

# Conducting Action Research

Dr. Michelle Stewart



# So what is Action Research?

- **Action Research** is a term that describes a practical way in which you can investigate work-related issues and improve professional practice
- Practitioner based research - that involves you in critically thinking about your work practices and how you might change them for the better



# The Benefits of Action Research

- Opportunity for collaborative working
- Offers new insight and understanding of careers work
- Useful and engaging Continuous Professional Development



# How to Conduct Action Research

## Step 1

- Identify an issue
- Compose a research question



# Case Study - Natalie

## Case Study -Natalie

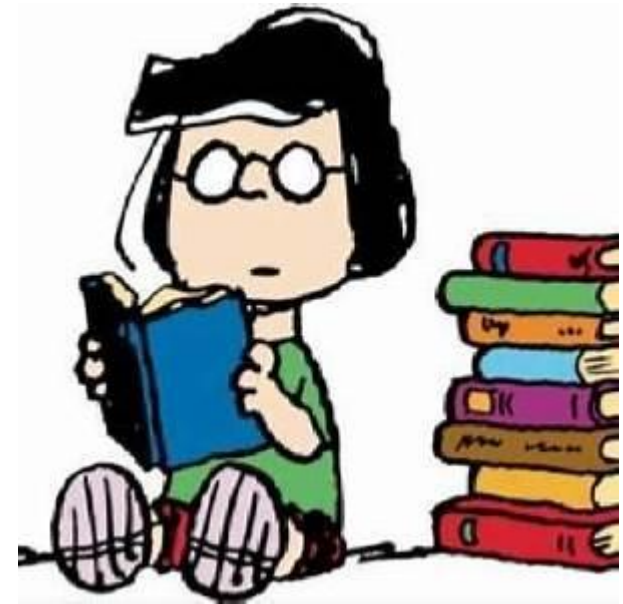
- **Issue** – Difficulty of meeting the needs of young people because they all appeared en masse late on Thursday afternoons
- **Research question** – ‘Why do lots of young people come to the careers room after the final lesson period on Thursdays?’
- **Outcome** – to better manage the flow of young people coming to see her, so she is able to speak with each of them and provide the information they need



# Example - Conducting the Research

## Step 2

- Reflect on the issue
- Share your thoughts with trusted colleagues
- Research what is already known



# Conducting Action Research

## Step 3 – decide on a course of action

Natalie decide on 3 courses of action:

- Speak with the young people and engage them in her research
- Investigate what was known – e.g. when the lesson took place, how numbers turning up o Thursday compared with other days
- Speak to form tutors

**Aim** – to reach an outcome that would benefit everyone

✓ **Informed consent**



# Conducting Action Research

## Step 4 – Reviewed her findings

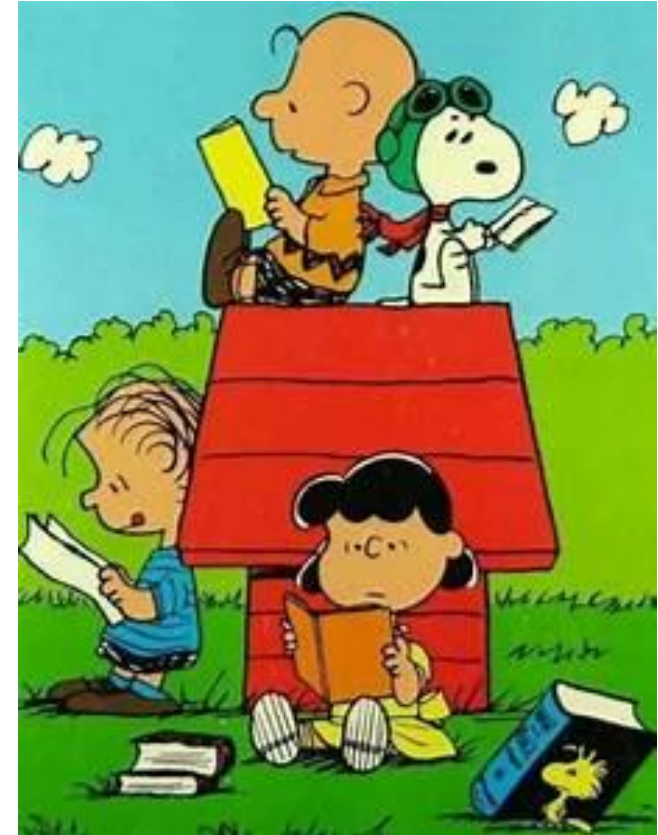
- Natalie discovered the focus of PSHE sessions on Thursdays was next steps and careers. This included action planning and goal setting

## Step 5 – Identify possible solutions

- Natalie spoke with the head of PSHE to agree a more strategic plan that would enable her to better support the young people and the PSHE tutors

## Step 6 - Evaluate

- Thursdays became more peaceful and after a period of time Natalie used a questionnaire to evaluate the changes.

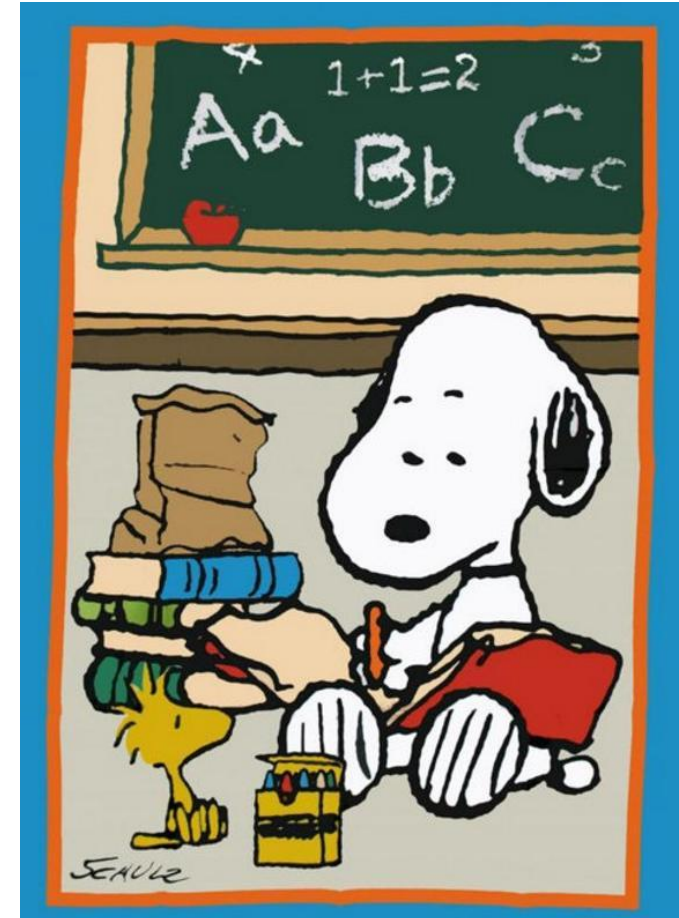




# Review of Conducting Action Research

## Step 1

- Identify the issue, compose your research question and the desired outcome
- Find out what has been written already that might help you understand the issue



# Review of Conducting Action Research

## Step 2 - Plan your research

- Decide what data you need to collect and how best it can be collected.
- This should include finding out what, if anything, has been written that might help you to better understand the issue - this is formally known as 'a literature review'.



# Review of Conducting Action Research

## **Step 3 – Deciding on a course of action - Informed consent**

- Be open about what you are researching, with whom you will be sharing your findings and your desired outcome to change and improve professional practice.
- Be clear about whether you can ensure anonymity and that any involvement is voluntary



# Review of Conducting Action Research

## **Step 4 - Conduct your research**

- Keep a record of what you do
- Note in writing everything you discover and any changes you plan to make



# Review of Conducting Action Research

## **Step 5 – Identify possible solutions**

Review everything you have discovered from your action research to identify what it tells you about the issue that is of concern.

Consider what your findings reveal about how and why it is happening (analysis) and the steps you could take to resolve the issue or adopt the identified good practice elsewhere to achieve the outcome you would like.



# Review of Conducting Action Research

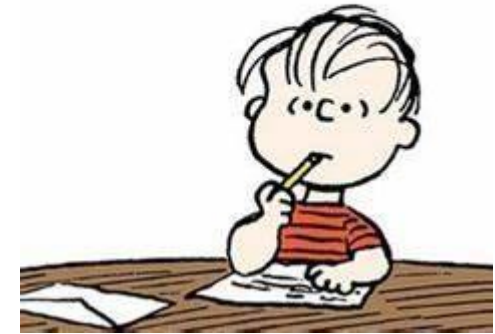
**Step 6** -Implement the changes and monitor and evaluate their impact



# Action Research – next steps

Once you have done your piece of research, share the outcomes by doing one of the following:

- Offer an item for Career Matters
- Write an article for the NICEC Journal
- Offer a write-up of your findings for the CDI Resources area
- Communicate through CDI's LinkedIn groups or the CDI's Community of Practice for Career Development Professionals on Facebook, or the Community of Practice for Careers Leaders
- Offer a conference workshop
- Could you lead a webinar?





# Discovery through Action Research



The End - or possibly just the beginning...