

ACTION PLAN AND ACTION RESEARCH PLAN

Part I: Brainstorming Possible Research Questions and Topics

Directions: Consider your teaching and the students and the context within which you work. Is there an area of your teaching that could be improved, that is challenging, or that you want to investigate further? The area could be something that you're struggling with or something that you're interested in knowing more. Working independently for three to four minutes, write answers to any eight of the following questions.

1. I wonder about
2. I am perplexed by
3. I'm really curious about
4. I want to learn more about ...
5. An idea that I would like to try out in my class is ...
6. Something I think would really make a difference in my teaching is
7. Something I would like to change is
8. I am unhappy about
9. Right now, some areas in which I'm particularly interested are
10. I am having trouble with
11. I would like to improve
12. One student in my class is doing and I would like to know how to address
13. I wonder how to incorporate more
14. For a long time, I have always wanted to know more about
15.

Part II: Characteristics of Good Research Questions

A. Researchable / Clear: The focus of the question

1. Is the question philosophical or practical?
2. Is the question too broad or too specific?
3. Does the question focus on issues that I'm dealing with as an educator?
4. Are there several questions embedded in the question or one single question?
5. Is the question the "right size"?
6. Is the question phrased clearly so that most people agree on the definitions and use of the key words in the question?
7. Is the question phrased in an open-ended way to avoid yes-no answers?
8. Can the question be answered with descriptions and observations?
9. Does the question begin with "why," "how" or "what"?
10. Does the question include an intervention, the steps that you will take, or the implementation that will improve the situation?

B. Significance / Relevance / Interest: The value of the question

1. Does the question have a theoretical significance and contribute to education in general?
2. Does the question have a practical significance?
3. Does the question focus on teaching and learning practices that could have an impact on students' behavior or achievement?
4. Is the question worth my time and effort and beneficial to me, my students and others?
5. Am I willing to invest time and energy into this question?
6. Am I interested enough in the situation to change and improve something?
7. Will the question sustain my interest over time?
8. Is there a little tension in my question?

C. Feasible: The context and constraints of the question

1. Is the question embedded in my day-to-day work as a teacher or is it an extra project that adds to existing teaching responsibilities?
2. Does the question fit well with my current and future responsibilities?
3. Would it be possible to build some research activities directly into my teaching (for example, students interviewing each other, group discussions, etc)?
4. Am I able to study the question with my existing research abilities and available resources and time?
5. Am I too dependent on other people or institutional structures? Would the improvement of this situation depend primarily on changing the behavior of other people?

D. Ethical: The effects of the question

Does the question harm or embarrass participants?

Data Collection Techniques & Sources

Data – As teachers we collect data in a number of ways. How do we do it? Why? Can we see different ways that we can collect data that will support questions we have about teaching and ultimately improve our practice?

Use multiple sources of data to analyze and interpret your data. This way, you will be able to *triangulate* the data – i.e., collecting the data in many (at least 3) different ways rather than relying on only one source. Here are some sources/techniques you may consider:

- **Journals & diaries** – teacher, students, parents, colleagues
- **Observation** – observing activity formally and informally, running records, documented anecdotal evidence gathered systematically & gathered over time, field notes, researcher memos, etc. Choose what is needed to answer question.
- Consider the following three categories of “observer.” If the researcher is a genuine participant in the activity that is being studied, then the researcher is a *participant observer*. If the researcher observes children when not directly involved in the teaching (such as watching an aide with a group in class as the researcher moves in and out of his role as teacher), then the researcher is a *privileged, active observer*. If the researcher is able to focus solely on data collection and not assume an active role of teaching, he becomes a *passive observer*.
- **Fieldnotes** – written records of participant observers. Anecdotal records are one type of fieldnotes written about learning and interaction in the classroom/school setting.
- **Existing records** – “archival” sources within a school – cumulative folders
- **Interviewing** – formal and informal – choose which stakeholders
- **Student work and work samples, portfolios, documentation**
- **Surveys & evaluations** – elicit responses from students, teachers, admin, parents, etc. – combine open and closed questions, scales, etc.
- **Rating scales** (i.e., Likert scale, value scale [semantic differential]) – may be part of a survey or alone
- **Audio taping** – should be transcribed/ analyzed – part of interview process or to gather classroom/other data
- **Video taping and Photography**
- **Inventories**
- **Quantitative Data** – existing or created – to provide additional insight
- **Qualitative Data** – experienced-based data that is descriptive, narrative and visual: fieldnotes, journals, surveys, attitude scales, standardized test scores, maps, audiotapes, videotapes, observations, online chat printouts, interviews and student work samples.
- **Maps and overview drawings of school/play area/playground/classroom**

Brainstorming Data Collection Sources Triangulating Your Data

“The strength of qualitative research lies in its triangulation, collecting information in many ways, rather than relying solely on one” (Wolcott, 1988, as cited in Mills, 2003, p. 52).

Triangulation: use of multiple data sources to determine evidence in more than one source. The strength of qualitative research lies in its triangulation, collecting information in many ways, rather than relying solely on one. Teacher-researchers might use a triangulation matrix to determine various data sources that will be used to address each question. This makes the data collection plan visible to the researcher and to others.

Research Question, Puzzlement, Or Information Sought	Data Source		
	1	2	3

Action Research Plan

Action Research Plan				
Observed Issue: <i>Identify an issue/question you have in your classroom.</i>				
Subject:	Grade:	Variables/Factors:		
Language:	Class:	Interventions: <i>What could you implement in your classroom?</i>		
Literature Review:	Article/Study 1:	Article/Study 2:	Article/Study 3:	Article/Study 4:
Data Collection Techniques & Tools:		Initial:	Ongoing:	Final:
Timeline: <i>Outline how long the action plan will take.</i>				
Implement Intervention: <i>What will you do and how will it work?</i>				
Data Interpretation: <i>What do the data tell you</i>				
Evaluate Action Research Plan: <i>What worked and didn't and why?</i>				
Reflection: <i>Why did you select this topic? What have you learned from this process?</i>				

Original template by Arayna Yearwood, 2011. Updated by Bonnie Corretjer & Maria Katradis, 2012. Updated by Maria Katradis & Kelley Webb, 2015.

Action Plan Template

Stage 1 – Desired Results	
Established Goals:	
Understandings:	Essential Questions:
Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence	
Stage 3 – Action Plan	
Actions:	