

# Action-teaching:

## Stimulating Active Student Learning in Psychology through Car (Concept, Action & Reflection)

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# Overview of the presentation

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- Action teaching: Background of the development of CAR
- Theoretical frameworks in action
- The design and implement of CAR activities
- Evidence and recognition of the CAR contribution to student learning



# Action teaching: Background of the development of CAR

- My teaching background
- What is the focus of teaching & learning in Psychology
  - High marks?
  - High social impact?
  - Both?
  - Or other options?



# Action teaching: Background of the development of CAR

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- Action teaching
    - Action research by Kurt Lewin (1964)
    - Research should aim at solving social problems.
    - Action teaching is the educational counterpart to action research (Plous, 2000).
    - Action teaching not only teaches about a subject topic but contributes to the greater good.
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# Theoretical frameworks in action

## – Situated cognition theory



- Emphasizes that people's knowledge is constructed within and linked to the activity, context, and culture in which it is learned (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989).

## – Instructional scaffolding



- Promotes a deeper level of learning with sufficient support provided to learners to help learners achieve their learning goals (Sawyer, 2006).

## – Guided discovery learning



- The teacher devises a series of questions that guide learners, step by step, making a series of discoveries that leads to their predetermined learning goals (Leutner, 1993).

- Applying these theories to CAR design, CAR consists of three components:



- **Concept**

- The concept section requires students to conduct a short literature review on the concept(s) they employ and to establish the conceptual connection with the pre-designed action.



# Theoretical frameworks in action

- Applying these theories to CAR design, CAR consists of three components:



## – Action

- I design the action that applies the concept(s) students have learned to a real world setting. Students are required to engage with community according to the instruction of action.

- Applying these theories to CAR design, CAR consists of three components:



## – Reflection

- In the Reflection section, students are required to conceptualize their action, and reflect on what they have learned from their action and how the specific CAR helps them understand the abstract concept(s).



# The design and implement of CAR activities

The screenshot displays the LMS interface for a Social Psychology course. The main content area features a 'Discussion Board' section with the following text:

Forums are made up of individual discussion threads that can be organised around a particular subject. Create Forums to organise discussions. [More Help](#)

Below this is a 'Create Forum' button and a table of existing forums:

Forum	Description	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/> Q&A	Please post your questions here related to the subject. Holle and Wendy will answer your question ASAP.	13
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>CAR 1: Self-change project</b>	<p><b>Objectives:</b> The goals of this project are for students to learn that changing behaviour is often difficult even under the best circumstances; to better understand the complex situational and personal factors that influence behaviour; and to feel empowered when they see that careful analysis and effort can lead to positive behaviour change.</p> <p><b>Concept:</b> Self related concepts discussed in the lecture or textbook</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <p>Step 1: Examine your daily habits and consider their impact.</p> <p>Step 2: Choose a specific behaviour goal.</p> <p>Step 3: Define the actions that fulfill your goal.</p> <p>Step 4: Before making any changes, keep track of conditions that relate to your goal. Observe behaviour for two days and write down how often goal and non-goal behaviours occur, and under what circumstances.</p> <p>Step 5: Analyse the conditions leading to non-goal behaviour and think about how these conditions could be changed. Also analyse what happens after non-goal behaviour, and think about how non-goal behaviour is reinforced.</p> <p>Step 6: Outline a plan of how you will change circumstances and reinforcement in order to successfully change your behaviour.</p> <p><b>Reflection:</b> See marking criteria.</p> <p><b>Acknowledgement:</b> Christie Manning, the winner of Honourable Mention of the Social Psychology Network 2010 Action Teaching Award.</p>	171

The 'CAR 1: Self-change project' forum content is partially visible at the bottom of the page, showing the start of an objective: 'Objective(s): To put the subject material into action in daily contexts, and apply social psychology...

# The design and implement of CAR activities

The screenshot displays a Blackboard LMS interface for a forum titled "Forum: CAR2: A Day of Compassion". The page includes a navigation sidebar on the left, a forum header, and a table of forum threads.

**Forum: CAR2: A Day of Compassion**  
*Organise Forum Threads on this page and apply settings to several or all threads. Threads are listed in a tabular format. The Threads can be*

Buttons: Create Thread, Subscribe

Thread Actions	Date	Thread	Author
<input type="checkbox"/>	3/04/17 3:30 PM	<a href="#">CAR 2</a>	T
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/04/17 4:03 PM	<a href="#">CAR 2 Day of Compassion</a>	G
<input type="checkbox"/>	21/03/17 12:00 AM	<a href="#">CAR 2 - A Day of Compassion</a>	A
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 11:57 PM	<a href="#">CAR:2</a>	S
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 11:23 PM	<a href="#">CAR 2: Compassion</a>	J
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 11:11 PM	<a href="#">CAR 2: A Day of Compassion: The Social Self, Happiness and Compassion</a>	S
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 11:08 PM	<a href="#">Car 2 : A day of Compassion</a>	S
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 11:04 PM	<a href="#">CAR2: A Day of Compassion (By RT)</a>	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 10:38 PM	<a href="#">CAR 2: A day of compassion - for two days</a>	L
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 10:29 PM	<a href="#">CAR 2: Day of Compassion</a>	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 9:46 PM	<a href="#">A Day of Compassion: Compassion vs Empathy</a>	S
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 9:38 PM	<a href="#">CAR 2 - Compassion</a>	R
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 9:22 PM	<a href="#">Car 2: Compassion</a>	J
<input type="checkbox"/>	20/03/17 9:16 PM	<a href="#">CAR2</a>	N

# The design and implement of CAR activities

- In PY3102 Social Psychology, the topics covered in CAR include:
  - Observing gender roles in everyday life;
  - Understanding the difficulties of behaviour change by implementing a self-change plan for at least two days;
  - Understanding social self and happiness by participating in the 'Day of Compassion' for two days; and
  - Understanding the role social cognition plays in decision making by participating in a magic card game.



# The design and implement of CAR activities

- In PY2018 Intercultural Psychology, the CAR is comprised of the following topics:
  - Observing individualist and collective selves in a social media setting such as FaceBook;
  - Identifying the privilege of being a white person via the shopping centre ‘Scavenger Hunt’ by counting the percentage of white-person images in dolls;
  - Understanding acculturation stress by stepping out of the language comfort zone to learn 3-5 sentences in a language that is different from the student’s own language; and
  - Interacting with diversity by role play a person who is different from the student in age, gender, social status, religion, race or ethnicity.



# The design and implement of CAR activities

- In PY3108 personality Psychology, to apply personality theories to the real world
  - Students work in a group on raw personality data of a ‘real person’ —Tom who seeks professional help to cope with mental health problems.
  - Each group employs a personality theory to analyze the data and create a personality profile for Tom.
  - Based on the analysis, students reflect on what could be improved to help Tom deal with his mental health problems.
  - The groups report their CARs to the class in a 15-minute presentation.

# Evidence and recognition of the CAR contribution to student learning

“The CAR activities were very enjoyable and challenging. Wendy feedback and communication was very prompt. CAR feedback was individualised and allowed you to improve upon and reassess your ideas.” (YourJCU Subject Survey, PY2018, 2016)

“Looking more intensely at issues involved in social phenomena is a great learning tool and one I appreciated for overall growth as a human being, as well as for learning about Social Psychology.” (Overall reflection in CAR5, PY3102, 2015)

“I believe the subject was a lot different to other subjects in Psychology. I think Wendy's style of teaching is unique because she isn't just talking about material that will eventually be on the exam. She encourages critical thinking and discussion. Because of her unique style of teaching, I think it can catch some students by surprise. Most students want to know what is on the exams and on the assignments. But Wendy encourages critical thinking that will be essential in the real world. I greatly enjoyed this subject for this reason.” (YourJCU Subject Survey, PY3102, 2014)

“This subject was extremely illuminating, making clear aspects that I had not previously noted, and doing so through practical, satisfying application. I liked how action was part of the three-fold [CAR] platform. Wendy is encouraging and enthusiastic and shows much expertise.” (YourJCU Subject Survey, PY2018, 2014)



# Evidence and recognition of the CAR contribution to student learning

	2013 Pilot		2014				2015			2016				
	PY3102	JCU	PY3102	PY2018	Subject Avr	JCU	PY3102	Subject Avr	JCU	PY3102	PY2018	PY3108	Subject Avr	JCU
The learning outcomes in this subject were made clear to me.	3.7	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.2	4.0	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1
The delivery methods used in this subject helped me understand the subject material.	2.7	4.0	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.2	4.2	4.0	3.6	4.0	4.2	3.93	3.9
This subject was well organised	3.4	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.15	3.9	4.3	4.3	3.9	3.9	3.7	4.2	3.93	3.9
The assessment activities helped me understand the subject material.	2.8	4.0	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.0
I received timely feedback on my work in this subject.	4.1	3.9	4.1	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.4	4.4	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.6	4.4	3.9
Overall, I was satisfied with this subject	3.1	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.85	3.8	4.4	4.4	3.9	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.1	3.9

# Evidence and recognition of the CAR contribution to student learning

	2013 Pilot		2014				2015			2016				
	PY3102	JCU	PY3102	PY2018	Subject Avr	JCU	PY3102	Subject Avr	JCU	PY3102	PY2018	PY3108	Subject Avr	JCU
This staff member was approachable for support if I needed it.	4.6	N/A	4.7	3.8	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.3
The teaching style of this staff member inspired me to learn.	3.6	N/A	3.6	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.7	4.3	4.0	4.0	4.0
This staff member delivered subject material in ways that helped my learning.	3.6	N/A	3.6	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.3	4.2	4.13	4.1
This staff member provided useful feedback to improve my learning.	4.1	N/A	3.8	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.1
Overall, I was satisfied with the teaching of this staff member.	4.0	N/A	3.8	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.1	4.13	4.1

# Evidence and recognition of the CAR contribution to student learning

- Awarded 3 JCU Teaching and Learning Development grants (2012, 2013 & 2015)
- Awarded JCU Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning 2017
- Invited to convene a Service Learning symposium and presented a paper entitled *CAR in Service Learning* at the 4th Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Service-Learning in Hong Kong in 2013
- Invited to Fudan University and Shanghai University of Technology, China, to deliver teaching and learning seminars on CAR (2015)
- Invited to join Prof Xuexin Zhuang's team to successfully apply for a Shanghai University Teaching Reform Grant of CNY50,000 awarded by the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission (Ref: SHEC2012012016-37)





# CHALLENGE

- Some students reported that it was time consuming to complete the CARs.
- Some students suggested that 5 CARs were a bit more stressful.
- Some students reported not to be comfortable to present their work to their peers.
- Some students felt that they were not eligible to comment on other students' work.

# References

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