

Power and contexts: Some societal conditions for organisational action research – Clashes between economic-management and pedagogic-social discourses

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Based on action research co-operation with a team of teachers at a Social and Healthcare College in Denmark 2012-2013, the article raises the question: What are the conditions for organisational action research projects in a neoliberal context?

The article has three purposes. Firstly, we want to show that mapping and delimitating relevant contexts are critical in an organisational AR project, because it is always arbitrary what you delimit as your field of inquiry, initially. The consequences of ignoring this in the project described were fatal. Secondly, the article draws attention to clashes between two societal Discourses: an economic-management Discourse versus a pedagogic-social Discourse. Unfortunately, we were not aware of the strength and the extent of the economic-management Discourse before it was too late. Thirdly, the article speaks in favor of continuous context inquiring dialogues with immediate and additional stakeholders questioning, among others, if the action research project is practicable at all.

Key words: social and healthcare education, context inquiring dialogues, societal discourse, power, organisational action research, new public management