



# **Example of action research in English language teaching**

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# Example of action research in English language teaching

- **Practical steps in conducting an action research**
- **Conceptualizing action research for conference presentation and publication**
- **Questions for action research**



# Practical steps for my action research cycle

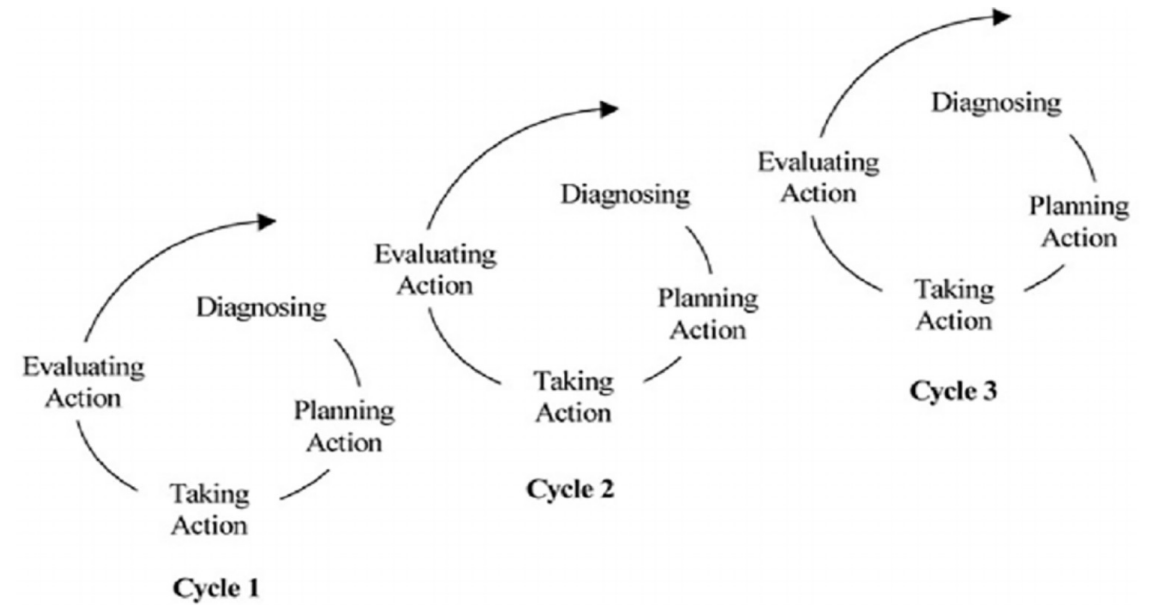


Fig 1. Coghlan and Brannick' [10] four-step spiral model of Action Research.

1

My pedagogical challenge(s)

2

Reference to relevant literature

3

My hopeful idea to address my pedagogical challenges

4

Design, implement my action and collect data

5

Reflection and preparation for another cycle

6

Writing up my action research



# The course/subject: *English Language Studies* Pre-university program/13 weeks

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## My class profile

- No entry or placement test, no specific English language requirement
- 25 students including native speaker and EALD students
- Age range: 17 – 41 years old
- Student diversity: Cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds (refugees, high school leavers, mid-career return to study...)
- Academic literacy level: EALD and native speakers with various language proficiency (across different language skills)
- For academic English language proficiency for pre-university students
- I have taught this course for a couple of years



## Assessments in the course

☐ Weekly grammar quizzes

☐ Email etiquettes

☐ Argumentative writing



☐ Reflective writing

What was my  
pedagogical  
challenge?



# Oral presentation assessment

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## Students work in pairs to:

Choose four media articles (two articles/each student) on the same single story from national and international news outlets

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Summarise each article and compare them in pairs (e.g., structure, language features, evidence, content, argument, objectivity...)

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Reflect on the story (e.g., why interested, emotions, feelings, lessons learned...)

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Develop PPT slides and do an in-class presentation (as a pair)

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**Skills to access:** summarizing and paraphrasing the sources, identifying and evaluating arguments based on the evidence, identifying and evaluating language features, using evaluative, comparative and reflective language, and oral presentation skills

# My pedagogical challenges: What I have observed



Lack of confidence and motivation from students (especially EALD students with limited levels of English language proficiency)



Difficulties in comprehending the content of the chosen articles due to language barriers (read, understand, summarise, compare, and reflect on the content)



Struggles to present ideas or express thoughts in class (can include frustration sometimes)

# What does literature tell me?

(research-informed and evidence-based practice)

## 1. Funds of Knowledge (González, Moll, and Amanti 2009)

- Response to a deficit view
  - Blame the victim
  - Poor academic performance due to socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds
- Appreciate what students bring to class
- Make use of student cultural and linguistic repertoires as resources for teaching & learning (strength-based approach)

## 2. Translanguaging pedagogy (García and Kleyn 2016)

- Multilinguals develop a single complex language repertoire, a unitary language system and a single identity as multilinguals
- Multilinguals can communicate and act with only certain features of their repertoire, those that respond to socially named languages (e.g. English, Mandarin, Spanish)
- Recognising and leveraging multilinguals' entire language repertoire is essential to deepen their performance in socially named languages



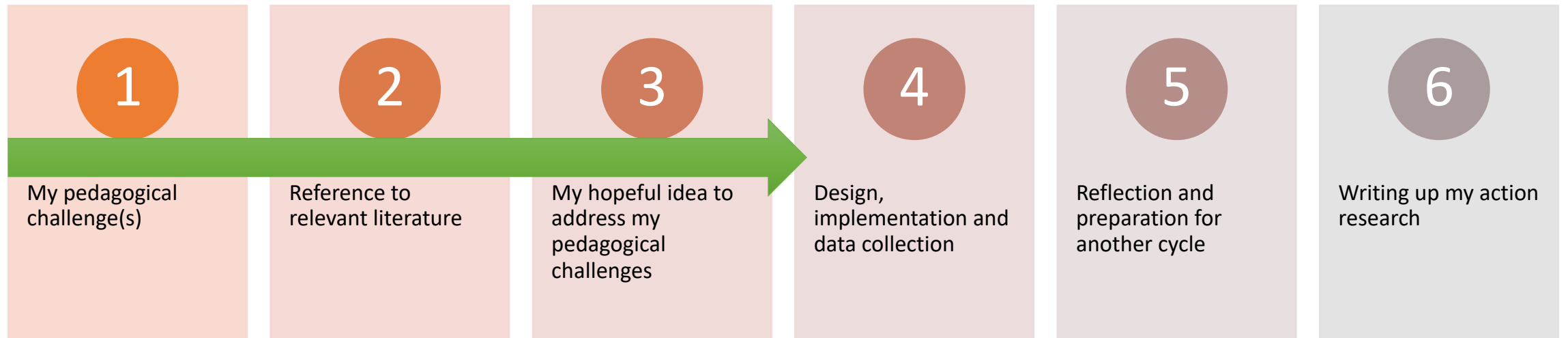
## **My hopeful idea and hypothesis**

Limited English language proficiency is responsible for students' difficulties and struggles in doing the assessment and therefore if they are encouraged to employ their full linguistic repertoire, it can help reduce the (cognitive) load and thus motivate them to work on the assessment to develop their English language proficiency.

## My working research question

To what extent does Translanguaging Pedagogy enable EALD students to develop their academic English proficiency?

# Practical steps for my action research cycle



# Translanguaging Pedagogy in Practice

Translanguaging components	Pedagogical
Teachers' stance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Believing that learners would always draw upon their linguistic repertoire – as a resource – to learn, think, imagine and develop commanding performances (García and Kleyn 2016, p. 21);</li><li>• Positioning language from the insider's view acknowledging bilingual students having a single linguistic repertoire (García and Kleyn 2016);</li><li>• Believing that translanguaging can enable students to perform with their own internal norm to be more creative and critical (Wei 2011).</li></ul>
Teachers' design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating collaborative/cooperative and student-centred instruction (García and Kleyn 2016, p. 21);</li><li>• Collecting and encouraging students to access to varied multilingual and multimodal instructional resources(García and Kleyn 2016, p. 21);</li><li>• Using translanguaging pedagogical practices allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoire (García, Johnson et al. 2017).</li></ul>
Teachers shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being prepared and willing to make instructional changes to adapt to individual learners' language repertoire (García and Kleyn 2016).</li></ul>

*Compiled and adapted by the presenter*



# Translanguaging pedagogy - instructional changes



EALD students encouraged to choose one article in English and the other in their first language (still on the same story from news media outlets)



Students can start working on either article as preferred



Students were encouraged to work with peers who speak English as the first language to collaborate with each other (they can choose to work with those who speak the same first language if preferred)



The teacher worked closely with students to support in finding articles, ask prompt questions, provide additional instructions, encouragement, and technical support

# Data collection and student experience



Classroom observation and data collection: presentation observation and notes from students were recorded



Average assessment grade: ~10% higher (compared to peers in two previous years)



Teacher notes were recorded; follow-up interviews conducted with 05 students who participated in this project



Follow-up interviews conducted with 03 EALD students who decided **NOT** to participate

Participants	Gender	First language
Student 1	Female	Indonesian
Student 2	Male	Vietnamese
Student 3	Female	Mandarin
Student 4	Female	Dari
Student 5	Male	Pashto

05 interviewees who participated in the project



why he got arrested

فعالو ماڼو

د ويکي ليکس په نامه د حکومت مالوماتو د افشا کوونکې وېبپاڼې شریک بنسټگر جولین اسانچ په لندن کې د اېکوادور سفارت کې تر اووه کلنې نظر بندۍ وروسته نن پنجشنبه د پولیسو لخوا ونیول شو. پر نوموړي د جنسي ځورونوې تو دي، او ټاکل شوې وه چې اووه کاله وړاندې ونیول شي او سویډن ته واستول شي. 7 year in Embassy

UK Police.

خو نوموړي په ۲۰۱۲ کال کې سویډن ته د استول کېدو له وېرې په لندن کې د اېکوادور په سفارت کې پناه واخیسته.

request by Ecuadorian government.

اېکوادور هغه مهال ښاغلي اسانچ ته په خپل سفارت کې سیاسي پناه ورکړه، او د هغه د ور سپارلو په اړه یې د برتانيا د حکومت غوښتنه ونه منله.

Ecuadorian Prime minister said about him

خو د اېکوادور ولسمشر لېنن مورېنو ویلي، جولین اسانچ بیا بیا تر یوال کنوانسیونونه تر پښو لاندې کړي، او له همدې کبله د سیاسي پناه ختمه شوې.



# It helped with that first step

- *Just thinking about reading two English articles **is scary enough** and 'I just wanted to **leave it there** (Student 3)*
- *After reading an article in Indonesian. I am **sort of knowing** what it is about and I moved to work on the article in English – easy I think (Student 1)*
- *When I finished working on the first article in Vietnamese and developed some PowerPoint slides for my assignment, **I felt so good**. I thought I have already got a half of the work done – it's not really a half but **I felt good** to think like that (Student 2)*
- *It does not matter in which language the information comes into my mind but when I think about it, I always do it in my **first language because it is easy**. I will then have to translate it in my head before I can say or speak it out in English. I **cannot think in English all the time** (Student 5)*



## It's just the language, not my intelligence

- *I felt upset and bad about myself in another class because I could not say what my teacher wanted me to explain. I understood it in my head but could not speak it out. In this presentation, I know the information and I know some English words about the story, I was be able to speak it out (Student 4)*
- *When working on this assignment, I come to know that it's just about the language, not my intelligence. I need to learn English more but it's okie because I was not born to speak it. I can do it, I think (Student 2)*
- *I spent a lot more time to work on this assessment than my partner but I was able to get it done. I think my work was as good as my partner's work. I was happy that I could do that (Student 5)*

# I can know more about the truth

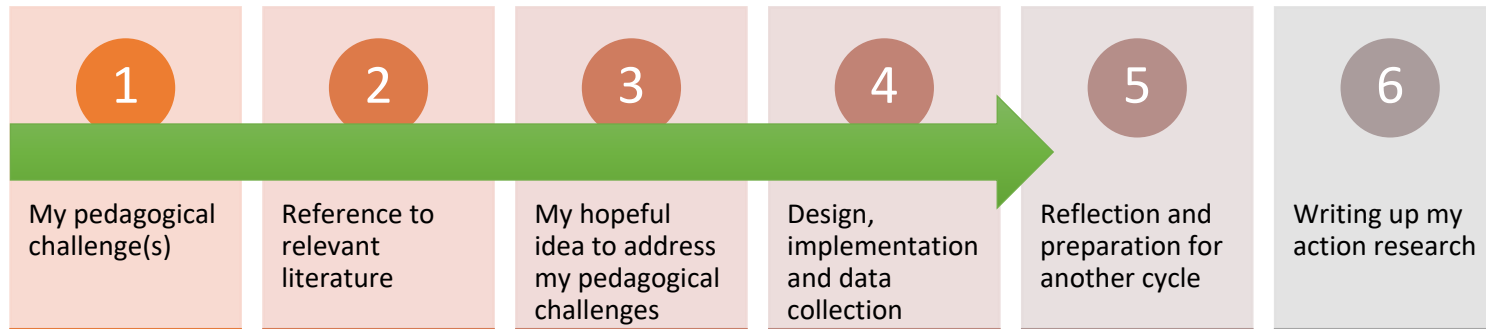
- *I know this because when I compared the two articles, **the same information was written differently in Vietnamese and English**. We do not say it in the same way as in English (Student 2)*
- *The same thing **can be written differently in different languages**. Great to figure out something like that myself (Student 3)*
- *But I could not find an article in Indonesian about it (the story). It was about Indonesia. I had to choose another story but why there was no report about it in Indonesian. I **do not know if I should trust all the information** in the English article (Student 1)*
- *I can see the **writers' minds are different**...I now know that in the writing they always want something. I think I need to access to information in many languages if I can so that **I can know more about the truth** (Student 5).*

## Going back to my working research question:

To what extent does Translanguaging Pedagogy enable EALD students to develop their academic English competency?

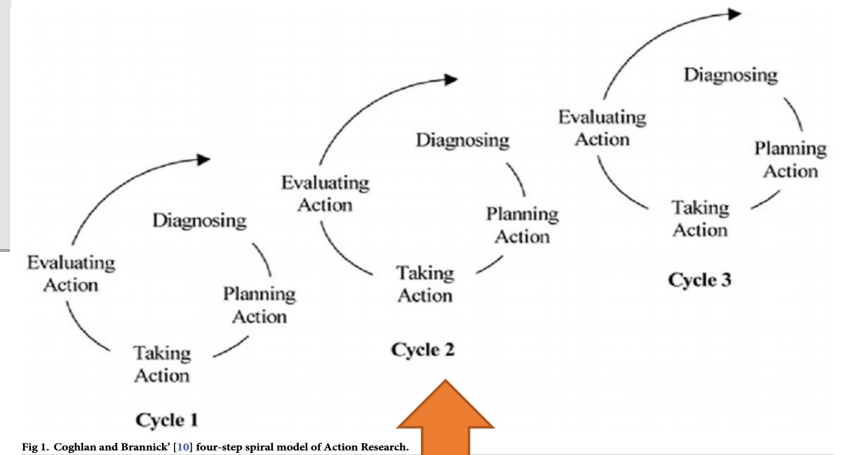
- Translanguaging Pedagogy can motivate students to complete a learning task (achievable)
- Translanguaging Pedagogy can promote students' confidence (belief in their ability to complete a task)
- Translanguaging Pedagogy can enable students to become more critical (to articulate and critique different worldviews)





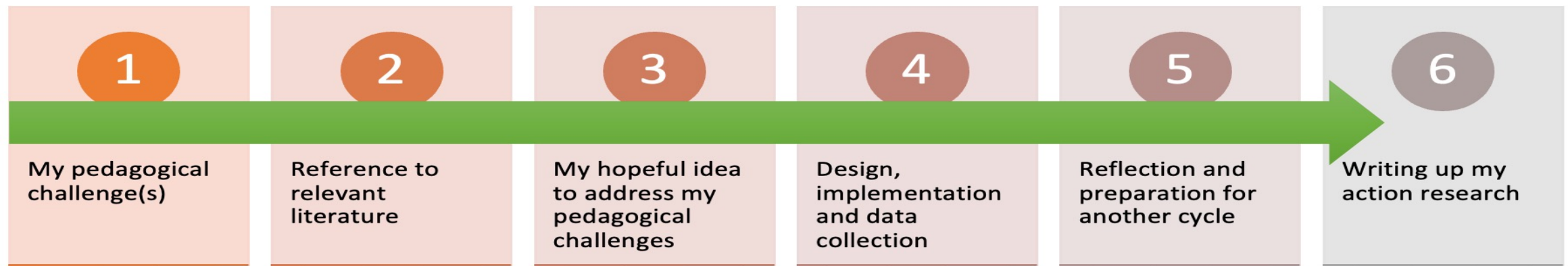
## What worked and did not work?

- \*Confidence, motivations, and performance were increased
- \*Student positive attitude towards themselves, the assessment & learning
- \*Some EALD students did not want to participate in this project
  - # Interviews with 03 EALD students
  - # Reasons: L1 can prevent L2 learning; focus on English only; study to live and work in Australia



My next round of action research cycle (looking at perceptions of multilingual learners on the role and use of L1 and L2 in language learning and pedagogical practices)





- Conceptualise my action research to contribute to literature
  - **Option 1:** Going back to Translanguaging Pedagogy (To what extent does Translanguaging Pedagogy enable EALD students to develop their academic English proficiency)?
    - Confidence (belief in their own ability to complete a task)
    - Motivation (achievable and strive to achieve the goal)
    - Criticality (articulate and critique different worldviews)
  - **Option 2:** Finding another way to conceptualise my research in enabling education
    - Choosing a theoretical framework: Jacques Rancière (1991) *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*.
    - Research question: To what extent can Translanguaging Pedagogy contribute to multilingual learners' intellectual emancipation?

# Jacque Rancière (1991) *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*.

Critical pedagogy (Freire and Shor)	Rancière's equality of intelligence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education as a political system that privileges some and disempowers others</li><li>• 'Liberatory education' as a way to 'just' society (emancipation): Critical pedagogies</li><li>• Educators to work with the oppressed to transform the world</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education is a social institution and therefore it is unjust in nature</li><li>• Education is never neutral due to intimate connection between education and politics (e.g., unjust to achieve just)</li><li>• Equality of intelligence as <b>a starting point</b>: <i>Only a man can emancipate a man.</i></li></ul>

# Rancière: Equality of intelligence

## The ignorant schoolmaster:

- *To interrogate is to demand speech*, that is to say, the manifestation of an intelligence that wasn't aware of itself or that had given up
  -
- *To verify* that the work of the intelligence is done with attention, that is, to make efforts to use one's own intelligence
- (Not) to take a role of an 'explicator master' but to summon their students to use their own intelligence

The centrality of education is to reveal an intelligence of what it '*can do when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself*' – the equality of intelligence for intellectual emancipation (Rancière 1991, p. 39).

'What stultifies the common people is not the lack of instruction, but the belief in the inferiority of their intelligence' (Rancière 1991, p. 39)

# Rancière: Equality of intelligence

The act of 'explication': For students to understand new content, they would need a master who uses his superior intelligence to explain it to them

*Explication is not necessary to remedy an incapacity to understand. On the contrary, that every incapacity provides the structuring fiction of the explicative concept of the world. It is the explicator who needs the incapable and not the other way around; it is he who constitutes the incapable as such. **To explain something to someone is first of all to show him he cannot understand it by himself.** Before the act of the pedagogue, explication is the myth of pedagogy, the parable of a **world divided into knowing minds and ignorant ones, ripe minds and immature ones, the capable and the incapable, the intelligent and the stupid** (Rancière 1991, p. 6).*

# Translanguaging pedagogy for intellectual emancipation

- Translanguaging is considered a **naturally instinct capacity** for speakers of any language including both monolinguals (codes and signs) and multilinguals (codes, signs, languages).
- Translanguaging **can liberate multilingual individuals from societally constrained language practices** (language as tool for thinking, acting) as they are free to employ all linguistic resources available for meaning-making.
- Translanguaging is **personal transformation**: creating a social space for multilinguals by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance (who they are)

*A report for my action research project has been written  
and currently under the review process for publication*

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# Your action research project



1. What is your pedagogical challenge (e.g., student motivation, assessment, attitude toward learning, content...)?



2. What does literature tell you about this challenge (what theories and practices are relevant)?



3. What is your hopeful idea to address the challenge (research-informed and evidence-based practices)?



4. Can you turn your idea into a hypothesis/working research question (to conceptualise your thinking)?



5. How do you develop your action plan (content, instruction, assessment, material, format of the subject, extra activities...)



6. How do you implement your plan and collect your data (what activities, what data to collect)?



7. What does your data tell you (Reflect on what worked, what did not work, what you learned and what next for another round of action research)?



8. How can your data/action research contribute to literature (write up your research for conference presentation and publication – how to conceptualise/theorise your research – **look beyond the TESOL area**)?



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