

## Action Research Example on Writing

Dear Teachers,

Action research is a reflective practice. A reflective teacher develops her own teaching learning strategies appropriate to her own situation in her professional life. The activities suggested in the training manuals and also in any other books are guided activities for the teachers. These were developed based on the reflective practice of some professional teachers. They are not necessarily effective in your typical context. You need to be an observant of your situation, think of your own learners and bring out your own ideas for teaching. And establish your own ideas, which you find effective, as teaching learning methods. This sort of practice is known as Action Research in teacher's professional life.

### Action research plan

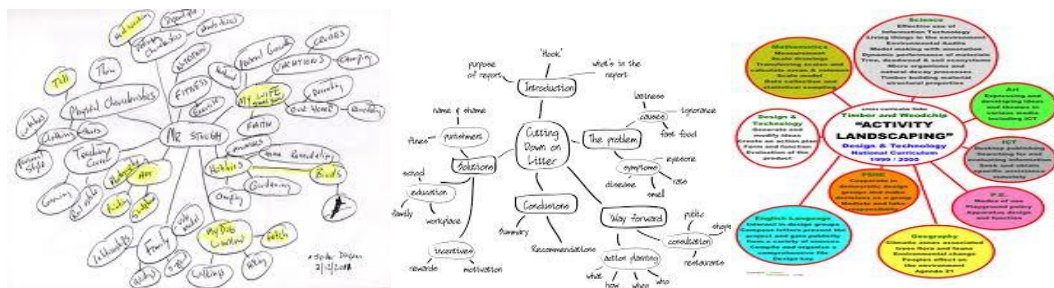
1. (My students can't write well. They don't like to write in the classroom. Whenever I ask them to write a composition (a paragraph, an essay, a story, a report or a description of an event) they hesitate to write in the classroom. In addition, they want to leave that task for homework. When I force them to write while they are in the classroom, they can hardly write a few sentences on the given topic. However, their writing is a little bit better when I let them to write as homework. In the exams, they have not done well in writing composition. The average score is 5 out of 20 in the last three tests.) **(issue)**
2. I wonder how I can improve my students' writing skill in English. **(research question)**
3. How have I been teaching writing compositions all these years? Is this approach not working well? What difference can I make now?

I have been teaching English for the past three years. I have applied the following techniques to teach writing compositions in English:

I bring several examples of such compositions to the class. Sometime I read out the composition and sometimes I ask them (a few of them) to read out. Usually, I write sample compositions on the board and they copy it. I explain how that composition is developed. I also explain the important points to consider while writing such a composition. I write the '**points to remember**' on the board. They copy them. Then I bring a new topic / question similar to the example just presented and ask them to write. They hesitate to write in the classroom. They want to leave that task for homework. I want them to write in the classroom in their copy books. For long, their pens don't move. I understand that they need more support on the topic. Then, I explain details about the topic orally. They start to write but only a few sentences but not well organized. In the tests, their writing is worse. Now, I know that this approach of mine for teaching writing composition is not working well. I am not happy with this situation. I am not satisfied

with the student's existing ability in writing. I want to improve this situation. I have to change the way I am teaching. I must think of new ways / method / techniques for teaching writing composition. (**Reflection on existing practice**)

4. I know my approach for teaching writing compositions is not working well. I must find new and more effective ways. What difference can I do? What new methods will work in my context? Let me think???????????????????????????????????? (looking for a new technique)
5. Y...e...s. My students need more support to be able to write. They need to be supported with appropriate words and structures to write in the given topic. They need examples and details to elaborate ideas. For this, we must have a discussion or interaction in the class. I have to elicit ideas from students. I have to elicit details and examples to support these ideas. In addition, I will write these on the board. What will I write? Only the main points. Not the full sentences. However, I will be speaking complete sentences while discussion / interaction. At the end of the interaction, there will be a spider diagram on the board. At the centre, there will be the topic and the ideas with details and examples around it. Then I ask them to write on the given topic. I think, this time, with help of the spider and earlier discussion, they will craft a better composition. I hope this idea works. This will be my new intervention in my class. Let me try it out. (**new intervention**)
6. Action research Topic: **Spider Technique** to improve students' writing skills.
7. Steps for implementing Spider Technique
  - i. introduce a familiar topic / issue for writing
  - ii. write the topic at the centre of the board
  - iii. Initiate an interactive discussion with students on the topic by asking questions
  - iv. Elicit ideas, details and examples. Modify their ideas as per the need.
  - v. Write the ideas around the topic on the board. Write details of the ideas and examples around the ideas matching to them. Thus, there will be a spider diagram on the board.
  - vi. Explain the spider diagram once again.
  - vii. Ask students to write a composition. (it could be a story / essay/report etc. as per the topic's nature)The spider diagrams will look like these.



8. How will I know whether this new idea (spider technique) works or not?  
After five such classes, I will give them a first test, after ten classes a second test and a third test after 15 classes. I record the progress as shown in the following table.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average score before implementing spider technique</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average score after implementing spider technique</li> </ul>			Meaning
• <i>Test 1</i>	• <i>Test 2</i>	• <i>Test 3</i>	• <i>Test 1</i>	• <i>Test 2</i>	• <i>Test 3</i>	
• 5	• 5	• 5				

On the other hand, I would observe their behaviour throughout this new intervention. My focus of observation will be on readiness to write in the classroom, their offer to postpone the writing activity as homework and how promptly they start writing after a writing task is given based on the spider.

## Reflective report

I am a teacher. I teach English at the secondary level in Nepal. I have been teaching English for the last three years. My students were not able to write compositions (paragraph, story, essay, report, etc.) at the satisfactorily level.

Despite my efforts, the average score in the last three tests was 5 out of 20. I had been applying the following techniques to teach writing compositions in English. I brought several examples of such compositions to the class. Sometime I read out the composition and sometimes I asked a few of them to read out. Usually, I wrote sample compositions on the board and they copied it. I used to explain how that composition is developed. I also explained the important points to consider while writing such a composition. I wrote the **'points to remember'** on the board. They copied them. Then I used to present a new topic / question similar to the example I had just presented and asked them to write. They hesitated to write in the classroom. They wanted to leave that task for homework. I wanted them to write in the classroom in their copy books. For long, their pens didn't move. I understood that they needed more support on the topic. Then, I used to explain details about the topic orally. They would start to write but only a few sentences, not well organized. In the tests, their writing was worse. Now, I knew that this approach of mine for teaching writing composition was not working well. I was not happy with this situation. I was not satisfied with the student's existing ability in writing. I wanted to improve this situation.

I thought of a new idea and decided to try it out in the classroom to teach writing composition. I call it the spider technique. My spider technique is like this:

First, I have a discussion or an interaction in the class on the topic. I elicit ideas from students. I elicit details and examples to support these ideas. In addition, I write these on the board. I write only the main points. Not the full sentences. However, I speak complete sentences while discussion / interaction. At the end of the interaction, there will be a spider diagram on the board. At the centre, there is the topic and the ideas with details and examples around it. Once again, I explain the spider to support them to write. Then I ask them to write on the given topic. The steps I follow are:

- i. introduce a familiar topic / issue for writing
- ii. write the topic at the centre of the board
- iii. Initiate an interactive discussion with students on the topic by asking questions
- iv. Elicit ideas, details and examples. Modify their ideas as per the need.
- v. Write the ideas around the topic on the board. Write details of the ideas and examples around the ideas matching to them. Thus, there will be a spider diagram on the board.
- vi. Explain the spider diagram once again.

- vii. Ask students to write a composition. (it could be a story / essay/report etc. as per the topic's nature)  
The spider diagrams will look like these.

**The spider looks like this on the board**



I implemented this new idea in my class till I had 15 such classes on composition writing. I gave three tests in three different intervals. The first test after five classes, the second test after ten classes and the third test was after the fifteenth class. I also observed their behaviour through this new intervention.

The table below shows their progress in writing composition in English.

• Average score before implementing spider technique			• Average score after implementing spider technique			Meaning
• Test 1	• Test 2	• Test 3	• Test 1	• Test 2	• Test 3	
• 5	• 5	• 5	6	9	9	The new idea has worked

### Reflection of my observation

After the spider is developed, they readily start writing. They don't offer to do it as homework. They improve their classroom composition as homework though I don't ask them to do show me the next day. I can read more confidence in their faces while writing in the classroom.

I have concluded that my spider idea has some strength to motivate students to write, to build confidence in writing and gradually my students are developing a skill i.e. to make a mental spider when they are given a new topic to compose something in English.

Now, I want keep up this idea. I want to try it in the next class too.

**Dear Teachers, what such experience or reflection do you have in your life? Please pass it to District Education Office. We will upload your reflection on this site.**