

Case Study Guidelines

A. Action Research Proposal

The Introduction and Method section of your Action Research Project will be submitted along with your Portfolio Section 2 Assessment Results (two separate documents). This assignment requires you to:

1. provide a rationale for the focus of your proposed Action Research Project
2. clearly articulate the question or questions that will guide your Project, and
3. describe your method (your plan) for data collection.

Your introduction should include:

- A description of the problem (student learning need) you propose to address as the focus for your Project. The problem should be based on relevant data collected as a baseline.
- A description of the context for your proposed project (relevant learner, classroom, school, community characteristics),
- An explanation of why you are personally interested in this particular focus,
- An explanation of why this is a critical focus professionally (how improving this area or aspect of educational practice will benefit the field of schooling, teaching and learning), and,
- A clear statement of the question or questions that will guide your project.

Your methods section should include the following:

- A description of each of the data sources you will use to answer your guiding action research question or questions (i.e., student assessment data, pre- and/or post-tests, student work samples, interviews, observations, etc.),
- The timeline for collecting your data – including your summative (pre-test, post-test) and formative data sources. This does not have to be in table form but can be a narrative discussing the timeline.
- A description of how you will analyze your data.

Formulate the research question or questions that will guide your Action Research Project

Through the required chapter readings and exploration of the supplemental readings, you will generate your research question(s). Your research question should be open-ended. It should not be answered with a "yes" or "no" because you don't know the outcome prior to implementation. Rather, your question should reflect how a strategy influenced or impacted student learning. For example, if your student struggles with fluency, a good open-ended question might be "*How does Readers Theater influence a struggling fourth grader's reading fluency?*" This question cannot be answered with "yes" or "no", rather, it will show influence, either positive or negative. This question format allows you to follow the research wherever it takes you. Action research is research in action, or problem-solving in the

classroom. We all know that a-ha moments and teachable moments occur all the time. Having an open-ended question lets you follow where these lead!

As you develop the focus for your project and refine your guiding question(s), you have also gathered the Background Information and data results from the assessments that will inform the Introduction section of your Action Research Project Report.

You should review the AR Introduction & Methods Handout (attached) for the information and the criteria that will be used to assess the Introduction to your project. Keep these questions in mind as you continue in your portfolio work:

1. What problem or student learning need, as revealed by your assessment data, will your project address? Why is this an important focus for your project?
2. What is your idea for your guiding research question or questions?

Your question(s) should be supported by your rationale and should identify the action you plan to take and the change you want to affect.

B. Action Research Data Analysis, Findings, and Conclusions/Recommendations

Now that you have collected the data on the one instructional strategy on which you are writing your Action Research Report, you need to analyze that data. Analyzing data simply means you reflect on the data you have collected, searching for patterns or discovering the results of what you did. Look at the reflection you wrote for that instructional strategy. Look at all of your pieces of data that you said you would collect on the one strategy. What does all of this data tell you about your struggling reader's growth throughout the semester? Based on the information you have read about analyzing the data and reporting the findings, write the Data Analysis section of your Action Research Report. Be sure to include charts, graphs, or other visuals embedded in the narrative of your Data Analysis section. The charts, graphs, and visuals should reflect your baseline, or beginning, data; your mid-point data; and your final data to chart student learning growth. Each visual should be clearly labeled as either a chart, graph, table, or other such label along with a title and should be inserted into the data analysis section where you discuss it. These visuals should be referred to in the data analysis discussion as "chart 1", "table 1", or whichever label you choose. Visit [OWL at Purdue's website](#) for information about APA formatting for these visuals.

Action research should be a regular part of your data-driven classroom instruction or when working with struggling readers throughout your career. Action research is simply a method of formalizing what you do in the classroom every single day as a reflective practitioner. It isn't extra. It is how you know your students are growing and learning.

The five parts of the Action Research Report in order include:

1. Introduction (background and contextual information on your struggling reader, including the assessment results)
2. Literature Review (the synthesis of five research articles connecting your student plan information to theory, research, and action you took)
3. Methods and Data Collection (what did you do, step by step? what types of data did you collect?)

4. Data Analysis (what did your data tell you happened as a result of your instruction?)
5. Conclusion and Recommendations (how can your research inform other teachers who want to try your instructional strategy? what were your study's limitations? what questions do you still have? what do you plan to do next as a result of this study? what did you learn and how did you grow as a result of this study?)

Case Study – Action Research Questions with Pre-test and Post-Test Data

Program Completer	Initial Level Program	AR Question	Measure	Pre-test	Post-test
Program Completer 1	BA - English (Grades 5-Adult)	How can semantic mapping influence struggling twelfth graders' vocabulary skills?	Defining Vocabulary in Context	40%	80%
Program Completer 2	BA - Elementary (K-6) with Special Education concentration	How does evidence-based instruction impact seventh grade students' learning of root words, prefixes, and suffixes?	Quiz – Root words, Prefixes, and Suffixes	52%	76%
Program Completer 3	BA - Elementary	How does using the "Get the Gist" strategy influence seventh graders' reading comprehension?	Comprehension Quiz	75%	100%
Program Completer 4	M.Ed. - Multi-categorical Special Education (K-Adult)	How will using evidence-based fluency strategies improve reading fluency skills for high school students with significant reading disabilities?	Running Record	91% accuracy	93% accuracy
Program Completer 5	BA - Elementary (K-6) with Special Education concentration	What are the effects of using visualizing to increase comprehension in fifth-grade students?	Comprehension Quiz	60%	100%