

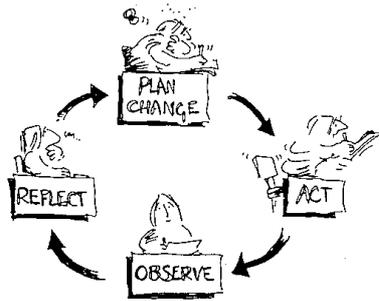
SOME DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF ACTION RESEARCH

1. It is about action *and* research

It is action that is intentionally researched, and research that is designed to inform subsequent actions. It is about research *in* action, rather than research *on* action.

2. It is *cyclical* and *evolves*

The classic action research cycle is :-



¹ Everyday Evaluation on the Run, Yoland Wadsworth, 2nd edition 1997 (page 78)

Each cycle can be short – maybe just a few hours, days or weeks. There can be cycles within cycles. Over time, a particular piece of action research may evolve into something quite different from its start.

3. Each stage of the cycle is *rigorous*

The cycle doesn't just happen. Accepted and appropriate methods of acting, observing, reflecting and planning are used in each cycle.

4. It is *critical*

Successful action research is based around shared curiosity not individual certainty. Action research works less well if people seek to prove the correctness of their own ideas. Indeed, people are expected to put their practices, ideas, and assumptions to the test by gathering evidence that could convince them that those practices, ideas and assumptions may be wrong.

5. It tends to be *collaborative*

There is no distinction made between those involved in the "action" and those involved in the "research". Everyone can be involved in both. The aim is to establish self-critical groups or communities participating in all stages of the cycle.

6. It often starts with an *engaging question*

Since action research is both action and research oriented, the inquiry starts best with an initial question that is action oriented. Those involved in a particular piece of action research will have many different perspectives and expectations. In order to engage them, this starting question needs to reflect some common ground between all those perspectives and expectations.