Description of Learning

Action Research is a step-by-step, methodical approach to studying and improving instructional and institutional strategies and practices by teachers, counselors, administrators, schools, and even whole school districts and communities. The researcher literally takes charge of his or her quest for improving or refining best practices. The first step is to identify a worthy problem or issue and then methodically work to solve it, or at least to improve the situation. Unlike traditional research, in Action Research, the teacher is an active participant in his or her own study and works with students and to solve important issues that they have a personal or professional interest in. Research topics should be narrow and focused, rather than too general or broad. Otherwise, well-meaning action researches may become lost in a sea of information and data.

Action Research involves four stages of implementation: planning, acting, developing, and reflecting. Planning, if done well, is time-consuming and involves brainstorming and identifying a problem or issue to tackle, reviewing the literature, and drafting a doable research plan. The acting stage requires data, either quantitative, qualitative, or both, to be collected and analyzed. During the course of my action research, I learned that this stage needs to be carefully planned and executed, and maybe just as important, well timed. There may not be a chance for a do over, so circumstances have to be idea for the experiment on all fronts. Once the data has been analyzed and the results clear, a conclusion is made and an action plan should be developed. The process is not complete with a plan of action. The final stage of the process is sharing the results with and reflecting on the process itself.

A valuable learning practice for me was working with my team members. We managed our time and attended regular meetings via Zoom outside of weekly class meetings. Collaboration is key and feedback or clarification from my team members was helpful to me, especially with the numbers/results. Collaboration helps me manage stress share the work load burden.

My final lesson came from feedback and our final meeting with Dr. Leh. We had obviously overlooked appropriate research report structure and were advised specifically how to improve the organization of our report. We had mixed up data collection with data results, however we feel that we have made the structural changes necessary to remedy the problem. After the conference, it’s much cleared to me as to why our organization in certain areas was a problem .

A huge take away from my Action Research experience is that fact that I made an assumption that our research suggested was false. There were a number of factors that could have skewed the results, but that to was part of my learning process. There are always factors or variables that affect the research process and outcomes and few studies are definitive.