Using Participatory Action Research for Professional Development

Action research is a qualitative method used to help educators improve teaching and learning practices and contribute to the educational research knowledge base (Coghlan & Brannick, 2009; Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2005; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Smith & Fernie, 2010; Svensson & Doumas, 2013). Whereas, traditional educational research focuses on explanations, knowledge, experimentation and universal generalizations, participatory action research focuses on academic improvement through professional development (Greenwood, Whyte, & Harkavy, 1993; Hoedebeck, 2011; Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014; McIntyre, 2008; McTaggart, 1991; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Participatory action research is presented as a social research method and process. It is argued that it is an emergent process that can often be intensified, and works effectively to merge participation, social action, and knowledge generation (Flood, 2010; Somekh, 2005; Stringer, 2013).