

Title of Session: Action Research

Moderator: Diane Painter

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WHITEBOARD IN AR GROUP ROOM

What do action-researchers do?

Ask questions and examine their underlying assumptions about teaching and learning.

Develop research questions based on their own curiosity about teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Learn to observe, reflect, and analyze their teaching and student learning.

Discuss with colleagues relationships among theory, practice, and research.

Systematically collect data and research methodology with fellow teacher researchers.

Analyze and interpret their data and research methodology with the support of colleagues and fellow teacher researchers.

Share their findings with students, colleagues, and members of the educational community.

Write about their research.

So, how is this the same or different from traditional educational research?

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DianeDP: Hello. Welcome to everyone. This is the Action Research Group. I am Diane Painter, the moderator for this session. BJB has joined us to help us with any questions we may have. I am a retired teacher and now teach at Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA. I believe some students and instructors from Shenandoah University will join us tonight to talk about action research. Who do we have in our group? Please introduce yourself.

Maribelf: Hi. Where do I find action

BJB2: top right of the chat window, Maribel

BJB2: find it?

JaninaH joined the room.

MaribelF: Sorry, I do not

BJB2: welcome, Janina. We're just starting

DianeDP: Welcome Janina

JaninaH: hello

BJB2: Maribell, do you see the grey bar at the top of the chat? It should read You are in AR_Grp, TappedIn campus

MaribelF: found it, Thank you

DianeDP: I am moderating the discussion tonight. BJB is helping everyone find the Action Research room

DianeDP: Great! I am a retired teacher and now teach at Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA. I believe some students and instructors from Shenandoah University will join us tonight to talk about action research. Who do we have in our group? Please introduce yourself

BJB2 . o O (so far, everyone has found you all by themselves, Diane!)

DianeDP: This is good!

JaninaH: Hello my name is Janina. I am an undergrad at Texas A&M Kingsville.

BJB2: Janina, I just reminded everyone to go to the Actions menu in the top right of the chat and select DETACH

SusanGst2 joined the room.

BJB2: Hi, Susan. Just in time for introductions

DianeDP: Welcome Susan, we are introducing ourselves.

JaninaH: Thank you BJ

ErikaV joined the room.

ErikaV: Hi I'm Erika

DianeDP: Janina is an undergrad at Texas A&M. Welcome to Erika

BJB2: Hi, Erika. We're just doing intros

NoeG: Hi Erika

MaribelF: Hello, my name is Maribel. I am an undergraduate at University of Texas Pan American.

ErikaV: I'm an Undergrad at Texas A&M Kingsville

DianeDP: Do you know Dr. Lowdermilk? He is a member of CEC and on the board of the technology division with me.

NoeG: Hi my name is Noe and I'm an undergrad at Texas A&M Kingsville

MaribelF: Hello, My name is Maribel. I am an undergraduate at University of Texas Pan American

DianeDP: Well this is very nice getting to know students in the southwestern part of our country.

SusanGst2: Hi my name is Susan and I'm in my last class of Action Research

ErikaV: Hi Susan.

DianeDP: Hello Denise- looks like we do have someone from SU

BJB2: good job, Denise. We're just finishing up intros

DianeDP: I thought we might first talk about why you are interested in the topic of action research. Is there anyone currently doing action research (also known as teacher research or practitioner research) or planning to do so in the near future?

SusanGst2: Actually, Diane I am in your tech class. And hi Denise

DianeDP: Hello Susan- so now I have two students from SU joining students from two universities in Texas!

BJB2 thinks Diane is ready to start the discussion. Did everyone read her question?

SusanGst2: no

NoeG: yes

ErikaV: no

JaninaH: yes I read her question

DianeDP: Welcome, Elsa- I thought we might first talk about why you are interested in the topic of action research. Is there anyone currently doing action research (also known as teacher research or practitioner research) or planning to do so in the near future?

ErikaV: Probably in the future

SusanGst2: yes, I am.

JaninaH: most likely in the future

ElsaGM: in the future

NoeG: some time in the future

DeniseS: yes, but I'm not doing an action research project. I'm just exploring the site. Should I stay here or try something else?

BJB2 hopes Denise will stay

ElsaGM: I had a paper that involved research and I was kind of confused

DianeDP: Marian Mohr and Marian MacLean wrote a book called Teacher Researchers at Work. Have you heard about it?

MaribelF: In the future

JaninaH: no I have not heard about it.

ElsaGM: not me

MaribelF: No not yet

NoeG: no I haven't

DianeDP: In the book they listed what teacher researchers do in the classroom. I have listed them on the whiteboard. Does everyone see that list- it is under the Featured Passageways on the right side of your screen.

DeniseS: yes

ErikaV: yea

SusanGst2: No, we are using three books, but none are by those authors

BJB2 . o O (if you detached your chat, the web window with the whiteboard is behind the chat)

ElsaGM: yes

JaninaH: yes I see the list

NoeG: I see it too

MaribelF: yes I see it

DianeDP: I thought we might talk about each one of those items to gain an understanding about what it means to do action research (i.e. teacher research)

StevenHu joined the room.

DianeDP: Action researchers ask questions and examine their underlying assumptions about teaching and learning.

ElsaGM: sounds good to me I would like to know more about the topic

DianeDP: Welcome Steve

ErikaV: me too.

MaribelF: so would I

JaninaH: I would like to know more about the topic as well

SusanGst2: Asking the right questions to get to my action research project was tricky

DeniseS: Students all learn differently. I think it is important to try to find activities for all types of learners.

DianeDP: We are starting with a discussion about what action researchers do. The list on the whiteboard comes from Mohr and MacLean's book on Teacher Researchers at Work. The first one addresses assumptions. Susan is right on- asking the right questions can be tricky

TerryGst9 joined the room.

DianeDP: Denise is showing us a wonderful example of assumptions she has about teaching and her students learning.

DianeDP: What assumptions do you have about teaching and learning or questions about

teaching and learning?

DianeDP: Terry- do you have any questions about the use of technology in teaching and learning?

MaribelF: encouraging students to actually engage themselves could be a type of learning also

TerryGst9: of course. just looking for some new research item on how technology supports learning outcomes

ElsaGM: to have the students do research in the computer is good for them to learn

DianeDP: Yes, a question might be related to the relationship of engagement and the learning process

DeniseS: Technology is exciting and motivating for kids. Sometimes they don't even realize that they are working and learning new information.

VenessaS: I agree

DianeDP: Elsa may be asking how researching a topic using online resources benefits learning. My question may be- in what ways does it benefit learning?

ElsaGM: I think that the students need to explore and learn at the same time

VenessaS: It benefits in many ways

ErikaV: yes it does

NoeG: it does

SusanGst2: I know one of the people in my cohort is doing her project on self learning of vocabulary

DianeDP: Denise has found that using the computers is motivating for kids during the learning process. This assumption is actually based on recent experiences, right?

ElsaGM: we have some students that don't know how to type their name

DianeDP: Susan- tell us more about that

VenessaS: If you make learning fun, it will get the kids motivated

ErikaV: for kids, the use of computer is more efficient

SusanGst2: As the students read a selection, they do the research on the vocabulary that they do not understand

MaribelF: some can show us how to use prepositions or verbs

DianeDP: Venessa- would you say then that making learning fun is related to finding ways to engage students in their learning?

VenessaS: Computers are the way of the future and its natural for the kids to get hand on experience and get familiar with it

VenessaS: yes

TerryGst9: Has anyone used Discovery Education Streaming? Good stuff for supplemental activities for your curriculum

MaribelF: I know there is a scrabble game in which they can learn how to spell but at the same time enjoy a great game

JaninaH: I agree with Venessa- making learning fun will get children motivated

DeniseS: Yes. Because of the recent assignments from your class I am using technology more often and more effectively. The kids love it and would like to learn more.

TerryGst9: a lot of my students are natives to technology

DianeDP: My assumptions about researching vocabulary then leads me to think that students are not only engaged in building vocabulary, but developing reading comprehension skills too

SusanGst2: I agree they are the way of the future, but so many of the students work around a program until they get the right answers without learning anything

JaninaH: there a countless amount of games that are fun but also teach children....this really motivates them

MaribelF: I agree

ElsaGM: I agree

TerryGst9: reading, writing, math, communication, and technology literacy

DianeDP: So here is a question, do playing games lead to meaningful learning/ If so, how would you define meaningful?

VenessaS: yes it does

ErikaV: like useful?

ElsaGM: we have a program in school that's called River Deep. It has math games and the students gain points.

NoeG: I think playing games motivates a child to actually do better like a competition they always want to be better than there friends

SusanGst2: How do you know it's meaningful?

VenessaS: It's like the Leapster for toddlers, it's fun and informative

DianeDP: meaning they can apply their learning to other things?

JaninaH: exactly Diane.

TerryGst9: I have many web sites that teach memory skills, problem solving and decision making skills. Some are reading, writing, and math games. NOT shooting games though...just my opinion

VenessaS: yes and find learning fun

SusanGst2: Yes

NoeG: yes

VenessaS: Of course, not shooting games but I think games having to do with math would be something to go with

TerryGst9: fun, meaningful, useful, practical, and can use it in every day life situations...

TerryGst9: gamequarium

VenessaS: math, is not something kids like to do but if it was fun I think they would get a little more into it and apply themselves.

MaribelF: Yes, because it helps them concentrate not only on playing, but learning how to spell or subtracting in math problems

ElsaGM: so when a child uses the computer he or she is learning even to type while playing a game

DianeDP: So that leads us to the next item on the Mohr and Maclean list on the whiteboard. From their questions and listing of assumptions, action researchers develop research questions based on their own curiosity about teaching and learning in their

classrooms.

TerryGst9: i have one of those math uninterested kids online today. he spent 45 minutes of the hour period glued. i was very pleased

ElsaGM: While they play they learn to type

VenessaS: That is great.

TerryGst9: yes, they should ask our students for questions

DianeDP: Take a look at the assumptions about playing games and using computers leading to learning, what questions can you ask? Elsa- can you ask one about your student who spent 45 min today online?

TerryGst9: they meaning researchers

ElsaGM: I think that 45 min. is too much time for a student to be playing

DianeDP: The researchers I am talking about are teachers- looking at their teaching and students' learning with an investigative eye.

TerryGst9: oh mine could because he was working on fraction shapes and other fraction things. He was glued!! He is a sp ed student in high school. A tuff guy and was glued...

DianeDP: Ah- was he playing? or engaged in a learning task?

TerryGst9: I was proud of his work

SusanGst2: My research project is using rhymes and songs to teach high frequency words. Through Diane's tech class I'm taking, I've learned to use the computer with games, etc., but they give me information about their learning

MaribelF: Do they focus on the game or do they wonder off to another website?

VenessaS: 45 minutes in not a long time to be playing especially when it has to do with learning

StevenHu: I will give it a shot.

TerryGst9: play is learning

TerryGst9: both

DianeDP: Susan- tell us what you found in terms of students' learning

ElsaGM: I think that 30 minutes is okay

TerryGst9: this guy was all about the game and play and learning

VenessaS: Try to get another student listening to a lecture actually paying attention during math and compare him to the one interested in the math game. Which one is learning more?

TerryGst9: for a Monday after a holiday that is a good thing

ElsaGM: in my school we have rotations that are 30 minutes so in my opinion 30 minutes is fine

DianeDP: It would be interesting to see what both can tell you what they know and what they can do as a result of their engagement.

JaninaH: well more than likely the one interested in math.

VenessaS: It is great, it's our job to keep them interested for as long as possible

SusanGst2: I've learned that the students are motivated to do the activities. I've also learned if they were able to recognize the targeted words

TerryGst9: I will great suggestion. this one is contracting math with me. Therefore, I have to keep him busy using several activities

VenessaS: And they are able to advance in the activities they are learning something

DeniseS: When I am listening to a lecture I zone out. I need to be "doing" something. I think it's great to find a meaningful hands-on activity.

MaribelF: they like hands on activities

VenessaS: I agree

DianeDP: So staying on task and working through the activities is one thing- then demonstrating the knowledge of targeted words leads you to assume that having them use the computer in literacy activities is worthwhile-

ElsaGM: I totally agree

VenessaS: Lectures are admit it at times, boring

NoeG: yeah hands on definitely works with keeping them awake

ErikaV: it is always better to interact

DianeDP: That is because they do not engage the students, just the professor!

JaninaH: exactly Erika

VenessaS: EXACTLY

NoeG: everyone needs to be engaged in a lesson

MaribelF: engaging is better

VenessaS: to actually learn

ElsaGM: I have always said that we have to interact

VenessaS: Keep them interested as long as possible

VenessaS: is the goal

ElsaGM: I'm a visual and a hands on person

DianeDP: Let's think now about how teacher researchers go about learning to observe, reflect, and analyze their teaching and student learning. We can begin with the concept of observing, reflecting and analyzing engagement.

JaninaH: keeping them interested is always a challenge. but its a teachers goal of course.

ElsaGM: i have to see it and engage in it to learn it

MaribelF: I agree, I learn better that way

StevenHu: Do we have research questions yet?

NoeG: me too I need to be engaged in a lesson to really understand the concept

StevenHu: The big question, based on our assumption, is what is the effect of using computers on learning, right?

JaninaH: I agree with Elsa..

StevenHu: So the next question is how do we operationalize that overarching question, I would assume.

SusanGst2: I'd agree, but like I said finding the right question is the tricky part

StevenHu: So let's try some.

DianeDP: That is one good question, Steve. Anyone else?

StevenHu: Of course, one place to start is the existing literature.

VenessaS: Okay, what about the existing literature?

StevenHu: Venessa, you had to ask. I have no idea.

DianeDP: What do we know about student engagement from things you have read in articles, texts?

MaribelF: Or maybe what benefits does online learning have?

DianeDP: There you go- there is another good question

VenessaS: I feel online learning has some benefits but it also has its downfalls

DianeDP: In what ways?

VenessaS: Like you have to have some kind of interaction with the instructor

DianeDP: engagement...

VenessaS: yes

ErikaV: hands on

ElsaGM: I think that online learning is good for me I like it

SusanGst2: Why

VenessaS: Being able to learn on your own causes procrastination

ElsaGM: I have done several classes on line and I like them

VenessaS: I for one leave things for the last minute and being in charge of yourself sometimes could be a bad thing

MaribelF: I agree

DianeDP: What does the literature say about learning styles and independent learning that online learning often requires?

DeniseS: Online learning has many benefits such as learning on your own schedule. Diane has been a very accessible online teacher.

VenessaS: yes she has but we are missing that face to face communication

SusanGst2: There aren't many out there like her, she actually came to my school to help me.

VenessaS: being able to see the reaction of everyone else and determining whether or not they understand

MaribelF: it has different types of works such as pedagogical, discursive, relational and institutional

VenessaS: That's great but there was that person to person contact that helped you

VenessaS: not ONLY online

DianeDP: Once teacher researchers have a question, they then need to decide how they will observe and reflect upon their teaching and students learning related to the question. Susan, can you tell us how that has gone for you?

DeniseS: I'm a single parent and it was very difficult for me to attend classes. The online class was beneficial for me. A few of us took the class together so we could talk to each other.

SusanGst2: I have revised my plan with each week's activities because of the students' learning

DianeDP: Did you find yourself asking different questions?

SusanGst2: Yes, I realized the different abilities of my students, so that helped me change activities, etc

VenessaS: I think you ask different questions for every situation

VenessaS: Not every student is the same

VenessaS: And they all learn differently

ErikaV: you always want to have a backup plan

ElsaGM: every student will have different questions

MaribelF: I agree because I have trouble learning with lecture classes

DianeDP: For those who have done action research- how did you go about observing, reflecting and analyzing what you were teaching and students were learning?

VenessaS: It's just the matter of answering them to the best of your ability

ErikaV: me too. that's why I always make sure to ask questions

ErikaV: when I don't understand

ElsaGM: I think that we need to observe the students needs and then take it from there

VenessaS: By asking questions..

MaribelF: I observed how the students were doing step by step in learning the different forms of using prepositions

JaninaH: me as well, I make sure I always understand what is going on in class.

MaribelF: there was even a section where they had to try some sentences

JaninaH: by asking questions

SusanGst2: I used anecdotal records, a researcher's journal, observation, discussions with other teachers, etc.

VenessaS: That's a good plan Susan

VenessaS: It's always good to have several ways to approach the question of learning

JaninaH: I agree Vanessa

DeniseS: Records are good, especially when you take the time to analyze these and use them to guide your teaching.

SusanGst2: I'm currently a reading teacher so I needed to ask their classroom teacher if the students were applying what they learned in my class. Thank you Vanessa

DianeDP: Maribel and Janina are doing what Jack Whitehead calls action research living theory. They make assumptions about how they learn best and then try out a plan to see if it works for themselves in terms of their own learning. Susan is looking at how and what her students are learning, makes assumptions about what she should be doing to help them learn better and takes action to try it out.

VenessaS: And it feels wonderful to have played a role in their ability to read and apply themselves

ErikaV: teaching is great.

DianeDP: That, Venessa, I think is the most exciting part of being a teacher-researcher.

ElsaGM: that is good

BJB2 looks at the clock on the wall. Are you planning on another discussion in January, Diane?

DianeDP: I would like to do this again in January. Let's set a date. Tell me, how did this session go, everyone?

DeniseS: fast!

MaribelF: great

VenessaS: Diane you are by far a great discussion leader, I was interested the whole time.

ElsaGM: I learned new things

JaninaH: great! ;)

SusanGst2: By January, I'll have completed my action research project and will have more info

ElsaGM: great job Diane

BJB2 waves bye. Good job, everyone!