

Access and the Politics of Action Research

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Success or failure of an action research depends on the events taking place at the start of the inquiry: the manner in which access is created and how participants and co-researchers are involved early on. Among the challenges involved in action research is opening of a communicative space. This involves opening an arena for the expressions of interpersonal needs together with social context developments through which the needs can be met or frustrated. This challenge can be overcome by intimacy, control and inclusion. Meeting the interpersonal needs adequately will result to accomplishment of tasks. An inquiry group would require boundaries to open a safe communicative space; however, if these boundaries are too firm the group turns out to be inaccessible (Whitmore & McKee, 2001).

The practices of initiating a communicative space are necessarily contradictory and paradoxical. The facilitator should hold together qualities perceived to be in opposition. An inquiry in some sense causes disturbance to established ways of perceiving and undertaking things. This necessitates that there be sufficient order to contain the confusion and chaos. Additionally, inquiry practices stimulate anxiety and therefore communicative spaces ought to have the capacity of containing anxiety for it to be expressed.

In an action research, sometimes it becomes difficult to deal with the participants. Therefore, facilitators and animators should offer appropriate leadership and exercise social power so as to establish conditions through which participation flourishes. Leaders should be able to give up authority and move away from leadership for participants to own their work fully (Chowns, 2008). The entire group of actors, with the inclusion of initiating action researchers,

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have their own participation vision. This vision is needed to engage with others. However, this vision can turn out to be domination if is not held evenly and with liveness.

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References

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