Using Action Research for Program Evaluation and Improvements

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Objectives

1. Go over Action Research (AR) and why it is useful

2. Examine a framework for AR

3. Review example from my experience as Program Coordinator

4. Brainstorm where you could use in your own programming

5. Provide resources to continue process on your own

6. Answer questions
What is Action Research?
Why is Action Research Useful?
Action Research Framework
Phase 1: Planning

• Identify problem area

• Develop plan of action to bring about improvements
Phase 2: Action

• Once plan carefully considered, deliberately intervene over an agreed period of time
Phase 3: Observation

• Systematically observe effects of action

• Document the context, action, and opinions of those involved
Phase 4: Reflection

• Reflect on, evaluate, describe the effects of the action
Example: Washtenaw Literacy
Mission

Washtenaw Literacy is a volunteer based organization providing free literacy instruction customized to the needs of adults throughout Washtenaw County. Volunteers provide individual and group tutoring in reading and writing skills and in English as a second language so adults can improve their personal, family, and community lives.
Specific Context: ESL Open Tutoring

- Drop-in tutoring
- Multiple locations throughout Washtenaw County, MI
- Volunteer tutors and site coordinators at each location
Phase 1: Planning
Phase 2: Action
Phase 3: Observation
Where @ Now:
Looped Back to Phase 2 & 3
Program Level
Action
Research
Activity
Identifying Your Focus Areas
Identify Your Focus Areas

1. Introduce yourself to your seat mates using the information on your card

2. Goal is to determine an area you could potentially explore using Action Research

3. Pick 1-2 of the following questions. First, think on your own. Write answers on the back of your card. Then, discuss with seat mates.

   1. What are you passionate/curious about?
   2. What will make your program more effective?
   3. What gaps are there between your current situation and what you’d like to see?
   4. What do you want your constituents to know, understand, or do better than they currently do?
   5. Why are your constituents behaving the way they do?
Now that you have broad ideas of what elements of your work might benefit from Action Research, let's spend a bit of time honing them using a Focusing Circle.
Focusing Circle

- Tutor Training?
- Tutor Recruitment?
- Character of Open Tutoring?
- On the job support?

ESL Open Tutoring
Tutors often stop tutoring earlier than expected

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Next Steps
Q & A
Thank You!