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# Classroom- and School-Based Action Research

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## Preview of *Action Research Mentor Portfolio*

The **Action Research Mentor Portfolio** is a series of PDF documents that are intended to help professional educators navigate the process of conducting their own classroom- and school-based action research. The templates are interactive, fillable documents that walk educators through the various decisions that are required during the conduct of any action research project. Once the templates are completed, they can be printed and/or saved on a local computer. The entire portfolio consists of the following PDF documents:

-  **Action Research Overview**
-  **Action Research 5 Why Process**
-  **Action Research Background & Literature**
-  **Action Research Development of a Plan**
-  **Action Research Planning for Data Collection**
-  **Action Research Planning for Data Analysis**
-  **Action Research Action Planning**
-  **Action Research Professional Reflection**

These materials were developed by [Dr. Craig A. Mertler](#), author of ***Action Research: Improving Schools and Empowering Educators***, currently in its 7<sup>th</sup> edition (2025). He is currently Professor of Action Research and Quantitative Methods. He has been an educator for 39 years, 29 of those in higher education, and 12 as an administrator. He teaches courses focused on the application of action research—to promote educator empowerment, school improvement, and job-embedded professional development—and also teaches research methods, statistical analyses, and educational assessment methods. He has served as the research methodology expert on more than 130 doctoral dissertations and master's theses. He is also the author of 30 textbooks, 9 invited book chapters, and 24 refereed journal articles. He has presented more than 40 research papers at professional meetings, and has consulted with numerous schools, districts, and universities on classroom-based action research. He has also delivered 25 invited or keynote addresses around the US and internationally. He has served his professional community in a variety of capacities, including as Past-Chair of the Action Research SIG

of AERA, as Past-President of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association, and as a Senior Editorial Board Member for *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*.

Screen captures of three of the templates appear below:

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**"5 Why Process"  
for Problem Identification**

Describe a specific problem you have observed in your classroom or school:

Why does/doesn't this happen?

Why does/doesn't this happen?

Why does/doesn't this happen?

Why does/doesn't this happen?

Why does/doesn't this happen?

Stop the "5 Why Process" when you believe you have identified the root cause of the original problem.

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**Developing a Research Plan**

1) My potential action research topic is:

2) The purpose of my study is to:

3) My fundamental research question(s) is/are:

4) The most appropriate type of data for me to collect is:  
qualitative  
quantitative  
both (mixed-methods)  
Why?

5) The specific data that I will collect is:

6) Based on my previous responses, my research design can best be described as:

PARALLEL  
ALL aspects of your research study (i.e., research questions, research design, data collection, analysis) MUST BE PARALLEL.

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**Professional Reflection**

1) The purpose of my study was to...

2) I learned the following about my initial problem...

3) Things I learned about my professional practice are...

4) Things I learned about action research are...

5) Things I learned about myself include...

6) When I conduct action research again, I will...

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