



PART OF THE INTO GROUP

Continuing professional development and classroom research

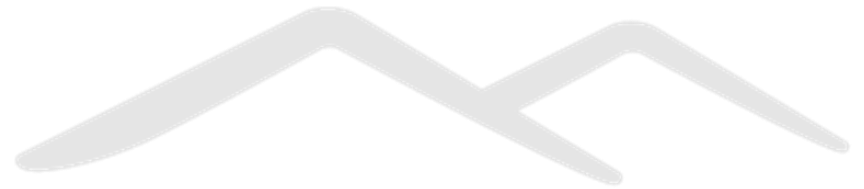
Alan Pulverness

Academic Director

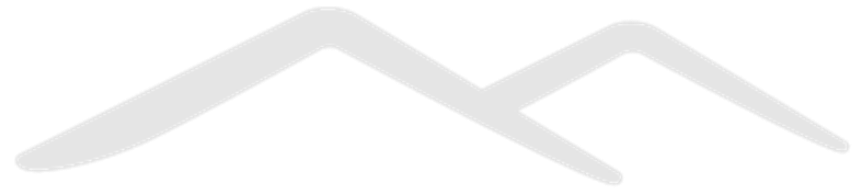
**Norwich Institute for Language Education
(NILE)**

www.nile-elt.com

- **Teaching as decision-making**
- **Classroom research**
- **Co-counselling, self-monitoring and action planning**



Teaching as decision-making



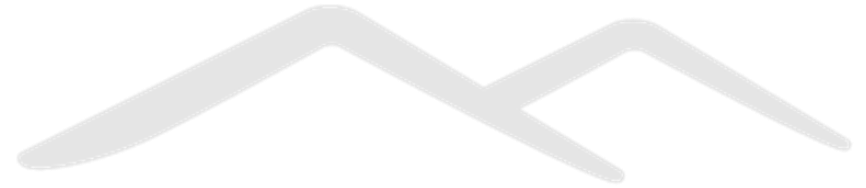
A millionbillionwillion miles from home
 Waiting for the bell to go. (To go where?)
 Why are they all so big, other children?
 So noisy? So much at home they
 Must have been born in uniform
 Lived all their lives in playgrounds
 Spent the years inventing games
 That don't let me in. Games
 That are rough, that swallow you up.

And the railings
 All around, the railings.
 Are they to keep out wolves and
 monsters?
 Things that carry off and eat children?
 Things you don't take sweets from?
 Perhaps they're to stop us getting out
 Running away from the lessins. Lessin.
 What does a lessin look like?
 Sounds small and slimy.
 They keep them in the classrooms.
 Whole rooms made out of glass. Imagine.

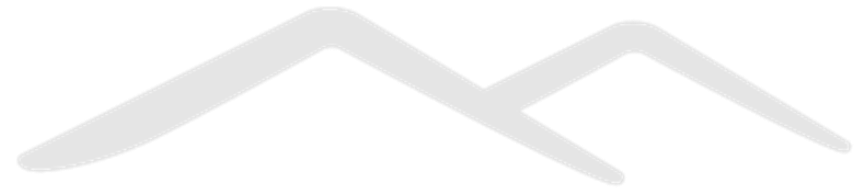
I wish I could remember my name
 Mummy said it would come in useful.
 Like wellies. When there's puddles.
 Yellowwellies. I wish she was here.
 I think my name is sewn on somewhere
 Perhaps the teacher will read it for me.
 Tea-cher. The one who makes the tea.

Roger McGough

Teacher... the one who makes the decisions



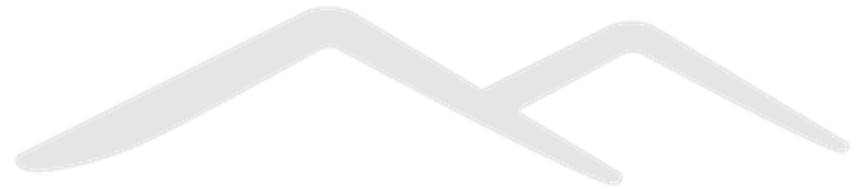
When did I lose my freedom? For once, I was free. I had power to choose. The **mechanics of cause and effect** is statistical probability yet surely sometimes we operate below or beyond that threshold. Free-will cannot be debated but only experienced, like a colour or the taste of potatoes.



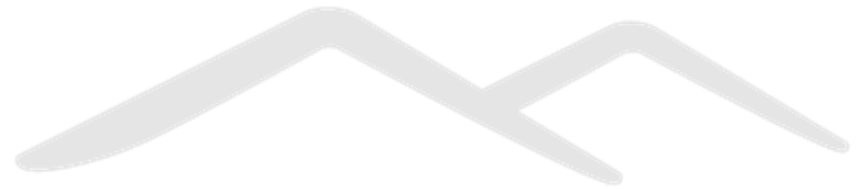
I remember one such experience. I was very small and I was sitting on the stone surround of the pool and fountain in the centre of the park. There was bright sunlight, banks of red and blue flowers, green lawn. There was no guilt but only the splash and splatter of the fountain at the centre. I had bathed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

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.

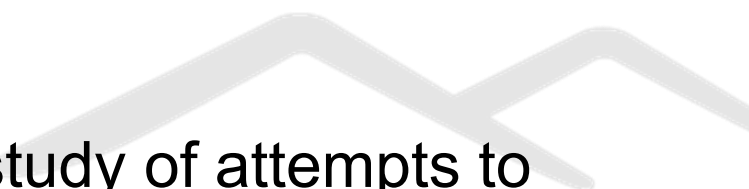
William Golding *Free Fall* (1959)



Classroom research



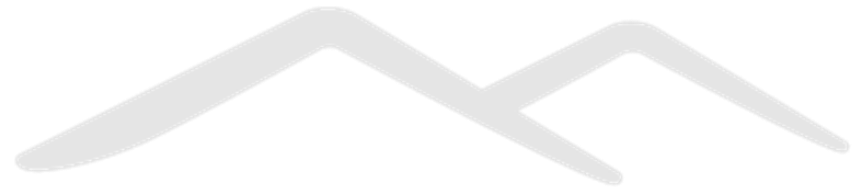
- In the process of enlightenment there can be only participants.
Jürgen Habermas Theory and Practice (1974)
- It is only through self-knowledge that we may hope to know others, and it is only through a commitment to professional development that we can hope to improve the quality of education in our own classrooms.
Jean McNiff Action Research: Principles and Practice (1988)

- “...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)
- 
- A faint, light gray graphic of a mountain range is positioned in the lower right area of the slide, behind the text of the third bullet point.

- “...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.” (Kemmis 1983)
- “...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)

- “...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 and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out.”

(Carr & Kemmis 1986)



To be action research, there must be **praxis** rather than practice.
Praxis is **informed, committed action** rather than just successful action.

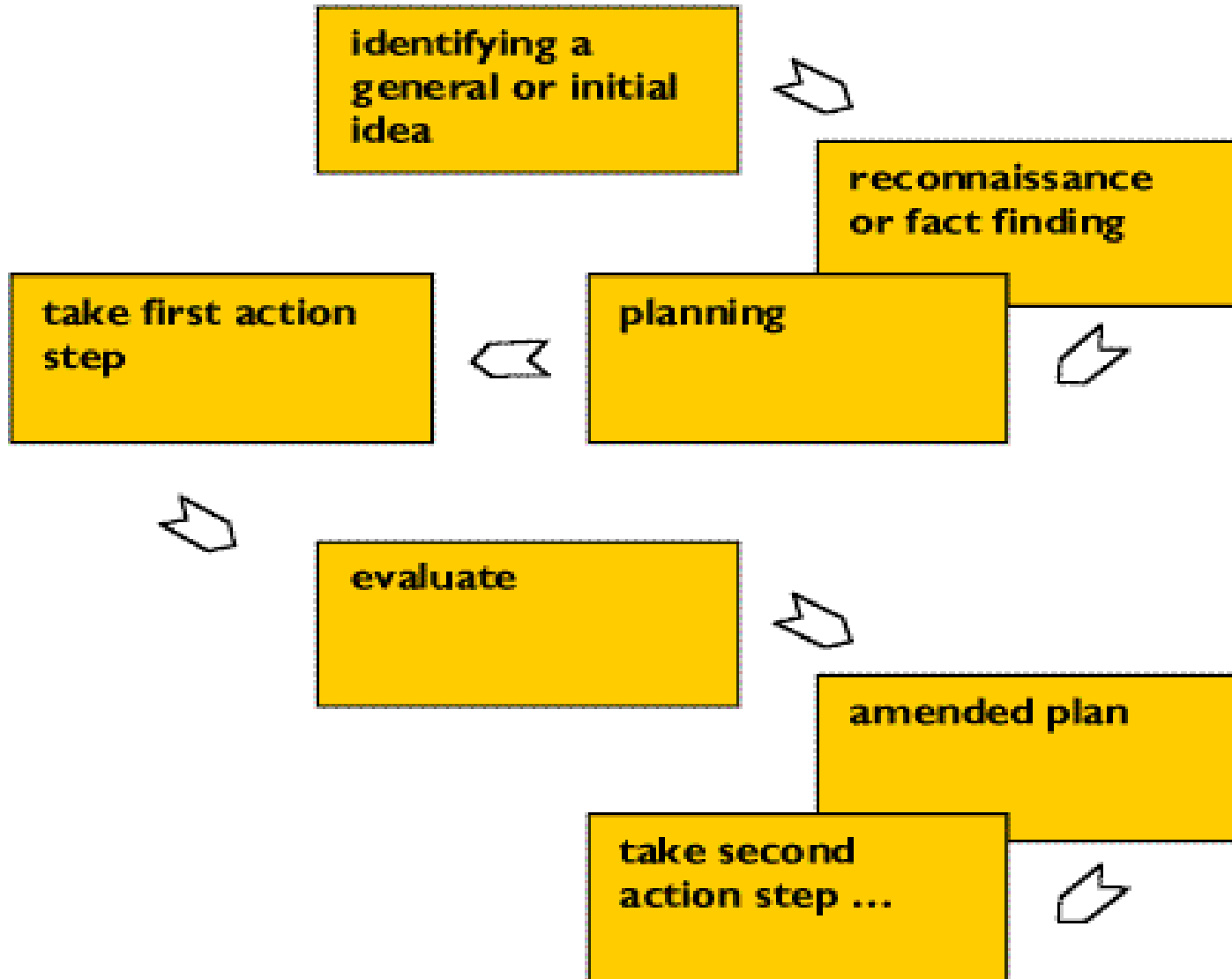
It is informed because other people's views are taken into account.
It is committed and intentional in terms of values that have been examined and can be argued.

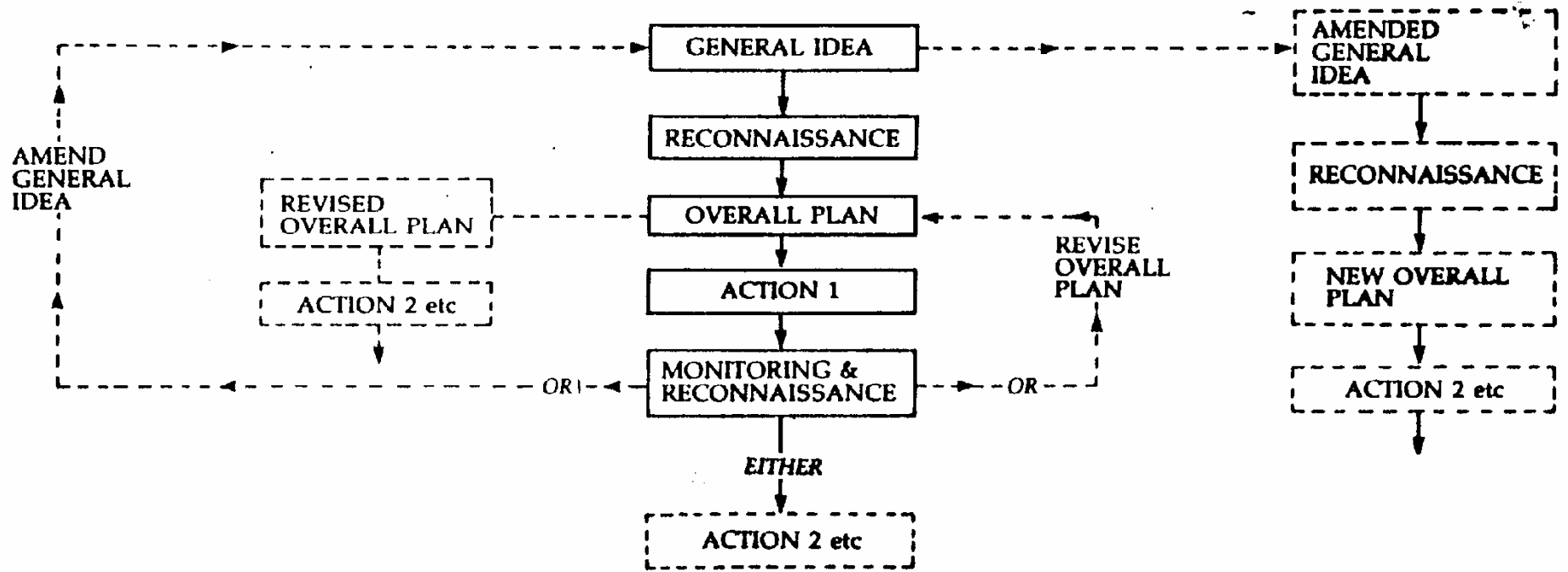
It leads to knowledge from and about educational practice.

McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead (1996)

...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)





Idealized Representation of the Process of Action Research

FIGURE 4.3 Ebbutt's model (1983)

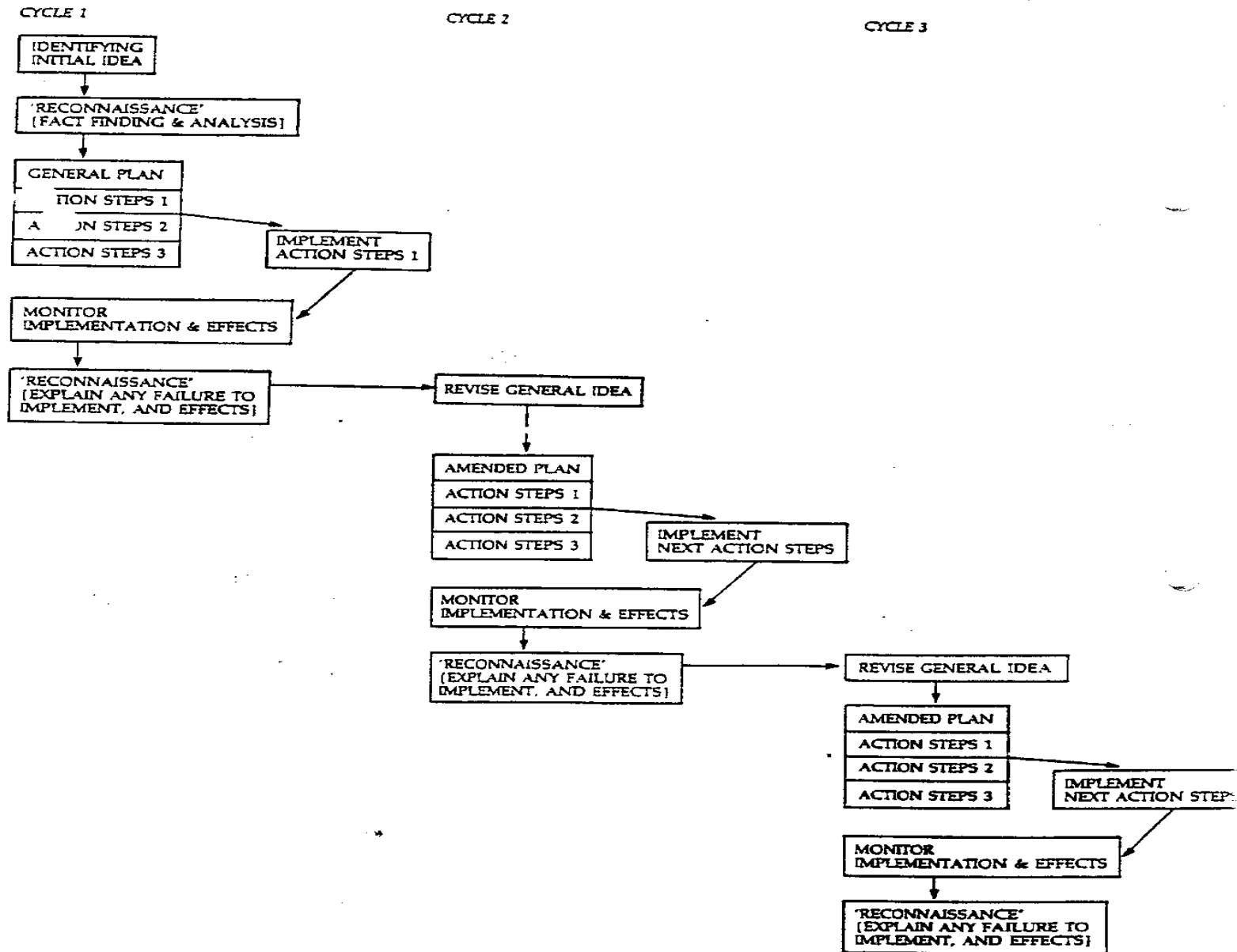


FIGURE 4.2 Elliott's action research model (1981)

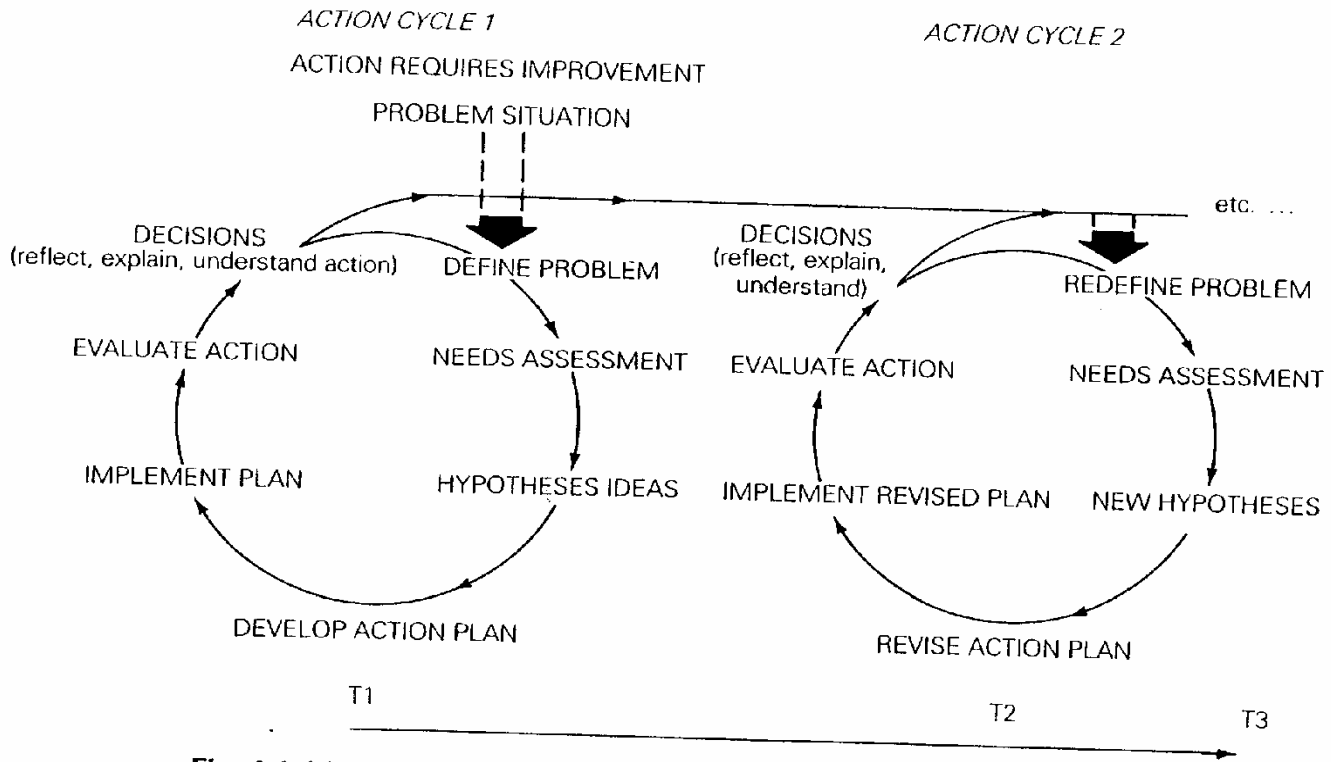
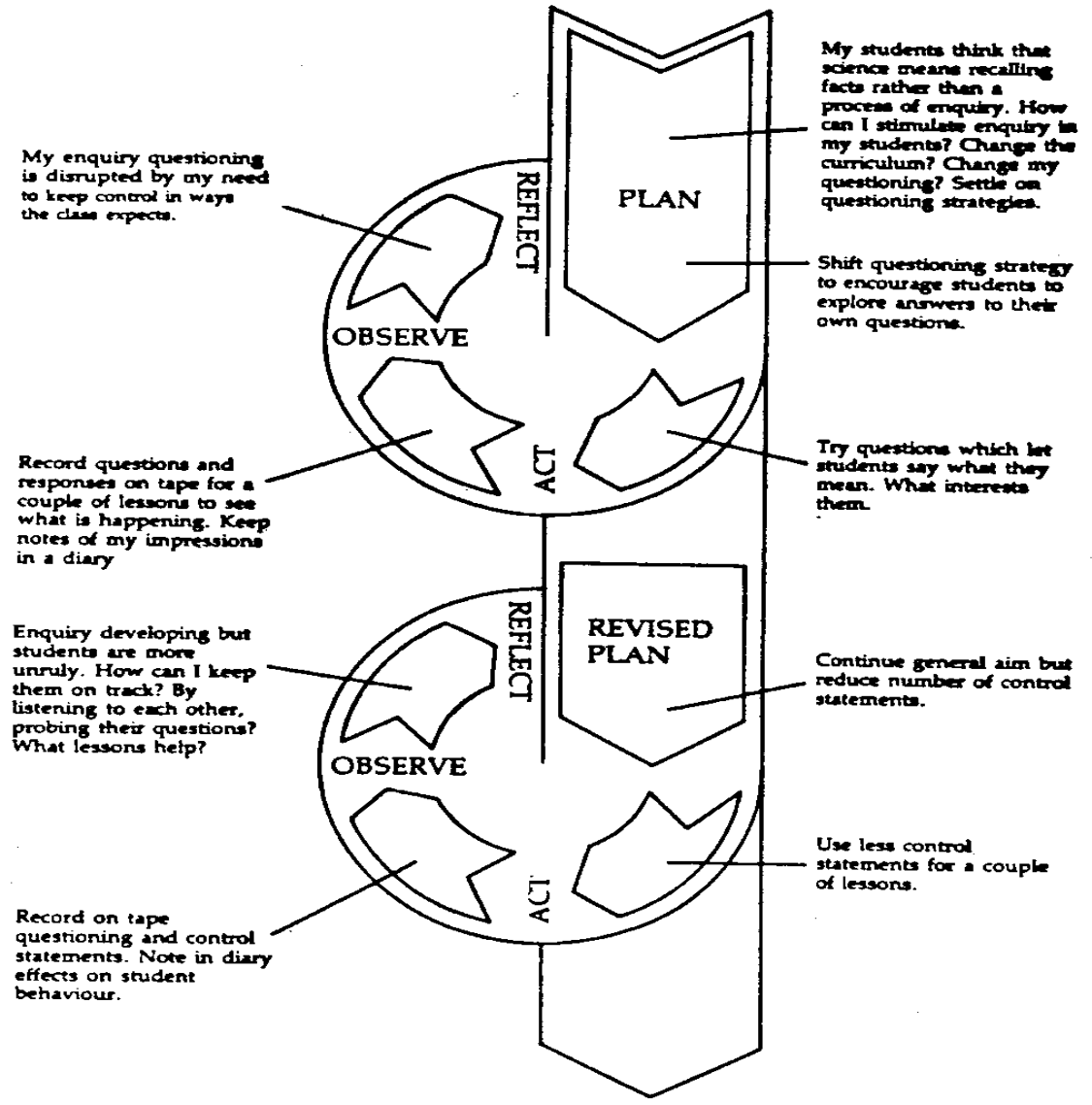
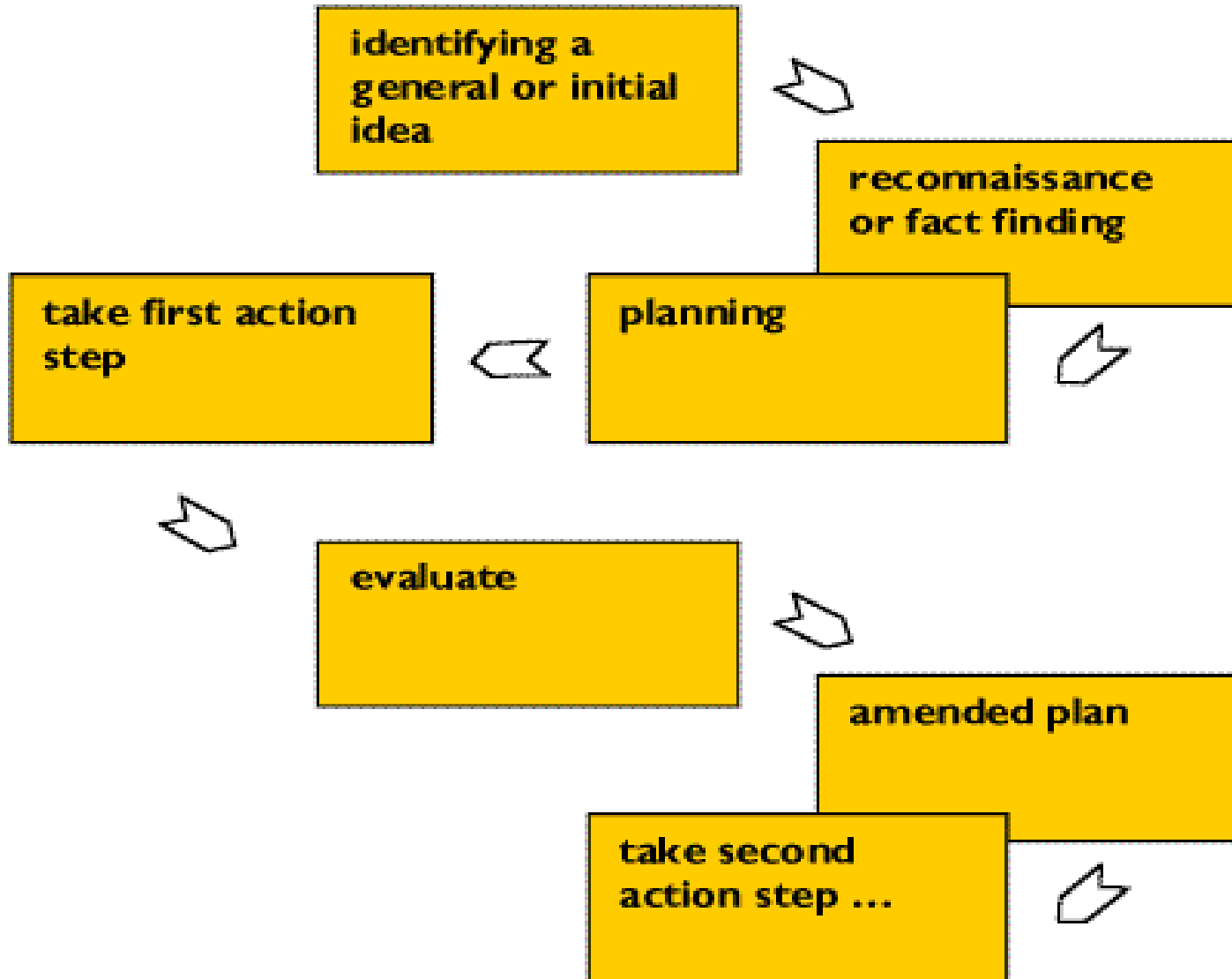


Fig. 4.4 McKernan's action research model (from McKernan 1991: 29).



Kemmis and McTaggart (1981)



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.



field notes



audio recording



learner diaries



questionnaires



still photographs



case studies



teacher diaries



video recording



interviews



sociometry



documentary evidence



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.

...as action researchers we do not claim to find the final answer to a question, but we do claim to improve (and change) educational practice through the educational development of practitioners.

...The validity of what we claim would seem to be the degree to which it was useful (relevant) in guiding practice for particular teachers and its power to inform and precipitate debate about improving practice in the wider professional community.

(Lomax 1986)

Reflection initiates action:

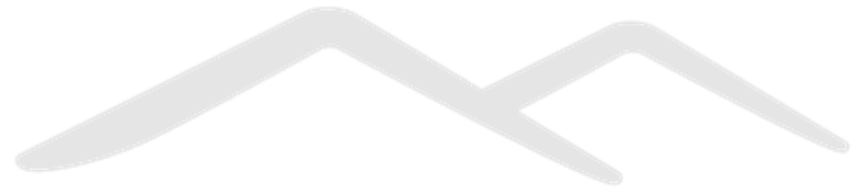
“The development of understanding precedes the decision to change teaching strategies”

Action initiates reflection:

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

(Elliott 1991)

Co-counselling, self-monitoring and action planning



Things I do badly...

As a teacher, I'm very bad at...

I believe I'm good at...

People say I'm very good at...



(and things I do well)

1. List five skills that, in your role as a teacher, you can do very well.
2. Write another list of five skills that you would like to be able to do better.
3. Compare lists with a colleague:
 - What would they like to do better that you can already do very well?
 - What would you like to be able to do better that they can already do very well? What is the exact procedure your colleague follows (i.e. what they do first, second, third, etc.)?
4. What does your colleague do to get good results?
5. How do they know they're getting good results?
6. What do they do to correct or improve their performance?
7. What do they do that you don't do?
(What's the difference that makes the difference?)

1. Select an aspect of your teaching you are interested in learning more about or wish to improve.
2. Find out more about it by:
 - reflection on problems
 - reviewing feedback
 - inviting an observer
 - reviewing current issues and how they might relate to your teaching
3. Narrow down your focus to what seems most important to you.
4. Develop a plan of action to address the specific problem area you have identified. What will you try to change? What effects will these changes have?
5. Draw up a time frame to try out new approaches and to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies you have chosen.
6. Decide on practical self-monitoring procedures.
7. Check to see if you have been successful.

[adapted from Richards 1990]

- 1 Only I can make my action plan, but I can be greatly assisted by the facilitation of another person.
- 2 An action plan should be treated with respect as a kind of personal contract.
- 3 The steps on it must be clear, practical and attainable. If not, then I am writing my own contract for failure.
- 4 The steps must take account of the problems that may arise and how to respond to them.
- 5 An action plan must be purged of wishful thinking.

[Adrian Underhill]

- 1 List the major possible learning points.
- 2 Choose just one of these points to work with.
- 3 List all the steps needed to put that point into action. Check that each step is **concrete, clear** and **attainable**.
- 4 Look at any possible problems and how best to respond to them.
- 5 Include any help you will need, where you will get it from, and how.
- 6 Specify your criteria for success.
- 7 Specify the time frame.
- 8 Decide how often you will review the plan.

“...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)

A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping, stylized mountain peaks or wave shapes, rendered in a light gray color, positioned at the bottom right of the slide.



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