

Enquiries

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Faculty of Education

Guiding tomorrow



Action Research Unit

What is action research?

In principle, action research means developing attitude, looking at any educational problem and saying, 'I can do something about this'.

In reality, it is often far from easy. There are challenges to overcome: political-logistical difficulties such as under-resourcing, large classes and intense poverty; cultural attitudes, such as the undervaluing of teachers, the bad press they receive, and their resultant deepening demoralisation; and the self-perception on the part of many teachers that they are inadequate, helpless, and unable to do anything about the situation.

Action research can enable teachers to overcome possible negative self-perceptions, and learn how to become resourceful.

Why do action research?

- Helps you to live out your values and to be clear about what you do and why when setting strategic goals
- Empowers managers to bring about improvement in own practice and subsequently whole school
- Encourages collaboration and participatory management
- If action research becomes a norm with management and subsequently all teachers and learners in the school, then the school can transform itself into a centre of excellence
- Everyone will be accountable for delivering the best work they can
- Teacher portfolios of action research will be a good indication of growth and development and can even be used as part of a performance appraisal

- Action research increases enthusiasm among teachers – when you are involved in your work and in control, it becomes much more exciting and enjoyable
- Action research promotes openness and transparency as people come to see that “mistakes” are valuable learning tools

How can the Action Research Unit help you?

The Faculty of Education can assist you in setting up action research projects to address any educational problem which might be negatively impacting on the quality of teaching and learning in your school. We can:

- Encourage and assist teachers/school leadership to conduct action research as a means of effective positive social and educational change in the school and community
- Help teachers/school leadership to become more proactive and take responsibility for effecting change and solving their own problems

The ARU will provide guidance and expertise to help you work through the process of action research, as detailed below.

Process of action research

Plan

What is our concern? How do we know it is a concern?
What can we do to improve things?

Implement

Design and implement a plan of action to address the concern.

Evaluate

What is the result of the intervention? What evidence do we have of positive / negative change?

Modify

What do we need to do as a result of what we have learnt to ensure the concern does not re-occur?

The process is spiral in nature – what you learn from one cycle, informs the action to be taken in the next. It is a continual development process which will support on-going school improvement.

Spiral process:

