



ACTION RESEARCH

SESSION 1

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION RESEARCH





Objectives

At the end of the session, teachers should be able to:

- 1 Explain each of the three principles of Action Research framework—excellence, integrity, and openness;
- 2 Describe each stage of the Action Research framework and explain how each one is related to one another;
- 3 Enumerate the steps in operationalizing the Action Research framework; and
- 4 Apply conceptually the five stages of the Action Research framework on a specific problem situation in the classroom.



Key Understandings

- 1 In conducting Action Research, one must be guided by the principles of *excellence*, *integrity*, and *openness*.
- 2 The Action Research framework is a cycle consisting of five Stages. Each stage helps researchers work through the research process of seeking and analyzing information and drawing conclusions from findings.
- 3 Action Research can be performed by doing the following:
- 4 Translating an identified classroom problem or issue into a research question;
- 5 Formulating research hypothesis aligned with the research question;
- 6 Collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information related to the research question;
- 7 Drawing conclusions from results of analyses; and
- 8 Using the conclusions to verify or reject the hypothesis formulated at the beginning of the study.

Materials

- Laptop
- LCD projector
- Whiteboard markers
- Masking tape
- Letter cuttings (to make up the words: ACTION, RESEARCH AND FRAMEWORK; each set of letters making up a word, clipped together)
- Scissors
- Metacards with 5 stages of Action Research Framework
(Assess the situation, Ask a question, Act to seek answers, Acquire information, Analyze and reflect)
- Blank Metacards
- Copies of the Action Research framework (the steps in operationalizing the Action Research Framework and Activity Card)



TIME ALLOTMENT

120 minutes/ 2 hours



References

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Introduction

Introduce the session by saying: “Good morning/afternoon, everyone. Welcome to our first LAC session on Action Research. I am (your name), your LAC facilitator for today. During the next two hours, we will be discussing the Action Research framework, which is necessary for us to understand before we can engage in Action Research. Please note that this is only the first of a series of LAC sessions on Action Research. Once we complete these sessions, you will all be able to conduct your own investigations, whether on your own or in groups.

At the end of this session, you are expected to be able to explain the three principles of Action Research framework, namely, excellence, integrity, and openness, describe each component of the Action Research framework, and explain how they are related to one another.”



Activity 1 (5 minutes)

Lead the conduct of the first pre-discussion activity by saying: “You will be divided into three groups for the first activity. You are to arrange jumbled letters assigned to your group to form words. Once your groups are done, post your answers on the board for everyone to see. The letters will be given to you by set, each set making up one word. There are three sets so there are three words. After you have formed the words, be sure to arrange the words in correct order on the board for everyone to see.”

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Distribute three sets of letter cuttings to the groups: one set for the word ACTION, another one for RESEARCH, and the last one for FRAMEWORK. The participants should be able to correctly form the phrase “Action Research Framework” on the board.

Analysis of Activity 1 (5 minutes)

Divide the participants into three then distribute metacards and permanent markers. Lead the processing of the result of the activity by asking them the following questions.

What comes to your mind after reading or hearing these words?

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Ask the participants to write their answers on the provided metacards. Assign a word for each group (RESEARCH for Group 1, ACTION for Group 2, and FRAMEWORK for Group 3). Give the participants ample time to write their responses. Once they are done, ask them to post their metacards under the appropriate word (ACTION, RESEARCH, and FRAMEWORK). You may choose a representative from each group to read what has been written by the group members. You can allow for comments and other feedbacks from other groups. Since this is a brainstorming session, all ideas must be accepted. Censorship of contributions should be avoided.

How are these words connected with each other?

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Call on two to three volunteers to give their syntheses of the words in the phrase Action Research framework.



Activity 2 (5 minutes)

Proceed to the conduct of the second pre-discussion activity by saying: “That was good sharing, everybody. Now, let us continue our brainstorming.” Do the following instructions.

- 1 Present to the participants the five metacards that represent each stage in the Action Research framework.
- 2 Ask the participants to arrange the stages in correct sequence. Have them post the metacards on the board following proper sequence for everyone to see.
- 3 Make sure that the participants were able to correctly arrange the five stages of the Action Research framework.

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Organize the board so that the other outputs can also be seen alongside the phrase Action Research framework. The participants may decide to arrange

the stages of Action Research framework in a linear fashion. If that is the case, you may just rearrange them in a circular pattern according to the diagram used in depicted the framework. Refer to the figure provided under Abstraction.

Analysis of Activity 2 (20 minutes)

Lead the processing of the participants' ideas regarding the five stages of the Action Research framework by asking the following questions.

- 1 What does “Assess the situation” mean? Why is this important in conducting Action Research? (*looking for a problem situation in school that needs an immediate solution; reconnaissance*)
- 2 What “question” is being referred to in the stage “Ask a question”? What are some examples of possible questions for Action Research? (*formulating an Action Research question or topic*)
- 3 What is involved in the stage “Act to seek answers”? What does the word “act” mean? What are some examples of how teachers can “act”? (*implementing an intervention addressing the problem*)
- 4 What does information mean in the fourth stage “Acquire information”?
- 5 Note to the facilitator: As a clue, remind the participants that “Acquire information” comes after “Act to seek answers.” (*Collecting data after the intervention has been implemented to see if it worked*)
- 6 What does the last step “Analyze and reflect” entail? (*statistical or qualitative analysis of data and interpretation of the results of analyses to see if the intervention has addressed the problem*)

Abstraction (40 minutes)

UNDERSTANDING THE ACTION RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The Action Research framework is a conceptual guide the in the conduct of Action Research. It helps researchers work through the stages of seeking information and drawing conclusions. The framework is made up of five (5) A's representing the five stages, namely, Assess the situation, Ask a question, Act to seek answers, Acquire information, and Analyze and reflect on the Findings (see **Figure 1**).

Action Research Framework

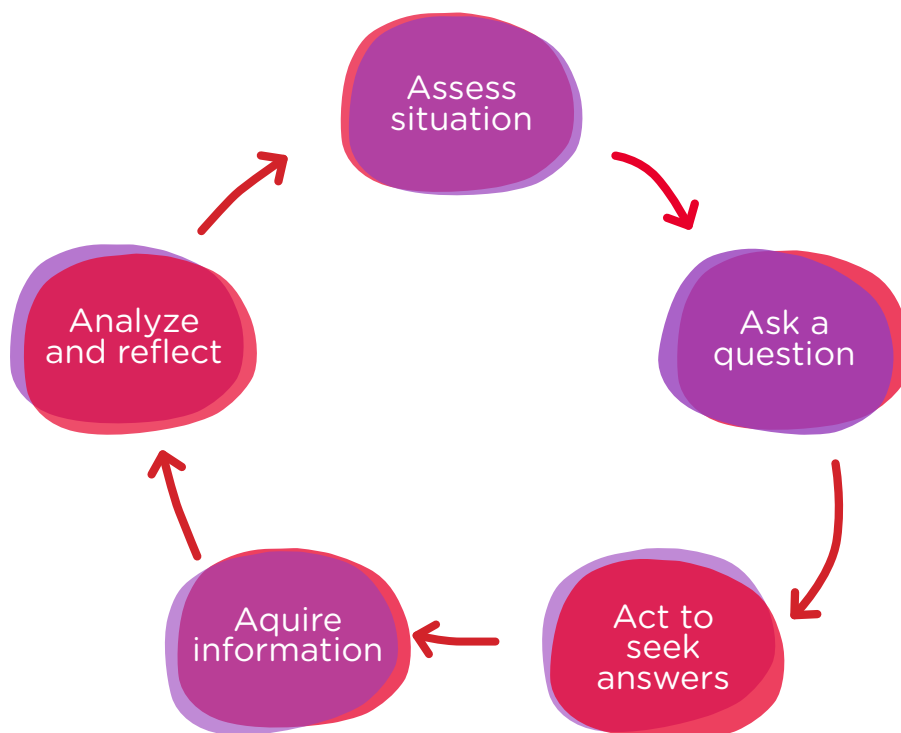


FIGURE 1. The Action Research Framework

Stage 1: Assess the Situation

This stage is performed to identify improvement opportunities in the teaching-learning process. It involves examination of student outcomes (achievements, dispositions), curriculum (standards, competencies, instructional materials); instruction (teaching strategies, use of technology), school climate (student morale, teacher morale,

relationships between teachers and supervisors), and parental involvement (attendance at events, involvement in parent-teacher committees,), among others.

Stage 2: Ask a Question

The research question is a clear, focused, concise, complex, and arguable question where the research is centered in. It is central to an Action Research project as it gives focus to the study, determines the methods for data collection and analysis, and guides all stages of inquiry, up to data analysis and research reporting. When doing an Action Research, a researcher has to go beneath the surface of an issue to identify why something is happening or not in order to generate the research question.

Stage 3: Act to Seek Answers

To be able to provide answers to the research question, the researcher has to design and test an appropriate intervention with a view of gaining insight into the problem and ultimately solving it.

Stage 4: Acquire Information

This stage requires the researcher to gather data and information about the effects of the intervention implemented using appropriate data collection instruments (survey, interview, observation, etc.)

Stage 5: Analyze and Reflect

The last stage of the Action Research focuses on the conduct of data analysis and interpretation. The research findings serve as bases for conclusions and recommendations. These findings, coupled with the researcher's reflections on the results of data analysis, may also serve as starting point for the next Action Research activity, thereby continuing the cycle.

End the first part of the discussion and introduce the next one by saying: "After understanding the Action Research framework, we also need to know how Action Research is conducted. In this regard, we are referring to the Action Research process.

The connection between the Action Research framework and the Action Research process is that the former guides the latter. The former is the philosophical basis of Action Research, while the latter is the technical process of conducting it. The framework then is the guide for the execution of the technical steps in the research process, which we will discuss next."

Operationalizing the Action Research Framework

Putting the Action Research framework into use follows the scientific method. It includes the following steps:

- Identifying the Action Research problem;
- Designing the Action Research;
- Collecting the data for Action Research;
- Analyzing the data Obtained for Action Research; and
- Writing the Action Research report.

Step 1: Identifying the Action Research Problem

Defining the problem is one of the initial steps in the action research process. It helps the researcher determine the appropriate intervention/s that will address the pressing need. It also gives the researcher an idea on the kind of information that needs to be collected.

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Say: “Let us now look back at the Action Research framework. At which stage in the framework is this particular step taking place? When we ‘Assess the Situation,’ what are we doing?” (Assess the situation and Ask a question; first and second A’s)

Step 2: Designing the Action Research

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Say: “This step is the operationalization of stage two of the Action Research framework, the second A— Ask a question. What would be the activities in this stage of the Action Research framework?” (design and test appropriate interventions)

A research design is necessary to generate relevant information in a standardized way, with minimal waste of effort, time, and money. Designing the Action Research means specifying the specific data collection activities that need to be followed in order to obtain the information needed to confirm the research hypothesis and draw some useful conclusions and applications of the findings. The research design should enable the researcher to collect relevant data that would prove or disprove the hypothesis about the intervention formulated to address the classroom problem or issue.

Step 3: Collecting the Data for Action Research

Note to the facilitator: Ask the participants: “What do we do to collect data or information? Can you identify which stage of the Action Research framework is operationalized in this particular step?”

This step specifically operationalizes the stage 4 of the Action Research framework wherein the researcher acquires information about the efficacy of the intervention through data collection instruments that include, but are not limited to, tests and rating scales. Data collected will help the Action Researcher determine if the intervention has accomplished its objective or not and has been effective in providing an answer to the problem or resolving the issue. To find out if the intervention implemented is the solution to the classroom problem, data that will categorically say so need to be collected.

Collecting pertinent data is crucial in determining if the action taken by the teacher in order to address a problematic situation in the classroom (stage 3 of the Action Research framework) is effective, if it can be replicated in other classrooms with the same type of problem, or if another intervention may have to be devised if the one applied failed to achieve expected changes in behavior or achievement.

Step 4: Analyzing the Data Collected for Action Research

Data collected can be subjected to appropriate statistical technique if numerical in form or to qualitative analysis if in descriptive or narrative form.

Note to the facilitator: Ask the participants: “Which stage of the Action Research framework does this step operationalize?” (stage 5 or the fifth A—Analyze and reflect)

Step 5: Writing the Action Research Report

Once the data collected have been analyzed, findings are ready to be reported. This last step helps the researcher in reflecting on the intervention just implemented. As he or she writes about the results of the study, he or she is challenged to make sense of them, searching for plausible conclusions and applications of the findings not only to his or her classroom, but also to other classrooms that may be facing the same problematic situation. This last step operationalizes the last stage of the Action Research framework, particularly the part on reflecting about the findings. Conclusions drawn from findings of the study can lead to a new focus for another cycle of the Action Research framework (as inputs to the first stage, which is “Assessing the Situation).”

Once the researcher is ready to present the results of his or her analyses and reflections on the outcomes of the investigation, he or she may proceed to the writing of the Action Research report. Doing so is very important because this is how the study becomes useful to other practitioners. Moreover, the results of the

study must be reported to those who need the information to serve as bases in making critical decisions.

Were you able to see the connection between the five steps of the Action Research process and the Action Research framework? Do you have questions that need to be clarified? You might wonder why there is no exact one-to-one correspondence between the two. As already mentioned, this is because the Action Research framework is a philosophical structure; it gives the overall skeleton of what Action Research aims to do. However, as a philosophical structure, it needs to be operationalized, which happens through the five steps or activities just explained.

The framework begins and ends with mental processes (assessment in the beginning, and reflection at the end). ‘Assessment of the situation’ involves thoughtful consideration on the part of the Action Researcher. After the results of data analysis have been obtained, the Action Researcher is expected to reflect on the effect of the intervention implemented and on the next steps based on the findings. He or she may decide that the intervention can be implemented in other groups of learners or can be fine-tuned to be more effective. A different intervention may also be considered to be developed; thus, another cycle of the Action Research framework may begin.

‘Identifying the research problem’ is how we put into practice the first two stages of the Action Research framework (more particularly, the second stage, ‘Ask a question’). Report writing is a technical activity that serves as a means of closing the investigation. Through this, the Action Researcher, as well as the readers of his or her report, can reflect about the findings and, possibly, think about another Action Research question.”



Application (30 minutes)

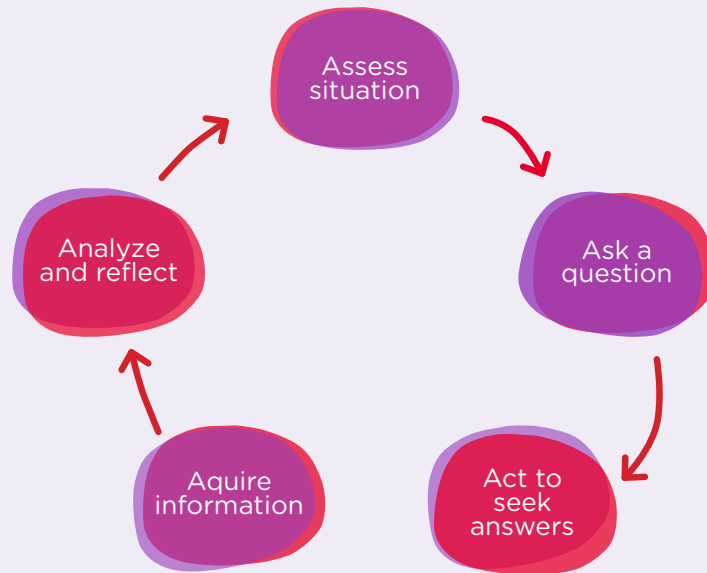
Lead the application of what the participants have learned in the session by saying: “I think we have had a good sharing and the voice of each person has been heard. Let’s put what we have learned to practical use. Going back to the Action Research framework, let us describe each of the five A’s in our own words.

With the same grouping as in the previous activities, brainstorm and decide on a particular Action Research topic. Discuss what specific activities you will pursue in order to accomplish each of the five A’s or five stages of the Action Research framework. Try to be as specific as you can.”

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Distribute the following activity card to the groups.

Activity Card: The Action Research Framework



Describe each of the five A's in the Action Research framework above and apply them on one problem situation or issue in your classroom. Share your thoughts with the group.

Assess the situation	
Ask a question	
Act to seek answers	
Acquire information	
Analyze and reflect	

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

The participants are allowed to write their answers in their local language.


Lead the sharing of group discussions with other participants by saying: "You have had such a dynamic discussion. Would you like to share with the rest of us what you have discussed within your groups? Let us begin with group 1...Thank you Group 1... Let's listen to Group 2 this time... Thank you Group 2. Let's also hear the thoughts of Group 3...Thank you Group 3."

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Closing (5 minutes)

End the learning session by saying: “Congratulations everyone! You see, we have just described and applied the Action Research framework. Let’s all clap our hands for this success. Thank you for a wonderful sharing today. For our next LAC session, bring with you the insights you have as you deepen your understanding of Action Research. Please also bring the following materials. Goodbye for now and see you all again in our next learning session.”

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