Title of Session: Action Research
Moderator: Diane Painter
Title of File: 20090409ar
Date: April 9, 2009

Room: Action Research Group

DianeDP: Hi everyone-

DianeDP: Why don't we introduce ourselves. I am Diane Painter from Shenandoah U and a retired teacher who did action research for many years as a teacher in VA.

BJB2: a reminder to those new to Tapped In to go to the Actions menu in the top right of the chat and select DETACH

KellyMol: I am a graduate student in Technology in Education

StephaniRW: I'm a graduate student at George Mason University getting my masters

DianeDP: Hi Kelly, Karen, Ladonna and Gloria. My, we have quite a group.

StephaniRW: I teach 1st grade..it's my first year

DianeDP: Steph- I graduated twice from GMU and that is where I learned about teacher research.

StephaniRW: that's cool!

VeronicaB: Hi. I'm an elementary grade level teacher. Have been out of teaching for a few years.

DianeDP: Hi Karen. Welcome

BJB2: Diane, we did have a question about what this discussion was about

BJB2 . o O (I'm afraid I couldn't do better than say Action Research ;-))

BJB2 . o O (which is why I'm not leading this discussion!)

DianeDP: This discussion is designed to talk about AR- what it is and then we can take it from there to discuss interests in teacher research- and support one another in the process

DianeDP: Let me begin by asking, who has done action research?

KellyMol: I did action research for a class.

KarenG: I have not

StephaniRW: I haven't

GloriaE: I have not

LadonnaMC: I also did an action research project for a class.

BJB2: welcome, Suzan

SuzanMV: Hi Everyone, this is my first time online like this

KarenG: me too

DianeDP: Ok then- let's all take a look at the whiteboard for a moment. The list of items comes from Mohr and MacLean's book on Teacher Researchers.

BJB2: Suzan, Diane has asked if anyone has done action research

BJB2: the whiteboard is on the web window that is behind your chat window if you've detached

==============
Whiteboard:

What do action-researchers do?

Ask questions and examine their underlying assumptions about teaching and learning.

Develop research questions based on their own curiosity about teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Learn to observe, reflect, and analyze their teaching and student learning.

Discuss with colleagues relationships among theory, practice, and research.

Systematically collect data and research methodology with fellow teacher researchers.

Analyze and interpret their data and research methodology with the support of colleagues and fellow teacher researchers.

Share their findings with students, colleagues, and members of the educational community.

Write about their research.

So, how is this the same or different from traditional educational research?
-DianeDP
===============

DianeDP: It appears most people are new to the process.

SuzanMV: What would an action research specifically look like?

BJB2: that's what we're going to be finding out, Suzan

SuzanMV: As the class session continues, I can better answer that question

BJB2: did everyone find the Whiteboard?

DianeDP: You begin with a question about your teaching and student learning. Here is one of mine- "How does the use of an interactive whiteboard transform my teaching and students' learning?

DianeDP: Then I began with the assumption that it will change the way that I teach for the better and improve my students' learning.

DianeDP: But then I needed to find out in what ways that might happen.

DianeDP: So, what questions might you all have about your teaching and/or students' learning that might be puzzlements to you?

SuzanMV: I guess it would be a better monitoring system of what is being taught and how to teach to make sure that the student's are retaining the content

KellyMol: Well the question I researched was whether or not giving students a review of expectations improved their behavior in the resource center.

JenniferNi: I'm experimenting lately with how I group my students, similar ability levels, vs mixed up (one strong, one weak, and two middle kids in a group)

KarenG: I will I know if it improves my students' learning

SuzanMV: I am a 6th grade special day teacher with mild/moderate learning disabilities and they are given the core curriculum with modifications and they also take the district generated benchmark test and I am always concerned if they are truly getting the concept

DianeDP: Suzan- yes that is a good question. How can I develop a better monitoring system that will assess what content my students' are retaining?

DianeDP: Kelly how did you conduct that research?

SuzanMV: The 6th grade team and I will get together and review benchmarks, and view what was the most common question missed

LadonnaMC: The project that I completed looked at how useful students and parents found my classroom website.

KellyMol: I used the same class (4 of them, though) as their own control during week 1, tallied off task behaviors and then in week two gave a review of how they should behave and then tallied their behaviors again as the experimental group.

SuzanMV: Most of my students parents do not have access to a computer and can not afford one

DianeDP: Jennifer- how does flexible group impact student learning?

KarenG: did it work?

JenniferNi: Well, if they're learning something new it's nice to have the abilities mixed, and if they're reviewing, I can differentiate their reviews to challenge or remediate.

KellyMol: in most cases, yes but there were lots of extraneous variables that got in the way also.

DianeDP: Suzan- your focus sounds like you are looking at how modifications to the curriculum and perhaps strategies used in teaching the curriculum impact the learning of special needs students?

KarenG: like what

SuzanMV: I know that I have to be prepared with my lessons because we have a 90 min block. If I don't keep them on task and busy the behaviors will arise.

DianeDP: Ladonna- in what ways do parents find your web site beneficial in supporting their children's learning?

GloriaE: I work with deaf and hard of hearing students in a one-on-one setting. One of my students is always very distracted and off task when he is mainstreamed. It was questioned whether or not his hearing aid was distracting him.

SuzanMV: Yes, Diane

KellyMol: like students being absent one day or the other, or coming in late from being at speech, social work, etc...who didn't get the review their class got.

StephaniRW: do people do this action research just for fun or is it another job?

DianeDP: Gloria- it may be the hearing aid, or other factors. That will be interesting to zero in on that puzzlement.

SuzanMV: I sign fluently and have worked with Deaf and H/H, what grade is this student in?

GloriaE: He is in 2nd grade.

SuzanMV: Does he have an interpreter or only has hearing aides?

LadonnaMC: Some of the features parents found useful included: important dates, daily homework chart, downloadable forms related to school, pictures of what students were doing in class, classroom procedures, a way to send a message to teachers, and a description of the curriculum.

GloriaE: I am in the process of observing him in class to collect data in different situations with and without the hearing aid. Is this part of action research?

DianeDP: People conduct research for a number of reasons. One is to get at understanding what puzzles them. Other reasons can be because they are collecting data for PLC initiatives, or to do a year-long special project for re-certification. Others need to collect and report on data for grant requirements.

KellyMol: yes, Gloria, it is!!!!!

StephaniRW: thank you

StephaniRW: I guess since I'm a new teacher this year this is all new to me

DianeDP: Gloria- it can be AR if you take some kind of action to determine the best ways he pays attention in class.

SuzanMV: I am working on a research project that covers the last 3 years of CELDT testing scores

StephaniRW: how do you all have time to do this and teach? haha and have a family

DianeDP: So, how do AR'ers collect data. Can you share examples from your previous studies to share with us?

KellyMol: what is CELDT

SuzanMV: I use AR to monitor my student reading growth

JenniferNi: I use quiz and test scores

KellyMol: I used tally sheets, but another way is through likert scales

LadonnaMC: In my last class, we were provided with the following link about action research...

LadonnaMC: http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr_action/

SuzanMV: California English Language Development Test Proficiency Descriptors

JenniferNi: and observations- kids in homogeneous groups interacted more and tried more

SuzanMV: I use tallies for behaviors

DianeDP: I get asked that question about time quite a bit. I say that teachers conduct the research all the time when they look at work samples, make observations, interview students to find out what works best, etc. but they do all this systematically and with a focused purpose.

DianeDP: Ladonna- the URL you listed is the web site that I did with Lynn Wilner. I am glad to see you find it useful.

GloriaE: So...if my data shows that he is less distracted and more on task without the hearing aid...the action would be to determine that he learns best without the distraction of ALL the sounds the hearing aid is amplifing.

JenniferNi: I ask questions all the time- it sounds like what I'm missing is some structure

DianeDP: Gloria- that may be an observation and a key finding. But you would need to try to verify that in some way. Have you done a structured interview of the student to see what he has to say about it?

GloriaE: Yes, I have interviewed the student as well as with his parents to see what his behaviors are at home with/without the hearing aid.

StephaniRW: it seems like a one-on-one convo

DianeDP: Will others in this chat offer other examples of how they collected data?

SuzanMV: I use Edusoft to monitor data

DianeDP: Gloria- good, so you have interviews from parents and students, observations- how about other teachers' input?

SuzanMV: This will be CST scores, CELDT scoring, district benchmarks and teacher

made test

DianeDP: How does Edusoft help you monitor data?

LadonnaMC: at our school, we are using a research-based math fact program to help students master their math facts. They have to keep track on their progress on charts. We use the charts and tests to monitor their progress.

SuzanMV: This is used throughout the district

KarenG: Not being a classroom teacher, I really don't collect too much data

JenniferNi: We use it too- it can compare students' answers against the class, school, or district

SuzanMV: I can pull data specifically about my students, the school sites, and other middle schools throughout the district

GloriaE: Yes, I have given the teacher a chart to fill out during the day so she can note the activity, time of day, and mood of the student when he is off task. This has been helpful input.

DianeDP: Ok- I am reading that you are collecting test scores, authentic work samples, observations and interviews. Good- these are things teachers use in the normal course of teaching. Now the key is systematically looking at the data to see patterns of information that may give us clues to our questions.

GloriaE: The main way I collect data...because I only see students one-on-one is the use of tally sheets and teacher made tests.

DianeDP: Gloria- that is fine. You are conducting case studies.

VeronicaB: I've compared test scores of ELD students with those of English language classes to analyze where they need language clarification to improve understanding.

DianeDP: Veronica- this is good preliminary data collecting and analysis. The AR comes into play when you take some kind of action to address a puzzlement.

JenniferNi: Are there places to share your results without doing a formal write-up?

SuzanMV: For anyone to see?

DianeDP: Here is another example. I discovered my 6th graders did not understand what copyright means in terms of peer-to-peer downloading of music- in other words, downloading music illegally. I took actions by teaching lessons from the BSA web site and having key speakers come in to talk about copyright laws and what happens when

people are caught engaging in such activities. I then monitored students' responses and letters to others about what they are learning to see if they were at least understanding the ramifications.

DianeDP: Sharing results can be done in a variety of ways. This AR group room is a good start. We can post and ask others to read and comment.

KellyMol: how did the students respond?

BJB2 . o O (if you would like to learn how to join this group so you can post to the group discussion board, I can tell you at the end of the discussion.)

SuzanMV: ok

JenniferNi: thanks

DianeDP: I had students write letters to anyone they cared to share what they were learning. Many chose family and friends, some the president of the USA, and a couple our principal. They were mostly concerned about being fined. Some expressed concern for the creators and developers of the music- that they were going to go out of business. My study is on the www.techlearning.com web site if you do a search for articles by Diane Painter

SuzanMV: As long as I have a password from a teacher, I can go into their class and monitor their students AR successes or struggles

DianeDP: I would love to see studies posted on the site

KarenG: that would be nice

GloriaE: Diane - Did you assess the students with a rubric to find out if they understood the concept?

DianeDP: Look on featured items. See the weblinks to other sites? Some post studies.

SuzanMV: I did a research project on Athrogryposis if anyone is interested I can post it some place with a powerpoint

DianeDP: I believe I did a qualitative analysis, coding responses and reporting on themes and frequency that those items were reported. But I do use rubrics as well.

DianeDP: Yes, Suzan- BJ can explain how to post to share with others. I can download the PPT if it is posted as an attachment to the discussion board and make it a file for other as well if you give me permission to do so.

DianeDP: So, what are the others thinking about this process?

SuzanMV: Sure, tell me what to do, and I will be delighted to share

KellyMol: I don't feel comfortable posting my research since it was only done for a class, and I don't feel like it's exemplary as it was my first try at this.

KarenG: Right now, I'm a little overwhelmed

SuzanMV: I am comfortable, I got an A

LadonnaMC: I do not feel like many teachers that I work with are doing AR. If they are, they aren't sharing. Do others feel like this?

VeronicaB: The process reminds me of a scientific approach to pedagogy. Observing puzzlements in our classrooms and addressing them in a systematic way, setting up a way to disprove a notion is the scientific way. And I really appreciate the emphasis on self monitoring by questioning where our assumptions lie.

JenniferNi: I hope a group like this will make it easier to get feedback from colleagues at any step in the research process- like defining the question and methods for collecting data

KellyMol: I think teachers are overwhelmed, at least in my school...and even if they are doing AR (i.e. interventions and accommodations etc.) they don't realize it's AR and aren't sharing results with staff, only with our principal and necessary individuals.

SuzanMV: It's madatory at our school site to use A.R. and review the data. The librarian also took it upon herself to monitor students and post names on the wall for the students that have grown and they receive a little surprise

KarenG: I think my teachers are sharing info....just not in a formal way

LadonnaMC: We are doing RTI interventions and monitoring, but I just don't feel like it is structured, reflected upon, written up, or shared....

SuzanMV: I use AR and post results on my IEP's

StephaniRW: wow this is overwhelming haha

StephaniRW: you guys are talking about so much

DianeDP: at my school, the TR group was a committee. Teachers voluntarily joined for a number of reasons such are re-certification, grant data reporting, etc. We met each month. Our principal gave us release time to meet. At the end of the year, we shared our projects with the whole faculty. We got a number of grants doing this, for example, money to buy interactive whiteboards.

DianeDP: Would you like me to post URLs to some of my projects in weblinks?

SuzanMV: yes

KarenG: that would be great

JenniferNi: Yes please- after skimming your copyright write-up I'm getting an idea for structure

SuzanMV: we also use RTI

LadonnaMC: it would be helpful to see what others are doing

BJB2: a reminder that you all will be automatically sent an email transcript of this chat

VeronicaB: Thank you Diane. I'd like to see your work.

BJB2 . o O (RTI is a hot topic during the Special Education Forum. Their next discussion is April 13)

DianeDP: After we end, I will find some of my studies that are online and post them in weblinks.

SuzanMV: good to know that

JenniferNi: forgive me but what does RTI stand for?

BJB2: Response to Intervention

DianeDP: RTI is a hot topic and would make a great study- what happens when x-y-z intervention is used with...

JenniferNi: thanks

SuzanMV: it's a documented level system

BJB2: one thing that makes this discussion so overwhelming to some of you is that this is your first visit to Tapped In...

SuzanMV: Everything today is about data monitoring and from those results how can we address issues to raise the scores and support the community of students that we are teaching

DianeDP: RTI is a pre-referral intervention initiative. It helps to give struggling students opportunities to try new strategies, adapted materials and/or small groups to see if a

different way of instruction will help them.

BJB2: by returning next month for the discussion, you can narrow the discussion to a more focused topic

SuzanMV: k

DianeDP: Suzan- the important thing to remember about AR is that you are addressing a puzzlement. Identifying the problem, addressing the problem, collecting and analyzing data to determine if the action makes a difference is the key. Finally, it is important to note future actions. What do the findings tell us?

SuzanMV: In order to for students to raise their reading level they have to read daily

DianeDP: I think tonight's session is exciting because we have shared experiences about AR and what it is. Next month, let's focus on specific puzzlements and how we might investigate those puzzlements.

SuzanMV: Many of my students can not read to their parents because they don't understand English

DianeDP: I would like to turn this over to BJ who will tell you all how to join this group. OK BJ?

BJB2 nods

LadonnaMC: how do you nod?

BJB2: Before I do...a reminder that the next Action Research discussion is on May14

SuzanMV: I run a reading and writing support class for an hour in the morning.   I have students raise their reading levels by 2 and 3 grade levels within the 2 semesters.

BJB2: to join this group go to the web window (if you have detached your chat, the web window is behind the chat

BJB2: find the Welcome note and scroll down the green circle in the welcome note

BJB2 . o O (This is the group room for Action Research)

BJB2: click on the green i and you will see the group ID page. At the top is Join this group

BJB2: when you see the prompt, you have successfully joined this group you will be able to post to the discussion board in this room

BJB2: and get posts from the discussion board

BJB2: this allows the group to maintain a dialogue between monthly discussions

BJB2: Thank you, Diane, for leading this discussion....

JenniferNi: Thank you Diane, and BJ, bye

BJB2: and thank you all for such lively participation...great discussion!

DianeDP: BJ-thank you for giving these instructions. If anyone needs to email me, I am dpainter@su.edu

DianeDP: Thank you for joining this chat. It was great.

KellyMol: Thanks, Diane!

SuzanMV: thank you everyone

DianeDP: See you next month.

BJB2 waves bye. Thanks again, Diane

VeronicaB: Thanks Diane! Thanks Bj!