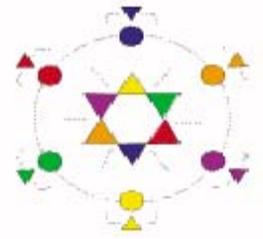


Action Research for Teachers: Part 1

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF AS YOU DECIDE IF ACTION RESEARCH IS SUITABLE FOR YOU AND YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION:

1. Are you wishing to conduct change experiments on real issues in a social system?
2. Are you wishing to focus on a particular issue and are seeking to provide assistance to the client system: students, teachers, dept, institution?
3. Which iterative cycle of identifying an issue, planning, acting and evaluating will you use?
4. Does your intended change involve re-education (changing patterns of thinking and action that are presently well-established in individuals and groups)?
5. Does your intended change challenge the status quo from a participative perspective (congruent with the requirements of effective re-education)?
6. Will it contribute simultaneously to basic knowledge in social science and to social action in everyday life?
7. Have you set in place high standards for developing theory and empirically testing propositions organised by theory?
8. Does your research question fit with the following:
 - Action research always involves 2 goals: resolve an issue; contribute to science
 - Action research is interactive
 - Action research aims at developing holistic understanding
 - Action research is fundamentally about change
9. Are you aware that:
 - Action research requires understanding of an ethical framework
 - Action research can include all types of data gathering methods
 - Action research requires a breadth of pre-understanding of business & organizations
 - Action research should be conducted in real time
 - Action research requires its own quality criteria
 - Is it explicit in developing relational participation?



- Is it guided by a reflexive concern for practical outcomes?
- Does it include a plurality of knowings?
- Does it engage in significant work?
- Does it result in new & enduring infrastructure?

[Reason & Bradbury, 2001)

10. Which of these 3 strategies of AR is for you?

First person action research/practice skills addresses our ability to fostering an inquiring approach to our own lives and work, to develop awareness skills, to act out of that awareness and be able to learn in action.

This is exciting for me.

Second person action research/practice skills addresses our ability to engage others in action research, to inquire together into issues of mutual concern and to learn in action together.

This works for us.

Third person action research/practice skills aims at creating a wider community of inquiry through the dissemination of knowledge to an impersonal audience.

This is interesting for them

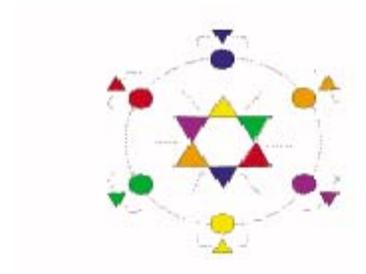
11. Do you know when AR is appropriate?

Describing an unfolding series of events in a given group, organization, community; or
Where members of the group wish to study their own action in order to change or improve its workings; or

Where members of the group wish to study the process of change or improvement in order to learn from it

12. Do you know how to design AR?

- Importance of framing the issue
 - having an action research team
 - building insider knowledge



- That is an emergent process

13. Do you know the 3 types of Steps?

- Pre step - understand context & purpose
- 6 main steps: gather, feedback & analyze data; plan, implement & evaluate action
- Meta step - to monitor

	Traditional Research	Action Research
Aim of Research	Universal knowledge Theory building & testing	Knowledge in action Theory building & Testing in action
Type of Knowledge Acquired	Universal Covering law	Particular Situational Praxis
Nature of Data	Context free	Contextually embedded
Validation	Logic, measurement Consistency of prediction & control	Experiential
Researcher's Role	Observer	Actor Agent of change
Researcher's Relationship To Setting	Detached neutral	Immersed

Figure 1 Comparison of Traditional Research and Action Research

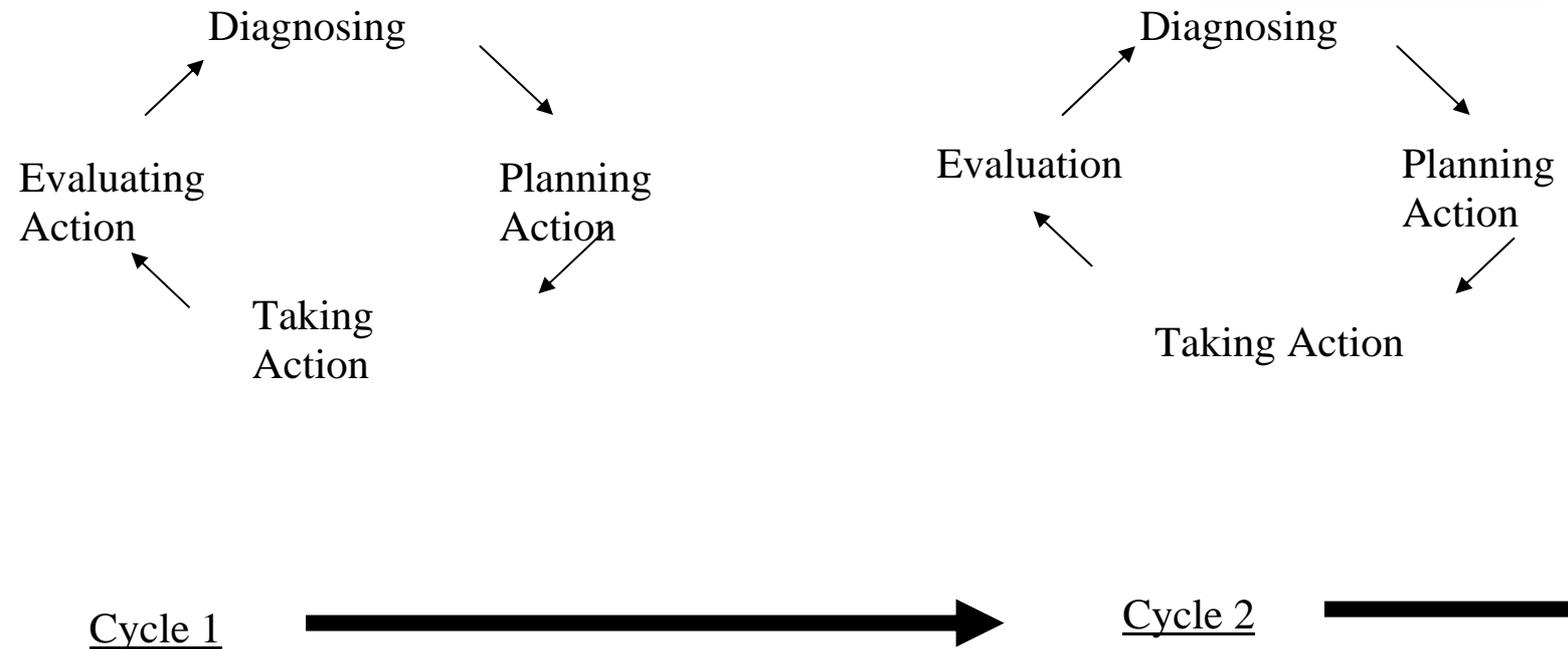
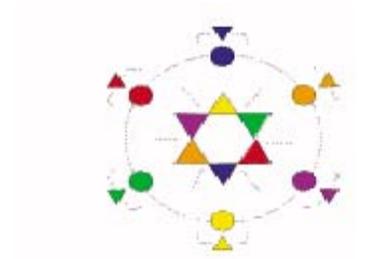


Figure 2 Sequences of Action Research Cycles

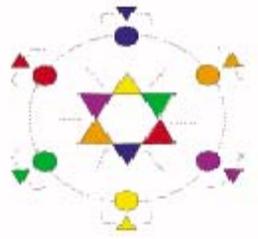
WHEN YOU ARE DOING ACTION RESEARCH

PRE STEP

1. What is the rationale for action?
 - Why is this project desirable/necessary?
 - What are the economic, political, social, technical forces driving change?
2. What is the rationale for research?
 - Why is this worth studying?
 - How is action research an appropriate methodology?
 - What contribution to knowledge is it hoping to make?

DATA GATHERING

- Hard data - statistics, financial accounts, reports...
- Soft data - perceptual, hard to interpret validly
- Data generation comes through involvement in the organizational processes.



- Directly observable behaviour important source of data groups at work, individual behaviour...

ACTION PLANNING

- What needs to change?
- In what parts of the organization?
- What types of changes are required?
- Whose support is needed?
- How can commitment be built?
- How can resistance be managed?

[Beckhard & Harris, 1987]

MONITORING (Meta-step of learning about learning)

- What are we learning?
- How are we implementing the action research cycle?

AR SKILLS

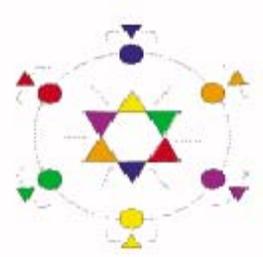
- Pure inquiry: eliciting the story
- Exploratory diagnostic inquiry: eliciting
 - analysis
 - reasoning
 - emotional
 - action
- Confrontive inquiry: challenging from researcher's perspective

FACETS OF ACTION RESEARCHERS

- Action researchers are instruments in the generation of data
- Key skill of learning in action:
 - self awareness
 - reflecting on experience
 - journal keeping as a useful tool

GENERATING THEORY THROUGH AR

- Action research generates emergent theory



- Theory building is incremental, moving from particular to general in small steps
- Action research demands an explicit concern with theory, formed from conceptualization of particular experiences
- Underlying assumptions must be made explicit & relate to theory

THREATS TO VALIDITY

Main threat is lack of impartiality, bias, and privately held inferences by researcher, hence the need for action researchers to test own assumptions & subject testing to public scrutiny

RIGOUR

Rigour in action research refers to how data are generated, gathered, explored and evaluated, how events are questioned and interpreted through multiple action research cycles.

1. How did you engage in the steps of multiple and repetitious action research cycles (how diagnosing, planning, taking action, and evaluating were done); how they were recorded to reflect that they are a true representation of what was studied?
2. How you challenged and tested your own assumptions and interpretations of what was happening continuously through the project by means of public reflection, so that your assumptions and interpretations are exposed to critique.
3. How you accessed different views of what was happening, which probably produced both confirming and contradictory interpretations
4. How your interpretations and diagnoses are grounded in scholarly theory, rigorously applied, and how project outcomes were challenged, supported or disconfirmed in terms of the theories underpinning those interpretations and diagnoses