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**Action Research Workbook (Word Version)**

This workbook, which also exists in an Excel version, is designed to help Action Research Leads and colleagues to identify and store essential work in a single place. The Workbook is not mandatory. Rather, it advises on content that will be useful – ‘research essentials’ – and should be kept in a single place of your choice, if not in the Workbook then on a Padlet or elsewhere.

Workbook covers your specific contexts, project management, design (methods), data collection and wider ‘so what?’ reflections. The content is not exhaustive – feel free to add your own information/headings. This

Keeping the Workbook a ‘live’ working document, returning to it throughout the year, will make compiling the important final written Report easier.

**Contents**

1. Research Focus
2. Timetable
3. Literature Review process
4. Methods
5. Thinking, conclusions and recommendations

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1. **Research Focus**

Suggested completion window: Sept/Oct

This section covers ‘What are you you going to research, and why?’ **Pease write a few paragraphs in the space below**. This will become the Background section of your research report. Do reuse whatever is still relevant from your previous reports.

Guidance on what to include:

1.the wider contexts and rationale for selecting your specific project, e.g. structure and sizes of your college and partner network colleges and maths departments; socio-economic infomation/data about your learners and local communities; national and College policy priorities relating to maths; CfEM aims; Covid-19; other factors influencing your priorities for action research.

2.themes and topics of your research, e.g. you could mention the central theme this year is mastery; outline of the key mathematical teaching and learning issue for investigation as your team currently sees it; state your research topic, aim/title; your research question and approximately 3-6 subsidiary research objectives for your first action research cycle. Please keep track of evolving research questions and objectives as you move on to cycle 2 and, if relevant, cycle 3.

3.who the project is primarily about (e.g. GCSE maths students aged 16-19 in 2 General FE and 2 Sixth Form Colleges) and a broad indication of the main change that your project seeks to bring about (e.g. a certain change in behaviour, understanding of maths, teaching approach, attitudes, etc.). Please make very clear the link between the main change your project is seeking and improving attainment towards a grade 4 GCSE or FS L2, which is the ultimate goal of all CfEM work.

1. **Timetable**

Suggested completion dates: October half term for Cycle 1; end-January for Cycle 2; before start of Cycle 3.

Please use this page for managing your Action Research project. Set out your (a) broad approach to project management and (b) draft a working timetable that you can revisit regularly. It should help ensure the project is broken down into the required research activities, in a logical sequence, which can be followed step-by-step. It becomes a clear record of who is responsible for doing what. It enables project progress to be monitored. If preferred, keep the same information on your preferred platform or software such as Word or a Padlet.

**(a) Your own broad approach to project managing action research and the people involved**

What sort of project manager do you want to be and why? Please write a few sentences outlining your approach to project management in general and how you'll implement it in practical ways, including how this contributes to the overall quality of your project.

**(b) Action Research Timetable**

What research and what project management activities will who undertake, by when? You'll probably be able to complete the timetable for the first action research cycle before October half term and for the second cycle in January. If you end up doing a third cycle, it might be March or April when you can timetable it. Some AR Leads will have already done their timetable, others yet to start. To assist you all, feel free to edit and complete or cross-reference items on the suggested template below, adding rows to break down activities as much as possible, and referencing the relevant budget line / assurance of teachers' time.

Consider contingency for moving teaching, learning and research to online in case Covid outbreaks require this. However, please plan for qualitative, face-to-face data collection as much as possible this year.

**Edit the cells in the time table below for your own project.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AR Cycle** | **Research Activity** | **Who** | **When** | **Expected hrs/wk** (based on CfEM Lead's action plan. Add actual hours done, if wanted) |
| **Cycle 1** | **Discuss broad topic and** aims with CfEM Lead. Convene AR Group. | AR Lead | Sept | e.g. 2 hours / ARG member |
| **Reflect on your current practice** relating to the broad topic while doing your normal teaching. Share ideas for good practice & take on-board others' good ideas - these don't need researching, go ahead and put them into practice. If asked to do this, start keeping your reflective log. | All AR Group teachers | Sept & Oct | e.g. 10 mins x 3 / ARG member |
| **Discuss and agree what to research and how.** This should be narrowly focused - select just one manageable aspect for research for the first cycle. | All AR Group teachers | e.g. Early Oct | e.g. 2 hrs |
| **Design intervention and communicate/train** others in AR Group | AR Lead and others? | e.g. Mid Oct | e.g. Half day to 4 days |
| **Try out intervention.** Take time to familiarise and try with different classes/staff, if possible. Keep a log of your reflections e.g. what I tried, what worked well and why, what didn't and how I'd change it next time. | All AR Group teachers | e.g. 2-4 weeks e.g. Nov 8th or Nov 15th to Dec 3rd | e.g. 20 mins of 2 lessons per week / ARG member |
| **Design data collection tools and sample** (ie who you'll all collect data from) | AR Lead | e.g. While intervention is being tried out. | e.g. Half day to 2 days, incl consulting 1-2 colleagues/learners & amending after their feedback. |
| **Gather data** on the intervention, focusing on what works well and doesn't work, for whom and why? Also, what'd work better for people? | All AR Group teachers | e.g. Final week of intervention | Depends on data sources, etc. |
| **Analyse data and make conclusions**, possibly at an 'AR Group analysis workshop' having all read a summary of collated data. Data *may* include reflective logs, students' work, survey results, key themes from interviews/focus groups, management data. What have you learned? What will you carry on doing as normal, now? What, if anything, does your AR Group still not know how to do well and therefore want to research in your next cycle after Christmas? If you've 'cracked it' completely (or well-enough), move on to a new research focus. | AR Lead process and share data summaries. All AR Group teachers discuss. | e.g. In early/mid December | e.g. 2-3 hours with ARG members. |
| **Cycle 2** | Repeat stages above |  |  |  |

1. **Literature Review process**

**Completion date: 31st December full draft submitted to Cath Gladding (cath.gladding@etfoundation.co.uk) for feedback**

Your literature review has two main purposes:

1) To identify what previous research already found, which your own teaching can use and your research can build upon? There's no point reinventing the wheel.

2) To provide evidence to refer back to and help explain the findings of your investigations.

The literature review is a section/chapter of your final report, which every project writes and is due for submission to Cath in July.

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| **Here's a recommended process for doing a literature review. As always, feel free to adapt.** |
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**Use the space below (or an alternative) to keep your work on points 1-5 below in one place:**

|  |
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| 1. Long-list of potentially relevant sources |
| 1. Shortlist - based on a quick read of introduction, methods and conclusion to see if relevant and robust. |

1. Share out the reading so all AR Group teachers contribute at least one summary of an article. Depending on your research aim and objectives, it could be good to include: the full reference (title, author, date, journal/book/newspaper, publisher, weblink) definitions, theories, results and/or conclusions. However, AR Leads tend to read a lot more.
2. Sort all your summaries under headings or themes. If it helps, write a 'topic sentence' for the beginning of every paragraph you want to write.
3. Add your own analysis/interpretation on each theme and, finally, add an introduction and conclusion.
4. **Methods**

**Completion dates: at the beginning of each action research cycle, discussed/confirmed when meeting with Cath.**

Please use the space below to keep notes on HOW you conduct your research project, including as many details as possible about…

… the numbers of teachers and students involved over how many of which type of environment, site and classes;

… whether quantitative, qualitative or a mix of these approaches would be suitable for answering your research objectives

… when the research took place - just project beginning and end dates and fieldwork period(s).

… the Action Research Cycle you were following and number of cycles done.

… what data collection instrument(s) you used in each cycle and something about these, e.g. Ten 1-2-1 interviews with students who did/didn't do X, each 15 minutes long and asking their views and experiences on Y and Z. Also, how you analysed them, e.g. counts and percentages, coding and theming, triangulating different data sources.

… ethics, such as confidentiality, anonymity and your thinking on the importance of exercising mutual respect, inclusion of all views, etc.

Notes for 2021/22 - 1. Please include blank data collection tools such as questionnaires and interview scripts in the Appendices of your report. 2. Please try to make greater use of qualitative methods this year; they were under-utilised last year due to online teaching, etc. but tremendously valued where used. 3. This year, please carefully explain your intervention.

**Our advice is to keep notes in the space below (or elsewhere) that you compile throughout the year to make it easy to write the Methods section of your final written Report in June/July.**

1. **Thinking, conclusions and recommendations**

**Suggested completion dates: ongoing through to June to ease writing up in July**

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| Please copy and paste your project title/aim/question and objective here so that they are uppermost in mind.  Then use the spaces below to keep a note of all your thinking, conclusions and recommendations, and suggestions for further research.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Your title/aim/question and objectives** (pasted again here to help keep thinking, conclusions and  recommendations relevant to the original question/aim.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | **Thinking (notes)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | **Ideas for conclusions** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | **Ideas for recommendations** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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