

## ACTION RESEARCH

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## CRITICAL RESEARCH PARADIGM

- Emancipatory interest
- Change advocates
- Small scale research
- Participant researchers, researchers
- Political, ideological factors, power and interests shaping behaviour
- Understanding, interrogating, critiquing, transforming actions and interests
- Critical theorists, action researchers, practitioner researchers

## 4 DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTION RESEARCH

- **Practical nature** – real world problems
- **Change** – integral part of research
- **Cyclical process** – feedback loop
- **Participation is active** not passive

## ACTION RESEARCH

- It recognises that practitioners can and should contribute to research - initiated, directed and controlled by practitioner
- Research in action rather than about action
- It puts the 'I' at the centre of the research process

## KEY FEATURES OF ACTION RESEARCH

- It is research *in action* rather than *about action*
- It is participative
- starts small
- It has a sequence of events
- tests - compiles evidence – keeps records (logs, journals)
- It aims to manage change and/or solve problems in an analytical, reflective series of actions, evaluations and further actions.

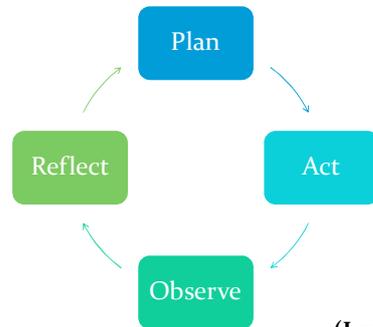
## KEY FEATURES OF ACTION RESEARCH

- It takes place in situ
- It is self consciously analytical
- It is generally grounded in a theoretical framework and through its activities generates emergent theory
- It is informed by an overt ethical framework

PRACTITIONER ACTION RESEARCH (IN EDUCATION)

- o Aims to improve education by changing it and learning from the consequences of change
- o It is participatory and collaborative
- o Establishes self critical communities keen to 'enlighten' themselves and thus 'emancipate' themselves from rigid practices

CYCLES OF ACTION RESEARCH



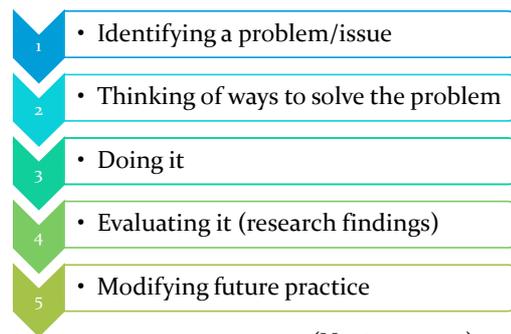
(Lewin 1946)



ACTION RESEARCH MAP

(Mc NIFF (2002))

SIMPLE 5 STEP PROCESS (ITDEM)



(Norton, 2009)

ACTION RESEARCH JOURNALS

- o Action research
- o Action research international
- o EJOLTS
- o Educational Action Research

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Can wikis support collaborative learning in students' group work?
- Investigate if the use of Augmented Reality modelling can improve the learning process of students preparing building designs for analysis in urban settings.
- Successes and challenges of feminist arts-based participatory methodologies with homeless/street-involved women in Victoria
- A collaborative inquiry: 'how do we improve our practice with children?'

### WHAT ACTION RESEARCH IS TO ME?

- How do I improve what I am doing?
- Applied research carried out on an identified need for improvement (Bell 2005, p8)
- An enquiry carried out to understand, evaluate and then change, in order to improve some educational practice (Bassey, 1998, p93)
- Process of systematic reflection .....

### CRITICISMS OF ACTION RESEARCH

- not proper research as seen from positivist/scientific perspective
- largely untheorised descriptions of practice
- need to be aware of major criticisms, and have confidence in that approach to action research is well thought out
- Not generalisable

#### How can we combat this?

### ACTION RESEARCH AND VALIDITY

- Critical friends
- Recording of events
- Validation of focus groups/interviews
- Triangulation

### CHECKLIST

- Cycle structure
- Timescales
- Ethical approval
- How will you insure quality and validity

### REFERENCES

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### MY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

- Supporting ePortfolio development for postgraduate students by implementing supports into curriculum design
- Cycle of 2 years
- Problem identified, changes implemented
- Currently investigating if the activities/strategies put in place during the academic year 2011-12 been effective in supporting the development of ePortfolios on the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the MSc in Applied eLearning



WHAT IS YOUR CYCLE OF ACTION RESEARCH

- o What is the cycle of action for your action research project?
- o Suggestion: Create a diagram for your paper and ePortfolio

