

Kathy Short, 2004

## **Writing a Report of Action Research/Teacher Research**

### INTRODUCTION

What was the focus of my study? What was the basis of my interest in this topic or focus? What was I trying to learn about and understand? What were my overall goals?

What factors in my own history and experiences led me to be interested in this inquiry?

What are my specific research questions for this study?

### BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY/REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

What is the background of this topic or focus and why is that background important to understand? What is the context of previous work that has been done on this topic? To what else does the topic relate?

How can I situate my study within related professional literature? What is the theoretical framework that I bring to this study? What are the areas of research and specific research studies that relate to my study? What are related professional references (research, theory, and/or practice) that inform me?

### DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

Where was the study conducted and the data gathered?

What is the specific context in which the study was conducted (e.g. school population, the classroom environment, curriculum, etc.)? May include a description of the school, the physical layout of the classroom, the curriculum or specific curricular engagement that was studied. What did I do in the classroom setting to create a context from which I collected data? Were there certain engagements that I did with my students?

Who were the participants in this research? How did I select the participants?  
What is my relationship to the people involved? Describe these participants.

Did I need to gain permission ("informed consent") from parents, guardians, or other "gatekeepers"? If so, how did I gain this consent? How did I assure participants that they are protected from harm and that they will not be exposed to risks?

### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

What is my general approach to research design (teacher research, experimental, case study, qualitative, etc.)? How and why did I choose this approach?

What important kinds of data did I collect? What specific methods of data collection did I use (e.g. field notes, teaching journal, interviewing, taping, collecting artifacts, etc.)? For each method - What did I do? What did the data look like? How did I collect it? When? How often? What did I do with it?

How did I analyze the data? What did I do to organize and analyze data as I collected it? What kind of more intensive analysis did I do once the data was collected?

How did I establish trustworthiness for the study?

What was my research time line?

## FINDINGS

What did I learn? What are the major findings of the study? What examples from the study support these findings?

A common way to organize findings is by themes or categories that were generated from the data. Typically each category/theme becomes a subheading and begins with a general description to define the category. This is followed by examples from the research to show the range of types of responses that went into that category -- actual quotes from student responses, journals, field notes, artifacts, etc are included and interpreted by the researcher. These categories might also be broken into smaller subcategories.

Other possible ways to organize the data include chronology (in the order events happened), life history (used for case study with the life history organized around analytical points to be made), composite (present findings as a composite picture such as "the day in the life of..."), critical events (significant events that reflect the major themes from the data), or portraits (of individuals or institutions).

In this section you are reporting the findings of the study and so must stay close to the data in the statements that you make. Don't make broad statements/interpretations that extend beyond the participants in the research. Do include "thick" description - lots of specific examples of student talk, actions, etc. You have to show that you have the data to support the statements that you are making and so others understand what is in your categories.

## DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS

So what? What are the possible implications of these findings for your own participants, other students, teachers, researchers? What sense do you make of this study? What are you taking away for yourself and for others?

Whose interests were served by this research? Who benefited? What is the study's potential

significance for my classroom or local context? for education or society as a whole? Who might care about this study?

What new questions emerged from this study? How will you continue this inquiry?

## CONCLUSIONS

Summary of study and concluding remarks that highlight thoughts you want to leave the reader with - the major insights or wonderings you are taking from the study.

## APPENDICES

Copies of research permission form, written surveys, interview questions, etc (forms used in the research or as part of the curricular engagement).