Integrated School Development and Improvement Project

**Implemented by
the Centre for Educational Research, Technology and Innovation (CERTI)
in the Faculty of Education at the
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University**

funded by the D.G. Murray Trust

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to provide appropriate training, mentoring and support for teachers and school managers to improve:

– learners' competencies in science, mathematics and languages.

– school functionality and performance based on specific needs identified by the school as a whole.

OUR APPROACH TO THE PROJECT

- We are here to share our knowledge, skills and experience with you.

- But, we don't know everything. We value your knowledge, experience and expertise.

- We would like to work with you collaboratively.

- We want to be able to respond to your needs as much as possible and not impose something on you.

- We will conduct research together with you, not purely for our benefit, but hopefully to the benefit of other schools.

WHY WE CHOSE TO APPROACH YOUR SCHOOL

- We did not choose to approach your school because we feel it needs improvement, or that there is something wrong with it.

- We chose to approach you because we know that you are good schools – we want to help you to be even better schools.

- We have been working with many of your schools in various ways and would like to present you with an integrated approach to help you to make your schools even better than they are.

FOCUS AREAS OF THE PROJECT

- School leaders support programme

- Scientific Literacy

- Mathematical Reasoning

- Language and Literacy

FOCUS AREAS OF THE PROJECT

- **School leaders support programme**
  - School development and improvement through Action Research projects (Will involve training and support for a team of school managers and teachers)
  - Support for principals
  - Facilitating networking with donors and service providers
  - Short Learning training programmes in Computer Usage and Financial Management
  - Developing computer networking between schools – www.wselearning.ning.com and http://nmmumod.nmmu.ac.za/sites/sosproject
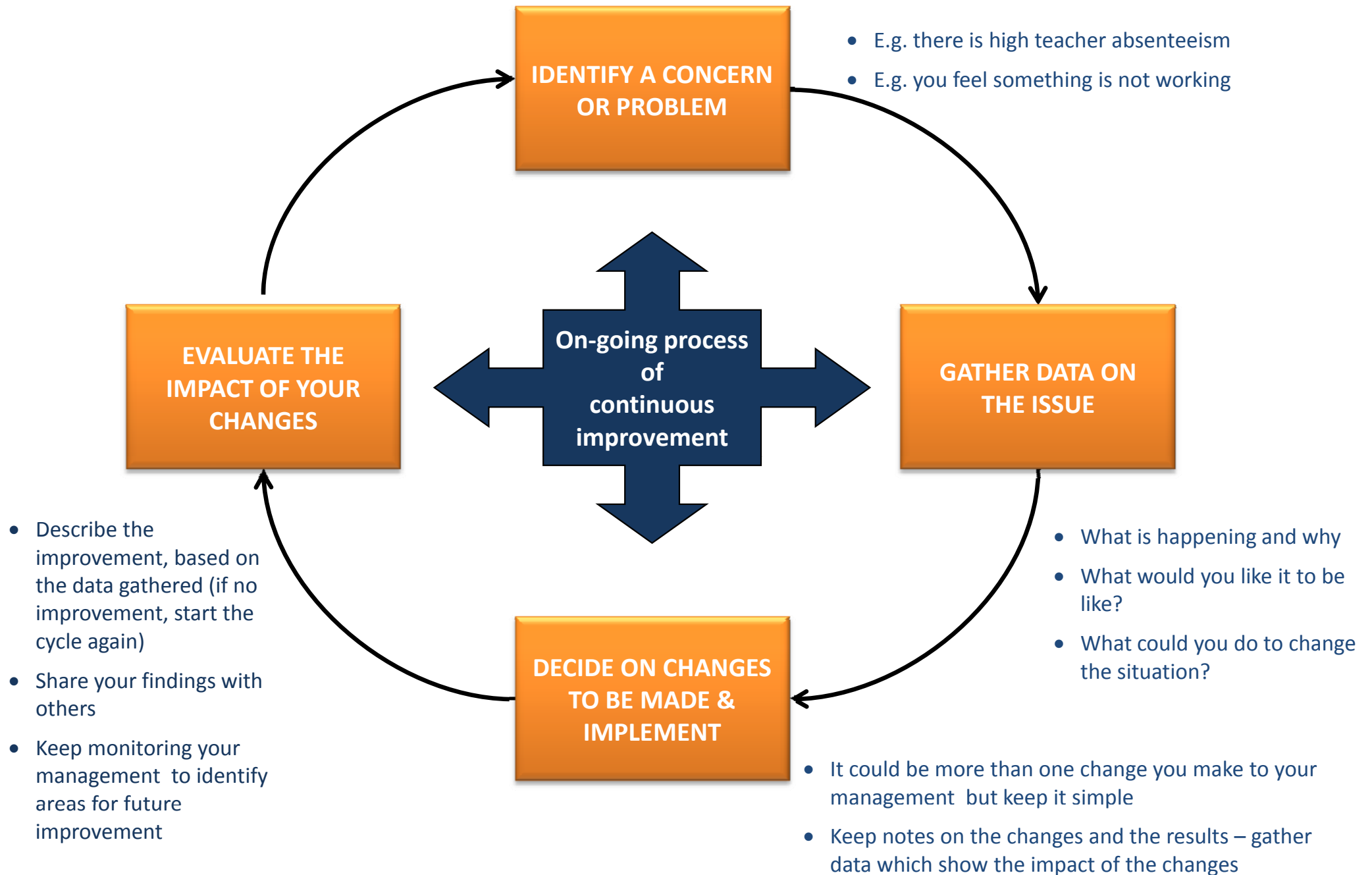
What is Action Research?

- Practitioner based research

- Systematic enquiry into practice to:
  - Develop managerial skills
  - Improve the school climate and culture
  - Develop life long learning approach

- Align practice with accepted values

Action research cycle

IDENTIFY A CONCERN OR PROBLEM

- E.g. there is high teacher absenteeism
- E.g. you feel something is not working

On-going process of continuous improvement

GATHER DATA ON THE ISSUE

- What is happening and why
- What would you like it to be like?
- What could you do to change the situation?

EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF YOUR CHANGES

- Describe the improvement, based on the data gathered (if no improvement, start the cycle again)
- Share your findings with others
- Keep monitoring your management to identify areas for future improvement

DECIDE ON CHANGES TO BE MADE & IMPLEMENT

- It could be more than one change you make to your management but keep it simple
- Keep notes on the changes and the results – gather data which show the impact of the changes

Why do action research?

Living out values
- be clear about what you do and why when setting strategic goals

Empowering managers
- to bring about improvement in own practice and, subsequently, whole school

Encourages
- collaboration and
- participatory management

AR for school development

If action research becomes a norm with management and subsequently all teachers and learners in the school, then the school can transform itself into a centre of excellence.

AR for school development

Teacher portfolios of action research will be a good indication of growth and development and can even be used as part of a performance appraisal

AR for school development

Action research increases enthusiasm among teachers – when you are involved in your work and in control, it becomes much more exciting and enjoyable.

AR for school development

Action research promotes openness and transparency as people come to see that "mistakes" are valuable learning tools.
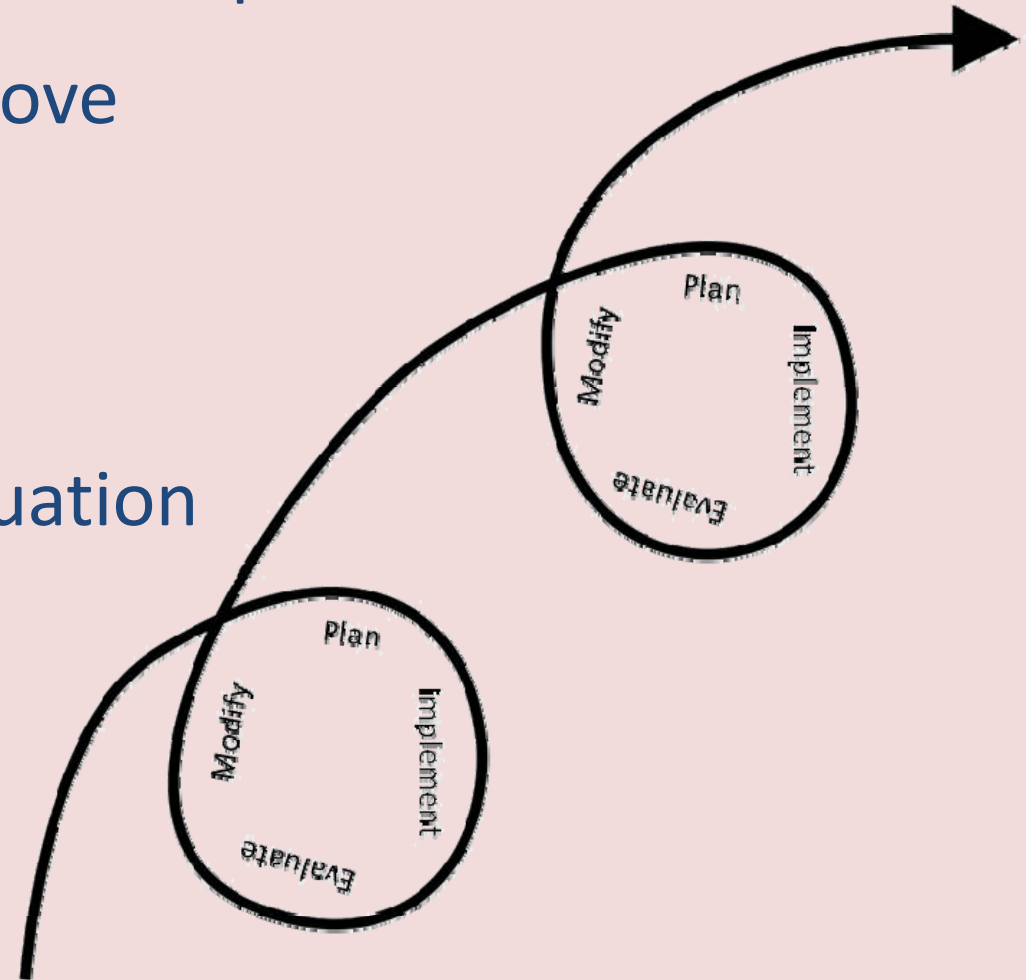
Oops!

How to carry out an AR study

- Spiral process which alternates between action and critical reflection

- Continuously refining managerial practice in light of understanding gained in earlier cycles

- Participative process

- Emergent process, takes shape as progresses

Basic steps in action research

1. Review current practice

2. Identify aspect that needs improvement

3. Imagine a way to improve

4. Try it out

5. Evaluate

6. Modify in light of evaluation

7. Monitor

8. Review

9. Evaluate ……….

Examples of current projects

- Encouraging self-discipline in learners

- Developing effective fund-raising

- Encouraging parental involvement

- Improving teacher-learner relationships

- Establishing a culture of reading in the school

- Improving teacher commitment

- Improving financial management in the school