Second Edition

Action Research in Education

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Action research is one of those terms that we hear quite often in todayâ€™s educational circles. But just what does it mean? If you ask three people to define action research, you may find yourself with three different responses. Typically, action research is undertaken in a school setting. It is a reflective process that allows for inquiry and dis-cussion as components of the â€œresearch.â€Â 1. Themes in education. that teachers should be constantly researching and educating themselves about their area of expertise, this is different from the study of more educational questions that arise from the practice of teaching. Implicit in the term action research is the idea that teachers will begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflection, and deciding on a course of action. Action research seeks transformative change through the simultaneous process of taking action and doing research, which are linked together by critical reflection. Kurt Lewin, then a professor at MIT, first coined the term "action research" in 1944. In his 1946 paper "Action Research and Minority Problems" he described action research as "a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action" that uses "a spiral of steps, each of