

R10 – Guide to writing up your Action Research

This guide offers a suggested structure for you to use when writing up your action research report.

Format

It is helpful for the eedNET team if you can format your report as follows:

Length: Most teachers find that they need a minimum of 1,200 words to do justice to their inquiries.

Font: Please use a plain font such as Calibri or Ariel, point 12, with report headings in bold.

Headings for your report

1. Context

Begin with a short paragraph about your school or college to help the reader understand your context. If there are several teachers in one school completing reports you might like to agree a common statement about the school that you all include, and then add a few words about your own department and role. You can also include a description of the students on whom you have chosen to focus [number, gender, year group, subject, and any other relevant characteristics].

2. The 'problem' or issue you have addressed

Briefly describe the issue that your research investigated. You could talk about the initial observations you made about your target group of students that alerted you to the 'issue', for example, were some more resilient than others, or more resourceful, and you would like more of them to be like this. Alternatively, you might be interested in improving the way you give feedback or ask questions in class. Whichever it is, you could tell us why you think it will enhance our understanding of expansive education, and why you have chosen the students you have selected.

3. Review of current practice and literature

Here you could tell us briefly about your current practice that is relevant to the research. More broadly, the 'problem' might also have led you to survey others' work and to read more widely. So include a brief section here if you did look at any books, research articles or reports to see what could be learned from these. This may help you to produce your own research question. Your own school/college policies and Ofsted reports might also be sources of information that helped you formulate your ideas.

4. My Research Question

Write down your final action research question in the format '**If I do X, will Y happen?**' Where X is the action you are going to take, and Y is the expansive outcome you hope to see for your students. You could follow this with a few supporting remarks, either about any specific research you read which supports the 'hypothesis' you are exploring in your question, or maybe a brief description of any relevant practice you found out about as part of your action research preparation.

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5. The Project

A description of what you did differently [your 'action'] and the methods you used to collect data [your 'research']. Different research designs will entail different ways of collecting data and Action Research approaches tend to favour 'mixed methods' of data collection, for example:

- an initial and/or end-of intervention survey
- participant observation
- interviews, and
- field notes.

See our handout R5 for more a more detailed description of the evaluation methods you could use. If you plan to include in your report any photographs of your class, please ensure that you have followed your school's guidelines on publishing images of your children.

6. Findings

Answer your initial research question here. Provide a summary of what you found out and your conclusions. You can include simple tables or charts, where relevant, which highlight the analysis of the data you collected. If you refer to specific students, please make sure you anonymise their names rather than use their real ones.

7. Lessons Learned

A few pointers as to what your own and other schools might learn from your findings. This section is also a chance for you to share your own reflections as a practitioner. What did you learn? What did you find challenging? What has it left you thinking, wondering? What might you do next? Another round of action research maybe?

8. References

List any books or research articles you used for (3) if you reviewed other people's work on your issue. Because other teachers may wish to locate and read the sources you found useful, it is helpful to give enough detail, so use the following formats to cite different types of publication, depending on whether they are books, journal articles, reports or websites: -

Book: Author surname, initial. (Year of publication) *Book title*. Publisher's location: Publisher's name.

E.g.: Hattie, J. (2012) *Visible Learning for Teachers*. London: Routledge.

Journal article: Author surname, initial. (Year of publication) Article title. *Journal title*, volume number (part number), page numbers.

E.g.: Zimmerman, B. (2002) Becoming a self-regulated learner: an overview. *Theory into Practice*, 41 (2), 64-70.

Report found on the web: Author surname, initial. (Year of publication) *Report title*. Publisher's location: Publisher's name. Full URL and (date accessed).

E.g.: Williams, P. (2008) *Independent Review of Mathematics Teaching in Early Years Settings and Primary Schools. Final Report*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.
<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8365/1/Williams%20Mathematics.pdf> (Accessed 07 April 2014).

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Website: Name of website (Date if available) 'Title of page accessed'. Full URL and (date accessed).

E.g.: Harvard Graduate School of Education Project Zero (2014) 'Visible thinking.'
<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/visible-thinking> (Accessed date/month/year)

9. Appendices

If you developed a questionnaire survey or a checklist to use for your evaluation, please include it as an appendix. Other teachers may well be able to adapt it for their own enquiry.

Finally, publishing your report

When you send your completed report to us we will check the format and do a 'light edit'. We will then finalise the front cover, maybe adding some extra keywords, for example, and upload it to the Members' Area of the Expansive Education Network website, www.expansiveeducation.net.

Your report will receive its own URL so you and other eedNET members can find it easily.