

SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION: THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Abstract

The Systematization of Experiences, as an exercise for the production of critical knowledge through practice, has increasingly gained significance in popular education experiences in Latin America, as well as in other contexts. Many times mistaken as mere data collection or the description of events, or even as the production of a synthesised report of an experience, the conceptualisations concerning the systematisation of experiences have created interesting points of reflection regarding its specific identity. The present article deals with this challenge by proposing the particular features, alongside the common and complementary ones, that the systematization of experiences would have in relation to other exercises of creating knowledge such as evaluation and systematization. It also places this reflection not only in a conceptual but also in a historical frame of reference, since it defines these relationships as a part of the challenge of building new epistemologies which confront the traditional ways of producing scientific knowledge and the dominant ways of producing and spreading know-how.

What to learn, how to learn, why learn, why and for whom do we learn – and consequently, why and against whom do we not learn – are theoretico-practical and not intellectual issues that we propose regarding the act of learning (...) there are, for this very reason, no neutral specialists, "owners" of neutral techniques... there are no "neutral methodologists" (PAULO FREIRE - Letters to Guinea- Bissau)

Three sisters from the same family (1)

One of the most common difficulties we come across when trying to clarify what exactly the systematization of experiences entails is the lack of boundaries defining the difference between social experience, evaluation and research. Thus, we will attempt to explore some of the avenues that may lead to a clarification of this issue.

Let us begin by highlighting that these three activities are like "sisters from the same family": they all work towards the same goal of understanding reality in order to be able to change it and all three activities are viewed within the context of learning.

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SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday

A second relevant aspect to bear in mind is that we believe evaluation, research and systematization of experiences feed off of one another and that none of the three can replace any other, and therefore we must put them all into practice. In order to make progress regarding the theoretical and practical challenges that popular education, organisation or popular participation projects involve, we cannot afford to forgo any of the activities.

In a third approach, we shall attempt to highlight some of the similarities and the specific individual contributions of each activity, using the most traditional definitions of evaluation and research as reference, given that many different types and approaches exist in this regard:

- Evaluation, as with systematization, represents an initial level of conceptual development. Its learning objective is immediate practice by those performing the evaluation. However, the aim of evaluation is not to interpret the logic of the process experienced, but fundamentally to analyse, measure or assess the results obtained, comparing them with the initial diagnosis and the objectives or aims that were initially proposed, highlighting the gaps between what was planned and what was achieved from those plans. Said analysis, measurement and evaluation are also learning processes and are not limited to using quantitative data, but rather aspire to identify the qualitative aspects that are present in the results.

- Both evaluation and systematization involve performing an exercise in abstraction either based on or through practice. However, whilst systematization focuses more on the dynamics and movement of the processes, evaluation places more emphasis on whether or not the results have been achieved. Thus, based on the individual contribution of each one, both become essential factors in building upon our learning experiences.

- This initial level of conceptualisation reached through both evaluation and systematization is the basis for a more extensive and profound process of theorisation. To advance on to further levels of conceptual reflection, it will be necessary to link the knowledge gained directly from individual practices with the knowledge accumulated, synthesised and structured in diverse existing theoretical proposals.

Therefore, evaluation must be considered an educational act that is useful to all those who participate in the experience, rather than a formal task that weighs the differences between costs and benefits, the number of results forecast and obtained, tasks completed or not. As with the systematization of experiences, evaluation must reach practical conclusions and both must feed off one another with the aim of coming together to achieve their common goal: improving the quality of our practices.

In turn, social research (the aim of which is not limited to experience itself, but could cover multiple phenomena, processes and structures) is an exercise that seeks to contribute to the construction of scientific knowledge, characterised in this way because they are based upon a doctrine understood as a combination of essential propositions that aim to understand and explain society's movements and

**SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday**

contradictions and that are permanently confronted and enriched with knowledge gained in a methodical and systematic way. The results of this research can be verified, compared and contrasted in order to create levels of generalisation and transferability.

The products of scientific knowledge are incorporated into systems that must be constantly enriched with the contributions of the relevant scientific community. Social research gives us an understanding of the experiences within a wider reference framework and enables us to explain the interrelationships and interdependencies that exist in various phenomena from socio-historic reality. In this way, research can enrich the critical interpretation of the direct practice performed by the systematization of experiences, contributing to the knowledge dialogue with new theoretical and conceptual elements. Thus we are able to reach a greater degree of abstraction.

As with evaluation, research and systematization must feed off of one another, with each activity contributing its own individual characteristics. Each one constitutes a particular way of approaching an understanding of reality and both are irreplaceable. If we were to confuse them we would lose the specific qualities that they offer us. However, we should not play one off against the other either, as neither of them can replace or override what the other does. Therefore, we affirm the extreme importance of both activities. As well as recognising the importance and urgency of fostering systematization processes for our education, organisation or participation experiences, we also reaffirm the no less important need of including the research dimension in our organisations.

Convergence and divergence, interrogations and research

While what we have discussed above provides us with a general reference framework, in practice we see that on many occasions we encounter "convergences" and "divergences" between these three activities. It therefore makes sense to explain in greater depth the common ground that these activities share and the individual features that each one contributes. Our primary concern focuses on how to incorporate in an effective, viable and permanent manner processes and products relating to the evaluation, research and systematization of experiences in our everyday jobs and in the dynamics of our organisations and institutions, knowing that in certain situations and depending on the ways they are used, we will find ourselves at crossroads and converging paths in which the three activities mix, since they share the same purpose. For example: Firstly, when we speak about the production of transforming knowledge, we are not describing knowledge with a transforming "discourse", but a process completed by social subjects with the ability to build a critical understanding linked to the dilemmas of social practice and the knowledge that said social practice produces. Therefore, the social subjects develop, as a component of the practice itself, the ability to foster and think about transforming actions. This can be achieved through specific research or evaluation efforts, or by standardising

**SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday**

experiences to the extent that they are linked to the processes and challenges of social practice.

The integrality of the processes and perspectives

We begin, therefore, with the need for an integral and integrating perspective on social practice in which the discussion regarding the manners of producing knowledge (its epistemology), must always be historically grounded, which in turn demands of us a political position with regards to the type of knowledge that is produced or that needs to be produced in a reality such as that of Latin America.

In this context, and more specifically, in relation to education, participation and social organisation processes carried out by social movements, NGOs and other bodies, this implies that we must always have an overall perspective of the cycle created by the ties between projects and processes, which normally includes instances of:

- a) preliminary diagnosis (linked to broader RESEARCH tasks)
- b) PROJECT design or strategic planning,
- c) drafting action plans
- d) implementation PROCESSES
- e) monitoring and tracking the implementation
- f) EVALUATION of the project and SYSTEMATIZATION of the experience

Throughout this cycle, a wealth of diverse information is identified and generated that on many occasions is not properly structured and organised in order to make the best use of it during the production of knowledge and that, in turn, allows useful learning experiences to be built that nurture the organisation's action. Therefore, we must highlight the importance of having an institutional record-keeping system that enables experiences to be used efficiently as raw material to nurture an institutional culture of reflection and learning. (2)

However, the central topic of integrality does not lie in organising a sequence of activities taking place in the project-process "trajectory", as if it were linear, but in the interrelationships and interdependence between all the cycle's components: upon deciding to perform a diagnosis at a specific place or on a certain topic, options have already been seen and knowledge has already been expressed; the ultimate purpose of the project is now depicted in the way its aims and stages are structured; throughout the implementation unexpected situations and circumstances will arise that will bring up new ideas or opinions that confirm or modify the elements highlighted in the diagnosis or change the scheduled objectives, etc. Therefore, it is naive to think these activities could be divided into completely separate phases: first, research, then, implementation, and subsequently, monitoring, systematization and evaluation, etc. Even though there may be instances where one of these aspects dominates over the others, we will not be able to separate them completely in the reality of the processes, performing them, thinking about them and the context in which they are carried out.

SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday

A new knowledge paradigm from "the South"

In order to coherently deal with process integrality, over recent decades, doubts have arisen regarding the traditional ways of understanding research and scientific knowledge production in the West, whose historical decontextualisation and desire to be applied universally has been at the service of colonialism and capitalist globalisation, shifting the focus away from other ways of understanding the world and life and excluding the individuals that create said ways of understanding. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2008) highlights (3), a new emancipating political culture must be created, fostering post-capitalist and decolonial thought, in a counter-hegemonic initiative. Therefore, it is essential to assess what has emerged from the social and political movements of the "South" as the bearer of other kinds of knowledge, comprehensive world views, ways of coming to terms with history, that confront traditional positivistic science and the prevalent ways in which knowledge is produced and circulated. In this sense, it is based on these other experiences that must be assessed, communicated and questioned mutually, where other research methods and approaches are conceived that may help in the understanding of and contribution to the construction of other possible worlds.

This has brought into question the male and predominantly white Western learning method paradigm based on Cartesian rationalism to sustain historicized, intersubjective and "feeling-thought" knowledge and perspectives, which link reason and desire, going beyond the positivistic concept of social research and the abstract universalistic notion of so-called scientific knowledge.

It has also broken down the traditional dichotomies of nature-culture, reason-emotion, expert knowledge-popular wisdom, manual labour-intellectual work. In particular, it has broken with the essence of these dichotomies: the separation between the subject and the object in research, in which from a hierarchical perspective the production of scientific and true knowledge can only be realised by a handful of individuals named researchers and via a standardised procedure whose rules must be followed scrupulously in order for the research to be considered legitimate (4).

As highlighted by Marco Raúl Mejía (2009) (5), we are confronted by new realities now perceived in all their complexity, which require new forms and methods of explanation: the ideas of truth and totality have been redefined; there is a change in the idea of time, once viewed as linear, fixed, determined; the essence of disciplinary knowledge is shattered as we move towards inter- and cross-disciplinary perspectives; the traditional conceptual system, rigorous in its procedures, objective, deterministic, which based its reasoning on formal logic and was strengthened by its corroboration, can no longer adequately explain new phenomena.

Research alternatives linked to popular education processes

Within the research trends that sustain the importance of a qualitative, multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approach, based on the proposition stating that

**SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday**

objective reality does not exist, but rather that we become familiar with reality through what we set out to discover, in Latin America there are two proposals that are of particular relevance: thematic investigation and participatory action research.

Thematic research was suggested by Paulo and Elza Freire as part of their methodological proposal for adult literacy, on the basis of the affirmation of the human being as creator of culture, and language as a means of expressing one's vision of the world. Said proposal is based on the vocabulary of illiterate people so that, through dialogue with them, those teaching them to read and write can identify what the "generating themes" of subsequent problematisation, critical reflection or "conscientisation" procedures will be. Some "generating words" correspond to these generating themes, reflecting in a particularly meaningful way the contents of the problematisation. Furthermore, they can be structured according to progressive syllabic and syntactic complexity, thus constituting a set of combinations of syllables and phrases that enable the reading and writing learning process to become a conscious, active and living mechanism, but also for it to become a way of "critically reading the world in order to be able to write their own story".

Thematic research therefore requires people from outside these communities to be willing to partake in a dialogic learning process and to have excellent listening skills. In the education-research process (as research forms part of the education process rather than being considered a prior step), the distance between those teaching literacy skills and the students will gradually decrease because, even though in theory the generating themes are identified primarily by those organising the literacy programmes, the reflection upon each generating word will depend on those who are learning the literacy skills. In this mutual process of learning, discovery and knowledge, confidence and challenge building Freire's (1996) assertion will be fulfilled: "The educator learns through teaching and the student teaches through learning", making research and critical reflection an element, a permanent dimension in the teaching profession (6).

Participatory action research

The proposals presented to us under this concept have a wide range of approaches and nuances, produced by epistemological stances or ideologies that are different or are marked by the place there were developed (such as an academic environment, or in popular education environments or social movements). We believe, as indicated in the previous chapter, Participatory Action Research to be an approach to research that originated primarily in Latin America, whose aim is the full participation of people from popular sectors in the analysis of their own reality, with the aim of promoting social transformation favouring the following groups of people: the oppressed, discriminated, marginalized and exploited. It is, in this sense, an epistemological, theoretical, ethical, political and methodological option.

**SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday**

“The Participatory Action Research (PAR) method combines two processes; that of learning and that of acting, involving the population whose reality is discussed in this process. In each PAR project the three elements are combined in varying quantities. a) Research consists of a reflexive, systematic, controlled and critical process, the aim of which is to study a specific aspect of reality with an express practical purpose. b) Action is not only the ultimate purpose of the research, but also represents a source of knowledge, whilst at the same time conducting the study itself is a form of intervention. c) Participation means that it is not only the professional researchers that are involved in the process, but also the project's target community; that they are not considered as mere research objects but as active subjects that contribute to learning about and transforming their own reality.

PAR's purpose is to change the reality of and confront the issues affecting a population by using said population's resources and participation, which is embodied in the following specific objectives: a) Generating liberating knowledge based on their own popular knowledge, which grows, expresses and structures itself via the research process carried out by the population itself and which the researches simply facilitate by contributing methodological tools. b) As a consequence of this knowledge, a process of empowerment is set in motion or an increase in political power (in a broad sense) and a strategy to bring about change is started or consolidated. c) Connecting this process of knowledge, empowerment and action locally with similar processes in other places, in such a way that it creates a horizontal and vertical framework which enables the process to expand and the social reality to be transformed”. (7)

In general terms its main characteristics are as follows (8):

- The starting point is the vision of reality as a whole formed by researchers who are engaged in their dilemmas and challenges.
- The processes and structures are understood in their historical dimension.
- Theory and practice are permanently linked, in cycles of action, reflection and action.
- Research is seen as a social process that makes it possible to discern whether or not there is correspondence between the subjects' practices, their understanding of them and the situations in which they live.
- The people from the communities and those whose role it is to carry out the research define the objectives of the research and jointly produce critical knowledge aimed at social transformation. Therefore, the results of the research are applied to the specific reality.
- The subject-object relationship becomes a subject-subject relationship through dialogue and involves a stance with regards to the themes and issues and a lack of neutrality.
- Research and action become one single participatory process. In this latter sense, it explicitly involves negating those forms of research that involve people from the communities in processes defined by external agents, to highlight the central importance of allowing all the people to assume a decisive role throughout the process.

**SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday**

- The synchronous and quantitative nature of traditional research is replaced by a diachronic focus and the integration of qualitative and quantitative elements.
- It values popular wisdom as a valid form of knowing the world, democratically distributing the power of knowledge.
- This is more complex than traditional research.
- It does not possess a closed methodological model or outline, but instead, it calls for criteria that move us closer to the creation of "an investigative context that is more open and procedural so that the results themselves are reintroduced into the process to make it more extensive" (Villasante, 1994) (9).

In short, despite all the variations, Participatory Action Research proposals and thematic research have a shared characteristic: concern for the use of research to transform reality, even though they place emphasis on different concepts and have different names. In this sense, they coincide, as we have shown, with the main aims of the Systematization of Experiences. It would therefore make sense to take popular education, organisation and participation experiences as the approach through which to conduct research processes.

Thus, while in general terms we could state that the Systematization of Experiences coincides with the foundations of participatory research and action, we cannot restrict it to simply being considered as a branch of participatory research and action, since its object of knowledge is more defined and precise (one's own experiences) and its process always involves the historical recovery of the process by those who have been its subjects, which is not an essential requirement of participatory action research processes. Both characteristics stipulate the specific, innovative and original contribution of the systematization of experiences, which does not intermingle with but does complement broader investigative processes.

Systematization of experiences and evaluation: the project and the process
As with research, the analysis of the relationships between systematization of experiences and evaluation involves starting by taking into consideration that different approaches and methods exist with which to make an evaluation, and therefore we can aspire to the creation of general guidance criteria that are of use in our profession rather than abstract conceptual classification.

The first statement we could make is that in educational and organisational work, social promotion projects and development programmes we normally base our work on action projects that formulate aims, specific and general strategic objectives; goals to be met, and expected results, effects and impacts; they define components, plans for action, the parties in charge of implementing them, measurement indicators, managers, timelines; sources and means of verification, products, required resources, potential risks, budgets, monitoring, tracking and evaluation mechanisms, etc.. These projects are normally structured on the basis of a specific planning method, based on a preliminary diagnosis or study, formulation of the institutional aim and vision and

**SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday**

other elements. This method and its instruments are the fundamental foundations for the evaluations. (10)

However, from the very moment a project is implemented, an unknown element begins to take shape: a process. Said process will ultimately depend on how, in short, the different people involved in the project's implementation interpret it, how they feel about it, act and behave towards each other. The process emerges, therefore, as the project's "vital" component, and undoubtedly, unexpected elements will appear in its path that could not be foreseen or planned for beforehand.

Unexpected elements may come up in any process, but innovation is also generated in relation to the original plans. The project's framework will continue to serve as a point of reference; however, it is now the pace of the process that will dictate the dynamics and specific directions: resistance factors and propelling factors -with regards to that planned- will arise, some of which originate from elements not involved in the project, and other from within the project itself. Synergies will arise that mobilise actions more rapidly and with greater impact than previously expected, and yet there will also be obstacles that block the path. The logic of a project will always be more linear and prescriptive; that of a process, more complex, dynamic and unpredictable.

Therefore, we can assert, as a main point of reference, that there must be a dynamic and dialectic relationship between the project and the process. This main point enables a better understanding of how evaluation and the systematization of experiences specifically contribute as factors in a learning process based on practice. (11)

a) Evaluation is more closely linked to the project and fulfilment thereof. The systematization of experiences is closely linked to the process, its dynamics, vitality and trajectory. We assess the project and standardise the experience undergone during the process.

b) Evaluation (whatever its approach or type) will always make a value judgement; however, the aim of systematization is to recover the practices and knowledge generated through evaluation, in order to recognise the meanings that are generated through the perspectives of the different participants, without necessarily making a judgement.

c) In order to make a value judgement, evaluation compares, normally through an institutional framework, what a project was expected to achieve with what it in fact managed to achieve; systematization is not limited to the structure or logic of the project and its aims; instead, it may include other dimensions that arose in the process that may not have had anything to do with the institution's proposal giving rise to the project.

**SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday**

d) The majority of evaluations are made with the aim of producing information that will aid decision-making. This at times leads evaluation to be primarily an administrative act, involving a controlling and supervisory approach, rather than producing learning processes, above all when presented as external evaluation. Thus, the attitudes that it generates may put some of the subjects on the defensive as they are afraid of the value judgement to be made and its implications.

e) The systematization of experiences should be free of these administrative ties and enable people to approach the practice with a more critical, self-assessing, thoughtful attitude, where they are keen to learn about what took place during the experience. However, the generation of an atmosphere of confidence and critical analysis will always be necessary, for evaluation as well as systematization, which facilitates transparency and the shared search for learning experiences.

f) The pace at which evaluations are performed may also vary greatly. Many evaluations have a very limited timeframe due to the need to issue reports and take decisions based on previously established deadlines. The systematization of experiences, intended more through the perspective of problematisation and understanding the experiences of the different participants, compiling their different kinds of knowledge and outlooks, tends to be slower and does not have strict deadlines insofar as it builds on a series of organisational learning experiences beyond the projects' timeframes.

g) In many evaluations, the role of the external assessor is often held by an independent actor who publishes his/her opinion. It is becoming increasingly rare for this role to be performed entirely externally; instead it is performed by someone who critically and autonomously accompanies a self-assessing reflection by a work team, which does not prevent this person from expressing his/her opinion and evaluations, asking questions and suggesting possible interpretations as part of a dialogic and inter-learning dynamic. Except in very specific cases of serious conflicts or extreme situations, it is pure fantasy to think that a person from outside the organisation can reach a suitable conclusion without having formed part of a collective exchange process with those involved and only based on the information that s/he collects over a short period of time. This role is even more interactive with regards to the systematization of experiences, but it is always carried out entirely based on those who are subject to the experience. It is possible for an individual who does not form part of the organization to assess a group, team or institution undergoing a process of systematization, but s/he does it in a way that supports, guides, advises and promotes critical self-reflection by the different participants involved, and the latter, at all times, are the main protagonists of the systematization of their experience. Therefore, by reconstructing and interpreting their own experience, the different participants are motivated to critically assume ownership of the ways in which they act, think and explain their role and the process, without being restricted to watching the implementation of the project.

SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday

h) Due to its origin and certain characteristics linked to its use as a tool to endorse projects funded by both government and non-governmental organisations, evaluation has also become a field of professional specialisation, to the extent that there are now people whose profession is "assessor" and regional and national associations for these specialists exist. On the other hand, however, systematization is seen more as an element that forms part of the processes driven by participants and even though there are many people who work as assessors in this field, none are recognised professionally as "standardisers". Recently, there has been an increasing tendency to include a "systematization process" in projects funded by international bodies, but this is often restrictively understood as the preparation of a "final report" that summarises what was achieved during the experience. This runs the risk of distorting the ultimate meaning of the term.

i) Evaluation makes it possible to gather indispensable information on the results obtained, which systematization does not normally provide. The information and evaluation that evaluation provides is essential for the reorientation of projects and future activities. It is also of the utmost importance to have value judgements regarding the goals, results, effects and impacts that are actually achieved, as well as value judgements regarding the reasons explaining why they were accomplished or why they failed, in order to correct mistakes or reiterate what must be done in the future.

j) Evaluations should attempt to go beyond merely looking at the completion of the proposed objectives or the activities completed in the short term, so as to evaluate the transforming impact of the processes over the medium term. It is therefore important to assess, in educational projects for example, the level of creative adaptation of the programme's content or the methodological proposal, looking beyond the events themselves, in order to identify changes in the subsequent practice. From there we are able to assess in a more general fashion the different elements that are used: the thematic sequence, techniques, procedures, the role of methodological coordination, organisational and logistical aspects, etc., generating participatory and self-evaluation methods whose learning experiences will nurture the reflexivity that is the aim of systematization of experiences.

k) It is true that both evaluation and systematization of experiences aim to build learning experiences that transcend the experience or the projects that served as their reference point, and therefore, the learning experiences aim to establish useful criteria for other practices. In this sense there is openness to the replicability of these criteria, but in the sense of creative inspiration to reinvent them and not in the sense of establishing models to copy and reproduce monotonously.

SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday

Towards convergence and complementarity

"We must establish conditions in which it is possible to learn critically... in which we are creators, instigators, restless, rigorously curious, humble and persistent. Curiosity, as with indagative restlessness and the search for clarification, forms an integral part of the phenomenon of life. There could be no creativity without the curiosity that moves us and makes us patiently impatient before a world we did not make..."
(PAULO FREIRE - Pedagogy of Autonomy)

Consequently, rather than concerning ourselves with the issues that, in general, separate research, evaluation and systematization, we should focus on how to create, in the specific practice of our projects and processes, the conditions for a fruitful and complementary convergence of these three knowledge-producing exercises, which facilitates their transformation into educational acts and critical learning factors that strengthen our strategic projection capabilities and the enhancement of our practice.

It is essential, therefore, to face the challenge of generating communication processes with the (partial and provisional) results that are obtained, thus actively, critically and dialogically pledging to the different parties involved that we will be increasingly able to "speak our words" within a framework of reflection, debate, controversy and consensus generation, even using shared languages, but based on the diversity of knowledge and learning experiences that, in turn, call us to joint action.

In our projects and action programmes we must include time and resources in order to generate conditions and a willingness that foster the critical intervention of multiple participants, with our multiple perspectives and sensitivities, in order to make discoveries and find interrelationships that make our perspective of what happens in our practices more complex and open us up to new and creative propositions. Similarly, we are able to aid in the creation of a "culture of reflection based on practices" that reinforces the habit of keeping periodic and timely records; spaces to meet, reflect and discuss; accumulative processes and mechanisms in the institutional sphere in order to build platforms for future action and reflection so that we are not constantly skating over the surface of the same issues but instead making effective contributions for decision-making.

Therefore, when these three activities converge it will always be a process of popular education, i.e. an ethico-politico-educational process that enables us to overcome the superficial and reductionistic explanations, democratising our abilities to produce knowledge and meaning, and therefore, empower more people. As Ricardo Zúñiga said: "Learning from our own practices, strengthening groups, their identities, empowering the subjects, making them part of the decision-making process and enabling them to tell their own story".

All of this will also generate a debate about different types of research, evaluation and systematization trends in which it is not possible to discover the fabric of power relationships or develop transforming abilities. Instead, to the contrary, they strengthen hegemonic perspectives, reinforcing the role of specialists that are

**SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday**

separate from the popular social sectors, monopolizing the power of knowledge. In this debate, based on popular education in Latin America, as Esteban Tapella states, we must focus on other contexts such as Europe and the United States, where "there are many approaches to evaluation within the field of formative evaluation that share important similarities with what we call systematization. For example, the concept of quality program evaluation, the concept of cluster evaluation and that of shared learning evaluation". (12) To this I believe we must add the substantive contributions that the American author, Michael Quinn Patton, has spent a long time developing in this field (13).

Thus, we are faced with a "challenging" panorama, which calls upon us, as Rosa Maraña Cifuentes states, to "weave and contribute to the weaving of continuity in the midst of the discontinuity of life experiences, exercises, contracts, reflections, in the outlook of the construction of critical, reflexive, strategic and proactive consciousness, in ethical outlooks and democratic, pluralistic and transforming learning policies". (14)

Bibliographical notes:

1. This article is a preview of the chapter on this topic in the book "La sistematización de experiencias: práctica y teoría para otros mundos posibles" (The Systematization of Experiences: Practice and Theory for Other Possible Worlds), which is to be published shortly.
2. For this reason, in a business environment (in particular, but not exclusively), the idea of having specialised areas dedicated to "knowledge management" has also become popular. This is related to everything stated previously, but also to the development of an institutional management system that favours the construction of "organisational learning", taking advantage of the existing knowledge in the institution, encouraging its inclusion in society and acting to leverage the creation of innovation based on accumulated knowledge.
3. Conocer desde el Sur. Para una cultura política emancipatoria, Santiago. Ed. Universidad Bolivariana.
4. In this regard, it is of the utmost importance to remember that positive science works on the basis of considering social phenomena as if they were tangible things and the object being studied ("reality") is not part of the subject studying it ("thought"), it has its own existence, an independent reality governed by natural laws that whomever researches it should attempt to discover. Consequently, the separation between the researcher and the object being studied is directly linked to the accuracy with which s/he will be able to report his/her findings. Not being involved with the objects being studied (communities, organisations and social movements, farming practices, education, communication, and other processes) would be the maxim of this model. The research process is considered pure and unbiased insofar as this premise is respected, and therefore, the research is considered objective, valid, and legitimate.
5. La sistematización como proceso investigativo o la búsqueda de la episteme de las prácticas, Bogotá, Planeta Paz.

**SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:
THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES Oscar Jara Holliday**

6. In my personal experience as a literacy skills teacher in the northern region of Peru, I directly confirmed that over the two and a half years that I spent there (1972-1974) I learnt from the people of the communities that I "made literate", perhaps even more than what I was able to teach them. In fact, I can state that it was they who "made me literate" with regards to their world, life and the meaning of popular education, reconfirming to me that the primary attitude of an educator should be that of always being willing to learn and to contribute to creating learning processes. See Freire Paulo: *Pedagogía de la autonomía*
7. Eizaguirre, Marlen: *Diccionario de Educación para el Desarrollo*, Hegoa, Bilbao, 2005.
8. To see different contributions related to action-research, participatory research and action-research in education read:
Fals Borda and others (1991) *Acción y conocimiento. Como romper el monopolio con investigación-acción participativa*, Santafé de Bogotá, Cinep. Elliot, J. (1994). *La investigación-acción en educación*. Madrid: Morata; De Schutter, A. (1983). *Investigación Participativa: Una opción metodológica para la educación de adultos*, Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, México: CREFAL. De Schutter A. and Yopo, Boris: *Desarrollo y perspectiva de la investigación participativa*. Biblioteca Digital CREFAL: http://crefal.edu.mx/biblioteca_digital/index.php Brandao, Carlos R. (2006): *Pesquisa Participante*. São Paulo. Brasiliense.
9. "Las ciudades hablan. Identidades y movimientos sociales en seis metrópolis latinoamericanas", Caracas, Nueva Sociedad.
10. A planning trend exists, with several schools and methodological and conceptual proposals, many of which are included within what are known as "logic models" or "logical frameworks", almost always considered as planning and evaluation instruments at the same time. It is not the aim of this text to go into depth on this topic, but perhaps the most extensive reference regarding it, its variants and alternatives can be found at: <http://www.mande.co.uk/logframe.htm#Logic>
11. Some of the points highlighted below were shared in a reflection forum held on the internet by the reference group of the Latin American Programme supporting CEAAL's Systematization of Experiences, which took place in October 2010, known by the Portuguese term, "ciranda cibernética" (a virtual round table). The forum was attended by : Mariluz Morgan (Peru) Alfonso Torres (Colombia), Iara Lins, Elza Falckembach, Celia Watanabe, Anna Santiago (Brazil), Indira Granda, Rebeca Gregson, Marianny Alves and Belén Arteaga (Venezuela) and Oscar Jara (Costa Rica).
12. Participation in the forum on systematization and evaluation led by RELAC, PREVAL and PLAS CEAAL in May-June 2010, which can be viewed at: <http://noticiasrelac.ning.com/group/sistematizacion>
13. 2008, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*" (4th edition), Sage; 2006, *Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed*. Toronto: Random House Canada. And the recent 2011: "Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use." Guilford Press New York.
14. RELAC, PREVAL, PLAS CEAAL participated in the highlighted forum.