

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