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ENABLING PARTICIPATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH: THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Policy and Social Work at
Massey University

Pauline Boyles

1998

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. **EVALUATION TOOL DEVELOPED BY RESEARCH GROUP AS A FINAL STAGE OF ACTION RESEARCH:** Please refer to Page 309 Appendix Seven (questions identified with research group). All participants did an individual evaluation and presented their personal evaluation to the group. Evaluation of training is found in Appendix Six.
2. For discussion around research with other groups and consultation on action research processes writer is available at the following:

DEALS INC
PEMBER HOUSE
16 HAGLEY ST
PORIRUA
04 237 5576
04 4237 5572 (FAX)
025 2444 255 (CELLPHONE)
Email P.Boyles@clear.net.nz

Abstract

Enabling Participation Through Partnership

This thesis presents an example of emancipatory research used within the field of disability studies. It argues that research can be conducted in a way which more directly addresses the needs of disabled people and involves them in its design and delivery. The key questions examine the role of emancipatory research in enabling disabled people to take control of their lives and to accomplish change in their immediate environment. Secondary questions explore the contribution of critical theorists Brian Fay and Stuart Rees in informing a model of emancipatory research and their work has been adapted to act as a framework for the thesis. The challenges researchers face when embarking on this type of research are confronted in a realistic and constructive way. It is argued that the achievement of a definition of 'emancipatory' more often depends on the attitudes and values of the researcher and the resulting impact on those whose lives are central to the research.

The thesis describes how a group of twelve disabled students formed the Disability Action Research Group (DARG), identified some goals for change in their immediate environment and subsequently developed a disability equity training package to be delivered to the staff of Victoria University. The journey from action research group to the development of a training group with a legal status instigated by the students of DARG is presented, offering some landmarks for others wishing to engage in similar activities.. The key theme of partnership represents the potential for alliances between disabled people as well as with their nondisabled allies. "Enabling participation through partnership" underpins every aspect of this thesis and reflects its fundamental principles.

Acknowledgements

Over the years since I began this research, many people have supported me and in so doing have made a contribution to this thesis. I thank all of them including the staff and management of Wellington College of Education who generously gave me a scholarship to write up the thesis. I would particularly like to thank all those students who shared the research journey with me, who gave of themselves, their lives and their wisdom. Their passion and motivation for change are reflected in the diary accounts and evaluation and their work continues to benefit other disabled students. I acknowledge the struggle each of them had to accomplish what they did while struggling with significant personal and physical difficulties. Their efforts have been a source of inspiration to me as I have slowly reached the end of the project. I thank them for the personal support and friendship I was offered at a very arduous and painful time of my own life. This thesis is dedicated to them.

My supervisors, Robyn Munford and Celia Briar have shown remarkable diplomacy, patience and insight during what has been a longer than anticipated writing up period. They have never allowed me to sink into negative thinking and have each given a huge amount of their individual expertise. I appreciate the expectation of excellence which they have presented me with and the integrity with which they have helped me work towards this. I am also grateful for the input of Martin Sullivan who conducted the peer examination. I have valued his guidance as a disabled person and have been challenged by his feedback.

A special thanks to my long standing friend and colleague Jan Perkins, whose loyalty knows no bounds. During the times when I have felt like giving up, she has stuck by me, quietly encouraging me to carry on. She has always enabled me to believe in myself and my ability, which is a gift she has given to the many other disabled people who have the good fortune to know and love her. My family in England have also given me strength particularly my mum who died during the course of this research. Her love and courage have inspired me to continue against all odds and a piece of her is present here in this work.

Thanks also to my other friends and support people particularly Karen Gallagher who has sensitively and patiently supported me on a daily basis over the last two years, a job which I appreciate has not always been easy. I am grateful for the time given by Deborah Willet to read and edit an earlier draft of the thesis, a huge job at a time when her own life was very busy.

I acknowledge the financial support provided by Workbridge, first through the women's scholarship I was given in 1994 to buy my computer and since then the support hours to enable me to carry on working and studying. I recognize the privilege I have been granted and hope that Workbridge can continue to provide such a great service to other disabled people who also have the often unexplored potential to succeed.

The disability community in New Zealand deserve recognition for their support and encouragement since my arrival in New Zealand and making me welcome. I hope this work makes a contribution to their cause.

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