

Negotiating educational action research in the eTwinning classroom.

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Educational Action Research?

- Values-based and values-led form of research
- Aim of enhancing practice and, at the same time, working towards a better, more just, and more equitable world
- The researcher generates their own educational theory from their practice.



Key features of action research

- Research is about yourself along with others
- It is based on the values you hold
- Critical reflection
- Posing a research question
- Taking action
- Data collection
- Sharing your new learning
- Practitioner-based : it is for everyone
- Strengthens our sense of professionalism
- Generate new theory

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- In educational action research, you put yourself as the researcher and educator at the centre of the research.
- You ask questions with ‘I’ as the focus
- You become a researcher as well as practitioner
- You become empowered to enhance your practice and change things for the better.
- The ‘I’ in educational action research is not an egotistical ‘I’ (Whitehead 2014)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OC2rx8vr43w&t=8s&ab_channel=NEARlinireland



Why do action research?

- Change for the better
- Based on real life – draws on your own experience and knowledge
- Take ownership of your practice
- Explore your own identity professionally and sometimes, personally
- Action researchers tend to be collegiate and supportive of one another





Three main stages in the research in practice process

1. The preparation stage
2. The project stage
3. The theory stage

(1) The preparation stage

- Stop; reflect; question; talk to critical friends; think and read. Think about your identity and your professionalism.
- Think about the educational values you hold
- Ask yourself questions like ‘What is my concern?’ and ‘Why am I concerned?’ (McNiff and Whitehead 2011)
- Establish a research question
- Imagine possibilities and decide on a plan of action.
- Make a timeline for your project
- Think about how you might collect data
- Get all necessary permission; gain ethical approval

(2) The Project Stage

- Begin implementing your new strategy
- Gather data and reflect on your work, evaluate your action, review how you see your values in your practice
- Are there indications in the data that you are improving your practice ?
- Establish criteria by which you can evaluate the quality of your work
- Discuss your research with critical friends on an ongoing basis
- Is there evidence to show

(3) Generating theory from practice

- Make an overall claim- share your new learning
- If you cannot see an improvement in practice, do not worry – you will have increased your professional learning in the process
- Be rigorous- show your integrity and be honest
- Offer descriptions and explanations of what you have done – this is part of the theory generation process
- Write a report
- Share the story of your learning,
- Show the potential significance of your work- and move on to a new cycle again. New questions are important



Model for
doing an
action
research
project

What is my concern or my area of interest?

Why am I concerned or interested?

How do I show the situation as it is and as it develops?

What can I do about it? What will I do about it?

How do I test the validity of my claims to knowledge?

How do I check that any conclusions I come to are reasonably fair and accurate?

How do I modify my ideas and practices in light of the evaluation?

(McNiff and Whitehead 2011)



‘What is my concern?’ can be rephrased as:

- What am I interested in?
- What am I passionate about?
- What am I curious about?
- What puzzles me about my work?
- What aspect of my practice would I like to explore more fully?
- What irritates me about my practice?



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Results:

<https://www.mentimeter.com/app/presentation/6853f2d7016a87f15523e425b802bef0/5355f9ee41d>

Action research and your eTwinning project?

- Think about possibilities around eTwinning
- Ask yourself how you might do some research on your work with eTwinning.





Linking eTwinning to action research

- Action research for any aspect of your practice
- Explore your interest in your eTwinning project...why are you interested in it?
- Why are you interested in eTwinning in general?
- Investigate how the project is going
- What are you learning from the process? What are your student learning?
- Innovative project that involves collaboration



eTwinning

Possibilities of
eTwinning and
action
research?

Would you like to research collaboratively with your e-Twinning partner?

Could you align your project aims with those of your eTwinning partner?

How will you align your values with those of partner schools?

How will you respond to people with different aims and values?

How might you include parents and the wider community?



Doing action research on your eTwinning project

- Stop, pause and reflect on your work as a teacher
- Think about how you might do some research about e-Twinning
- Tell you e-Twinning partner about your research project
- Develop a heightened sense of awareness about your work.
- Do some professional reading
- Develop some critical friends



Action research writing tasks

- Begin to write a reflective journal
- Play with ideas around your values are and why they are important to you



Forming a research question

- Ask yourself ‘What am I concerned/interested/curious about?’
- Ask yourself ‘Why am I concerned/interested/curious?’
- Place ‘I’ at the heart of the question
- Ensure that your research focus is small and manageable
- Ensure that it is a debatable topic
- Connect it with the values you hold
- Connect it with your eTwinning Project

My Journal

That's Good Ideas & More



Ongoing tasks for duration of the research process

- Continue to write a reflective journal. Read back over earlier entries, and see if your ideas have changed. Check if you can see your values being embodied in your practice.
- Reflect on and naming values
- Read
- Talk and share your ideas



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(McNiff and Whitehead 2011)

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Why am I
concerned
or interested?



Results link:

<https://www.mentimeter.com/app/presentation/96cf263616e70f056625e89da85f034f/ea23fa04f90>

Data analysis

- Think about what your new learning is.
- Think about the **significance** of your project in terms of your educational influence in your own thinking, the thinking of others and its potential significance for broader policy and practice.



Writing up a formal research report

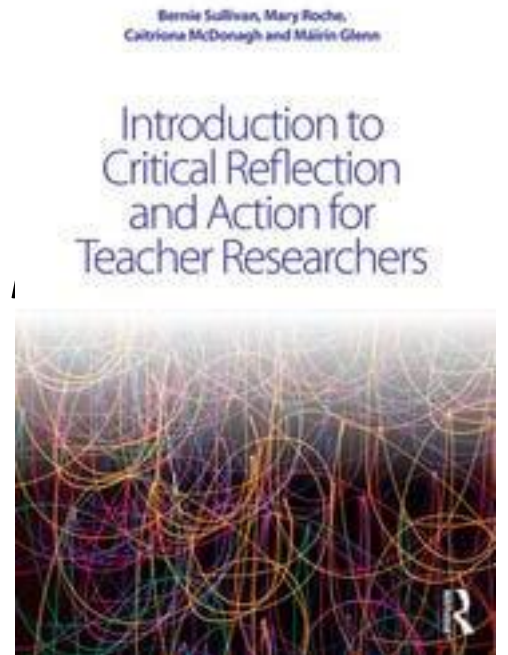
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature review
- Methodology
- Findings and discussion of findings [the project]
- Conclusion.
- Reference list

Sharing your research with others

- Decide whether you want to share your research formally in an academic setting or in a more informal setting.
- Informally: Share with colleagues in your school or district.
- AR network such as NEARI or AR+.
- Consider establishing your own blog about your research. You can also podcast your research.
- Formally: Consider submitting your research to eTwinning, to an academic journal such as EJOLTs, Educational Action Research or AR Journal etc. IPDA or CARN have journals for people who are new researchers
- Educational conferences

Recommended reading

- *Action research for professional development: Concise advice for new action researchers* by Jean McNiff available: <https://www.jeanmcniff.com/ar-booklet.asp>
- *Introduction to Critical Reflection and Action for Teacher* by Bernie Sullivan, Máirín Glenn, Mary Roche and Caitriona McDonagh



Any questions
or comments?

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