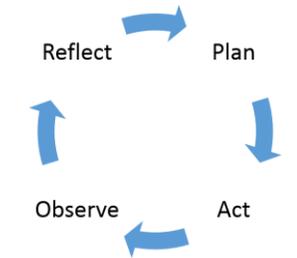


# ACTION RESEARCH

## OSU'S CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

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Action research is a systematic progressive process of meaningful investigation to improve an identified problem within one's own teaching practices. "Action research is characterized as research that is done **by** teachers **for** themselves" (Mertler, 2014, p.4). As a critical self-reflective process it may involve the individual working alone or collaboratively with other instructors in a community of practice (CoP). Action research aims to identify problems and then produce an iterative plan of action with strategies to strive for best practice. There are four basic stages in the cyclical action research process: reflect, plan, act, observe, and then reflect to continue through the cycle (Dickens & Watkins, 1999).



As multiple strategies are attempted and analyzed by the instructor, or with CoP peers, evidences converge (also known as data triangulation) to identify if the new strategies are beneficial. Data triangulation increases the validity and credibility of the results which helps to provide information that leads the researcher to another cycle of reflection and the development of a new plan of action. As these steps are taken the instructor-researcher is able to identify the quality of their own work and substantiate the action(s) they have taken to develop their practice within their unique teaching situation.

Action research is not typically generalizable to other populations, but it is possible that the evidences that an instructor-researcher gathers have the potential to influence other instructors who practice in similar situations. If you anticipate that you will publish your findings it is essential that you gain permission from OSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before commencing the research. Click on the following link to find out what research must be approved by the IRB, and to learn about IRB policies and procedures: <http://research.oregonstate.edu/irb>

If in doubt, contact the IRB office directly @ (541) 737-8008.

### References

Dickens, L., & Watkins, K. (1999). Action research: rethinking Lewin. *Management Learning*, 30(2), 127-140.  
doi: 10.1177/1350507699302002

Mertler, C.A. (2014). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage.

For more information:

Linder, K. E., Elek, E. D., & Calderon, L. (2014). SoTL and the Institutional Review Board: Considerations before Navigating the Application Process for Classroom Research in Higher Education. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 14(2), 1-14. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v14i2.4217>

Free Open Online Course, *Action Research Tutorial* with activity templates by Margaret Riel (2015):

<http://ccar.wikispaces.com/1+Overview+of+Action+ResearchMargaret%20Riel>

<http://ccar.wikispaces.com/file/view/AR%20Tutorial%20Activity%20Templates.pdf/550773646/AR%20Tutorial%20Activity%20Templates.pdf>

American Educational Research Association (AERA) Special Interest Group: Action Research

<https://sites.google.com/site/aeraarsig/>

Action Research

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHiZdh85R3w>

Action Research Made Simple

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg83f72\\_6Gw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg83f72_6Gw)