Tips for Webinar:
- Keep mic on MUTE
- Feel free to send questions in CHAT BOX
- If on laptop or tablet, you MAY disconnect; Just log back in and reconnect.

TAGT Research Division Webinar:
Action Research Made Easier

In only 9 simple steps

Moderating Tonight:
Christina Dearman, Denton ISD
Joyce Miller, TAM-Commerce
Katheryn Schaffer, CFB ISD
Debbie Troxclair, Lamar Univ.
Overview
What is Action Research?

“Any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, counselors, or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or operate, how they teach, and how their students learn” (Mills, 2011).
What is Action Research?

"A gap is sometimes perceived by educators. There is a need for best practices, but at times the research findings from researchers to practitioners breaks down" (Johnson, 2008).
What is Action Research?

“Action research is done by educators for themselves and is a systematic inquiry into their own practice” (Johnson, 2008).
What is Action Research?

Identify an area of Focus

Collect Data

Develop an Action Plan

Analyze and Interpret Data

What is Action Research?

Systematic process lends to credibility of inquiry.

Assures "Rigor" in the study:

- Quality
- Validity
- Accuracy
- Credibility
Nine Simple Steps
Step 1

Identifying & Limiting the Topic
Identifying & Limiting the Topic

Categorization assists in focusing upon a topic.

Mertler and Charles (2011) list the following educational research topics:

- Classroom Management
- Instructional Methods
- Relation of Human Growth Patterns to Education
- Grading and Evaluation
- Conferencing
Identifying & Limiting the Topic

Categorization in Gifted Education:

- Assessment
- Program Design
- Instructional Methods
- Social/Emotional Needs
- Diverse Populations
- Advocacy
### Identifying & Limiting the Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Topic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What teachers’ lives are like outside of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Factors that affect learning among culturally diverse students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Visual dissection versus real dissection of lab specimens</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrowed Version of Topic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Leisure activities of elementary and the amount of time spent on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hispanic student’s perceptions of factors that make academic success more difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tenth-grade biology students’ perceptions of virtual and real animal dissections</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Identifying & Limiting the Topic

Based upon your topic:

- Formulate research question(s).
- Consider HOW they might be answered; if too broad, revise.
- Know that they may continue to be revised as you move through steps 2, 3, & 4.
Step 2

Gathering Information
Gathering Information

Begin to build your idea:

- Explore your own perceptions about the topic
- Begin to look into topic via professional journals
- Explore "less-academic" sources such as teacher’s manuals, resource guides, blogs, Pinterest, etc.
Gathering Information

Examine Research Question Systematically (Step 2

Template: Probing the Question)

- What evidence exists that what you perceive is a problem is an actual problem?
- Who are the stakeholders (specific students, administrators, parents, etc.) that are affected by the problem?
- How is this program, material, concept, etc. currently implemented, taught, etc.?
- How is the this program, material, concept, etc. currently reinforced or maintained?
- How is the effectiveness or mastery of this program, material, concept, etc. currently evaluated or assessed?
- Where does the program, material, concept, etc. fit into the program's mission, course content, etc.?
- When during the school year does this program occur, is the material taught, is the concept covered, etc.?
Gathering Information

Based upon your discoveries:

• Consider your research question(s).

• AGAIN, consider HOW they might be answered; if too broad or too narrow, revise.
Gathering Information

Based upon your question(s) & preliminary fact gathering, formulate a HYPOTHESIS

- Informed through:
  - Self reflection
  - Historical context of teaching & learning in your school/program/district
  - Guided by discoveries through investigation of “current “state of affairs” with respect to condition(s) you wish to change or improve

Step 3

Reviewing Related Literature
Reviewing Related Literature

"An examination of journal articles, ERIC, documents, books, and other resources related to your action research project"

(Johnson, 2008, p. 75)
Good Reasons for doing Literature Review:

- You are able to better identify your problem, develop your research design, and develop your overall project (Rousseau and Tam, 1996)
- It can provide opportunities for replication or provide insight for potential research problems (Mertler, 2014)
- Helps prevent the “recreation of the wheel” if a solution already exists (Mertler, 2014)
Reviewing Related Literature

Places to search:

- **Old School**: Books – provide excellent overviews
- **Online**:
  - Google Scholar
  - ProQuest
  - ERIC
  - Scholarly Journals in Gifted Education
Reviewing Related Literature

Step 3: Reviewing Related Literature
TEMPLATE: Planning Your Action Research Literature Review

- This template designed to guide your literature review.
- It groups/categorizes your findings and incorporates the literature into your research for your topic.
Step 4

Developing a Research Plan
Developing a Research Plan

Step 4: Developing a Research Plan

TEMPLATE: Action Research Design Development

This template designed to guide your thoughts as you develop a research plan.

Consideration is given to:

- **Topic**
- **Purpose**
- **Research Question(s)**
- **Type of Data Collection**
- **Specific Data**
- **Description of Research**
- **Research Design**
Developing a Research Plan

Research Designs:

- Qualitative
- Quantitative
- Mixed Method
Developing a Research Plan

• All aspects of your study and its design must be PARALLEL!

• Will your DESIGN seek the CORRECT DATA that will ANSWER YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION???
Developing a Research Plan

Don't Forget INFORMED CONSENT...Discuss with administration to determine if necessary for your research.

School Districts and Universities SHOULD have some form of:

- Human Subject Review Boards
- Institutional Review Boards
Step 5

Implementing Plan & Collecting Data
Implementing Plan & Collecting Data

1. Identify an area of Focus
2. Collect Data
3. Analyze and Interpret Data
4. Develop an Action Plan

Implementing Plan & Collecting Data

Steps 5 & 6: Implementing Plan, Collect Data, & Analyzing the Data

TEMPLATE: Planning for Data Analysis

• Utilize this template to help guide you through a systematic means of planning data collection & subsequent data analysis
Implementing Plan & Collecting Data

Keep a list of what you need for each data collection method.

Make a calendar:
- Dates, times, etc. of data collection
- *(And stick to it)* 😊

Keep a reflective journal during the process.
Step 6

Analyzing the Data
Analyzing the Data

Steps 5 & 6: Implementing Plan, Collect Data, & Analyzing the Data

TEMPLATE: Planning for Data Analysis

- Refer back to this template to help guide you through a systematic means of data analysis
Analyzing the Data

Tips that you may find helpful:

• Play into your own “Learning-Style”
• Post your research question(s) on the wall where you can see it.
• Use colored stick notes to sort out/categorize your ideas
• Keep a notebook or recorder handy for those “aha” moments while driving, etc. (OK, maybe not while driving)
• Have a statistician review your statistical analysis

*OTHER TIPS???*
Step 7

Developing an Action Plan
Developing an Action Plan

SO, NOW WHAT???

Based on the study, what should be done now?

(Mills, 2011)
Developing an Action Plan

Step 7: Developing an Action Plan
TEMPLATE: Sample Steps to an Action Chart

This template is designed to guide thinking about the action research cycle.

Here the opportunity is given to consider what revisions to make, what changes need to occur, or what improvements need to be made so that future actions are meaningful.
Step 8

Sharing & Communicating Results
Sharing and Communicating the Results

Remember this earlier quote?

“A gap is sometimes perceived by educators. There is a need for best practices, but at times the research findings from researchers to practitioners breaks down” (Johnson, 2008).
Sharing and Communicating the Results

Step 8: Writing an Action Research Report

TEMPLATE: Research Report

This template is designed to the writing of an Action Research Report
**Sharing and Communicating the Results**

Website to share the data?

New South Whales Professional Learning and Leadership Development Website
Step 9

Reflecting on the Process
Developing an Action Plan

- Identify an area of Focus
- Collect Data
- Analyze and Interpret Data
- Develop an Action Plan

Putting it all together
So, what is Action Research?

“Action research is not a library project where we learn more about a topic that interests us.

It is not problem-solving in the sense of trying to find out what is wrong, but rather a quest for knowledge about how to improve.

Action research is not about doing research on or about people, or finding all available information on a topic looking for the correct answers. It involves people working to improve their skills, techniques, and strategies.

Action research is not about learning why we do certain things, but rather how we can do things better.”

(Ferrance, 2008)
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