



ACTION RESEARCH

SESSION 2.1

ACTION RESEARCH DEFINED





Objectives

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

- 1 Define Action Research in the context of teaching practice;
- 2 Enumerate the five steps that operationalize the Action Research framework;
- 3 Cite the importance of Review of Literature in formulating an Intervention for Action Research;
- 4 Generate topics for Action Research; and
- 5 Plan interventions for specific classroom problems or issues.



Key Understandings

- 1 Action Research has unique features that are relevant in improving teaching practices.
- 2 The Review of Literature helps education practitioners develop and implement interventions that are responsive to classroom problems or issues.

Materials

- Laptop
- LCD projector
- Blank Metacards/Metastrips
- Marking pens
- Masking tape
- Scissors
- Copies of the “Table for Brainstorming Action Research Topics”
- Copies of questions for journal writing
- Journal notebooks (small think, notebooks), enough for the number of participants



TIME ALLOTMENT

120 minutes/ 2 hours

References

- Creswell, John W. 2012.** *Educational Research, Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Kolk, Melinda. n.d.** “Embrace Action Research.” **Creative Educator (website)**. Accessed May 12, 2018. https://www.thecreativeeducator.com/v07/articles/Embracing_Action_Research
- Department of Education. 2017. Research Management Guidelines.** DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017.
- Department of Education. 2015. Revised Guidelines for the Basic Education Research Fund (BERF).** DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2015.
- Business Dictionary. n.d.** “Action Research.” **Business Dictionary (website)**. Accessed May 12, 2018. _____. <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/action-research.html>

Introduction

Begin the learning session for the day by saying: “Good morning/afternoon, everyone! Welcome to our second LAC session on Action Research. I am _____, your LAC facilitator. Today, we will be discussing what Action Research is and how it differs from other types of research that are familiar to us. We will review the steps in doing Action Research, which we discussed during our first LAC session, and see each one is related to the Review of Literature. Our goal is to help you understand that a careful review of studies related to the research topic that you have in mind will help you define your focus, decide on a specific intervention and method of implementation, plan your data collection procedures and data analysis techniques, and give you ideas on how to write the Action Research report.

At the end of this session, you are expected to be able to define Action Research in the context of teaching, enumerate the five steps that operationalize the Action Research framework, cite the importance of Review of Literature in formulating an intervention for Action Research, generate topics for Action Research, and plan interventions for specific classroom problems or issues.”



Activity (15 minutes)

Lead the conduct of the pre-discussion activity titled “Problem Hunting” by saying: “We will start today’s session with a problem hunting activity. The goal is to be able to identify problems or issues inside the classroom or school that you find to be serious and needing immediate solutions.”

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Group the participants according to grade level or subject area. You may also group them according to preformed teams for Action Research, if there are any. Distribute three to five metacards or metastrips per group. Present the following activity instructions:

- 1 Identify problems or issues that you find to be areas of concern in your classrooms or schools, particularly those related to the teaching-learning process. Write these down on the metacards or metastrips distributed.
- 2 Once you have written down the problems or issues in your classrooms or schools on metacards or metastrips, arrange them according to degree of priority.
- 3 Post the metacards or metastrips on the board for everyone to see.
- 4 Assign one member of the group to discuss how it was decided which topic would be top priority, next priority, and so on.

Allow groups to do the task within 15 minutes.

Analysis (10 minutes)

Lead the processing of the activity results by asking the participants the following guide questions

- 1 What are the common problems or issues in the classrooms or in the schools that your groups have identified?
- 2 How did you as a group prioritize the problems or issues? What factors did your group consider in deciding which problem or issue should be top priority, second priority, etc.?
- 3 What made your group agree on which problem or issue should be ranked first?

Abstraction (30 minutes)

Conclude the activity and proceed to the discussion part of the session by saying: “We did the activity earlier to make you realize how to identify and prioritize problems and issues in the classroom or school that can be addressed through Action Research. We must understand that these can be solved scientifically. Let us now look into the definition of Action Research and its difference from Basic and Applied Research.”

Defining Action Research

Share a related anecdote by saying: “Let me describe to you the experience of a fictitious teacher named Fatima. She has been teaching Mathematics for the past 10 years in a high school located in a far-flung barangay. She has noticed that many of her students leave school particularly during rice planting season. This situation has been a cause for concern among the teachers as well as the school administrator. To address the situation, the principal formed a committee composed of teachers with the guidance counselor, and the drop-out coordinator for the purpose of developing an intervention. Fatima recognizes that the problem or issue is an opportunity to conduct Action Research as a means of addressing it in a scientific way. You might have a problem situation similar to Fatima’s. You may have some long-standing problem or issue that has caused you some concern, but you don’t quite know how to solve. This is where Action Research comes in.”

Action Research, by definition of the Department of Education, is a process of *systematic and reflective inquiry* to *improve* educational practices or resolve problems in the classroom or the school. It is a process of uncovering solutions to classroom or school problems through a series of methodical, logical, and organized activities. The outcome of these activities is the enhancement of classroom and school practices.

In contrast, Basic Research is undertaken to discover, develop, or formulate theories. It is conducted for the sole purpose of finding out general laws about student

learning and teachers' instruction. Applied Research seeks to find usefulness of theories or principles already discovered or formulated. The concern of Applied Research, as the term implies, is that of seeing the practicality of theories in real-life situations.

Moreover, Action Research is initiated by education practitioners themselves and is therefore conducted right in their own classrooms for specific purposes. It might be contested that Action Research is therefore useful only for the teacher who implements the solution or intervention. Yes, it is useful to the teacher who conducts his or her own investigation about a solution or intervention that he or she has devised for his or her own learners. However, this does not deter other practitioners from learning from his or her experience. In fact, when several Action Research projects are conducted in specific but unrelated situations using the same solution or intervention and all the findings confirm its efficacy, an Applied or Basic Research might be developed to further establish its usefulness for a wider group of practitioners or learners.

Understanding Review of Literature

Proceed to the next part of the discussion by saying: "Prior to the conduct of Action Research, it behooves the teacher-investigator to find out what has already been done to solve the specific classroom or school problem or issue that he or she wants to focus on in his or her investigation. He or she should try to exhaust all possible references in relation to the topic—from libraries and electronic data bases, as well as online resources. This is referred to as *Review of Literature*. This activity helps the Action Researcher in all stages of the Action Research framework.

First, by reading on the problem or issue that the Action Researcher would like to tackle, he or she would be able to clearly formulate his or her research question and research hypothesis. This leads the Action Researcher to the stage 2 of the Action Research framework, 'Ask a question.'

Second, prior research works on a topic that an Action Researcher would like to address will help him or her in deciding a suitable intervention considering the subjects (entire classes, small groups, or individual students). It will also enable him or her to identify an applicable Research Design to the study. In this way, the Review of Literature provides guidance for stage 3 of the Action Research framework, 'Act to seek answers.'

Third, from the Review of Literature, the Action Researcher obtains some idea on how many student participants should be included and which data collection techniques

have been found to be appropriate for the variables of the study. Some research reports sometimes include sample items for instruments used. This is relevant to stage 4 of the Action Research framework, 'Acquire information.'

Fourth, the Action Researcher can learn from previous studies in terms of what statistical or qualitative analyses will yield the results required to answer the research question or confirm the research hypothesis. In addition, published works on the topic can give him or her ideas on how to write the research report. He or she can also include in his or her report the studies that support his or her research hypothesis, enriching his or her reflection. The Review of Literature then gives light to stage 5 of the Action Research framework, 'Analyze and reflect.'

Thus, the Review of Literature has many uses for the Action Researcher other than giving a 'background' on the study. Some of the technical aspects of the research may be obtained from a perusal of related studies."

Lead the transition of the discussion to the next topic by conducting a brief activity on the importance of Action Research to teachers. Divide the participants into the same groups as in previous activities. Ask them to brainstorm on the values and benefits of doing Action Research. They should be able to name at least three (3). Have them write down their responses on meta cards. Give them 10 minutes for the brainstorming. Ask them to share the results of their discussions with the rest of the participants. Allot five minutes per group.

Understanding the Importance of Action Research in Education

Action Research is popular among educators because there is always room for improvement when it comes to teaching and educating students. The following are some of the reasons why Action Research is valuable to stakeholders in the educational system.

- *Results of Action Research benefit students.* Through Action Research, effective solutions to student problems, such as poor school performance, low motivation, or frequent absenteeism, can be identified and applied. Research on special or differently-abled students can also help teachers practice inclusive education in a way that will be profitable to them. Successful interventions for various types of learning difficulties can provide teachers with options that can be utilized in practicing differentiated instruction.

- *Action Research promotes the culture of research among teachers.* It is imperative for teachers to resolve problems in their own classrooms and schools. Teachers who engage in scientific inquiry in addressing classroom or school issues and problems are those who are keen on improving the educational practice, which, eventually, will contribute to the promotion of access and quality of education, as well as its governance (DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2015). Among the areas that teachers can explore in Action Research are solutions for problems about least learned skills and competencies. At the very least, Action Research can help teachers understand what is happening in their classroom and identify changes that need to be put in place for the advancement of both teaching and learning experience. Finally, and more importantly, Action Research can help answer the questions that teachers have about instructional strategies, student performance, and classroom management techniques (thecreativeeducator.com).
- *Action Research serves as one of the bases for necessary reforms and policy development* (DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017). Results of classroom research are important sources of inputs for decision- and policy-makers in modifying or replacing current directives and regulations, as well as commonly accepted practices, particularly those that are no longer effective or relevant to learners in the present contexts. Problems or issues encountered by teachers in the classroom are like red flags that point to instructional limitations and deficiencies. When several Action Research conducted by different teacher-investigators come to the same conclusions, they can lead to valuable action on the part of educational leaders and administrators. Even if conclusions from studies undertaken by different researchers on the same topic seem to contradict each other, these still offer important information that can be the starting point for revisions of old policies and practices or creation of new ones.



Application (35 minutes)

Guide the participants in applying what they have learned so far by saying: “Now that you understand what Action Research is its importance, and how it differs from Basic and Applied Research and know the five basic steps in the Action Research process, you are ready to identify some of the problems or issues that you have encountered in your classroom or school. Intuitively, you may

already have some possible solutions to address them. Moreover, you probably now see the importance of addressing them. To prepare you in carrying out your own Action Research, I would like you to complete this table in groups.”

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Following the same grouping, distribute the following table to the groups. Give them enough time to analyze and reflect on this problem-solution activity.

Table for Brainstorming Action Research Topics

Classroom/School Problem or Issue (on the teaching-learning process; in order of priority)	Possible Solution	Importance of addressing the issue/concern
1		
2		
3		

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

After the participants have accomplished the table, call on some volunteers to share the responses they came up with.

Continue the application task by saying: “Now, to help you reflect on what we just did today, I would like you to get a small notebook that will serve as your Action Research journal. Answer the following questions. Write your answers in your Action Research journal.”

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR:

Share the following questions to the participants.

1 What new things did I learn from our session today?

2 What, if any, are my hesitations in conducting Action Research?
What is/are the reason/s for this/these?

3 How would I help myself continue to hone my knowledge and skills in conducting Action Research?

Closing (5 minutes)

End the learning session by saying: “Thank you for your active participation in today’s LAC session on Action Research. I hope to see you again next time. To conclude our learnings, let me leave you with this quote from Albert Szent-Gyorgi.

“Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.”

— ALBERT SZENT-GYORGI

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