UNIVERSITY *of* GREENWICH

Teachers as Action Researchers

P13902 Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Primary Professional Development)
P13903 Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Secondary Professional Development)

Jill Trinder, for The Cambridge Teaching Schools Network (September 2019)

On your graduation day

UNIVERSITY *of* GREENWICH

Aims of today's session:

To consider what it means to be a professional teacher;

To think about why teachers research;

To provide a brief overview of the Action Research cycle – teacher-led change;

To pave the way for your Action Research plan.

What does a PGCE offer?

Go to www.menti.com

Use code **36 75 32**

Why a PGCE? Some ideas...

- Teacher education (student) and training (trainee);
- Academic study: the theory behind the practice;
- Increased confidence in your classroom practice;
- Latest research, developments and policy;
- Encourages critical, analytical and evaluative thinking about teaching and learning;
- Internationally recognised qualification;
- 60 level 7 credits to count towards a Masters';
- A 'springboard' into ongoing teacher-led enquiry.

Greenwich Graduate Attributes

Scholarship and Autonomy

The University of Greenwich is committed to developing graduates who:

1. Have an informed understanding of their discipline or professional practice, and the ability to question its principles, practices and boundaries

2. Think independently, analytically and creatively, and engage imaginatively with new areas of investigation

3. Appreciate disciplines and forms of professional practice beyond their own, and draw connections between them

4. Are intellectually curious, responsive to challenges, and demonstrate initiative and resilience

What kind of teacher do you see yourself as?

shutterstock.com • 1036683106

Artwork by Iryna Kuznetsova

Can you articulate some of the innate and unnamed values which you hold about education?

"A fundamental ingredient of Action Research (AR) is clarity of values. To zero in on a focus for your AR, try to become super clear about your core values."

(Schmuck, 2006, p.11)

UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH

'What3Words'... best describe the classroom you want to create?

Activity: triangle of six words or phrases (establish your 'top' 3)
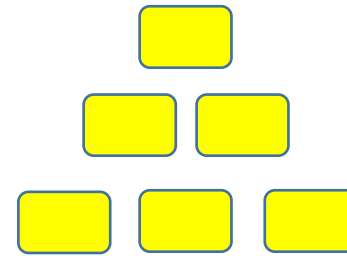
Go to www.menti.com

Use code 29 46 73

Johnson and Golombek, 2002, p.2

"For teachers to develop as professionals there must be a process of reshaping teachers' existing knowledge, beliefs and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods or materials on teachers.'

Model of the developing professional teacher

Research

The developing professional

Theory ⟷ Practice
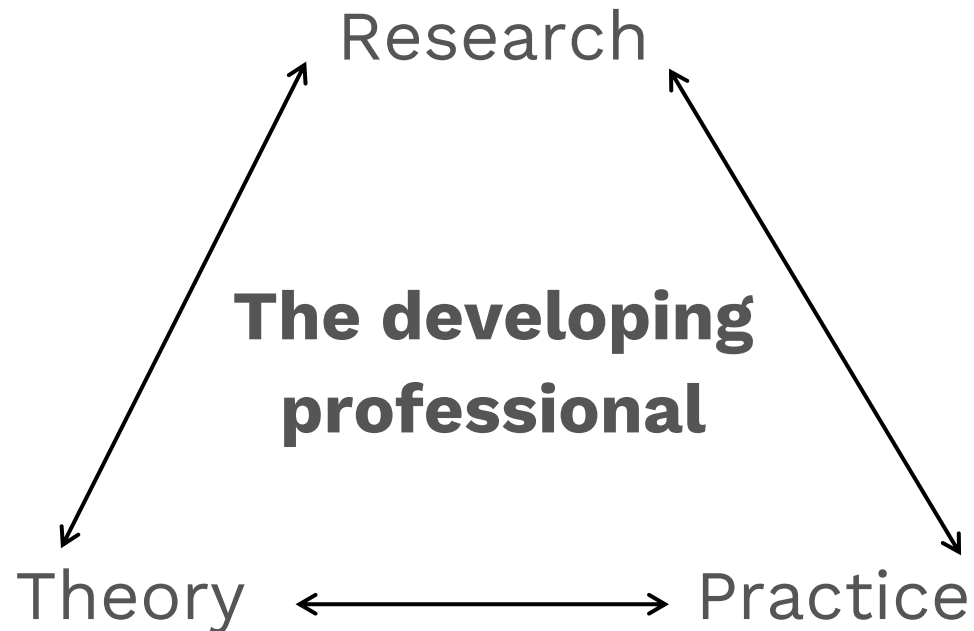
Sewell & Lakin (2012)

The '*Visionary Teacher*'

"The teacher who can respond to the multitude of changes which will occur throughout their career by drawing on theory and research and by possessing the skills of critical evaluation and reflection which will enable them to make changes in their practice which account for this."
(p.10)

ACTION RESEARCH – WHAT IS IT?

Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe AR as being about:

- the improvement of practice;

- the improvement of the understanding of practice;

- the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place.

"The fundamental aim of action research is to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge."

(Elliott, 1991, p.49)

Schmuck (2006) suggests that, "Reflective practice, problem solving, and action research are the three faces of continuous improvement for individuals and organizations." (p.18)

UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH

The difference between traditional research and action research:

"Traditional research is concerned with creating theory and testing hypotheses and action research is concerned with solving problems and making changes."

"Action Research is practical, participative, empowering, interpretive, tentative, critical."

From Schmuck (2006, p19-29)

ACTION RESEARCH

Action research is a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world to address practitioners' own issues, and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1992, p.10) suggest that, "To do action research is to plan, act, observe and reflect more carefully, more systematically, and more rigorously than one usually does in everyday life."
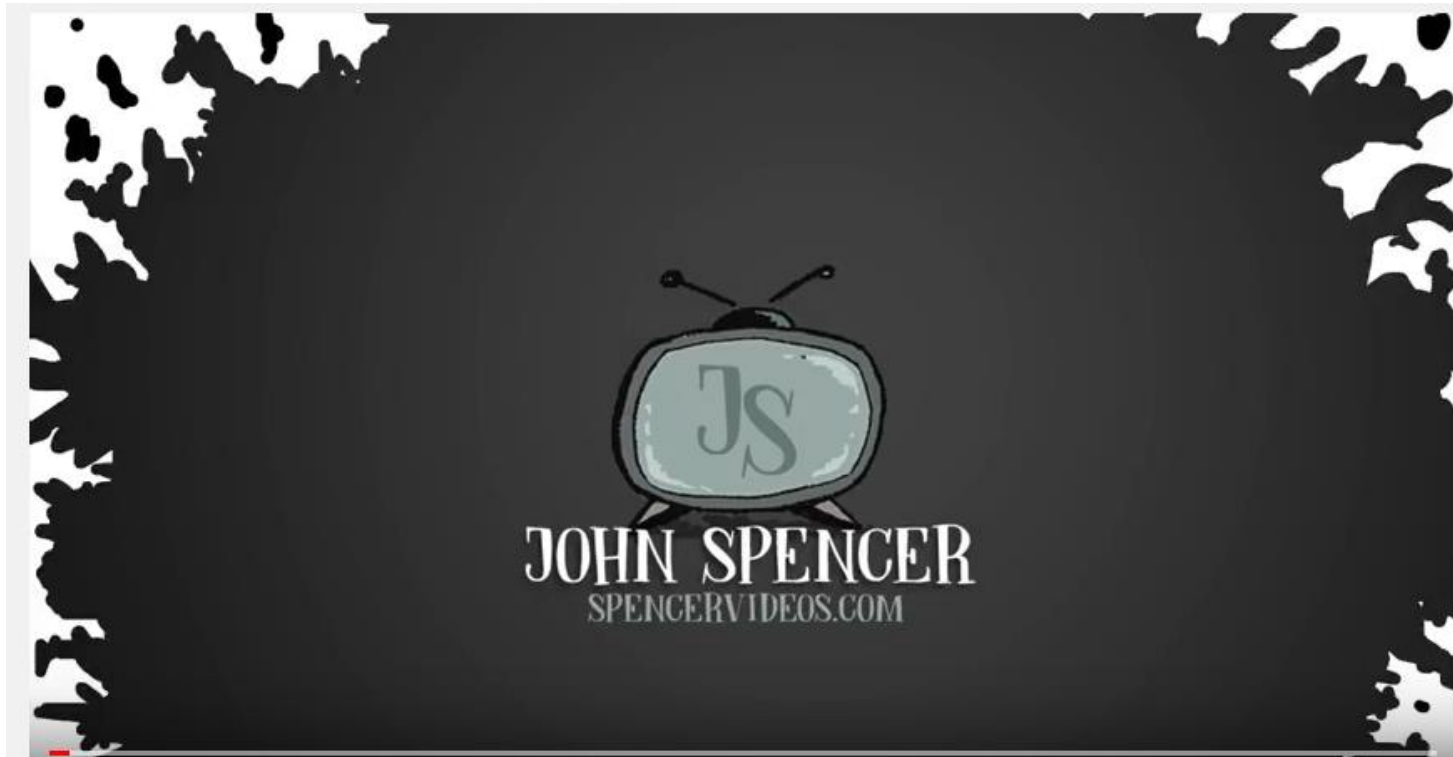
Action research combines diagnosis, action and reflection.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011)

McNiff (2010, p6) on Action Research

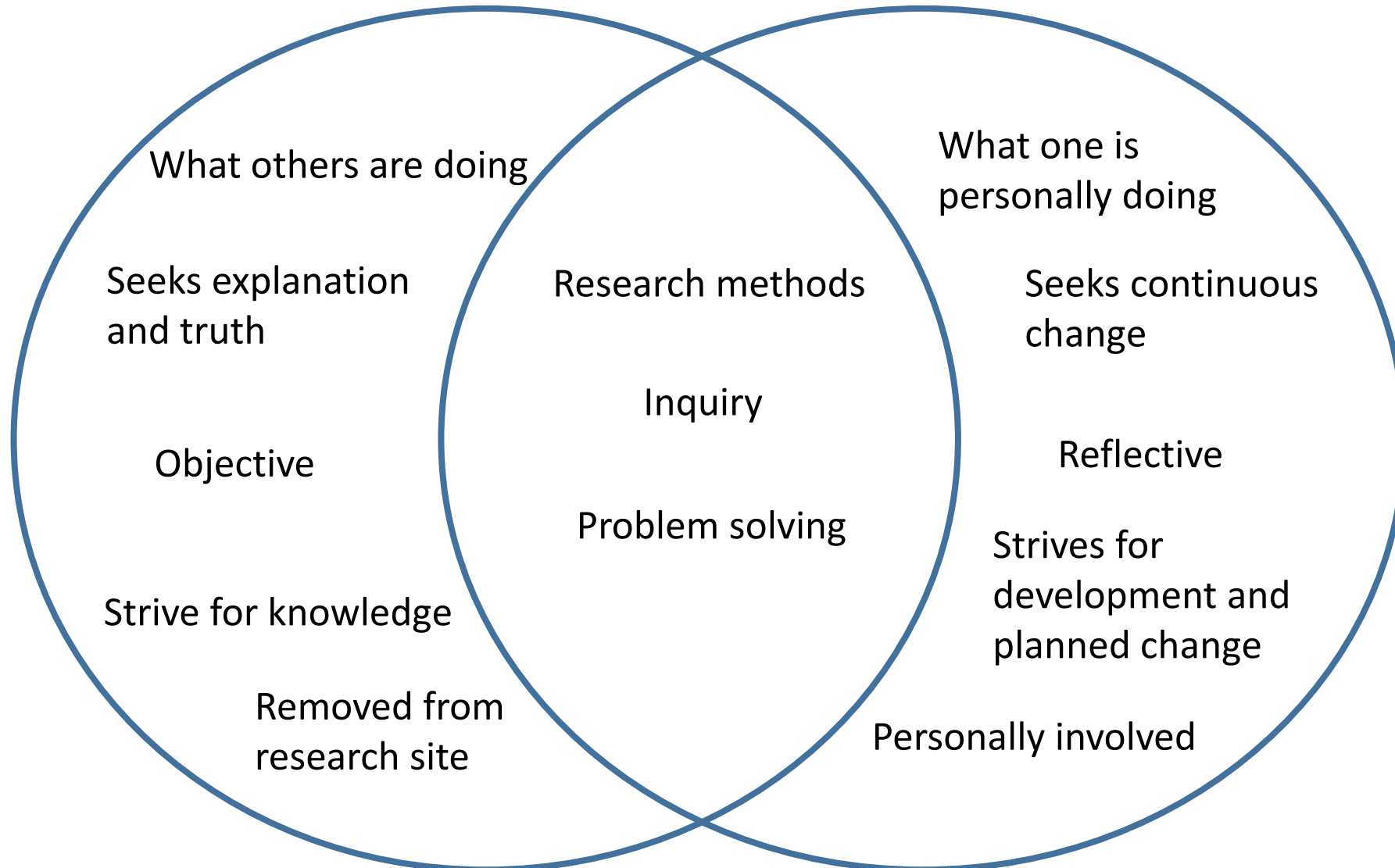*This research approach is grounded in ideas that you as an individual can find ways to:*

"improve your practice and then explain how and why you have done so."

What is Action Research?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ov3F3pdhNkk

Traditional   vs   Action Research

UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH

Traditional (left circle):
- What others are doing
- Seeks explanation and truth
- Objective
- Strive for knowledge
- Removed from research site

Overlap (center):
- Research methods
- Inquiry
- Problem solving

Action Research (right circle):
- What one is personally doing
- Seeks continuous change
- Reflective
- Strives for development and planned change
- Personally involved

Self Study Action Research

Produces situational understanding - where '*understanding informs action and action informs understanding*'

(Elliott, 2004, p285)

Assessment Structure

Primary

Level	Module code	Module title	Term of delivery	Credit value
7	ACAD 1392	Primary Professional Development one: Making an impact on teaching and learning (home school)	Autumn (1)	30
7	ACAD 1393	Primary Professional Development two: Making an impact on a school priority (alternative school)	Spring (2)	30

Secondary

Level	Module code	Module title	Term of delivery	Credit value
7	ACAD 1396	Secondary Professional Development one: Making an impact on teaching and learning (home school)	Autumn (1)	30
7	ACAD 1397	Secondary Professional Development two: Making an impact on a school priority (alternative school)	Spring (2)	30

Level 7 Assessment Criteria

	Exceptional 80%+	Excellent 70-79%	Good 60-69%	Pass 50-59%	Fail 49% and below
Knowledge and understanding of literature	Outstanding engagement with the assignment aims and learning outcomes and demonstrating considerable originality in approaching educational debates. Authoritative, original interpretation of and engagement with an extensive range of relevant literature. Skilful application of key concepts. Work shows systematic, comprehensive understanding of the relationship between theory and practice.	Excellent engagement with the assignment aims and learning outcomes. An authoritative grasp of a wide range of literature and sophisticated conceptual understanding gained through an in-depth examination of appropriate resources. Original interpretation of a wide range of relevant literature. Demonstrated engagement with and application of key concepts. Clear evidence of observations and research undertaken in the classroom, applied to practice and used to substantiate arguments.	A clear, systematic engagement with the assignment aims and learning outcomes. A good understanding of relevant literature and key concepts. Presents a thorough review of relevant literature and is consistently critical in the analysis of a range of sources. With a good grasp of key concepts the action research is carefully targeted to address the identified issue.	An acceptable engagement with the assignment aims and learning outcomes. A sound understanding of relevant literature and key concepts. Background reading is evident and key concepts are adequately explored in the literature review. The action research is informed by background reading and interventions are planned to test improvements to practice	A limited engagement with the assignment aims and learning outcomes. Weak grasp of key concepts and limited use of literature. Material cited is either irrelevant or insufficiently current. Work shows little understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. The action research undertaken is flawed and/or insufficiently focused to address the identified issue.

UNIVERSITY *of* **GREENWICH**

	Exceptional 80%+	Excellent 70-79%	Good 60-69%	Pass 50-59%	Fail 49% and below
Analysis and application	Insightful and innovative contribution to developments within a professional context. Demonstrates critical analysis and synthesis of complex ideas. An original analysis of key approaches and theories which shows creativity in the application of knowledge and learning. Exceptional fluency and confidence in the use of the literature and current thinking. Attempts to generate own models for theory in the light of the arguments presented and/or in the light of broader educational debates. Consideration of ethical issues demonstrated.	Integrated and innovative application of learning to a professional context. A high level of criticality. Demonstrates rigorous analysis of key approaches and theories, shows creativity in the application of knowledge and learning. Arguments are contextualised within current research and literature. Presents counterarguments, identifies key issues / problems and justifies conclusions. Consideration of ethical issues demonstrated.	Thorough consideration of relationship between theory and practice. Good level of analysis and criticality. Evidence of critical evaluation of practice by the application of theory. Shows some creativity in the application of learning and knowledge. Arguments are contextualised within recent research and literature. Consideration of ethical issues demonstrated.	Discussion of the implications of theory for practice. Deals with ideas/issues with satisfactory creativity. Demonstrates understanding of the key approaches and theories, shows creativity in the application of knowledge and learning. Some analysis and criticality evident Some attempt is made to apply theory to practice. Consideration of ethical issues demonstrated.	Evidence of awareness of relevant critical issues is insufficient. Limited ability to link theory and practice. Shows little understanding of creativity in the application of knowledge. Limited awareness of how to deal with ideas/issues creatively. A tendency to description rather than analysis. Inadequate consideration of ethical issues.

	Exceptional 80%+	Excellent 70-79%	Good 60-69%	Pass 50-59%	Fail 49% and below
Communication	Scholarly writing that could provide the basis for wider dissemination. Strong rationale, extremely well planned and sharply focused. Coherent and original argument rigorously pursued. Assured and highly articulate writing that observes all academic conventions in style and content. All literature is correctly and consistently referenced within the text and bibliography/reference section	Impressive writing style that shows clarity and precision in presenting arguments. Clear, well structured, fluent and engaging writing that observes all academic conventions in style, content and Standard English. Cogent argument consistently applied. All literature is correctly and consistently referenced within the text and reference section.	Clear writing style and organisation. Coherent structure and clear expression. Good rationale, clear focus, consistent, carefully structured argument. Work correctly presented in standard English The work observes all academic conventions in style, content and Standard English. All literature is consistently referenced within the text and bibliography/reference section.	Clear writing style and organisation. Work correctly presented in standard English There is some attempt to present a clear argument. The work observes academic conventions, in style, content, and standard English. All literature is consistently referenced within the text and bibliography/reference section.	Lack of coherence and clarity in presentation and/or structure. Poor focus with limited rationale and issues ill defined. Limited evidence of relevant background reading. The work does not observe academic conventions in style, content or standard English. Many referencing errors in the text, in the list of references, or both.

Two Models of Action Research

Proactive (for when you are inspired to try a new practice)

Steps

1. List hopes and concerns for the new practice;

2. After a knowledge search, try a new practice;

3. Do a methods search to create research procedures;

4. Check on what the data mean;

5. Reflect on alternative ways to behave;

6. Fine to the new practice or try something new.

Responsive (for when a situation is unclear and you wish to understand it better)

Steps

1. After a methods search, collect data to diagnose the situation;

2. Analyse the data for themes and ideas for action;

3. Do a knowledge search, share the data and announce the changes that will be tried;

4. List hopes and concerns for the new practice;

5. Try the new practice;

6. Collect data to evaluate the effects of the new practice.

Self study action research

As we seek to improve our practice we must be careful to constantly check that what we are doing is for the common good, for a better and more sustainable form of educational practice.

This is where practitioner researchers must accept responsibility for the fact they work with vulnerable others, have the potential for huge influences in the lives of others and therefore show how they ensure that what they are doing is ethically good for society (Roche, 2011)

Action Research Steps (McNiff, 2002)

1. Review your current practice;

2. Identify an aspect that you wish to improve;

3. Imagine a way forward in this;

4. Try it out;

5. Monitor and reflect on what happens;

6. Modify the plan in the light of what has been found, what has happened, and continue;

7. Evaluate the modified action;

8. Continue until you are satisfied with that aspect of your work (e.g. repeat the cycle).

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011)
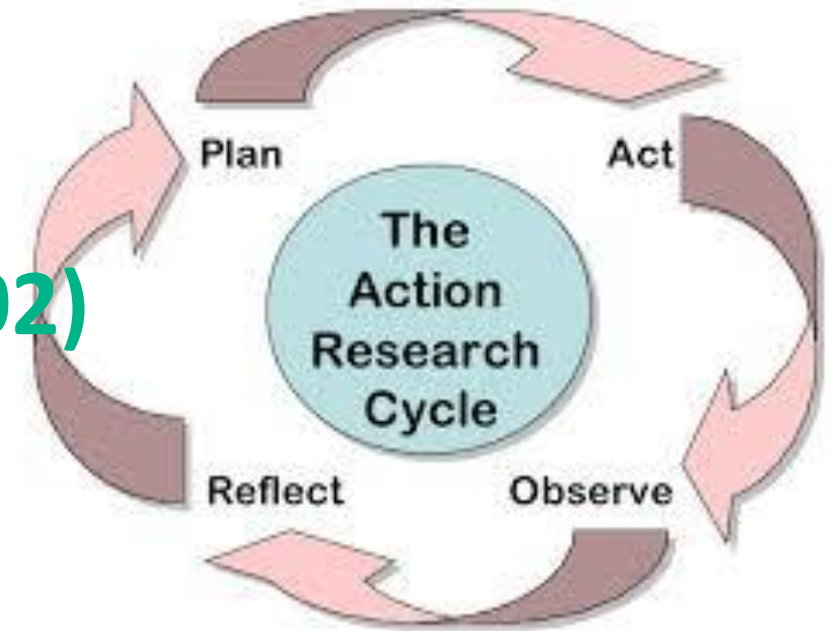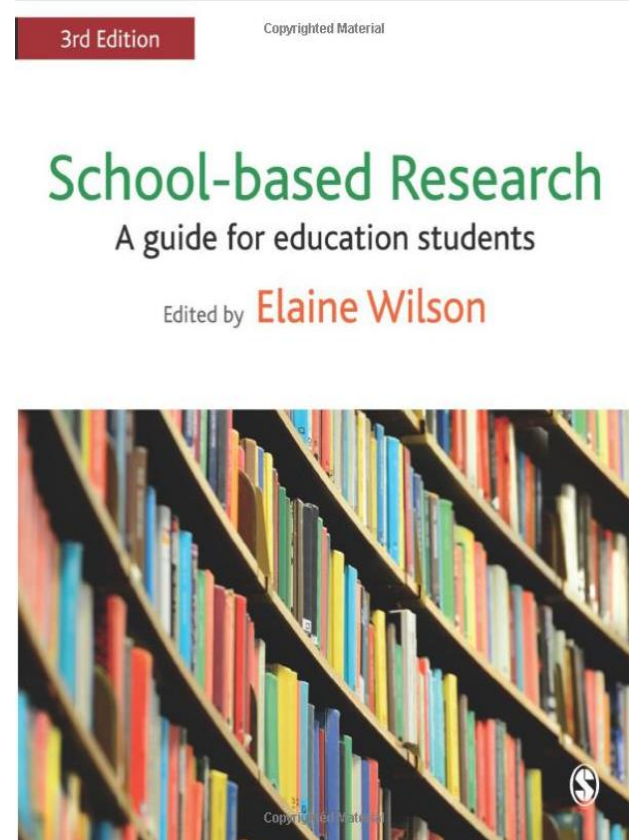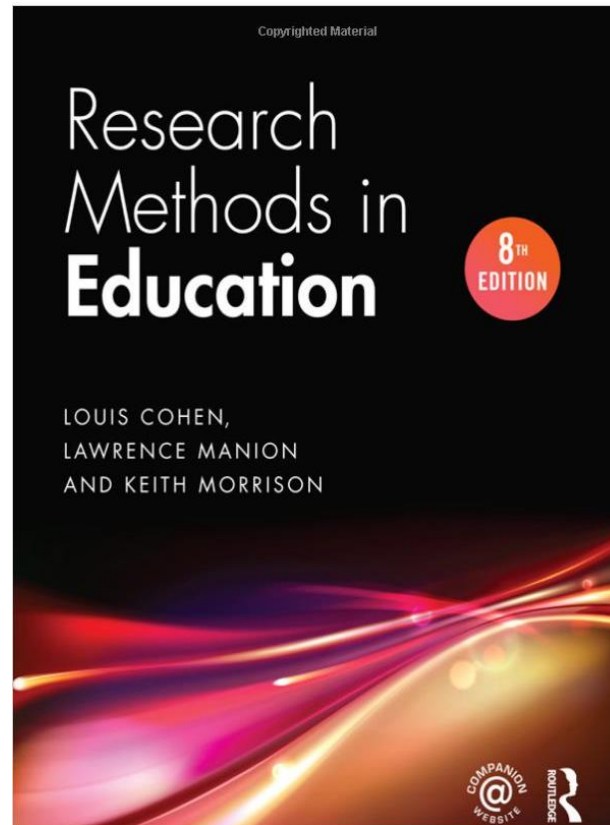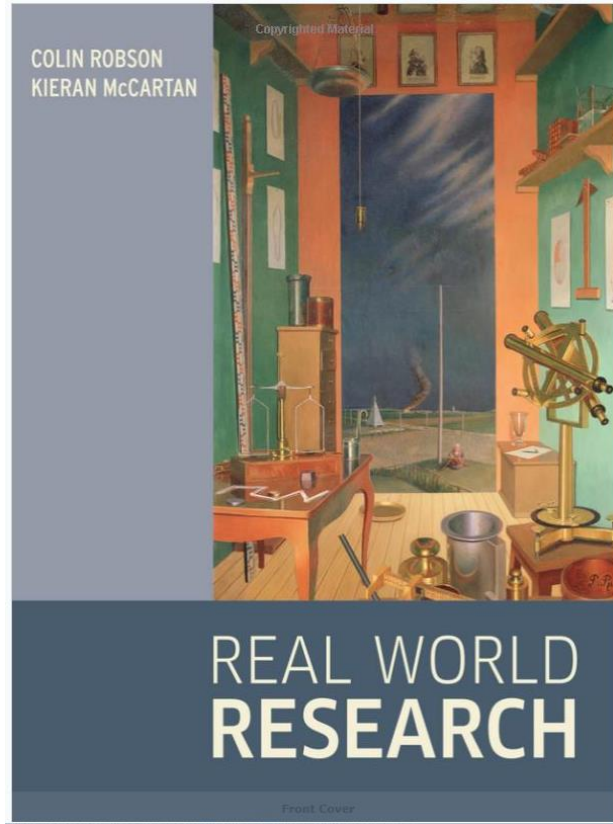
AR 8-STAGE MODEL

***Stage One*:** Decide and agree one common problem that you are experiencing or need that must be addressed.

***Stage Two*:** Identify some causes of the problem (need).

***Stage Three*:** Brainstorm a range of possible practical solutions to the problem, to address the real problem and the real cause(s).

***Stage Four*:** From the range of possible practical solutions decide *one* of the solutions to the problems, perhaps what you consider to be the most suitable or best solution to the problem. Plan how to put the solution into practice.

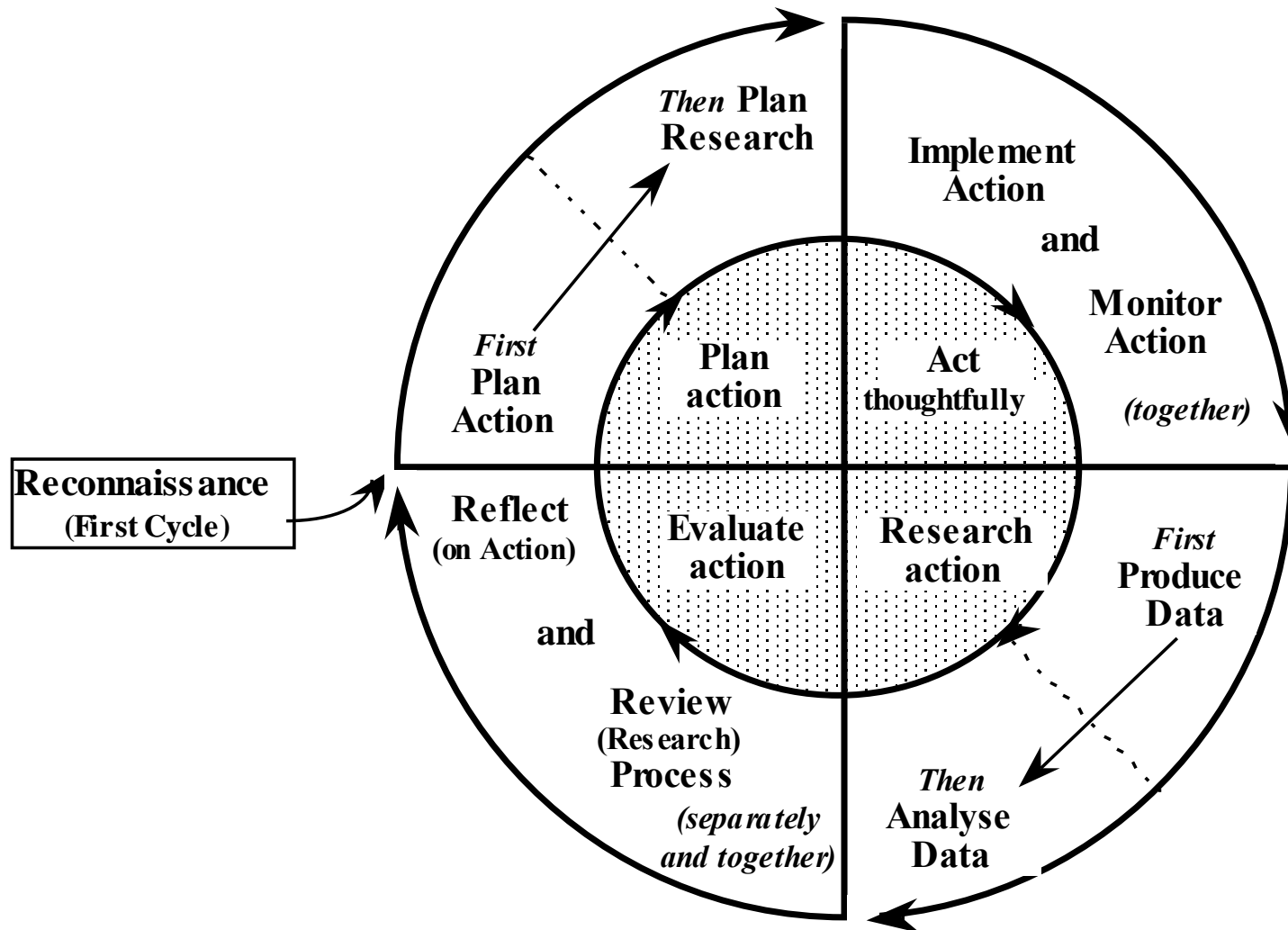Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011)

AR 8-STAGE MODEL

Stage Five: Identify 'success criteria' by which you will be able to judge whether the solution has worked to solve the problem,

Stage Six: Put the plan into action; monitor, adjust and evaluate what is taking place;

Stage Seven: Evaluate the outcome to see how well it has addressed and solved the problem or need, using the success criteria identified in Stage Five.

Stage Eight: Review and plan what needs to be done in light of the evaluation.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011)

AR RESEARCH CYCLE (Tripp, 2003)

Author: Jill Trinder
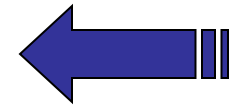
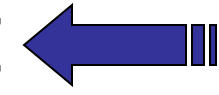Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011)

INITIAL PROBLEM

PROPOSED INTERVENTION

IMPLEMENTATION

OUTCOME

E V A L U A T I O N

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011)

Author: Jill Trinder

Past Project Titles:

To what extent does objective led planning encourage and extend children's learning in reception?

To what extent does mastery teaching impact on the progress of a higher ability year 7 mathematics class?

Do Daily Phonic Interventions lead to Accelerated Progress for Lower Attainers?

To what extent do rewards help to encourage reading?

Are Children More Responsive to Self-Assessed Feedback Than Teacher Given Feedback?

Do Cooperative Learning Structures Reduce Mathematics Anxiety?

To what extent does rotating roles in practical lessons affect the feeling of involvement for students in group work?

Challenging learners through a stratified seating plan.

Can 'excellent examples' of peers' written work guide more able students to improve their own writing?

An investigation into the effects of rewards and sanctions on student achievement and attitude to learning in a year 8 English class.

To what extent can behaviour specific praise be used to promote a growth mindset in lower achieving students?

How can visual scaffolding devices be used more effectively to support lower attaining literacy pupils with their vocabulary learning?

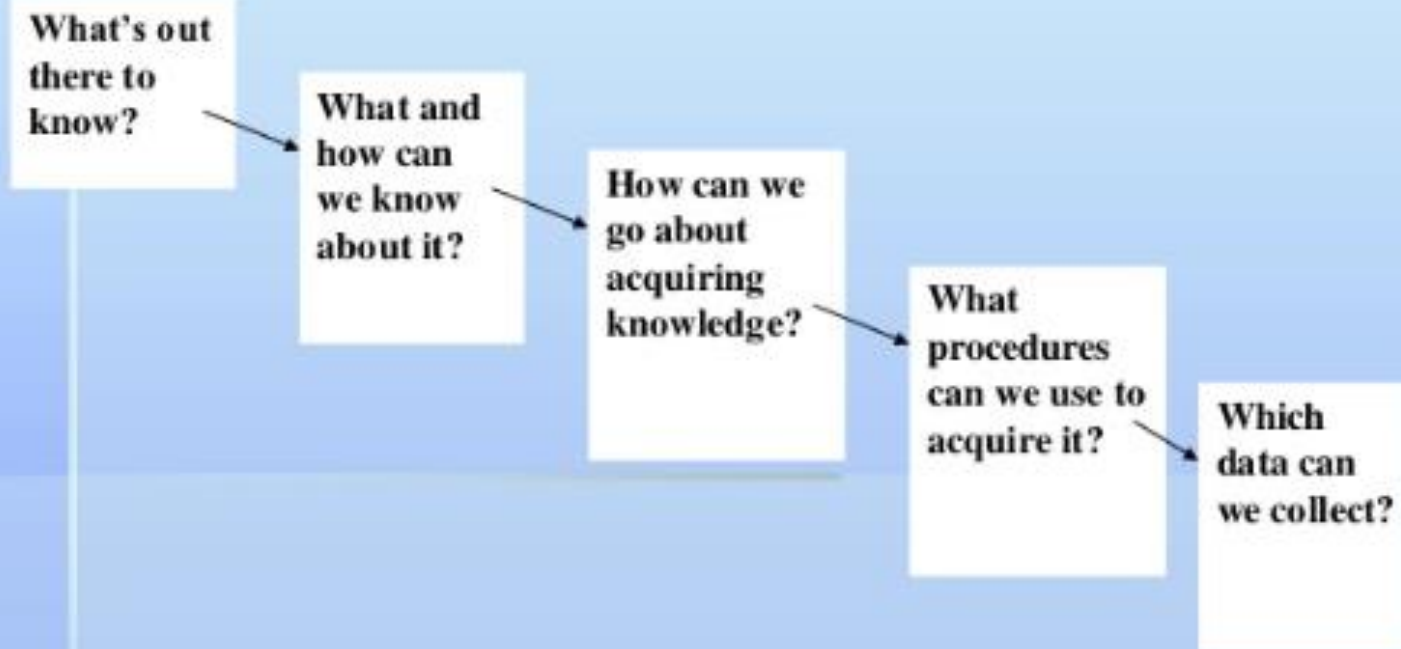The effect of differentiated grouping on low level disruption.

To what extent does descriptive feedback have a positive effect on pupil progress?

Research Methods

"The numbers on my report card aren't good, but I question the school's methodology."

Inter-relationship between the building blocks of Research

Ontology | Epistemology | Methodology | Methods | Sources

What's out there to know?

What and how can we know about it?

How can we go about acquiring knowledge?

What procedures can we use to acquire it?

Which data can we collect?

Adapted from Hay, 2002, pg. 64

Research Methods

UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH

Quantitative data collection may include any method that will result in <u>numerical values</u>. E.g.

- Experiments and clinical trials;

- Surveys, interviews and questionnaires that collect numerical information or count data by using closed-ended questions;

- Observing or recording measurable events such as the number of pupils achieving a particular level of attainment.

Qualitative data <u>approximates and characterizes</u>. It is non-numerical in nature. E.g.

- Observations

- One-to-one interviews

- Focus groups

MIXED METHODS

Your data might be generated from…

- Observations (consider the type and frequency)
- Written methods (questionnaires, field notes, surveys, journals, blogs)
- Spoken methods (interviews, video diaries)
- …or a combination of these

Your data might be generated from…

- **Observations (consider the type and frequency)**
- Written methods (questionnaires, field notes, surveys, journals, blogs)
- Spoken methods (interviews, video diaries)
- …or a combination of these

Observational methods

Type

    Open *or* focused observation

    Or semi-structured observation

Frequency

    One-off

    Systematic or repeated observations

    Targeted observations (only making notes on girls, or summer born, or left-handed pupils)

    Timed

    Photographs (consult your school's policy and discuss with tutor)

Your data might be generated from…

- Observations (consider the type and frequency)
- Written methods (questionnaires, field notes, surveys, journals, blogs)
- Spoken methods (interviews, video diaries)
- …or a combination of these

UNIVERSITY *of* GREENWICH

Written methods

Documentary evidence

Questionnaire

Journals

Field notes, created by you

Field notes, created by others

Your data might be generated from…

- Observations (consider the type and frequency)
- Written methods (questionnaires, field notes, surveys, journals, blogs)
- Spoken methods (interviews, video diaries)
- …or a combination of these

Spoken methods

Interviews

    Structured

    Semi-structured

    Unstructured

Use

    written notes

    audio recordings

    video recordings

Interviewing Pupils …

… brings with it additional ethical issues

- Access to the outcomes
- Safeguarding
- Permissions / Right to withdraw
- Anonymity

Methodological Tools

Now read through the Methodology chapters of the two sample assignments on your table.

1. What are the data collection tools (methods) that each researcher used?

2. Is it made clear why they chose these methods?

3. Have they used literature to support their choices?

Action Research Proposal Form
(a template of this is in your Module Handbook)

UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH

Trainee name:	
Trainee number:	
e-mail address:	
What aspect of primary/secondary education do you plan to research?	*Bear in mind that your research project begins the moment you start thinking about it (today!)*
What do you want to learn through this research?	*It is important to consider the questions that you wish to gain answers to.*
Why do you want to do this (ie professional reasons)?	*What impact do you want your research to have on your practice/thinking?*
Where do you plan to undertake your research?	*Remember this is small-scale AR – don't over-reach yourself. Keep things tight and focused.*
When will you be undertaking your research?	*Consider practicalities such as competing priorities / significant events)*
What research methods do you plan to use?	*These are your 'tools' for collecting the data or evidence for analysis? (e.g. observations, interviews, tests…)*

UNIVERSITY *of* **GREENWICH**

Who, and how many people, do you think will be involved in your research? **How many of them are students?**	*Likely to be some/all of your students in your class but possibly others too e.g. support staff, teaching colleagues, SLT members.*
What permissions do you need to gain, and from whom?	*Your students are your study participants and transparency is important to promote trust.*
What ethical issues might there be, and how will you address them? Be specific. In particular, if your research will involve children (directly, or indirectly), give ethical consideration to their place in your research.	*Minimizing potential for harm by considering:* *- Informed consent* *- Confidentiality* *- Data storage* *- Sensitive participant selection* *- Length and timings of data collection*
Identify up to two texts that have informed your approach to action research and choice of research methods.	*Use your recommended reading list for starters. It contains some key texts to guide those engaged in educational AR.*
Identify up to six texts/sources that have informed your understanding of the aspect of the field of education you are researching.	*Begin to read around your topic. Is there sufficient literature to draw upon? What does it seem to be saying about the current 'state of play'?*

UNIVERSITY *of* GREENWICH

Stay small, stay focused;

Identify a clear research question;

Be realistic about what you can do;

Plan carefully;

Set a realistic time scale;

Involve others (as participants, observers, validators – including critical friends – potential researchers);

Ensure ethical practice;

Concentrate on learning, not on the outcomes of action;

The focus of the research is you, in company with others;

Beware of happy endings;

Be aware of political issues.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011)

Reference List:

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) *Research Methods in Education.* 8th edn. Oxon: Routledge.

Hay, C. (2002) *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Schmuck, R.A. (2006) *Practical Action Research for Change.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Sewell, K. (ed.) (2012) *Doing your PGCE at M-Level.* 2nd edn. London: Sage.

Wilson, E. (2013) *School-based Research – A guide for education students. London: Sage.*

CHANGE STARTS HERE

UNIVERSITY *of* GREENWICH