

Basic Template for an Action Research Thesis

The basic organization for a thesis that uses the Action Research (AR) methodology is somewhat distinct. As AR is observation based and rooted in the tradition of solving a real-world situated (classroom-based) problem and does not set out to test a point, the layout should be different from what we might think of as the classical empirical model or template.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduce the idea of AR and why it is applicable to the setting. Also introduce the basic topic of the research (what might be best termed the issue) and the way that it will be explored in the AR.

Chapter 2

The Setting and the Problem

Introduce in detail the setting in which the action occurs. This means unpacking in detail the classroom situation as well as the learners. This may involve bringing in surveys and observation conducted before the action plan is devised and implemented. This information is critical in clearly introducing the problem or issue. Introduce the issue and how it was decided that this is an important issue that needs to be dealt with in the classroom.

Chapter 3

The Action Plan

This chapter is akin to the literature review chapter in an empirical research study. It introduces the intervention that forms the theoretical basis for the action plan. Therefore, the specific intervention (e.g., mime games) is introduced by unpacking the theory underlying the practice. This involves introducing the theoretical underpinnings of the practice as well as any closely related previous research in order to justify its use in the action plan. Once the intervention has been sufficiently justified the action plan is introduced. This includes a basic timeline with basic information about the cycles.

Chapter 4

Cycle 1

The cycle chapters are to be broken into several sections. The first is the introductory part. The basic set of practices for the 1st cycle are introduced. This includes the materials used for teaching as well as the materials used for data collection. The next section is the results and in this part the results of the invention in cycle 1 are presented with a discussion. The final section is the conclusions, and this includes the basic findings of the first cycle (what worked well and what could be improved on). The conclusions form a bridge into the next cycle. The basic idea is that the things that need still need to be improved on form the basis for the next cycle.

Chapter 5

Cycle 2

The chapter for cycle 2 has the same basic format of that of the 1st cycle, but with the focus on the new aspect of the invention that is new in the 2nd cycle.

Chapter 6

Cycle 3

The chapter covering cycle 3 (if there is a cycle 3), again, follows the same basic format of the first two cycle chapters with the exception that the conclusions are somewhat abridged. They do not mention a next step as this is the end of the intervention.

Chapter 7

Meta Discussion

In this chapter the whole intervention (cycles 1-3) is discussed. This discussion should center on one simple guiding question – how successful was the intervention in this setting. Again, the follow up questions of what worked well and what could be improved are used to guide the discussion. Keep the meta discussion focused on the results already presented in the previous cycle chapters and do not introduce any new data or undocumented impressions.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Summarize the whole AR including the results and present some suggestions for teachers as well as possibilities for further interventions to improve the issue.