

# GROWING YOUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

## **ASDN Webinar Series**

Session 5

Conducting Action Research to Improve Professional Learning

November 18, 2010

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Chicago, Illinois

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## AGENDA

### Session Outline

- ◆ Understanding Action Research to Improve Practice
- ◆ Protocol for Organizing and Conducting Action Research
- ◆ Collecting and Analyzing Data for Action Research

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## READING

### Session Readings

Reading:  
Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action; Tools for Schools; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000

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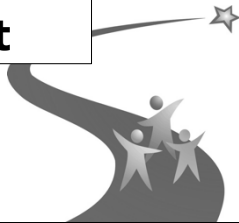
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## Coaching Homework Debriefing Session 4 Assignment



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## The Planning Conversation for Coaching

- Clarify Goals
- Determine Success Indicators
- Anticipate Approaches, Strategies, and Decisions
- Identify the Data to Support Self-Assessment
- Provide Feedback about the Coaching Session

Adapted from *Cognitive Coaching*; Costa and Garmston;  
Christopher-Gordon Publishers; 1994

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## Partner Interviews Resource

1. Starter questions to generate meaningful conversations...
2. Questions about teachers' current realities...
3. Questions about students' current realities...
4. Questions about the school's current reality...
5. Questions about changes being experienced...
6. Questions about instructional practices...
7. Questions about a desired future...
8. Questions about professional development...

Drawn from *Conversations Can Kick-Off the Coaching*; Jim Knight; Teachers  
Teaching Teachers; March 2007

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### Homework Debriefing

1. What coaching strategy did you use?
2. What was the outcome of your coaching session?
3. How did you feel about carrying-out your coaching role?
4. What suggestions do you have based on experience?

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## Understanding Action Research to Improve Practice



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### UNDERSTANDING ACTION RESEARCH

Action research is “a process where participants – who might be teachers, principals, or support staff – **examine their own practice**, systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research.”



Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action*; Tools for Schools; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000

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### UNDERSTANDING ACTION RESEARCH

In the busyness of the school day, staff typically have little time to pause and examine the work they do. Increasingly, staff members are turning toward action research as a way to create time and space needed for reflection.

Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action; Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000



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### UNDERSTANDING ACTION RESEARCH

Action research usually consists of the following techniques:

1. Staff develop questions to be answered
2. Staff collect data
3. Staff analyze data
4. Staff act on what they have learned

Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action; Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000



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### UNDERSTANDING ACTION RESEARCH

Action research can be done by an individual or with a group. The group can be a few people, 8 – 10 persons, the entire school or district. Groups provide a broader learning experience with participants learning from one another.

Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action; Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000



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## UNDERSTANDING ACTION RESEARCH

Action research can be messy – it is not a linear process. It's not neat and tidy – in fact it can be very messy! Action researchers must follow their questions – wherever the information takes them.



Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action; Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000

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## Protocol for Organizing and Conducting Action Research



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## PROTOCOL FOR ACTION RESEARCH

### Step 1 Write the Question

Individuals or groups identify areas of greatest concern for them. Questions are drafted and refined.

- What do you think about this question?
- Is it a worthwhile and important question?
- What suggestions could improve the question?

Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action; Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000



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## PROTOCOL FOR ACTION RESEARCH

### Starting Points for Developing Good Questions

1. I would like to improve...
2. I am perplexed by...
3. Some people are unhappy about...
4. I'm really curious about...
5. I want to learn more about...
6. An idea I would like to try in my work is...
7. Something I think would make a real difference...
8. Something I would like to do to change \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_
9. Right now, I am particularly interested in...

Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action: Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000



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## PROTOCOL FOR ACTION RESEARCH

### Sample Action Research Questions

- ✓ What kinds of assessments would best help me understand and teach my ELL learners?
- ✓ How can I more effectively facilitate independent writing in my third grade classroom?
- ✓ How does chronic staff absenteeism impact student learning?
- ✓ What changes in our teaching practices are required to successfully implement the new math program?

Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action: Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000



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## PROTOCOL FOR ACTION RESEARCH

### Step 2 Collect Data

Answers to your question can come from many different data sources. Consider hard and soft data.

- Collect data from at least three sources.
- Keep a data log – when, time, and place.
- Make the data presentable and understandable

Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action: Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000



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## PROTOCOL FOR ACTION RESEARCH

### Hard Data

- ✓ Test Results
- ✓ Parent-Teacher Conference Participation
- ✓ Attendance
- ✓ Graduation Rates
- ✓ Demographics

### Soft Data

- ✓ Interviews with students, parents, or colleagues
- ✓ Classroom observations
- ✓ Student work samples
- ✓ Lesson plans



Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action: Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000

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## PROTOCOL FOR ACTION RESEARCH

### Step 3 Analyze the Data

Be systematic and objective when analyzing data.

- Look for themes, patterns, and big ideas.
- Reduce your list – narrow to 3 – 5 themes.
- Label information around relevant themes.
- Make notes as you go along.
- Look for frequency and powerful points.
- Write-up your major findings.



Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action: Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000

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## PROTOCOL FOR ACTION RESEARCH

### Build a Data Template

WHAT I COLLECTED...	WHAT I LEARNED...

Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action: Tools for Schools*; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000



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## PROTOCOL FOR ACTION RESEARCH

### Step 4 Plan Your Next Steps

Now is the time to **ACT** on what you have learned...

- How do your conclusions differ from what you thought you would learn?
- What actions might you take based on your learning?
- What new questions emerged for you?

Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action; Tools for Schools;* National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000



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## Collecting and Analyzing Data for Action Research



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## COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA

### Guidelines for Developing Good Questions

1. Hasn't already been answered...
2. Gets at explanations, reasons, relationships – How does... What happens when...
3. Is not a YES-NO question...
4. Uses everyday language – Avoids jargon...
5. Is concise – Doesn't include everything you are thinking...
6. Is manageable and can be completed...
7. Is do-able – in the context of your work...
8. Is a question about which you feel a commitment and passion...
9. Is close to your own practice...
10. Has tension – helps you stretch...
11. Provides a deeper understanding of the topic...
12. Leads to other questions...



Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action; Tools for Schools;* National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000

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## COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA

### Five W's and H

- Why are you collecting the data?
- What exactly are you collecting?
- Where are you going to collect it?
- When are you going to collect it?
- Who is going to collect it?
- How will the data be collected and displayed?



Drawn from *Teacher Research Leads to Learning, Action*; Tools for Schools; National Staff Development Council; February/March 2000

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## READ MORE ABOUT IT...

The Learning Principal; Examples of Action Research Projects; National Staff Development Council; May 2008

Action Research Aids Albuquerque; Raisch; Journal of Staff Development; National Staff Development Council; Summer 2005

Guiding School Improvement with Action Research; R. Sagor; Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development; Alexandria, VA; 2000

How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School; E. Calhoun; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; Alexandria, VA; 1994

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## Powerful Designs for Professional Learning

Accessing Student Voices	<b>Action Research</b>
Assessment as P.D.	Case Discussions
Classroom Walk-Throughs	Critical Friends Groups
Curriculum Designers	Data Analysis
<b>Examining Student Work</b>	Journaling
Lesson Study	Mentoring
<b>Peer Coaching</b>	Portfolios for Educators
<b>School Coaching</b>	Shadowing Students
Standards in Practice	<b>Study Groups</b>
Training the Trainer	Tuning Protocols
Visual Dialogue	Yet to Be Developed...

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## Thank You for Your Participation



If you would like additional information,  
please feel free to contact:

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