ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

PROCESS OVERVIEW

EXAMPLE: STUDENT USE OF CELL PHONES

All of the following steps correspond to the Harris et al. text, but also addresses aspects of the Dana text as noted.

1. SETTING THE FOUNDATION – Creating a climate to explore action research issues:
   Through collaboration or during meetings with your principal or other key stakeholders, like the site based decision making committee, the issue of student use of cell/smart phones on your campus and/or in your classrooms is identified as a problem or at the very least, a concern.

   Step one is compatible with the week one and two assignments.
   You will be developing, reviewing, revising and completing your draft action research plan in the week three and four assignments.
   All of the hours you spend working on your action research project are hours you may record as campus supervised internship hours.

2. ANALYZING DATA – Use a variety of data gathering (e.g., referrals due to inappropriate use of cell/smart phones) as well as electronic searches (e.g., Google on using smart phones in public schools, or searches through AASA, NASSP or NAESP – your resource section has a number of professional administrative association links that will also yield data on this issue). Likely findings from your searches might include:
   There are solutions that ban or punish student use of smart phones on campuses and/or during class time.
   There are solutions that use student cell/smart phones to improve campus communication and/or classroom instruction

   Step two may correspond with week one assignment, and certainly connects with the Dana text, chapter 3, Developing a Data Collection Plan.
   It will be substantially completed in week two and three assignments; you will find it helpful to revisit this step throughout your action research project.

3. DEVELOPING DEEPER UNDERSTANDING – Initial data gathering is likely to lead to additional questions and an effort to dig deeper in understanding the pros and cons and possible consequences of selecting certain solutions.
   You should plan to interview key stakeholders to discuss their possible and plausible solutions for student use of cell phones. Review additional Google and
other resource information on the plausible solutions and then conduct additional interviews, or pursue other action research tools, like those described in the Harris et al. text, *Developing Deeper Understanding*, you might also see Tool 3.1 Selecting Data Collection Techniques.

*Step three is compatible with week one and two assignments.*

*It will be substantially completed in week three and four assignments; you will find it helpful to revisit this step throughout your action research project.*

4. **ENGAGE IN SELF-REFLECTION** – You begin to ask some reflective questions regarding choices and consequences of particular policy solutions. Questions might include:
   - Do you possess the skills and resources needed to conduct a successful action research project that reflects your selected solution?
   - If you like the idea of placing an electronic block over the campus that would block cell phone reception, do you have the skills or the resources needed to implement the solution?
   - Conversely, if you like the idea of using cell/smart phones to improve the instructional program, do you have a viable program approach and the skills needed to implement it?
   - If you do not have the skills, can you develop those skills?
   - If you do not have the resources needed, can you procure them?

*Step four begins in week two assignments and continues throughout your action research project.*

5. **EXPLORING PROGRAMMATIC PATTERNS** – After digging deeper and posing some of the reflective questions, begin to formulate a more definite solution, and begin to consider the programmatic impact of the solutions. Talk with at length with your site supervisor and other people whose opinion you respect to determine the pros and cons of plausible solutions. What skills and resources do they think are essential to successful project implementation? The more pit-falls you can identify before you implement your solution, the better your project will work.

*Step five begins in week three assignments and continues throughout your action research project.*

6. **DETERMINING DIRECTION** – You are about ready to launch your action research project but you must be able to answer these questions:
   - It is time to double check your approach to implementing your action research project!
     - Are you clear on what you are attempting to solve (your research questions)?
     - Have you adequately addressed the skills and resources questions?
     - Have you established a collaborative approach to the issue?
D. Are your timelines realistic?
E. Do you have a reasonable plan to monitor the project?
F. Do you have a reasonable plan for determining the level of success – how do you evaluate if the plan is effective?
G. How will you revise and improve the plan based on monitoring and evaluation?

*Step six begins with week three assignments.*
*It will be emphasized in week four and five assignments.*
*It will be re-evaluated throughout your action research project.*

7. **TAKING ACTION FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**
   You may want to organize one or more committees to assist you with your action research project. You will definitely want to develop a written plan of action. We suggest you use the appropriate template steps (see Chapter 7 Tool 7.1 or ) to guide the implementation of your research project. You will want to monitor the project (formative evaluation) and prepare a summary report (summative evaluation) of the results of your action research project addressing student cell/smart phone exclusion or inclusion on your campus.

*Step seven will be reviewed in week three, four and five assignments.*
*It will be implemented along with your internship program after you have completed this course.*

8. **SUSTAIN IMPROVEMENT**
   Learn to maintain the positive aspects of your action research project. Those things that improved the learning or cultural environment should be appreciated and maintained over time. For example, if your research revealed an effective use of student cell phones, you would want to share the results with others on your campus and in your school district. You would also want to share the results with your online colleagues. We also suggest that the process you used to gain additional skills and knowledge should be applied to other areas of your personal professional development.

*Step eight will be reviewed during week three, four and five assignments.*
*You will address it in depth during the months following the completion of your action research project.*