

# ACTION RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, A STRATEGY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE



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UNIVERSIDAD DE COLIMA

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in the Field of Education  
A Strategy for Professional Development  
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# Action Research in the Field of Education

## A Strategy for Professional Development and Change

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# Introduction

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According to Feldman (2007) and Feldman *et al.* (2008), AR is about asking questions, learning, acting, and enhancing the social context in which people operate. AR is a strategy for understanding and improving practice, as well as generating knowledge. It is a process that helps you as a practitioner build a profound awareness of what you are doing as an insider researcher, thus it has both a personal and a social goal (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). For Burns (2005) AR is a technique for generating meaning and understanding in difficult social contexts, as well as increasing the quality of human interactions and practices within those situations. AR is a method that encourages practitioners to ask questions about theory and practice, as well as to evaluate their own teaching through systematic inquiry. It has also been defined as a type of collective reflective inquiry in which participants in social circumstances work together to improve the logic and fairness of their own social or educational activities, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which they occur (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). For several of the attributes mentioned before, AR has become increasingly popular around the world as a form of professional learning and development, specifically in education. The literature on AR and its connection to the field of education is examined in this article. It explains the effective growth of AR in educational environments and how it aided teachers in coming to view themselves as insider researchers. A number of historical AR models are also shown. Based on current research findings, the paper advocates the use of AR in the fields of professional development, knowledge grounded in practice, and the improvement of classroom work.

# Development of Action Research in Educational Contexts

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Burns (2005) claims that the modern seeds of AR in educational contexts can be found in the work of (Dewey, 1929). Dewey's arguments against the separation of theory and practice were profoundly influential in educational enquiry in the first part of the 20th century.

AR was tested within the industry field, but it has also had an impact on other areas of society such as education (Jefferson, 2014). Kurt Lewin is often cited as the creator of the term AR. A deeply held belief of Lewin was that democratic workplaces foster employees who retain possession of their work, which raises both confidence and efficiency (Hendricks, 2013). Lewin proved that through AR the development of social relationships of groups and between groups to sustain communication and cooperation was possible (Adelman, 1993).

His idea of improving social formation by involving participants in a cyclical process of fact finding, planning, exploratory action and valuation was an alternative way of approaching research (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). Exploring social issues such as discrimination against minority groups, Lewin proposes AR as an extension of a further step from field experiments and the ones conducted in a laboratory (Maksimovic, 2010). Adelman (1993) explains that AR was used to overtake systematic inquiry for participants to reach greater effectiveness through democratic participation, providing opportunities to ordinary people to participate in collective research on common troubles through discussion, decision, and action.

According to Somekh and Zeichner (2009) Stephen Corey, a leading voice for promoting AR in education in the United States of America, conducted different projects to improve the work environment



within schools across the United States. Identifying solutions often required teachers to work with other teachers in the school, making AR a cooperative endeavor. This led to the development of the method known as cooperative/collaborative AR (Jefferson, 2014). Cooperative AR “encourages participants to share common problems and to work cooperatively as a research community to examine their existing assumptions, values and beliefs within the sociopolitical cultures of the institutions in which they work” (Burns, 2009, p. 13).

Corey advised teachers to research their own work to improve it. Before that, the only researchers were the proficient outsiders who objectively researched social situations. However, Corey believed teachers should research their own work scientifically therefore they could assess their choices and decisions, amend, modify their plans and so the cycle would continue. Corey maintained that teachers’ research is a cooperative activity which would support democratic values (Cunningham, 1999).

During this time Lawrence Stenhouse initiated the teacher-as-researcher movement in the United Kingdom (Jefferson, 2014). His work with curriculum development focused on working with teachers as researchers. A key principle was to prepare teachers to conduct case studies in their classrooms with the purpose of improving their practice and eventually influencing educational policy. Stenhouse (1981) emphasizes.

Classrooms are the ideal laboratories for the testing of educational theory. From the point of view of the researcher whose interest lies in naturalistic observation, the teacher is a potential participant observer in classrooms and schools. From whatever standpoint we view research, we must find it difficult to deny the teacher is surrounded by rich research opportunities (pp. 9-10).

Stenhouse (1983) believed that teachers could take responsibility for themselves and their actions, thus by adopting a research posture, they were able to emancipate themselves from the controlled situation they could find themselves in. Stenhouse assumed that teachers could assess their situation. By doing so, they would be involved in meaningful professional development and become more autonomous in their decisions about their own practice. Stenhouse asserted “The essence of emancipation as I conceive it is intellectual, moral and spiritual auto-

nomy which we recognise when we eschew paternalism and the role of authority and hold ourselves obliged to appeal to judgment” (Stenhouse, 1983, p. 163).

Elliot (1991) a colleague of Stenhouse extended and transformed the concept of the teacher-researcher. The reason for AR was to enhance students’ education, based on the assumption that any attempt to introduce change into an educational context should be underpinned by generations of theory from attempts to change practice in the school. *i.e.*, theory derived from practice and constituted by a set of abstractions from it. Elliott asserted that “theories were implicit in all practices, and theorizing consisted of articulating those tacit theories and subjecting them to critique in free and open professional discourse” (p. 6). Elliot’s thoughts about educational change through AR have contributed to develop a sound theory of teacher professional knowledge and teacher professional development through AR (Elliot, 2007).

Stenhouse also believed that professional literature was barely worth writing if teachers were incapable of testing it. Stenhouse’s viewpoint was that both researchers and teachers had to examine it. Stenhouse’s point of view was that researchers had to make research meaningful; and consequently, incorporating educational research into the practitioners’ work environment was essential (Stenhouse, 1981).

Lawrence Stenhouse also influenced the work of several scholars at Deakin University in Australia in the late 1970s. The implementation of AR was influenced by political context in which much curriculum work was being done around issues of educational equity. Researchers worked on school-based projects based on Lewin’s spiral of planning, taking action, observing and reflecting as core elements to improve educational understanding and practice, as well as their contexts (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988).

After working on a historical study on the field of AR, Noffke (2009) provides three dimensions which AR can have: professional, personal, and political. AR has been seen as one way to enhance the professional quality and status of professions. Regarding the personal dimension of AR is the idea that AR has an impact on the personal growth and development of those who engage in it. AR has been related to social problems and politics such as the development of collaborative processes, locally developed curriculum, and democratic processes in schools. Other

dimensions of politics which have been linked with AR are gender and racial equality as well as feminism. Somekh and Zeichner (2009) comment that Noffke's work is crucial in establishing the wide range of the AR territory.

McNiff (2013) recognises that AR has become a preferred methodology for professions and disciplines, on the understanding that practitioners need to build an evidence base to show the validity of what they are doing as competent researchers. The author also claims that these days it is becoming normal and, in some cases, expected that academics study their practices; something that was not common years ago. McNiff (2013) asserts that

Significant features are that the academics regard their practice not as simply communicating subject matter, but also as accepting pedagogical and epistemic responsibility for their work; and not only about teaching, but more about inspiring a mindset towards life and lifelong learning by practitioners across the profession (p. 5).

The recognition of the value of practical knowledge instead of the dominant conceptual, abstract forms of knowledge, as well as the fact that many people working in formal academic settings implement AR, have placed AR in a similar position to “dominant abstract forms of theory” (McNiff, 2013, p. 4).

# Action Research Models

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Many academics have proposed models for the AR procedure. The models appear to be distinct because AR is a continuous process, yet they all have many basic elements. For instance, all AR models start with the identification of a key issue or subject related to existing practice, followed by gathering and then organizing data. At the conclusion, something is done, which provides support for the beginning of a new cycle. The examples below demonstrate the complexity and simplicity of several models, with some models appearing to be more complex than others (Mertler, 2009).

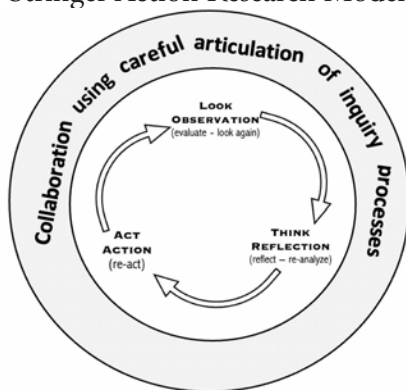
## *Stringer*

Stringer's (2007) approach to action research is grounded on the idea that everyday knowledge of practitioners is more important than knowledge acquired from top-down administrative policies and procedures. Action research, in Stringer's opinion, aims to give a voice to regular, capable, and experienced employees who are typically ignored while making decisions concerning their workplace. Action research, according to Stringer, aims to uncover and portray people's experiences by offering stories that help others interpret problems and occurrences in their daily lives (Stringer, 2007). A collaborative method of inquiry or investigation, Stringer's model of action research gives people the tools they need to take deliberate action to address particular issues. Stringer offers a straightforward action research technique that uses the look, think, act framework to provide a simple yet effective structure, allowing people to start their inquiries simply and add detail to their operations as the complexity of the problems rises.

Although, action research shares many characteristics with the common problem-solving and planning techniques used by educators in the course of their regular classroom and school work, Stringer (2004, p. 10) emphasizes that “action research’s strength lies in its systematic execution of carefully articulated processes of inquiry.”

The look, think, act paradigm is repeated continuously, enabling the researcher to monitor an ongoing teaching and learning process. The model can follow a linear configuration to demonstrate that certain phases of the research are recurred repeatedly. According to Stringer (2007), practitioners who use the model learn specifics about their everyday tasks as they go through a process of observation, reflection, and action. They will evaluate (look again), reflect (reanalyze), and re-act after each set of activities (modify their actions) (see figure 1).

Figure 1  
Stringer Action Research Model



Note: This figure represents the interpretation of the authors of the Action Research model presented by Stringer (2007).

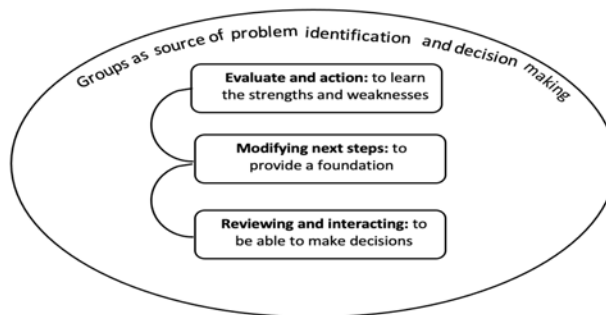
### *Kurt Lewin*

The idea behind AR is typically credited to Kurt Lewin. Lewin was highly interested in assisting minority groups in their use of AR to assert their rights to independence, equality, and cooperation. Lewin urged marginalized communities to resist colonization and exploration forces. Lewin endorsed the use of social science for the resolution of social disputes. Lewin used a procedure wherein groups were used for problem

identification and decision-making. The group makes decisions after looking into these issues, monitoring, and noting any consequences. The progress is then periodically reviewed. The group would decide when a certain plan or tactic had been used up, failed, or would bring up any newly discovered issues during these conversations (Adelman, 1993).

Lewin used a model that has recently been associated with the cycle of AR; it entails evaluating the action to allow planners to learn about its strengths and weaknesses, informing the following step and providing a foundation for modifying the planned change overall, then reviewing and interacting with this overall cycle (Lewin, 1945) (see figure 2). Lewin made it quite evident that AR could guide social policy and behavior.

Figure 2  
Kurt Lewin Action Research Model



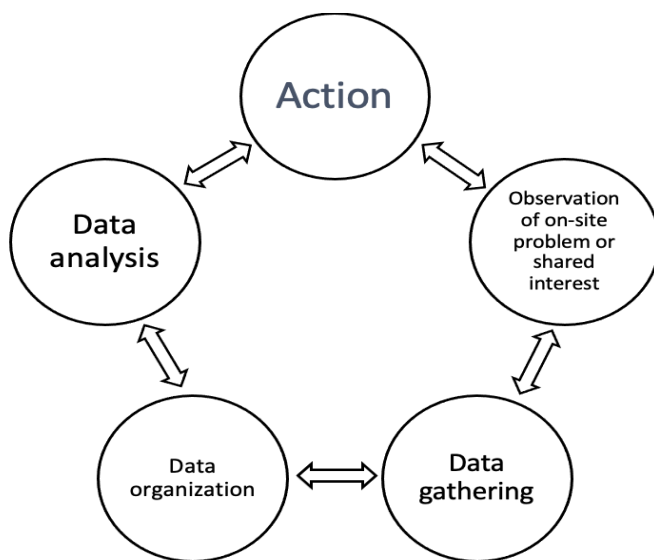
Note: This figure represents the interpretation of the authors of the Action Research model presented by Lewin (1945).

### *Calhoun*

In order to acquire information and make decisions about students at a school, Calhoun (1994) offers a five-step Action Research Cycle model. The five steps of Calhoun's routines, which he refers to as motions through the AR model, start with the observation of an on-site problem of shared interest; it proceeds to the gathering of data; followed by the organizing of the data; and the analysis of the data pertinent to the area of interest (see figure 3). Based on the information gathered, its organization, and analysis, action is then done. It is important to note that

phases naturally overlap one another, and actions are frequently reversed and amended before or while moving forward on this model. The procedure is usually repeated, and Calhoun claims that it can be used as a formative assessment of institutional activities.

Figure 3  
Calhoun Action Research Model



Note: This figure represents the interpretation of the authors of the Action Research model presented by Calhoun (1994).

### *Participatory Action Research*

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is another AR methodology which is considered a conjunction of multiple traditions which might be originally linked to Lewin and Freire. Bachmann (2001) introduced PAR with the goal of bridging the gap between agricultural theory and practice. The author looked into how to combine science and practice and discovered that PAR was an effective method. Bachmann embraced AR Lewin's spiral-step methodology, which includes action planning, action taking, and action assessment. Gained insights into complex circumstances gradually increase with each step. The steps of information collection, action planning, action evaluation, and re-planning for a new cycle considering the insights gained in the previous cycle of the spiral make up

the research process. Re-planning results in a new cycle of actions and evaluations as the process proceeds (see figure 4).

Figure 4

#### Participatory Action Research Model



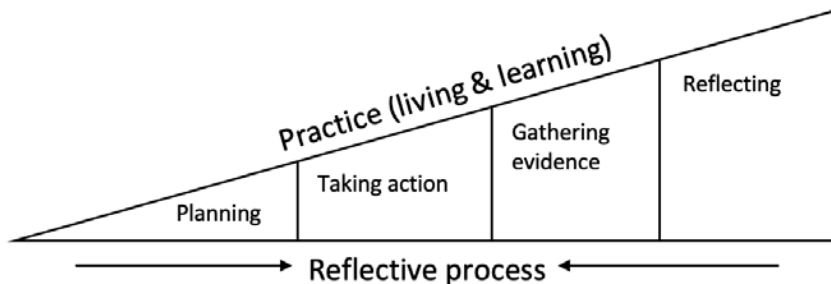
Note: This figure represents the interpretation of the authors of the Participatory Action Research model (2001).

#### *Riel*

The participant goes through four processes in each cycle of Riel's (2007) progressive problem-solving through AR model: planning, taking action, gathering evidence, and reflecting. According to Riel, AR offers a method for learning from and through one's practice by guiding the development of progressive problem solving through a number of reflective stages. Action researchers get a thorough grasp of the complicated interactions between many social and environmental influences across time. Due to the dynamic nature of these factors, AR is a process of putting one's theory into practice or approaching teaching from a perspective of both living and learning (see figure 5).



Figure 5  
Riel Action Research Model



Note: This figure represents the interpretation of the authors of the Action Research model presented by Riel (2007).

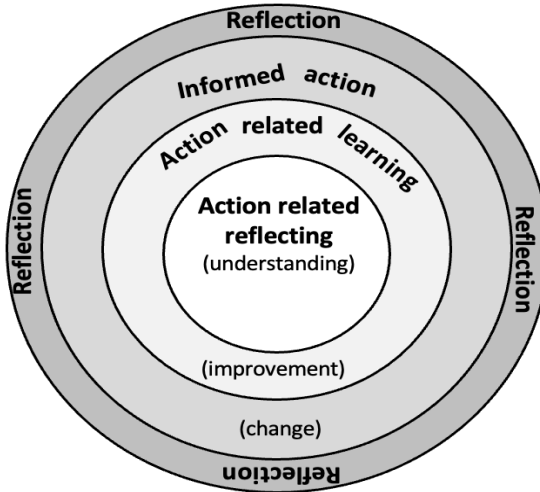
### *Piggot-Irvine*

The interactive research process described by Piggot-Irvine (2002) AR model incorporates cycles of action-related reflection, action-related learning, and new, informed action, which is subsequently the subject of reflection. Cycles of experience learning are also included in the concept. The cycles involve inquiries and thoughts about experience or action, which result in observation and the acquisition of new knowledge, which is then put to the test in novel circumstances. Then comes another cycle of learning, which is followed by a fresh, tangible experience.

The primary objectives of these learning cycles are understanding, improvement, and change of a specific event or circumstance. The methodology focuses on research done within the participants' own organizations. By having practitioners conduct research on their own practices, the paradigm, according to Piggot-Irvine (2002), strives to lessen the gaps between theory and practice.

The models that the various researchers use are likely irrelevant because they share a number of characteristics. They engage in problem-based inquiry, research, data analysis and interpretation, and action that fuels the start of a new cycle. When using AR, researchers frequently discover that they need to repeat some stages repeatedly or in a different order (Mertler, 2009). According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1998), the general action research process used in this study consists of a four-stage process, which will be covered in more detail in the next section.

Figure 6  
Piggot-Irvine Action Research Model



Note: This figure represents the interpretation of the authors of the Action Research model presented by Piggot-Irvine (2002).

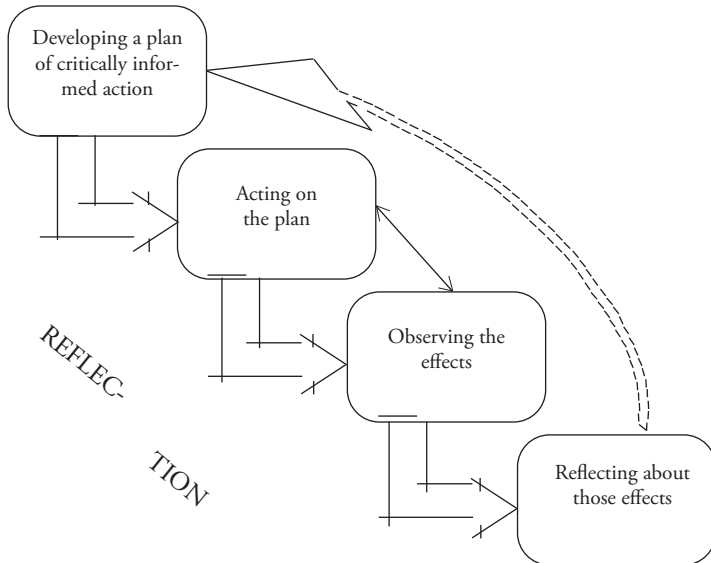
### *Kemmis and McTaggart*

Although longer and more detailed descriptions of the phases in AR have been suggested above, Kemmis and MacTaggart's (1988) model is the most well-known (Burns, 2005). They contend that AR happens through a dynamic, complementary process that includes key moments such as developing a plan of critically informed action to improve what is already occurring, acting to put the plan into practice, observing the effects of the critically informed action in the context in which it occurs, reflecting on these effects as the basis for further planning, further critically informed action, and so on, through a series of stages (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988).

Investigating strategies that could result in improvements by taking particular actions are a necessary step in developing a plan. As the moment of observation can occur while action is also taking place, action and observation are two steps that may go together. Reflection occurs throughout the action as well; its goal is to understand the significance of all data, frequently with the aid of a conceptual framework drawn from the literature (Maxwell, 2003).

Figure 7

Kemmis and McTaggart Action Research Model



Note: This figure represents the interpretation of the authors of the Action Research model presented by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988).

# Action Research as a Form of Professional Development in Education

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AR has become increasingly popular around the world as a form of professional learning, specifically in education. One of the reasons why teachers started to participate as researchers was because traditional educational researchers have a tendency to impose abstract research findings on schools and teachers with little or no attention paid to local variations (Anderson, 2002). As Mertler (2014, p. 14) reports “I believe that, due to this continued imposition of more traditional research findings, there is a real need for the increased practice of teacher-initiated, classroom-based AR”.

The process goes through ontological moments in which practitioners critique their practice, recognise what is good and build on strengths, as well as understand what needs attention and to take action to improve it (McNiff, 2013). Producing insights about their own teaching practice is through a process of developing lessons or assessing the learning of students with careful consideration to educational theory, existing research, and practical experience, along with the analysis of the effect of the lesson on the learning of students (Parson and Brown, 2002).

According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010) AR has become increasingly popular around the world as a professional learning tool for practitioners. It has also been recognized as a model for professional growth. Furlong and Salisbury (2005) found that taking part in AR often led to teachers becoming more confident and knowledgeable, by collecting and using evidence, and learning about their own learning. Some educational

researchers claim that teachers who conduct AR are better informed about their field.

Action research as professional development has been widely documented. Saeb *et al.* (2021) investigated the impact of action research on the professional development of EFL teachers. It also looked into the difficulties and issues instructors encountered while conducting their action research and the support systems that were required in this regard. Although, participants faced challenges when conducting research, the results showed that action research helped teachers grow professionally by increasing their awareness of their roles as teachers and of their students' needs, giving them the chance to reflect on their practice, boosting their professional confidence, developing a sense of leadership and autonomy, and fostering a positive classroom environment.

Cambareri (2021) reports the findings of a mixed-methods action research study that looked at the impact of teaching teachers on how to conduct action research in the classroom for professional growth. In this study, teachers identified problems in their practice and went through the action research cycle to find solutions. It describes a study of educators who started action research in their own classrooms and learning environments. Analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data show that action research projects led to beneficial improvements in both teacher behavior and in the learning and accomplishments of their pupils. Further analysis of the study's data provided a better grasp of the need for persistent change, the importance of professional development, and expectations for professional development that includes those traits.

By presenting a quick overview of action research in Malaysian teacher training institutions, Amin *et al.* (2019) investigated the application of the actions research component in teacher education there. The discussion then turned to problems and difficulties with the curriculum, instructional strategies, and goals. The study also covered the justification for including an action research component in teacher preparation courses. The findings indicated that the lack of exposure to action research during the initial stages of training, the curriculum's lack of practical content, and the objectives' potential for generality and vagueness all hindered the implementation of action research. The

study suggested doing action research workshops and training earlier in the training program as well as introducing additional hands-on learning opportunities.

Osmanović-Zajić, Mamutović, and Maksimović (2021) present the results of a study where a group of primary and secondary school teachers are the main beneficiaries of this research. The research reports an analysis of the teachers' attitudes toward methodological education, cognition and metacognition in the classroom, reflective practice, science education, and lifelong learning in the context of action research. Participants in this study were 1,021 instructors from the Republic of Serbia. According to the research findings, there were statistically significant differences between the respondents' responses in relation to the independent research factors, including the number of professional development seminars attended, the teaching experience, and the education cycle. The importance of action research is demonstrated by the fact that it is the teachers who fix the issues, not academics or researchers who are not actively involved in the classroom. As a result, this research helps to increase teachers' motivation and support as they work to elevate their classroom activities and successes to the status of scientific research.

# Action Research Generates Knowledge Grounded in Practice

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Traditional scientific and social scientific researchers usually see knowledge as a single or detached element found in literature. “Knowledge therefore becomes separated from the people who create it” (McNiff, 2013, p. 28). According to Johnson (2008) there is a gap between what researchers find and report as a result of their investigations, and what really happens within the field of work. For instance, what occurs every single day in school classrooms, teacher’s points of view, the teaching-learning process, or the practical challenges are not often reflected in research findings.

Support comes from Whitehead (2009) who received responses from a group of local teachers he had been working with, after presenting them with a research report about local curriculum development based on current theories. Whitehead explained to the teachers what they had been doing regarding curriculum innovation, teaching and learning process, and evaluation. Teachers agreed the report might be satisfactory to Whitehead’s academic colleagues, “but they could not see themselves in the report. They could not recognise the explanation in terms of the explanations they gave for their practice in working to improve their pupil’s learning” (p. 91).

Whitehead (2009) claims that it is a misapprehension to think that the disciplines of education, individually or in combination, could sufficiently explain an individual’s educational influence in their own learning and in the learning of others. Hirst (1983) argues that many

of the educational theory's operational principles "will be of their nature generalizations from practical experience and have as theory justification the results of individual activities and practice" (p. 18).

This argument has a resonance with what Johnson (2008) acknowledges about AR in the way that AR creates knowledge based on enquiries conducted within specific and often practical contexts. Somekh (2006) also recognizes that knowledge that is produced through AR "in collaboration with practitioners is grounded in practice" (p. 94). Sexton and Lu (2009) suggest that actionable knowledge is produced in "nature and is generated by, and for, a particular social setting" (p. 686).

According to Elliot (1989) "developing self-reflection about teaching experiences can turn an AR process into an exercise in 'ideological deconstruction'" (p. 3). This means that the teachers' experiences of class research can be grounded in trying to facilitate their professional development and not in theoretical inputs by teaching experts. Support comes from Ahmad and Sajjad (2011), who claim that native Anglophone writers lead the ELT community in research for innovations and improvements in teaching English and that their findings typically tend to be universal. However, they add that it is impossible for such studies to have universal application due to local constraints.

Ginsberg (2022) examined how action research helped future teachers develop their own knowledge and that of their students', as well as how their inquiry affected how they perceived the way teachers construct meaning and produce knowledge. Using critical teacher inquiry as a framework allowed for a critical lens that prioritized the need and importance of viewing teachers' inquiry in the classroom as a means of upending both the structures that support inequality in the classroom and fighting against the hierarchy that values scholarly generated knowledge over teacher generated knowledge for education. The conclusions of the study backed up the idea that action research is a useful tool for preservice teachers to implement, develop, and interpret their classroom inquiries as well as a way to foster a critical teacher inquiry posture.

Wyatt (2011) reports on a teacher education course run by a British university for the local Ministry of Education in a Middle Eastern country, where AR was a key component. The researcher was interested



in finding out what teachers achieved through AR and potential benefits emerging from engaging in AR. As a result of the enquiry some grounded knowledge came to light. For instance, teachers were able to address important concerns that related to the contexts they worked in, they engaged in behaviors that helped others, and they disseminated their research. Additionally, participants believed that AR helped improve their work environment, and aided them to develop their research skills.

# Action Research Can Help Improve Teaching

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It has been repeatedly mentioned above that one of the main reasons why AR projects are undertaken is because they help improve the work environment of participants. This has been confirmed by several scholars. Glassman *et al.* (2012) suggest that AR is essentially a social-education-based intervention for communities dealing with difficult, deep-rooted problems. Carr and Kemmis (1986) also claim that AR is seen as a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices.

McTaggart (1994) mentions that a distinctive feature of participatory AR is that those affected by planned changes have the primary responsibility for deciding on courses of critically informed action which seem likely to lead to improvement. Meyer (2000) maintains that AR's strength lies in its focus on generating solutions to practical problems. Winter and Munn-Giddings (2002) state that AR represents the study of social situations carried out by those involved in that situation in order to improve both their practice and the quality of their understanding.

Somekh (2006) affirms that participating teachers could improve their own practices and contribute to the larger educational system. Carver and Klein (2013) comment that AR is a useful tool for supporting continuous improvement in teaching programmes. Borko *et al.* (2007) point out that through AR unique opportunities for reflection and improvement of the practice are created.

Different studies confirm that AR is the motivation for changes in teaching. Rebolledo and Bullock (2020a) present the research accounts of nine teachers from Mexico who became teacher-researchers to improve their teaching. Along with 14 other educators, they fostered their professional growth while conducting their own in-class research projects. In each instance, teachers selected subjects to further their understanding of a problem or a circumstance that, in their opinion, could be improved. After investigating these problems or circumstances, they developed an action plan based on what they had learned. Making home films, coming up with an exercise, devising a worksheet or rubric, or introducing new approaches or strategies were some of the more innovative and creative acts that were taken.

39 teacher educators at Mexico's Teacher Training Colleges (*Escuelas Normales*) public education system have engaged in exploratory action research and they have systematically recorded their findings for publication, which confirm the usefulness of action research for improving the language teaching process. The following are a few of the changes teachers made to improve their practice. For instance, one of the teachers observed that pupils were struggling with reading comprehension, so she presented some strategies. She discovered that her pupils had trouble comprehending books on unfamiliar subjects. Also, they had trouble locating the accurate definition of words in the dictionary, which affected their reading comprehension and speed. As a result, it was challenging for them to finish the activities, especially when it came to responding to open-ended questions that required them to voice their ideas. Regarding the kinds of assistance necessary, Ana discovered that her pupils relied on visual aids to help them understand the texts. Also, they stated that one of the things they enjoyed the most was playing reading comprehension games. She made the decision to alter a few of her lessons. She based each modification on the data she collected from her pupils.

One more teacher expressed that his pupils insisted on communicating in Spanish no matter how many times he went through classroom language at the beginning of the academic year, how many mini-conversation exercises he introduced in class, or how much effort he made to use English in the classroom. He was perplexed by that and was impatient since it seemed as though his teaching abilities and tire-

less efforts were in vain. He collected information from both students and colleagues to find out what was happening. He analyzed students and colleagues' responses and found out that nine pupils exhibit unfavorable attitudes toward speaking English because they worry about pronouncing words incorrectly or are anxious about making mistakes and being misunderstood. Sixteen students favor team and large-group activities. He was surprised by this because he had assumed that they favored pair work. He was already offering a great deal of assistance, such as by making references to prior knowledge, giving hints to remind them of useful language, and using examples. Pupils primarily spoke the target language, but they occasionally also spoke Spanish and the language of the classroom. Finally, he developed suggestions for encouraging student speaking in the classroom based on the findings of the investigation. During the course of ten lessons, he put these modifications into practice.

One more amplified a method that is actually being used successfully in the classroom. In order to get to the point where teaching grammar was a student-centered process, another teacher engaged in actions that included employing task-based learning to teach language systems, assigning responsibilities in group activities, and using genuine resources. Another teacher made judgments, which she then promptly put into practice with activities and tactics that catered to the desires, sentiments, and wants of her students. One more made certain adjustments to the way she handled schoolwork, and she saw improvements in moods of her pupils as a result (Rebolledo and Bullock, 2020b).

Manfra (2019) focuses on action research studies in the fields of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The researcher is based on the idea that knowing how instructors learn is a prerequisite for improving teaching practices. It concentrates specifically on using action research to comprehend changes in Teacher Pedagogical Topic Knowledge, Disciplinary Inquiry, and Critical Pedagogy. Findings imply that, to view teaching as inquiry, we must move beyond the current conceptualizations of Teacher Learning as process-product, cognitive, and situational Teachers should take an active role in education research, as shown by successful attempts to influence practice through action research.

In summary, AR participants are able to undertake systematic inquiry in the search of a learning process in order to create social change within their communities. AR often leads to teachers becoming more confident and knowledgeable, collecting and using evidence, and learning about their own learning. Teachers who conduct AR are better informed about their field. AR can be conducted by practitioners and not only by researchers whose research findings leave a gap between what they find and report as a result of their investigations, and what really happens within the field of work.

On the other hand, AR creates knowledge based on enquiries and grounded in practice conducted within specific and often practical contexts. As a result of all this, AR is seen as a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve their practices, generate solutions to practical problems, and benefit the curriculum.

# Summary

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This research paper begins with the analysis of the work of leading scholars in the development of AR. Kurt Lewin recognized as a referent of the AR movement, believed that ordinary people could democratically participate through a spiraling process that includes reflection and inquiry with an emphasis on improving work environments and dealing with social norms (Jefferson, 2014).

AR started in the field of industry, but quickly expanded to other fields such as education, where it underwent a prolific evolution. The involvement of teachers in the solving of common problems turned AR into a cooperative endeavor and the teacher- as-researcher movement, promoted by Lawrence Stenhouse, prepared teachers to conduct case studies in their classrooms with the purpose of improving their practice. The work of Stenhouse influenced educational institutions to conduct AR to help understand the existing situation and to improve the current practice (Stenhouse, 1981).

Three key theoretical concepts of AR are examined with the purpose of informing this article. AR fosters the participation of people (teachers) who are not researchers, AR leads to work environment improvement and AR promotes the production of sound knowledge. The evaluation of claims made by scholars is illustrated with the analysis of several empirical studies, which broaden understanding and serve as a foundation for the data collection and analysis phases of an AR study. Theorists and empirical studies both claim that AR is an alternative option for practitioners and not necessarily specialists in the field of research, to get involved in research activities (Adelman, 1993; McNiff, 2013; Jefferson, 2014; Mertler, 2014).

In summary, there is a body of literature which supports the idea that AR has had positive effects on different areas of education. Scholars in the area of AR have claimed that this method provides practitioners, teachers for example, with opportunities for conducting projects which contribute to the improvement of their work environment, and also encourage reflection, which ultimately can produce knowledge of the existing situation (Whitehead, 2009; Wyatt, 2011; Salm, 2014).

In a sense then, AR, like any other field of knowledge, is in the process of development since no finite understanding of the concept is possible. Further research is needed to discover if the different features of AR can be observable. Furthermore, empirical evidence will contribute to the understanding of this method, and probably suggest possible routes of development.

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*Action Research in the Field of Education, a Strategy for Professional Development and Change*, from Fernando Manuel Peralta Castro and María Magdalena Cass Zubiría, it was published in Dirección General de Publicaciones of the Universidad de Colima, avenida Universidad 333, Colima, Colima, México, [www.ucol.mx](http://www.ucol.mx). The digital edition was completed in august, 2023. The Adobe Garamond Pro family was used for typesetting. The size of the book is 22.5 cm by 16 cm wide. Editorial Program: Eréndira Cortés Ventura. Administrative management: Inés Sandoval Venegas. English proofreader: Yul Ceballos. Cover design: Lizeth Maricruz Vázquez Viera. Interior design and Editorial care: Myriam Cruz Calvario.

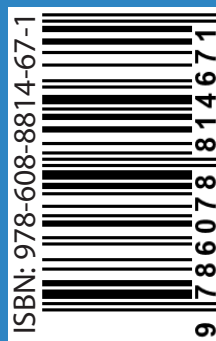
This desk-based research has the goal of illustrating, by way of a detailed review of literature dealing with Action Research (AR), a method which has been used to solve diverse problems in diverse scenarios and diverse fields of knowledge. This document examines literature on AR and its connection to the field of Education; it explains how a significant development is produced in educational situations and how it helps professors to see themselves as researchers. In the publication, various models are also shown and it highlights the use of AR in fields of professional development, knowledge based on practice, and the improvement of educational work based on findings of present day works of research.

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