



Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher (3rd Edition)

By Geoffrey E. Mills

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Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher (3rd Edition) By Geoffrey E. Mills

Known for its practical, step-by-step guidance for teachers on how to do research in classrooms. Born of the author's own experience working with teachers and principals, this book provides a step-by-step outline of how to “do” action research—backed by the most extensive theory and research coverage on the market today. The author guides future educators through the action research process via numerous concrete illustrations and a wealth of on-line resources; positioning it as a fundamental component of teaching, alongside curriculum development, assessment, and classroom management. Key changes in the revision include: a new chapter on ethics (Chapter 5), expanded discussion of literature review, expanded discussion of data collection techniques using quantitative data collection techniques, expanded coverage of data analysis and interpretation techniques, and expanded coverage of descriptive statistics in Appendix B. Accessible, comprehensive, scholastically sound—this is a “hands-on” guide for anyone who aspires to be an exceptional educator.

FEATURES:

- **NEW! Expanded coverage of "Ethics"**--Includes a new chapter devoted to ethics (Chapter 5).
- **NEW! Revised and increased discussion of quantitative data techniques**-- Found throughout Chapter 3.
- **NEW! Expanded discussion on the use of style manuals (e.g., APA Manual of Style)**-- Readers can find this important, applicable information in the newly added Chapter 8.
- **NEW! Increased discussion of descriptive statistics and action research**-- Includes other ways to calculate standard deviation, not just by using SPSS (Appendix B).
- **NEW! Rearranged order of chapters pertaining to the writing of and sharing of action research**-- Presents a clearer path to understanding.
 - Now in the new edition readers will learn about "Writing Up Action Research" (Chapter 8) before the "Sharing, Critiquing, and Celebrating Action Research" (Chapter 9).
- **Coverage of how to visually display qualitative data in appendix.**

- Provides basic usable tools for presenting and interpreting qualitative data.
- **Explanation of the four-step action research process**—Accompanied by various models and discussion of each step's impact on results.
 - Guides, step-by-step, through conducting action research—identifying focus area, collecting data, analyzing/interpreting data, and action planning.
- **Explanation of the “3 E's” of data collection**—Experiencing, enquiring, and examining.
 - Ensures teachers understand the crucial importance of thorough data collection to the success of any research.
- **Case study of *Curtis Elementary School***—Presented in Appendix I—follows the text's action research process as it happens in an example school.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

***Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher, Third Edition*
Geoffrey E. Mills**

This text provides a step-by-step, how-to approach of "doing" action research--backed by the most extensive theory and research coverage on the market today. The author guides future and current educators through the action research process with numerous concrete illustrations and a wealth of on-line resources, positioning action research as a fundamental component of teaching alongside curriculum development, assessment, and classroom management.

Key changes in the new edition of this market-leading text are:

More Balanced Coverage of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection Techniques

- *NEW!* Increased coverage of the most frequently used quantitative data collection techniques in action research, including teacher-made tests, standardized tests, and report cards, is included in Chapter 3, "Data Collection Techniques."

More Balanced Coverage of How to Analyze Both Quantitative and Qualitative Data

- Chapter 6, "Data Analysis and Interpretation," and Appendix B, "Descriptive Statistics and Action Research," guide students through the data analysis process and provide techniques, coding guidelines, and examples for analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data.
- *NEW!* An expanded discussion of descriptive statistics in Appendix B includes step-by-step guidance on how to calculate standard deviation by hand with the help of a calculator rather than using SPSS.

Rearranged Order of Chapters Pertaining to Writing and Sharing of Action Research

- *NEW!* "Writing Up Action Research" (Chapter 8) precedes, "Sharing, Critiquing, and Celebrating Action Research" (Chapter 9) to present a more logical and clearer path to understanding.

Separate Chapter Completely Devoted to Ethics

- *NEW!* Chapter 5 provides an expanded discussion of ethical issues, principles, and guidelines.

To view the website that accompanies this text, please go to <http://www.prenhall.com/mills>.

About the Author

A native of Australia, Geoff Mills moved to the USA in 1986 to undertake doctoral studies at the University

of Oregon. After completing his PhD in 1988, Geoff accepted his first teaching position at Southern Oregon State College (now Southern Oregon University). After 12 years of teaching, Geoff moved in to university administration where he served as Dean and Professor of Education in the School of Education at Southern Oregon University. Most recently, Geoff has returned to the faculty in the School of Education as a professor of education.

Geoff has traveled extensively and given invited action research presentations in Australia, New Zealand, Greenland, United Kingdom, Canada, and many states in the United States. In addition to *Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher*, 5e, Geoff is also the active author of *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications* (2012; with L. R. Gay and P. Airasian), now in its 10th edition.

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The Role of Action Research in Effecting Educational Change

Action research has the potential to be a powerful agent of educational change. Action research helps to develop teachers and administrators with professional attitudes that embrace action, progress, and reform rather than stability and mediocrity. In addition, the action research process fosters a democratic approach to decision making while, at the same time, it empowers individual teachers through participation in a collaborative, socially responsive research activity.

Commitment to action research positions teachers and administrators as learners rather than experts. Those committed to action research will willingly undertake continued professional development because they believe that there is a gap between the real world of their daily teaching practices and their vision of an ideal one.

Incorporating action research into preservice teacher education programs and professional development programs for inservice teachers will help make action research an ongoing component of a professional teacher's practice. Such action will ultimately help teachers to incorporate action research alongside other critical components of teaching, such as curriculum development, authentic assessment strategies, classroom management strategies, teaching strategies, and caring for children. Such actions will encourage teachers to embrace change.

It is my hope that this book will, in some small part, help us all to move forward in difficult times. Action research is an invitation to learn, a means to tackle tough questions that face us individually and collectively as teachers, and a method for questioning our daily taken-for-granted assumptions as a way to find hope for the future.

Conceptual Framework and organization of the Text

This book has emerged over a number of years and is based on my experience of doing and teaching action research. During this time, I have had the opportunity to work with some outstanding teachers and principals who were committed to looking systematically at the effects of their programs on the lives of children. This book's organization has grown out of these experiences and has been field tested by numerous students and colleagues.

Each chapter opens with an action research vignette that illustrates the content that will follow. These vignettes, most of which have been written by teachers and principals with whom I have worked, illustrate who does action research and what action research looks like in practice. The order of these chapters roughly

matches the action research process, an approach that I have found very successful when teaching action research.

Contents of this New Edition

Chapter 1 defines action research and provides historical and theoretical contexts for the rest of the book. The chapter also reviews various models of action research and concludes with the four-step process (identifying an area of focus, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, and action planning) and the dialectic, model upon which this book is based. The remaining chapters mirror these steps.

Chapter 2 helps action researchers choose an "area of focus." Guidelines for selecting an area of focus are offered along with new and expanded step-by-step directions for how to do a literature review using on-line resources "such as ERIC. The chapter culminates with an action research plan that provides a practical guide for moving teacher researchers through the action research process.

Chapter 3 offers a comprehensive discussion on qualitative data collection that covers the "3 Es" of data collection: experiencing, enquiring, and examining. New to this edition are more coverage of interviewing guidelines and a data collection matrix for researcher use.

Chapter 4 addresses important data collection considerations, such as validity, reliability, and generalizability, to ensure that the data collected will be "trustworthy." The chapter also offers ethical guideposts and poses an ethical dilemma vignette to spark teacher researchers' thinking about how best to resolve ethical dilemmas if and when they arise.

Chapter 5 describes selected techniques of data analysis and data interpretation and distinguishes between the goals of the two processes. New to this edition are (1) guidelines and an example of coding qualitative data and (2) a new section and an illustration of using computer software to assist with data analysis.

Chapter 6 helps teacher researchers take action using a helpful Steps to Action chart. The chapter also discusses the potential obstacles to change that teacher researchers might face and suggests strategies for overcoming these obstacles.

Chapter 7 discusses the importance of bridging the gap between research and practice and following through with the complete action research cycle to ensure that the findings of the research have an impact on student learning. The importance of sharing, critiquing, and celebrating action research is also covered, along with valuable guidelines for using the action research resources offered on the Internet, including expanded coverage of action research web sites, listservs, and on-line journals.

Finally, Chapter 8, a new chapter, provides practical guidelines for writing up action research and ways that teacher researchers can "get the word out." A reprinted action research article with marginal annotations gives researchers an example of the general structure and components of written action research. A selfevaluation rubric helps teachers make sure their write-up is ready for publication.

Appendix A contains an extended example of action research through a case study of Curtis Elementary. The case study follows the process described throughout the book and includes an evaluation of the project on the basis of criteria for judging the quality of action research. New Appendix B contains a brief discussion of descriptive statistics (mean, mode, median, and standard deviation) and an illustration of how they can be applied to the analysis and interpretation of teacher research. New Appendix C, "Displaying Data Visually," presents a variety of examples of visual displays of data—bar graphs, tables, and a concept map—from action research projects. Using these display techniques helps teachers "see" data for better analysis and more effective communication of their findings.

Features of the Text

The text's user-friendly format includes chapter objectives, Key Concepts boxes, Research in Action Checklists, chapter summaries, and questions for further thought. The text also includes many practical illustrations of the action research process that will help teacher researchers apply the process in their own school or classroom setting. The unique information in Chapter 7, which provides on-line action research resources, will be a welcome feature to teacher researchers who wish to interact with other action researchers and access the plethora of action research resources available on the Internet.

Accompanying the text is a Web site at www.prenhall.com/mills, providing resources for students and instructors. For students, tasks provide action research practice opportunities, Web links provide handy access to relevant Web sites, and summaries of key concepts help researchers understand important chapter concepts. For instructors, PowerPoint Slides are available for use with each chapter.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Deborah Ellefson:

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James Anderson:

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Tim Andrus:

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Ashley Robinette:

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