

Attempts of a Participatory Approach to Helping Improve the Value and Appreciation of Geriatric Nursing in Germany – Looking at the “PflegeWert” Project from an Action Research Perspective

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All collaborations can be characterised by power and participation and how those forces are distributed within the group. Action Research’s distinctive feature is that ‘ordinary’ people are actively involved in the entire research process, as they are entrusted with tasks and take on responsibilities that are otherwise often reserved for researchers (Arieli et al., 2009, p. 265). In this sense, Action Research can be understood as “a democratic relationship, in which both sides exercise power and shared control over decision-making as well as interpretation” (ibid). In this paper we try to analyse the relationships and structures of power in a project that dealt with the appreciation of nursing services in geriatric care in Germany, so-called *Altenpflege*. Consistent with the idea of Action Research, the project was conducted by research partners and practitioners working in geriatric care. In order to take a closer look at the conflicts that took place, and to identify the role of communication in this collaboration of different personalities, three retrospective interviews were conducted. The project’s reflection highlighted that an equitable dialogue between researchers and practitioners can unveil differences and conflicts and help to overcome them. With this paper we intent to encourage more Action Research projects in Germany by reflectively illustrating a successful project with its “ups” and especially its “downs”.

Key words: power, participation, conflict, nursing, appreciation