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**INSIDER /OUTSIDER INQUIRY
AND THE LARGER ISSUE OF
ACADEMIC-PRACTITIONER
RELATIONSHIPS**

Evered and Louis (1981)

Dimension of Difference	MODE OF INQUIRY	
	From the Outside	From the Inside
Researcher's relationship to setting	Detachment, neutrality	↔ "Being there," immersion
Validation basis	Measurement and logic	↔ Experiential
Researcher's role	Onlooker	↔ Actor
Source of categories	A priori	↔ Interactively emergent
Aim of inquiry	Universality and generalizability	↔ Situational relevance
Type of knowledge acquired	Universal, nomothetic: theoria	↔ Particular, idiographic: praxis
Nature of data and meaning	Factual, context free	↔ Interpreted, contextually embedded

Figure 2
Differences Between the Two Modes of Inquiry

Insider/Outsider Research

Bartunek, J. M., & Louis, M. R. 1996. *Insider/outsider team Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Bartunek, J. M. 2008. Insider/Outsider team research: The development of the approach and its meanings. In A. B. Shani, N. Adler, S. A. Mohrman, W. A. Pasmore, & B. Stymne (Eds.), *Handbook of collaborative management research* (pp. 73 – 91). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Basis for the approach:

- ◎ Insiders and outsiders both theorize about what goes on in particular settings, and bring different perspectives to this task
- ◎ The combination of insider and outsider perspectives creates a marginal stance

Summary of Insider/outsider research Stages

1. Composing the I/O research team

Those who initiate the research choose insider or outsider partners. Criteria for choosing insiders include wide access in the setting, interest in the research, and ability to appreciate others' perspectives. Criteria for choosing outsiders include trust, ability to work jointly, and research skill.

2. Developing a working relationship

Mutual respect and influence are essential in the development of the working relationship. The research addresses the goals of both parties.

3. Formulating research questions to orient the study

Insider and outsider researchers develop questions to orient the study. Together, they may decide on a common set of questions. One group may have more say than the others, or they may have equal say in this decision.

4. Designing data collection processes

Insider and outsider researchers design the data collection process. Insiders may give an external researcher guidance in methods and specific questions to be addressed, or the groups may jointly design these.

4a. Get IRB approval

All researchers *may* need to pass Human participants review certification

5. Collecting Data

Insiders and outsiders may collect the data together, insiders may collect one kind of data and outsiders another kind, or one party may collect all the data

6. Analyzing and interpreting data

Insiders and outsiders may analyze the data together. One party may provide a tentative interpretation, and the other may critique and advance it.

7. Writing reports and presenting results

One party may write the report and obtain comments on drafts from the other party. Insiders and outsiders may author the report jointly, or parties may write separate papers.

8. Taking action

Action is undertaken based on the research and aimed at benefiting setting participants

9. Making Scholarly contributions

The research makes a contribution to scholarly literature in some area.
There also be a written contribution to practice

10. Tracking outcomes

Researchers assess the extent to which project goals were achieved

Process Issues in I/O research

- ◎ Conflict and Its Potential Sources in I/O Teams
- ◎ The Relative Power of Insider and Outsider Members of the Research Team

An example of an insider/outsider study

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FRONT AND BACKSTAGES OF THE DIMINISHED ROUTINIZATION OF INNOVATIONS: WHAT INNOVATION RESEARCH MAKES PUBLIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH FINDS BEHIND THE SCENES

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1. Composing the I/O research team

I am a “founding member” of the Society for organizational Learning (SoL)

Sherry Immediato is the President and managing director of SoL



Jordi Trullen (ESADE) was my doctoral student at BC



Frank Schneider, a staff member at SoL, took two MBA classes from me at BC

- ◎ Frank told me that the core competencies course at SoL had been very popular at first, but was no longer so, and the staff wanted to make it successful again
- ◎ I suggested that we carry out a joint insider/outsider action research investigation

2. Developing a working relationship

- ◎ Sherry, Frank, Jordi and I had several meetings together to discuss what we might do.
- ◎ These provided a chance for Jordi to get to know Frank and Sherry, and for us all to develop what we wanted to accomplish with the project

3. Formulating research questions to orient the study

- ◎ My original plan was to try to use a design science approach (e.g. van Aken, 2004) to improve the course
- ◎ We would use a formula something like “to accomplish A in situation C, do something like B”
- ◎ The hope was that this would help Sherry and Frank reinvigorate the course and return it to profitability. We would then trace the change process in a scholarly fashion.

- ◎ But this approach was not successful at all.
- ◎ As we began to try to implement this kind of planning, many discussions of the past came up, recollections of how the course had begun and evolved over the years.
- ◎ Rather than start with the present and work forward, it seemed necessary to understand the past, and how and why the course had changed.

4. Designing data collection processes

- ◉ To understand the course's evolution, we decided to add interviews, observation, and archival data collection to our exploration
- ◉ The four of us together designed the interview protocols
- ◉ Sherry and Frank arranged for Jordi and me to sit in on activities pertinent to the course
- ◉ Sherry and Frank searched their office for archival material

4a. Get IRB approval

- ⦿ We ran into a glitch when we told the BC IRB about the study
- ⦿ The BC IRB wanted a formal IRB from SoL (which didn't have one) to approve the study
- ⦿ The BC IRB wanted Sherry and Frank to turn in forms certifying that they had passed a human subjects "course"
- ⦿ The BC IRB didn't like that Sherry and Frank would see the results of interviews.

- ◎ We finally agreed that Jordi and I would do all the original coding of the interview results, and that we would remove identifying information from the materials we gave to Sherry and Frank. This satisfied our IRB

5. Collecting Data

- ◎ Observation – I sat in on an offering of the course and Jordi participated in a meeting of the SoL Council (SoL's governing board)
- ◎ Archival data collection – we collected all past SoL documents that referred to the course

- ◎ Interviews. Jordi and I interviewed representatives from all of SoL's constituencies to get to know their understanding of the course's evolution and their desires for it.
- ◎ Sherry and Frank decided who we should interview and Sherry sent out an original mailing inviting everyone to be interviewed. Jordi and I followed up on it.

6. Analyzing and interpreting data

- ◎ SoL paid for the interviews to be transcribed
- ◎ Jordi and I then rearranged the data by interview question asked, and then into random orders of answers to each question, which we sent to Sherry and Frank

- ◎ Jordi and I did the first coding of the responses and then discussed them with Sherry and Frank
- ◎ All four of us discussed the results and their meanings and implications. Sherry and Frank sometimes understood reasons for the answers that Jordi and I would have missed entirely

7. Writing reports and presenting results

- ◎ All four of us presented a session at a SoL research greenhouse (a small conference sponsored by SoL)
- ◎ Jordi and I, with Sherry and Frank's help, co-authored a feedback report that Sherry sent out to everyone we had interviewed and the SoL (Governing) Council

8. Taking action

As a result of the work we did...

- SoL offered a version of the core competencies course, called 'Accelerated learning for business results', that was based on our learnings. While the course was successful, it was not feasible over the long term, because business conditions had changed since SoL had been formed
- More attention to the overall process of product innovation at SoL was stimulated, contributing to the creation of a consulting business there as well as the September 2007 launch of the SoL Academy on Wheels and other new products.

9. Making Scholarly contributions

- ◎ I was invited to submit a paper to one of the inaugural issues of the *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*. The paper was accepted there

In terms of writing

- ◎ I did most of the writing (especially of conceptual materials), with help from Jordi (who had moved to Spain)
- ◎ Sherry (a lot) and Frank (a little) responded to drafts and made changes where appropriate. They were not familiar with the scholarly literature

The paper focused on...

- ◎ The front and back stages of the “diminished” routinization of innovations.
- ◎ The front stage is consistent with what innovation literature argues
- ◎ Backstage, though, there are many dynamics associated with power, structure, and knowledge sharing more often discussed in Organizational Behavior literature

Oh, and the implications for practice...

- ◎ Were actually pretty good, largely because Sherry wrote a lot of them

10. Tracking outcomes

- ◎ Sherry told me that working on the project had helped her learn quite a bit about some “hidden” aspects of how SoL was designed, learnings that have helped her later.
- ◎ I don't think that the paper has had a lot of scholarly impact to date.

Where this has led 1: The larger issue of academic-practitioner relationships

- ◎ Insider/outsider research limits academics' relationships with practitioners to the academics' turf
- ◎ In an AMJ (2007) I argued that the relationship had to be broader than that. I suggested the value of creating “joint forums” in which academics and practitioners join to work on areas of common interest

Where this has led 2: Collaboration in studying a collaborative program

- ◎ An invitation from the dean of the Lynch School of Education at Boston College to conduct a “historical review” of a “collaborative fellows” program in the Lynch School”

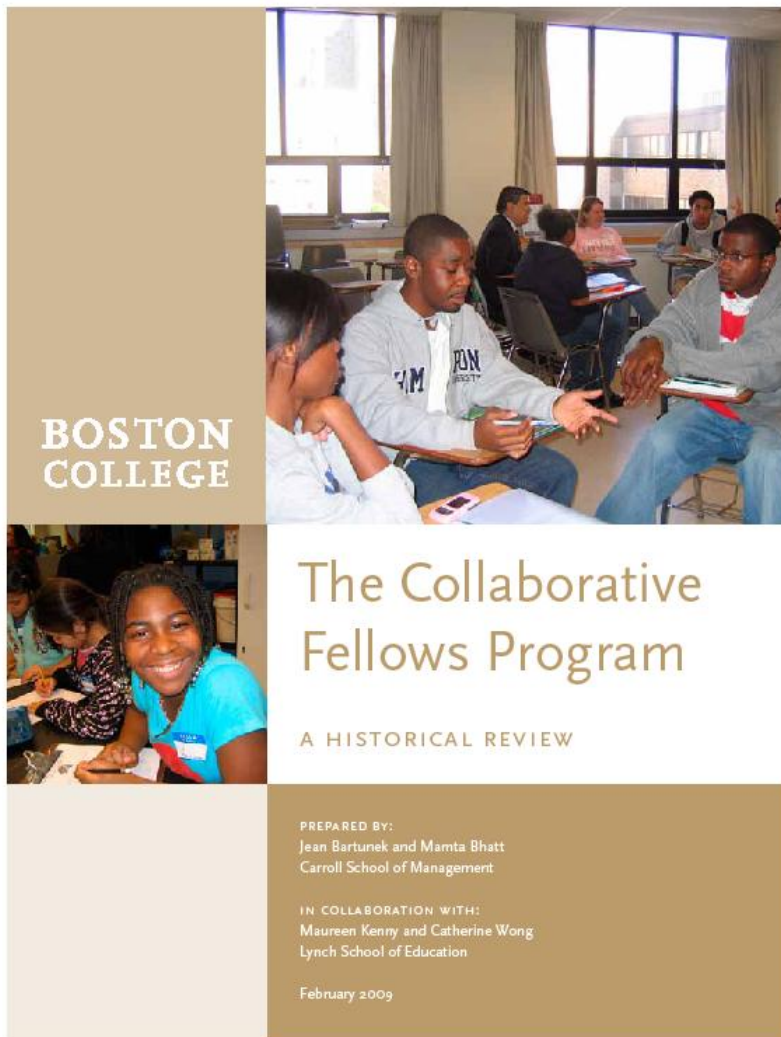
The collaborative fellows program involves...

- ◎ School of Education faculty members receive grants that facilitate their collaborating with Boston Public School teachers and doctoral students to accomplish a change in the Boston Public Schools AND contribute to scholarly research
- ◎ Some of the grant money must go to the Boston public school teacher(s) involved

- ◎ My doctoral assistant and I collaborated with an assistant dean and the director of urban outreach in the School of Education to study it

We completed a report to the dean about our findings

The dean sent the report to the Mayor of Boston, the superintendent of schools, local congressmen etc.



Where this has led 3:

- ◎ Practitioners seek me out to talk more (e.g. to help them with research, to participate in a podcast, etc.)