

## Introduction – on Interactive Research

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This article is an introduction to the special issue on interactive research. A short presentation is made of the different articles. A background to the growing interest in interactive research is presented, and some differences and similarities with action research are discussed. One section deals with the issue of validity in interactive research, another with the realistic and critical perspective. The role of researcher is described. In the final section an interactive research model is presented.

**Key words:** Interactive research, action research, validity, researcher role, critical realism

In this introductory article we will present a background to the growing interest in interactive research. We will also discuss what an interactive research approach can look like. Interactive research is seen as a development of the action research tradition.

Interactive research is characterised by a continuous joint learning process between the researcher and the participants. The main focus is on the outcome of the research in terms of new theories and concepts. We will argue that the inclusion of the participants in the whole research process is a way to increase the validity of the research. The change process should be owned by the participants, but these changes will be more sustainable because of the critical reflection and analysis in the joint learning process.

The special issue will include five additional articles. Four articles are empirically based, one compares interactive research with gender research.