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**An evaluation of action research methods in
developing a national instructor induction package
for a Private Training Establishment**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Adult Education**

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**My thesis is dedicated to
the New Zealand Red Cross team that made this work possible**

ABSTRACT

The provision of appropriate, needs based workplace induction training programmes is recognised as an important step for new staff in many industries. This thesis investigates the way in which action research processes can be used to enhance the induction of new instructors within a Private Training Establishment (PTE). The research was conducted within an educational workplace context where action research methods were applied in practice and where the action research group developed a new instructor induction resource by working together collaboratively to identify and solve their problems. Evaluative action research processes were used to assess the effectiveness of the team approach.

Data was gathered during three collaborative action research cycles (plan, act, observe and reflect) over a period of 12 months. Information was obtained from collaborating group workshops which included review discussions, reflective practice and evaluations, verbal and written feedback from new instructors and other key people, and researcher autobiographical journal notes. The data was analysed using spreadsheets and group discussions of recorded information.

The results show how an increased level of member participation and collaboration can inform the research methods and direction as well as benefit induction processes and professional development outcomes. Working together collaboratively helped the group to find new ways of addressing their specific induction issues, primarily through better understanding and appreciation of each other's knowledge, ideas and views. A range of factors both influenced and enabled the participating group to solve their problems in a way previously not articulated. Notably these included discussions, academic readings, group collaboration, and increased group trust, sharing and openness. The time between group meetings was identified as being the major constraint.

The findings demonstrate the positive contribution that action research methods can make to effective problem solving, particularly when managers of educational organisations wish to proactively improve their business and educational standards.

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