

Social Analysis Systems² ^{OM}

Concepts and Tools for
Collaborative Research and Social Action

<http://www.sas-pm.com/>

Name of this technique: A.R.T. (Action-Research-Training)

Author(s) and correct citation: Jacques M. Chevalier, 'SAS² 1.0: A.R.T. (Action-Research-Training),' in *Social Analysis Systems² 1.0*, <http://www.sas-pm.com/>.

Acknowledgements: *A.R.T.* is a SAS² adaptation and development of the principles of problem-based learning and learning by doing (see *Readings and links*).

What is the goal of A.R.T.?

A.R.T. helps you assess the balance and integration of three project components: 1) **actions**, aimed at achieving project or program goals, 2) **research**, consisting of data collection and diagnostic analysis, and 3) **training**, involving capacity-building events and strategies.

What are the guiding principles of A.R.T.?

- Actions are goal-oriented interventions where people reach decisions, implement them, and interact with others in the process. Research is any diagnostic activity where people systematically gather and analyze information on a topic. Training is any learning activity that provides instruction and practice in a skill.
- The precise balance of action, research, and training should reflect project or program objectives.
- Projects or programs that achieve a strong integration of all three components may achieve better results because:
 - Action is more effective when it is based on sound research and good training;

- Research is more useful when it is shared with others through training events;
- Training creates better learning when it is directly applied to problem-solving research and action. This is capacity-building grounded in ‘action learning’ or ‘learning by doing.’

Here’s how to do A.R.T.

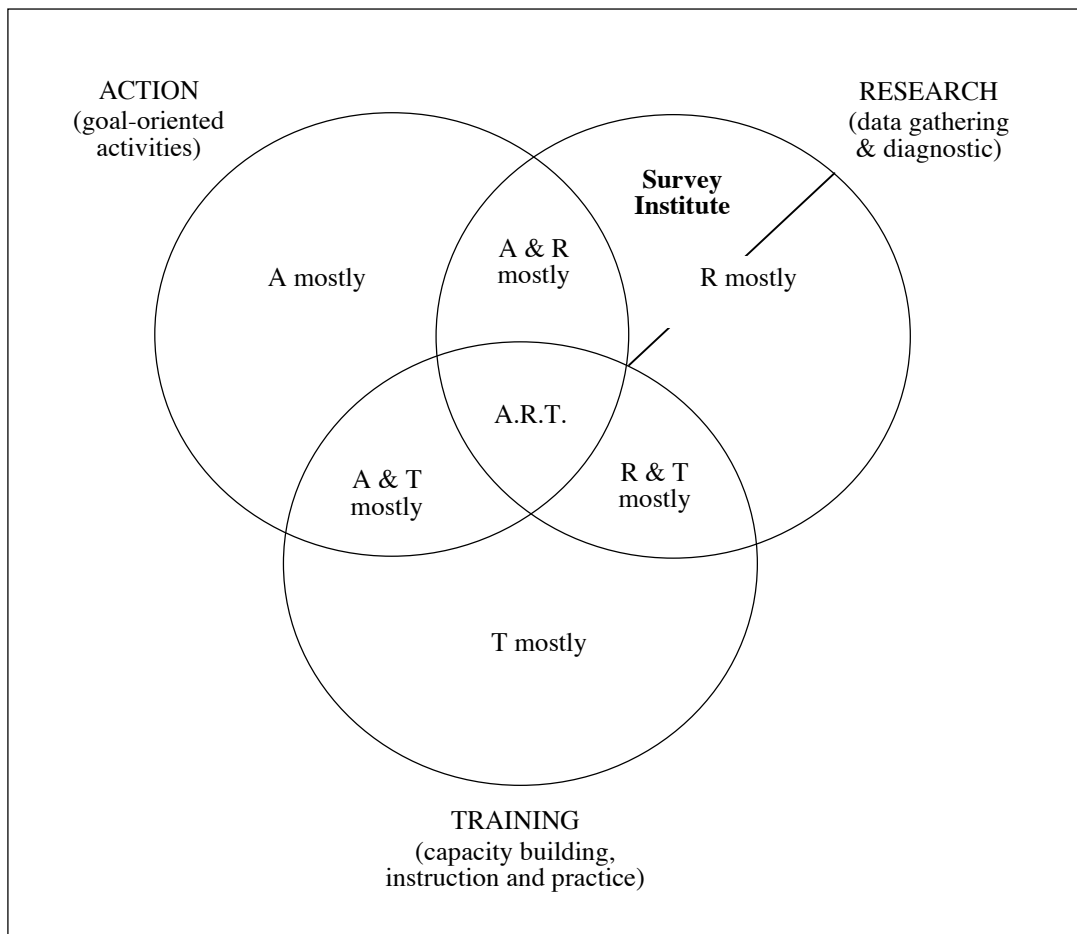
Using a Venn Diagram

1. Identify an activity or a group of activities (actual or proposed) where you need to use *A.R.T.* Clarify the purpose of your analysis.
2. Draw a **Venn Diagram**. Use the three intersecting circles to represent the three *A.R.T.* components (Action, Research, Training) and all their possible combinations (see example in Step 4).
3. Discuss and compare the **importance** given to action, research, and training in the activities you identified in Step 1. Use one of the following categories from your Venn Diagram to describe these activities:
 - Action mostly
 - Research mostly
 - Training mostly
 - Action and research mostly
 - Action and training mostly
 - Research and training mostly
 - Action and research and training

You can use one of these categories to describe your **project or program in general**. Another option is to use the appropriate category to describe **each activity** within your project or program.

4. If the activities identified in Step 1 focus on action, research or training mostly, discuss what **contribution** this makes to the objectives of other activities. For instance, do you focus on the kind of research that others can use mostly for training (but not for immediate action)? If so, divide the circle for research in half and put your answer in the half that intersects with the circle for training (see the upper right corner of the diagram below).

Here's an example of an Venn Diagram involving a Survey Institute that mostly does research through public opinion polls. In this case, the research is used mostly for political decision or action by other groups.



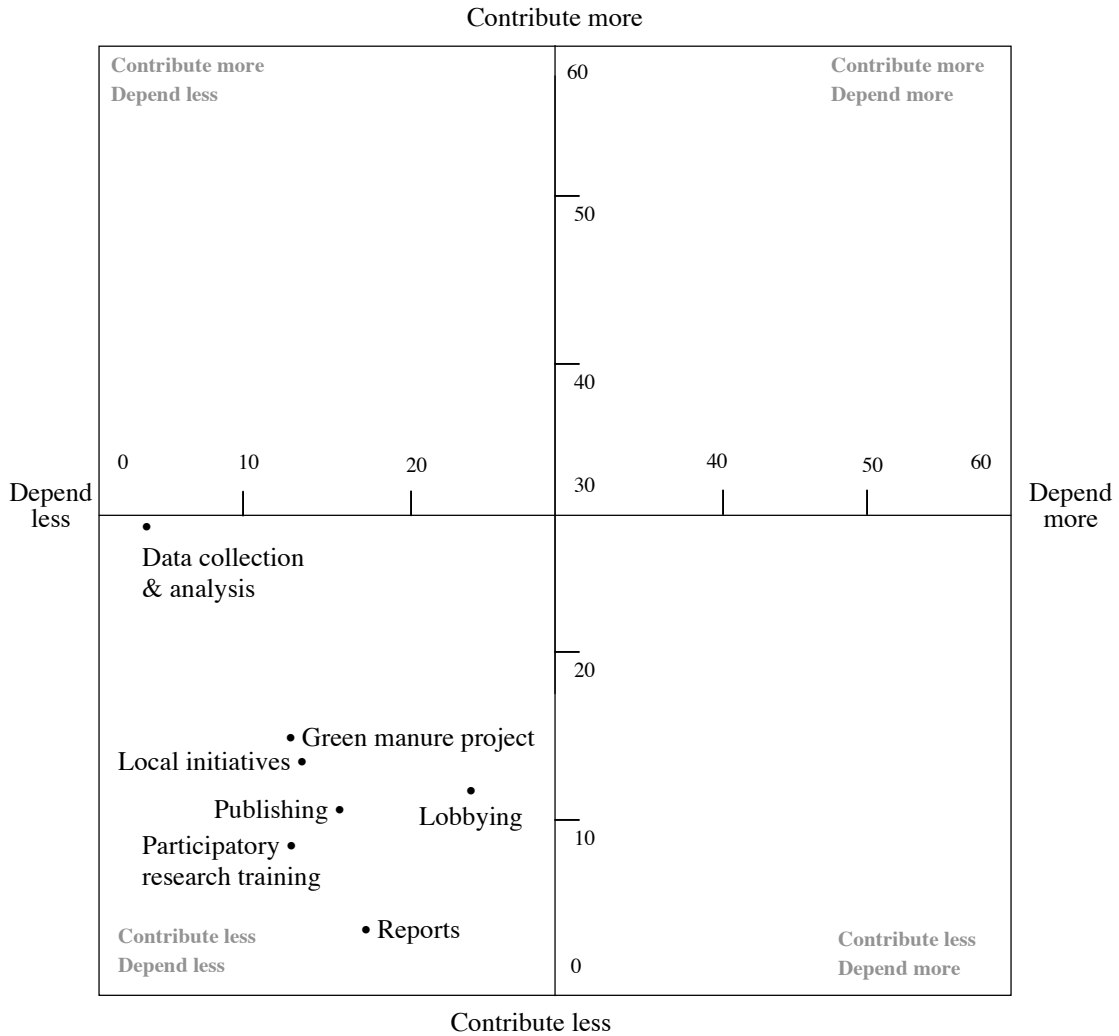
5. If the activities identified in Step 1 combine more than one focus, assess the extent to which each component affects the other(s). For instance, if you combine R & T mostly,

can you use the results of your research in your teaching, and is your teaching useful to your research? If you combine research with both action and training, how is each component useful to the other two? Use your own code to describe the **level of interaction** among the components of your *A.R.T.* profile (such as a long dash for a weak integration, as in R—T, and a plus sign for a strong integration, as in R+T).

Calculating the level of interaction

- Use *Skill Dynamics* to measure the **level of interaction** among the components of your *A.R.T.* profile. Here’s an example of an *Activity Dynamics* table and diagram that show the contribution that each project activity makes to other activities (the activities are categorized by components, in order of importance):

Activities	Research			Action			Training	Total contribution
	Data collection & analysis	Publishing Reports	Reports	Green manure project	Local initiatives	Lobbying	Participatory research training	
Research Data collection & analysis	x	8	6	1	3	8	3	29/60, 4.8
Publishing Reports	0	x	2	1	1	6	0	10/60, 1.7
Reports	0	2	x	0	0	2	0	4/60, 0.7
Action Green manure project	2	3	5	x	2	3	1	16/60, 2.7
Local initiatives	1	2	4	2	x	4	2	15/60, 2.5
Lobbying	0	0	0	2	4	x	7	13/60, 2.2
Training Participatory research training	0	0	0	6	3	0	x	9/60, 1.5
Total dependence	3/60 0.5	15/60 2.5	17/60 2.8	12/60 2.0	13/60 2.2	23/60 3.8	13/60 2.2	96/420 23%



Summary of this example: this project involves research and action mostly, with some training. But the overall interaction between the corresponding activities is generally weak; each activity makes a limited contribution to other activities. Data collection and analysis contributes the most, and lobbying depends the most on other activities.

Interpreting the results

6. Discuss how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with your *A.R.T.* profile that results, and where you would prefer your activities to be located in the Venn diagram (Step 4) and the interaction diagram (see example in Step 5). Explore what you can do to achieve this **ideal profile**.

7. Discuss the guiding principles presented at the beginning of this technique.

Making this process work for you

For simpler versions

- Use the technique to assess your project or program in general but not each activity within the project or program (see Step 3).
- Don't divide your circles into halves (Step 4).
- Don't calculate the dynamic interaction among the components of your project or program (Step 5).

For more advanced versions

- Take more time to gather the information you need to complete the exercise.
- During the exercise, discuss and record the views that participants express.
- Write a short description for each component of you're *A.R.T.* profile.
- Evaluate the importance of each component using *Ranking* or *Rating*.
- Use the advanced version of *Activity Dynamics*.

Reading and links

The University of Delaware Institute for Transforming Undergraduate Education,
<http://www.udel.edu/pbl/>

Maricopa Community Colleges, Arizona, <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/pbl/info.html>

McMaster, Problem-Based Learning in the Sciences and Liberal Arts, P.K. Rangachari,
<http://www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/pbls/#Sean>

Australian Problem Based Learning Network, see Bibliography at
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/iesd/learndevelop/problarc/bibliography.html>.

Schools of California Online Resources for Education,
<http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/problearn.html>

Boud, D., Felletti, G. (1991) *The Challenge of Problem-Based Learning*. London: Kogan.

Woods, Donald R. (1994). *Problem-Based Learning: How to Gain the Most from PBL*.
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Donald R. Woods, Publisher.

Illustrations

La Paz, Bolivia, HUEMP and CEBEM, May 2004

