General Reflections on how to Practice and Train for Action Research

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There is much uncertainty about action research (AR) in the academic social science debate; that’s why critical comments on AR are often uninformed. One of the main reasons for these deficits is the lack of training opportunities at universities.

The following article is general in style, though based on broad action research experience. It is not my intention to present the great variety of AR concepts and practices or my experiences in detail, but to draw some general lines about the possibilities and difficulties to train students in AR in academic contexts. On this ground the need for action research training is demonstrated, and some opportunities in university contexts are pointed out. I conclude enumerating some criteria for writing action research and elaborating the difficulties to write AR in academic and in action research contexts.

Key words: action research training, democratic dialogue, action research values, action research culture, writing action research

Action research is not based on the separation, but on connecting theory and action, both understood as social praxis, i.e. embedded into social contexts. That’s why action research cannot be taught like any academic discipline; it may be trained and has to be experienced.

The topic raises several questions:

– Who is to be trained?