

Action Research Communities for Language Teachers

Planning teaching & planning action research: Two sides of the same coin?

Action research is an adventure and a way of finding out about how to do things in a better way in the classroom. I start with what I am good at, I start with the strengths in my teaching and with something I am interested in. And then I think about what I want to know.....

However, action research implies a clear teaching plan. Teachers embarking on action research very often experience the difficulty of finding a question and the problem may lie in a lack of clarity of the teaching plan. This is the starting point for the adapted action research spiral to be seen as a “pre-spiral” for getting into action research. The aim is to lead teachers towards a well thought through plan.

Is it lesson planning or action research planning?

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 & language level?• Which other factors may play a rôle?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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?

How can I plan a possible focus for future action research as I plan my lessons?

The teacher as a professional “a capacity for autonomous professional development <i>through systematic self-study</i> ” (Lawrence Stenhouse)		Action research Action research is the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it. (John Elliott)
10 features of good lesson planning Meyer, Hilbert (2004). Was ist guter Unterricht?. Berlin: Cornelsen		10 features of action research Posch, Peter. Einführung in die Aktionsforschung
1. Clear structure for a lesson 2. Large proportion of actual learning time 3. Classroom climate conducive to learning 4. Clear content 5. Meaningful communication 6. Variety of methods 7. Individual support 8. Intelligent practice 9. Transparent performance expectations 10. Prepared environment		1. Research through those involved 2. Questions that evolve from practice 3. Relationship between action and reflection 4. Long-term research & development cycles 5. Confrontation of different perspectives 6. Integration of individual research in a professional community 7. Ethical rules for collaboration 8. Publication of practitioner knowledge 9. Aspect of value of pedagogical action: actions as an expression of values 10. Aims of action research: realisation and development
Teaching & learning processes at school: Project categories (PC) Maier, Uwe (2014). Lehr-Lernprozesse in der Schule: Praktikum. UTB, Bad Heilbrunn: Julius Klinkhardt		Characteristic features of action research Posch, Peter: Einführung in die Aktionsforschung
PC 1 Clarify curricular and subject requirements and formulate learning aims PC 2		1. Starting point/Research question Hypothesis, Bases, Context 2. Methods: Information and data collection

<p>Pay attention to learning pre-requisites and level of knowledge acquisition</p> <p>PC 3 Design of teaching & learning processes</p> <p>PC 4 Organisational aspects of teaching & learning processes</p> <p>PC5 Evaluation and reflection of teaching & learning processes</p>		<p>3. Results: Securing results</p> <p>4. Discussion of results: Evaluation and reflection of the results</p> <p>5. Outlook: Increase in understanding and open questions</p>
<p>ARC-Spiral – Getting into action research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A language teacher plans a teaching unit together with other language teachers at the school or at a partner school in the same or another country; 2. Action research tools are discussed and analysed in the team taking the usefulness for various points of focus into account; 3. Within the framework of the implementation of the planned lesson the language teachers observe the phases in the classes and link observations to the focus of a potential action research project; 4. Teachers describe their experiences and present their results within the team; the process will lead to a focus for an action research project; 5. Together the team reflects and analyses the observations and discusses the following questions: 		<p>Typical starting point for action research Posch, Peter: Einführung in die Aktionsforschung</p> <p>Interest For example, trying out a promising idea; building on a strength; carrying out a day-to-day task in a more considered and economical way.</p> <p>Difficulty For example, improving a difficult situation, solving a problem, correction a lack (e.g. of appropriate learning materials).</p> <p>Unclear situation Solving a riddle that is not necessarily clearly positive or negative, giving pleasure or pressure but something that needs to be understood in order to gain control of the situation.</p>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do the observations mean for us?• What consequences will they have for our team? <p>On the basis of the discussion and reflection in the team the group decides upon a focus for action research.</p> <p>The action research in the classes can begin!</p> | | |
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