

Understanding Community-Based Research: Reflections on a Shared Learning Journey in Clayoquot Sound

Edited by
Kelly Bannister

*A collection of short essays written by students of
ES 481A: Community-based Research in Clayoquot Sound
Summer 2005*

An activity of the **Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training**



Sponsored by the
Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the **University of Victoria**



Understanding Community-Based Research: Reflections on a Shared Learning Journey in Clayoquot Sound

A collection of short essays written by students of
ES 481A: Community-based Research in Clayoquot Sound (Summer 2005)

Edited by Kelly Bannister
2005



Students and Instructors of ES 481A (Summer 2005)

Acknowledgements

Students and Instructors of *ES 481A: Community-based Research in Clayoquot Sound* (Summer 2005) are grateful to the following individuals and organizations who made this course possible (in alphabetical order):

Daniel Arbor (Boat Basin Foundation), Dr. Barb Beasley (Ucluelet), Stan Boychuk (Clayoquot Biosphere Trust), Peter Buckland (Boat Basin Foundation), Stephen and Karen Charleson (Hesquiaht First Nation), Rod Dobell (University of Victoria), Leif Johansen (Ahousaht Cultural Centre Society), Caron Olive (Ucluelet), George Patterson (Tofino Botanical Gardens), Jen Pukonen (Raincoast Interpretive Centre), Derek Shaw (Tofino), and Warren Warttig (Interfor).

We owe a special thanks to Dr. Barb Beasley, *community-based researcher extraordinaire*, for her enthusiasm, inspiration and tireless dedication to the well-being of human and non-human communities of Clayoquot and Northern Barkley Sound.

Table of Contents

Title.....	1
Acknowledgments.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Background on Essay Collection..... <i>Kelly Bannister</i>	4
An Evolving Definition of Community Based Research..... <i>Alison Garnett</i>	5
Concepts of Community Based Research: Dissecting the Big Picture..... <i>Heidi Postnikoff</i>	8
Expect the Unexpected: A Journey into Clayoquot Sound..... <i>Naomi Devine</i>	12
Experiences in Community-Based Research <i>Jonna Winger</i>	15
The Most Critical Part of CBR? LISTENING!..... <i>Julia Black</i>	17
Understanding Imbedded Complexities in Community Based Research: Experiences from the Clayoquot Sound..... <i>Marin Ripsam</i>	19
Clayoquot Sound: A Look at Community-Based Research..... <i>Meaghan Noad</i>	22
Where Does It Fit In? Reflections on Community Based Research in Clayoquot Sound..... <i>Ryan Karkhairan</i>	25
“Researching Ourselves Back to Life:” The Possibilities and Challenges of Community- Based Research in an Indigenous Context..... <i>Megan Thom</i>	28
Appreciating the Complexity and Seeing the Connections: Reflections on Community- Based-Research and Clayoquot Sound..... <i>Ariel Hunt-Brondwin</i>	33

Background on Essay Collection

Dr. Kelly Bannister

Adjunct Professor, School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria

ES 481A: Community-based Research in Clayoquot Sound is a unique course offered by the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. It is designed as a partnership between the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the University of Victoria. The course is a collaborative effort, made possible by several individuals and organisations from the university and the communities of Clayoquot and Northern Barkley Sound (west coast of Vancouver Island, B.C. Canada), as an activity of the Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training (CLARET). It was developed under the guidance of Dr. Rod Dobell (Professor Emeritus, UVic Public Administration), Mr. Stan Boychuk (Executive Director, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust) and Dr. Barb Beasley (Community researcher, Ucluelet).

As much as possible, the design, planning and implementation of the course are based on collaborative and participatory philosophies and values, which are integral to community-based research. The community partners and co-instructors are essential in the planning and they are the real 'experts' on community-based research in their region. The course changes each time it is offered, adapting to opportunities and interests in the community. Course materials can be viewed on the CLARET website at <http://www.clayoquotalliance.uvic.ca/> (note the course number was formerly ES 400C).

In Summer 2005, students spent the first part of the course (a nine-day field component) "immersed" in the communities of Clayoquot Sound and the second part of the course in classes at the university. The field component provided a unique first-hand learning opportunity to become familiar with the people and place of Clayoquot Sound, which grounded discussion of course theory and issues in concrete examples. The field experience was also used as the basis for developing many of the course projects so that they were both intellectually interesting and useful to the communities, thereby applying theoretical understandings of community-based research to real life contexts.

This collection of short essays is based on brief oral presentations that students were required to make to their classmates mid-way through the course, directly after returning from their nine-day intensive field experience in Clayoquot Sound. The objective of the oral presentation (upon which these essays are based) was for students to reflect on their understanding of "community-based research" in light of their field experience. More specifically, students were asked to describe their understanding of "community-based research" on the first day of this course and how their understanding changed, indicating any field experiences that significantly influenced their understanding. Students were also asked to share a question or issue about community-based research they saw as vital for university researchers to understand.

As is evident by the following collection, students, instructors and community partners alike were deeply moved by their experiences in Clayoquot Sound. Students have captured this with sincerity, humour and a genuine attempt to better understand if, how and why universities and rural communities might find mutual benefit in engaging in community-based research. As the primary Instructor and person responsible for conceiving this course, I am filled with respect and appreciation at the heart and courage that the students have shown in making this course an incredible shared learning journey for all involved, and also at their time and effort in "giving back" by sharing with others some of what they learned. This collection is one such contribution.

An Evolving Definition of Community Based Research

Alison Garnett

Forth year student in Environmental Studies and Women's Studies

This essay describes my definition of community based research on the first day of class, before we went on the trip to Clayoquot Sound, and how that definition has changed, based on our shared and my personal experiences on the trip. Community based research (CBR) is a complicated topic, so I will only highlight a few points that I think are particularly relevant to my new understanding.

My definition of CBR on the first day of class, based on a previous class with Kelly Bannister and other classes where I have learned about feminist research methods, was that community needs were at the center of the research, in its inception, development, execution and conclusion. Meeting the needs of the community at the inception of the research implies addressing issues that have been identified by the community. The community should benefit from the results of the research, and should receive research or other skills training. Research should be conducted with respect, abiding by any protocols that may exist to protect the integrity of the community. In addition to these components, I had a vague idea of CBR involving a shift in the hierarchy of academe and the community, but I wasn't clear on what that shift meant.

My idea of CBR before this class was represented best in the masters project that Jen Pukonen is planning to work on (traditional root gardens in Ahousaht). I think this project was the ideal CBR project because it was a long term, organized project being done by a university student in a First Nations community. It is in contexts such as this where codes of conducts might enter into the research, where research must be relevant to community interests or needs, and the project would include active participation by the community (in Jen's case, the schools). The results would be returned to the community and then ideally shared with kids in school so the knowledge can be passed down.

The field component of our course made me realize that my initial understanding of CBR wasn't exactly wrong, but it challenged my grandiose ideas of what CBR *needs* to be. Our trip to Clayoquot Sound exposed me to many examples of CBR that don't fulfill my previous definition. So now, I'm left trying to decide what the essential components of a project are that allow it to be labeled "community based"?

The first idea of mine that was challenged was the concept of community. My initial thought when reflecting on "community" was to think about authentic or proper representation of peoples' interests. Who can decide what research will be done? How it will be done? I needed to find a unified "community" before research could be initiated. This is a very difficult question, but one that I now believe doesn't need to arise every time research is done. My reason for saying that is related to the examples of CBR that I encountered on the trip. The toad count that six of us did on Peter Buckland's property at Boat Basin was CBR, but there was really no community *per se*, only Peter and Daniel, who wanted to know if there were toads near Rae Lake. Barb Beasley was also interested, and inspired students who were so excited to be out of the city that they volunteered to crawl around in the dark for an hour or more looking for toads and salamanders. The mapping of the Tofino mudflats wildlife management area with Caron Olive also challenged my grandiose ideas of CBR. The mudflats do occupy space within a community, but I'll bet some people didn't know we were there, or some people might even have an interest in us not mapping the shoreline (for example, if they lived there on the mudflats

and didn't want to have increased regulations for use). With Jen's root garden project, she will be working with schools, and people who are interested in traditional root gardens, but not the entire community. My ideal of getting a community consensus on a research project is idealistic and impractical. This is not to say that you shouldn't, as a researcher, strive to inform many people living within a community about the project that you are working on. But the timeline of CBR (as I gather from the course readings) is already so long, and the amount of people to contend with and to please is already immense, that having ideals about community consensus may not be possible.



This evolved concept of community exemplified my realization that I had to lose my idealized definition of CBR. My initial definition was not necessarily wrong, but the fact that I had a definition at all was surprising. I may not be able to define CBR, however, I feel the need to come up with some underlying elements of CBR, for the sake of this paper, and to make some sense in my own mind.

Now, after returning from our course field trip to Clayoquot Sound and seeing the differing scope and sizes of research projects, I think I have decided what the essential part of CBR is, i.e., what makes research "community based". As of today (because I'm sure my definition will continue to evolve) an essential aspect is the sharing of resources between academia and communities. From Clayoquot Sound I have seen examples of knowledge learned from stories of past generations, from spending your whole life in the coastal temperate rainforest, or studying textbooks and attending lectures. CBR requires an appreciation for different forms of knowledge, and a genuine willingness to learn from "the other" and to combine those knowledges. Communities and researchers offer different skills, and CBR is the combination of those skills. Examples of this exchange of knowledge are in Caron's work asking local naturalists what they have to say about the mudflats, in Barb's work asking volunteers to give up their time because their contribution to counting "splatted" frogs on the highway is valuable, and in Peter asking Barb to design a method to count toads near Rae Lake. What was so great about our trip to Clayoquot Sound is that we were given a chance to listen to people, to learn from them, to appreciate other ways of knowing.

Why we were able to do that is the second component of CBR, according to me. In each project there was an established relationship between the "researcher" and the "community" (in whatever form they take). On our trip, Kelly, Barb, Stan, and others made it possible for us to do what we did, to meet the people we did. Those kind of relationships are key to identifying the research needs of the community, to understanding the politics of a region (especially one as politically charged as Clayoquot Sound), to understanding what constitutes respect with or without the help of formal protocols and any other community needs that can be addressed along the way, such as capacity building or understanding what form the research should be returned in. I think that these understandings can also help the researcher identify what skills he or she brings to the project, and what she can't bring, or what is already there. Bigger projects like Jen's also require a huge commitment to the community, outside of her commitment to her

university. Having a meaningful relationship with a community gives extra incentives and obligations to carry out your end of the work, even if other priorities pop up outside of the research.

My primary question to community based researchers then, is how to create relationships with community members in order to initiate projects that will be helpful to communities? In effect, how to make research more socially relevant on a smaller scale? There is a distance between the people who work at university institutions and people who live in communities, caused by physical distance and imagined segregation based on hierarchy of knowledge. Separate ways of learning and different skills are created in these separate places. So my question is, how to bring together those separate sides in a productive or mutually beneficial way, or how to get communities and academics to enter into meaningful dialogue? In essence, I believe that CBR will come out of solid personal relationships. But how can the two sides meet to initiate communication, especially to match up people who can have genuine relationships, which I believe is the backbone of CBR? One answer is in partnerships such as the Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training (CLARET). It is meant to be a forum in which community interests and needs become academic concerns, and education and training resources of university are made more accessible to civil society. But how well does CLARET work in practice for the individual? What other means exist to connect people in communities and people in universities? If we can understand and challenge this issue, the occurrence and quality of CBR projects (regardless of the definition of CBR) will grow, and this will only help to enrich communities, universities and the broader knowledge base and social gains to which research is supposed to contribute.



Concepts of Community Based Research: Dissecting the Big Picture

Heidi Postnikoff

Forth year student in Environmental Studies and Geography

When I was first introduced to the concept of community-based research (CBR), what most stuck in my mind was the need to carry out all activities/projects/initiatives with respect. This goes for both the researchers as well as community participants. My understanding of the term also included assessing the assets a particular community has, and using this as a way to mobilize the community. While somewhat vague, my general understanding of CBR prior to taking this course was based on community members and researchers/professionals working together to carry out research, problem solve, or initiate a project which would best suit the desires of the community members.

After the field experience, this definition was verified but my understanding was also expanded. I had the opportunity to have direct contact with community members, hear their stories, and at times, be faced with a glimpse of the challenges that can occur within CBR, especially when conducted by outsiders. Throughout this paper, I will share how my understanding of CBR has changed or has been expanded through the field course, and offer my opinion on what I feel to be essential for university researchers to understand when undertaking CBR.

When I stood at the top of Eik Street in Tofino, gazing at a giant, old growth cedar being held up by a harness and chains, I was awe struck. What this effort bore witness to was more than the preservation of the life of a tree. I had a surge of respect for what one community could do. The strength and perseverance of the people who share a common goal and are in turn, able to carry out this objective, was staring me in the face. While the accomplishment represented by the Eik Street Tree in Tofino is to be commended and celebrated, I also am aware that it is not always the case that a community shares commonalties around a particular issue or desire. For example, through class discussions during this course, I was able to hear how many of my fellow classmates were not supportive of this initiative. Some people felt that saving this tree was simply another means of humans attempting to control nature. By not allowing the tree to age and move on to a resting place in peace, the community members have taken power over the fate of the tree. The discussion peaked my curiosity regarding how other



community members in Tofino felt about the tree. It occurred to me that a conflict might have resulted between members that supported the goal to save the tree, and others that simply wanted it felled. Through exposure to this situation, as well as others during the field component of our course, I became more aware of the reality that many differences in views, priorities and agendas could exist within members of a given community.

Another example of this diversity was demonstrated when the class had a presentation by representatives from the logging company Interfor and members of the Hesquiaht Band Council. They spoke in support of the logging operations that were occurring in the area and the resulting benefits to the local Hesquiaht community. Later in the trip, we met a Hesquiaht elder and

former Band Council Chief expressed concern about some of the activities of Interfor. Chatting with the elder a few days after the discussion with the Interfor and Hesquiaht Band Council representatives, I was left with a completely different perspective on the corporate activities, including the consequences of building a road that would connect two Hesquiaht communities. The Interfor representatives felt that their company's contribution of the road construction



between Boat Basin and Hot Springs Cove would benefit both themselves as well as the Hesquiaht community by connecting the community (and particularly the school children) with a more protected and safe port entry by water, since the main transportation to Hot Springs Cove is by boat or float plane, but the trip by boat can be treacherous in poor weather. But the class was later informed that Interfor was requesting that the community of Hot Springs Cove foot the bill for half of the construction of the road. This crucial piece of information made me aware of a much larger issue at hand. If one were to take a CBR approach to examining this topic, I feel that many challenges

would exist regarding conflicting opinions between community members. The big questions for CBR then, which I had not previously considered, are how does one gain broad based representation among a community and what does the conflict resolution procedure entail to resolve disputes that might arise in research? Through the Eik Street tree discussion, as well as the exchanges with and about Interfor, I was able to witness first hand, and I realized the necessity in CBR to allow adequate opportunities for people to voice their concerns and then identify appropriate tools to problem solve these concerns.

Also key to my learning experience was to see some of the challenges involved in the planning stages of working with communities. For example, when the class visited Ahousaht, under the direction of the director of the Ahousaht Cultural Centre Society, we were able to assist with some small projects at the local youth center. Participating in service-oriented tasks to meet identified needs is one form of participation in community life that builds bridges that are essential for community members and outsiders such as researchers to work together. During this excursion, due to a recent death in the community, we were not able to meet with all of the desired community members. This experience, therefore also made me aware of the necessity to remain flexible and patient when research involves communities. As with this situation, things come up that we cannot prepare ourselves for. With this in mind, my understanding of CBR was expanded to recognize that it is not always beneficial to have expectations – or at least not inflexible ones. If researchers can remain open-minded, patient, and easy going, when situations come up that are not expected, adjusting to the circumstances will be much easier on everyone.

After the field experience, many questions still exist for me around CBR but the first hand experience that I received was both eye-opening and provided a valuable learning experience. The biggest question for me that remains with regards to CBR is how to be inclusive of all community members, both young and old. When participating in CBR, building relationships between the researchers and community members is essential to creating effective research strategies (in both processes and outcomes). Recognizing this and attempting to solve disputes to reach consensus is key to the future of CBR. The benefits of proceeding with the wide support of many people will lead to the incorporation of diversity and will build essential tools, such as problem solving, for both researchers and participants.

Many more thoughts related to CBR remain floating in my mind but I feel it crucial to touch on a concept of the Nuuchah Nulth First Peoples that was shared during our trip. *Hishuk ish ts'awalk* is the ideology that everything is one, or everything is connected. If this belief could be widely recognized by researchers and incorporated into the research design, the results would be ground breaking. Seeing everything as one and interconnected allows for a great sense of respect with all things. Further, and very importantly, seeing all things connected enables the awareness that if we disrupt one area, another will also feel this disruption. If communities could work with researchers and apply the concept of *hishuk ish ts'awalk* to all areas of work, the results will more likely be balanced and in tune with people as well as nature. This ideology could also assist in shifting the power inequity that often exists between participants and researchers.

As a conclusion, I'll share a poem by Al Purdy, titled "Nurse Log", which symbolically recognizes the interconnectedness of all things. Throughout this class, I have seen that all of our meetings with people and with one another were interconnected. The actions of one affected the other and the words of some were felt and impacted by all. Sharing this belief with one another and witnessing how it applies within nature, can aid in teaching us how to communicate with others and carry out principles of CBR with not only the highest intentions but, with the greatest potential for making a difference in the diverse and complex real world.

The Nurselog

These are my children
these are my grandchildren
they have green hair
their bones grow from my bones
when rain comes they drink the sky
I am their mother and grandmother
I am their past
their memory is my thousand years
of growing

Four hundred rings past
in my body count
there was fire
it touched me and I glowed
with blue fire from the sky
the sky was so close
it hissed and shimmered in me
then rain fell

Three hundred and fifty rings
past there was no rain
for many growing times
but when it came I heard
the forest talking together

How great a time ago
is lost but I remember
long-necked animals eating me

one great-jawed creature eating them
everything consumed everything else
and wondered if living was eating

Then the birds came
but strange birds like reptiles
with broad leathery wings
flapping and crashing through me
they changed to specks of blue
and orange and green and yellow
little suns sleeping in me
I remember this in a dream
when we all dreamed
as if I were an old repeated story
once told to me that I retell

And now the little green ones
nesting cleverly in a row
some love the shade and some the sun
another is growing crookedly
but she will straighten in time
one grows more slowly than the others
and has my own special affection

They are so different these small ones
their green hair shines
they lift their bodies high in light
they droop in rain and move in unison
toward some lost remembered place
we came from like a question
like a question and the answer
nobody remembers now
no one can remember

~Al Purdy

References Cited

Purdy, Al 1993. Nurse Log. In Susan Musgrave (ed)'s *Clear Cut Words: Writers for Clayoquot*. Hawthorne Society for Reference West.

Expect the Unexpected: A Journey into Clayoquot Sound

Naomi Devine

Third year student in Environmental Studies and Political Science

When I heard about this Environmental Studies course (ES 481A - Community-based Research in Clayoquot Sound), and its feature field trip, I thought wow – what a unique opportunity. This is a chance to see places of Clayoquot Sound that I have only heard about, and meet community members that one would not ordinarily get to meet. I was also interested in research – something I have not had a lot of opportunity to engage in – and especially this thing called “community-based” research, and its role in helping communities solve problems. This had become a question I was interested in exploring as I had just taken ES 301 – Introduction to Political Ecology, where we explored what effects activists and academics have had on the environmental movement – the limits and the possibilities. Here was a chance to explore this issue in a real place, where these themes and issues have played out on the ground and continue to do so. I had to jump on it.

Little did I know that the theme that would follow me throughout the course was to expect the unexpected – it was only upon reflection of the field trip that I saw this jumping out at me all over the place. The purpose of this essay is to take a closer look at this recurring theme that surfaced during this trip about community-based research – a theme that kept jumping out at me over and over again throughout my time in Clayoquot Sound. The best way to illustrate this is to draw on examples from the field trip.

On day one, we began to explore the main topic of the course by discussing what community based research is. My initial sense of what community based research was vague. I wrote: “Community Based Research (CBR) is research that is done by or for a community with respect and collaboration with that community on an issue that the community deems important.” Good thing that there is debate in academia about this term – the **first** thing that I did not expect – and I should not have been surprised about this. Many questions were raised such as: what does ‘community’ really mean? and what is community-based anyway? I could see how our professor, Kelly Bannister, saw it as a continuum.

My broad definition of CBR evolved during the course, through several experiences described below:

The first person that we met that expanded my definition of CBR was Dr. Derek Shaw, member of the Tofino Council. In his presentation to us, he stressed the importance of *relevance* in CBR. Relevance: a simple, yet important point to drive home in our minds. Research can have inherent value (i.e. the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge), however if it is to be useful to the community in which you are conducting your research, relevance is paramount. What I didn’t expect to learn were the unique problems of the Council of Tofino – like the fact that they do not have enough space to house all of the documents necessary to run the municipality. That is a startling piece of information and important for any researcher who is working on a project for or of interest to the municipality.

The second example involves how both Stan Boychuk (Executive Director, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust) and Kelly Bannister (our fearless Instructor) stressed the fact that we are all still learning what CBR means and that no one has all the answers. I found this to be comforting and exciting at the same time – the ‘experts’ don’t have all the answers, yet they were on the ground trying

their best to work them out in this relatively new field of research. Community-based researchers are faced with several variables that cannot always be controlled, for example: how the socio-economic status of community members can effect timelines and objectives of projects, political opportunism of certain people, the expectations of community members about what the researchers can accomplish, and even hostility and/or resistance by community members towards researchers.

Importantly, I learned that even the 'experts' have moments of uncertainty – I asked Barb Beasley (co-instructor and community liaison for the course) how she feels about the region, and while she has called it home for over a decade, she admits to sometimes feeling like an outsider in Ucluelet and not sure exactly why she's there. Our own instructor Kelly Bannister did not set out to



have a career in CBR – she began in the sciences and a chance

finding in her research took her career off in a different tangent. The same can be said for Peter Buckland (Director, Boat Basin Foundation) – coming to Hesquiaht Harbour as a prospector, he could not have known that he

would eventually come to live there full time, purchase Cougar Annie's property (after a little manipulation from her) and create the Boat Basin Foundation to preserve it for educational purposes such as the trip we found ourselves on.

Indeed, the unexpected reared its head in many ways, for example:

- Perhaps most obviously was the death of an Ahousaht First Nations elder that we found out about en route to Ahousaht – and how our instructors, Barb and Kelly, had to deal with that on the fly. We were not going to stay, out of respect, but we were asked to and had an experience in that community that will stay with many of us for years to come.
- The Bear! In Boat Basin, I found myself sitting on a nice log, listening to a moose hunting story that Kelly was relating when I heard a not so pleased "snort" behind me. My spine stiffened involuntarily and I quickly removed myself from the log and began walking away quickly to the inquisitive looks of my classmates wondering, "What are you freaking out about – oh it's a bear!" I believe my line was, "I heard something breathing behind me, and it didn't sound friendly!" As you will



remember, Kelly became a backpack tree trying to gather all of the bags that were left as people explored the inter-tidal zone and the last bag standing was Stan's! So much for Kelly's "bear-away" stick – it was more of a "bear attractor" stick.

- The "breach of protocol/political opportunism" incident on the dock at Stewardson Inlet as we entered traditional Hesquiaht territory on Interfor land. A member of the Hesquiaht Band Council, took the occasion of our arrival to deliver political messages to our group leaders over a "breach" of protocol since the Band Council was not formally informed of our visit to the Boat Basin Foundation in writing. This event served as an important learning experience for us all. It showed us that the Hesquiaht Nation, like all communities, has no one voice that speaks for it, and that respect and communication are important when dealing with unexpected situations.

This trip to Clayoquot Sound provided all of us with unforgettable experiences and a unique opportunity to explore the topic of community-based research first hand. What I have come away with is something I will never forget – a better understanding of unexpectedness, and how if you have an open mind, it can provide you with unique and rich opportunities that would never have presented themselves if all had gone according to plan.



Experiences in Community-Based Research

Jonna Winger

Forth year student in Political Science

As I thought about what to say in a presentation about my understanding of community-based research, I felt overwhelmed. How could I possibly express myself adequately in a 10 minute presentation? For me the experience was a feeling, a positive feeling within. It was like traveling; as you see and learn so much about the place it becomes difficult to translate that feeling into words. In this essay I will try my best to translate those feelings into words.

For me, learning about community-based research was a series of moments. I guess one's whole life is a series of moments, but I was especially conscious of them and on the field trip to Clayoquot Sound I was hyper aware. These moments on the trip contributed to my understanding of community based research because they allowed me to understand "the community" more fully. These moments helped reveal a true sense of how to interact with the people in the community and the issues that are important to them. My philosophy is that everything has a purpose, everything has a meaning. I tend to analyze things, to notice minuscule details and try to understand what the purpose is in each of the moments that make up our days. These are important details that I feel are often times often overlooked; yet they bring so much meaning and understanding to everyday.

Throughout the trip I did not really feel like I was engaging in any type of research, especially community based. This was partly due to my lack of a concrete definition about what community is and where it exists. But as the trip progressed I realized that even if we were not conducting research, everything we experienced was contributing to our understanding of community. For example, the nature walk with the class through Boat Basin - was that community based research? In a way, we were part of a research project in progress - the Walk of the Ancients - and we made a small contribution by pooling our observations and ideas about what could go into a new and improved version of the pamphlet. But mainly we were there to learn about the place and the kinds of research activities that could happen there. Was talking with Hesquiaht elder Steven Charleson at Hooksum community based research? No, but it was the kind of learning that is necessary as a part of community based research, especially in a different culture.

Now I understand that in order to understand the community, one must understand the environment surrounding the community and the issues that are important to the community. All these experiences are part of those moments. So my purpose of this essay is to emphasize how important every experience is to community based research and how the definition of community is not concrete, it is ever changing, transforming into different ways in different circumstances and situations.

Before this course started I did not know exactly what community based research was. When my friends asked me what I was going to be doing up in Clayoquot Sound, I would shrug and say with uncertainty, "doing community based research, whatever that is." All I knew was that I was excited to be going on this amazing trip and finding out more about community based research.

So how has my understanding evolved? I now know that everything we experienced is a part of understanding community based research, all those moments. In the salmon weir mapping

exercise at Hooksum we were contributing a little by helping out the community, and at the same time we were experiencing the community - not necessarily writing things down and taking notes, but by participating in an activity that they asked us to do. One of the most enriching and challenging experiences was our visit to Ahousaht. During our visit we were able to be part of a community project with the Youth Centre, and were able to see some of the issues that the community was facing. One of the biggest issues was garbage. It was everywhere, all over the beach and the town. For me garbage is a form of disrespect. When someone throws a piece of garbage on the ground, the garbage stays on the ground or in the case of Ahousaht it is blown into the ocean. Where does one think that is going to go? Who is going to pick it up? So essentially I see the litter as a show of disrespect for the land and the community. From that, arises the question about why there is such a low level of respect? How did the community get to the point of such disrespect for the land? I look at our meeting with Steven Charleson, who has such a high level of respect for the land and his ancestors who lived a life of being one with the land, and I wonder how the community of Ahousaht arrived at such a different point. Or perhaps the better question to ask now is how do they get back to Steven's level of respect? These experiences were related to community because they gave my classmates and me a better understanding of the community.

A point from the course readings that really resonated with me during the trip was Kara Shaw's (2002) dichotomy of the global/local paradox. I saw so much of the local in the global, and the global in the local. It is amazing how many issues were at work in this tiny enclave of the world. There are so many environmental, political, cultural and economic issues that have local impact as well as global impact; one example of this was the 1993 logging protest and the boycotts. These local acts had important local as well as global impacts and vice versa. Clayoquot has become a well known example of logging protest around the world.

I will conclude on Derek Shaw's point about relevance. My question is how do things become relevant for both the researcher and the people or community being researched? Where does the balance lie between research and intrusion, and even if someone can find that balance, how can the timing work out for both the institution and the community? This sort of research relies on a lot of uncontrollable factors, so is the real answer that there is no real answer? My questions could go on forever, but one of the lasting questions that I am still trying to deal with in my head is that of relevance, how community based research can make research relevant for both the community and the university.

References Cited

Shaw, Karena 2002. "Encountering Clayoquot, Reading the Political." In *A Political Space: Reading the Global through Clayoquot Sound*, Warren Magnusson and Karena Shaw (eds). University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis/McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal. pp. 25-66.

The most critical part of CBR? LISTENING!

Julia Black

Fourth year student in Environmental Studies and Women's Studies

The purpose of this essay is to shed light on the reality that the learning process necessary to conduct effective community based research (CBR) is very unlike the traditional learning model of universities. When participating in CBR projects, it is important to pay attention to the information presented. However, it is highly essential not to analyze or draw conclusions too quickly, as that is when university researchers can poison otherwise fantastic CBR with their entrenched academic theories and ways of thinking.

Before our course started, I did not have a clear idea in my head of what CBR was. Other than the self-explanatory name, I really did not know exactly what the term referred to. When our instructor showed us a spectrum, illustrating the range in forms that CBR can take, I began to understand CBR as a vaguely defined term that is used to describe many different kinds of projects. At that point, I thought CBR was going into a community, gathering information, and returning to the university to organize and write about those findings. I now think that in a way, CBR is actually the reverse of that. CBR is not going into a community following an academic mandate and plugging community specifics into analyses as data sets. Rather, I now think that effective CBR requires emersion in the community (e.g., listening, asking questions, observing) and allowing academic concepts and tendencies that limit or control variables to trickle in slowly rather than dominate.

The primary way our trip affected my understanding of CBR is that it showed me that to create effective CBR, in which social or political factors are being considered, patience and time are the two most important factors. For example, gathering data in the form of stories from community members is a process very unlike reading journal articles. The actual story telling is slow, but the process of synthesizing the information into relevant, accurate work is even slower. It seems that much CBR requires immersion in the community. From our eight days in Clayoquot Sound, I am not equipped to produce a piece of work that can be called CBR. My view of CBR has been altered based on the realization that CBR involves becoming comfortable with a new kind of learning. This type of learning requires observing and participating but being extremely patient, because the results will only become clear when we allow ourselves to listen and observe without overanalysing. Most learning in universities takes the form of being presented as well-prepared, synthesized theories, opinions or views. CBR requires becoming comfortable with a more raw style of learning. The information that was presented to me over the course of our trip was in such a disorganized form that I was feeling frustrated since I could not immediately understand its relevance.

Our trip showed me that as academics we have to learn to be quiet sometimes. It is vital that we learn to suppress the desire to immediately draw conclusions when we see or are told something. Community relations are complicated and often contradictory. CBR requires accepting this, even the parts that really bother us, and being patient and sensitive when exploring why something that appears to be clearly problematic to us, exists in a community. An example of this for me was during and after our visit to Ahousaht. Without thinking twice about it, I immediately started brainstorming solutions to problems that no one had asked me to solve. A few days later, I realized that I am the last person who should be voicing ideas of what the residents of Ahousaht need and should want.

Repeatedly throughout the trip, I kept saying and writing in my journal about how hard it is to immediately learn from stories. I needed time to synthesize and analyze the information that was being presented to me. I think it can be hard for university students to get used to being a part of the situation under consideration, and just staying neutral - not asking a plethora of questions and not offering solutions. Rather, taking the surroundings in without immediately analyzing and compartmentalizing them into conclusions is a critical first step of creating good CBR.



My vital question? If immersion and patience are necessary elements of CBR, how can those needs be met in the face of the funding and time issues that seem to be inherent in today's academic world?

Understanding Imbedded Complexities in Community Based Research: Experiences from the Clayoquot Sound

Marin Ripsam

Forth year student in Geography and Environmental Studies

Over the course of our nine day undergraduate field study in Clayoquot Sound, I felt completely inundated and overwhelmed with information. Simple things like walking to our cabins and trying to remember the names of plants and trees, as well as listening to our community partners' provided me with a lot of valuable information. Although I may not remember every piece of information I was taught, I was able to understand more about community based research and the areas where it takes place. In the following I will share some of my learnings while in the Clayoquot Sound region.

Upon the conclusion of our trip, I spent a lot of time reflecting and trying to understand how all the bits of knowledge I had gained and been exposed to fit together. As Hesquiaht elder Steven Charleson put it in his "peanut butter teaching method", I was (and still am) trying to get the glob of peanut butter back together. As the days went on, this task seemed to be much harder than I thought. Just as I thought I had one thing figured out and understood how it played a role in our experience, and how it fit into the context of community based research, I realized that each thing was only a small portion of a much bigger issue. One of the main things that impacted me throughout our trip was the extreme complexity, uncertainty and interconnectedness of the issues that surround community based research, some of which we got to experience first hand. The purpose of this paper is to present a reflection of my understanding of "community based research" prior to the trip to Clayoquot Sound and how that changed upon the conclusion of the trip. I will also describe two different occasions where I began to see the underlying complexities inherent in community based research.

Before leaving for the Clayoquot Sound region my understanding of community based research was basic, naive and broad. My thoughts were as follows:

- it involved a collaboration with researchers and the community to conduct research in order to learn about the community and the surroundings;
- it was conducted in a respectful manner, respecting the environment and the community;
- it included the use of traditional knowledge from the locals;
- the process and outcome were intended to be mutually beneficial; and
- throughout the process and upon completion of the research, the notion of giving back to the community was an essential component.

This understanding of what I thought community based research was before we left was solely based on a few previous geography and environmental studies courses I have taken, in which it was always a brief discussion and most certainly not 'hands on'.

After visiting the Clayoquot Sound region, not only was I finally able to experience 'community based research', and start to really understand what it is as a practice and a concept, but throughout the entire journey my learning never stopped. Everyday, through talks, and interactions with our surroundings I was slowly able to grasp more of the characteristics of community based research.

My understanding of community based research upon the conclusion of the trip, is still constantly changing and evolving, as it has since we left on that sunny day in May. Building upon my initial understanding, which was not necessarily wrong, just basic, I have come to

understand some characteristics that I see as integral to community based research and a part of its philosophical foundation. I see community based research as a reciprocal process which is action oriented to initiate or produce change within a community, in an area which the community feels needs 'expert' help from an outside source (such as a researcher). A role of the researcher is to research and educate those in the community, which includes skill building, so the community can share responsibilities of the work. Once the researcher's 'work' is complete the community ought to have developed the skills to maintain and apply the knowledge for the future. I believe these characteristics to be only a portion of what community based research means as a practice, and are by no means conclusive; however I do think they serve as a foundation from what I have come to understand.

When really looking at some of the above concepts, they appear simple on paper, but in reality they are quite complex when it comes to implementing them. Prior to the trip, I was unaware of this complexity. For example, when we arrived at Stewardson Inlet, we were faced with an issue surrounding protocol. I was never really aware of the concept of protocols as a part of community based research, but from what I did know it seemed like a great idea, maybe even simple. In very basic terms, it meant getting together with the community, coming up with an agreement of how things should be handled and conducted in the region, compromise, and when the time came, the protocols were referenced to make sure they were followed. As I came to find out, protocols are not so straight forward. Although there had been a standard of conduct for research developed with the interests of the Hesquiaht and other central region Nuuchah-nulth First Nations in mind, the protocols were not simple when it came to implementation. Later, when the group had a conversation about it, it struck me when Stan Boychuk said, "no matter what we would have done, it wouldn't have been right", "it was a staged political act", "an issue of control". Also, after hearing from Kelly Bannister about her experience when working with a variety of First Nation groups in order to come up with protocols to avoid conflict for the future, I learned this too was not an easy process, but very complex. While protocols can be a tool to make the research process less burdensome, more respectful and more beneficial to communities, the sharing of community expectations can also be seen as giving over control to outsiders. Sometimes it isn't even possible to establish protocols because they are not yet agreed upon within a given community.

Another incident that occurred around our arrival to boat basin was when Hesquiaht Band Council member Richard Lucas made it clear that we should not take Steven Charleson's opinions about Interfor and Hesquiaht relationships as the Hesquiaht First Nation perspective. At first I didn't really understand why he said this, but later, as we spoke with Steven about his viewpoint, I started to

understand that the underlying politics of the region, between groups and also within the Hesquiaht community, were also more complex than I had previously thought. There may be a variety of diverse views within a community, and the "official" community perspective in the political arena (e.g., the Band Council) may or may not be representative of the wider



community's views. For example, Steven's opinion about the Interfor logging practices and their relationship with the Hesquiaht First Nation were very strong and came from a past of local

political activism. These were not the same views promoted by the current Hesquiaht Band Council who had established a close working relationship with Interfor.

After the field experience there are a lot of remaining questions surrounding the issues of community based research, as a general concept as well as what it means to me, personally. Some things I think that are important to look at and understand as a community based researcher are:

- what is the role or purpose of the researcher?
- what are the needs of the community?
- what are the existing politics of a region (between people, organizations, etc.)?
- who will be involved?
- are there protocols?
- what is the relevance of academic research to the community?
- what will be the future use of the research/ project and how will it be maintained?
- how to ensure the community will become empowered through transfer of skills and that the research is not entirely an extractive process?

Overall, I believe one of the most important questions surrounding community based research are what is the role of a researcher, and how does that role fit in with the community needs? I think it is essential that these questions are addressed each and every time community based research is conducted as well as throughout the duration of project, in order to not loose sight of the intentions of the research.

Returning to the peanut butter analogy, it has taken much reflection and time to put this much of the glob of peanut butter back together. Although my reflection is not complete, the process thus far has taught me a lot about the complexities imbedded in community based research and where it takes place. As I continue to reflect and understand what exactly community based research is, now knowing just how complex it really is, and while things may look good on paper, everything seems to be uncertain. It is important to understand that when looking at a concept such as community based research, it is essential to be aware of the uncertainties and make adjustments when necessary. It will take me a lot longer to get the rest of the peanut butter back together, but as I do I will continue to learn even more, because more information will fill the void spaces; where the peanut butter got stuck on someone else.



Clayoquot Sound: A Look at Community-Based Research

Meaghan Noad

Fifth year student in Biology, with a minor in Environmental Studies

A nine day trip to Clayoquot Sound as part of an undergraduate course at the University of Victoria certainly was not enough to expose a group of 15 students to all of the complexities and logistical issues inherent in community-based research, but it was a great way to open our eyes to many of the realities associated with the process. The purpose of this paper is to look at some aspects of the trip to Clayoquot Sound that stood out as important to the process of conducting community-based research. This includes ideas such as researcher as facilitator, and the effects of timescale on relationship building and trust building with community members. I describe my understanding of community-based research before the trip and how it changed after some exposure to the topic, and I discuss what I believe is most important for university researchers to understand when conducting this type of research.

It is difficult to remember what my thoughts were regarding community-based research before being influenced by our trip and the course readings, so I will begin by simply reiterating what I wrote on the first day of our course when asked by the instructor to define community based research:

Well, I don't know exactly, but what I believe it to be is research that is carried out by someone (i.e. us) or any institution seeking to further their understanding of certain community dynamics. I think it is also about taking what has been understood and learned about the community and using that knowledge to help with conflicts or issues within the community. It is also about making that knowledge more accessible to more people, and recognizing everyone that is involved.

It is clear that I was unsure of what community-based research was prior to our trip, and so I will make several key changes to this definition, now that I have gained some knowledge and perspective on the topic.

A fundamental change in my idea of community-based research is the idea that community members have a more active role in defining the problem of the research project, carrying out the goals laid out, and analyzing the findings. The university researcher therefore acts more as a facilitator, providing assistance in guiding the project and in acquiring information that would be otherwise inaccessible to the community. It is during this process of learning, and knowledge acquisition that community members are able to really gain understanding and control over their own lives. This is in contrast to a research project in which a researcher comes into a community, does their research without community involvement, and then leaves. The community is no better off in the end, and is potentially worse off.

The ultimate goal is for the community to be able to address pressing current problems, to be better equipped to handle future issues, and to be empowered to overcome adverse conditions, especially the oppression that has resulted from colonization. We saw many impacts of oppression and colonization on our trip, from the fishing and logging industries to the social situation in the Ahousaht First Nation community. This idea of empowerment associated with community-based research is especially critical with First Nations because of the historical oppression and inequalities that they have faced for so long.

In order to best facilitate this process, I believe it is important to really understand the lives of people in the community. By this I mean that researchers must have adequate knowledge of the politics, history, ecology, socioeconomics, and any other issues associated with the area and the community. Therefore, the researcher should know not only about their own area of academic expertise, but about the many other aspects of community life that are so fundamentally intertwined. These will inevitably affect the research process or outcomes in direct or indirect ways. With Barb Beasley's help we learned about the general political, economic, and social history of the area, and we enjoyed many an ecology walk and talk. We heard about the issues concerning logging from several points of view. And one of the most important things is that we listened. We did not impose our own ideas and views, but we tried to see through the speakers' eyes. In particular, we spent 2 days with Hesquiaht elder Stephen Charleson and listened intently to every word he offered us. He shared his own worldview, and he had many interesting things to say that many of us found inspiring.

Stephen shared with us a view that is much different from the people we spoke to from Interfor. Richard Lucas, who is a Band council member, and Cecil Sabbas who works as a liaison between Interfor and the Hesquiaht First Nation shared a view that the First Nation and logging company could work collaboratively, whereas Stephen did not believe that logging was compatible with Clayoquot Sound. In this situation, I believe that we as listeners need to use caution because it was my belief that we were quick to judge what the Interfor representatives had to say. It is easy as "environmentalists" to be really hopeful about Stephen's vision and infer that all people should think that way. The reality is that many First Nations, even those who are from the same community as Stephen, do not share those same views. We must therefore be careful not to judge when we do not have all the facts, but listen and reflect critically in developing our own opinions

Another crucial aspect of community-based research is the timescale. It is my understanding that in many cases the timescales given to research projects is simply not enough to pursue this type of research. It is important to build relationships with community members in order to build a sense of trust. On our trip we were able to meet with many people whom Barb has built friendships and working relationships with over many years. We met with people who are outspoken, politically active, and accepting of academics. The timescale of the trip did not enable us to build our own relationships, and to hear from other community members who may be more timid and less trusting of academia. I believe though that this approach was somewhat evident in Ahousaht. The community

and the Youth Centre had outlined some projects that they deemed important, and we undertook some tasks to address certain problems, or to simply help out with whatever needed doing. Due to the circumstances of our arrival (an unexpected death in the community), there were no youth present when we first got to the centre, but as we were working, people became interested and began to approach us and interact with us. We did not impose ourselves upon community members,

but we made ourselves open and approachable. Later on we played stealing sticks with some of the youth of Ahousaht. This was an integral step in initiating a sort of trust and relationship, especially with youth.



I would sum up what I have learned so far with the word empowerment. Community-based research is about empowering community members so that they are able to have control over their lives and work to bridge the inequalities that have been the result of adverse circumstances or years of oppression. This idea brings us back to our first day in Tofino looking at the Eik Street Tree – a large old cedar tree standing in shackles above a new housing development. For me, this tree symbolized a loss of control for the community to govern their own lives, and a loss of control over the land and development.

Finally, I would say that it is vital for university researchers to understand and accept the complexities associated with community-based research. There are so many variables involved in this type of research, and each one is important in understanding and resolving the types of issues that arise within communities. Research constraints such as time or funding, or limiting exposure to conflicting perspectives would devalue this type of research and potentially disempower the community. In research projects that impose constraints to limit variables, the results may be seen as more objective and therefore more valuable in scientific terms, however they may be of little use to a community and irrelevant to the real world. While such results are useful for different areas of research, I believe that community-based research, which should seek to help the community members regain control over their own lives, must acknowledge rather than ignore the complexities and variability associated with communities.

Where Does It Fit In? Reflections on Community Based Research in Clayoquot Sound

Ryan Karkhairan

Second year student in Environmental Studies and Anthropology

Community based research proves to be quite a complex topic. The issue of whether or not it has an important role in Clayoquot Sound and in other areas of the world is a question I've been struggling with. While I hate to straddle the fence, I feel it is important to think critically and without bias about such an issue before arguing for its benefits. So, in this essay, I've attempted to put some serious thought into what community based research is, who really benefits from it, where its potential pitfalls are, and whether or not I agree with its use in general terms, at least by academics.

On the first day of class when we were asked to explain what we thought community based research (CBR) was, my response was mostly recalling what I had learned from the assigned readings done prior to class. It was along the lines of this: the process of research and study of interrelated issues of a given community. Had I been asked to explain it a week before, my response would have been much more vague. I would have told you that CBR is research done about a community or a community issue. Throughout the field component however, the complexities of CBR became much clearer. Prior to the course, I doubt I would have seen any problem with CBR or with its use in Clayoquot Sound. Now however, I see a range of complex issues that need to be addressed.

When I read the objective of this oral presentation – “to reflect on your understanding of CBR in light of the field experience”, I was at a bit of a loss. Questions rose in my mind as I debated whether CBR is actually useful to communities or whether it just serves to help already privileged students and academics to get ahead in the world. This line of thought led me to wondering how important the motivation for doing CBR was. I wondered how much of it is done with community interests in mind and how much of it goes towards helping students with their theses or helping academics get published for their own recognition. And further, if these intentions are misguided, does that negate any benefits promoted by the research?

One of the feelings I remember having during the field component was a feeling of dismay. This was a dismay that people in our society seem completely unable to let nature take care of itself. And not just nature for that matter. We don't seem to be able to let other people or communities take care of themselves either. What first struck me in this light was the Eik Street cedar tree. The whole thing – a tree in \$80,000 shackles - just seemed so ludicrous. This tree, having resided in the same spot for centuries, now having its existence threatened because it may or may not fall on a tourist resort. I found it symbolic that the only way people would let it live was if humans were in control of it in some way. But after all, isn't it just as much of a tragedy and an indignity to be forced to stand if the tree's time to fall has come and gone?



I found myself revisiting these ideas later on in the trip when we visited Hesquiaht elder Steven Charleson at Hooksum. That first day, seeing the unusual site of a beached sea otter, it was Steven's reaction to the situation that struck me. Many of us in the class, myself included, started thinking of ways in which we might help the poor animal. But Steven remained firm that we must let it be and allow nature to take its course. To him, this was the right thing to do. Yet to many of us, this went against our social inclination to "fix" the problem. To bring this back to the topic at hand, I wondered if this inclination to meddle with everything which seems so deep-rooted in so many aspects of our culture, was perhaps parallel to our use of CBR. Perhaps, despite what we believe our intentions to be, the act of outsiders meddling in any way with communities is more for the benefit of the researchers than for the community. That is to say, maybe the communities are fine on their own – whether they are thriving or not – and that their state is the natural one which they are supposed to be in. For us to interfere could be seen as an imposition of our own cultural beliefs on the natural state of communities with different cultures.



Upon thinking this through further however, I was reminded of something Tofino Council Member Derek Shaw had said. I remembered him explaining how people new to Tofino have this attitude of – *wow, this place is amazing... Now let's shut down the borders so no one else can come in and mess this up.* Perhaps these feelings I was having were along the same lines. Upon realizing all these aspects of this region that I didn't even know existed, my initial reaction was to feel that outside researchers had no place here. Perhaps this was due to the immense power of the area. As soon as I stepped off the boat I could feel such a strong connection to the land and I knew that this would be lost on many members of mainstream Canadian culture. Whatever the reason for my initial feelings, it struck me at this point that I was maybe being too hasty and jumping to too many conclusions.

Community based research isn't perfect and there still seems to be room for improvement in its practices. Towards the end of the trip I was still a bit unsure of where I stood on the issue. I had



felt that working with Steven mapping out the fishing weir stakes had been an interesting exercise and felt that the work we did, although it wasn't much, may have been useful to Steven and the Hesquiaht community. At least it was a small glimpse into the possibilities of CBR in practice. On the other hand however, the trip to Ahousaht, while it had been very enlightening, it seemed the work we did there was a bit futile. At times I felt as though our class was the community being researched. By this time in the trip, our group had developed all of the inner workings of our own community and in Ahousaht I felt as though the

members of that community were getting an up-close look at this odd university research community. And although this trip was highly valuable at an individual level, I couldn't necessarily see any benefit for either community.

It wasn't until we got back to the city and I had some time to reflect that my thoughts really started to shift. I guess it was a bit of a reality check getting back to civilization. The fact of the matter is we don't live in an isolated and disconnected world. Signs of globalization are everywhere. Even the youth in Ahousaht had access to all the latest technologies and fashions. We can't just ignore small communities and expect them to be unaffected by the global world. And the more connected this planet becomes, the more important I think it is to really understand one another. We need to embrace our similarities and our differences and understand them both. If you are going to undertake a research project to understand a community, then community involvement is absolutely vital.

Community based research seems to be necessary for a complete and integrated understanding of human culture and civilization in this era. But I believe great caution must be taken on the part of the researchers to ensure that outside cultural values are not imposed on the communities or on the outcome of the research. The focus needs to be on sustaining and protecting diversity within our global community, and we must take care not to meddle with or control any aspect of the communities in which research is taking place.

“Researching Ourselves Back to Life:” The Possibilities and Challenges of Community-Based Research in an Indigenous Context

Megan Thom

Third year student in Environmental Studies and Political Science

“Alright.

You know, I hear this story up north. Maybe Yellowknife, that one, somewhere. I hear it maybe a long time. Old story this one. One hundred years, maybe more. Maybe not so long either, this story.

So.

You know, they come to my place. Summer place, pretty good place, that one. Those ones, they come with Napiao, my friend. Cool. On the river. Indians call him Ka-sin-ta, that river, like if you did nothing but stand in one place all day and maybe longer. Ka-sin-ta also call Na-po. Napiao knows that one, my friend. Whiteman call him Saint Merry, but I don’t know what that mean. Maybe like Ka-sin-ta. Maybe not.

Napiao comes with those three. Whiteman, those.

No Indianman.

No Chinaman.

No Frenchman.

Too bad, those.

Sometimes the wind come along say hello. Pretty fast, that one. Blow some things down on the river, that Ka-sin-ta.

Sometimes he comes up too, pretty high. Moves things around, that Ka-sin-ta.

Three men come to my summer place, also my friend Napiao. Pretty loud talkers, those ones. One is big. I tell him maybe looks like Big Joe. Maybe not.

Anyway.

They come and Napiao, too. Bring greetings, how are you, many nice things they bring to says. Three.

All white.

Too bad, those.

Ho, my friend says, real nice day. Here is some tobacco.

All those smile. Good teeth.

Your friend Napiao, they says, that one says you tell a good story, you tell us your good story.

They says, those ones.

I tell Napiao, sit down, rest, eat something. Those three like to stand. Stand still. I think of Ka-sin-ta, as I told you. So I says to Napiao, Ka-sin-ta, in our language and e laugh. Those three laugh, too. Good teeth. Whiteman, white teeth.

I says to them, those ones stand pretty good. Napiao, my friend, says tell these a good story. Maybe not too long, he says. Those ones pretty young, go to sleep pretty quick. Anthropologist, you know. That one has a camera. Maybe.

Okay, I says, sit down.

These are good men, my friend says, those come a long ways from past Ta-pe-loo-za. Call him Blind Man Coulee, too. Ta-pe-loo-za means like a quiet place where the fish can rest, deep quiet place. Blind man maybe comes there later. To that place. Maybe fish.

Alright.

How about a story, that one says.

Sure, I says. Maybe about Jimmy runs the store near Two Bridges. His brother become dead and give Jimmy his car. But Jimmy never drives.

Napiao hold his hand up pretty soft. My friend says that good story, Jimmy and his car. These ones don’t know Jimmy.

Okay, I says. Tell abot Billy Frank and the dead-river pig. Funny story, that one, Billy Frank and the dead-river pig. Pretty big pig. Billy is real small, like Napiao, my friend. Hurt his back. Lost his truck.

Those ones like old stories, says my friend, maybe how the world was put together. Good Indian story like that, Napiao says. Those ones have tape recorders, he says.

*Okay, I says.
Have some tea.
Stay awake.
Once upon a time.”*

~ Excerpted from Thomas King (1993: 3-5).

Once upon a time there was a group of excited young students who went to a strange, wild land called Clayoquot Sound to learn about community-based research (CBR). This is the story of how the world of one student's understanding of CBR was put together.

I chose to begin my presentation and this paper with an excerpt from Thomas King's *One Good Story, That One*, because it encapsulates my understanding of community-based research, particularly in an indigenous context. The main purpose of my presentation is to determine the role of the non-indigenous researcher in indigenous communities, and identify the challenges that researchers must overcome.

King's (1993) story may not seem immediately relevant to the questions asked of this essay, and it may not make complete sense to the listener/reader. Perhaps you, the listener, missed one bit at the beginning, and then you did not know who "Ka-sin-ta" is, or, out of context, what was going on. To the teller, however, the story is a perfect answer to the question; it might just take years to understand why. This confusion, time, and flexibility is precisely what community-based research is all about.

The white anthropologists in *One Good Story, That One* will never understand the story because they do not take the time to build a relationship with the teller. Nor do they value the local stories first offered to them. They ignore the concerns and values of the living community, focusing only on extracting "good Indian stories" about the past. Once they record that story, they leave, presumably never to be seen again. This kind of research is like resource extraction. If researchers continue to take from communities without giving something in return, someday the stories and the data may run out, or communities will simply refuse to keep giving.

Many indigenous communities in Clayoquot Sound and around the world have expressed frustration with research, protesting that they have been "researched to death." However, as one Elder at a workshop on research ethics with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples said, "If we have been researched to death...maybe it's time we started researching ourselves back to life" (Brant-Castellano 2004: 98).

I believe that it is through community-based research that indigenous communities will research themselves back to life. The term "community-based research" encompasses a wide spectrum, from research about communities, to research with communities and ultimately by communities. In its best form, I think community-based research is research that is initiated, directed, and controlled by the community at every step of the process.

Before I went to Clayoquot Sound, I had an idealistic, but basically correct idea of what community-based research is. On the first day of class I wrote:

CBR is a process in which academic researchers work with community members in an equal, open, and mutually-respectful way to examine aspects of that community. It is an opportunity for people with different areas of expertise to join them together to produce a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Community members must be recognized as experts on their community, their needs, and their lives. Community members should have ultimate control over how the research is used and how it will affect their community. Research must be cooperative, respectful, consensus-based, open to diverse kinds of knowledge and world views, slow enough for all to be involved, and controlled and driven by the community.

My conception of community-based research has remained essentially unchanged since my experience in Clayoquot Sound, however, I now have a more nuanced understanding of the challenges that stand between the ideal and the reality. In the face of this vast minefield of challenges and relationships to be navigated, I have identified three main challenges that our field experience in Clayoquot Sound underlined for me.

Firstly, I can no longer blithely refer to a unified entity called “the community.” Nine days in Clayoquot Sound taught me that there are many overlapping and conflicting communities, identities, opinions, and interests, and what happens in one community has far-reaching effects. For example, what is the Ahousaht “community”? Is it contained within the geographical boundaries of the reserve? Does it extend to encompass Ahousaht people living in Tofino, Port Alberni, or all over the world? Does it include non-Ahousaht people living within the community? And what are the implications of research in Ahousaht for the Hesquiaht people? How does it affect any of the multiple “communities” living in the region? How can one measure that?

Secondly, I have become wary of using CBR as a convenient acronym because it could lend itself too easily to neatly classifying this confusing complexity, or to masking research that is not as firmly entrenched in the community as it ideally should be. I am reminded of Steven Charleson speaking of “CMTEs”- culturally-modified tree experts. By this he meant non-indigenous academics that are hired by developers and logging companies to inventory culturally-modified trees. All too often these “experts” miss significant trees, while knowledgeable community members whose ancestors modified those trees are relegated to carrying the coffee thermos. These CMTEs are conducting one form of community-based research, but it is certainly not one that values and works with communities.



The third question that came up for me throughout our field experience in Clayoquot Sound is, what should a researcher do when community members have conflicting views of their situation and what should be done?

In Clayoquot Sound the main issue that different community members kept highlighting was logging. We heard drastically different opinions on all aspects of logging, from its social and ecological affects, to its future potential and its current state. We heard from Warren Wartig of

Interfor that logging has drastically improved in recent years, and they are now doing more restoration and road building for the benefit of Hesquiaht school children than actual logging. Richard Lucas from the Hesquiaht Band Council spoke of the economic and social benefits of logging for his people, invoking the Nuu-chah-nulth concepts of *hishuk ish ts'awalk* and *hahuulthi*. On the other hand, Steven Charleson had an entirely different take on Interfor, saying that they are environmentally and economically unsustainable, an opinion that was supported by Peter Buckland at Boat Basin. Finally, George Patterson at the Botanical Gardens held that Interfor could not possibly be losing money because they just donated \$20 million to the UBC Faculty of Forestry.

For us as researchers, hearing all these perspectives did not give us a sense of what “the community” wants. It did not even give us a clear idea of the straight facts of how much Interfor is cutting and earning. As Eldon observes in Frank Fischer’s *Citizens, Experts and the Environment*, the participatory researcher “is more dependent on those from whom the data come, has less control over the research process, and has more pressure to work from other people’s definitions of the situation” (Eldon 1981 as quoted in Fischer 2000: 181).

This is equally true for the community-based researcher, who is ostensibly working for and with “the community.” Given the problem of defining “community,” and the multiple and conflicting opinions and agendas present within that “community,” how is the researcher to determine what “the community” wants, or even what is real? How is the researcher to negotiate his or her path through the labyrinth of opinions, visions, unspoken histories, conflicts, and hidden agendas? Coming back to my original purpose, *what is the role of the researcher?*

This is the question that I see as most vital for university researchers to understand when they undertake community-based research. I have particularly focused on the role of non-indigenous researchers in indigenous communities. This emphasis was inspired by our brief stay on the Ahousaht reserve, where I found myself confronted with all of these challenges and questions.

When a non-indigenous researcher enters an indigenous community, that researcher comes with the social, economic, and cultural differences embedded in hundreds of years of colonialism. Personally, although my ancestors were not directly involved in colonisation, my life, my house, and my education are all built on that process which still continues today. What, then, are my rights and responsibilities as an academic in an indigenous community such as Ahousaht?

There is great potential for academics to help indigenous communities recover from colonisation through community-based research. However, researchers must realize the privilege and precariousness of their position in these communities, and devote serious thought to how they can best help facilitate that recovery. If everything is connected, as the Nuu-chah-nulth phrase *hishuk ish ts'awalk* suggests, where do I fit in? What is my role, and how can I fulfill it in a way that best benefits myself and this community?

References Cited

Brant-Castellano, Marlene, 2004. “Ethics of Aboriginal Research.” In *Journal of Aboriginal Health* 1 (1): 98-114.

Eldon, M, 1981. “Sharing the Research Work: Participative Research and Its Role Demands.” In P. Reason and J. Rowan (eds.) *Human Inquiry: A Source book of new paradigm research*. John Wiley, New York. Pp. 253-266.

Fischer, Frank, 2000. "Community Inquiry and Local Knowledge: The Political and Methodological Foundations of Participatory Research." In *Citizens, Experts and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge*. Duke University Press, Durham.

King, Thomas, 1993. "One Good Story, That One." In *One Good Story, That One*. HarperCollins, Toronto.

Appreciating the Complexity and Seeing the Connections: Reflections on Community-Based-Research and Clayoquot Sound

Ariel Hunt-Brondwin

Fourth year student in Political Science

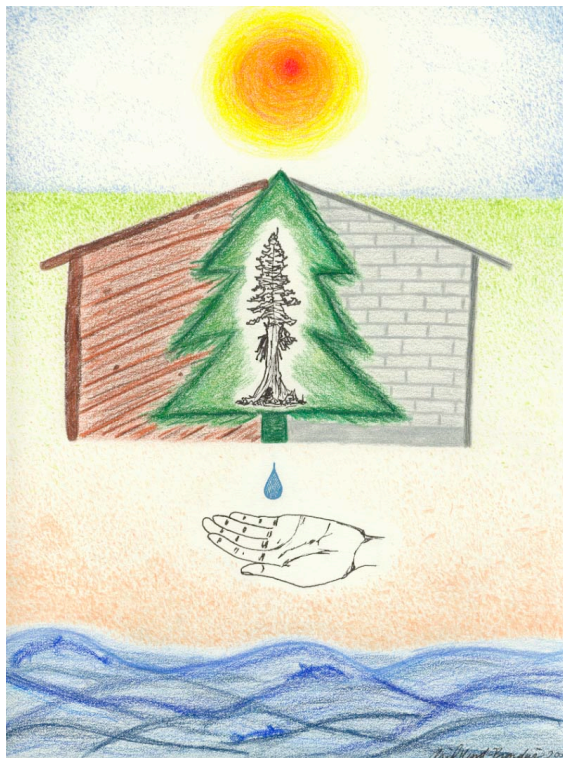
The purpose of this paper is to highlight the complexity of our field course experience within the region of Clayoquot Sound and describe the influence it had on my understanding of community-based research (CBR). This trip has been yet another reminder to me of both how complex the world is and how vital it is to acknowledge that complexity, especially if I am trying to engage with my surroundings or with an issue from an academic standpoint.

CBR, perhaps unlike other types of research, seems to lead more to questions than answers; instead of simplifying the world, it seems to allow us to further appreciate and comprehend its many complexities by bringing to light the connections between things that make our world so complex.

We touched on all of the following relationships while we were on our trip:

- the roles of animals and plants in various ecosystems
- the implications of interaction between humans and the natural world
- interactions within a community
- the interactions with and the effects of the larger world on one or several communities

Everywhere we focused our attention, we were made to see how everything becomes more complicated. We also began to see from various points of view that everything is connected. Everything I learned over the days of our trip stimulated more questions but the knowledge I did gain has also led to an increasingly detailed, nuanced and complex web of information that I now possess about the place of Clayoquot Sound.

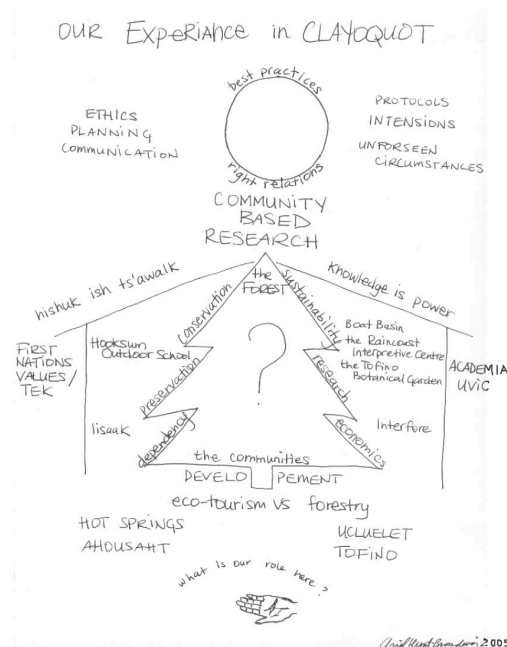


A drawing came to me at the end of our trip. It began as just a few images that I expanded on once I began. I include it here as a visual and symbolic reminder to us of our experiences in Clayoquot Sound. I guess this picture represents the surface, or only that which can't be missed when I think of Clayoquot Sound. This drawing is simplistic and in that way similar to my original understandings of CBR.

I'll summarize the main points from my initial response to the question that was asked on our first day of class, i.e., "what is community-based research?"

I believed that CBR was supposed to be collaborative in nature and that it should proceed in a grassroots/bottom-up oriented-way. In other words, I think what I meant there was that the direction of the research was supposed to come from within the community. I also understood

CBR as research that should be conducted in equal partnership with community members but where the community has the authority over how the gained information is shared, used, etc. My understanding was not necessarily incorrect but not very penetrating either. I came up with a different version of that same picture. In this picture I have tried to 'put on the table' so to speak the complexities of Clayoquot Sound without wiping away the sentiments of the first image.



What has changed my understandings of CBR? It is difficult for me to pinpoint one single event that decisively changed my mind but rather there were many events that slowly contributed to a new and hopefully more nuanced understanding. For example, Derek Shaw's talk, all of the conflicting information regarding logging by Interfor and Lisaak, participating in the fish weir mapping exercise with Stephen Charleson at Hooksum, helping Caron Olive and Barb Beasley with the mapping project at the Tofino mudflats and visiting Ahousaht. Each of these experiences helped to shape and influence my understanding of CBR.

It was our time in Ahousaht (and our subsequent debriefing) that brought to the forefront of my mind the idea that CBR was not quite what I thought it was, even though I realize that our activities in Ahousaht were by no means research – we were there trying to do some service and to learn. However *all* of these events raised questions in my mind.

These experiences showed me that nothing is as simple as I thought it was, that everything is connected and therefore affected by everything else that happens. They made me question the idea of community - who actually represents a community? And how can a community control and direct or even request research? What and who is a community? These questions made me realize my naiveté regarding CBR (and I'll come back to this point).

Here is my new definition/understanding of CBR, which still includes all of my earlier points but has definitely become a lot broader:

Community-Based-Research is a striving for balance between academic interests and community-based concerns, which can result in a win/win situation of new knowledge or insights gained and some form of beneficial social development in the form of policy changes, better services or positive awareness gained regarding oppressive and or unhealthy attitudes etc.

CBR involves communities in some capacity, but the level and type of involvement can be very different from one project to the next. Community members will most likely be involved in some or all of the following ways:

- as the subjects of study
- as participants in collecting data, and or as providers of data also
- as co-directors of areas of research.

It takes a lot of time and planning, knowing that it might not workout despite all of the forethought put into it. Ultimately CBR itself is a complex and dynamic thing that is more of an umbrella term rather than a specific definition of a type of research methodology.

At this point I am not convinced that CBR is the same as the different types of research we read about in the course readings. Instead I think that Participatory Action Research, Participatory Research and Community Based Participatory Research are all types of CBR. This is where I think I was naive in that I thought all CBR must be like what was described in the articles, however through reflecting on our experiences I realized all CBR wasn't - and I don't think that all CBR should necessarily be either. This is where I saw my naiveté. Thinking about the course readings and reflecting back on our trip made me realize my own biases towards social science and social justice type interests and goals respectively. While I can say that I think it might be 'better' if all CBR was really as community directed, and focused on anti-oppression work etc, as the readings seemed to suggest is possible, I don't think that is the reality of where research is at today or that that is necessarily a good limitation.

Secondarily, in seeing my own biases and the biases in the course readings towards the social sciences, I realized that this bias actually served to marginalize physical science research interests which I don't think is right either (not that this type of research hasn't been historically privileged but that's a different can of worms entirely!). The great thing about being in Clayoquot Sound, was that we were really exposed to the whole range of areas that could be of study through a CBR type model or process, both relating to the environmental and the social aspects of a region.

My main suggestion for what university researchers need to understand prior to commencing this kind of work is: *to understand (or at least be aware of) the complexities of both the social and physical environment of the place they will be working in.* I think this means especially going out of your discipline in order to do that. It means, for example, learning about the social aspects if you are an ecologist or learning about the physical world if you are a sociologist.

To better understand the complexities that they will encounter, *researchers have to be able to see the political nature of what they are doing.* My own biases as a political science student are evident but our experience in Clayoquot Sound really did reconfirm in my mind that there is always a political dimension to all relations.

The questions that I think need to be considered in research involving communities are:

- what is the point of your research?
- who will benefit from it?
- who has the power in this work?
- who should have it?

The vital issue underlying this kind of research is power. Researchers must understand the power relations they are enacting by doing their research, the power they hold and occupy by virtue of their role, and the power relations within the community.