“Action Research” Defined

Investigations conducted by and for the people taking the action, on their own action, to inform their future actions.

Four Functions of Action Research

- Leadership development
- Teacher development
- School development
- Culture development
Five Habits of Inquiry

- Clarifying a Shared Vision for Success
- Articulating Theories of Action
- Acting Purposefully While Collecting Data
- Analyzing Data Collaboratively
- Using Informed Team Action Planning

Three Reasons for fostering CAR in Independent Schools:

- Accountability
- Communication with stakeholders
- Culture development—the “ethic of continuous improvement”
“Culture is as culture does...”
—Adapted from Forrest Gump’s mom

Three Types of Cultures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional</th>
<th>Congenial</th>
<th>Collegial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are largely left alone.</td>
<td>Emphasis is on sustaining a positive staff climate.</td>
<td>Focus is on continuous improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms are autonomous.</td>
<td>Classrooms are autonomous.</td>
<td>There is shared responsibility for teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are unaware of each other’s work.</td>
<td>People are valued for the role they play in the social fabric of the school.</td>
<td>People are valued for the contributions they make to student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts don’t exist.</td>
<td>Conscious efforts are made to eliminate or quickly resolve conflict.</td>
<td>There is a recognition that conflict is inevitable, so deliberate efforts are made to manage conflicts in the interests of student learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Hallmark of a Productive School Culture

“Collective Autonomy”

(Carl Glickman)

Two Levels of Action Research in Schools

• Macro level
  ➢ Focus is on program or schoolwide issues.

• Micro level
  ➢ Focus is on classroom-level issues.
  ➢ Focus on personal growth
Action Research Process

- Action
- Leading/Teaching
- Data on Action

Performance

Findings/Action Plans

Five Habits of Inquiry

- Clarifying a Shared Vision for Success
- Articulating Theories of Action
- Acting Purposefully While Collecting Data
- Analyzing Data Collaboratively
- Reporting Results and Team Action Planning
Professional Defined:

A person capable of combining a mastery of their field’s knowledge base along with the wisdom one gains from practice to creatively solve non-routine problems.

THE ROLE FOR LEADERSHIP:  
The People Strategy

A primary goal for those of us engaged in educational leadership is the development and maintenance of the professional culture experienced regularly by those we lead.
Overcoming the tyranny of central tendency:
An “assessment” paradigm shift:
The Tyranny of Central Tendency

Who improved?

Did everyone?

Did every group?
 Apparently, even financial managers understand:

“**At Dean Witter, we measure success one investor at a time...**”

*Advertising slogan*

“**At ________ ________ School, we measure success one student and one faculty member at a time...**”
Assessment Paradigm Shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual cases</th>
<th>Aggregate by demographic groupings</th>
<th>Draw conclusions regarding school performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Findings reported from average school performance</td>
<td>Dis-aggregate by demographic groupings</td>
<td>Individual cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Norms for Professionalizing Teaching

- **Student as “knowledge worker”**
- **Teacher as “academic coach”**

* (focus becomes teaching students, not classes)
A Leadership Mantra

• What specifically do you hope to accomplish?

• Specifically, how do you plan to accomplish this? Why?

• How will you monitor your progress?

• How will you report what you’ve learned?

A different dialogue:

The teacher/administrator dialogue changes from:

Just tell us how you want it done.

to:

Based upon the evidence, this is what we think we should try, and this is the data we will be collecting to monitor and improve the results.
Richard Sagor’s books on conducting Collaborative Action Research


- **Collaborative Action Research for Professional Learning Communities** Richard Sagor, Solution Tree, 2010


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Richard Sagor’s books on conducting Collaborative Action Research, con’t:


- **Local Control and Accountability: Getting it, Keeping It, and Improving School Performance**. Richard Sagor, Corwin Press (1996)