Beyond Capturing the Voice: Student Participatory Action Research (SPAR) at Cerro Coso Community College

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Presentation Goals and Outcomes

- Increase understanding of CBPAR and its benefits across stakeholders across California Higher Ed Institutions
- Student Participatory Action Research is considered as an appropriate research approach by more college/university IR/IE Offices
- A “Community of Learning” is established on participatory inquiry and student engagement practices across California
Cerro Coso — At a Glance

- AY 2018-19 Unduplicated Student Headcount is 9,953
- Five (5) Physical Campuses
- Spans 18,000 sq. miles across four (4) CA Counties
- Total of 44 Service Area Zip Codes
- Statewide leader in Online/ Distance Education
- Statewide leader in Prison Education: Tehachapi CCI & California City Correctional Facility (CAC)
- Office of Institutional Research (OIR) established in 2017
What is Community-based Participatory Action Research?

Community-based participatory research (CBPAR) is research conducted by and for those most directly affected by the issue, condition, situation. The data collected is intended to be used to create drive positive actions.

In Student Participatory Action Research, students are equal collaborators in the research process.
Benefits of CBPAR for OIRs

Institutional Research Offices that use CBPAR as a framework for research may be able to achieve:

- **Strengthened collaboration**: equitable partnerships of multiple stakeholder groups in all phases of research
- **Increased research buy-in**: that promotes action for the benefit of all
- **Incorporated students**: as subject matter experts (not just as a unit of analysis)
- **Build-on**: of research capacity and strengths of college OIRs
Benefits of CBPAR at California Higher Ed Institutions

Institutions that use CBPAR as a framework for research can achieve the following:

• Promote joint learning, skill-sharing and capacity building among all partners (i.e. IR staff, faculty data champions, student leaders, etc.)

• Foster shared commitment in addressing the unique barriers to student success specific to your college

• Engage students in a long(er)-term process and enhancing their community college experience
CREATING THE PLAN

Theoretical framework → Pedagogy → Curriculum design
Infusing CBPAR into Pedagogy

❖ Strong partnership between Institutional Research and Faculty is an integral part of the pedagogy of CBPAR at Cerro Coso.

❖ Adult Learning Theory/Learning pyramid

❖ The PAR praxis is offered as an experimental design/applied research course in selective post-grad and doctoral programs, Cerro Coso is the first college to implement this form of CBPAR at the CA community-college level and formally introduce it as a promising practice.
How do you choose the ‘right’ pilot course for CBPAR?

Qualities of an ideal course:
Class has a pre-existing component or focus on research, such as Basic Research Methods, Social Science Statistics, Cultural Anthropology, Library Sciences, etc.

*It’s important to note that there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ course to pilot CBPAR. The only criteria is a class and partnerships committed to leveraging research to create meaningful change.
## Community-Based Participatory Action Research Timeline (Phase I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CBPAR Phase</th>
<th>When is this happening?</th>
<th>Who is involved?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to CBPAR</td>
<td>Week of 10/22</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examining the issues</td>
<td>Week of 10/29</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formulating a research question</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training on research Methods</td>
<td>Week of 11/5</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning the study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collecting data</td>
<td>Week of 11/12</td>
<td>Student Researchers</td>
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<td>Week of 11/19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyzing data</td>
<td>Week of 11/26</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report Out</td>
<td>Finals Week</td>
<td>Student Researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing actions based on the data collected</td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Three:
Read Ch. 3, Planning Research: Generating a Question
Research Topic Due in Discussion Forum

Four:
Read Ch. 4, Practical Issues in Planning Your Research

Five:
Read Ch. 5, Measurement and Sampling
Literature review

Six-Eight:
Read Ch. 6, Conducting an Experiment (Focus Group workshop)
Read Ch. 14, Considering Cultural and Individual Differences
The Fall-18 Research Methods Team

Theory to Implementation: Phase One
SPAR Pilot at Cerro Coso (Phase I, Fall 2018)

- **Recruited**: Students in the Fall 2018 PSYC C271 course are recruited into the SPAR Pilot Project (Phase I), which has CBPAR praxis integrated into the curriculum.

- **Trained**: Students learned basic research methods from course professor and received hands-on training/coaching on mixed-methods data collection from IR staff.

- **Aligned**: Students developed research questions and co-designed projects to be in direct alignment with two CCC student success initiatives: Student Equity and Guided Pathways.
How does SPAR relate to Student EQUITY?

SPAR is intentionally designed to increase **equitable research practices** within institutions by closing participation gaps.

SPAR Researchers can ask what can *WE* do to help?

Some may need more than others, to gain an EQUAL chance.

SPAR Researchers Can ask what needs are *NOT* met?

Equity image courtesy of: https://www.theodysseyonline.com/act-now
How does SPAR relate to Guided PATHWAYS?

SPAR Researchers can ask:

- What prevent students from staying on the path?
- How do students find the path?
- What is unclear about the path?
- What are the goals?
In the fall semester of 2018, using these themes of Equity and Guided Pathways, students examined existing survey data and identified gaps surrounding Food Insecurity and Transfer Services.

Student Researchers developed and facilitated five (5) student-centered focus groups with Cerro Coso IWV students (n=39)*.

The ownership afforded to us as student researchers by this project model made us feel engaged and empowered in ways we never had before.

*Note: Focus Group sample size may include the duplicated counts of an individual student that participated in different sessions.
SPAR Pilot at Cerro Coso (Phase II, Spring 2019)

• Phase II integrated CBPAR praxis to strengthen the college’s institutional research capacity.

• SPAR Members became paid OIR Student Workers for Phase II in Spring 2019

• SPAR worked collaboratively and applied their existing research skills towards developing and implementing a large-scale mixed-methods Enrollment Research Study

• This college-endorsed research project examined a myriad of student success factors related to Guided Pathways and Student Equity at Cerro Coso.

• Phase II was intentionally designed to incorporate at least one “Data-to-Action” outcome.
## Community-Based Participatory Action Research Timeline (Phase II)

### Community-Based Participatory Action Research Timeline

*Spring 2019 | SPAR Implementation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CB-PAR Phase II</th>
<th>When is this happening?</th>
<th>Who is involved?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to SPAR Members</td>
<td>Week One</td>
<td>SPAR Members and IR Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Intro to IR data ethics</td>
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<td>- FERPA Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissemination of Fall-19 Research Findings at FLEX Day (Faculty PD)</td>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td>SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Planning and practice</td>
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<td>- Presentation to Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data-to-Action</td>
<td>Week Three</td>
<td>SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reflection Assignments</td>
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<td>- Presentations to Admin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissemination Research Findings at RP Conference 2019</td>
<td>Week Four</td>
<td>SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff</td>
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<td>- Planning and practice</td>
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<td>- Creation of Poster Boards</td>
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<tr>
<td>CB-PAR Phase II (cont.)</td>
<td>When is this happening?</td>
<td>Who is involved?</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW Research Project – Enrollment Study</td>
<td>Week Four</td>
<td>SPAR Members and IR Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning the study</td>
<td>Weeks Five - Seven</td>
<td>SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Co-designing research plan and timeline</td>
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<td>-Roles and responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Re)Training on research Methods</td>
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<td>-Focus Group Facilitation</td>
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<td>-Note-taking &amp; Transcribing</td>
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<td>-Survey Design &amp; SurveyMonkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collecting data</td>
<td>Weeks Eight - Eleven</td>
<td>All</td>
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<td>Analyzing data</td>
<td>Weeks Twelve – Fifteen</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training on Report Writing</td>
<td>Week Sixteen</td>
<td>SPAR Members and IR Staff</td>
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<td>Final Report Out – All Staff Professional Development Day</td>
<td>Post-Commencement</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing actions based on the data collected</td>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>SPAR Members and IR Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>SPAR Members, Faculty and IR Staff</td>
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SPAR Pilot Phase II: Highlights

- Student Researchers authored their own focus group questions
- Data Dissemination
- All Staff Professional Development Day Presentation
- Flex Day Sessions
- Student authored research briefs (2)
- Presentation and Video Interview at RP Conference
Data to Action

✓ Disseminate data to other student groups (i.e. student govt, Umoja, Latinos Unidos, etc.)

✓ Disseminate data to college committees (i.e. academic senate, Student Success Support Program Committee, etc.)

✓ Creation of summary report to aid in creation of food pantry

✓ Creation of summary report to aid in creation of an in-person Transfer Center and services offered

“Students respond to students, and the knowledge of what’s happening can improve or create resources for the students in need.”
-SPAR Student Researcher

“Student[s], community members, faculty. Each of these groups have a stake in the research and should actively be a part of the the conversation and action.”
-SPAR Student Researcher
OUTCOMES

A post-Phase evaluation survey tool using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree) measured SPAR-member experiences across Four Main Areas:

A. Benefits to Research Departments
B. Benefits to Pathways and Equity
C. Benefits to Student Researchers
D. Room for Improvement

* 1. Did the CBPAR project enhance your overall PSYC C271 course experience?
   - Yes
   - No

* 2. Please check all the activities you have experienced in this CBPAR course
   - Researched a problem / issue
   - Reported CBPAR findings in class (orally, in writing, or via technological media)
   - Attended meetings with community partners
   - Reported CBPAR findings to policy-makers (orally, in writing, or via technological media)
   - Interacted with community members and / or partners outside of meetings
   - Participated in a community-based program / project
   - Indicate if other (please specify)

* 3. Please choose the answer that best fits your experience in this course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
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Benefits to Research Departments

Enhanced my perceptions on who can conduct and lead research projects in higher ed.

- PHASE 1 (N=7) 4.86
- PHASE 2 (N=5) 5.00

Increased my interactions with research staff.

- PHASE 1 (N=7) 5.00
- PHASE 2 (N=5) 5.00

Increased my interest in the field of research.

- PHASE 1 (N=7) 4.86
- PHASE 2 (N=5) 5.00
B.

Benefits to Pathways and Equity

Enhanced my understanding of local issues impacting student pathways at Cerro Coso.

Enhanced my understanding of equity issues affecting Cerro Coso students.

Deepened my understanding of others who are not like me.

- PHASE 1 (N=7)
- PHASE 2 (N=5)
C. Unplanned Stat-boosts for SPAR student researchers:

- **+CHANGE** in power dynamics when students interact with faculty and college admin as an equal collaborator—they *know* they have an equal seat at the table.

- **+GROWTH** in project management skills when students co-design and co-lead a *real* research project—they see *tangible* improvements in their career-readiness.

- **+CONTROL** in solution-finding when students know they don’t have to rely on the college to take steps toward creating positive outcomes for their success—they can help drive those actions!
D.

Room for Improvement

- **Helped improve my personal qualities.**
  - Phase 1 (N=7): 4.14
  - Phase 2 (N=5): 4.60

- **There was sufficient time in the term to execute my CBPAR project.**
  - Phase 1 (N=7): 3.57
  - Phase 2 (N=5): 3.80

- **Interactions with college faculty/staff members were generally positive.**
  - Phase 1 (N=7): 5.00
  - Phase 2 (N=5): 4.60
LESSONS LEARNED

Students | Faculty | IR Office
Lessons Learned by SPAR Students

- Becoming a researcher is not an unattainable goal
- Get the word out early for focus groups
- Have plenty of practice for group facilitation, including role-play
- Incentivize your participants
- Students will trust students, so front-load privacy concerns
- Prepare for possible pushback

After participating in the SPAR project it opened my eyes to who can do research...we are all researchers and have the opportunity to better our experiences.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons Learned by Faculty and OIR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit from various pools of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing a SPAR pilot is a time intensive project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong partnership with Faculty and OIR is required to successfully implement a SPAR pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be mindful of the intricate power dynamics and remain aware of the strengths and limitations of all parties involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students as active research collaborators throughout the process strengthen institutional research design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student voice is a powerful tool to harness and advocate for institutional change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How ready is your institution?

- How strong are your relationships with faculty? OIR?
- What disciplines will pair well with SPAR initiatives
- What areas do you think CBPAR would be instrumental to strengthen student success?
What’s the next step in SPAR’s evolution?

- Facilitating SPAR in different modalities on-site and online
- Infusion of SPAR to existing Honor Program specialty research projects
- Hiring student workers to be SPAR researchers with embedded research trainings
What are some resources?

Public Science Project:  https://publicscienceproject.org/


Cerro Coso’s Short Guide to CPBAR at Community Colleges (Coming Soon!!)
Questions?
To continue the conversation...

Contact:

● Nakysa Cummings, Professor of Psychology at ncumming@cerrocoso.edu

● Ryan Khamkongsay, College Institutional Researcher at ryan.Khamkongsay@cerrocoso.edu

● Davis Kunz, Student Researcher at davis.kunz@cerrocoso.edu