

Memos

In the action research context, the term memo can be understood in at least two different ways.

1. A memo might be a short note written by a teacher after lessons. Before embarking on the somewhat daunting task of writing a full diary, a teacher might choose to make short notes following lessons in a straightforward format:

- Spontaneous thoughts
- Plus and minus What went well/ At which points could I change something?
- What was memorable about today's lesson?
- Visualisation

Making brief notes in this way is a good, gentle start!

It is important to remember that action research should not disrupt practice and teachers should not fall into the trap of putting more energy into research than their teaching. And action research should not be daunting or frightening! Note-taking is a private activity and can be useful.

One systematic way of keeping notes is for example about a particular class after a day's teaching.

2. A memo can also be understood as short feedback given by learners.

In this case, a teacher asks students to jot down a few lines about the lesson in general or on a small number of specific points:

- How did the lesson go for you today?
- Do you think students had enough opportunities to participate in the lesson?
- What did you like/ dislike about a history lesson in English/French.....?
- Three in one
 - What did you learn?
 - What was difficult?
 - What else would you like to say?

This format is extremely useful as a pre-questionnaire. It takes far less time to prepare and does not require the knowledge and experience needed to write a worthwhile questionnaire.

On the other hand, notes made by learners can be very useful for a teacher to gain first insights into issues.

At this stage of a workshop, prepare feedback sheets with three questions, for example:

- **What has been interesting for you so far?**
- **What was not clear?**
- **What might you be able to use in your professional context?**