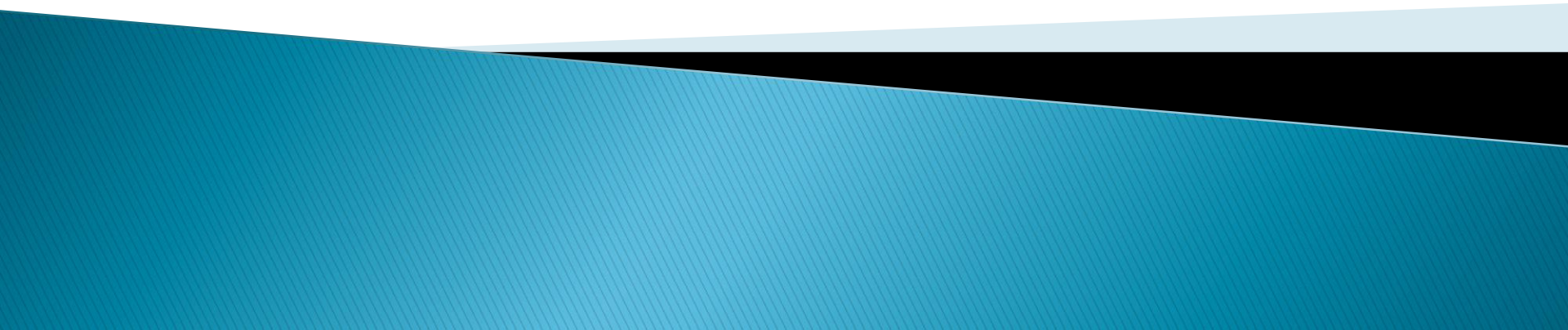# Action Research
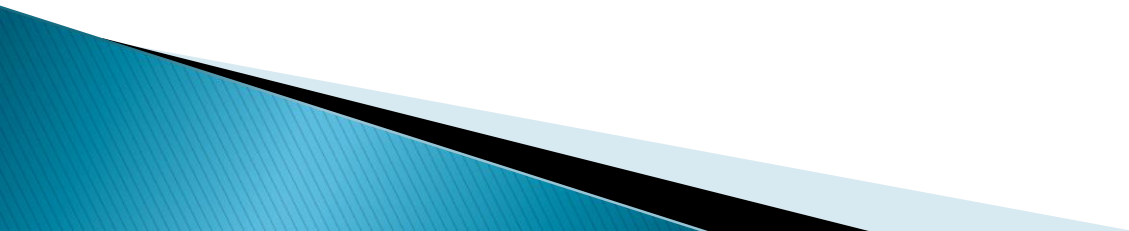
Dr. Sujit Kumar Choudhary
Dept. of Sociology, MGCUB

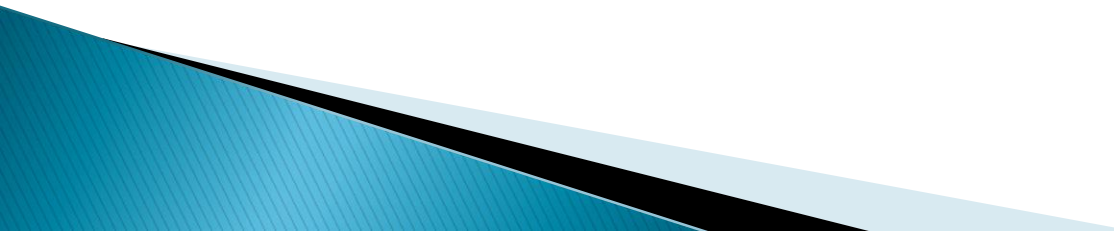# Action research/practitioner research

Three particular characteristics:
- arises from practical questions;
- is participatory in nature; and
- its validity is strengthened through peer examination and discussion.
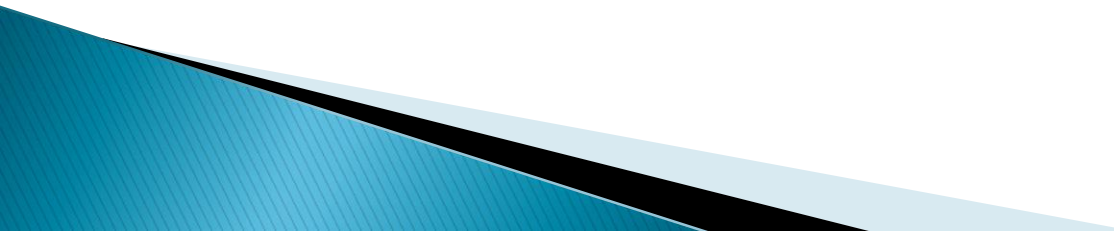
(Bartlett, S. & Burton, D, 2006,401)

Action research/practitioner research as inquiry

The <u>objects of inquiry</u> are:

- observable social activities, patterns, structures;
- intentions motivating those activities;
- shared, available interpretations of these activities.
- Goal & interest to document, explicate, critique, transform.

Researcher's toolkit

- Methodology – framework for conduct of research project [e.g. ethnographic, case study, discourse analysis, <u>action research</u>].
- Method – systematic, theoretically derived means employed for producing a public knowledge. It includes techniques to be employed for the collecting of data (e.g. survey, questionnaire, data bases, standardised or teacher-developed tests, field notes, participant observations) as well as the analytic techniques employed to analyse and interpret data.
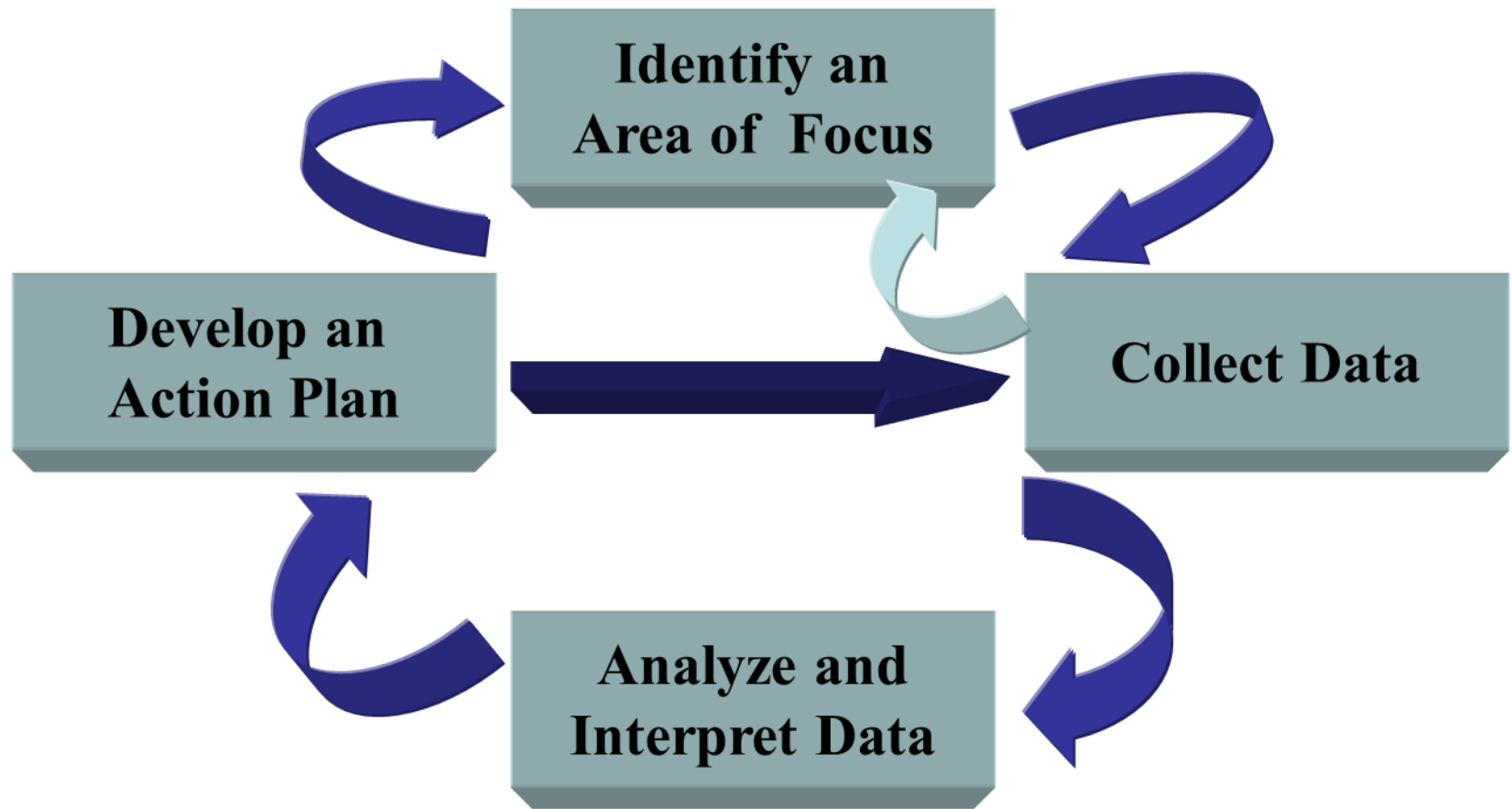
Action Research

Practical

Participatory

- Studying local practices involving individual or team-based inquiry
- Focusing on teacher development and student learning
- Implementing a plan of action leading to the teacher-as-
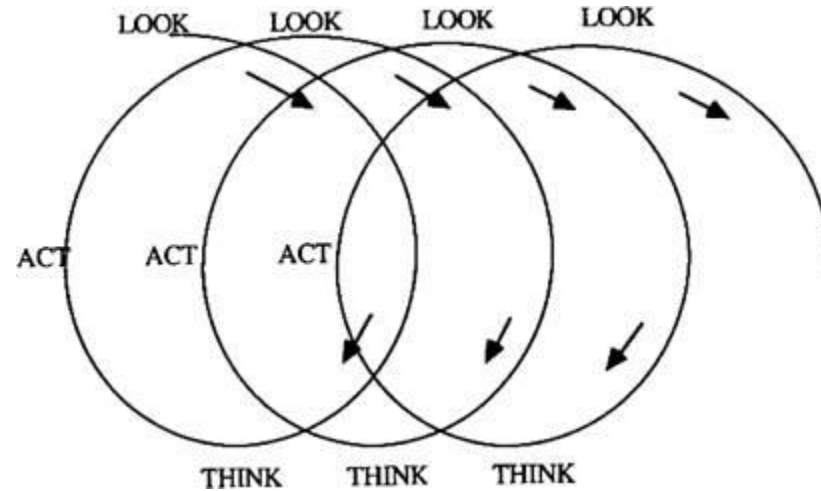   researcher

(Spears, B. & Skrzypic, G. 2012)

- Studying social issues that constrain individual lives
- Emphasizing "equal" collaboration
- Focusing on "life-enhancing changes"
- Resulting in the emancipated researcher

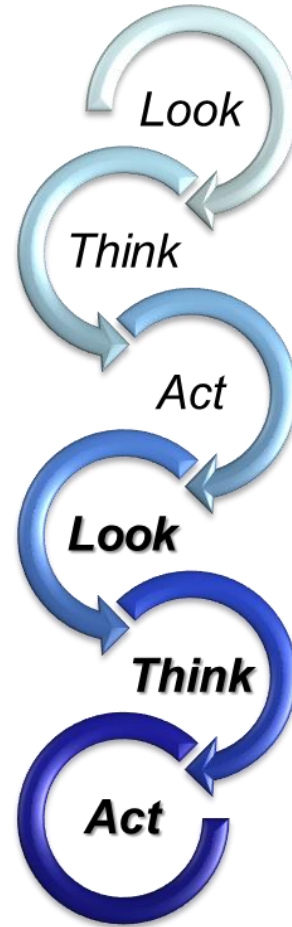# Action research as cyclic (Spears & Skrzypic, 2012)

Stringer's (1999) Action Research Interacting Cycle
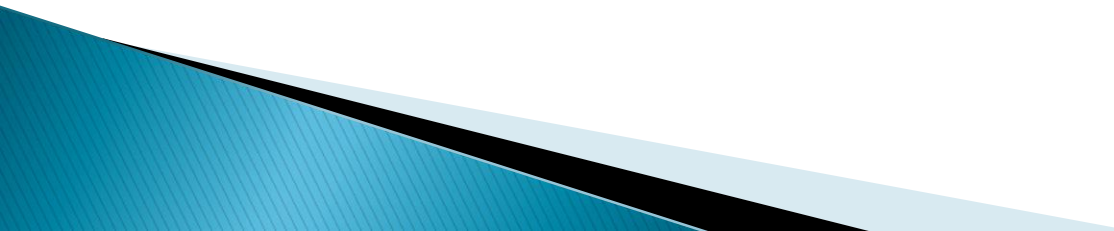## Look ↔ Think ↔ Act

Stringer (1999)

Action research/practitioner research

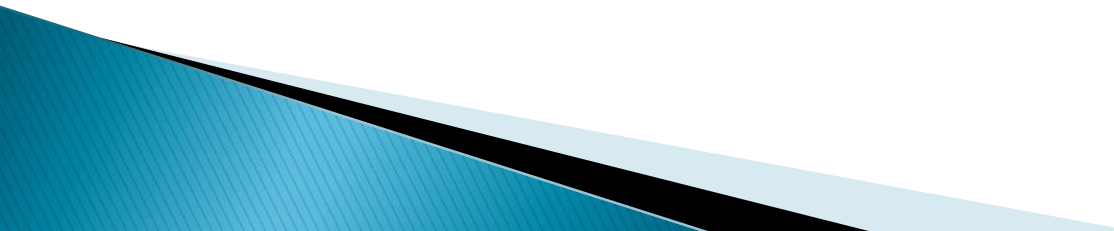Action research/practitioner research involves engaging educator researchers and collaborators in a cycle of
- experience
- critical reflection, and
- action

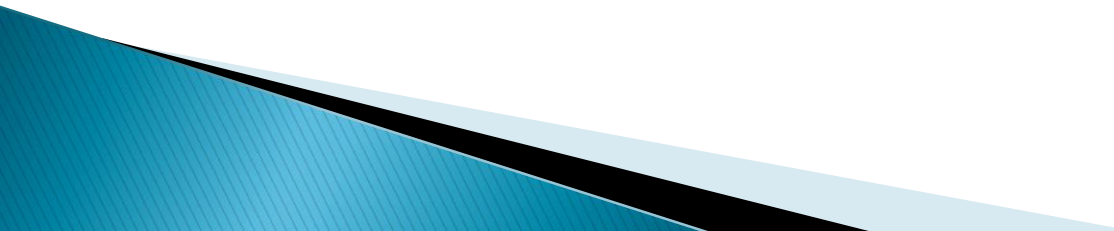# Key characteristics of Action Research (Freebody, 2003, 86)

▸ It is a 'deliberate' rather than a purely exploratory entry into a naturally-occurring educational setting. That is, it is planned and self-consciously focused examination of changing practice.

▸ It is 'solution-oriented investigation' aimed explicitly at solving particular problems rather than simply documenting their instances, character or consequences.

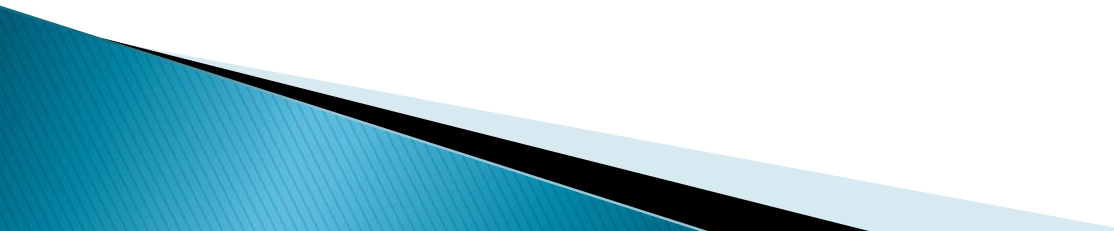# Key characteristics of Action Research (Freebody, 2003, 86)

- It is 'group or personally owned and conducted'. This is a reference to the politics of knowledge ownership,… which emphasizes the importance of the educational practitioners' role as determinants of the description of the problem, what counts as solutions, and what form the reporting of the project will take.
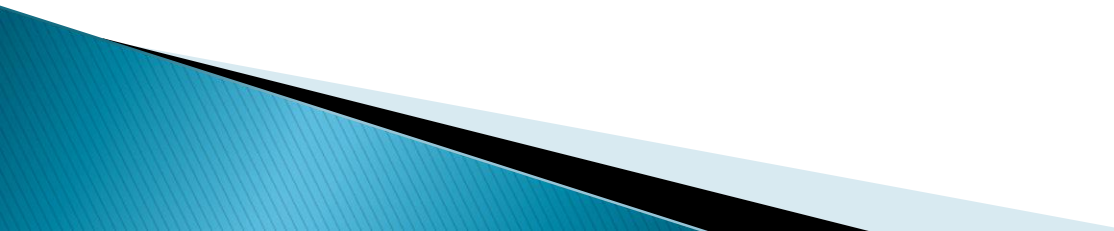
Key characteristics of Action Research (Freebody 2003:86)

- It takes the form of a series of repetitions on and around the problem, its documentation and theorization, and the analyses that are used to display how it has been redefined and solved. These repetitions are referred to as … 'spirals' but are more commonly known as the Action Research cycle. This 'cyclic' feature of Action Research is taken to be central to its core emphasis on the documented improvement of practice.
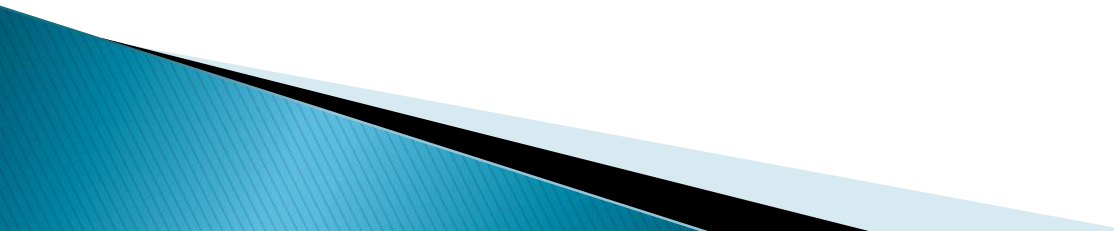
Key characteristics of Action Research (Freebody 2003:86)

▸ The 'trying out of ideas' is not undertaken solely for the purposes of re-theorizing educational practice, or adding to knowledge, but is also aimed at improving educational practice, then and there. In that respect, Action Research is concerned as much with outcomes on the original research site as it is with generalizations to other sites or leading to theoretical refinement.
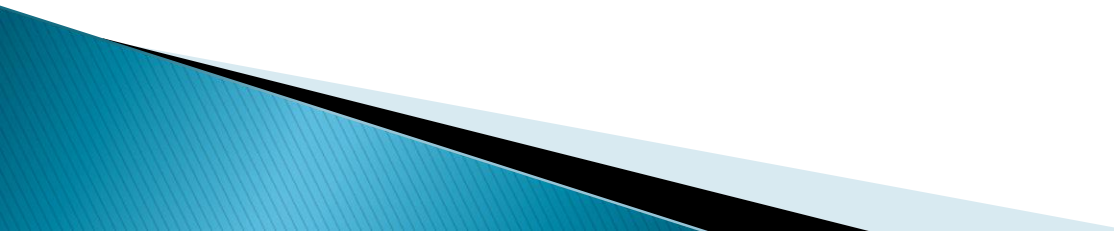
Process (Freebody 2003:87)

1. select focus – study available literature;
2. collect relevant data from variety of sources;
3. analyse, document & review the immediate, cumulative & longer-term effects;
4. develop and implement interpretive analytic categories;
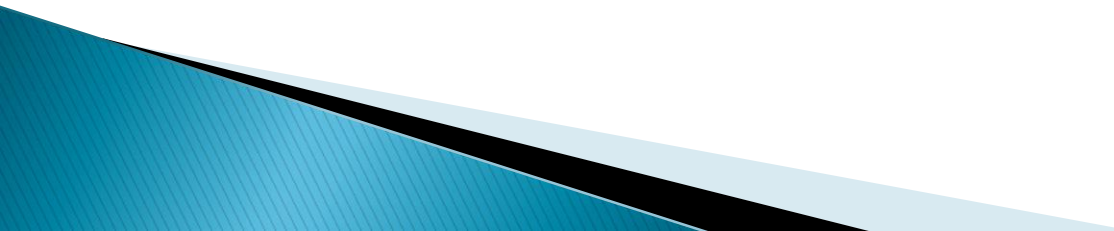
Process (cont.) (Freebody 2003:87)

5. organise the data and its interpretations by grouping instances, events, & artefacts into systematic, interconnected displays;

6. taking action on the basis of redeveloped short and long-term plans; and

7. repeat the cycle.

Action Research/practitioner research results in data-driven action

- What constitutes data?
- How do you collect it?
- How do you analyse your data?
- How do you substantiate your findings?

Research Checklist

- research that can be completed with the available resources, including time (do-able);
- research processes that are logical and coherent (credible);
- products of the research that are meaningful to the stakeholder groups who ought to be its beneficiaries (useful);
- outcomes are achieved in a timely way (efficient).

Ethical practice in action research

- Action research is subject to the same ethical protocols as other social research.
- **Informed consent** from participants
- There must be an earnest attempt to 'do no harm'.
- Processes should be **transparent** –
  1. in the conduct;
  2. researchers accountable for the processes and products of their research – making these public is part of the transparency.

Ethical practice in action research

- It is collaborative in nature:
  -provide opportunities to colleagues to share, discuss and debate aspects of their practice with the aim of improvements and development and involves responsible sense-making of data collected from within the field of researchers' own practice.
- It is transformative in its intent and action:
  -Practitioner researchers engage in an enterprise which is about contributing to transformation of practice.

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Your turn

Questions/Comments

Thanks