MONTAGE: IMPROVISING IN THE LAND OF ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT
This paper and its appended multi-media production describe the rationale and process of creating and presenting a “digitally saturated” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003), multi-layered, synchronous “montage” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) of educational Action Research findings. The authors contend that this type of presentation, arising from the fusion of Collaborative Action Research (CAR) and arts-based research (ABR), conveys more fully the complexity of context-specific, classroom-based CAR. Viewers and readers are invited to experience vicariously, interpret critically, and construct uniquely this “new type of knowledge.”

INTRODUCTION
In the digital age of the 21st Century, many educators embrace the challenges and opportunities that new technologies present, and the belief that with new technologies come new, technology-based “ways of knowing” (Cummins, 2006). While the application of digital technology to the classroom has seen great advancement (Beetham & Sharpe, 2007; Brown, 2000; Cummins, 2006; Merchant, 2007; Starkey, 2010), academic conference presentations tend to follow a predictable, linear formula, often with the use of PowerPoint and its inherent limitations (Van Leeuwen, 2008). This paper and its appended multi-media production describe the rationale and process of creating and presenting a “digitally saturated” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003), multi-layered, synchronous “montage” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) of educational Action Research findings. This alternative type of research presentation arises from the fusion of Collaborative Action Research (CAR) and arts-based research (ABR). Viewers and readers are invited to experience vicariously, interpret critically, and construct uniquely this “new type of knowledge.”
The layout of this paper conveys to some degree the shift that the authors underwent in moving from a traditional, text-based presentation of research findings to a newer, multimedia rendering of research findings. First, a condensed textual report of a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) project is provided. Next, the genre shifts to a narrative/dialogue in which authors T and S describe the beginning stages of their collaboration, including the tensions, challenges and synergies of merging Arts-based Research (ABR) with CAR. “Montage” as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2003) is employed as a conceptual framework that corroborates the rationale, synthetic process and multi-layered complexity of this technology-based movie/montage. Lastly, readers have the opportunity to experience the "alternative" expression of research findings, availed through online technology, in the 5-minute movie/montage entitled 8 Stanzas of Collaborative Action Research; and perhaps to reflect on the meaning gained through the digital medium as compared to the exclusively textual report, which is presented first.

**COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH: A TEXTUAL REPORT**

**Background and literature:** Action Research has been a part of North America’s educational landscape since the publication of “Action Research to Improve School Practices” (Corey, 1953). Corey’s definition holds true today: the process by which practitioners attempt to study their problems systematically in order to evaluate, correct, and guide their decisions and actions (1953, p. 6). Educational Action Research is thus, by definition: (i) directed and conducted by practitioners in the field; (ii) context-specific; and (iii) intended to improve the specific situation in which the research takes place (Glickman, 1992; Johnson, 2008; Mills, 2003; Moghaddam, 2007; Rock & Levin, 2002; Sagor, 2005). While its recognition has swelled and abated since the 1950s, “in recent years there has been increasing acceptance of Action Research among teachers” (Moghaddam, 2007, p. 228) due largely to consistent reporting of successful Action Research projects in preservice (Blumenreich & Falk, 2006; Churcher, 2007; Gore & Zeichner, 1991) as well as inservice (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2004; Conway & Jeffers, 2004; Goodnough, 2008; Van de Kleut, 2007) educational settings. When undertaken as a collaborative process, the additional benefits of decreased isolation among teaching professionals (Ainscow et al., 2004; Sagor, 1992) and a bridging of the gap between classroom teachers and university researchers (Churcher, 2007; Conway & Jeffers, 2004; Watkins, 2006) have been realized.

In the spring of 2007, the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Canada, issued a call for Action Research proposals to all elementary public schools in the province of Ontario. The initiative was voluntary; team leads could choose their teammates, and the teams could choose the topic of investigation. From the submissions, 50 teams of teachers were chosen to participate in the Teachers Learning Together (TLT) project. Each group of teacher-researchers, composed of three to five members, was then paired with two university professors who would provide guidance and support in the research process. In addition, the university professors were asked to conduct a multiple case study with three of the eight teams they were supervising. This report summarizes the main findings from
the multiple case study conducted with three Action Research teams in southwestern Ontario.

**Research Questions:** The unit of analysis for the multiple case study was the Action Research team and the investigation focused on the process undertaken by the teams. The three guiding research questions were: (i) What factors enabled the Action Research process? (ii) What factors inhibited the Action Research process? and, (iii) What professional and personal outcomes resulted from participation in this collaborative process?

**Data Collection:** Data included field notes made during site visits to schools, email correspondence with teacher researchers, researcher notes made during and after phone conferences, document analysis (teams’ interim and final reports) and transcripts of focus group interviews with the three case study teams at the end of the school year.

**Data Analysis:** First, open coding (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was conducted in which phrases, sentences and paragraphs were identified as one- or two-word concepts. During this process, the researcher put out of mind the research questions in order to allow the data to speak for themselves (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Next, thematic analysis (Creswell, 2002) was conducted on the open codes, i.e., recurring and similar concepts were identified and grouped into categories. In this stage, to avoid getting in the way of discovery, the researcher was conscious of not “forcing” the data into pre-conceived categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 49). The third phase was distinct from the first two, emergent phases. Phase three involved purposeful analysis of the original data as well as the open codes and categories, to answer the three research questions. From this three-stage analysis, the following findings emerged. All participants have been given pseudonyms.

**Findings:** *Enablers* to the Action Research process included release time; the teacher-directed nature of the research; the teachers’ ability to choose their own topic of research; support from university partners; and effective team leadership. The following focus group excerpts indicate these ideas.

Theresa (Team B): We also felt that having large blocks of time to work together as professionals was invaluable.

Jane (Team G): The release time was important where we could sit down on a half day or full day **out** of our school because we always met here [School Board Office]—that was so powerful because we could remove ourselves from our busy lives as teachers and dive right into this in a separate space so the release days were important.

Martha (Team G): I think this is a very powerful model because the teachers ... have ownership of it.
Abigail (Team W): It’s teacher-focused rather than principal-imposed.

Katherine (Team G): I do think the Action Research can’t be something that’s forced upon teachers or it loses the essential power of what it is.

Colleen (Team G): I think that having teachers choose what they are interested in is motivating—it shouldn’t be prescribed for them.

Karinna (Team B): You [university partners] brought the research and theoretical pieces and we brought the practical application.

Bonnie (Team W): You’ve given us some guidance—big time guidance.”

Donna (Team B): Having Karinna as a team leader ... ya, she kept us on track and she also has experience so ... this would have to be accomplished by ... 

Inhibitors: Inhibitors included time, lack of easy access to ‘specialist’ information such as scholarly journals, and the team that was at different schools also identified geographic distance as an inhibitor, as evidenced in the following quotations:

Bonnie (Team W): The only thing was the distance of where we were from—I’d say that was our biggest stumbling block.

Wanda (Team W): And because of the distance, that communication other teams had, when you meet in the hall—we didn’t have that.

Martha (Team G): If you wanted a journal, you wouldn’t find it—I called the Board Office and said, do we have any of these journals and they said, “No”, so they’re just not accessible to us unless we’re close to a university.

Time was identified as both an inhibitor and an enabler in the CAR process. That is, although the four days of release time for each teacher funded by ETFO within the TLT project was considered an enabler, still, more time could have been used. However, if the teacher-researchers had been given more time to work on the Action Research project, it would have required compromising time with their students. Thus, one participant’s description of time as a “Catch-22” was apt:

Donna (Team B): It’s probably like a Catch 22, right? It’s wonderful to have the time to get together and discuss and work on it, but then that’s time taken away from you doing stuff in the classroom.

Abigail (Team W): It’s been stressful trying to fit it all in and get everything done but I have learned a lot that I will continue to use with my students.
Katherine (Team G): There was always this feeling of galloping for me and I never felt like I was doing enough of the professional reading because of the school year being what it is with the time, resources and energy.

The first two research questions about enablers and inhibitors to the CAR process were identified clearly through teacher researchers’ verbatim responses above. Next, personal and professional outcomes are explained.

**Personal and professional outcomes:** The most consistent theme across all eight teams coming out of reports, site visits and observations of teacher discussions, was professional development. Professional development took various forms. Some teachers enjoyed the collaboration in lesson planning and the sharing of educational resources. For example:

Theresa (Team B): I really enjoyed the collaboration. I liked the process, how we decided we were going to tackle it, how we were going to address each one of the strategies and then I liked the collaboration on the sharing of the ideas and making up of the lessons and looking at our work to see if we were on the right track or if we saw differences between our kids. I got a lot out of that professionally.

Colleen (Team G): For me, the opportunity to get together with colleagues on a regular basis and just be . . . totally focused. I have just so much enjoyed—that professional development for me personally and how collegial the group has been. It has just been a fantastic year; just fantastic.

During site visits, it was common to hear the teams relating their findings and observations to research they had found while doing the literature review. Discussions were rich and highly professional, always with the underlying aim of enhancing student learning. Many teachers contrasted this professional development with the usual workshop formats, which they often found irrelevant or useless to their own practice.

Wanda (Team W): And I definitely prefer it as PD compared to what we normally have. I really prefer it.

Bonnie (Team W): Well even sitting here today, and going over what we all did during the year, and what we found good and bad and ugly. . . . You know, it’s really nice to have that open-ended conversation like that.

Stacy (Team G): I think this is by far the most powerful PD I’ve ever done.

Other outcomes and impacts included: increased confidence in teaching practice, a heightened focus on individual students’ progress and increased student achievement.

Donna (Team B): So, yes we were doing it before but when you have to get down and analyze it, it kind of brought up more questions for me and made me think about it in a more in-depth way than I had before.
Karinna (Team B): Before we began, it all sounded good, there was lots of literature that said this was effective but I wasn't 100% convinced. And I really saw a big difference. And I'm actually really shocked at how many of the Grade 3s are better readers and actually use the strategies outside of my lesson.

Another way that teachers expressed increased confidence was in their own ability to teach based on increased understanding resulting from collaboration and sharing of knowledge and classroom experiences.

Team W Final Report: The project was transformative for the teachers as their practices changed in various ways, including: providing students with more choice and responsibility; offering increased feedback on student writing; engaging students in self-evaluation.

The outcomes of this CAR initiative were overwhelmingly positive. Though we intentionally probed for negative aspects of the process, the only consistent theme was that of time, explained earlier as a type of double-edged sword.

In summary, all teams considered the CAR study to be a success. Regardless of experience, i.e., whether they were new teachers or preparing to retire, all teacher researchers remained committed to the research and saw its many benefits in their students' learning, their own practice, and enhanced collegiality among team members. Given the time commitment required and the complexity of their lives as teachers, we were surprised when all participants stated that, given the opportunity, they would do an action research study again. Even though it made additional demands on their time and energy, they would do it again because they saw its many benefits. The most commonly cited indicators of success were: (a) meaningful professional development, and, (b) enhanced student learning.

In our role as university partners, we had the privilege of working with eight teams of committed, energized and expert teaching professionals. In developing a positive rapport with teams and learning from them about their teaching processes while they learned from us about the research process, we felt we had participated in an authentic school-university partnership. We concluded that collaborative action research, if implemented wisely and thoughtfully, can be an effective bridge between theory and practice. The organizational framework, the supports (human, time, resources, financial) and the leadership provided by ETFO all facilitated this process wherein teachers experienced self-chosen, self-directed, meaningful professional development.

Reflective Turn: Like the process of Action Research itself, which “ends” with more questions and cycles on, our case study research did not end with the final reporting, but propelled reflection leading to new questions. It seemed the final report was in some ways incongruent with the overall experience and essence of what had unfolded in this dynamic, complex, multi-site, multi-team, multi-topic CAR process. Though more elaborate and
detailed that the adumbrated version above, it was still largely devoid of the richness of experiences; the emotions; the laughter; the camaraderie that were very much parts of the CAR process. In a word, the final report seemed inadequate. Therefore, the question that impelled the next phase of research was, how could this rich experience be shared more meaningfully? In response to this question, the next section of this paper is written as a narrative/dialogue, as the authors describe the beginning steps of their collaboration, and the tensions and challenges they faced as they transitioned from traditional text-based reporting to arts-based collaboration.

**Reflective Narrative**

*Merging Action Research and Arts-based Research:*

S: After completing the report for ETFO, I continued to reflect upon the process we had undergone with the teacher-researchers. The word “complexity” was uppermost in mind, in reference to the teachers’ professional lives (Eisner, 1979; Glickman, 2001; Sagor, 1992), which had become yet more complex with the introduction of action research. Conveying multiple layers of complexity in a linear, textual format had been, to a large extent, an exercise in compromise. During this period of reflection, a Call for Proposals came from organizers of the *ProVoking Research ProVoking Community Conference* at the University of Windsor, soliciting work that challenged traditional research paradigms and/or presented educational research in alternative formats. I answered the call with a proposal to convey, in eight stanzas of poetry, the topics, research questions and results of the eight Action Research studies. Photographs from field trips would provide the essential context in a background slide show and musical accompaniment might convey unwritten concepts. My colleague, A, was enthusiastic about this proposal, and suggested that we invite, T, a musician and university colleague, to join our presentation as a live performer.

T: When S and A invited me to help them develop a presentation for the “ProVoking” Conference, I was hesitant to get involved: I was afraid they wanted to use the Arts to superficially illustrate essentially text-based material. However, when we sat down together I discovered they were open to alternative forms of collaboration that would “provoke” and convey complexity. They explained the project, described their trips into the field, and enumerated the types and forms of data they had collected, such as photographs, audio recordings, correspondence, and field notes. As I listened, I took notes, sketching and drawing lines between elements. At the end of an hour I had a suggestion: I would compose a “piece” using the various voices, texts, and visual artifacts they had collected. The result would be a kind of musical score that would guide assembly of a mixed media movie. Unlike a written text, with a single line of words unrolling for the reader, I envisaged a polyphonic performance in the spirit of the Baroque (Cyr, 1992), with multiple voices and images producing a surfeit of information and stimulation, all of which would convey the complexities of context-based, educational Action Research. I would provide, as well, “performance notes” for the performers and for the audience. Rather than “presenting”, the two researchers would “perform live”, reading excerpts from their original field notes. . . . I warned S and A that the audience response would likely include confusion and resistance,
as listeners who tried to follow individual voices would find themselves overwhelmed by the layering of media and rapidly changing images. The aim was to immerse spectators in the complexity and richness of Action Research, and to engage them as observers, interpreters, and active participants. S’s original concept of 8 stanzas of poetry would remain in the title of the final work as more of an allusion to the eight teams of action-researchers.

**Matching medium and message:**
W: T’s ideas were of instant appeal due to many conceptual connections to Action Research and to some of our own beliefs about research in general. First, we were very interested in this proposal because it gave voice to participants, not just figuratively, but in reality. That is, the sound track of the “movie” was predominated by teachers’ voices in the focus group interviews. This was important not only for empowering respondents (Mishler, 1986; Silverman, 2003); it was essential to convey that the teacher-researchers were indeed the experts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; McRae & Parsons, 2007; Sagor, 2005) within this CAR study and must therefore be re-presented as the voices of authority. By placing participants’ voices centrally through digital technology, a conceptual “ring of truth” sounded as medium (placement of teacher-researchers’ voices using new technology) and message (content of interview excerpts) aligned. As well, the inclusion of photographs from our field trips to the research sites would provide insight into context, which is a central, defining feature of Action Research. Even T’s warning that audience members might be confused or overwhelmed when presented with a plethora of data was fitting in that it would parallel the experiences of the teacher-researchers who felt overwhelmed at times with an abundance of data and the daunting task of making sense of it all. T suggested that the blending and overlapping of images, sounds, texts and understandings would create a unified whole rather than the relatively fragmented, traditionally linear (McLuhan, 1964) format of the textual report. We understood intuitively that this medium had the potential to more adequately re-present the message, i.e., the CAR process, than the textual report. Yet, as appealing and intuitive as the multi-media proposal felt, we were at the same time apprehensive at the seeming absence of structure, the unknown of a “live performance,” and the dismissal of a standard conference presentation format (Introduction, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Discussion and Conclusion, in that order). Nonetheless, we were ready to take the risk because this alternative arrangement, as T described and diagrammed it, meshed remarkably with the complex realities we wanted to share.

T: S and A agreed to the challenge. Using my score and performance notes, they prepared a montage of photos from their field trips, audio from focus group interviews, text from email correspondence, all of which they assembled using movie editing software. In addition, they chose extracts from their field notes to read aloud at the conference, producing a live performance that would interrupt and overlap the voices and images of the movie, running simultaneously.

S: In reviewing our field notes, we found the starting point of our conversations about the cyclical nature of Action Research. It was during a trip to visit teacher-researchers in Kincardine, Ontario, when we initially saw the wind turbines that would become the motif
of our presentation. A. had commented on the eerie appearance of the large, gray, metal, windmills in the distance: “They’re like postmodern trees dotting the landscape, changing the landscape.” I responded, suggesting that the continually cycling turbines in a way symbolized the Action Research process as Hannay described its cyclical nature: “as one spiral is complete, other questions emerge” (1998, p. 40). By the end of this discussion, we decided that the wind turbines would be our visual symbol of this CAR project, and that we would begin taking photographs of the landscape, the roads, towns, and schools we were visiting—the contexts, sites, and topography of our research.

T: When S and A performed and presented the work for the ProVoking Conference that summer, the audience response was as predicted: confusion and discomfort followed by enthusiasm and energy. After the performance, audience members shared generously and honestly their responses to the unconventional presentation. Most reported feeling overwhelmed by the multi-layered data at first, and then adjusting by focusing on one or two data sources while consciously ignoring the others. One scholar stated that she would have liked more background information before the start of the performance, e.g., research questions, participant profiles, methodology, and conclusions. This was met with the nodding of some heads and a flood of responses to the contrary, i.e., people stating their belief that to do so would defeat the purpose and essence of the experience in which observers were required to actively engage in interpretation and knowledge construction. The presentation triggered excitement, controversy, and rich discussion—fittingly provocative for the conference theme. We subsequently revised and presented the work at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference. The presentation again drew interest and excited discussion, both as a research methodology and a dynamic communication strategy, with audience members seemingly compelled to express their enthusiasm to the authors.

What made this small production—a five-minute movie with performance—so differentially engaging? We believe it was the open-ended, organic aspect of arts-based research that empowered us to break free of established conference presentation norms and to act upon the belief that matching medium with message would enrich representation of the complexities of classroom-based Action Research.

**Collaborative Synergies: An Arts-based Re-presentation of Action Research:**

Using art practice as a method of conducting or presenting research has been adopted by researchers from within and without arts disciplines (Irwin, 2006; Prosser, 1998). Artists have found new acceptance for their work as research, and non-artists have found new ways to engage with, analyze and present their research through arts-based strategies. Yet art practice is more than a strategy; it creates and is created within a zone of production that is inherently unstable, open, and organic. Hence, we had to be intentional, for using art to effectively present research requires intentionality, thoughtfulness, knowledge and skill (Berger, 1980; Sontag, 1977).

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1 Artist is meant to include visual artists, musicians, dancers, and actors
For instance, the knowledge and skill of a musician and music educator were essential in the creation of a musical score. The score, composed to visually, temporally, and conceptually represent multiple layers of data, was also our guide for presentation construction and performance. We were aware that use of a musical score rather than a more confined and stable chart or matrix, would change the presentation in two significant ways. First, by using a score that included a live, performative element, the paradigm shifted from academic presentation to performance art. Working in a liminal zone between scholarly discourse and musical performance, between stable text and time-based art, this piece spoke from, through, and to the researcher, as participant, as observer, as knowledge producer and cultural consumer/user, or “produser” (Bruns, 2009). Secondly, the role of the viewer also shifted from academic audience to performance art spectator, and with that move, added challenges and possibilities were implied: to interpret, to witness, to participate in the co-creation of meaning in a visual and cultural field (Becker, 1996; Foster, 1996; Preusse, 1999). This shift to a medium that tended to dissolve the traditional divide between presenter as creator and possessor of expert knowledge, and audience as receiver and critic, was yet another vital linking of medium to message. That is, our experience with CAR supported its status as an effective bridge between university and school researchers (Blumenreich & Falk, 2006; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Churcher, 2007; Conway & Jeffers, 2004; McRae & Parsons, 2007; Sagor, 1992; Watkins, 2006). The arts-based presentation, then, in conveying a relationship of mutuality and thereby dismissing the “fictive subjective – objective divide” as articulated by Sullivan (2006), below, paralleled our message about the process of CAR in that it was most powerful and transformative for all when the “researcher” (university partner) and “researched” (teacher-researcher) were equal partners in the process. “When used as a site for research, art practice brings into play the seamless relationship between the “researcher” (artist) and the ‘researched’ (art practice) and this builds on all the discursive arguments that disrupt untenable dichotomies such as the fictive subjective-objective divide” (Sullivan, 2006, p. 31). We had also to be intentional about choice of technology that would combine and present our data. We understood the benefits of using Windows Moviemaker, i.e., it was user-friendly and enabled the assembly and layering the visual, audio and textual elements. At the same time, we acknowledged being constrained by limited choices and capabilities of the software (Van Leeuwen, 2008). After weighing the advantages and disadvantages, we chose this program because it would facilitate the creation of a “montage” as elaborated next.

**Montage as Conceptual Bridge and Framework:**

The use of montage has a deep history in film-making; its essential concept remains “the creation of a sense of meaning not proper to the images themselves but derived exclusively from their juxtaposition” (Bazin, 1974, p. 90). It allows multiple participants to combine their creative activity or a single creator to combine multiple sources and produce unexpected synergy, with the whole greater than the sum of its parts (Fuller, 1979). Montage has resurfaced as a methodological approach in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), wherein various forms of data are combined and layered to create a non-linear, complex, open “text.” In montage, “images, sounds, and understandings are blending together, overlapping, forming a composite, a new creation. The images seem to shape and
define one another, and an emotional, gestalt effect is produced” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 6).

While the textual findings expressed adequately teacher-researchers’ pedagogical ideas and some of their personal experiences, the richest and most meaningful outcomes of the study, in our view, were those moments in which an “emotional, gestalt effect” was felt by all present. We intuited that these central findings would be more adequately conveyed through a montage of digital data which provided audience members with direct access to the tone, rhythm, tempo and expression of teacher-researchers’ original utterance. The receiver had the opportunity and the challenge of interpreting teacher-researchers' statements while viewing photographs of the context in which they were made. As email text overlapped and blended with images and sound, audience members could gain a sense of time, distance, reflection, synthesis and growth, as well as other possibilities that we as researchers had not considered. This medium opened up new possibilities of knowledge construction rather than closing them off with a conclusion. Furthermore, while the movie itself, once “published”, was a fixed entity, the live performance by university partners would convey flexibility, spontaneity, and the synergistic effects of collaboration. In this way, the montage mediated the flexible nature of action research.

Another function described by Denzin and Lincoln (2003) is that “montage uses brief images to create a clearly defined sense of urgency and complexity” (p. 7). The simultaneous, layered presentation of data that composed the montage/movie conveyed complexity while a brief time frame (3-5 seconds) for each photograph transmitted the sense of urgency. These were the abstract yet central findings that had been compromised and perhaps even contradicted at some level through straightforward, linear, text-only reporting. We felt that there was enhanced authenticity in presenting data through montage. If the textual medium introduced these findings conceptually, the multi-media presentation reinforced them experientially.

**CONCLUSION**

This work was “provoked” by two concurrent calls: an external, academic conference call for proposals; and an internal, intuitive resistance to reducing the richness of a complex and dynamic CAR project to linear, text-dominated re-presentation. These synchronized conditions, plus the introduction of arts-based research (ABR) led us to experience new ways of conceptualizing and constructing knowledge. Through ABR, we were able to release our hold on standard academic practices and thereby respond not only in thought but in action, to Elliot Eisner’s position that the assumptions and procedures of scientific education “do not exhaust the forms of knowledge and methods of inquiry that human use to give shape to the world” (1979, p. vii). Art transported us into the unknown place where we could give shape to our findings in a new way for art is, at its heart, uncharted territory, and by entering the creative realm, the researcher can move “beyond probability and plausibility to possibility” (Sullivan, 2005, p. 72). We put forth the possibility that research, when combined with art, can open up routes to knowing and unknowing—to releasing ourselves from that which we think we know. The addition of musical concepts, montage,
and digital technologies enabled the compilation of “simultaneous realities” (Glickman, 2001) and opened up “limitless possible interpretations” of a research moment (Gallagher, 2008, p. 68). All of this we called “Improvising in the Land of Action Research.”

The movie/montage (see embedded video) is not intended to represent any sort of artistic or academic masterpiece. Nor are we interested in dichotomous thinking on the matter, i.e., we are not suggesting that the digital movie is a “better” rendition of findings than the textual report. Our main intention is to put forth a different way of presenting knowledge that is aligned with current technologies and that might in turn ignite new ways of constructing knowledge on the part of readers/viewers. We theorize that, if this multi-layered medium lends itself to multiple interpretations through “open readings” (Gallagher, 2008), it may motivate different and divergent ways of thinking and knowing. The next spiral in this CAR-ABR collaboration involves you, the reader/viewer. We invite you to view the movie and then to ponder your own process of knowledge development and construction.

REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

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