



ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT HANDBOOK

The Action Research Project simulates the role of the administrator to influence adult behavior in order to improve student outcomes. It is the same process a leader might use to make decisions in order to change student achievement outcomes. Steps in this process include identifying a problem, determining a strategy to deal with the problem, collecting and analyzing data, setting measurable outcomes, training adults, and monitoring student achievement.

The Action Research Project also affords candidates the opportunity to practice behaviors consistent with the leadership dispositions of successful school leaders.

All students will present their Action Research Project to colleagues and a panel of sitting school leaders in May.

Project Requirements

Your final Action Research Project must include the following criteria:

1. You must choose a project that will showcase how you exhibited **leadership** of adults in a way that influenced student learning.
2. You must discuss each of the following elements of your project:
 - Statement of the Problem
 - Purpose of the Project
 - Review of the Literature
 - Site and Participants
 - Project Action Steps
 - Evaluation Instruments
 - Outcomes/Findings of the Project
 - Implications for CPSEL
3. You must demonstrate effective presentation skills.

Your final paper and presentation are worth 100 points and will be graded as follows:

	4	3	2	1
Organization	Information presented was complete and in logical order. Included all required components of the project. Easy to follow. Very well-timed and well-paced.	Information presented was nearly complete and presented in logical sequence. Included all required components. Pace and timing appropriate.	Some information presented out of sequence or illogically. Missing some required components. Some pacing and timing problems.	Poor sequence or illogical presentation of information. Missing some or all required components. Presentation not well timed.
Planning for instructional leadership	Articulates a clear and solid approach in organizing and planning the leadership of adults in a way that impacts student learning. Articulates a research-	Articulates a general and basic approach in organizing and planning the leadership of adults in a way that impacts student learning. Articulates a rationale for	States a vague approach in organizing and planning the leadership of adults in a way that impacts student learning. Reflects a general rationale for	Lacks an approach in organizing and planning leadership of adults in a way that impacts student learning. Vague rationale for



	based rationale for instructional choices and decisions. Illustrates how standards and guidelines drive instruction based on the unique needs of learners. Includes supporting data and complete description of intervention.	instructional decisions. Some illustration of how standards and guidelines drive instruction based on the unique needs of learners. Includes few examples of supporting data and a description of intervention.	instructional decisions. Includes little illustration of how standards and guidelines drive instruction based on the unique needs of learners. Limited use of supporting data and limited description of intervention.	instructional decisions. Missing illustration of how standards and guidelines drive instruction based on the unique needs of learners. Lacks supporting data and provides an incomplete description of the intervention.
Linking assessment to instruction	Reflects a deep understanding of how assessment drives instruction, including the place of informal and curriculum-embedded assessments. Assessments are used for formative and summative purposes such as screening, diagnosis, placement, and progress monitoring. Provides examples of methods that use grade level or school-wide data to implement and revise instructional programs.	Reflects a general understanding of how assessment drives instruction, including the place of informal and curriculum-embedded assessments. Some assessments are used for formative and summative purposes. Provides few examples of methods that use grade level or school-wide data to implement and revise instructional programs.	Reflects a limited understanding of how assessment drives instruction, including the place of informal and curriculum-embedded assessments. Few assessments are used for either formative or summative purposes. Hardly provides examples of methods that use grade level or school-wide planning data to implement and revise instructional programs.	Reflects lack of understanding of how assessment drives instruction, including informal and curriculum-based assessments. Assessments are used for either formal or summative purposes, but not both. No examples of methods that use grade level or school-wide assessment data to implement and revise instructional programs.
Evaluating instructional interventions	Clearly and effectively presents data and results of the instructional intervention. Provides complete examples of methods and data used to evaluate professional development regarding instructional interventions.	Clearly presents data and results of the instructional intervention. Provides partial examples of methods and data used to evaluate professional development regarding instructional interventions.	Vaguely presents data and results of the instructional intervention. Provides unclear examples of methods and data used to evaluate professional development regarding instructional interventions.	Lacks data and results of instructional intervention. Provides no or unclear examples of methods and data used to evaluate professional development regarding instructional interventions.
Delivery	Expresses ideas fluently, in own words, with little reliance on notes. Genuinely interested and enthusiastic. Exceptional voice mannerisms, body language, and communication skills. Exceptional quality of presentation materials.	Relied little on notes. Displayed interest and enthusiasm. Good voice mannerisms, body language, and communication skills. Good quality of presentation materials.	Read small parts of material. Occasionally struggled to find words. Displayed interest and enthusiasm. Sometimes used inappropriate voice mannerisms, body language, and communication skills. Moderate quality of presentation materials.	Relied extensively on notes. Unenthusied and monotonous. Poor voice mannerisms, body language, and communication skills. Poor quality of presentation materials.
Total Score:				



Part I – Needs Assessment – to be collected Fall Semester

Objective: To collect data about your school in order to determine which needs your project might address.

Steps:

- Collect relevant school data (e.g., demographic data, assessment data, etc.). Be sure to disaggregate the data and be as specific as possible.
- Analyze the data you collected and begin to identify patterns and/or trends in order to determine a problem or an area of need on which you can concentrate for your ARP.
- Meet with your site mentor and your course instructor and present your findings and your idea for a project.

Part II – Project Plan – due Fall Semester

Objective: To identify the outcomes, measurement instruments, and steps to meet your project goal.

Steps:

- Determine who will participate in your project (i.e., which adults and which students).
- Identify what the targeted **adults** will do differently as a result of this project.
- Identify the instrument(s) you will use to measure the degree to which your project met your stated outcomes for adults (e.g., survey, observation, etc.).

As a result of the changes the adults made, student outcomes should also change positively.

- Identify what the targeted **students** will do differently as a result of this project.
- Identify the instrument(s) you will use to measure the degree to which your project met your stated outcomes for students (e.g., district benchmark, text assessment, teacher-made assessment, etc.).
- Identify what impact you believe your ARP will have on the state assessment.
- Write an Action Research Project Proposal for your project based on the information you gathered in Parts I and II and submit it on Blackboard.

Part III – Project Implementation – due Spring Semester

Objective: To collect the post-data and reflect on the changes in the adults and students who participated in the project.

Steps:

- Complete an Action Research Project Goal Report and submit it on Blackboard.
- Implement each of the steps in your plan.
- Deploy your measurement instruments to discover how the project influenced student learning, as well as how it influenced changes in practice in the adults you led.
- Have your site mentor review the activities you have completed to accomplish your project and sign the Site Mentor Verification form. Scan the form with your mentor's signature and submit it on Blackboard.

Part IV – Written and Visual Presentation of Results – due Spring Semester

Prepare a written report and visual presentation describing your project and its results, then present them.



EXAMPLE OF AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The ability to read fluently is a crucial skill to success in life. Students must read fluently in order to comprehend material in all subject areas. With the implementation of the Common Core Standards, the rigor of the reading expectations in math has greatly increased, preventing students who are struggling in reading to find success in math either. The achievement gaps for these students will continue to increase in all subject areas if they cannot increase their reading fluency, which may cause them to be considered for special education testing, to act out in school and at home, or to fail and drop out of school before they graduate.

Early intervention is key to the educational success of our students. Students must enter third grade with the ability to read fluently in order to access the material in all subject areas. My project will focus on improving reading fluency in second grade students by coaching teachers on how to work with them in small reading groups, helping teachers become familiar with the materials provided with the curriculum for small group guided reading, and guiding teachers through the Student Study Team process. Home support is an important piece to student improvement, therefore I will also be meeting with and advising parents on how they can assist at home by forming a "Parent Partnership" for the second grade students who work in the Learning Center as a 40-minute extension to their school day.

DATA TO BE ANALYZED IN THE PROJECT

The need for this project is demonstrated in the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment. The DIBELS assessment measures the reading fluency rate of students and provides a "performance indicator" based on the results, recommending the



amount of support individual students need. “Core” refers to students who are at low risk of failure and are able to access grade level material. “Strategic” refers to students who have some risk of failure; they need support to access the grade level material, and the teacher should provide additional intervention during the school day. “Intensive” refers to the students who are at risk of failure, have great difficulty accessing grade level material, and need additional support beyond the classroom teacher (e.g., need a reading specialist).

Below are tables illustrating the school data pertinent to my action research project.

Student Data:

Number of 2 nd grade students	Number of Boys	Number of Girls	Percentage of ELL Students	Percentage of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students
173	75	98	66.7%	86%

DIBELS Data:

Beginning of the Year Cut Scores

Core: 52+ words per minute

Strategic: 37-51 words per minute

Intensive: 0-36 words per minute

Number of Intensive Students	39	Average Words Per Minute (WPM) for Intensive	22.2
Number of Students with IEP	6	WPM for Intensive Students with IEP	7.3
Number of Intensive Boys	22	WPM for Intensive Students with SST	5.5
Number of Intensive Girls	17	WPM for Intensive Students in Learning Center	19.3



STEPS TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT

To complete my project of improving fluency in second grade students at Golden Oak Elementary School, I will do the following:

With Teachers:

1. Guide each teacher through the data for her or his class
 - a. Help teachers understand the performance indicators and identify students
 - b. Determine the amount of time each student needs
 - c. Set up interventions
2. Present a mini professional development
 - a. Review Response to Intervention (RTI) tiers
 - b. Review reading materials for each tier
 - c. Check in on Student Study Team (SST) process
3. Observations
 - a. Observe two teachers during PE intervention and UA
 - b. Follow-up conversation regarding observation and suggested routines
4. Model lesson
 - a. PE intervention for high frequency words and repeated reading
 - b. UA for “intensive” and “strategic” students
 - c. Follow-up conversation regarding modeled lesson
5. Follow-up observations
 - a. During PE and UA to check in
6. Present mini professional development
 - a. For topics as needed



- i. Based on my classroom observations

With Parents:

1. Send letter of introduction
 - a. Explain why students are in the Learning Center
2. Invite parents to an introductory meeting
 - a. Create our Parent Partnership
 - i. Establish responsibilities
 - ii. Set goals
3. Monthly communication via “Book Bag”
 - a. Update student progress toward goals
4. Student Study Team meetings
 - a. Attend with updated data

INSTRUMENTS TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT

It is important to collect data for this project because it will determine if it is a worthwhile endeavor and if an RTI coach should be incorporated into other campuses in our district in the future.

I will use a survey with the teachers. Teachers will rate their knowledge on administering DIBELS, understanding the performance indicators, and utilizing the reading materials for the different tiers, as well as how often they work with students at the different tiers. The same survey will be given at the beginning of the project implementation (September 2015) and at the end of the project implementation (April 2016).



CSU Bakersfield

I will utilize the DIBELS data for second grade as the measure for student learning. The goal is to decrease the number of “intensive” students, as well as to increase by 40 points the number of words per minute that “intensive” and “strategic” students read, from the beginning of the project implementation to the end of the project implementation.



EXAMPLE OF AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT GOAL REPORT

Name of Candidate:

Adult Goals

Goal	Processes to Undertake	Implementation & Completion Dates	Data to Collect	How can I involve other adults?
Increase teacher understanding of intervention materials for 2nd grade students.	Meet with teachers at grade level meeting and individually to review the progress of the students and develop an intervention plan utilizing materials available.	Monthly grade level meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month Individual meetings held monthly, prior to scheduled SST meetings	Student progress via DIBELS benchmark scores Dates materials are used Teacher survey	Consult with mentor Meet and collaborate with 2nd grade teachers Attend SST meetings
Increase teacher effectiveness in the area of building reading fluency in at risk 2nd grade students.	Train two 2nd grade teachers to implement an intensive fluency afterschool program for at risk 2nd grade readers.	Training will occur late January. Coaching will continue February through May	Student progress via DIBELS progress monitoring Student attendance	Consult with mentor to obtain permission to begin program Recruit, train, and coach teachers
Increase parent involvement in efforts to increase reading fluency.	Follow up "Parent Partnership" meeting. Personally contact parents that do not attend and schedule individual meetings.	Continually beginning in January until all families are contacted.	Student progress Parent sign in	Consult mentor and invite her to present Include the two teachers leading the new after school intervention classes.



Student Goals

Goal	Processes to Undertake	Implementation & Completion Dates	Data to Collect	How can I involve other adults?
Increase reading fluency by 30 words per minute in at risk 2nd grade students.	Train teachers in the utilization of intervention materials Establish "Parent Partnership" to involve families Provide high quality instruction and motivational support	see above	DIBELS benchmark data from Fall 2015 and Spring 2016	Train teachers Meet with parents Consult mentor
Have all at risk students appropriately referred via SST meetings (testing, retention, intervention tiers).	Consult with classroom teachers to implement interventions, track the progress of students, complete a SST referral, and attend SST meetings.	continually throughout the school year	Notes of the recommendations made by the SST team and the decision of the parents	Guide classroom teachers through the process Meet with SST team members Invite parents



EXAMPLE OF AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTATION

Classroom Assessment for Student Learning

JANE STUDENT

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT - CSUB EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

MAY 7, 2016

Statement of the Problem

With an increased emphasis on state-mandated tests as the ultimate measure of student achievement, many teachers have also begun to rely on summative forms of assessment as their definitive form of accountability. By focusing solely on summative assessments, teachers are less likely to monitor student progress toward their learning goals and are therefore less likely to provide feedback and interventions that will help struggling students achieve proficiency and/or mastery of the required academic skills.

Purpose of the Research Project

The purpose of this research project was to help teachers move away from relying solely on summative assessments by leading them in learning about and creating new kinds of formative assessments that measure student learning growth and progress toward specific academic skills.



SMART Goal

By April 2016, a team of eight teachers will be able to evaluate specific methods of formative assessment that they have researched and used successfully in their own teaching practice, as measured by gains in student achievement, and will train the school leadership team and faculty in these methods, as well.

Review of the Literature

Purposes of assessment – summative and formative (e.g., Chappuis et al., 2011)

Positive and negative forms of assessment (e.g., Hodgkinson, 2008; Rivera & Crowe, 2013)

Assessment as student motivation (e.g., Schmoker, 2010; Fullan, 2012)

Growth models of assessment (e.g., López & Cohen, 2013; Brau, 2009)

Site and Participants

Northwest High School - 2,791 students

- Latina/o – 61%
- African American – 34%
- Pacific Islander – 3%
- Asian – 1.5%
- White – 0.5%

- IEP – 13%
- ELL – 13%
- FRL – 74%

8 teachers from across disciplines (English, Social Studies, Biology, Math, World Languages, Computer Literacy, Health, P.E.)



Action Steps

The team leader gave a recruitment presentation at a faculty meeting, leading to 8 teacher volunteers.

The team read *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing it Right—Using it Well* (Chappuis, Stiffins, Chappuis, & Arter, 2011).

From December 2015 to March 2016, the team met after school for approximately one hour every two weeks to:

- Discuss the ideas presented in the book
- To create different methods of formative assessment to try in their classes
- To share student work samples and student achievement data in order to evaluate which of the formative assessment methods were most and least successful, as well as ways to improve upon their efforts

The team led a professional development session for the entire faculty on successful methods of formative assessment and resultant positive achievement gains among students.

Evaluation Instruments

Student achievement data before implementing the formative assessment strategies

Student achievement data after implementing the formative assessment strategies

Focus group interview with the teacher work team

Teacher essays from the teacher work team

Survey of all faculty about the professional development session on formative assessment strategies given by the teacher work team

Outcomes/Findings

Student work samples pre- and post-intervention showed that student learning increased when teachers measured their growth through formative assessment before giving them a summative assessment in a specific area.

The teachers involved in the work team described their teaching as having improved through assessing specific measures of growth across time in student skills.

The faculty indicated that, after learning of specific kinds of formative assessment strategies they could use in their classes and how those strategies increased student achievement among the students taught by those in the teacher work team, the majority (82%) would like to implement some of those strategies in their own work with students.



Implications for CPSELs

Standard 1: Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision

Leaders shape a collective vision that uses multiple measures of data and focuses on equitable access, opportunities, and outcomes for all students.

Standard 2: Instructional Leadership

Leaders promote a culture in which staff engages in individual and collective professional learning that results in their continuous improvement and high performance.

Standard 3: Management and Learning Environment

Leaders facilitate safe, fair, and respectful environments that meet the intellectual, linguistic, cultural, social-emotional, and physical needs of each learner.

Standard 4: Family and Community Engagement

Indicator 4A-3: Solicit input from and communicate regularly with all parents and families in ways that are accessible and understandable.

Standard 5: Ethics and Integrity

Leaders guide and support personal and collective actions that use relevant evidence and available research to make fair and ethical decisions.

Standard 6: External Context and Policy

Indicator 6B-1: Advocate for equity and adequacy in providing for students' and families' educational, linguistic, cultural, social-emotional, legal, physical, and economic needs, so every student can meet education expectations and goals.