Kinsey Dialogue Series #5: Radicalizing the Everyday

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RADICALIZING THE EVERYDAY
CREATING SPACE FOR
FEMINIST-INFORMED ACTION RESEARCH

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"Education, like nature, is an organic process. Here nurture is more critical than control, redundancies can be functional, and there is room for interactive transformation and surprise. In our garden you do not see the whole at first glance, if ever. Rather you 'make the path by walking,' being attentive and discovering the unexpected around the next bend."

David C. Kinsey

The Kinsey Dialogue Series was established in memory of our beloved colleague, David Chapin Kinsey. David touched countless lives in the course of his 40 years as a dedicated, brilliant and outstanding educator, helping people everywhere to inquire, explore and discover the world and themselves. From 1975, David Kinsey served as a faculty member of the School of Education in the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. It is our hope that the Kinsey Dialogue Series will uphold his legacy, keeping alive his passionate vision for a better world.
Introduction

My presentation for the 5th Annual Kinsey Dialogue Series is given to honor David Kinsey, who was my teacher, mentor, and friend. It was through David that I first came to know in the early 1980’s about participatory action research while a graduate student at the Center for International Education (CIE). I came to CIE several years after working as a Peace Corps Volunteer (1977-79) in a very tumultuous Jamaica and while still working as a training consultant for international development organizations. CIE was well known for promoting Frierian empowering non-formal education approaches in development contexts. At the time, I struggled alongside many other CIE graduate students with how to make our research and evaluation practices more congruent with the transformational and liberating possibilities of non-formal education. I was introduced to participatory action research (PAR) in David Kinsey’s alternative research methods course.

While at CIE, my growing feminist awareness was nurtured by other Center women, by working in the local reproductive rights movement, and by delving into feminist scholarship. All of this helped me come to see the androcentrism of much of the early PAR. Feminism was like a dry cloth on a foggy window that allowed me to see more clearly. I began to question where were the women among the campesinos, the villagers, or “the people” described in the PAR case studies? Why were feminist theories omitted from discussions on the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of
PAR? The early groundbreaking PAR literature made it appear as if feminists had neither questioned traditional social science scholarship nor offered alternatives.

The 1980’s were exciting times at CIE as men such as Rajesh Tandon, Miles Horton, Paolo Freire, and Ira Shor visited as guest speakers. But I wondered why were many of the well-known men in the PAR world, activists committed to changing the world, essentially silent about feminism? What kind of world would they have us create? How could PAR claim to be a force for justice and transformation if feminism and women’s varied experiences were largely ignored?

I began to make meaningful connections between feminism and PAR while working with battered women in Gallup, New Mexico. I moved to Gallup with Cal Marshall, my husband, to live and work, love and play, not solely to do dissertation research. Halfway across the country from the university-based CIE, and living in a poor, under-resourced community where few people read Habermas or discussed hermeneutics, phone conversations with David were an important part of my dissertation support system. A pro-feminist man, David encouraged my efforts to bring together feminism and participatory action research. He encouraged many of us at CIE to find our voices, speak out, and act up. The learning community that David helped foster at the Center for International Education affirmed bell hooks’s claim that “the classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy” (1994, p. 2). I am
forever grateful to David for all that I learned with and from him, both in and out of the classroom. I am likewise grateful to the Center for International Education, particularly to David Evans, Stephanie Pirroni, Manaslu Gurung, Leticia Arteaga, Ceil Bartreau, and Barbara Gravin Wilbur for making this presentation possible. The extended CIE community remains a central touchstone for my work.

I begin this presentation by identifying three current challenges for action research as an approach to knowledge creation, and hence challenges for action researchers. This sets the stage for discussion of my personal experiences with one of these challenges, primarily sustaining a connection to action research’s radical roots while working with others to create a space for feminist–informed action research in the academy. In particular, I will be discussing some of the work I have been engaged in over the past 15 years at the Western New Mexico University, Gallup Graduate Studies Center (GGSC) in Gallup, New Mexico. The GGSC is an extended university center, over 250 miles from the WNMU main campus. Although I have been working collaboratively with a small group of committed colleagues to develop and sustain the GGSC, I speak only for myself in this presentation. I will conclude by identifying the challenges and struggles I embrace for the future in trying to create a space for feminist-informed action research in a non-feminist-identified place, i.e., the university.

Challenges for action research and action researchers

One current challenge for action researchers is to stay connected
to the radical or political roots of action research when the space for social justice-oriented education, particularly in the academy, is being diminished. A sub-theme of this challenge, which I do not discuss here, is the role and relevancy of the university in an era of the corporatization of higher education.

A second challenge is to actually make a difference through action research, which is often conducted in small, locale-specific projects. Regarding this challenge, Werner Fricke asks of action researchers, "Is there no despair seeing our limited influence on the social change processes we are permanently witnessing without having a chance to intervene?" (email February 16, 2003, feedback for Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, Maguire, 2003).

This then leads to the third challenge of scaling up action research projects. For example, Gaventa and Cornwall (2001) observe that as participatory processes of research, evaluation, and appraisal are increasingly embraced by and integrated into large-scale international development policy initiatives, action researchers must work to resist co-optation and the reinforcement of existing power relations. In too many instances, participatory rhetoric gets hijacked by development organizations, which leave their own non-participatory and undemocratic organizational procedures and structures intact and unquestioned. Gaventa and Cornwall (2001) point out that a dilemma for action researchers is to go where the resources are while resisting dilution and co-optation of participation.

These are exciting yet worrisome times for action research. On
the one hand, action research is increasingly acknowledged as a legitimate approach to knowledge creation. On the other hand, action research is increasingly presented as a depoliticized tool for improving practice while being delinked from critical understanding or critique of the power relations, structures, and dynamics that influence those daily practices (see Maguire, 2002).

The constant pressure to depoliticize action research is particularly worrisome in education-based action research. For example, education-based action research can be promoted as a reform tool disconnected from the contextual and structural inequities that influence students' and teachers' daily lives. For example, teachers might use action research to improve their classroom practices so their students can improve their performances as measured by high-stakes standardized tests. A narrow, fragmented focus allows, indeed pushes, educators to ignore the big picture.

Today I'll speak about my experiences with one of these challenges, that is, trying to sustain a connection to action research’s radical roots while working with others to create a space for feminist-informed action research. Feminist Jill Morawski contends that the greatest challenge for feminist scientists, and hence their greatest possible contribution to science, lies in changing the environments in which science is generated, or, as she put it, “modifying the near environment” (1997, p. 677). Creating space for feminist-informed action research is part of that modification.

Let me go back to the 1980's in David Kinsey’s Alternative
Research Methods class. Seeing participatory action research through a feminist lens, I began noticing the androcentric nature of much of the early, trendsetting PAR work of the 1970’s and early 1980’s. I wondered, where are the women? Where are feminist theories and scholarship? What are the implications of this marginalization of feminist theories and women’s everyday experiences for the social construction of knowledge? Indeed, what are the implications for participatory research’s supposed emancipatory project? Just what kind of world are we trying to create through PAR if women and feminisms are ignored? (Maguire, 1987). At the time, as “just a graduate student,” and a woman at that, in a field dominated by many bigger-than-life men, I did not initially trust my own analysis. But I began examining feminist scholarship through the lens of participatory action research. Where was the action? Where was the participation? What were the purposes of feminist scholarship if not connected to action?

Now, over 15 years later, who cares? If participatory action research is supposed to be a transformative or liberatory project and approach to knowledge creation, PAR needs to account for feminists’ diverse views and concerns. Or what is PAR liberating us from and transforming us into?

Whenever one speaks of feminism or self-identifies as a feminist, the question always arises, how is feminism being defined? So let me digress for a moment to share my working definition of feminism. First, let me say that while I use the term “feminism” in the singular for speaking purposes, I recognize the plurality of
feminists and feminist theories (Kemp & Squires, 1997). Feminism contends that women, despite differences, face some form of oppression, devaluation, and exploitation as women. Differences, such as race, ethnicity, class, culture, sexual orientation, physical abilities, religion, age, or one’s nation’s place in the international order create conditions for a web of oppression (Dill and Baca Zinn, 1997). Women and men, given multiple identities, experience their oppressions, struggles, and strengths in specific, changing, historical locations. Despite differing and interwoven experiences of oppression, feminism celebrates women’s strengths and resistance strategies. Women are not, and have not, been helpless or hopeless victims. I believe that feminism requires me to be committed to expose and challenge the web of forces that cause and sustain any and all forms of oppression. Feminism requires a personal commitment to individual and collective action.

**Shared Lens: Feminisms and Action Research**

Twenty or thirty years into action research, much of the mainstream work still ignores feminist perspectives or feminist contributions to the critique of traditional social sciences. As such, feminism is still often excluded from discussion of the theoretical groundings of action research.

In 1998, Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury initiated the project that would become the *Handbook for Action Research* (2001). They invited me to write a chapter on the feminist groundings of action
research. To develop the chapter, I asked many action researchers directly how, if at all, had feminism influenced their work and how, if at all, did they think feminism had influenced the field of action research. Through email exchanges and a brief web-based threaded discussion, many action researchers shared their experiences and opinions. A number of themes emerged from their responses and discussion. The action researchers who contributed indicated that they had been influenced by feminist concepts of voice and silence, multiple identities and positionalities, gender and gender mechanisms, everyday experience as a source of knowledge, and feminists' reconceptualization of power. The final feminist influence on their work was the notion that knowledge is always created in the context of human relationships (Maguire, 2001a). Research then is a relational process, not an “autopsy” (Gorelick, 1991, p. 460). These are some of the principles or lenses for seeing and being in the world that are shared by feminists and feminist-identified action researchers.

Both feminist and action researchers affirm the importance of voice, of creating spaces for muted or marginalized voices. As part of reconceptualizing power, there is a recognition of what might be called the pedagogy of the privileged (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2000). That is, those of us in positions of power must use our voices to question, change, or transform our work places, communities, and relationships, as well as processes, including inquiry, evaluation, and decision making. There is a shared commitment among feminist and action researchers to create knowledge for potential action. As Liz
Stanley (1990) said of feminists in the academy, the purpose is not merely to study the world, but to change it. There is a shared recognition of the social construction of knowledge. Meaningful knowledge is created in the context of relationships, and relationship-building takes time, across time and space. Given that knowledge creation always takes place in the context of relationships, these relationships involve complex power dynamics. Feminism and action research affirm everyday experiences as a source of legitimate knowledge. People experience the everyday through their multiple identities and positions. People's everyday experiences are gendered. That is, if knowledge is socially constructed, feminist and feminist-informed action researchers recognize that men and women, in sexist societies, often have differing social experiences. These are some of the shared principles of feminist and feminist-informed action research.

The near environment

Since 1988, I've been working with a small, but deeply committed group of educators who are trying to create and sustain a place for culturally and regionally relevant, affordable, cutting-edge graduate education in a region historically under-served by public higher education and suffering the legacies of racism. Certainly not all my colleagues, current or past, identify themselves as feminists. Nonetheless, we work collectively as respectful colleagues, intent on modifying the near environment. Within this context, my long haul dream and passion has been to create a space for feminist-informed action research. Of course it is a struggle to modify the near
environment of higher education when its systems are known to have potent *immunities to transformation.* While nothing of consequence can be accomplished alone, I do not presume to speak on my colleagues' behalves today. I share only my perceptions about our long term, on-going efforts.

In 1983, a local school begged universities to come into the community to offer professional, graduate level education for school district personnel. Although at the time there was a two-year branch of the University of New Mexico in the community, there were no permanent graduate education programs. Western New Mexico University responded to the plea of school district officials and in 1984, opened what would become the WNMU Gallup Graduate Studies Center. In 1988 I became the third on-site director of the center. I'd like to share a few lessons from my fifteen-year experience.

I have learned to work with people where they are, physically and philosophically. Essentially, we have worked to create a nurturing and challenging space where people are. In a poor rural state, that is often far from university main campuses and resources. Indeed, we have had to develop a critical mass of people willing to advocate and fight for such a place. Two people can be the beginning of critical mass.

I joke that to create a space for feminist-informed action research, first we had to build a university. Essentially we had to co-opt and
demand university resources for use in the near environment. Through intense advocacy work by Gallup-based faculty on behalf of the students and community, the WNMU Gallup Graduate Studies Center, started in 1984, received its first permanent home, with classrooms, computer lab, and offices all in one location in 1998.

I say this to remind those of you who work in universities such as UMASS Amherst that main campuses do not readily share their resources with citizens in outlying communities. Center-periphery politics, in which those in the powerful center work to keep resources, often scarce anyway, from those less powerful in the periphery, or at the margins, is entrenched. The GGSC grew over the years to consistently serve 400 part-time graduate students, of which...
99% are full-time teachers, administrators, or counselors. Approximately 20% of GGSC students are Native American, and all of our students, regardless of their own race or cultural heritage, work among culturally diverse populations. Out of respect for the multiple identities of our students, a Navajo medicine man, and former WNM GGSC graduate, conducted a traditional Blessing Way for the new facility. This May 2003 we will dedicate an addition, with three more classrooms, offices, and a student lounge, since many of our 400 students travel great distance to attend evening or weekend classes. Again, it may be difficult for you to imagine driving over a hundred miles one way on poorly maintained rural roads to evening or weekend classes after working a full day yourself. This is the context in which we work.

How have the shared principles of feminism and feminist-informed action research shaped my work with others over the past 15 years? We have worked to open a space for the diverse voices of the region and to listen for silences. Although we have a long way to go to continue diversifying faculty, we have a diverse graduate student population and intentionally diverse curricula. We have tried to stay focused on the relational component of knowledge creation, through collaborative learning strategies, by nurturing meaningful relationships among and between faculty, staff, and students, and by creating a physical space that is conducive to dialogue, conversation, shared meals, and studies in otherwise isolating circumstances. Likewise, faculty and students, the vast majority of whom are full-time teachers, counselors, or
administrators, are meaningfully involved in community life. The GGSC works to be a space of hope for people committed to the children and families of northwest New Mexico where the resource poor conditions of the region can be demoralizing. New Mexico is ranked as one of the five worst states for children in the United States. Our county, McKinley, is ranked third poorest in New Mexico for children under 18 (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2002). The other counties in which our students live and work are equally as poor. As educators, GGSC graduate students teach some of the poorest children and families in North America. In addition, many work in Native American communities racing against time to stabilize and restore their indigenous languages (Cantoni, 1996). Our graduate students juggle the demands of full time work and graduate education as well as extended family and community obligations.

While of course the center is not limited to women, a significant percentage of graduate students are women, many of whom are mothers. Our faculty has grown from one full-time member in 1988 to eight full-time faculty, five of whom are women. Garnering university resources for our students, who, due to the state funding formula, pay higher tuition than their main campus counterparts, has involved many battles. Our rural location, in a border town on the edge of the Navajo Nation and the Pueblo of Zuni, is particularly important for students, male or female, with family obligations. Many GGSC students would otherwise find it impossible to leave their communities, jobs, and family to pursue advanced education.
Our programs' curricula have proactively addressed issues of particular significance to women and children's lives, such as sexual abuse and interpersonal violence. Our programs attempt to break down disciplinary boundaries and promote praxis, the integration of theory and field-based practice. We have focused on creating humanizing relationships, educational space, curricula, and methods that honor diversity, from world views to learning styles. Through the creation of a graduate student council, we are committed to democratizing processes. We recognize that every learner, whether teacher or student, comes with a history, and through pedagogical practices, we help people tell their stories and better understand others' stories. For example, I have recently initiated the Boarding School Oral History Project. Essentially we have been committed to co-creating a safe, supportive, yet challenging, potentially inclusive, and transformative space for long haul work.

My actual venture into creating a space specifically for feminist-informed action research is more recent. Much of our early work has supported building the center as described. It is only more recently with the development of a Teacher Education Master's program that my colleague Julie Horwitz and I have been developing an action research program for classroom teachers.

While developing an action research component to the Teacher Education Master's, an initial task has been to help students, and ourselves, understand the beliefs about feminism and feminists that students bring to the program and to their daily work as educators. I have found that many of our graduate students have had little prior
exposure to feminist theories, literature, scholarship, or even to information about the most recent women's movement of the 1960's and 70's. Indeed, I have found that the information that many of the students have about feminism or feminists comes from secondhand mass media sound bytes. For example, I ask students at the beginning of the action research course to write about their impressions or knowledge of feminism. One student, I'll call him Lester, a white K-12 teacher, wrote, "to be quite honest, I really know nothing about feminists, except for the allusions that they were kind of psycho." His perception is typical of the students (Maguire, in press).

The failure of undergraduate teacher education to adequately address gender equity issues is well documented (Sanders, 2002; Blackwell, 2000). The failure of teacher education to adequately address racism, as well as the meaning and privileges of whiteness within the context of multicultural curriculum, is likewise documented (McIntyre, 1997). Our MAT education students do not come from undergraduate education majors. But their undergraduate experiences are consistent with undergraduate education majors who are not adequately exposed to issues of race and gender. Hence, it is necessary to include extensive materials and discussions that address equity issues.

We are committed to action research, well connected to its radical roots, and envision an approach to action research where teachers and students are co-researchers whose roles include the creation of knowledge and advocacy for more democratic, caring, just, and safe schools (Burnaford, Fischer, & Hobson, 2001; Noffke & Stevenson,
As we began the process of developing a critical mass of local teacher action researchers and a support system to nurture local action research efforts, students and faculty realized that we needed to start with small scale, classroom-focused inquiry. Many of the teachers enrolled in the MAT program did not feel that they had the leverage or sufficient allies to initiate school-wide action research. We have a long haul ahead of us.

bell hooks noted that “women's liberationists called on all women to join the feminist movement, but they did not continually stress that men should assume responsibility for actively struggling to end sexist oppression” (1998, p. 285). Everyone comes with gender—men are gendered too. Just as feminism has moved from “theorizing women to theorizing gender” (Kemps & Squires, 1997, p. 11), we are moving in the action research program to help both men and women students understand societal gendering mechanisms, and then work to unsettle limiting or rigid gender expectations. Indeed, as basic as it seems, the groundwork for creating space for feminist-informed action research begins with exposing our students, who are working classroom teachers, to feminist literature and scholarship written by and about diverse feminists. Intentionally including feminism as part of the theoretical underpinnings of classroom action research seems to be energizing new ground for many students. As their views of feminism shift through meaningful exposure, some ask, “Why continue to use the term feminism when it comes with so much baggage?”

As Paula Kamen wrote in Feminist Fatale, “A natural response is
to change the word feminist to a word with fewer stigmas attached. But invariably the same thing will happen to that magical word. Part of the radical connotation of feminism is not due to the word, but to the action. The act of a woman standing up for herself is radical whether she calls herself a feminist or not” (pp. 50-51). I see part of my work as reclaiming the f-word (Maguire, in press). It is likewise important to push men teachers to explore their own gendered experiences and lenses, and see how those shape and influence their daily practices as classroom teachers.

I have also worked with the next generation of feminist-informed action researchers, a group of sixth grade girls, on a small-scale, action research project. The girls identified a community problem that they wanted to research and act on. Through discussion, they decided to look more closely at the local Humane Society Shelter. In particular, they were concerned about the conditions that led to the annual euthanization of hundreds of animals, especially cats and dogs. Toward that end, they spent over 25 hours at the shelter, moving beyond gathering abstract data to gathering experiential information through action. The girls and I spent many Saturdays at the shelter bathing, grooming, and playing with puppies to make them more adoptable. The girls each completed a photo-documentation project of a “Day in the Life of a Puppy” on death row as they put it. We enlisted the help of a local woman photographer and local woman artist in the photo-voice project. Each girl exhibited a series of her photos with a piece of poetry at a local gallery to educate the community on the problem of
abandoned animals. The girls created knowledge through action, and further used their knowledge to educate the community.

Over the years I have also been networking with other feminist-identified action researchers worldwide. After the ironic marginalization of women and feminist issues at the 1997 World Congress on Participatory Action Research, many of us in the informal network decided, in the words of Yoland Wadsworth, that “we (feminist participatory action researchers) cannot depend on the ventriloquism of good but powerful men” (via email communication). We moved forward on a number of efforts.

With a grant from SPSSI (Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues), Mary Brydon-Miller, Alice McIntyre, and I initiated a small, working conference in June 2001 called “Bridging the Gap,” to bring together feminist scholars and feminist participatory action researchers. The conference, and six months of pre-conference web-based discussion among participants, was part of the effort of feminists in the action research arena to create more space for and attention to feminism within participatory action research. Jill Chrisp, a participant from New Zealand, expanded the effort across geographical and cultural boundaries with an action research and feminism conference at the Waariki Institute of Technology, Rotorua, Aotearo/New Zealand.

The conference included Yoland Wadsworth, President of ALARPM, a long time advocate of feminist PAR. Nimat Barazangi of Cornell also initiated a follow-up effort, the “Feminism and Participatory Action Research (ParFem)” conference at Cornell.
Another effort to bring together feminism and action research was initiated by Gunilla Harnsten at the now dismantled Centre for Feminist Research at the University of Uppsala, Sweden in January 2003. The work begun by participants at the “Bridging the Gap” conference has evolved into a book, Traveling Companions: Feminism, Teaching, and Action Research (Brydon-Miller, Maguire, & McIntyre, in press; see also http://www.wnmu.org/tc.html ). I share these efforts to demonstrate that the action research work we are involved with at the Gallup center is connected to a supportive and active informal network of feminist action researchers around the world, each working to modify her or his own near environment and to integrate feminism and action research. I know that many of you here are also involved in this work.

Based on my experiences both in Gallup and within the informal network of feminist-identified action researchers, let me identify some suggestions for the struggles ahead. Much of my focus is on teacher education, and hence the training of teacher action researchers, as this is my daily work. However, I hope that these suggestions are applicable to your particular context.

First, it is critical to continue to engage everyday educators, women and men, in exploring and unsettling gender constructs and their own beliefs about feminists and feminisms. From your location here in the Pioneer Valley with five major universities and influential women studies departments and programs, it may be hard for you to imagine the hundreds of small teacher education programs at small colleges which are extremely under-resourced, have few
women's or feminist studies resources to draw from, and are feeling the increasing curriculum pressure of the No Child Left Behind legislation. Hundreds of teachers, and not just those in North America, are being trained in programs with little if any emphasis on gender issues. With the pressures of No Child Left Behind influencing teacher education programs in the USA, the room for equity and social justice issues in curricula is increasingly constrained.

While I have learned the importance of starting where people are, geographically and philosophically, frankly I have been taken aback by the images and opinions that everyday teachers have about feminism and accomplishments of the women's movements in the U. S. and worldwide. This is particularly ironic as many educators, women and men, enjoy the benefits achieved through feminist activism. Similarly, as more and more teacher education programs include teacher action research, it is critical to maintain linkages to PAR's radical roots. It is important to engage educators, whether K-12 or university-based, which includes many of us in this audience, in continuing to examine the connections among our multiple identities, our worldviews, and our action research work.

All of us must continue to recognize the privileges we have while simultaneously working to explicitly name and unsettle inequitable power structures around us. Frankly, we have to use the power we have in our various institutions, organizations, and agencies to modify the power inequities in our environments and relationships. If not us, then who?
Another challenge is to respect and encourage educators to explore the connections between their religious and spiritual beliefs and social justice work, including action research. The rise of fundamentalist Christianity and fundamentalist Islam certainly complicates the conditions for open and mutually respectful dialogue among people with differing religious views. Nonetheless, as action researchers examine how their multiple identities impact the doing of action research to change daily practices and the conditions in which they practice, we simply have to be willing to take on this complicated, emotionally charged work of exploring how our spiritual groundings impact our action research.

For those of you, like myself, who work within university settings, we must hold universities’ feet to fire. The university bureaucracy, while made up of many individual good people, takes on a life of its own in activating its immune responses to politicized work. Likewise, we have to hold our own feet to the fire as action research educators. I struggle to keep learning about my own practices by engaging in a formalized, feminist informed action research, when like each of you, I am over-extended and tired. Do you know a colleague who is also a parent who is not exhausted? My colleague Julie Horwitz and I are stretched to find time to study meaningfully and improve our own daily practices, the very work we expect of our graduate teacher education candidates, each of whom works fulltime as a K-12 teacher while pursuing graduate studies on nights and weekends.

In teacher action research, educators face a particular struggle,
that is, finding meaningful ways to include children's voices and concerns in teacher action research. There is so much work to do to include children as co-researchers and knowledge producers in educational systems that rarely affirm children's voices and views. We have to keep pushing ourselves as action researchers to blend the benefits of qualitative and quantitative research data collection methods. Quantitative data has been essential to the work of women's movements around the world, providing information on interpersonal violence, sexual abuse, wages, productivity, and so forth.

Through continued networking, formal and informal, we must continue developing and building sustainable supports for feminist-informed action research. For example, Mary Brydon-Miller and I are beginning to develop action research training materials and resources that focus on feminist issues. There are many possible intervention points in our communities and universities, such as the nitty-gritty work on curriculum committees and so forth. Perhaps this seems trivial to many of you in large research institutions with well-placed women's studies or feminist studies departments. Again, I can tell you that hundreds of teachers are trained with little focus on gender and other social justice issues. Building sustainable support for feminist-informed action research will remain excruciatingly difficult in the era of No Child Left Behind in the US, and its counterpart focus in other nations on high-stakes testing as the sole measure of student achievement, and hence teacher effectiveness. Many classroom teachers, that university based-folks
like myself are trying to engage in feminist-informed action research, are exhausted and demoralized by the daily classroom demands on their students and themselves as a result of high-stakes testing.

In closing, let me say that the efforts needed to promote and engage in feminist-informed action research are daunting. I have tried to share with you some of the work I have been doing over the years to create a space for feminist-informed action research. My context is a graduate program for working educators that is housed in an extended university in a historically under-served and under-resourced area struggling with the legacies of racism. I have been fortunate to be able to draw on the strengths and passions of my colleagues, students, community members, and an incredible worldwide network of feminist-identified action researchers. I am fortunate to likewise draw on the support of the extended community of the Center for International Education. Together, we have so much work to do.

Thank you.
REFERENCES:


ENDNOTES:

' This paper was initially given at the April 2003 Kinsey Series as a PowerPoint presentation with more photos than text. I have subsequently revised it as a paper with fewer photos.

ii I recognize the multiplicity of feminisms. However, I use feminism in the singular for smoother reading.

iii My university colleagues at the Gallup Graduate Studies Center include Elaine Jordan, Roy Howard, Julie Horwitz, Corine Frankland, Rich Yzenbaard, Jonathan Dooley, and Marita Delaney. Others who have worked with us as full-time faculty include Genniver Bell and Libby Quattromani. There are many other adjunct faculty, too numerous to name here, who have worked with us over the years.

iv Here I mean the academy in general, not solely my university.

v I borrow this phrase from Geoff Mead (2002)

vi In 1989 my long time colleague Elaine Jordan became the director of the GGSC. Since then we have rotated the position among ourselves and other faculty. The position is now a chairperson. I have been the current chair since 2001.

vii A past colleague, Libby Quatromani, first opened the door for action research by introducing it in a curriculum course for administrators. However, the practice of action research was not fully integrated into the masters program.