

Action Research

NATASHA HASS AND HAROLD PLISZKA

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY, FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

Action Research Outline

1. Introduction
2. Definition
3. History
4. Types
5. Characteristics
6. Cycle
7. Ethics
8. Criticisms
9. Activity (be sure to take notes during the videos)
10. Resources

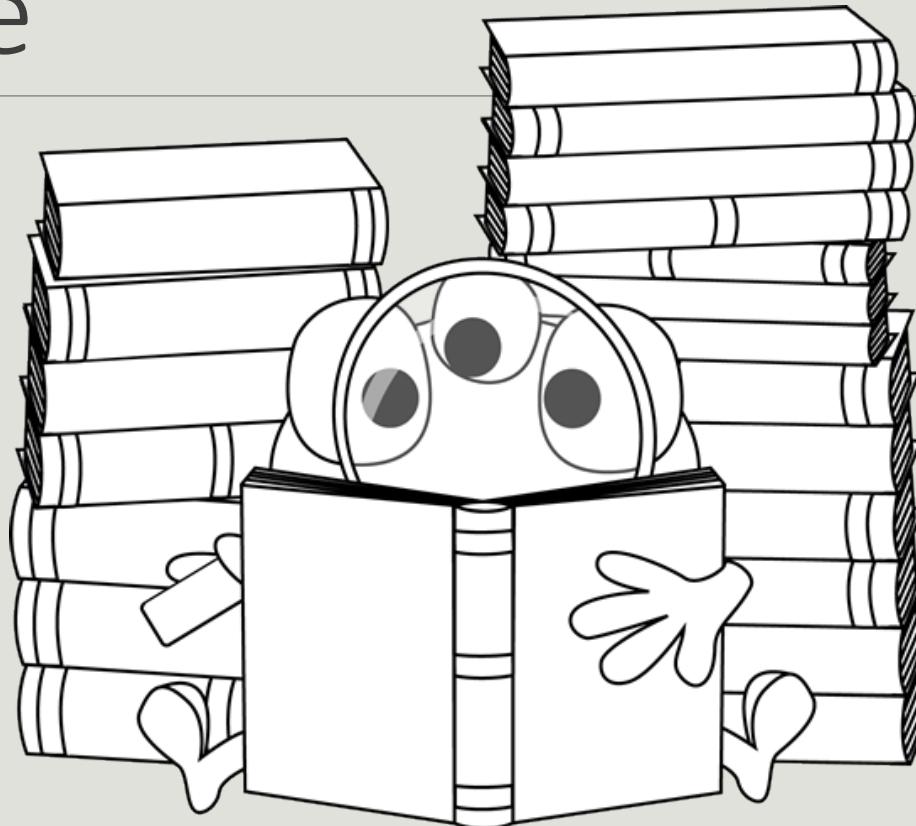
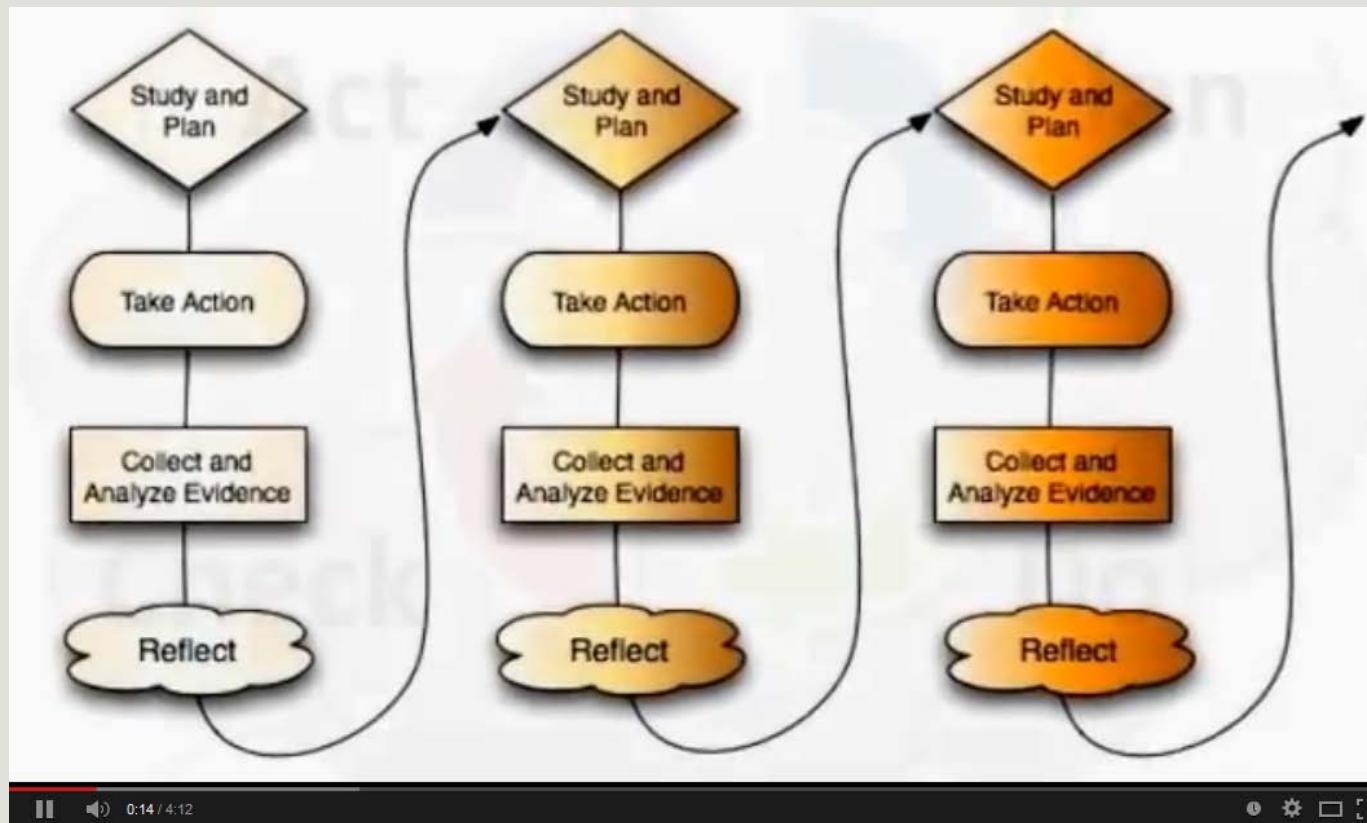


Image Source
<http://content.mycutegraphics.com/graphics/monster/three-eyed-monster-reading-book-black-white.png>

Introduction to Action Research



Study and Plan
|
Take Action
|
Collect and Analyze Evidence
|
Reflect
|
Repeat

<http://youtu.be/ZHiZdh85R3w>

Action Research Perspectives

"A micro-sociological approach has a different focus than a Foucauldian macro-sociological perspective, because power in a Foucauldian perspective is looked upon as potentials which play a vital and productive role in how society unfolds" (Olesen, & Nordentoft, 2013, p. 71).

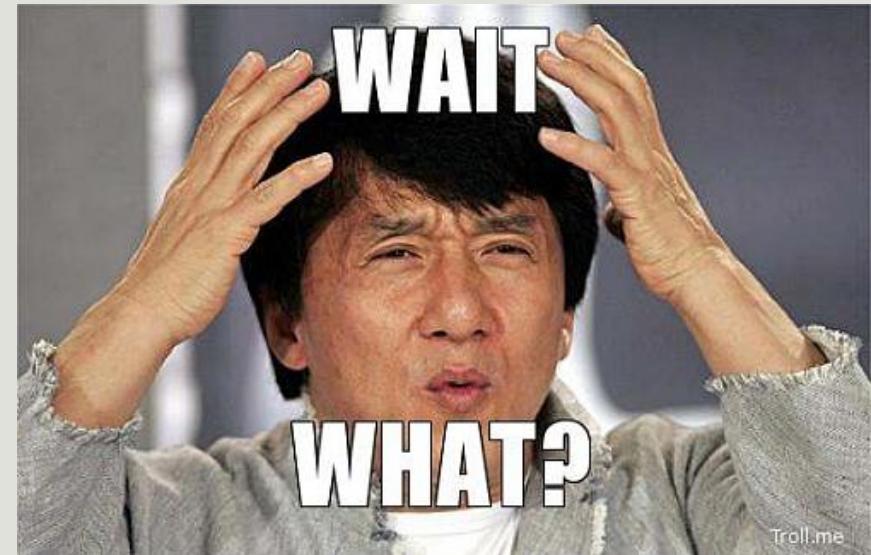
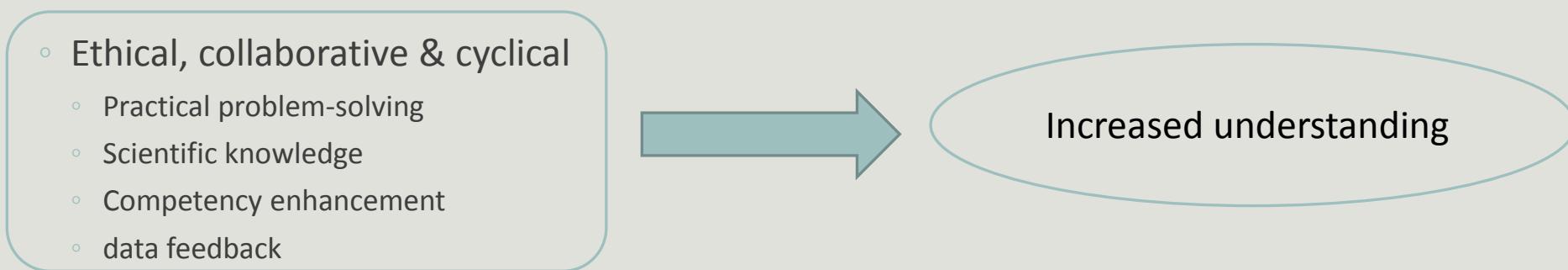


Image source
<http://uturncrossfit.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/wait-what.jpg>

Defining Action Research

"Action research simultaneously assists in **practical problem-solving** and expands **scientific knowledge**, as well as enhances the **competencies** of the respective actors, being performed collaboratively in an immediate situation using **data feedback** in a cyclical process aiming at an increased understanding of a given social situation, primarily applicable for the understanding of change processes in social systems and undertaken within a mutually acceptable ethical framework." (Hult & Lennung, 1980, p. 247)



History of Action Research

- In 1930 Kurt Lewin created the term action research
- Lewin felt group discussions would benefit social conditions during and after WWII
- This group process consisted of: planning, acting, observing and reflecting
- Lewin's action research popularity slowed in the 1950s when empirical research and experimentation became prevalent
- Action research re-emerged becoming popular in schools and universities in the 1970s
- Has continued to be popular in social sector, particularly in education



image source www.tavinstitute.org

Two Types of Action Research

PRACTICAL ACTION RESEARCH

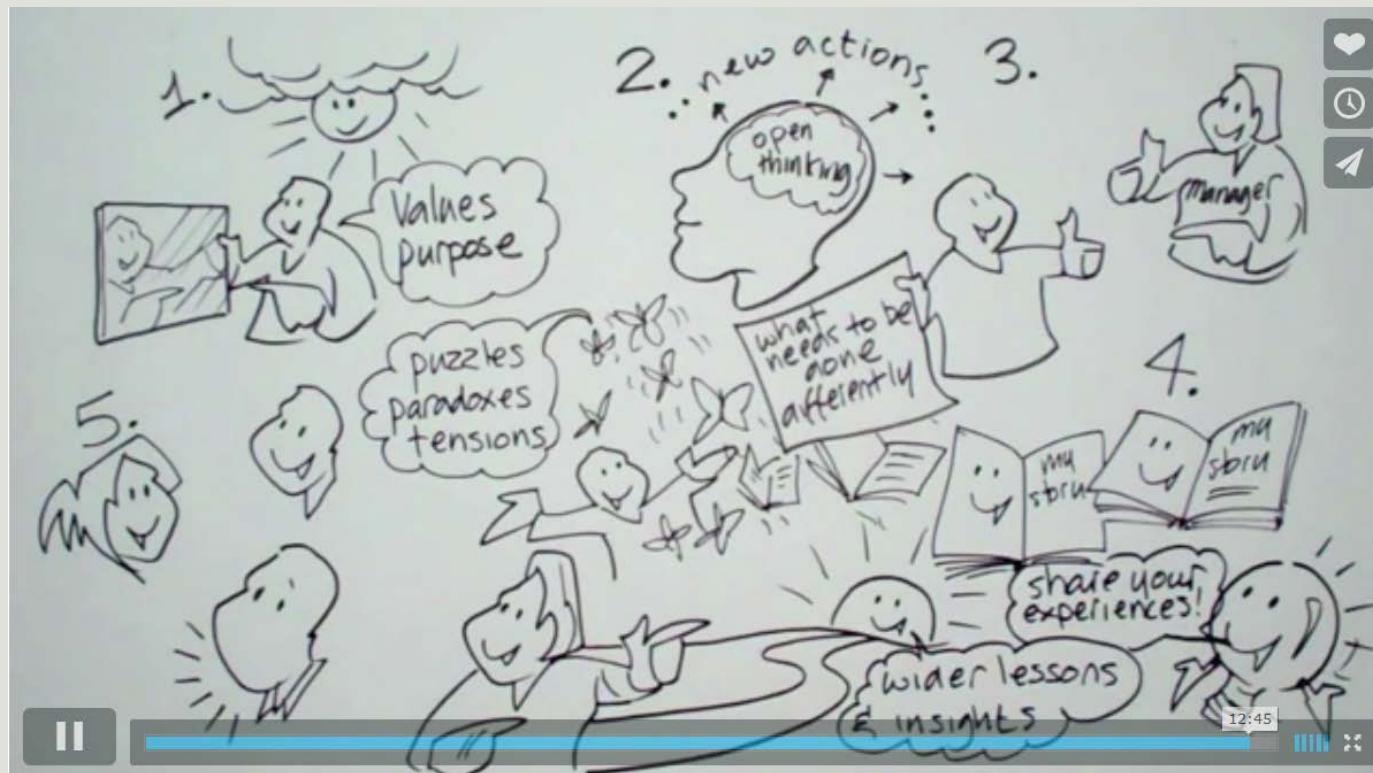
- Studying local practices
- Involving individual or team-based inquiry
- Focusing on practitioner development and client learning
- Implementing a plan of action
- Leading to the practitioner-as-researcher

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

- Studying social issues that constrain individual lives
- Emphasizing “equal” collaboration
- Focusing on “life-enhancing” changes
- Resulting in the emancipated researcher

Adapted from Creswell (2015) p. 581

Action Research for Better Practice



"This storyboard (animated video) aims to explain what action research is and how it can help to improve public services. It uses the example of Cedar (Children experiencing domestic abuse recovery) to talk through how action research can be useful and offers some hints and tips for those thinking about undertaking action research themselves."

(The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS)

<http://vimeo.com/46674776>

Key Characteristics of Action Research



image source www.keepcalm-o-matic.co.uk

Practical – tries to solve practical problems with real and immediate solutions

Researcher's own practices- study their own situation, reflect on it to find a solution to their problem; it's personal to them

Collaboration – collaboration with others occur at many stages in the research process

Is a dynamic Process – not linear, rather it goes back and forth between reflecting, data collection and action

Creates a plan of action – always has an end with a solution such as a presentation to those concerned, implementing programs

Sharing research – not only through publication in journals, etc., but through immediate sharing with stakeholder so they can implement it right away

Cycle of Action Research

- Decide if AR is the best research method for your study
- Have a problem you want solved
- Organize a team of people who can collaborate with you and offer resources
- Decide how you will gather the data
- Implement the data collection
- Analyze the data
- Develop a plan for action addressing how to solve your problem
- Implement the plan and reflect on if your goal was achieved

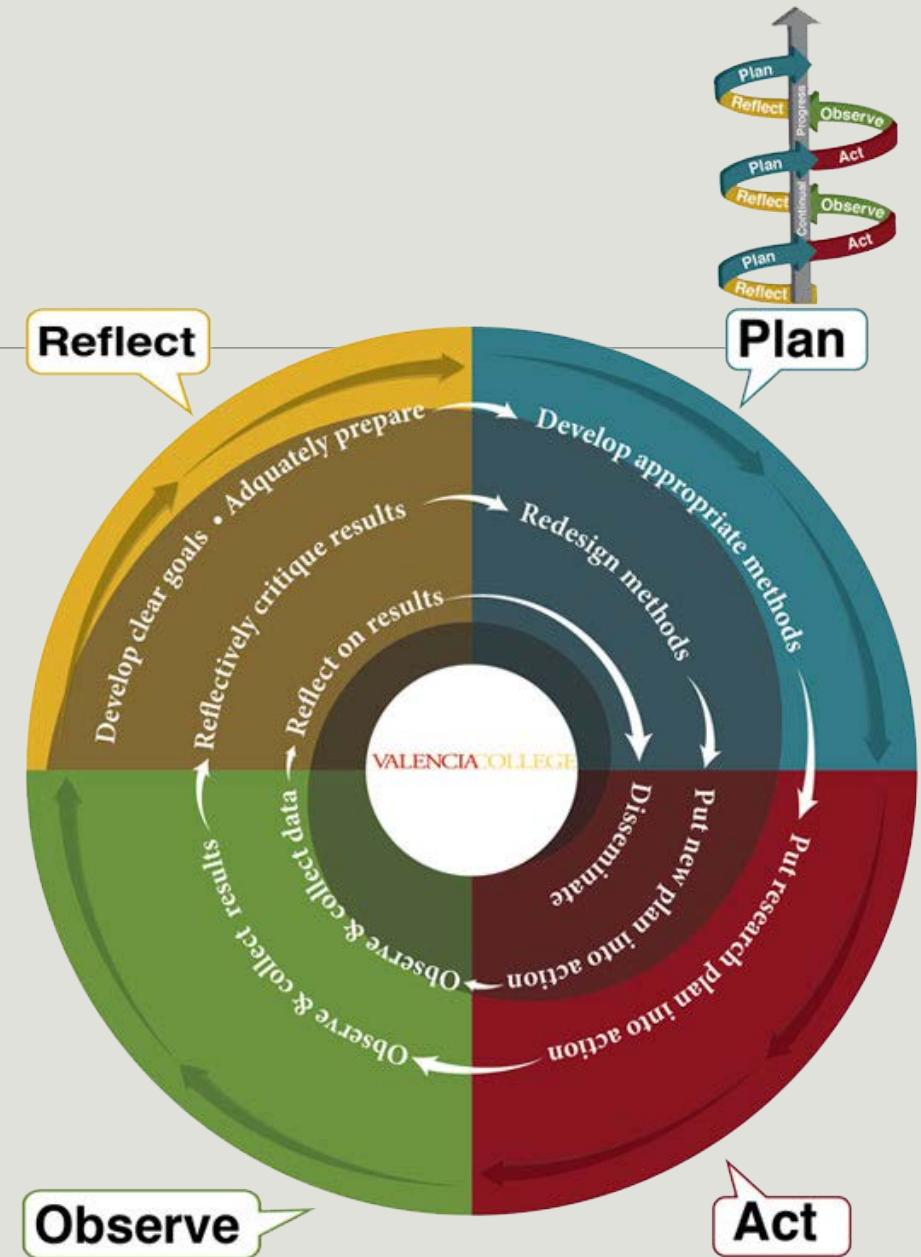


image source of valenciacollege.edu

Potential ethical issues of action research

- The close relationship between researcher and participants – it can't be coercive, participants can opt out any time
- Researcher plays a dual role as researcher and practitioner
- Because the process is being continually changed it's important to keep the participants informed of the reconsideration of the purpose of the study and to consider how the results will be used



image source movies.lovetoknow.com

Criticisms

- AR is not necessarily academic or scientific in nature
- AR is at high risk for bias because the researchers are intimately involved in the process
- Can be difficult for practitioners to stay neutral in their relationship and role with participants



Shutterstock

Image Source <http://i.huffpost.com/gen/1021518/thumbs/o-THUMBS-DOWN-facebook.jpg>

Action Research Activity



image source workcollaboratively.com

- Separate into groups of about four people each.
- Think of an environment or situation where you can apply AR.
- Use your notes from the video and come up with a brief action research plan.
- Discuss how this might improve your environment or situation.
- Discuss what barriers might make AR difficult in this environment or situation.
- Present your idea to the class in about two minutes each.

References

Creswell, J. (2015). "Chapter 17: Action Research Designs". *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. (pp. 578-597). Toronto, ON: Pearson.

Dick, B. (2002) *Action research: action and research* [On line]. Retrieved from <http://www.aral.com.au/resources/aandr.html>

Hult, M., & Lennung, S.-Å. (1980), Towards a definition of action research: A note and bibliography. *Journal of Management Studies*, 17: 241–250. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6486.1980.tb00087.x

O'Brien, R. (2001). *Um exame da abordagem metodológica da pesquisa ação* [An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research]. In Roberto Richardson (Ed.), *Teoria e Prática da Pesquisa Ação* [Theory and Practice of Action Research]. João Pessoa, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Paraíba. (English version) Retrieved from <http://www.web.ca/~robrien/papers/arfinal.html>

Olesen, B.R., & Nordentoft, H.M. (2013). Walking the talk? A Micro-Sociological Approach to the Co-production of knowledge and Power in Action Research. *International Journal of Action Research*, 9(1). 67-94. doi:10.1688/1861-9916_IJAR_2013_01_Olesen

Action Research Resources

Action Research Methods

- Braun, P. (2006). *Action Research Methods. Encyclopedia of Developing Regional Communities with Information and Communication Technology*, 1.
- Herr, K., & Gary L. Anderson. (2005). *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:
<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.4135/9781452226644>
- Joy, M. (2007). *Research methods in education* (No. 10). Innovation Way, York Science Park, Heslington, York YO10 5BR: The Higher Education Academy.
- Pickard, A. J. (2013). *Research methods in information*. Facet Publ.
- Valencia College. Elements of an Action Research Project.
<http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/tla/actionResearch/elements.cfm>

Action Research Videos

- The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS). How action research can help to deliver better services. <http://vimeo.com/46674776>
- ResearcherRagan. Action Research. <http://youtu.be/ZHiZdh85R3w>

Action Research Resources (cont'd)

Action Research Websites

Bencze, J. L. (2009). Educator Action Resource Support. Retrieved from
<http://cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/resources.html>

Center for Collaborative Action Research. (2014). Retrieved from
http://webspace.oise.utoronto.ca/~benczela/Action_Research_Help.html

Dick, B. (2014). Action Research and Action Learning: For community and organizational change. Retrieved from at <http://www.aral.com.au/>

McNiff, J. (2014). Action Research for Professional Development. Retrieved from
<http://www.jeanmcniff.com/ar-booklet.asp>