall be uploaded on 20th June –it shall remain open until 7th July.

There are two reasons why you should take part in the quiz. Firstly, it ensures that you go through the prescribed readings in a detailed manner, which is an essential component to your learning. Secondly, it is an easy and fun way to add to your overall assessment. So don't lose this opportunity.

Please note, in case you attempt the Quiz more than once, the software will only consider the first submission of the Quiz as the one for grading purposes. So please do not send in revised versions of the Quiz in order to get a better score.

Value: 20% of your final grade (10% for each Quiz).

ASSIGNMENT 4: Project Paper

Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate your understanding of the concepts and methods of PR, and begin thinking about how you might apply your knowledge in a real-life setting.

We understand the inherent contradiction of one person designing a PR process, and know that such processes are highly dependent on and vary according to the emerging needs of a group. For the purpose of this assignment, however, you may assume that the design you submit has been discussed and agreed upon by the community in which you will work.

A good reference on writing a proposal is:

Reitsma-Street, M. (2003). The research proposal in thirteen parts. Paper presented at the "Practicalities of completing a degree in HSD" conference at the University of Victoria, Faculty of Human and Social Development. Victoria, BC.

It is available online at: <http://web.uvic.ca/spp/documents/researchproposal.pdf>

Instructions:

Design a PR project in your community. Describe the context (e.g. the site, etc) of your proposed project, your position within this context, and how you came to understand the problem or issue you would like to see researched or evaluated. Making reference to the literature and concepts we have covered throughout this course, describe how you would go about undertaking this process. In addition to the reflection questions you are familiar with from the first two assignments, consider the following questions in your discussion:

- How will you initiate the process?
- How will you negotiate the working relationships?
- What are your proposed methods of information gathering?
- What is your proposed timeline?
- How will you make decisions?
- How will you build evaluation into your process?
- How will you deal with unanticipated challenges?
- Are there any ethical concerns?

Be sure to make reference to specific authors or areas of the course manual.

Length: Please ensure that your paper is not less than 4500 and does not exceed 5000 words. The paper must be in 12-point, Times New Roman font and in 1.5 spacing format.

Value: 40% of your final grade.

Guidelines for Writing Assignments

Read the instructions for the assignment and any other information given in the instructional guideline carefully. Sometimes there are several questions or steps embedded within the instructions, so be sure to address all of them in your writing.

- Introduce the reader to your paper by clearly stating your purpose or thesis statement and then provide an outline of how you will go about explaining or arguing it. In the introduction, you can also provide some context for your topic and why it is important. If you are addressing one small piece of a complex problem, the introduction should define the scope of your paper. □
- The body of the paper should follow logically from the outline stated in the introduction. Sometimes it is useful to indicate to the reader when you are making a new point or moving into the next step of your explanation, argument or analysis. This can be done simply by using headings or words such as ‘first... second... or next...finally.’ Introduce the main point of each paragraph and ensure that the information in that paragraph supports your point.
- Whenever you are citing from an article or referring to a theorist’s ideas, you must include the author’s name and year of publication in parentheses.
- If you are using direct quotes from the original text, use quotation marks [“...”] and include the page number. For example, Kothari (2001) argues “participatory approaches to development research and planning attempt to challenge the apparent power relations in society by recognizing the control that certain individuals and groups have over others” (p 142).
- If you are paraphrasing the author’s ideas, but are not using a direct quote, you still need to acknowledge that this is not your original idea. For example: Kothari (2001) cautions that while participatory approaches can challenge the relations of power embedded in every society, we must take care not to oversimplify the nature of power, or to reassert new forms of social control.

International Perspectives in Participatory Research

- For excerpts of more than 40 words, start on a new line and indent the block of text. (Do not end a paragraph with this indented quote, comment on it.) These indented quotes do not need quotation marks. For example: Kothari (2001) has described how powerless groups can have their knowledge validated through participatory approaches:
- Participatory approaches to development research and planning attempt to challenge the apparent power relations in society by recognizing the control that certain individuals and groups have over others. This is based on the recognition that those who wield little power have limited opportunities to express their interests and needs and is generally excluded from key decision-making processes, and that their knowledge is considered insignificant. Nevertheless, she goes on to caution that we must take care not to oversimplify the nature of power, or to reassert new forms of social control. Indeed, relations of power are embedded in participatory approaches as well.
- The conclusion often provides a brief summary of what has been covered in the paper and reiterates the purpose statement. While no new arguments should be introduced in the conclusion, it is sometimes appropriate to call for action. For example, further research into a subject when there are obvious gaps in the literature. In a more personal paper, you may also speak about your own reflections on the subject, what you have learned or what implications it has in your life.
- Do not trust the spell check – always re-read, and if possible, have someone else read your paper. Grammatical and spelling errors are distracting and can sometimes weaken your credibility to the reader.

(Note: You will not be graded for your spelling or grammar for e-mail postings; however, as noted above, these will be taken into account in the evaluation of the two written assignments you submit).

Tips for Online Communication

Online communication requires slightly different skills from face-to-face interactions, as the people you are communicating with do not have access to all the usual visual signals (tone of voice, facial expressions, hand movements, body language, etc.). In addition to typing skills, you may also need to give some context to your statement. For example, if you are making a joke, or being ironic, you need to indicate this clearly to the readers.

Please remember that your peer learners may come from different regions, as well as other nationalities, and therefore there are many different idiomatic expressions that are used in specific countries, regions or communities. There are also a number of acronyms that have become popular through online communication through e-mail, chat rooms, text messaging, etc. Keep in mind that not everyone will be aware of what these expressions or acronyms mean; so if you choose to use them please give a definition. Likewise, if you do not understand what others – including what we – have written, please ask for clarification.

Evaluation

During the course, you will be evaluated on the basis of your written assignments, the quality of content and frequency of your online participation with the guest faculty and instructor.

The division of marks for all assignments and online participation is as follows:

S No.	Assignment	Title	Total Marks
1	Assignment 1	Reflection Paper	25
2	Assignments 2&3	Individual Quiz	20
3	Assignment 4	Project Paper	40
4	Online Participation		15
			100

Grading

The letter grades do not fully measure how much you have learned and internalised, but are more indicative of your performance in the virtual classroom and quality of assignments. As such, you should take responsibility for your own learning in the following ways:

At the beginning of the course, the instructor will ask you to send your personal learning objectives. At the end of the course, you should reflect upon those objectives, whether you have met them, whether they were realistic, and which parts of the course structure have helped or hindered you in meeting them?

During the course, you will get an opportunity to participate and make contributions through discussions, reflections and comments by using the Discussion Forum on the Moodle. You should reflect upon your own contributions to such virtual exchange.

At the end of the course, you will be asked to provide a 'balanced feedback' on your overall performance. This will include two positive comments and one suggestion for self-improvement.

Please provide these comments in the feedback form as they will be considered as one of the components towards your overall grade.

Grading Scheme

Grade	Qualitative Value	Point Grade	Equivalent Numerical Value (%)
A	Excellent	5	70 and above
B	Very Good	4	Above 55 and below 70
C	Good	3	Above 45 and below 55
D	Satisfactory	2	Above 35 and below 45
E	Unsatisfactory	1	Less than 35

(Note: You must get at least Grade D to claim the Certificate in International Perspectives in Participatory Research).