

Action Research Pedagogy in a New Cultural Setting: The Syrian Experience
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In this paper, we discuss a unique action research (AR) pedagogical experience of professors at four public universities in the Syrian Arab Republic. The approach in this experience began by contextualizing some lessons and experiences of AR at Cornell University and issues about university reform in a very different cultural and national setting, the Syrian setting. The setting is four public universities (Damascus, Aleppo, Baath, and Teshreen) in 2006.

Few are those universities in the US or Europe that have contextualized AR and the relation between university and society in an effective pro-social way. The experience of the Syrian universities is unique in that some of their professors in the social sciences and the humanities are being educated in AR despite the adverse national political and economic conditions. One may even suggest that we are able to educate these professors in action research because of the contemporary adverse conditions.

The focus of this educational process is re-thinking and reviving scientific research at the university level. Preliminary discussions suggest that educating in AR at the higher education level could be more effective when the professors see their ability to conduct any research as the priority. Such a knowledge self-generation process has resulted in focusing on what facilitates or deters from doing social research for social change.