Researching with Communities
Stances, Methods, Communication

Jeff Grabill
grabill@msu.edu
@grabill
what are your questions and concerns?

Talk with each other, think, and come up with a few things that you want to know, questions you have, ideas you have to contribute, and other such things
promise of engaged research

• More useful research and outcomes
• Conditions for participant empowerment, learning, growth
• Social justice (at least a measure of)
• More meaningful and sustaining work and life experiences (both researchers and participants)
risks of engaged research

1. Such work often requires scholars to write in multiple registers and genres, many of which may be unfamiliar
2. Such work often is seen by colleagues more as service than research
3. The work can require methodologies that seem unconventional to reviewers
4. The exigencies that researchers may explore with participants may not lend themselves to promotion or tenure deadlines

from Stuart Blythe, “Composing Activist Research”
you might be doing engaged research if ...

- Participants are improving their own lives and situations (via a project)
- Shared reflection, learning, and decision making
- Public communication of process and outcomes
essential research practices

1. Initiation, or where do studies come from?
2. Access, or how do I get permission to do my work?
3. Participation (with sponsors, clients, all those impacted; in planning design, method, analysis, and communication)
4. Studying up (or studying one’s client or sponsor as well)
essential research practices

4. Local politics (mediation, advocacy, relationship building and maintenance, community and political mapping)
5. Communication (as day-to-day research practice itself as well as in myriad settings during the research process regarding “nonresearch issues”—all in addition to the communication of the research results themselves)
6. Sustainability
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying Up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>