

# Planning teaching and planning action research: two sides of the same coin?

Action research should not be confused with the ongoing work teachers do in **planning their teaching**. This is concerned with practical decisions about content, curriculum, the nature of the class with the objective of improving the day to day work in the class.

**Action research** is a **process of enquiry** with specific methodology; it involves formulating questions about your teaching experience and observing and analysing what you do – with the aim of doing things better.

## Differences between planning your teaching and doing action research

### Planning teaching or planning action research?

Questions asked when planning teaching units:	Questions asked when planning action research:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will the unit be about?</li> <li>• What is the general topic?</li> <li>• What is the theme of the lesson(s)?</li> <li>• How does the topic fit into the curriculum?</li> <li>• What will I have to consider concerning the learners' age and language level?</li> <li>• Which other factors may play a role?</li> <li>• What is the current mood in the class? exam stress, end-of-term, relationships between students, general levels of interest.....</li> <li>• What will the learning aims be?</li> <li>• What competences will be reached?</li> <li>• How will I assess learning outcomes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do I want to know?</li> <li>• What am I interested in finding out?</li> <li>• Why am I interested in this?</li> <li>• Is the question something that can be answered through action research tools?</li> <li>• Does the scope of the question fit with the possibilities that I have? Is it feasible?</li> <li>• Which action research tools will I use?</li> <li>• At which point will I employ which tools?</li> <li>• How will I know when I have found something out?</li> <li>• How will analyse and interpret the findings?</li> <li>• How will I share my findings?</li> <li>• Where will this lead me?</li> </ul>