Language Arts Journal of Michigan

Volume 5
Issue 1 *Focus: The Teacher-Researcher*

Article 10

1989

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Recommended Citation

Harley, Kay (1989) "LAJM Resources: Action Research," *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*: Vol. 5: Iss. 1, Article 10.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.9707/2168-149X.1693>

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LAJM RESOURCES: ACTION RESEARCH

Kay Harley

Definitions of Action Research

Basically classroom action research relates to any teacher who is concerned with his own teaching, the teacher who is prepared to question his own approaches in order to improve its quality. Therefore the teacher is looking at what is actually going on in the classroom. He seeks to improve his own understanding of a particular problem rather than impose an instant solution upon that problem. Having collected information it is crucial that time is taken for thought and reflection, although it is implicit in the idea of action research that there should be some practical effect or end product to the research, but based on an increased awareness of what actually happens in the classroom.

John Elliot, *People in Classrooms*

Teacher research is any study conducted by teachers of their school system, school, class, groups of students, or one student, either collaboratively or individually....Teacher research will be judged on the basis of its clarity of language, its organizational consistency, and its goodness-of-fit with the intuitions of the teacher community, both in its definitions of problems and in its findings.

Miles Myers, *The Teacher-Researcher: How to Study Writing in the Classroom*

To learn deliberately is to research....Few, I think, learn how to seek out knowledge and to test it in action; that is, do research....Thus, "action" research is deliberate, group or personally owned and conducted, solution-oriented investigation.

Garth Boomer, "Addressing the Problem of Elsewhere: A Case for Action Research in Schools," in *Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher Research as an Agency for Change*, ed. Dixie Goswami and Peter R. Stillman

Ethnographic research in education sets out to describe not only events in classrooms which occur as students and teachers work, speak, write, interrupt, question, etc., but also describe all that can be observed and reported about the contexts of lessons, that is, events in the school and in the students' home lives which bear on what goes on in the classroom. In short, contexts for learning and teaching are seen as major elements in the learning process....

The chief characteristic of this kind of data is that the documentations (descriptions and records) are made by people who were present at the time, and who can, therefore, describe experience as it was lived. Firsthand accounts differ in important ways from reports made by people who were not there, or were not part of the community.

Nancy Martin, "On the Move: Teacher-Researchers," in *Reclaiming the Classroom*

Research, like REcognition, is a REflexive act. It means looking— and looking again. The kind of REsearch would not mean going out after new "data," but rather REconsidering what is at hand. REsearch would come to mean looking and looking at what happens in the English classroom. We do not need new information: we need to think about the information we have.

Ann Berthoff, "The Teacher as REsearcher," in *Reclaiming the Classroom*

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