

Action Research

Instructor: Nguyen Ngoc Vu, Ph.D.

What is Action Research?

Action Research is a process through which teachers collaborate in evaluating their practice, try out new strategies, and record their work in a form that is understandable by other teachers.

John Elliott. (1991). Action Research for Educational Change. Philadelphia: Open University Press/Milton Keynes.

Similarities and Differences Between Action Research & Formal Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Action Research

Systematic inquiry.

Goal is to solve problems of local concern.

Little formal training required to conduct such studies.

Intent is to identify and correct problems.

Carried out by teacher or other local education professional.

Uses primarily teacher-developed instruments.

Less rigorous.

Usually value-based.

Purposive samples selected.

Selective opinions of researcher often considered as data.

Generalizability is very limited.

Formal Research

Systematic inquiry.

Goal is to develop and test theories and to produce knowledge generalizable to wide population.

Considerable training required to conduct such studies.

Intent is to investigate larger issues, of local concern.

Carried out by researcher who is not usually involved in local situation.

Uses primarily professionally-developed instruments.

More rigorous.

Frequently value-neutral.

Random samples (if possible) preferred.

Selective opinions of researcher never considered as data.

Generalizability often appropriate.

Nature of Action Research

- Action research is research conducted by a teacher, administrator, or other education professional to solve a problem at the local level.
- Each of the specific methods of research can be used in action research studies, although on a smaller scale.
- A given research question may often be investigated by any one of several methods.
- Some methods are more appropriate to a particular research question and/or setting than other methods.

Key characteristics

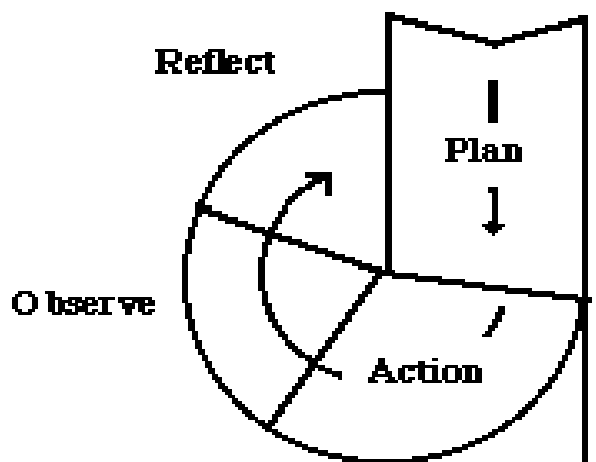
- A practical focus
- The educator-researcher's own practices
- Collaboration
- Dynamic process
- A plan of action
- Sharing research

Action Research Cycle:

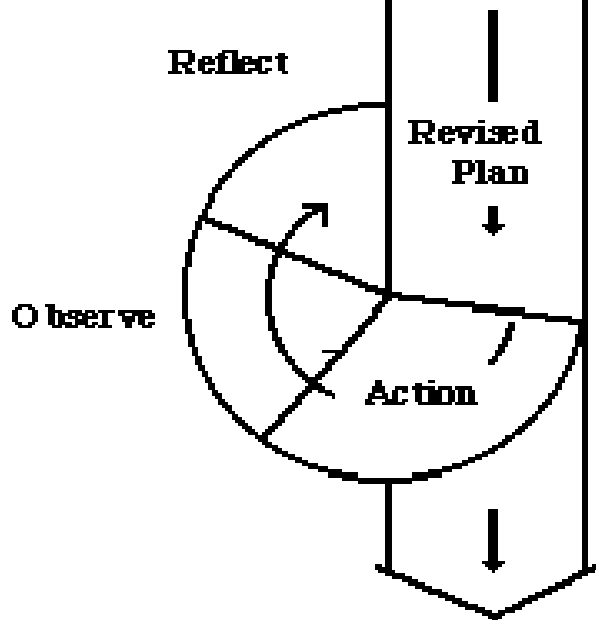
Observe, Reflect, Plan and Act

- **Observation phase** - the issue or problem is monitored and described. Useful data is recorded and kept.
- **Reflection phase** - observations are interpreted and shared so that the issue or problem can be better understood.
- **Planning phase** - actions are proposed to address the issue or problem.
- **Action phase** - the plan is implemented and the cycle starts again as outcomes are observed, recorded, and shared.

CYCLE 1



CYCLE 2



Simple Action Research Model

Advantages of Action Research

- It can be performed by anyone, in any type of school or institution
- It can help to improve educational practice
- It can help education and other professionals to improve their teaching
- It can help them learn to identify problems systematically
- It can build up a small community of research-oriented individuals at the local level