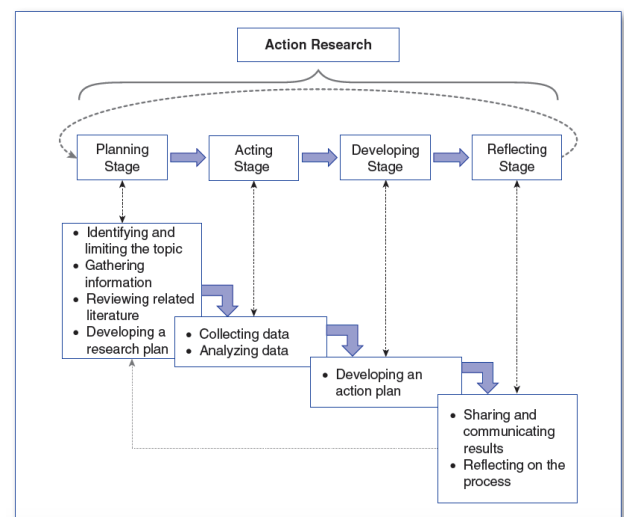


Classroom- and School-Based Action Research

Overview of Action Research in Schools

Action research is defined as systematic inquiry conducted by educators at any level (e.g., PK-12, higher education) and in any position (e.g., teachers, administrators, counselors, resource teachers, lead teachers, etc.) who have a vested interest in the success and improvement of all aspects of the teaching-learning cycle. Action research is a cyclical process of **systematic and scientific inquiry** into professional practice. It consists of four stages—the planning stage, the acting stage, the developing stage, and the reflecting stage. It is an important endeavor for educators at all levels for so many reasons. It can bridge the gap between theory and practice; it has the potential to result in the direct improvement of educational practice; it has a direct connection to school improvement; it helps to empower educators and to stimulate intellectual engagement; and it is an incredibly important means of experiencing professional growth. Ultimately, it is characterized as research that is conducted **by educators for themselves**. It may truly be the epitome of customizable and meaningful professional development for educators.

This figure shows the four stages of the action research cycle, along with the specific research activities occurring at each stage.



From:

Mertler, C. A. (2025). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators* (7th ed.). SAGE.