In this every fraction of seconds and minutes changing world, we face a large number of problems, which require immediate solution. This is achieved through action research. Action research has the potential to generate genuine and sustained improvement in schools, colleges and organisations. It gives educators new opportunities to reflect on and assess their teaching; to explore and test new ideas, methods, and materials; to assess how effective the new approaches are; to share feedback with fellow team members; and to make decisions about which new approaches to include in the team’s curriculum and assessment plans.

The early work in Action Research is attributed to Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist who coined the term, “action research”. Action research is client-centred, action-oriented and problem-centred. It involves the client system, is a diagnostic, active-learning, problem-finding, and problem-solving process.

Various terminologies used for action research are Co-operative inquiry, Action inquiry, Participatory action research, Community-based action research, Collaborative research and Participative inquiry.

Definition

- Action research is an interactive inquiry process that balances problem solving actions implemented in a collaborative context with data-driven collaborative analysis or research to understand underlying causes enabling future predictions about personal and organisational change (Reason & Bradbury, 2001).

- It involves utilising a systematic cyclical method of planning, taking action, observing, evaluating (including self-evaluation) and critical reflecting prior to planning the next cycle (O’Brien, 2001; McNiff, 2002).

- Action research is an inquiry or research in the context of focused efforts to improve the quality of an organisation and its performance. It typically is designed and conducted by practitioners who analyse the data to improve their own practice. Action research can be done by individuals or by teams of colleagues. The team approach is called collaborative inquiry.

- Action research in education is research (applied) undertaken by practitioners (teachers) to study their problems scientifically in order to guide, correct and evaluate their decisions and actions (Stephen M Corey).

- Action research is characterised by the systematic study of the implementation of planned change to a system.

Purposes of action research

The purposes of action research are to:

- Produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives,
- Work towards practical outcome,
- Create new forms of understanding. Since theory

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**Basic Research and Action Research: A Comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Research</th>
<th>Action Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It finds out broad basic principles and generalisation</td>
<td>Concentrates on specific problem areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is pursued for establishing facts and truths</td>
<td>It is conducted to find out usable solutions of actual problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The research pattern once decided is final</td>
<td>The research pattern can be modified as the situation demands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It requires special training to enable the research to reach the goal</td>
<td>It does not require special training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
without action is meaningless, and
- Provide important guidance and inspiration for practice.

**Main features of action research**
- It focuses on solving the immediate problem which the researcher is facing in the study.
- It involves the client system as a diagnostic, active-learning, problem-finding, and problem-solving process.
- It requires small sample.
- Its findings are very usable and practicable locally but not usually generalisable.
- It increases morale, skill and efficiency of the worker.
- It is applicable to local problems.

Action research involves a baseline survey of the pre-action situation; a feasibility study of the proposed action programme; planning and launching the programme; concurrent evaluation of the programme; making modification and changes in the programme and its method of implementation in the light of the research findings, and final evaluation, if the project is time-bound.

**Basic steps of Action Research according to Nunan (1990)**
1. After determining that there is a potential problem, survey what is happening (status quo) through observation - via video, audio, hash marks, or whatever relevant means are available.
2. Code the observation based on the problem and what was seen (i.e., the code is created solely for that problem/session).
3. Based on the coded information, determine one change that could impact the problem in a positive manner.
4. Implement the change in the course/classroom.
5. Observe the class/course while implementing the change.
6. Code the new observations.
7. Finally, compare the coded sessions to determine the results of the change.

**Characteristics of Action Research**

1. **Human flourishing**: In any research, the ultimate outcome is for human growth and welfare.
2. **Participation and democracy**: Participation with subjects is common. No concealment.
3. **Practical form**: Action research has always preferred the practical way of activities and day-to-day problems.
4. **Emergent development form**: This type of research is more suitable in emergency situations.
5. **Knowledge in action**: Only in this type of research whatever the outcome or results, that will be applicable immediately.

**Types of Action Research**
Four basic types of action research have been identified:

- **Experimental**: It is applicable for any intervention, new procedure, newer educational strategies, innovation etc.
- **Organisational**: This type of action research is organised by institution/agency for regulation of policies and procedures.
- **Professionalising**: It is related to professional body regulation, issues, scope and emerging trends.
- **Empowering**: This type of research is applicable in protection of rights of consumer and professional care giver.

**Validity of Action Research**
(Waterman 1998)
1. **Dialectical method:** It refers to constant analysis and report of movement between theory and research and practice in examining the tensions, contradictions, and complexities of the situation.

2. **Critical validity:** Analysing the process of change the measure of validity is not the change affected but rather the analysis of intentions and action, their ethical implication and consequences.

3. **Reflexive validity:** It is the attempt by the researcher to constantly examine the biases, supposition, pre-supposition of the research.

**Conclusion**

Action research does not focus exclusively on user and career involvement, though clearly their participatory principle makes it an obvious choice to explore these issues. It can be used more widely to foster better practice across professional boundaries and between different healthcare settings. It is an eclectic approach to research and draws on a variety of data collection methods. It is a dynamic approach for the researcher who opts to study the problem and assist in making a change in their lives. Action research also sets in motion a long-range, cyclical, self-correcting mechanism for maintaining and enhancing the effectiveness of the client's system by leaving the system with practical and useful tools for self-analysis and self-renewal.

**References**


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