GUIDELINES FOR ACTION RESEARCH

2025

Table of Contents

Introduction

At Beaconhouse School System, we believe that great teaching is not just an art; it is a continuous inquiry into what works best for our students. In today's dynamic educational landscape, teachers are not only educators but also researchers and change agents. **Action research empowers Beaconhouse teachers to systematically investigate their practices, test innovative strategies, and make evidence-based decisions to enhance student learning and well-being.**

The process promotes reflective teaching, strengthens instructional strategies, and fosters data-driven innovations in classrooms.

As Hopkins (1985) aptly states:

"Action research is a personal attempt to use a combination of action and research for disciplined inquiry to understand, improve, and reform practice."

These guidelines provide a clear and practical framework for teachers and school leaders to undertake action research projects. They outline each stage of the process, from identifying focus areas to reflecting on outcomes and taking informed action.

SCOPE

Action research at Beaconhouse is designed to be a flexible and inclusive process, open to:
- Individual teachers
- Collaborative teacher groups working within a single school
- Partnerships between teachers and researchers (either from within Beaconhouse or external collaborators)

Through this approach, Beaconhouse affirms its commitment to empowering educators and improving student outcomes through collaborative, practitioner-led inquiry.

Teachers may undertake action research in a wide range of areas that reflect both classroom-level interests and whole-school improvement priorities. Possible focus areas include:

- **Teaching methods:** Replacing or improving existing instructional strategies.
- **Learning strategies:** Implementing new student-centered learning approaches.
- **Assessment practices:** Enhancing methods for evaluating student understanding and progress.
- **Classroom management:** Introducing or refining techniques for promoting positive behaviour and a productive learning environment.

- **Attitudes and values**: Encouraging positive mindsets or adapting value-based education approaches.
- **School Based Professional development:** Assessing approaches that effectively build teachers' instructional capacity within the school context.
- **School administration**: Improving operational efficiency and decision-making processes.

Beaconhouse Action Research Process

At Beaconhouse, action research follows a structured, cyclical process that supports teachers and school leaders in identifying challenges, testing solutions, and reflecting on the outcomes. Whether undertaken by an individual teacher, a group of colleagues, or the entire faculty, the process unfolds in four key stages and eight practical steps.

Stage I-Identification & Planning

Step 1—Review and Select a Focus
- Identify an area of teaching or learning that needs improvement or a new strategy you might want to implement.
- Gather baseline data (e.g., past assessments, student feedback, classroom observations).
- Consult students, colleagues, and experts where appropriate.

Step 2—Review of Literature
- Reflect on your current beliefs and assumptions about the issue.
- Review relevant research, theories, and case studies to inform your approach.

Step 3—Identify Research Questions
- Frame clear, focused, and open-ended questions that can guide inquiry.
- Ensure questions are actionable and relate directly to factors within your control. Example: How does peer feedback affect students' writing skills?

Stage II-Action & Collection

Step 4—Implement Strategy
- Clearly define the strategy or intervention
- Communicate your plan with students and colleagues, if needed.
- Ensure classroom readiness: prepare materials, adjust lesson plans, and set expectations.
- Pilot the intervention briefly, if necessary, to troubleshoot any practical issues.
- Implement the strategy or intervention

Step 5—Collect Data
- Determine what information you need to answer your research questions.
- Use multiple data sources (triangulation) to enhance accuracy and reliability.
- Possible data collection methods include:
  - Field notes
  - Lesson plans and student work
  - Audio/video recordings or transcripts
  - Surveys or questionnaires
  - Interviews and focus groups
  - Structured observations
  - Assessment results
  - Student learning diaries

Stage III-Interpretation & Modification

Step 6—Analyze Data and Make Changes
- Identify patterns and trends in the data.
- Ask reflective questions: What story does the data tell? Why did these outcomes occur?
- Modify strategy to assess impact, continuing to collect data throughout the changes.

Stage IV- Reflection & Planning

Step 7—Reflect and Report
- Reflect critically on successes, challenges, and unexpected findings.
- Share your findings with colleagues through staff meetings, workshops, or conferences.
- Use accessible language and maintain confidentiality at all times.

Step 8—Taking Informed Action
- Develop a plan for next steps based on your findings.
- Adapt teaching strategies as needed.
- Identify new questions or areas for further inquiry, continuing the cycle of improvement.

BSS. ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

Cycle 1   Cycle 2   Cycle 3
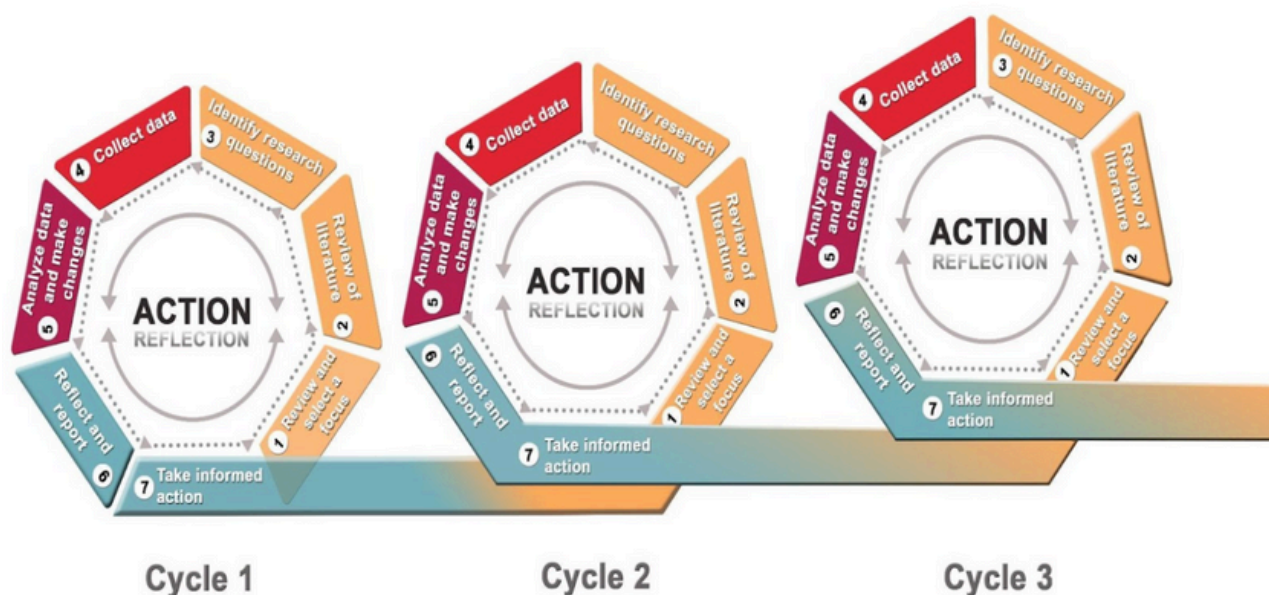
Action Research Project Plan Template

Instructions: Below is the sample template for Action Research Projects. Beaconhouse staff can use this template as a guide and a worksheet to organise their Action Research Projects.

Researcher's Name and Job Title	
School	
School Head	
Target participants (class and age group)	
Subject/discipline	
Title of the Research	**Instruction**: Write a concise title summarising your research. **Example**: "Improving student participation in group discussions through seating arrangements."
Focus Area	**Instruction**: Identify the problem or area for improvement and explain why it is important. **Example**: Problem Statement: Low student engagement during group discussions. Research Focus: Investigating how seating arrangements influence participation.
Literature Review	**Instruction**: List resources (with links) and summarise key findings relevant to your focus area. **Example**: Sources Reviewed: Articles on collaborative learning strategies and seating dynamics. Key Findings: Research shows circular seating encourages eye contact and active participation.
Research Questions	**Instruction**: Develop specific, actionable questions to guide your research. **Example**: How do different seating arrangements impact student engagement? What patterns emerge when students are grouped based on shared interests?

Data Collection Conducted	**Instruction**: Outline how and what data you will collect to answer your research questions. Please provide the data you have collected. **Example**: Methods: 1. Field Notes: Observe student behaviour during group activities. 2. Questionnaires: Survey students about their comfort and participation levels. 3. Documentary Evidence: Collect videos, pictures, or any other sort of evidence. Timeline: Observe groups over four weeks.
Action Taken	**Instruction**: Detail the steps you will take to address the problem. **Example**: Week 1: Implement a practice and observe its impact. Week 2: Introduce the new strategy or intervention and monitor changes. Week 3:Gather feedback from students and/or colleagues and make adjustments based on insights.
Data Analysis Conducted	**Instruction**: Describe how you will process and interpret the data. **Example**: Steps: 1. Compare participation rates in circular seating setups. 2. Categorise feedback into themes (e.g., comfort, collaboration, focus). Tools: Use a bar chart to visualise participation changes
Reflection	**Instruction**: Reflect on what worked, what didn't, and why. **Example**: During circular seating, quieter students participated more, but some found the setup distracting. Reflection-in-action revealed a need for moderation techniques.
Findings and Reporting	**Instruction**: Summarise key outcomes and prepare a report or presentation. **Example**: Key Findings: Circular seating increased overall participation by 20%. Report Format: Present findings at a faculty meeting with recommendations.

Informed Action	**Instruction**: Describe how findings will influence future actions. **Example**: • Based on results, circular seating will be implemented twice a week with moderated discussions. • Further research: Explore how seating arrangements affect specific subjects like science vs. literature.
Ethical Considerations	**Instruction**: Ensure ethical guidelines are followed. **Example**: All student feedback collected anonymously. Parental consent obtained for any video recordings.

Note to Users

Each section should be filled based on your specific context. Refer to the examples provided for clarity only.

Disclaimer: You can also submit your action research as a case study