

# Introduction to Action Research

Erasmus : Culture of Learning Challenge  
Action Research Guide for Practitioners

Sharon James



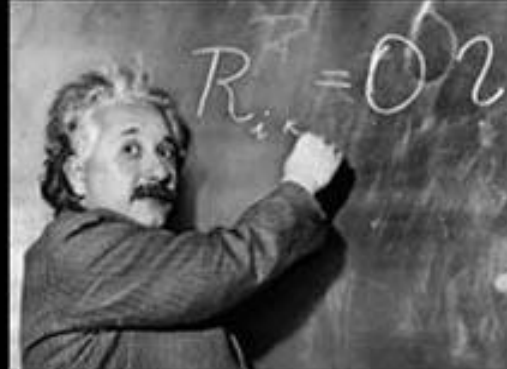
Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# Culture of learning

# TEACHER



**What my friends think I do**



**What my Mom thinks I do**

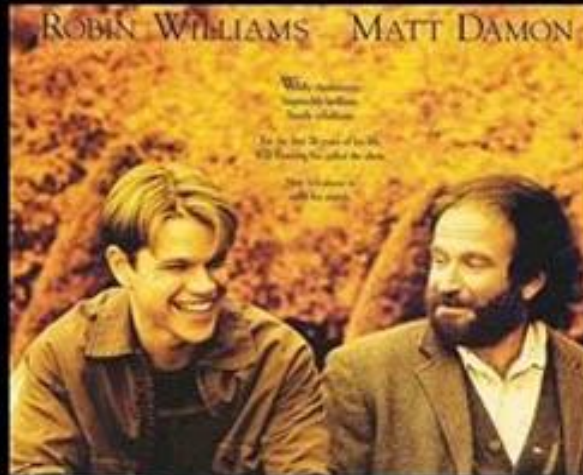


**What society thinks I do**



3

**What kids think I do**



**What I think I do**

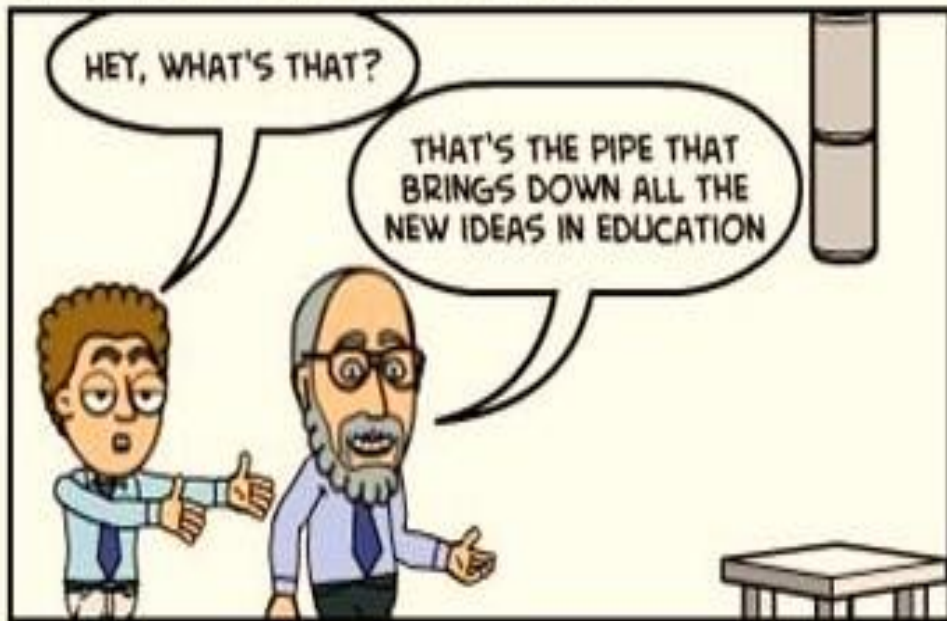


23/05/2018

**What I really do**

# NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION

BY BONEYARD



# What is action research? Pg 1

# What is practitioner research?

- <http://www.tlrp.org/capacity/rm/wt/campbell/#howto>
- Campbell, A. (2007) Practitioner Research. London: TLRP. Online at <http://www.tlrp.org/capacity/rm/wt/campbell> (accessed 23 Nov 2015)

# Practitioner research

Participatory

Small-scale case study

Critical action

Small-scale ethnographic study

Action research

Action learning

Classroom action

Action science

# What is action research?

Look

Think

Act

Stringer (1999)

# The challenge pg 2

# Action research: the responsibility of school communities to improve the school learning environment

You could choose:

a strategy you are already using **to evaluate its effectiveness**

**Or**

a new strategy to promote pupil learning **and observe its introduction**

**Or**

**Chart the value** of a professional development strategy for promoting teacher learning

**Or...**

[Why do we research?](#)

# Identify Initial Inquiry

pg 3



# Using practitioner research

The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom  
Research: Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn  
Through Practitioner Inquiry

By Nancy Fichtman Dana, Diane Yendol-Hoppey

Now I can't imagine *not* having a question:  
that guides my thinking,  
that helps me to determine what kind of data I need  
and how to gather it,  
a question that helps me look at my assumptions  
and helps me open up possibilities.

I am a better educator  
because I have begun to  
explore questions about my  
practice in a systematic  
way.

# Why do we research?

To find out...

How, why, what, who, when

To improve...

Outcomes, teaching, learning

To explain...

Situation, change, no change

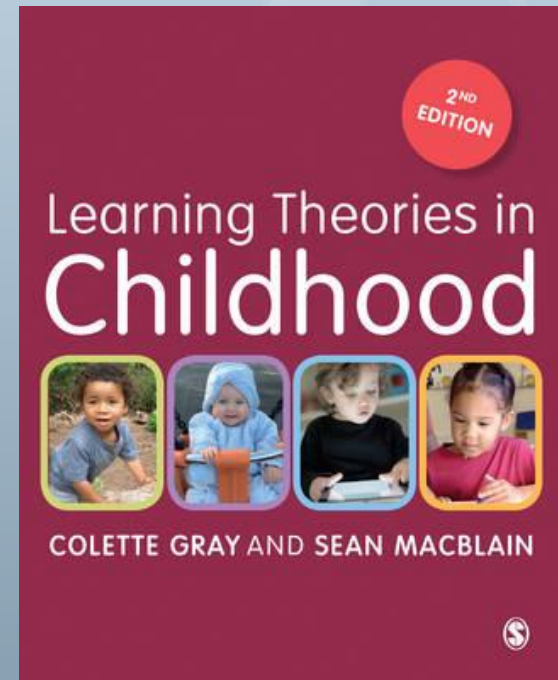
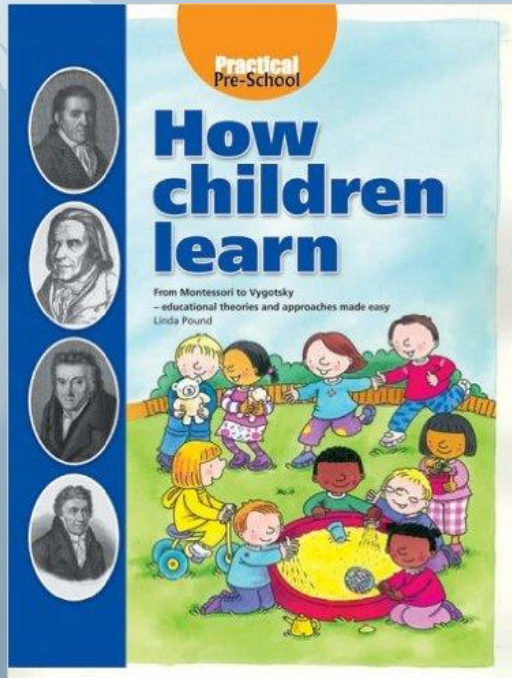
[Write your research question](#)

# Fact Finding

# Research expectations

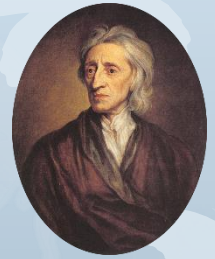
- Read...read...read
- Read widely – text books, technical books, professional magazines, journal articles, government documents, on-line materials from a reliable source
- Read critically – is that true?

# What educational theories do we remember?



- <http://www.learning-theories.com/>

# John Locke 1632-1704



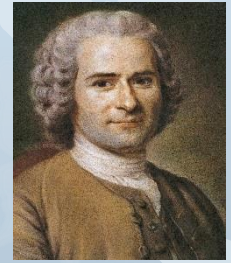
## Essay Concerning Human Understanding

theory of the self as a blank page, with knowledge and identity arising only from accumulated experience: tabula rasa

## Thoughts Concerning Education (1693)

Locke argued for a broadened syllabus and better treatment of students: the importance of learning how to learn

# Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778

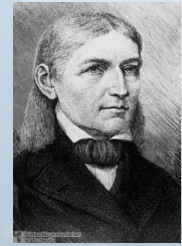


## Emile *or* On Education

He divides childhood into stages:

- the first to the age of about 12, when children are guided by their emotions and impulses
- during the second stage, from 12 to about 16, reason starts to develop
- finally the third stage, from the age of 16 onwards, when the child develops into an adult

# Friedrich Froebel 1782-1852



encouraged the creation of educational environments that involved practical work and the direct use of materials.

engaging with the world, understanding unfolds the significance of play – it is both a creative activity and through it children become aware of their place in the world

# Susan Isaacs

1885-1948



Children learned best through their own play.

*For Isaacs, play involves a perpetual form of experiment... "at any moment, a new line of inquiry or argument might flash out, a new step in understanding be taken".*

"What imaginative play does, in the first place is to create practical situations which may often then be pursued for their own sake, and this leads on to actual discovery or to verbal judgment and reasoning".

The role of the adults, then, is to guide children's play, but on the whole they should have freedom to explore.

*Intellectual Growth in Young Children*

Jerome Bruner

1915 - 2016



1996, in *The Culture of Education*, Bruner reassessed the state of educational practices three decades after he had begun his educational research.

Often posed the question – Why do you look at what I said when I started? I have changed my thinking; I have grown my theories. Look at what is happening now and what needs to happen.



- Reggio Emilia

<http://www.reggiokids.com/#!our-perspective/rcpd8>

<http://www.reggiokids.com/#!the-reggio-approach/x27yp>

No single theorist has offered a **complete** explanation of children's learning

○ Pavlov

○ Skinner

○ Piaget

○ Vygotsky

○ Bandura

○ Bruner

○ Dewey

○ Montessori

# Current educational thinking or fads?

- Bloom's Taxonomy
- Brain-Based Teaching & Learning
- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Emotional Intelligence
- Feminist & Gender Issues
- Global Education
- Growth mindset theory
- Inquiry-Based Teaching
- Learning Styles
- Multiculturalism
- Multiple Intelligences
- Outcome-Based Education (or Standards-Based Education)
- Phonics vs. Whole Language
- Problem Solving
- Thematic Curriculum



# Standing on the shoulders of giants

## Meaning:

Using the understanding gained by major thinkers who have gone before in order to make intellectual progress.

## Origin

The best-known use of this phrase was by Isaac Newton in a letter to his rival Robert Hooke, in 1676:

*"What Descartes did was a good step. You have added much several ways, and especially in taking the colours of thin plates into philosophical consideration. If I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."*

<http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/268025.html>

# Write your research question pg 5

- Action research: the responsibility of school communities...

# Plan pg 6

# Research design

General categories of research design currently being used in educational research

1. Quantitative
2. Qualitative
3. Mixed Methods

# Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

The ultimate goal when choosing a design is to produce a credible answer to the research question

The research question drives the choice of a research design

# Research design

Remember: different purposes of research –  
Explanatory or Exploratory

Consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of  
different approaches for specific purposes

Consider the complementary nature of quantitative  
and qualitative approaches

# Difficulties conducting educational research

Involves human beings and the complexities associated with them

Difficulties generalising from specific studies

Problems when imposing sufficient controls to conduct research in educational settings

Complications when observing in educational settings

Indirect measurement of the variables being studied

**Think ethically**      **pg 7**

# Human Rights

The instruments of the international human rights framework are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the six core human rights treaties:

- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Article 1 (Definition of the child): The Convention defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger.

Article 2 (Non-discrimination): The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. **No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.**

Article 3 (Best interests of the child): The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. **When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.** This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

Article 5 (Parental guidance): Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly. Helping children to understand their rights does not mean pushing them to make choices with consequences that they are too young to handle. Article 5 encourages parents to deal with rights issues "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child". The Convention does not take responsibility for children away from their parents and give more authority to governments. It does place on governments the responsibility to protect and assist families in fulfilling their essential role as nurturers of children.

Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child): **When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.** This does not mean that children can now tell their parents what to do. This Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making -- not give children authority over adults. Article 12 does not interfere with parents' right and responsibility to express their views on matters affecting their children. **Moreover, the Convention recognizes that the level of a child's participation in decisions must be appropriate to the child's level of maturity.** Children's ability to form and express their opinions develops with age and most adults will naturally give the views of teenagers greater weight than those of a pre-schooler, whether in family, legal or administrative decisions. When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

Article 16 (Right to privacy): **Children have a right to privacy.** The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

Article 31 (Leisure, play and culture): Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

# Choosing ethically

## Examples:

- Pupil voice
- Choosing to talk to them in their free time
- Insistence on participation
- Parental consent
- Disadvantage through 'control' groups

Take action steps pg 8

Data collection

Analyse pg 8

Data crunching

Share pg 8

Professional dialogue