

Action research project plan assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Action Research Project Plan David Landdeck October 31, 2003 (intake 9, M. Ed. , Hong Kong) for Tim Hill Improving the Feedback Portion of my Teacher Observation/Evaluation Process Progress in education is tied inexorably to teacher improvement in the classroom. As Principal I carry a major responsibility in that growth arena. I will be using action research techniques to make the feedback I give to teachers on their methods and learning environment management more effective. This is a rather small segment of the improvement process, chosen for that specific reason.

Positive results will encourage and allow for expansion in the future. The previous year's evaluation forms regarding my performance indicated this as an area that I could make more effective. I agree with these findings. This subjective conclusion on where to improve is given credibility and impetus by these evaluations. An open and honest appraisal of all the aspects has convinced me that this project is completely feasible. There may be small expenditures involved but these fall quite naturally into areas where spending is under my control and needs only my approval.

My position of leadership provides me with the resources and authority to initiate and complete the entire project within the allotted time frame.

Support from the school's Headmaster, the other Principals and the teachers under my influence was relatively easy to get. Time will be the principle expenditure. Having widespread acceptance of its potential value will enable me to devote several scheduled hours per week to the task without risking negative scrutiny from colleagues and staff. The actual implementing of the project should not generate any large amounts of sensitive data or information.

I have already taken the opportunity to pledge complete confidentiality with any such information. Computer files will only be stored under security controlled systems. Hard copy documents will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my office. The self-reflective nature of true action research makes it most compatible with change that is initiated from the bottom up. Individual practitioners evaluate their process or performance, decide on an improvement target, implement a change and then re-evaluate based on results. Evidence used here can be objective as well as subjective and often involves “glimpses” caught along the way.

It is much less formal than typical research and its purpose is different as well. “The fundamental aim of action research is to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge.” Elliott [1991: 49] “The most important difference is that in traditional research the researcher was required not to influence the situation being studied; in action research, the researcher intentionally sets out to change the situation being studied.” Lomax [2002: 123] Altering the plan of action along the way is acceptable and often desirable since there is no fear of contaminating the evidence. Sometimes things do not work out neatly and require a good deal of creative zig-zagging to get back on course. Sometimes they do not get back on course.

Understanding how to deal with the complexities of the situation is at the heart of the process.” McNiff [2000: 202] Educational management has typically pushed changes from the top down. I realize this perception gap between “in the trenches” initiated change and the “commander” issued orders for change is a very real and potent deterrent to a smooth, cyclical and ongoing course of action. “... nstitutional management is interpreted by,

for example, Holly, (1984) as ‘ top-down’ hierarchical and bureaucratic enterprise involved primarily in maintenance of the status quo. Action research is an ‘ alternative paradigm’ pressing for change from the ‘ bottom-up, characterized by collegial and collaborative relationships between teachers. ” Wallace [1987: 98] It is crucial that all people involved see this as my project for self improvement. One of my challenges will be to avoid any perceptions that this is something I am doing to someone else.

The evolution of action research has been similar to that of other progressive change and improvement movements. Different people, using it for different goals and in widely varying circumstances and contexts, have squeezed and molded its definition to suit their viewpoints. The result has been a sort of meandering progression through realms encompassing an array of definitions and features. Generally, John Collier (1884-1968) is considered the founder and he gave this type of research its initial impetus. As the U. S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, his campaign for reform regarding the status and treatment of the American Indians was based on this self-reflective model. He believed that those who are actually implementing actions should be doing the research and that the actual research should emerge from their specific needs. Since then many differing opinions as to the nature and elements of action research have been proposed and put into practice. Action research is still carving out its roll as a force in promoting change in the educational arena. In recent years Action Research has become extremely popular as a form of professional development for managers in a wide range of organizations including schools and colleges. ” Hill [2003: 17] I see action research as having almost infinite potential in the progressive

development of educational professionals. Stephen Corey, Dean of Teachers' College, Columbia University has used action research in education successfully and has thus advanced its popularity and usefulness. He focused mainly on performance aspects of those involved in the action research. The rationale for this approach to practice was on grounds of motivation. Practitioners would be more likely to put professional researchers' findings into practice if these findings were used to inform the solution of work-related problems defined by the practitioners. Corey said of the teacher: " He does not read about these practices, he engages in them. And he learns what he does. " (1953: 10) Wallace [1987: 100-101] Teachers should already understand the value of hands on learning. Their classrooms have become platforms for " learn as you do" methods. Why not involve them in their own learning and progress?

My goals include better organization, computer based documentation, consistency, and a format that allows for improvement plans revolving around the school's Expected Learning Results, best practices and grade level standards and benchmarks. My aim is to help teachers develop self improvement plans by increasing my own skills and performance in providing feedback. I believe this project lends itself very well to the action research approach. I have chosen this method because it " is systematic self-reflective scientific inquiry by practitioners to improve practice".

McKernan [1996: 5] as in Hill [2003: 5] I am the practitioner and I have identified an area in my administrative practice that needs improvement. With that goal in mind I will plot a course of action, act on that plan and be ready to expose and reflect on results both positive and negative. The idea

<https://assignbuster.com/action-research-project-plan-assignment/>

of this being an ongoing process leading to cycles of change makes it very ideal as a tool for change in the educational setting. All action research promoters have a cycle of self scrutiny, design of plan, evaluation and change embedded somewhere in their specific method.

Once such a cycle is in place and everyone sees its value and employs it, effective change will become much more consistent and relevant to what is actually going on in each classroom. On a larger scale the introduction of action research into our school is very appropriate since we are entering a phase of very large and sweeping changes. Virtually every stakeholder is involved in some way or another with our transition from a small International School to a medium sized Private Independent School. Like Stephen Corey, I believe we need to “ urge groups of teachers to collaborate in action research since... mprovement implie(s) modification in the behaviour of all those involved in an institutional change effort;. ” Wallace [1987: 101] The existing evaluation forms which point to this area as one where upgrading would be welcomed and appropriate, form the basis for the data of current status. I will conduct several in depth teacher interviews to get personal input and feelings about the process as it is now. Surveying the entire teaching staff will enable me to construct a fuller picture of the impressions teachers have regarding the process and my performance.

My own subjective analysis and choice of this as an area that needs development stems from the lack of effective, functioning improvement plans for individual teachers. A collection of such plans generated by the project will be important data. Getting teacher buy-in on the appropriateness of action research as an effective improvement process for classroom

<https://assignbuster.com/action-research-project-plan-assignment/>

teaching is a secondary goal of mine. The visible effects of my project will determine the extent to which that happens. I want the success of this project to be contagious.

If I am successful here I will not only have stepped up the level of my competency as an educational manager but, I will also have laid some useful groundwork, by example, for teachers to actively manage change in their own practices. I am proposing to introduce professional software into my procedure. I will be researching current available packages and comparing their various components and structures. A key factor will be flexibility. I will want to use something which allows me to tailor documentation and results to best fit with our progression toward standards and benchmark instruction and reporting.

The ability to generate improvement plans which allow teachers options in areas and methods of change will also be important if I am to encourage the use of action research as a possible way for them to facilitate change. The introduction of such software should make consistency easier to achieve. Another course of action will be to investigate current “good practices” in the area of teacher observation, evaluation and improvement monitoring. Having access to resources through EARCOS (East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools) will help and should provide me with good up to date information.

I am also a member of the NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals) in the United States. I will be attending a conference this year in which teacher evaluation will be addressed in several ways. I am currently in

the middle of an observation, evaluation & feedback cycle with all my teachers. I am using my current methods and procedures for this rotation. After completing this round I will conduct selected interviews being careful to get good grade and experience representation. All will teachers will be given a survey which includes the feedback and development aspects.

I will combine these results with the existing performance reviews from previous years. Past and present “ improvement plans” or the lack of them will also be noted. I will conduct another series of observations, evaluations and feedback in January. Repeating the same interview, survey and plan documentation at that time should give me some data I can use in comparison with the original outcomes. I plan to keep record of what I do in the form of a journal. I realize that a very strong possibility of having to alter or change some part of this plan exists. I want to be able to accurately re-trace my actions and feelings.

This will be crucial to my own sense of understanding but will also help in the completion of the Unit Two assignment. My criteria for success will contain both objective and subjective elements. I will be looking at the specific number averages in the survey forms. Allowing teachers to give numerical evaluations will permit me to form quantitative summaries. This data will be important as I will have to place it in juxtaposition to the interviews and comments for comparison. I will want to see a significant rise in the averages of this data looking specifically at the numbers representing my feedback and its helpfulness to them.

I should be able to detect a significant upward movement in these averages. I would look for a minimum of 25 per cent change to feel satisfaction. The use of a data base or table to present this is a possibility. The interviews will give me subjective feelings and impressions that are hard to get with a survey. I value these highly and will do my best to foster an atmosphere of openness and honesty as I conduct them. Perhaps I will record these sessions to insure I don't miss or forget important feedback. If I have been successful, there should also be evidence in the form of an increased number of functioning improvement plans.

All of this can be seen. Naturally, my own subjective opinion will be influenced by these forms of evidence. I will also have an internal sense of success or failure. This will be important but impossible to quantify. I will have to ask myself if my feedback process has actually improved and produced desirable results. I am also willing to accept that there may be desirable results I have not thought of. It is most likely these will surface out of the interviews if there are any. I am also willing to face undesirable results should they occur.

Since I have a secondary goal; to impart a knowledge and desire to use action research as an improvement tool among the other staff members at ICS; I also need criteria for measuring success in that arena. At this point I have encountered anyone else at ICS who is using action research as a method except Brian Van Tassel and myself. We are both in this course. I will use a very simple e-mail survey to find out what percentage of staff members know what action research is and if anyone has used it in their

professional growth plan. I will not repeat this survey to formally gather new data until next year.

At that time I will also be able to look at any action research type plans that have been developed by teachers. Appendix A Outline of action research plan – David Landdeck (intake 9, Med. , Hong Kong) 1) Identifying the topic Why I chose this project and its importance to my responsibilities – focusing on a small segment to start with the possibility of more areas in the future This is entirely within my realm of responsibility and authority – decisions and resources It is an area I feel improvement is needed in my managerial competences It is feasible in the time frame allotted

I have already secured buy-in from the Headmaster, my peers, and the teachers Scheduling time will be critical The nature of AR and how it became a viable tool for managing educational reform Why the project lends itself to an AR approach 2) Reconnaissance Phase The existing data and what it says about current practice A secondary goal of promoting AR as a practice My proposed plan of action – the introduction of specialized software What are good schools doing now – EARCOS & NAESP as resources 3) Action and Evaluation Phase

Use current evidence as basis for need to improve and a baseline for comparison Interviews and surveys of staff to generate a better picture of how things are now Complete a second round of observations with new software by January Re-run of the Interviews and Surveys (Possible recording of interviews) Documentation of process, changes, feelings etc in a Journal

Criteria for judging success – quantitative and subjective References Hill, T. (2003) Action Research for Education Managers. Bristol.

University of Bristol Peterson, Kenneth D. (2000) Teacher evaluation: A comprehensive guide to new directions and practices Thousand Oaks, CA.

Corwin Press Ponte, P. (2002) How Teachers Become Action Researchers and How Teacher Educators Become their Facilitators Education Action Research, 10, 3 399-422 Websites: <http://www.naesp.org> National Association of Elementary School Principals <http://www.earcos.org/> East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools <http://www.acsi.org/acsi/> Association of Christian Schools International