Module	5 Specialised Dimensions
Unit	5.1 Action research 1
Session	1
Topic	Teacher research and its varieties. Action research cycle: stages and steps
Objectives	By the end of the session, students will be able to: • identify the role of research in learning and teaching • explore teacher research and its varieties • identify the notion steps and stages of action research
Time	80 minutes
Materials	Handouts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, ppt

Procedure	Purpose	Time
Activity 1: School experience • Display questions in any convenient way **/Slide 2/**. 1. What problems and challenges did you have during your teacher assistantship? How did you deal with them? 2. Did you carry out any research to cope with them? 3. What steps did you take? 4. Who/what helped you to find a solution? • Split students into small groups and ask them to share their experience. • Take selective feedback from the groups.	to explore students' school experience in terms of dealing with with issues and challenges	10 mins

Procedure	Purpose	Time
Activity 2: Case study • Distribute **Handout 1** and ask students to individually explore the case and identify the teacher's problems. • Split students into small groups and ask them to sketch ways the teacher can approch the problems. • Take feedback from groups and encourage a whole group discussion. • Distribute **Handout 2** and ask students to explore possible ways of approaching problems. • Ask students to anticipate the teacher's further steps. • Take selective feedback.	to enable students to analyse ways of solving problems	15 mins

Procedure	Purpose	Time
Activity 3: The nature of teacher research • Distribute **Handout 3**. • Ask students to read the definition of teacher research and highlight the key characteristics of teacher research. • Ask students to read the brief descriptions of different forms of enquiry and decide to what extent each is (1) an example of research and (2) an	to enable students to identify the key characteristics of teacher research	15 mins

example of teacher research. Inform students that if it is not a research it cannot be teacher research. *Key:* *a) not a teacher research (student assignment)* *b) teacher research* *c) not a teacher research (educational research)* *d) not a teacher research* *e) not a teacher research (professional development)* • Summarise characteristics of teacher research.		

Activity 4: Teacher research varieties • Use the 'flavours' metaphor (e.g. ice-cream, apple, etc.) to introduce students to the varieties of teacher research: action research, exploratory practice, self-study, reflective practice /**Slide 3**/. • Distribute **Handout 4.** Ask them to compare descriptions of the teacher research varieties, identify similarities and differences.	to raise students' awareness of teacher research varieties	15 mins

Activity 5: The notion of action research 　• Distribute **Handout 5** and ask students to decide on what the pictures of action research have in common. Ask students to identify the stages and steps of action research. 　• Distribute **Handout 6** and ask students to read the statements about what is not action research. 　• Summarize the key characteristics of action research. 　• **Watch the video** to check the key points and create shared understanding of action research.	to unable students to define action research and create shared understanding of the notion	20 mins

Activity 7: Summary of learning • Encourage students' reflection on learning in the session.	to identify students' key learning points in the session	5 mins

Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 1: Teacher research and its varieties. Action research cycle: stages and steps
Handout 1: Case study

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Individually, explore the case and identify the teacher's problems.

> My English technical college was not responding. From the first day of class, the students were slumping over their desks. They rarely looked up. When I greeted them, none returned the greeting, but looked furtively at each other before returning to their meditation of their desks. Some slept through the class despite being awakened several times. When I asked simple questions, such as "What's your name?", the response I would get from several was "No." I was assured by the school management that the students were merely shy, and would eventually come out of their shells. However, the situation continued for weeks and then months. When no amount of class preparation seemed to work, I knew I had a real problem on my hands.

Adapted from: http://www.nuis.ac.jp/~hadley/publication/jaltar/JALTAR.htm

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Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 1: Teacher research and its varieties. Action research cycle: stages and steps
Handout 2: Case study – possible ways of solving problems

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Explore possible ways of approaching problems.

> The first thing I decided to do was to begin networking. I've never been ashamed to ask another person for help. I joined the local chapter of The Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT). It was there I met experienced, concerned teachers who were more than willing to help me. Drawing from their advice, I found local libraries and received catalogs of international educational publishers. I read texts that provided me with a better understanding of second language teaching methodology and theories. It was my hope that research could somehow help me find some solutions to my problem.

Adapted from: http://www.nuis.ac.jp/~hadley/publication/jaltar/JALTAR.htm

Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 1: Teacher research and its varieties. Action research cycle: stages and steps
Handout 3: The nature of teacher research

I. Read the following definition and highlight the key characteristics of teacher research..

> Systematic inquiry, qualitative and/or quantitative, conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts, individually or collaboratively (with other teachers and/or external collaborators), which aims to enhance teachers' understandings of some aspect of their work, is made public, has the potential to contribute to better quality teaching and learning in individual classrooms, and which may also inform institutional improvement and educational policy more broadly.

II. Read the brief descriptions below of different types of enquiry and decide to what extent each is (1) an example of research and (2) an example of teacher research.
NB If it is not research it cannot be teacher research.

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a. As part of a PRESETT course, a student teacher gave a questionnaire to teachers of English in a school. The questionnaire asked the teachers about how they correct their students' spoken errors in class. When she received the completed questionnaires the student teacher analysed them and wrote an assignment for her course about teachers'correction strategies.

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b. A teacher of English wanted to find ways of getting learners to participate more in group discussions in class. He arranged a class discussion of this issue with his learners and they told him how they felt about the group activities he had been using. The main problem, he found, was that they did not find the topics he asked them to discuss interesting. He asked learners to write down topics they were interested in and decided to use these topics for future group discussion activities. These worked more successfully. He told his colleagues about his findings at the next staff meeting.

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c. A teacher was interested in understanding the kinds of activities that advanced learners of English found motivating. She designed a questionnaire to ask learners about this issue, and arranged for it to be completed by learners in three nearby schools. She analysed the results and presented her findings at an international conference.

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d. A teacher of English wanted to find out more about her facial expressions while she was teaching her young learner class. She designed a sheet with several faces on it – from very happy to very serious, then asked a colleague to come to observe her teach a lesson and to place a tick, every minute, next to the face matching the teacher's expression. The teacher looked at the sheet after the lesson and was pleased to see that she had been smiling most of the time during the lesson.

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e. A teacher became very interested in a new idea she heard about at a conference – task-based learning (TBL). She bought several books on the subject, spent much of her free time reading them, and told her colleagues how interesting she thought the ideas in them were.

Adapted from Borg, S. (2010). *Language teacher research engagement. Language Teaching, 43(4), 391-429.*

Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 1: Teacher research and its varieties. Action research cycle: stages and steps
Handout 4: Teacher research varieties

Compare the descriptions of teacher research varieties, identify similarities and differences.

Action research *refers to a wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical research methods designed to diagnose problems or weaknesses whether organizational, academic, or instructional—and help educators develop practical solutions to address them quickly and efficiently.*

Self-study *is the study of something by oneself, as through books, records, etc., without direct supervision or attendance in a class Self-study allows teachers to learn at their own pace and at a time that is convenient to them. By practicing self-study, they are encouraged to further explore topics they are interested in, developing stronger study skills as a result.*

Exploratory Practice *is a sustainable way of carrying out classroom investigations which provides language teachers (and potentially learners also) with a systematic framework within which to define the areas of language teaching and learning that they wish to explore, to refine their thinking about them, and to investigate them further using familiar classroom activities, rather than 'academic' research techniques, as the investigative tools.*

***Reflective practice*** *is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning. According to one definition it involves "paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions, by examining practice reflectively and reflexively.*

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Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 1: Teacher research and its varieties. Action research cycle: stages and steps
Handout 5: Understanding action research: stages & steps
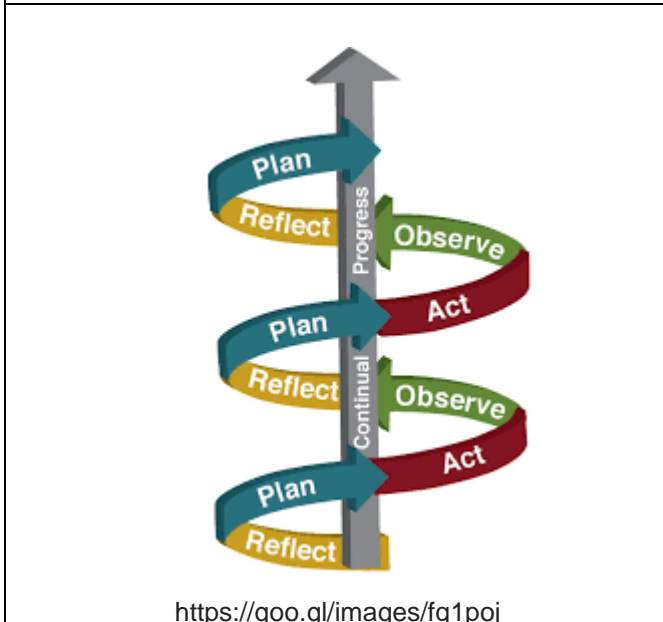
Here are four pictures of action research. What do they have in common? Identify the stages and steps of action research
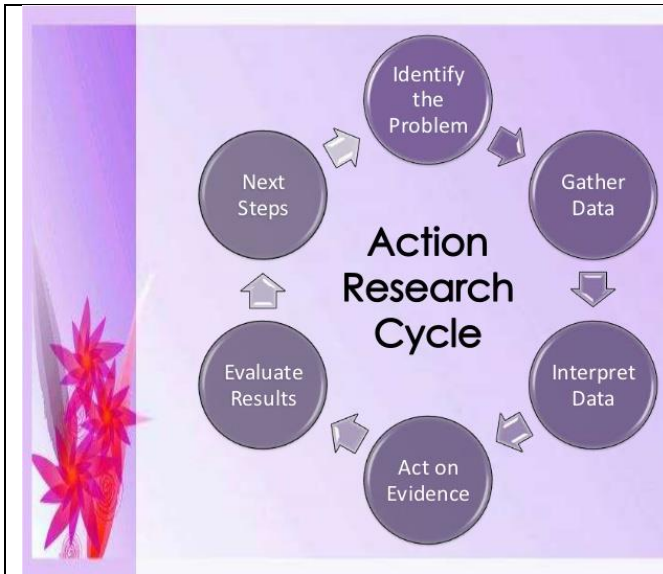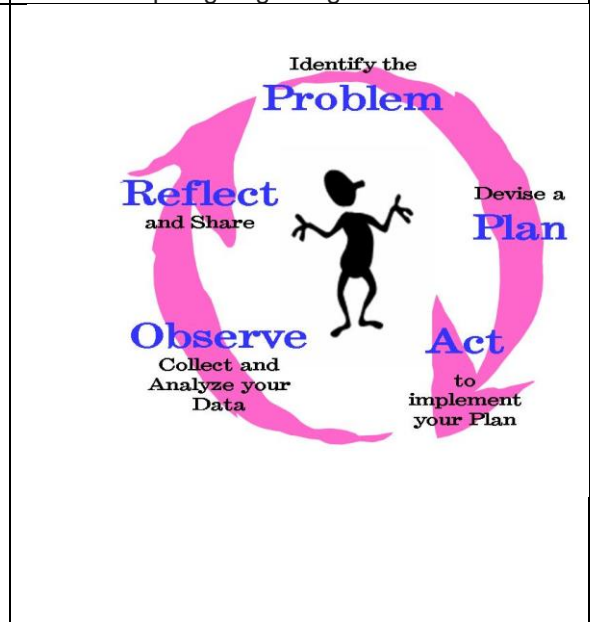

https://www.slideshare.net/lady_han/action-research-14056026

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https://goo.gl/images/fq1poj

Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 1: Teacher research and its varieties. Action research cycle: stages and steps
Handout 6: What is not action research

Read the statements about what is not action research. Summarize the key points about action research

> ➢ Action research is not a library project where we learn more about a topic that interests us
> ➢ It is not problem solving in the sense of trying to find out what is wrong, but rather a quest for knowledge about how to improve
> ➢ Action research is not about doing research on or about people, or finding all available information on a topic looking for the correct answers. It involves people working to improve their skills, techniques and strategies.
> ➢ Action research is not about learning why we do certain things but rather how we can do things better. It is about how we can change our instruction to impact students.

Adapted from https://www.slideshare.net/lady_han/action-research-14056026

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Module	5 Specialised Dimensions
Unit	5.1 Action research 1
Session	2
Topic	Classroom issues and research questions • noticing an issue/problem • formulating a research question Data collection tools.
Objectives	By the end of the session, students will be able to: • define the focus of the study • formulate a research question
Time	80 minutes
Materials	Handouts 1, 2, 3, 4, ppt

Activity 1: Reflection • Split students into small groups and ask them to reflect on and share their experience of noticing problems during their school practice. • Summarize their feedback by means of completing the statesments in groups (Distribute **Handout 1**) /**Slide 5**/ • Take feedback from the groups and encourage a whole group discussion.	to explore students' school experience in terms of noticing problems; to give students an opportunity to to develop a focus of action research	20 mins

Activity 2: Formulationg a research question • Distribute *Handout 2* and ask students to explore possible research questions individually and analyse if they are appropriate for a research focus. • Take selective feedback. Introduce the **SMART criteria** /**Slide 7**/.	to give students an opportunity to formulate a research question	15 mins

Activity 3: Checking research questions against SMART criteria • Regroup the students. Distribute *Handout 3* and ask students to decide on whether the research questions meet the SMART criteria. • Ask students to make up a few classroom problems and formulate the research questions accordingly.	to enable students to formulate SMART research questions	20 mins

• Invite groups to share their problem lists and decide if the research questions are SMART enough.		

Activity 4: Defining data collection tools • Distribute *Handout 4* and ask students to match data collection tools with their description. • Ask students to identify whether they are qualitative or quantitative	to enable students to define the tools of data collection	15 mins

Activity 5: Summary of learning • Encourage students' reflection on learning in the session by means of making creative posters	to identify students' key learning points in the session	10 mins

Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 3: Classroom issues and research questions. Data collection tools
Handout 1: Developing a focus of action research

In groups, complete the following statements:

- ✓ **A GOOD PROBLEM IS ….**
- ✓ **A GOOD PROBLEM IS ….**
- ✓ **A GOOD PROBLEM IS ….**
- ✓ **A GOOD PROBLEM IS ….**
- ✓ **A GOOD PROBLEM DEMANDS….**
- ✓ **A GOOD PROBLEM RAISES….**
- ✓ **A GOOD PROBLEM LEADS TO….**

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Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 3: Classroom issues and research questions. Data collection tools
Handout 2: Formulating a research question

What do you think of the following research questions? Are they clear? Are they appropriate for action research?

1. Do games improve language learning?
2. What problems do secondary school students encounter in English speaking activities?
3. How do all EFL teachers in Ukraine teach pronunciation?
4. Why do weak students get low scores?
5. Is there any relationship between proficiency in English and the occupation of great grandfather?
6. Where do students buy their stationary at the start of the school year?
7. What spelling errors are most common in the English composition writing of?

Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 3: Classroom issues and research questions. Data collection tools.
Handout 3: Checking research questions against SMART criteria

Decide if the following research questions meet SMART criteria:

1. How do I get learners to speak more English in class?
2. Does teaching spelling rules make a difference to learner's accuracy in using them?
3. How can I change student's negative attitudes to group work?
4. What are the effects of self-monitoring on writing?
5. How does giving students more responsibility for their own progress affect their motivation?
6. How can I get students to peer assessment more effectively?
7. How do I teach grammar and are there more effective alternatives?

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Unit 5.1. Action Research 1
Session 3: Classroom issues and research questions. Data collection tools.
Handout 4: Defining data collection tools

Individually, match data collection tools with their description.

Data Collection Tool	Description
1) interview	a) a picture of something that you make with a camera
2) sociogram	b) information about a particular behaviour and its duration
3) videotape	c) a method of recording images and sounds on a videotape
4) web research	d) a research method that involves the collection of information from the internet; online surveys, polls, questionnaires, forms, focus groups, are various tools of online research that are vital in gathering information
5) rubric	e) a short story that educators use to record a significant incident that they have observed; relatively short and may contain descriptions of behaviour and direct quotes.
6) photograph	f) a meeting in which someone asks another person questions about themselves, their work, or their ideas, in order to publish or broadcast the information
7) activity report	h) a scoring guide used to evaluate the quality of students' constructed responses; often presented in table format
8) behaviour record	i) summary submitted to provide certain details about a person's activities and performance over a certain period
9) survey	j) a list of things to be checked or done; also: a comprehensive list.
10) anecdotal record	k) a set of questions that you ask a large number of people
11) checklists	l) a collection of pictures, photographs, or documents that you use as examples of work you have done
12) questionnaire	g) is a graphic representation of social links that a person has; a graph drawing that plots the structure of interpersonal relations in a group
13) self-evaluation	o) set of printed or written questions with a choice of answers
14) portfolio	p) looking at your progress, development and learning to determine what has improved and what areas still need improvement.

Action research project proposal template

No	Guiding question	Description
1.	What is the topic of your project?	
2.	Why do you want to study this issue?	
3.	List a few readings/sources relevant to your topic that you have identified so far.	
4.	What is/are your research question(s)?	
5.	What will the general context for the research be (e.g. the school, one or more classes)?	
6.	Who will the participants in the research be, e.g. students – how many, which level?	
7.	Describe in general terms the stages the research will go through.	
8.	How will you collect and analyse data?	
9.	What ethical issues does your research raise and how will you deal with them?	
10.	What challenges do you anticipate in doing this project?	
11.	Overall, who and how will benefit from your project?	
12.	Any other comments you want to make about the project?	

Adapted from Borg, S. (2018) Action research in PRESETT workshop. Kyiv

Sample self-assessment checklist

Unit 5.1 Action Research 1

Now that I have completed this Unit, I can	without difficulty	to some extent	not at all
• notice classroom issues and formulate a research question			
• design appropriate data collection tools			
• analyse and interpret the collected data			
• plan action research to be carried out during my school experience			
• report on action research and plan further actions on the basis of the findings			