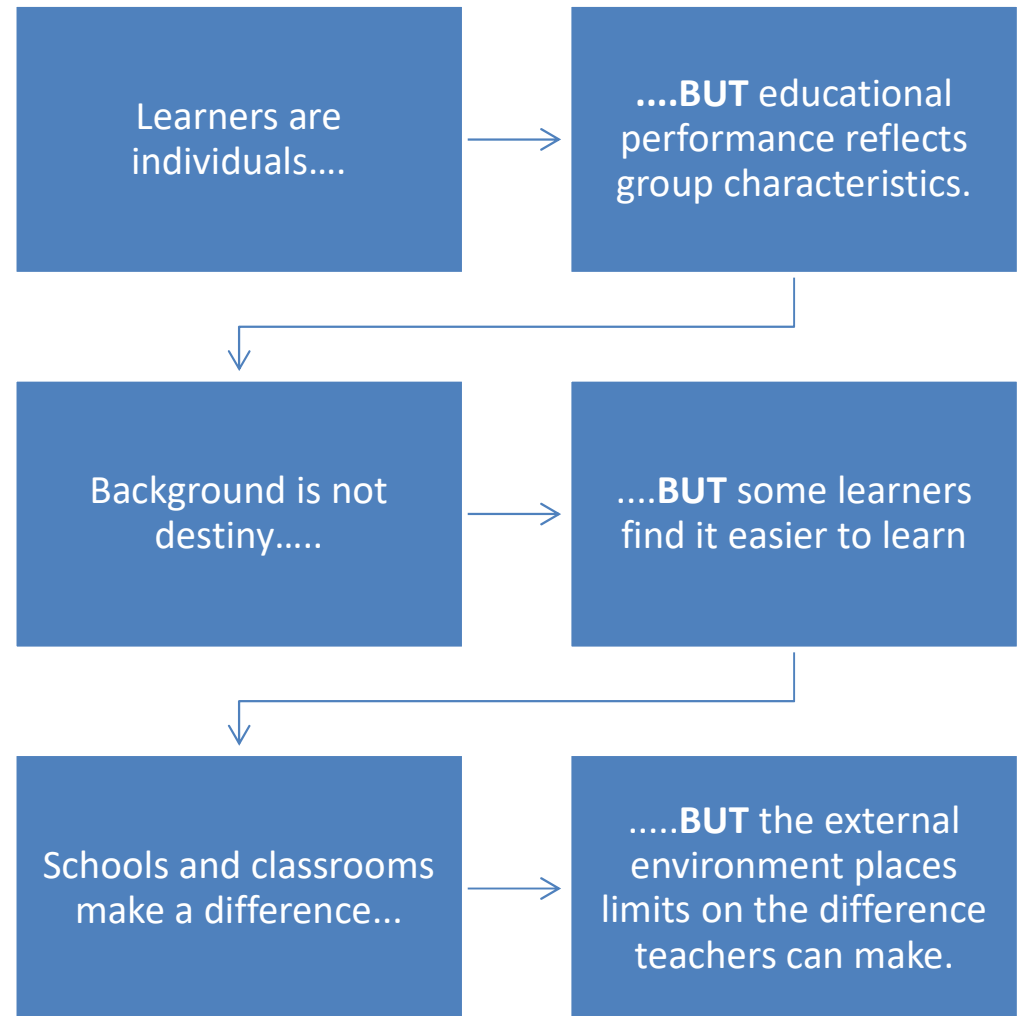# Action Research

… is a democratic and participative orientation to knowledge creation. It brings together action and reflection, theory and practice, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern. Action research is a pragmatic co-creation of knowing *with*, not on **about**, people.

Bradbury-Huang, H., & Reason, P. (2007). The SAGE handbook of action research. The SAGE Handbook of Action Research, 1-752.

Keele University

Social Background and Learning

Learners are individuals…. → ….**BUT** educational performance reflects group characteristics.

Background is not destiny….. → ….**BUT** some learners find it easier to learn

Schools and classrooms make a difference… → …..**BUT** the external environment places limits on the difference teachers can make.

Keele University

Learners, Learning and Context

What kind of country/type of country...**CULTURE/ETHNICITY**

What is the social status of children/pupils....**SOCIAL CLASS**

What is the balance of boys/girls....men/women....**GENDER**

Do any of these characteristics impact on teaching and learning?

In which ways?

Why?

Diana Reay

Reay, D., 2012. What would a socially just education system look like?: Saving the minnows from the pike. *Journal of Education Policy*, 27(5), pp.587-599.

'The establishment of the completest possible educational equality'

Equal access?

Equal process?

Equal treatment?

Equal opportunities?

Equal outcomes?

Inequalities

- Race, gender, sexualities, disability
- 'Existing inequalities of gender, race, sexualities and disability are inextricably intermeshed with inequalities of class and consequently will never be fully addressed until social class is recognised as a fundamental division in British education that requires urgent, far-reaching action' (p. 588).

'Education cannot compensate for society' (p. 592).

SOCIALLY JUST EDUCATION SYSTEM – MORE EQUAL SOCIETY?

ATTITUDES – 'THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE MORE PRIVILEGED AND POWERFUL IN SOCIETY' (P. 593)?

EVERYONE CAN BE MIDDLE CLASS?

INDIVIDUALISTIC, COMPETITIVE – SUCCESS ACCORDING TO WHAT YOU DESERVE RATHER THAN RESOURCE FOR WHAT YOU NEED?

Educability

- Innate differences between groups
- Material advantages/deprivation
- Cultural support/deprivation
- Motivation/aspiration
- Cultural and social 'capital'
- Ability/motivation/hard-work

Education Differentiates

- School processes categorise, select, order and provide according to group/individual characteristics
- They do so *institutionally….*

Organisation of teaching

Formal curriculum

Informal curriculum: expectations – self-fulfilling prophecy

Ommission – failure to acknowledge, include and recognise

Behaviour Management

Education and Gender

Maynard, T., 2005. A problem of gender. *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Inclusive Education*, p.83.

Boys and Girls

- Boys – lads, loutish, lazy, anti-school, anti-learning, creative, vocal, 'breezy', 'rebellious'
- Girls – bookish, passive, submissive, excessive conscientiousness, morbid obsession with learning
- Femininity/Masculinity
- Boys and girls educated according to their future roles in society – education and destiny
- Gender and class
- Opportunity and outcomes

Boys and Girls

- Stereotypical roles in the classroom
- Stereotypical expectations in the classroom
- Stereotypical subject choices – male and female subjects
- Individualism, competition and performance
- Praise, reward, sanctions
- Formal curriculum 'reinforce traditional values upheld by white, male-dominated areas of knowledge' (p. 86)
- Informal curriculum - practices, expectations,

Discussion: Reflecting on Social Factors in Learning

- In your experience of education, do you believe that learning is affected by:

- Social class and opportunities

- Gender and expectations

- Differences between home and community cultures and schools cultures?

- If you were observing teaching and learning and thinking about social factors, what kinds of things would be looking at?

Principles and Practices of Inclusion

Inclusion

In groups, discuss:

- What do you understand by the term inclusion?
- Who is to be included?
- What do schools do to be inclusive?
- What do schools do to be exclusive?

Policy

- International focus
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Mainstream schools vs Special schools
- **Social construction of exclusion -** the idea that society and its institutions have the power to **construct exclusion** around **social** expectations and practices. Exclusion is a **construction** based on localized **social** expectations.

Principles

- Not a deficit model of learners
- Inappropriate school processes and practices
- Comprehensive and whole school approach
- Dismantle traditional forms of segregation; special classes/withdrawal/sink groups
- Expansive – quality of education for all
- Address the social production of exclusion

Principles

Ainscow, M., Booth, T. and Dyson, A. (2006), Inclusion and the standards agenda: negotiating policy pressures in England, International Journal of Inclusive Education, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 295-308.

Principles

School 'should concern themselves with increasing participation and broad educational achievements of *all* groups of learners who have historically been marginalized' (Ainscow et al, 2006, p. 295).

Challenges

- Accountability culture
- Inclusion and standards
- Discipline and exclusion
- Growing backlash
- Challenge to education policy: equity, participation, rights, community, compassion, respect

Policy in Practice

Clarke, C., Dyson, A., Millward, A. and Robson, S. (1999), Theories of Inclusion, Theories of Schools: deconstructing and reconstructing the 'inclusive school,' British Educational Research Journal, Vol, 25, No. 2, pp. 157-177.

Policy in Practice

- Rhetoric/discourse of inclusion
- Leadership and resistance
- Behaviour – individual and group responses
- Support – in-class; subject teams; pastoral; senior management; external agencies
- Training – of teachers; of teaching assistants; of school leaders
- Differentiation
- Ability grouping/basic skills curriculum/alternative curriculum
- Special interventions/withdrawal
- Market pressures
- 'Dilemmas of diversity' (p. 174).

Policy in Practice

- Learning Support Units on site
- Alienation/segmentation
- National Literacy/Numeracy strategies; Mastery teaching
- Whole class teaching/setting/streaming
- 'The way we do things here' – conservative and resistant

Continuity or Change?

'Bureaucratic organisations deal with problems by creating sub-units and specialisms to contain them whilst practice elsewhere in the organization remain unchanged. However, 'adhocratic' organisations see such problems as an opportunity to rethink their existing practices in fundamental ways.' (Ainscow et al, 2006, p. 302).

Seminar Groups:

Analyse Action Research paper

- Which principles and practices of inclusion are used here?
- What is the evidence used to conduct research?
- How would you use the observation tools to conduct action research in an organization?

Next Time

Read:

Hobson, A. and Malderez, A. (2013), Judgementoring and other Threats to Realising the Potential of School-Based Mentoring in Teacher Education, *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Eduation, Vol. 2, No. 2. pp. 89-108.*