



Classroom research and the whole teacher

Alan Pulverness
TransformELT

The whole teacher

Humanistic Approaches

- ✓ respect for the learner
- ✓ learners as individuals
- ✓ education as a process of realising individual potential

parent-child



adult-adult



paternal/assertive



fraternal/permissive

dispenser of knowledge



consultant/resource

fostering dependence



preparing for independence

Transmission teaching

- integrity of the subject
- body of knowledge to be passed on
- teacher as evaluator / guardian of value
- learner as *tabula rasa*

Interpretation teaching

- knowledge as process
- teacher as provider of frameworks for learning
- learner with capacity to extend existing knowledge

Douglas Barnes *From Communication to Curriculum* (1976)

***'Banking'* education**

“An act of depositing in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor”

***'Dialogic'* education**

“Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers”

Paulo Freire *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972)

Training or **Development?**

Training...

- ...prepares *against* surprise
- ...sees the past as finished
- ...repeats a completed past in the future
- ...leads towards final self-definition

Development...

- ...prepares *for* surprise
- ...sees the past as unfinished
- ...continues an unfinished past into the future
- ...leads towards continuing self-discovery

Carse (1987)

Finite and Infinite Games

What *is* teacher development?

...the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased **experience** and **examining** his/her experience **systematically**.

Glatthorn (1995)

Teaching as decision-making



Free Fall

When did I lose my freedom? For once, I was free. I had power to choose. The mechanics of cause and effect is statistical probability yet surely sometimes we operate below or beyond that threshold. **Free-will cannot be debated but only experienced, like a colour or the taste of potatoes.**

Free Fall

I remember one such experience. I was very small and I was sitting on the stone surround of the pool and fountain in the centre of the park. There was bright sunlight, banks of red and blue flowers, green lawn. There was no guilt but only the splash and splatter of the fountain at the centre. I had bathed and drunk and now I was sitting on the warm stone edge placidly considering what I should do next.

Free Fall

The gravelled paths of the park radiated from me:
and all at once I was overcome by a new knowledge.
I could take whichever I would of these paths. There
was nothing to draw me down one more than the
other. I danced down one for joy in the taste of
potatoes. I was free. I had chosen.

Free Fall

I put the day in the park first in my story, not because I was young, a baby almost; but because freedom has become more and more precious to me as I taste the potato less and less often.

William Golding *Free Fall* (1959)

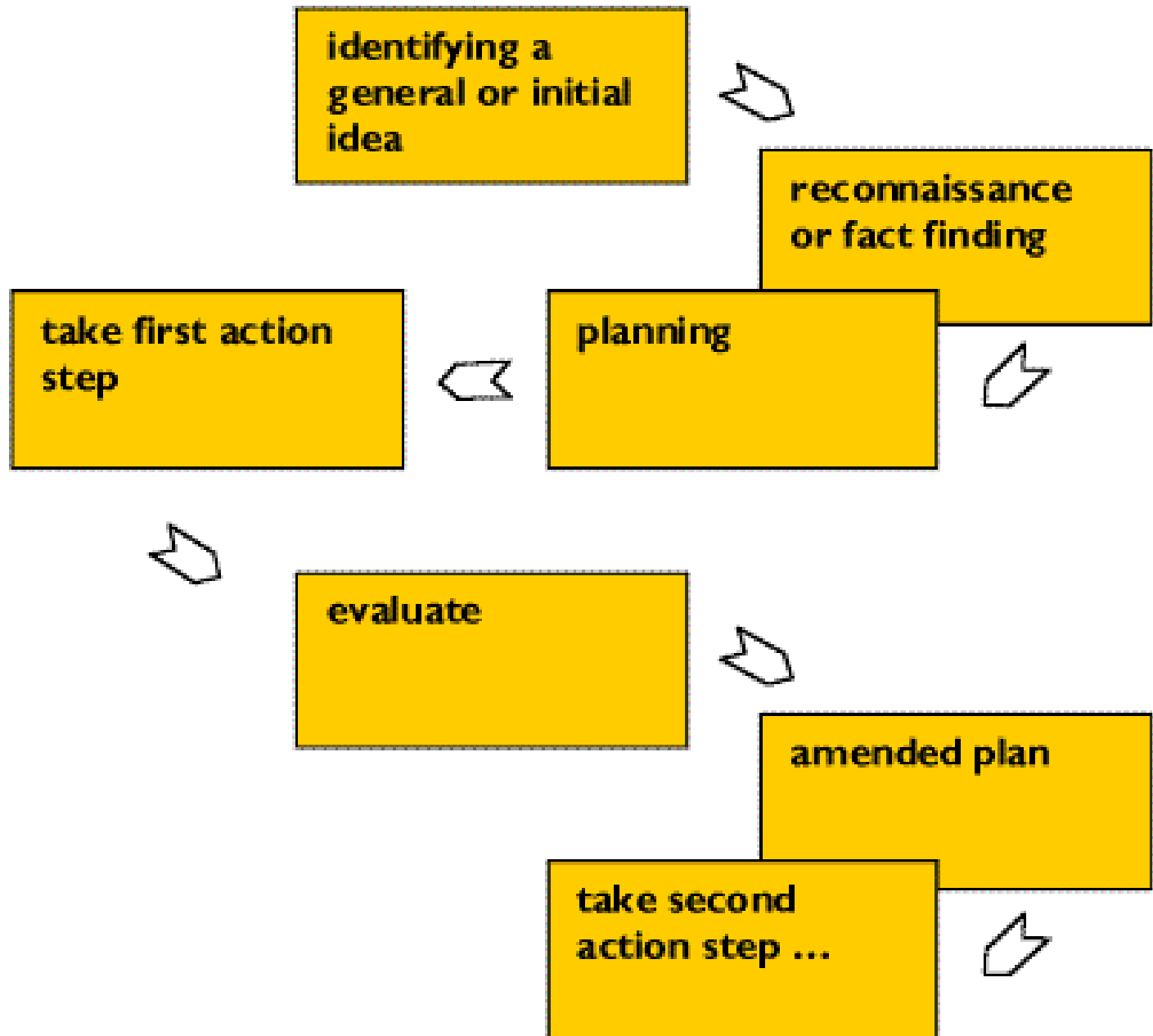
Classroom research as teacher development

- In the process of enlightenment there can be only participants.

Jürgen Habermas *Theory and Practice* (1974)

- It is only through self-knowledge that we may hope to know others, and it is only through a commitment to professional development that we can hope to improve the quality of education in our own classrooms.

Jean McNiff *Action Research: Principles and Practice* (1988)



Action research



To be action research, there must be **praxis** rather than practice.

Praxis is **informed, committed** action rather than just successful action.

It is **informed** because other people's views are taken into account.

It is **committed and intentional** in terms of values that have been examined and can be argued.

It leads to knowledge from and about educational practice.

Action research



...analysis, fact-finding, conceptualisation,
planning execution,

more fact-finding or evaluation;

and then a repetition of this whole circle of
activities;

indeed **a spiral of such circles...**

Kurt Lewin (1948)

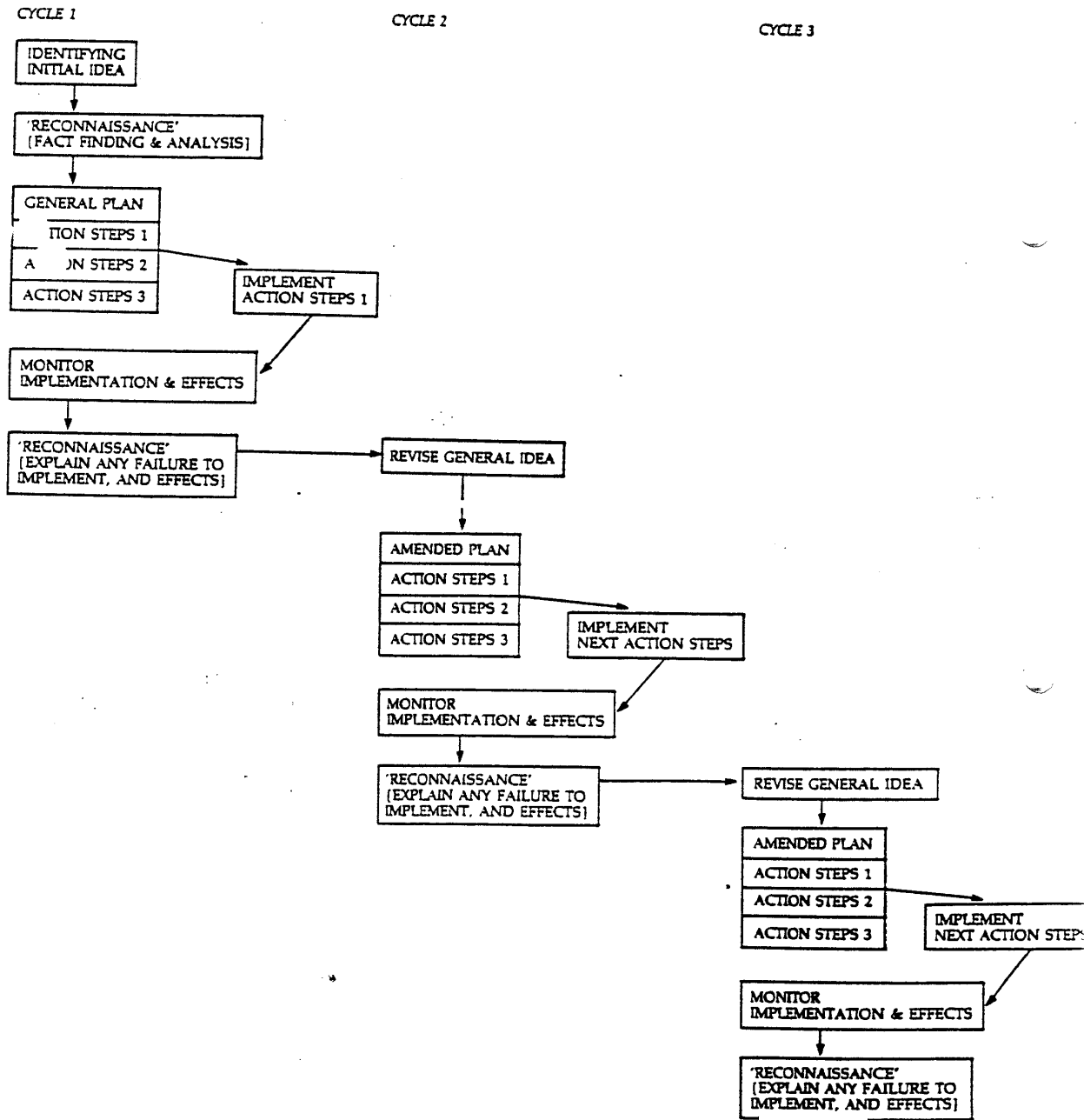
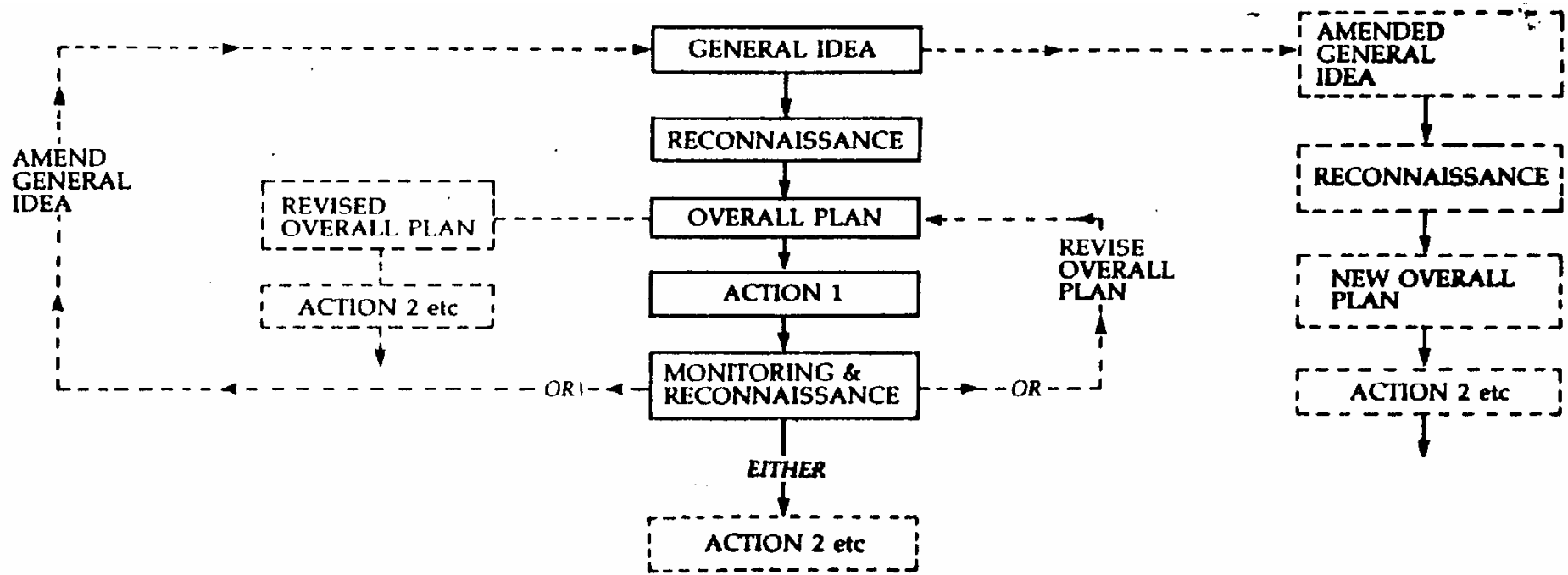
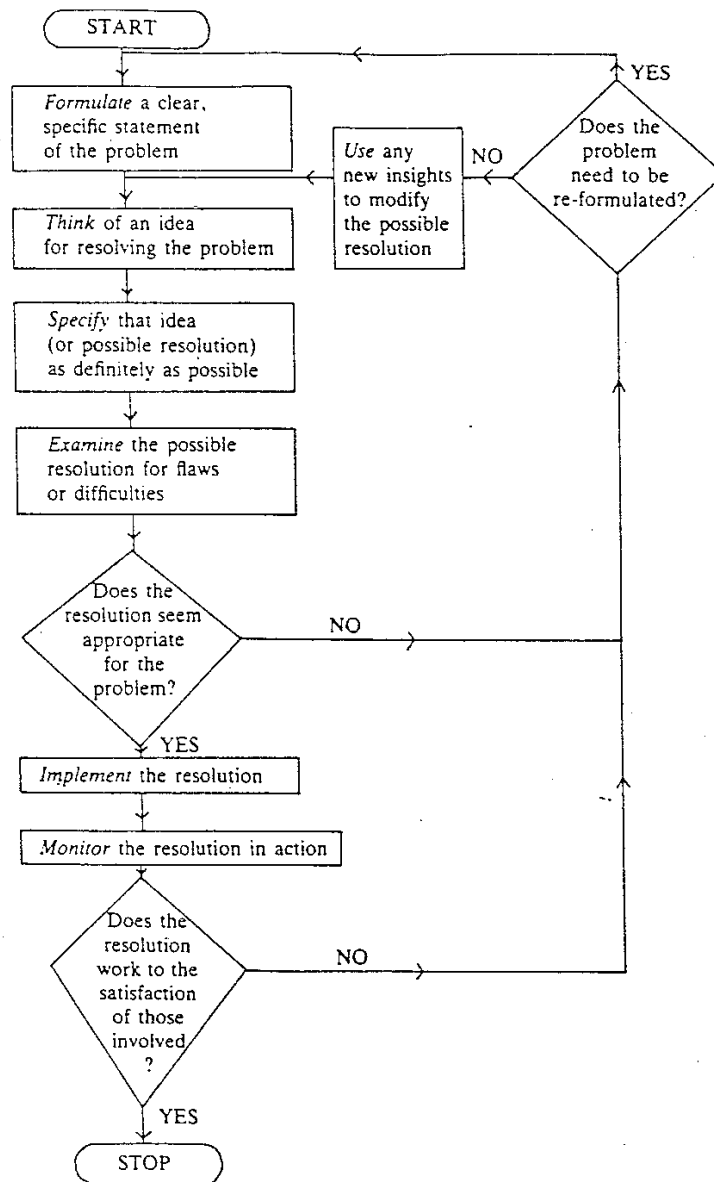


FIGURE 4.2 Elliott's action research model (1981)



Idealized Representation of the Process of Action Research

FIGURE 4.3 *Ebbutt's model* (1983)



Easen (1985) Making School-centred INSET work

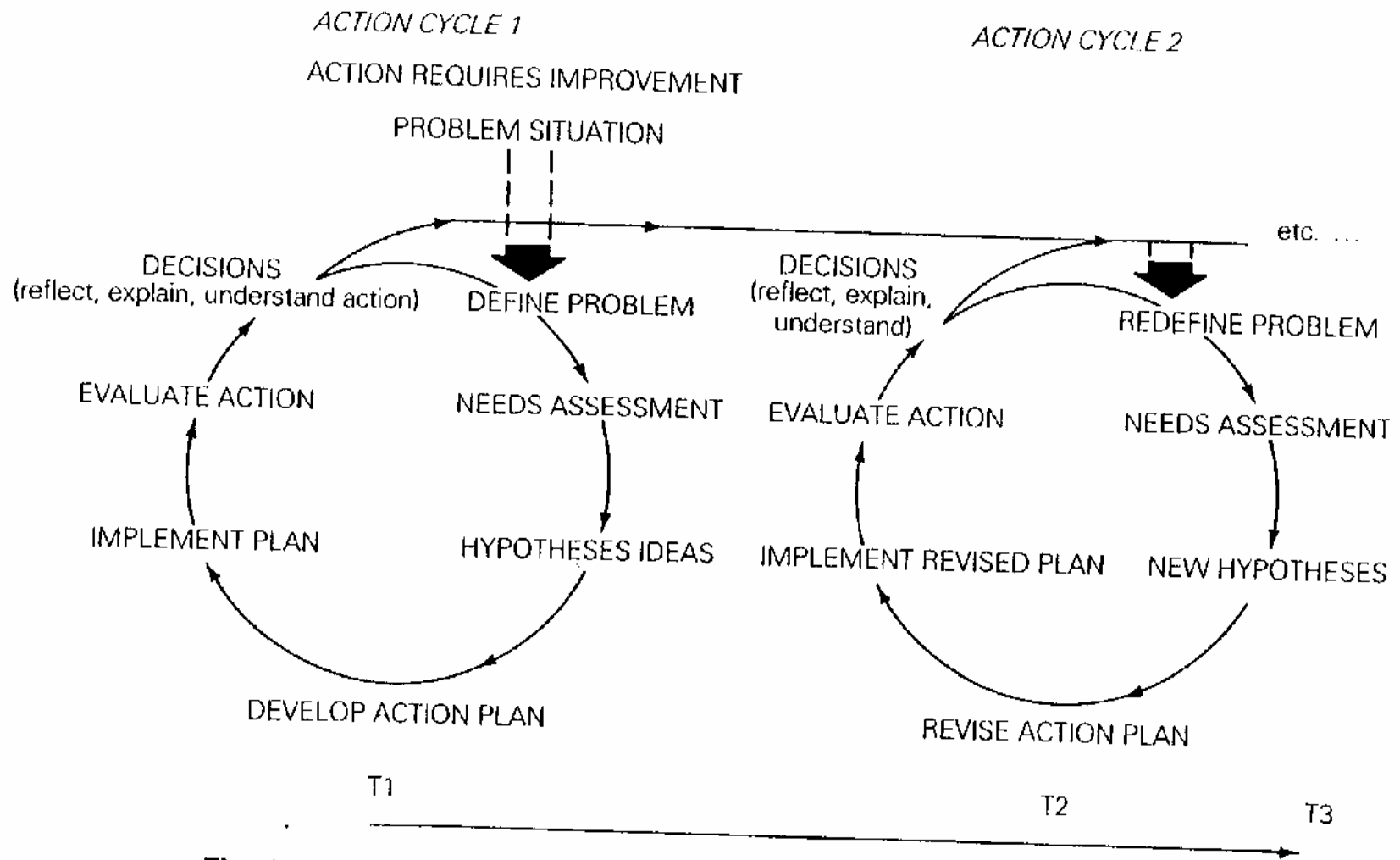


Fig. 4.4 McKernan's action research model (from McKernan 1991: 29).

My enquiry questioning is disrupted by my need to keep control in ways the class expects.

My students think that science means recalling facts rather than a process of enquiry. How can I stimulate enquiry in my students? Change the curriculum? Change my questioning? Settle on questioning strategies.

Shift questioning strategy to encourage students to explore answers to their own questions.

Record questions and responses on tape for a couple of lessons to see what is happening. Keep notes of my impressions in a diary

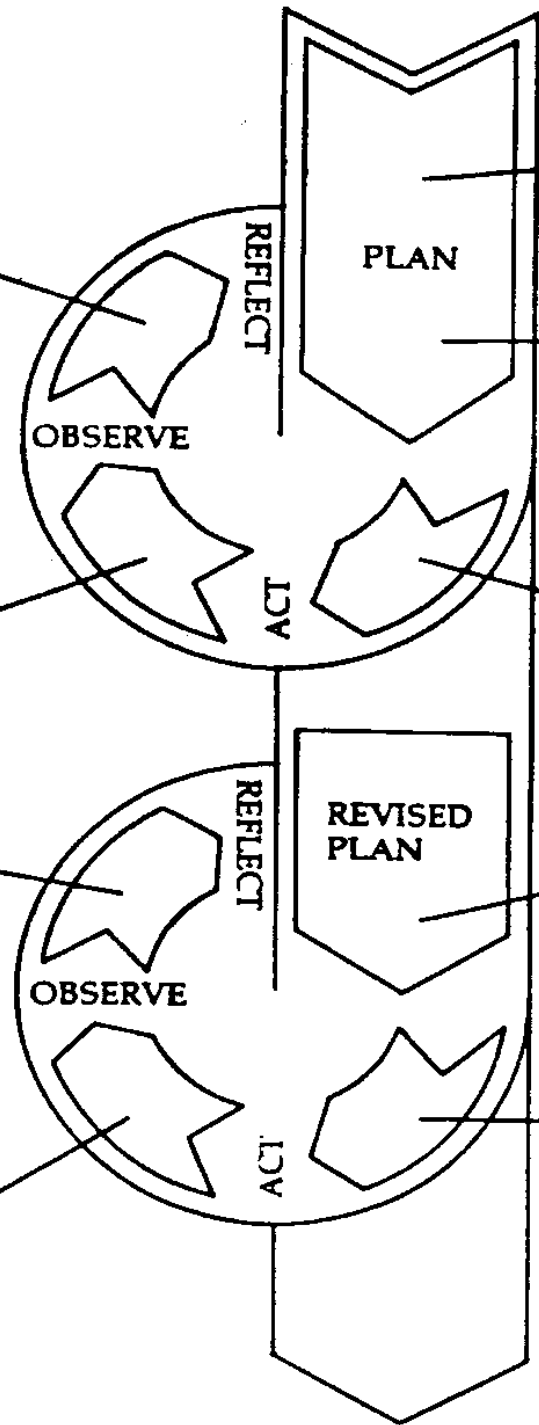
Try questions which let students say what they mean. What interests them.

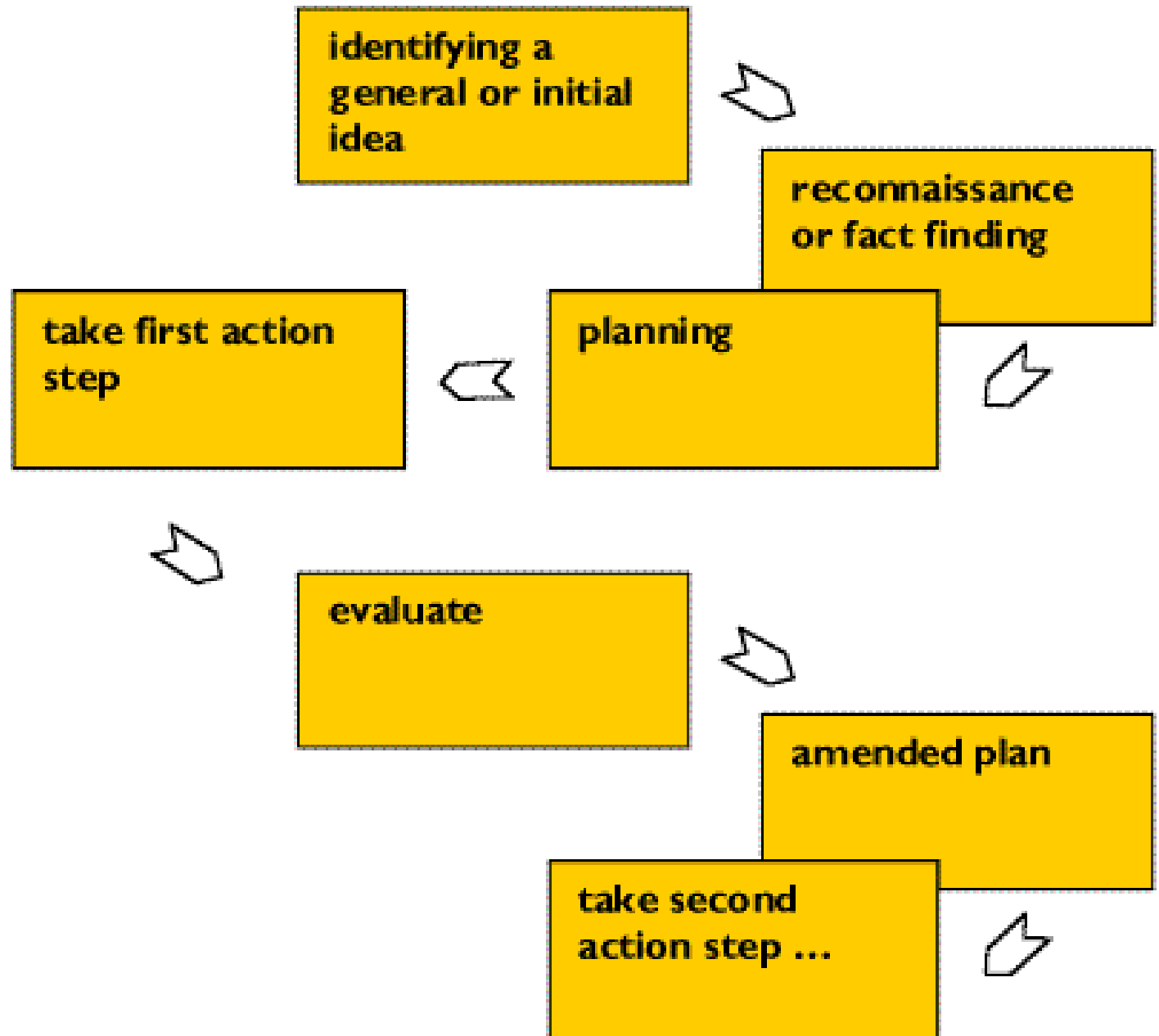
Enquiry developing but students are more unruly. How can I keep them on track? By listening to each other, probing their questions? What lessons help?

Continue general aim but reduce number of control statements.

Record on tape questioning and control statements. Note in diary effects on student behaviour.

Use less control statements for a couple of lessons.





Action research...

- “...raises to a conscious level much of what is already being done by good teachers on an intuitive level” (McNiff 1988)
- “...aims to contribute...to the **practical** concerns of people in an immediate **problematic** situation. (Rapoport 1970)
- “...is about the **systematic** study of attempts to improve educational practice **by groups of participants** by means of their own **reflection upon the effects of those actions.**” (Ebbutt 1985)

Action research...

- “...is the study of **a social situation** with a view to **improving the quality of action** within it.”
(Elliott 1991)

- “...is the way **groups of people** can organise the conditions under which they can **learn from their own experience.**”

- “...is **trying out an idea in practice** with a view to **improving or changing something, trying to have a real effect on the situation.**”

(Kemmis 1983)

Action research...

“...is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants...in order to improve the rationality and justice of:

- (a) their own practices
- (b) their understanding of these practices
- (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out.”

(Carr & Kemmis 1986)

Necessary conditions

Viability

Don't tackle issues you can't do anything about.

Discreteness

Only take on small-scale and relatively limited projects.

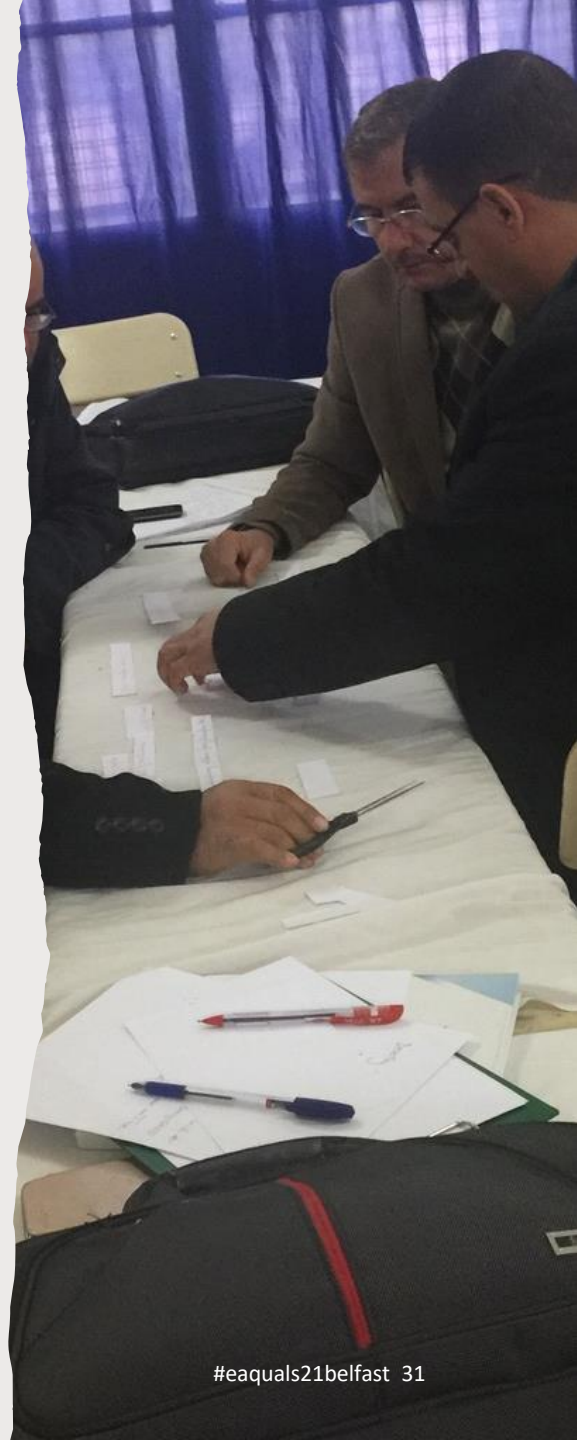
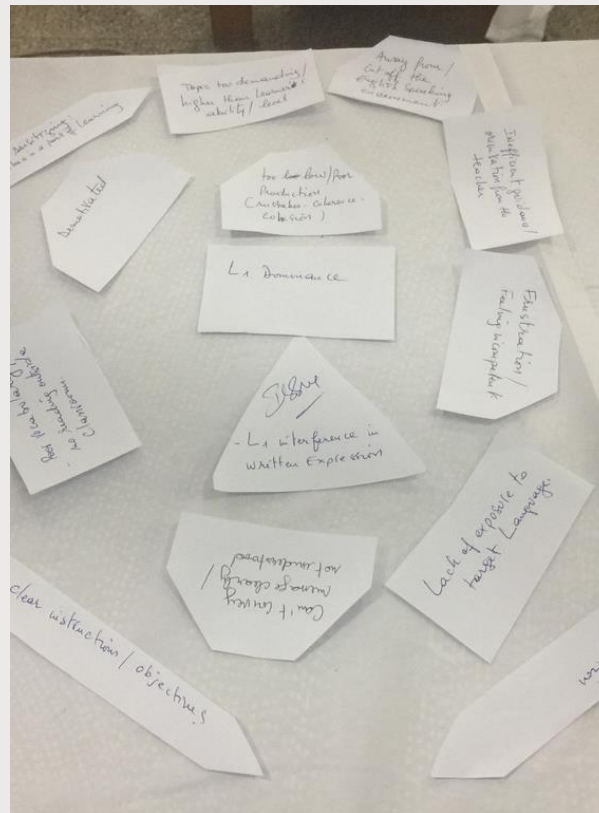
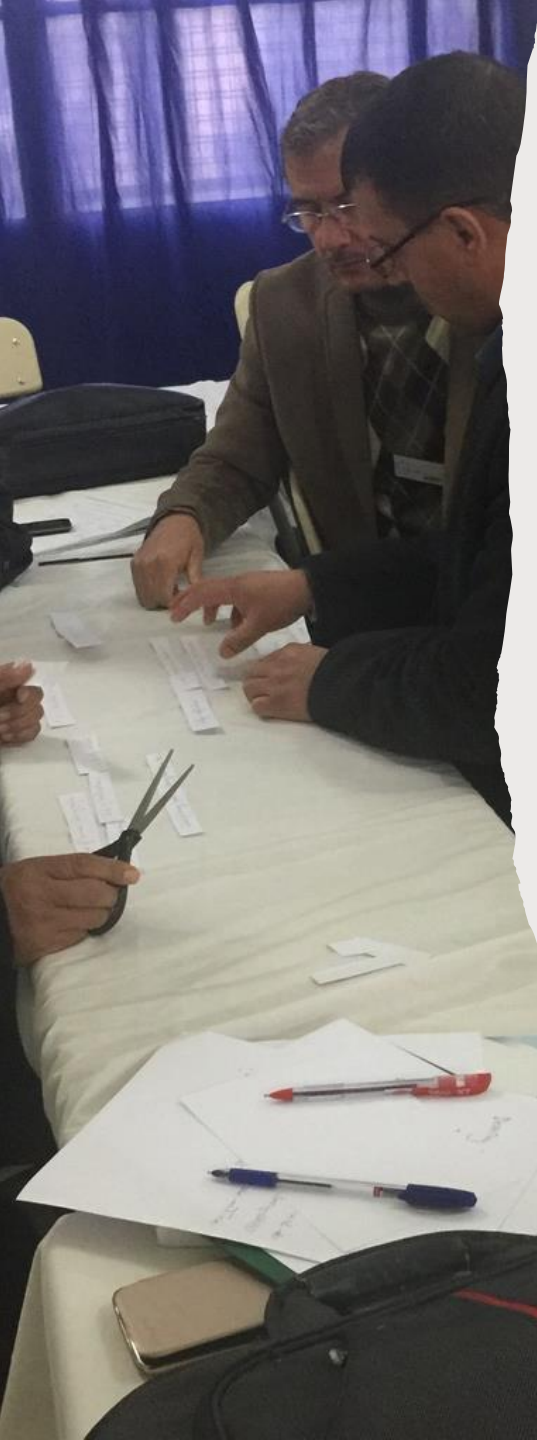
Intrinsic interest

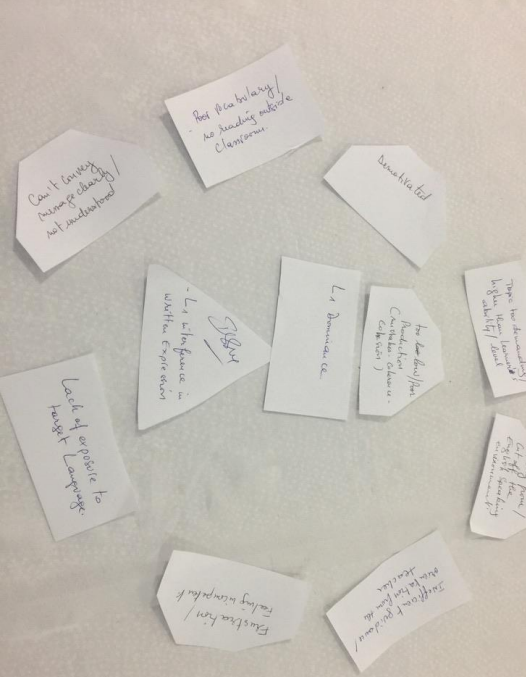
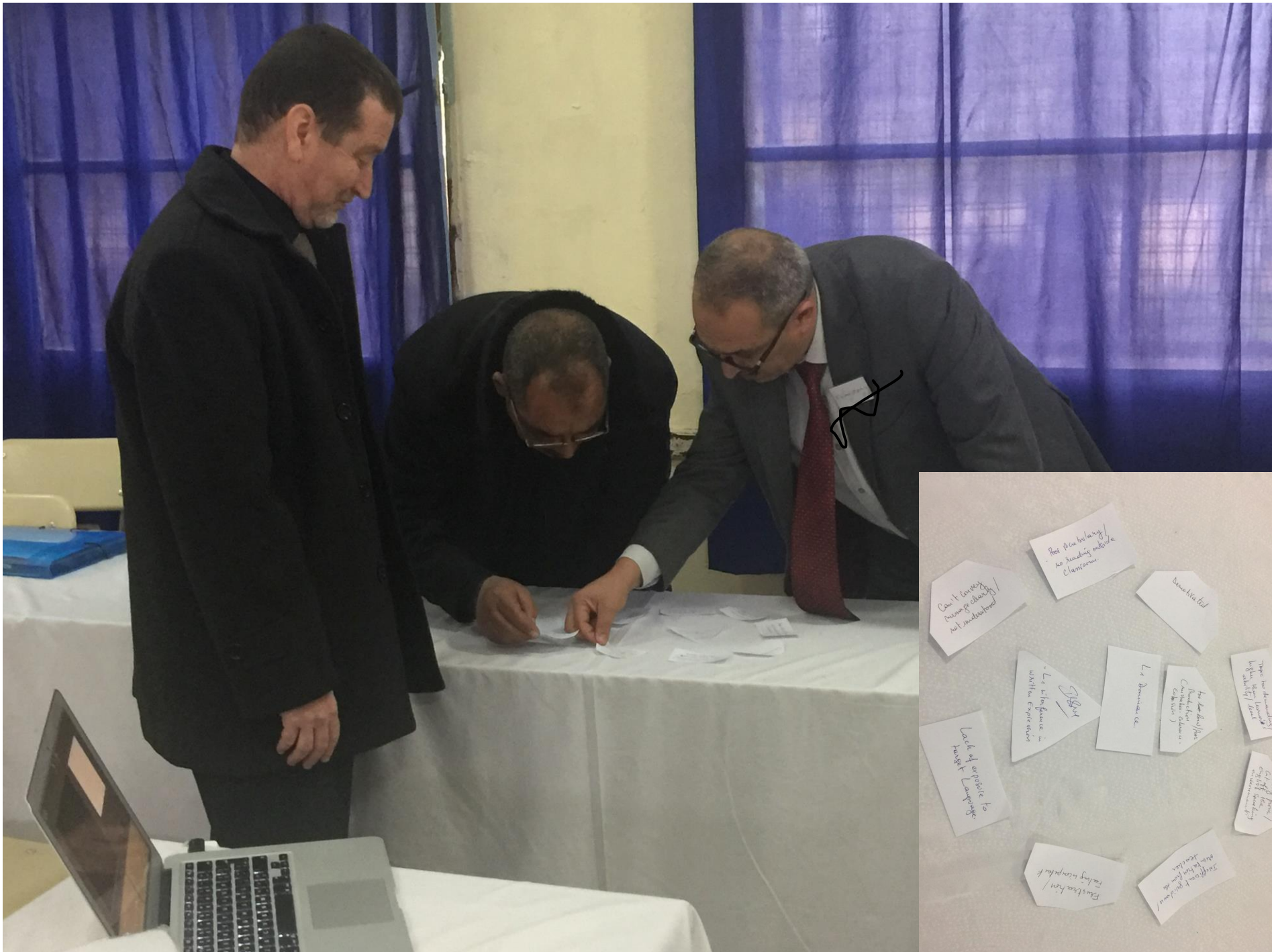
Choose a topic that is important to you and your students, or one that you have to be involved with anyway in the course of your teaching.

Problematising...



Causes and Effects





Data-collection



field notes



teacher diaries



audio recording



video recording



learner diaries



interviews



questionnaires



sociometry



still photographs



documentary evidence



case studies



observation

Isn't this just what good teachers do all the time?

Surely it's a misnomer to call it research.

How can you generalise from a unique experience?

What about properly validated test results?

It lacks any kind of objectivity.

Two kinds of knowledge...

- Declarative knowledge: knowing *about*...
- Procedural knowledge: knowing *how to*...

...and a third

- Tacit knowledge: what we know intuitively...

“We know more than we can tell”

(Michael Polanyi 1958)

Two approaches



1. Reflection initiates action:

The development of understanding precedes the decision to change teaching strategies.

2. Action initiates reflection:

The decision to adopt a change of strategy
... precedes the development of understanding.

(Elliott 1991)

Classroom research...

...is teacher development made explicit.

(Maria Elena Perera de Perez
cited in Head & Taylor 1997)

...liberates teachers from their prejudices
and allows their instincts to blossom.

(Headmaster cited in McNiff 1988)

Select bibliography

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www.transformelt.com

apulverness@transformelt.com