

Sookmyung Women's University  
Graduate School of TESOL  
**Practicum I & II**  
Fall 2017

Summer reading assignment:

Text:

Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. New York/London: Routledge.

Please answer these 4 questions in about 3-4 pages (Times New Roman, 12 pt font) based on the text (draft due on Week 1 and final version due Week 2).

1. Explain, in your own words, what is action research and what are its key characteristics? In what ways is it different from empirical research?
2. Briefly explain each of the stages of the action research process in your own words, including how they are connected together.
3. In action research, what are the various ways in which data can be collected and analyzed? In addition, give 2 examples based on research studies reported in the book to show how data can be collected and analyzed.
4. How is an action research report organized? (i.e. what is its format?)

More on the Action Research project:

The basic idea behind this action research project is to try to glean information about our teaching from point of view of classroom observation and in a somewhat more empirical nature. The focus here, following the action research paradigm, is to analyze elements of classroom teaching and the overall class situation and to see how such elements could be improved. This is all about problem solving and making our class better, goals that clearly fall into the paradigm of this Practicum course. In order to do this, you will need to work through the four basic Action Research movements. In the end, you will prepare an Action Research report which is to be included in your portfolio.

**Movement One - Plan**

Researchers will first need to identify a particular problem or area of concern in the classroom. This could be an area of their own concern that the teachers themselves have noticed or it may be generated from outside observation. It could be a student-generated concern. In the former, careful analysis of reflection journals may reveal a particular area which all parties involved have become concerned with during the course of teaching the class. The latter may involve giving surveys to students and seeing what the students themselves perceive as being either problems with the class or areas which they are mostly concerned about in their own development. The first movement is all about identifying a particular area to be researched. Essentially, researchers are to think of this as observation-based research. Thus, the research should be based on observation and the goal is not to show something but to find an issue that will be addressed in the following parts of the research.

### **Movement Two – Act**

Once an area has been identified through observation, and sufficiently contextualized through triangulated research then the second movement basically involves developing a treatment through trial and error. This will probably involve making certain changes to what normally happens in the classroom related to the area that is being focused on. Basically, certain treatments will be posited and tried out in the classroom. Simply put, in the second movement we try to devise possible solutions or treatments designed deal with the problem area. Once more, the treatments are tried out in a systematic way in the classroom – hence the term act.

### **Movement Three - Observe**

In the third movement we accumulate data about the changes/treatments we have made in order to try to find out whether they were effective at all or which changes seem to work the best. Again, observation plays a pivotal role in how we assess the effects of the individual treatments. Basically what we are looking for is some substantiation, some feedback, about what we have done to make the class function better. In this way we can make changes that are deemed more effective by the students themselves or by other stakeholders such as the teachers themselves.

### **Movement Four – Reflect**

In the fourth movement researchers are expected to reflect on everything that has been done as a whole. This can be equated in some ways to the discussion section of an empirical study. Here, the researchers analyze and discuss the overall results.

All in all, you will be given a free hand in choosing not only your areas of concern but also your treatments. Your instructor will, of course, provide guidance and feedback with this. At the end of the course a brief write-up of your efforts regarding this Action Research project will be required, and will be placed in the portfolio as evidence of teaching development and professionalism. Try to have fun with this and try to use this as a useful tool for not only monitoring but also altering your own classroom behaviors. It should be fun and enlightening.

As far as the timing for this project goes, you will have until Week 5 to come up with an area of concern which you want to focus on (Plan). This gives you about four weeks of class time to try to identify problems or concerns with either something in the class or related to the web materials. After the initial identification of the area of concern, you will then have six weeks in the class to try out your different treatments (Movements Two and Three), and after each one to glean some information from the students or those affected by those treatments. It is important to remember that you should not wait until the very end, the last moment, in order to observe the effects of the treatments. As soon as you try something new you should survey or observe changes directly afterwards. In the end students will then have about two weeks to write up the reflection of your results. The length of the write-ups should be between approximately 15 pages, not counting any of the survey material produced. Please refer to your syllabus to find out the exact dues of the write-ups.

The summer reading materials are devoted to the Action Research project, so try to get the book as soon as possible and read through it and make sure you ask me early on if you have any questions.