



Research in schools

Purpose of leaflet:

This leaflet is aimed at supporting you to feel more confident in carrying out research within your own school setting.

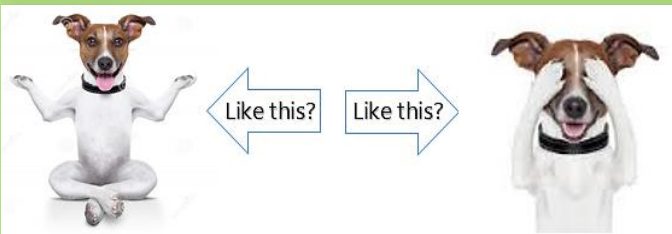
It looks at what you may already be doing within your own practice which could be considered research, before more closely examining two types of research processes:

- 'Action Research'
- 'Practitioner Research'

Where to begin...

Before you begin on your research journey, we would like you to stop and consider:

How do you feel about carrying out research?



Activity

Write down some words or phrases to describe how you feel about **conducting research**.

Consider the words or phrase you have written and identify any that you have heard others use (adults or children) in school or elsewhere to describe how they feel about **mathematics** and/or **numeracy**

...are there any similarities?

Identifying what you already do

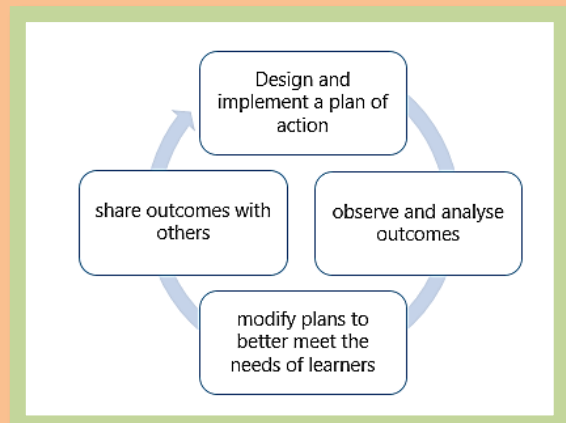
As educators in schools you will already have done some research within your practice, perhaps without even realising it:

- You help students learn
- Create lesson plans
- Evaluate learners' work
- Share outcomes with your learners, their parents and your colleagues

You then begin this process again with new lessons and units, recapping on concepts previously learned and building upon this prior learning to create new knowledge and understanding.

It may not sound like research but if you use slightly different language, you could say that teachers regularly:

- Design and implement a plan of action
- Observe and analyse outcomes
- Modify plans to better meet the needs of students
- Share outcomes with others



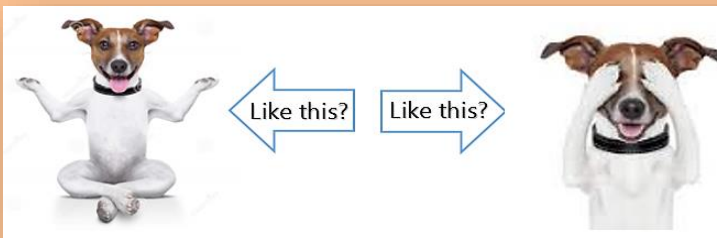
Activity

Identify a change you have made in practice in the last 12 months

1. How did you identify the problem?
2. What information did you use to inform your decision?
3. What action did you take to improve your practice?

So...You can, and already do, research!

Feeling better?



Action Research...what is it?

Action research is a way for you to continue to grow and learn by making use of your own experiences. The only theories involved are the ideas that you already use to make sense of your experience. Action research literally starts where you are and will take you as far as you want to go.

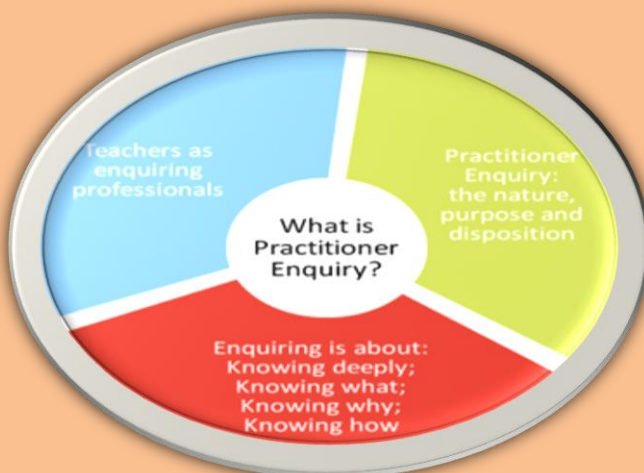
(How to do action research in your classroom, by Rust & Clark)

Practitioner research...what is it?

A structured process for:

- Customising research findings
- Enabling educators to address specific questions, concerns of problems within their own classrooms or schools

A process that 'allows teachers to study their own classrooms... in order to better understand them and to be able to improve their quality or effectiveness' (Mertler, 2012b, p. 4).



Evidence based practice:

Evidence based practice involves a practitioner bringing their own knowledge and skills together with best quality evaluation research to make a decision about selecting what programme/intervention is most appropriate to the parents/children they are working with. (Department of Education, 2012)

Accessed at

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/b00203759/evidence-based-practice>

Do we need practitioner research?

Academic Research	Practitioner Research
Conducted by academics & researchers	Conducted by practitioners themselves
Researcher often new to the environment studied	Researcher often part of the environment studied
Main purpose: to identify generalisable findings	Main purpose: to help improve practice and implement change in that specific organisation

- Lots of 'academic' research happening & having an influence
- Are their findings generalisable to you and your school?
- Classroom-based action research can provide more appropriate solutions (Mertler, 2012a)

Suggested reading:

Practitioner research:

www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/research-practitioner-enquiry/practitioner-enquiry/what-is-practitioner-enquiry.aspx#enquiring

Action Research:

www.teachersnetwork.org/tnli/Action_Research_Booklet.pdf