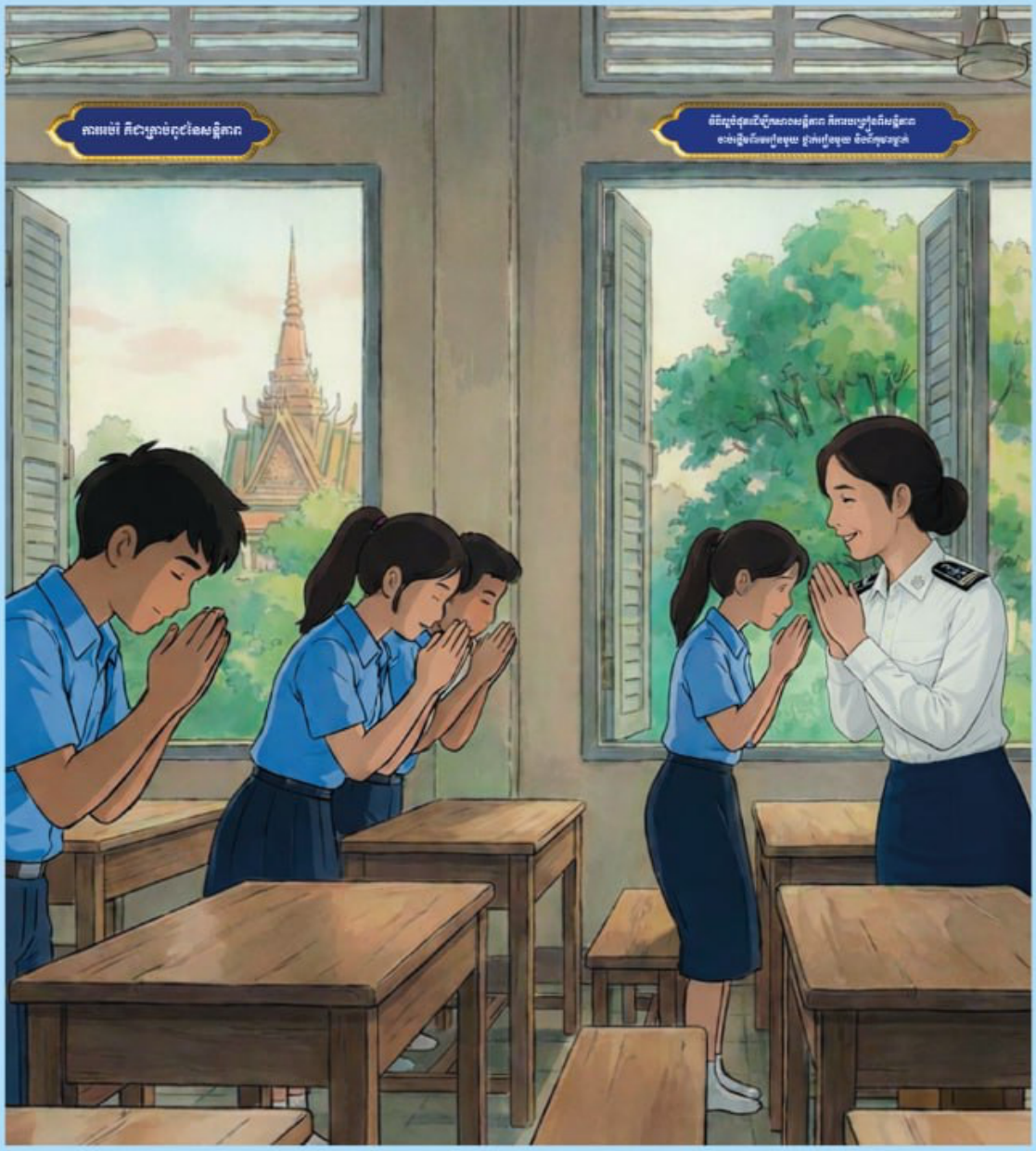
ACTION RESEARCH MANUAL FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS

Building Peace and Promoting Non-Violent Communication in Classrooms



First Edition

Co-developed by:

forumZFD

First edition

2025

Published by
Battambang Teacher Education College (BTEC), and
Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (forumZFD Cambodia)
Battambang, Cambodia

Financially supported by German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

How to cite this book

BTEC & forumZFD Cambodia. (2025). *Action research manual for teacher educators: Building peace and promoting non-violent communication in the classroom* (1st ed.). Battambang, Cambodia.

This book is dedicated to all soldiers and civilians who lost their lives during the border conflict occurring at the time of its writing. May their sacrifice remind us of the urgent need for education that fosters peace, non-violence, and mutual understanding.

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Preface

This Action Research Manual for Non-Violence in the Classroom has been developed to support teacher educators at Battambang Teacher Education College (BTEC) in strengthening their professional capacity to conduct and supervise action research, with a particular focus on promoting non-violent, safe, and respectful classroom environments. The manual is designed primarily for self-study by teacher educators, while also serving as a practical guide for supervising student teachers, who are required to complete action research as part of their graduation requirements.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) of Cambodia has provided official guidelines for action research as a professional requirement for student teachers and in-service teachers. These guidelines emphasize reflective practice, classroom improvement, and the professional growth of teachers. This manual is not intended to replace or duplicate the Ministry's existing action research framework. Instead, it is deliberately designed to work alongside and complement MoEYS guidelines, offering deeper, more focused guidance on action research for non-violence in the classroom—a critical and timely issue in the Cambodian education context.

Despite policy commitments to child-friendly and violence-free schools, research and practice continue to show that verbal and physical forms of violence, including shouting, humiliation, and corporal punishment, still occur in some classrooms. Such practices negatively affect students' emotional well-being, behavior, learning motivation, and teacher–student relationships. Addressing these issues requires more than training or policy dissemination alone; it requires systematic, reflective, evidence-based inquiry by teachers themselves. Action research provides a powerful mechanism for teacher educators, student teachers, and classroom teachers to examine their own practices, test non-violent alternatives, and improve classroom culture in contextually appropriate ways.

For this reason, the manual places non-violence—not general teaching effectiveness—at its core focus. The action research processes presented here are specifically tailored to help educators identify classroom behaviors related to violence, plan and implement non-violent interventions (such as positive discipline, respectful communication, and cooperative learning), collect and analyze evidence of change, and reflect ethically and professionally on outcomes. While improved teaching and learning may emerge as positive outcomes, they are viewed as secondary benefits that result from improved relationships, behavior, and emotional safety in the classroom.

The manual adopts a six-step synthesized action research model—*identifying and diagnosing the problem, planning for action, taking action, observing and collecting data, reflecting and interpreting results*, and *revising and sharing*. Each step is explained in detail with practical examples, tools, templates, and Cambodian classroom scenarios so that teacher educators can engage in independent learning and confidently guide student teachers through the entire action research cycle within a realistic timeframe.

Importantly, this manual recognizes teacher educators as research mentors and ethical gatekeepers. It emphasizes ethical considerations, child protection, reflective supervision, and supportive monitoring systems to ensure that student teachers can complete their action research responsibly, on time, and to an acceptable academic standard. Action research reports produced using this manual may therefore be used as one of the criteria for student teachers' graduation, while also contributing to the broader goal of fostering non-violent school cultures.

This Action Research Manual for Non-Violence in the Classroom has been fully funded by **forumZFD Cambodia**, whose support has made it possible to develop a context-responsive, practice-oriented resource for Cambodian teacher education. It is hoped that this manual will not only strengthen the capacity of teacher educators and student teachers at Battambang Teacher Education College, but also contribute to long-term improvements in student behavior, teacher–student relationships, and classroom well-being—laying a strong foundation for effective teaching and meaningful learning across Cambodia.

Battambang, 31st December 2025

Rector of Battambang Teacher Education College

Dr.CHEA Ratha

Executive Summary

Violence in schools—whether physical, verbal, or relational—continues to affect students' well-being, learning engagement, and relationships in Cambodian classrooms. While significant policy efforts and teacher-training initiatives have been made by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) to improve teaching quality through Action Research (AR), many classroom-level challenges related to non-violence, student behavior, and teacher–student relationships remain insufficiently addressed in practical and systematic ways.

This Action Research for Non-Violence Manual is developed specifically to strengthen the capacity of teacher educators and student teachers at Battambang Teacher Education College (BTEC) to design, implement, and reflect on action research projects that focus on reducing violence and promoting respectful, inclusive, and safe classroom environments. Fully funded by forumZFD Cambodia, the manual responds to the need for a contextualized, practice-oriented guide that supports teacher educators' self-study and supervision roles, while guiding student teachers to fulfill graduation requirements through meaningful, ethical, and feasible classroom-based research.

Importantly, this manual is not intended to replace or override MoEYS Action Research guidelines. Instead, it is designed to work alongside and complement MoEYS AR frameworks, by offering a focused lens on non-violence in classrooms—an area that directly influences teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and long-term learning outcomes.

What This Action Research Manual Is About

This manual is a practical guide for conducting Action Research for Non-Violence in the Classroom. It emphasizes: understanding non-violence broadly (physical, verbal, emotional, relational), addressing everyday classroom challenges related to discipline, exclusion, teasing, humiliation, and conflict, supporting teacher educators in mentoring student teachers step-by-step, and promoting ethical, child-centered, and culturally responsive research practices.

The manual is written for three key groups of readers such as teacher educators – for self-study and for supervising student teachers, student teachers – as practitioner-researchers during practicum, and classroom teachers – as reflective practitioners interested in improving classroom relationships. In addition to these groups of readers, this manual serves as a core resource for teacher educators, joined an initiative capacity development training, which was organized by BTEC and forumZFD in Battambang, to integrate conflict transformation principles into their professional practice.

Although MoEYS encourages action research to improve teaching and learning, many teacher educators and student teachers report difficulties when applying AR to behavioral and relational issues, especially those involving violence or sensitive student experiences. Common challenges include: (1) difficulty identifying non-violent classroom problems systematically, (2) limited tools for observing behavior and social interaction, (3) uncertainty about ethical considerations when researching children,

(4) overemphasis on teaching techniques rather than classroom climate, and (5) lack of structured supervision and monitoring during AR implementation.

Therefore, this manual addresses these gaps by (1) providing clear tools, templates, and examples, (2) focusing specifically on non-violence and positive discipline, (3) offering step-by-step guidance aligned with teacher education contexts, (4) supporting ethical and reflective practice, and (5) strengthening teacher–student relationships, which ultimately contributes to improved teaching and learning

How to Use This Manual

Teacher educators can use this manual in two main ways: (1) for self-study and professional development, and (2) for supervising and monitoring student teachers. For their self-study, this manual assists them to (a) understand Action Research for Non-Violence, (b) build confidence in supervising student teachers, and (c) reflect on their own classroom and mentoring practices. When supporting their student teachers to conduct AR, this manual helps them (a) guide student teachers through each stage of AR, (b) monitor progress across a 6-month AR timeline, and (c) assess student teachers' AR reports as part of graduation criteria. Similarly, **student teachers** can use the manual as a roadmap, while **classroom teachers** may adapt selected tools and strategies for their own practice. Specifically, teacher educators in the Nonviolent Conflict Transformation (NVCT) project and in the training sessions can use this manual as the practical guide for conducting the action research in their classrooms. They will use this manual to (a) systematically collect evidence of changes within their classrooms, (b) document the changes process, resulting from their engagement with students, and (c) facilitate ongoing reflection on their role as peacebuilders and educators.

The Six-Step Synthesized Action Research Process

To ensure clarity, consistency, and applicability, this manual adopts a six-step synthesized Action Research model, integrating elements from established AR frameworks while aligning with Cambodian teacher education practice:

Step 1: Identifying and Diagnosing the Problem: Teachers systematically observe classroom behaviors, use informal communication with mentor teachers, conduct quick observations, student surveys, and review behavior patterns to identify non-violent classroom issues.

Step 2: Planning for Action: Based on evidence, teachers design realistic, ethical, and context-sensitive intervention strategies such as positive discipline, cooperative learning, peace-education mini-lessons, and respectful language instruction.

Step 3: Taking Action (Implementation): Planned interventions are implemented during normal lessons, using prepared materials such as lesson scripts, group rules, behavior posters, and role-play activities.

Step 4: Observing and Collecting Data: Multiple data sources are used, including pre- and post-surveys, observation logs, behavior frequency checklists, student reflections, and short interviews.

Step 5: Reflecting and Interpreting Results: Teachers analyze patterns over time, compare data before and after intervention, interpret changes without blame, and connect findings to relevant literature.

Step 6: Revising and Sharing: Teachers refine their practices based on findings and share results through research seminars, peer discussions, or college-level presentations.

By focusing on non-violence as a foundation for effective teaching and learning, this Action Research Manual supports teacher educators and student teachers in addressing one of the most critical yet under-researched dimensions of classroom life. When teachers are equipped to investigate and respond to issues of violence, exclusion, and disrespect through systematic reflection and action, classrooms become safer, relationships improve, and meaningful learning can take place.

This manual represents a collaborative effort to strengthen teacher professionalism in Cambodia and contributes to the broader goals of MoEYS by fostering reflective, ethical, and child-centered educators.

Contents

1. Introduction

In contemporary education, the role of the teacher is not limited to delivering lessons or following pre-designed curricula. Effective teaching requires reflection, adaptation, and a constant effort to respond to learners' needs within complex classroom environments. The ability to conduct action research equips teachers with a systematic method to reflect on their own practice, analyze challenges, and experiment with context-appropriate solutions (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014). In other words, action research becomes both a tool and a mindset: it enables teachers to view themselves not only as practitioners but also as researchers of their own classrooms.

The development of action research skills has a direct link to the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers who are able to identify problems through evidence, test innovative strategies, and evaluate outcomes are better prepared to create learning environments that are inclusive, responsive, and transformative (Mertler, 2019). This ongoing process of inquiry enhances teachers' professional growth while simultaneously improving students' educational experiences (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). For teacher educators, introducing student teachers to action research fosters a culture of critical inquiry from the early stages of their professional journey. By practicing action research, student teachers learn how to connect theory with practice, challenge assumptions, and cultivate habits of reflective practice that will sustain them throughout their careers (Zeichner, 2003).

1.1. Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide teacher educators and student teachers with a practical guide to understanding and applying action research within their professional context. It is designed not merely as a theoretical reference but as a working resource that supports both the learning of research skills and the integration of those skills into daily classroom practice.

More specifically, this manual seeks to:

- Introduce the fundamental concepts and processes of action research.
- Guide readers step by step through the design, implementation, and reflection stages of an action research project.
- Highlight the specific relevance of action research to addressing issues of peace and violence in classrooms.
- Encourage teachers and student teachers to engage in critical reflection and dialogue as a means of improving both professional practice and educational outcomes (Stringer, 2014).

1.2. Who Should Use This Manual?

This manual has been developed with two primary groups in mind:

- Teacher Educators – It serves as a pedagogical tool for guiding student teachers in developing action research skills. Teacher educators can use it to design modules, workshops, and assignments that foster inquiry-oriented learning. The manual also supports their role as mentors, helping them to provide structured guidance while allowing student teachers to take ownership of their research journeys (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

- **Student Teachers** – For student teachers, the manual is both a study resource and a practical companion. It provides accessible explanations of action research concepts, concrete examples, and reflective tasks that can be applied directly in teaching practice. The manual emphasizes that student teachers are not passive recipients of knowledge but active contributors to the improvement of teaching and learning in their classrooms (Burns, 2010).

While these are the intended audiences, the manual may also be of value to in-service teachers, school leaders, and education policymakers who are committed to evidence-based improvements in education.

1.3. What is Action Research (AR)?

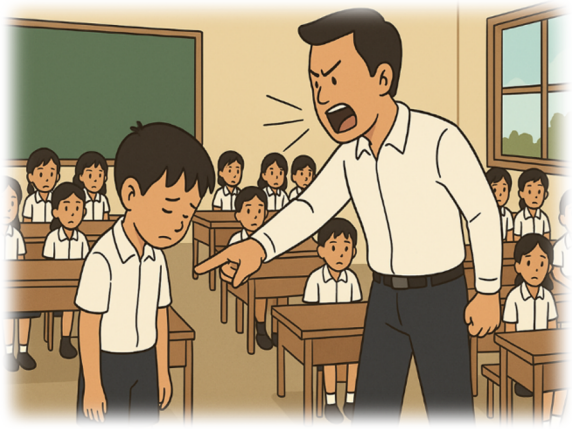
Action research (AR) is a form of systematic inquiry conducted by practitioners to improve their own practice, generate knowledge, and enhance the outcomes of their work (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). In education, AR is typically carried out by teachers in their own classrooms. It involves a cyclical process of identifying a problem, planning and implementing an intervention, collecting and analyzing data, reflecting on results, and refining practice (Mills, 2020).

Several key features distinguish AR from other forms of research:

- **Practical orientation:** AR is directly linked to improving practice rather than producing abstract theory.
- **Participatory nature:** Teachers and sometimes students are directly involved in identifying issues and shaping solutions (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).
- **Cyclic process:** AR follows a spiral of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, which can be repeated to achieve deeper understanding (Kemmis et al., 2014).
- **Transformative potential:** By engaging in AR, teachers not only solve immediate problems but also develop long-term habits of inquiry and professional growth (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

For student teachers, engaging in AR means learning to approach teaching not as a set of fixed methods but as a dynamic, evidence-based profession where reflection and experimentation are central.

1.4. Why Focus on Peace and Violence in the Classroom?



Classrooms are not isolated spaces; they are microcosms of broader society. Issues of peace and violence—whether expressed through bullying, discrimination, exclusion, or conflict—affect both the emotional climate and the learning outcomes of students (UNESCO, 2017).

Addressing these issues is essential to ensuring that education fulfills its purpose of nurturing responsible, empathetic, and active

citizens. Cambodian classrooms continue to experience both physical and verbal forms of violence that undermine children's rights, learning, and psychosocial development. Large national and international assessments and program reports consistently document high exposure of children to violence at home and at school. For example, national and UN reviews note that a substantial share of children report physical violence and witnessing violence in domestic, community and school settings; over half of young adults' report having experienced physical violence before age 18. These patterns reflect entrenched social norms that accept corporal punishment and harsh verbal discipline as legitimate methods of maintaining order (see UNICEF, 2023a).

The impacts of both physical and verbal violence in school are well documented: children who experience or witness violence show reduced school engagement, higher absenteeism and dropout risk, poorer concentration and learning outcomes, and longer-term emotional harm (e.g., fear, shame, aggression). Where teachers use *corporal punishment* or *humiliating language*, classroom climate shifts from one of curiosity and safety to one of fear and compliance — which damages the relational foundations necessary for active teaching and learning. International and Cambodian program evaluations also show that replacing punitive practices with positive discipline and child-centered classroom management leads to measurable reductions in bullying and peer violence and improvements in student well-being and participation (see UNICEF, 2019; 2023a).

Quantitative snapshots illustrate the scale of the problem in Cambodia. Surveys and program assessments report high prevalence rates: for example, government-linked reporting and studies have documented that a large proportion of children have experienced physical discipline at home (recent government surveys indicate figures around the 40–45% range for physical discipline of young children at home) and school-based surveys found that around 46% of children in some samples experienced corporal punishment or verbal abuse from teachers for reasons such as minor classroom misbehavior. These data show that violence is not marginal, but pervasive enough to require systematic, school-level change (see CamboJA News, 2022).

This guides that action research is especially well-suited to address classroom violence in Cambodia due to:

- **Context-specificity and teacher ownership**: Violence is sustained by local norms, classroom routines, and individual teacher beliefs. Action research empowers teacher educators and student teachers to investigate their own classrooms — to identify the specific triggers, beliefs, and routines that lead to physical or verbal aggression and to test locally feasible alternatives. Locally owned interventions are more culturally appropriate and more likely to be sustained than externally imposed programs.
- **Iterative, low-risk experimentation**: Action research uses *small-scale cycles* (e.g., plan → act → observe → reflect → revise) allowing teachers to trial *positive-discipline strategies* (e.g., classroom rules co-created with students, restorative conversations, non-punitive consequence systems) and refine them based on evidence. This iterative approach reduces professional risk and enables gradual norm change within accepted professional practice.
- **Professional learning and reflective practice**: Conducting action research develops reflective habits — teachers systematically collect evidence, reflect on outcomes, and adjust practice. This is central to transforming attitudes that view corporal punishment as necessary; evidence from program evaluations in Cambodia shows that training in positive discipline, when combined with reflective support, reduces the use of violent practices (RUPP, n/d).

- **Evidence generation for policy and scale-up**: When teacher educators and student teachers document their cycles, they generate context-rich evidence that MoEYS, teacher training colleges and NGOs can use to develop policies, pre- and in-service curriculum, and supervision tools tailored to Cambodian classrooms. National progress reports show policy attention is increasing (e.g., commitments toward prohibiting corporal punishment and implementing positive discipline), but effective roll-out depends on practitioner-level evidence and capacity (see UNICEF, 2023b).

By focusing action research on peace and violence in the classroom, this manual emphasizes two critical goals:

- **Creating Safe Learning Environments:** Peaceful classrooms foster trust, respect, and cooperation, all of which are prerequisites for effective learning. Research shows that when students feel emotionally secure, they are more motivated and able to engage fully with their studies (Johnson & Johnson, 2005).
- **Building Teachers' Capacity for Conflict-Sensitive Education:** Teachers play a central role in shaping how conflicts are addressed and how students learn to interact with one another. Action research provides teachers with a structured way to examine the root causes of classroom violence, test strategies for conflict resolution, and reflect on the impact of their interventions (Salomon & Cairns, 2010).

Focusing on peace and violence does not limit AR to one theme; rather, it demonstrates how AR can address issues of profound relevance to both education and society.

1.5. How to Use This Manual

This manual is organized to support both self-study and guided learning. Each section introduces a key concept, provides practical steps, and encourages reflection and application. Readers are advised to:

- **Read actively:** Take notes, raise questions, and relate the content to personal teaching experiences.
- **Engage in practice:** Apply the suggested steps in real classroom contexts, even at a small scale.
- **Reflect systematically:** Use the reflection prompts to connect experiences with theory.
- **Collaborate:** Where possible, work with peers, mentors, or supervisors to design and conduct action research projects.

Teacher educators may use the manual to design training sessions, while student teachers may follow it as a structured path for their first experiences in classroom-based research. The manual is not prescriptive; it is flexible and intended to be adapted to specific contexts, needs, and challenges.

2. Understanding Action Research

Action Research (AR) has become a central approach in teacher education because it empowers teachers and student teachers to become active investigators of their own practice. Unlike conventional forms of academic research, which are often conducted by outside researchers, AR positions the practitioner as both researcher and change agent. This section introduces readers to the concept of AR, outlines its key features, compares it with traditional research, and discusses its benefits and ethical considerations. By deepening understanding of AR, student teachers and teacher educators can better appreciate its value as a transformative tool in improving both classroom practice and professional growth.

2.1. Definition and Key Features

The term "***action research***" was first coined by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in the 1940s, who described it as a process of "comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action" (Lewin, 1946, p. 35). Since then, the concept has evolved across disciplines, particularly in education.

Several definitions highlight the nature and scope of AR:

- Carr and Kemmis (1986) define AR as "a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out" (p. 162).
- Stringer (2014) explains AR as "a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (p. 1).
- Mills (2020) defines AR in education as "any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators, or counselors to gather information about how their schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn" (p. 6).

Despite variations in wording, the definitions share a common theme: AR is a participatory, reflective, and practice-oriented form of inquiry aimed at improving professional practice.

Several characteristics distinguish AR from other research approaches:

Cyclic and iterative process: AR typically follows a spiral of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014). Each cycle builds upon the previous one, enabling continuous refinement of practice.

Practitioner-led inquiry: Teachers themselves identify problems, design interventions, and evaluate outcomes (Burns, 2010). This ownership ensures that research is directly relevant to their context.

Context-specific focus: AR is grounded in the realities of the classroom, with solutions tailored to particular groups of learners and situations (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

Collaborative nature: While AR can be an individual process, it often involves collaboration with colleagues, students, or the wider community (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Integration of theory and practice: AR bridges the gap between academic knowledge and classroom realities, ensuring that teaching strategies are evidence-informed but adaptable to specific contexts.

Transformative orientation: The ultimate aim of AR is not only to solve problems but also to transform the quality of education by developing reflective practitioners (Zeichner, 2003).

2.2. Action Research for Non-Violence vs. Action Research for Teaching and Learning

Both use the same basic cycle, yet they differ significantly in their purpose, focus, process, data, ethics, teacher roles, and expected outcomes. Understanding these differences helps teacher educators and student teachers select the most appropriate approach for their classroom problem.

2.2.1. Purpose

The main purpose of the *action research for non-violence* is to reduce violence and promote a safe, respectful learning environment. This research aims to change harmful practices such as shouting, using sticks for punishment, calling students "slow," or allowing bullying to continue. However, the purpose the *action research for teaching and learning* is to improve academic instruction, such as increasing reading comprehension, raising test scores, or improving the effectiveness of group work.

Example: The purpose of action research for:

non-violence	teaching and learning
A Grade-6 teacher notices frequent name-calling among students. She conducts an action research cycle to introduce positive discipline rules and weekly class meetings to discuss respectful behavior.	A student teacher observes that learners struggle with writing paragraphs. His research focuses on testing guided writing strategies to improve writing skills.

2.2.2. Main focus

The action research for non-violence looks at behaviors, interactions, emotional climate, and discipline practices. The goal is to shift the culture of the classroom. Its typical focus areas can be like the following:

- Reducing corporal punishment
- Replacing harsh language with supportive feedback
- Preventing bullying
- Encouraging respectful communication
- Improving teacher–student relationships

Whereas the action research for teaching and learning focuses on instructional practices and academic outcomes. The following are the examples of the typical focus areas of this type:

- Improving questioning techniques
- Enhancing student engagement
- Strengthening vocabulary learning
- Increasing reading fluency
- Using group work effectively

Example: The main focus of action research for:

non-violence	teaching and learning
A teacher replaces ***"If you don't listen, I will hit the table!"*** with calm, structured routines and tracks whether student misbehavior decreases.	A teacher tests whether using ***"Think–Pair–Share"*** increases the number of students participating in English speaking activities.

2.2.3. Research process and data collection

Both types follow the same cycle (e.g., Identify → Plan → Act → Observe → Reflect → Revise), but the type of data and level of sensitivity differ. In the action research for the non-violence, its data often examines emotional and behavioral patterns. The common tools used in this type of action research can be:

- Incident logs of violent behavior,
- Tracking frequency of angry tone or shouting,
- Observation checklists of student interactions,
- Student/parent interviews about safety, and
- Reflection journals on teacher habits.

However, the data for action research for teaching and learning focuses on academic performance, whose data can be collected using these following tools:

- Pre- and post-tests
- Student worksheets
- Observation of teaching techniques
- Student learning interviews
- Engagement checklists

Example: The process and data collection of action research for:

non-violence	teaching and learning
A teacher counts how many times she uses negative language in one week before and after implementing a "positive language plan." *Note*: Because violence is sensitive, this research requires ***extra ethical care*** to avoid exposing children to harm.	A teacher measures improvement in vocabulary retention after switching to picture-based teaching materials. *Note*: Ethical concerns are minimal as long as assessments are fair and students' identities are protected.

2.2.4. Teacher's role

When conducting the action research for non-violence, teachers become protectors of student well-being, role models of peaceful communication, agents of cultural change, or reflective practitioners examining their own behaviors; whereas, when conducting the action research for teaching and learning, teachers act as instructional designers, experimenters of teaching strategies, analyzers of student learning, or reflective educators improving pedagogy.

Example: The role of teachers in the action research for:

non-violence	teaching and learning
A teacher reflects honestly on her own habit of shouting and designs a plan to replace shouting with hand signals and calm reminders.	A teacher tests two ways of teaching reading and compares which method helps students understand the text better.

2.2.5. Types of change expected

In the action research for non-violence, the expected change is behavioral and cultural. Outcomes may include:

- Reduced violent incidents
- Improved classroom relationships
- Increased student confidence
- More respectful communication
- A calmer, safer classroom

However, in the action research for teaching and learning, the expected change is academic and instructional. These may include:

- Higher test scores
- Better comprehension
- More active participation
- Greater learning independence

Example: The role of teachers in the action research for:

non-violence	teaching and learning
After implementing restorative conversations, *students begin apologizing to one another instead of fighting*.	Students improve their reading scores after the teacher introduces reading circles.

2.2.6. Stakeholders involvement

Action research for non-violence often requires multiple stakeholders such as school leaders, parents, child protection committees, community councils, and peer teachers. However, teachers, students, occasionally parents (for homework or reading support) can be the stakeholders when conducting the action research for teaching and learning.

Example: The stakeholders in the action research for:

non-violence	teaching and learning
A teacher invites parents to a meeting to explain why the school is moving away from corporal punishment and how they can support at home.	A teacher shares test improvement data with the class and discusses how students can participate more actively.

2.2.7. Ethical consideration

High ethical sensitivity may be seen in the *action research for non-violence* because it relates to physical punishment, emotional harm, confidentiality. Also, in the reporting procedures, teachers must ensure: no child is harmed during the research, observations do not expose students to further violence, and violent incidents are handled safely. In the *action research for teaching and learning*, the ethics are simpler such as avoiding bias in assessment, protecting student identities, and ensuring voluntary feedback.

Example: The ethics in the action research for:

non-violence	teaching and learning
If a teacher discovers a case of severe peer bullying, she must report it immediately, not wait for the research cycle to finish.	A teacher gives anonymous surveys asking students which teaching method they prefer.

Although both types of action research share a common structure, they differ significantly in purpose, focus, teacher roles, data, ethics, and expected outcomes (see the table below).

- *Action research for non-violence* centers on safety, relationships, and emotional well-being.
- *Action research for teaching and learning* centers on pedagogy, instruction, and academic progress.

Understanding these differences helps teacher educators and student teachers select the most appropriate methodology and ensures that classroom improvements are thoughtful, ethical, and impactful. Both approaches contribute to educational knowledge, and the action research is uniquely suited for empowering teachers and enhancing classroom learning.

Table 1: AR for Non-Violence vs. AR for Teaching and Learning

Aspects	**Action Research for Non-Violence**	**Action Research for Teaching and Learning**
Purpose	Ensure safety, reduce violence, improve classroom climate	Improve academic achievement and instructional quality
Focus	Behavior, interactions, discipline, emotional climate	Pedagogy, learning outcomes, teaching strategies
Teacher roles	Protector, model, emotional leader/relationship builder, norm changer	Instructor, curriculum designer, facilitator
Data types	Incident logs, interaction observations, relational data	Tests, worksheets, engagement data, instructional observations
Ethics	High sensitivity; child protection mandatory	Low-to-moderate sensitivity
Stakeholders	Parents, school leaders, community	Mostly teachers and students
Change expected	Emotional and cultural transformation	Instructional improvement

2.3. Benefits for Teacher Educator and Student Teachers

Promoting non-violence in schools is not only a moral and professional responsibility — it is a powerful pathway for developing stronger teachers, safer schools, and healthier communities. When teacher educators and student teachers engage in Action Research (AR) for non-violence, they do far more than reduce harmful behaviors. They build capacity, confidence, and professional identities that support a peaceful, child-centered approach to education. The impact extends beyond the classroom, reaching into families and communities across Cambodia. Below are the key benefits for each group, with clear links to Cambodia's real educational needs and context.

2.3.1. Benefits for the teacher educator

Teacher educators play a pivotal role in shaping future teachers. Action Research for non-violence strengthens their work in four important ways:

- ***Strengthened Professional Expertise and Credibility***: Action research allows teacher educators to systematically examine classroom practices and test new approaches to positive discipline. This gives them deeper knowledge and firsthand evidence, strengthening their voice when training student teachers or guiding school-based reforms.

  > Example: *A teacher educator who has implemented restorative dialogue in practicum schools can confidently train student teachers on how to use restorative conversations instead of punishment*.

- ***Enhanced Ability to Mentor and Supervise***: The action research equips teacher educators with clearer frameworks, tools, and observation skills. They learn how to guide student teachers through identifying violence, analyzing incidents, collecting data, and reflecting ethically. This strengthens supervision at Teacher Education Colleges (TECs) and improves the quality of practicum experiences.
- ***Contribution to Institutional Reform***: Through action research, teacher educators generate evidence on effective non-violent strategies. This evidence can influence curriculum design, peer training, and school-level policies. In Cambodia, where many TECs are shifting toward competency-based education, the action research findings provide practical examples that support teacher policy and national child-protection goals.

Personal and Professional Growth: Teacher educators themselves often discover new insights about communication, empathy, and relationship-building. Many reports reduced stress, improved rapport with children, and greater satisfaction in training young teachers to work peacefully.

2.3.2. Benefits for Student Teachers

Student teachers — the future classroom leaders — gain especially transformative benefits from conducting action research for non-violence.

- ***Stronger Classroom Management Without Fear or Threats***: Instead of relying on shouting or punishment, student teachers learn: positive discipline, co-created classroom rules, emotional regulation techniques, peaceful conflict resolution. These skills give them confidence to manage classrooms respectfully and effectively.

A core feature of the action research is reflective practice, which encourages teachers to critically examine their actions and assumptions (Schön, 1983). Through AR, student teachers develop:

- ***Observation skills*** – noticing patterns of behavior, engagement, or learning difficulties.
- ***Reflective skills*** – analyzing causes and evaluating outcomes of teaching strategies.
    - Action research teaches student teachers to ask:
        - *What happened?*
        - *Why did it happen?*
        - *What can I improve?*
    - This mindset becomes a lifelong professional habit, improving their teaching year after year.
- ***Problem-solving skills*** – designing and testing practical interventions.

These skills help student teachers move beyond routine delivery of lessons toward intentional, research-informed practice.

- ***A Deep Understanding of Child Psychology and Behavior***: By analyzing why students misbehave, when conflicts occur, or how violence escalates, student teachers gain knowledge that textbooks alone cannot offer. They understand children's needs, emotions, and motivations — essential for safe and engaging learning.
- ***Ethical and Professional Identity Formation***: When student teachers see how non-violent approaches transform student behavior, they develop a strong identity as caring, ethical, child-protective educators. This is especially important in Cambodia, where traditional beliefs sometimes view strictness or hitting as normal. Through AR, student teachers shift from traditional discipline to modern, child-centered practice — becoming leaders of positive change.
- ***Develops Professional Confidence***: Conducting AR fosters a sense of agency among student teachers. As they collect evidence, test strategies, and see positive change, they gain confidence in their ability to shape classroom outcomes (Burns, 2010). This confidence not only strengthens their professional identity but also prepares them for the challenges of independent teaching.

2.3.3. Benefits for Cambodian Students

Ultimately, students are the heart of this work. When teachers conduct action research to reduce violence, the benefits for children are both immediate and long-lasting.

- ***Increased Safety and Emotional Security***: Children learn best when they feel safe. Reducing yelling, shaming, and physical punishment creates a classroom atmosphere where students feel protected and respected. Students become less anxious, more confident, and more willing to speak, participate, and take academic risks.
- ***Improved Learning Outcomes***: Positive discipline builds a strong foundation for quality education. When harmful discipline is replaced with positive strategies: absenteeism

decreases, attention improves, learning motivation increases, and academic performance rises.

- ***Stronger Social and Emotional Skills***: Non-violent classrooms teach children: empathy, peaceful communication, self-regulation, respect for others, and collaborative problem-solving. These life skills are essential for adulthood and contribute to a more peaceful society.
- ***Reduction in Bullying and Peer Violence***: As teachers model peaceful behavior and involve students in conflict resolution, bullying and peer aggression reduce significantly.

> Example: *A class meeting system where students discuss weekly problems helps prevent conflicts from growing into fights.*

2.3.4. Benefits for Families and Communities

Non-violent classrooms extend their influence beyond the school grounds.

- ***Changing Social Norms About Violence***: When children experience non-violent discipline at school, they bring new expectations into their families. Parents begin to notice positive changes in communication and behavior — leading many to reflect on their own disciplinary habits. Over time, this helps shift harmful cultural norms that accept physical punishment as necessary.
- ***Strengthening Family–School Relationships***: Teachers who use positive discipline build trust with parents. Families feel more respected and included, making them more willing to cooperate with the school. This builds a stronger support network around every child.
- ***Peacebuilding at the Community Level***: Every peaceful classroom contributes to a more peaceful community. Students who learn respectful behavior become adults who handle conflicts without violence. In rural and urban Cambodia alike, where social tensions can escalate quickly, this culture of peace has long-term societal benefits.

2.4. Ethical Consideration

Ethical practice forms the foundation of any action research, but it becomes especially critical when the focus is on non-violence. Because AR for non-violence deals with sensitive behaviors, power dynamics, and emotionally charged interactions, teachers and student teachers must ensure that their research protects participants, respects rights, and upholds the dignity of all individuals. In the Cambodian education context—where classroom hierarchies, cultural expectations, and community relationships play a significant role—ethical reflection must be deliberate, culturally responsive, and continuous throughout the research cycle.

Simply put, when teacher educators, student teachers, or classroom teachers engage in action research focused on reducing violence and promoting safe, respectful classrooms, they must attend carefully to ethical issues. Researching non-violence often involves sensitive topics (punishment, discipline, emotional well-being, power dynamics) and may involve children — thus requiring strict adherence to ethical principles to protect participants' rights, dignity, and safety throughout all phases of the research process.

2.4.1. Core Ethical Principles

Drawing on established research-ethics frameworks (e.g., the three core principles of the Belmont Report — Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice), as well as guidelines specific to educational and child-centered research, AR for non-violence should be guided by the following core principles:

- ***Respect for Persons***: Recognize the autonomy and dignity of all participants; treat them as individuals deserving respect, including obtaining informed consent/assent and allowing voluntary participation without pressure.
- ***Beneficence / Do No Harm***: Ensure that the research does not cause physical, emotional, social, or psychological harm — and, where possible, contributes positively to participants' well-being (e.g., by improving classroom climate, strengthening child protection) (UNICEF, 2018).
- ***Justice and Equity:*** Ensure fair treatment and opportunity, avoid exploitation or discrimination, and treat all participants with equal respect regardless of background or status (The Norman Ebenstein Institute, n/d).
- ***Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity***: Protect participants' identities, store data securely, and report findings in a way that prevents identification of individuals (children or teachers) — especially important in small communities or tight rural settings.
- ***Transparency, Honesty, and Integrity:*** Clearly explain the purpose, methods, risks and benefits of the research; provide truthful reporting; avoid manipulation or deception of participants or data; and be open about limitations and possible risks.
- ***Child-centered Safeguarding (When Working with Minors)***: When participants are children, take extra care: obtain parental/guardian consent and child assent (when they are able), explain research in age-appropriate language, allow withdrawal at any time, and be especially careful about sensitive topics or possible distress (Australian Catholic University, 2024).

2.4.2. Key Ethical Considerations and Practical Guidance for Cambodian Classrooms

Below are the major ethical issues that teacher educators, student teachers, and classroom teachers must anticipate and address—along with practical suggestions and Cambodia—specific examples for doing so responsibly.

Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

- Before research begins, participants must understand what the research involves (purpose, methods, duration, possible risks or benefits). Participation must be voluntary; they must know they can refuse or withdraw without negative consequences.
- For under-aged students, consent must be obtained from parents or guardians—and assent from the child, using language appropriate to their age. Researchers must ensure children feel free to say no.

> Consider this:
> *Suppose a student-teacher researcher wants to survey Grade 4 students about whether they have ever been shouted at or hit.*
>
> - The researcher should send a consent letter to parents in Khmer explaining the study; obtain signed consent; then explain to students that their

participation is voluntary and that refusal will not affect their grades or treatment.

Confidentiality, Privacy, and Anonymity

- Research on violence or discipline can expose information that may shame, stigmatize, or even endanger individuals if identities are disclosed.
- Assign pseudonyms or codes to participants; remove identifying details (names, school identifiers, class numbers); store sensitive data (notes, audio, video) securely; limit access to only authorized persons.

Consider this:

In small rural school communities (e.g. a village school in Takeo), even minimal contextual details may allow community members to guess individuals' identities.

- Instead of writing "*Grade 5 student from **Prek Russey School***," describe as "a Grade 5 student at a ***village public primary school*** in a rural district."

Protecting Emotional and Physical Safety ("Do No Harm")

- Topics like corporal punishment, yelling, emotional harm, and bullying are sensitive. Asking children, especially victims, to recount these experiences may re-traumatize them or expose them to retaliation from peers or adults (Australian Catholic University, 2024; Jonsson et al., 2022;).
- Use sensitive, non-judgmental language; provide support resources (counselors, trusted school staff) if participants become distressed; allow participants to skip questions or withdraw; avoid publicizing sensitive details; and have clear referral or reporting mechanisms if serious abuse is disclosed.

Consider this:

During a class discussion about discipline practices, a child reveals they are sometimes slapped at home as "training."

- The researcher should stop probing further, ensure confidentiality, and — if the policy requires — report the case to the school's child protection focal point or relevant authorities, rather than forcing the child into more disclosure.

Power Dynamics and Voluntariness

- In Cambodian classrooms, teachers hold significant authority; children (and sometimes parents) may feel they must comply with teachers' requests. This undermines voluntary consent.
- Make it clear that non-participation will not result in any negative consequences; conduct data collection in ways that reduce pressure (e.g., anonymous survey boxes, group interviews with voluntary participation, age-appropriate assent for children).

Consider this:

If a teacher is conducting a survey on classroom discipline in her own class, she should emphasize that participation is optional, collect responses anonymously, and

not stand over students as they complete the form (which might unintentionally pressure them).

Cultural Sensitivity and Respect

- Cambodian social norms often place strong emphasis on respect, hierarchy, and social harmony. Questions about discipline or violence in school may challenge deeply entrenched beliefs. Researchers must be culturally sensitive, avoid blame or judgment, and respect local values while promoting children's rights (UNICEF, 2018).
- Use respectful and non-blaming language; frame the research around *"improving classroom well-being and safety"* rather than *"exposing abuse"*; involve community and parental stakeholders sensitively; adapt consent procedures to local languages and contexts.

Consider this:

In a rural school where corporal punishment is considered "normal," a student-teacher might introduce the AR study by speaking first with local school leadership and parent representatives — explaining that the goal is to create a safer, more respectful class environment, not to blame or shame teachers.

Accuracy, Honesty, and Integrity in Data Collection and Reporting

- Even with the best intentions, misrepresenting findings, manipulating data, or selectively reporting only positive outcomes undermines the value and trustworthiness of AR.
- Keep accurate records; triangulate data (observations, interviews, student feedback); report both positive findings and challenges; acknowledge limitations; avoid exaggerating results to please stakeholders.

Consider this:

If after implementing positive-discipline strategies the classroom reduces shouting but peer bullying remains, the researcher should report both — not just the success — to provide an honest, realistic picture that can guide further reflection and improvement.

Safeguarding and Reporting of Harm/Child Protection Responsibilities

- AR on non-violence may uncover instances of abuse or severe neglect. Researchers must be prepared to act, not just observe (UNICEF, 2018).
- Establish a clear referral procedure before starting research (for example, to the school's Child Protection Focal Teacher, or external child-protection agencies). Ensure participants know this in advance. If a serious issue arises, report appropriately — even if it means halting the research.

Consider this:

Suppose a child reveals during an interview that they are being physically punished at school with a stick.

- The student-teacher must follow the school's child protection policy: report the case to the school director or child protection focal point, ensure the child's safety, and cease further questioning on the matter.

Equity, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination

- Research should include children from diverse backgrounds (gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, ability) equitably. Vulnerable or marginalized students must not be excluded, nor should participation favor those more easily accessible (Attrash-Najjar & Friedman-Hauser, 2025).
- Use inclusive sampling strategies; make materials accessible (language, literacy level); particularly accommodate children with disabilities or from minority groups; ensure their voices are heard while maintaining confidentiality and respect.

> Consider this:
>
> In a multi-ethnic school with Khmer and indigenous students (e.g., from an ethnic minority group in Rattanakiri province), the researcher should offer translated consent forms or interpreter support if needed, to ensure all students understand and can choose whether to participate.

2.4.3. Ethical Responsibilities to Teacher Educators, Student Teachers, and Classroom Teachers

Because the roles of teacher educator, student teacher, and classroom teacher intersect differently with power, responsibility, and professional relationships, each group has particular ethical responsibilities when doing AR for non-violence:

- ***Teacher Educators (at teacher training colleges)*:** Must ensure that student-teacher research proposals respect ethical standards; review consent and data-protection procedures; guide student-teachers on child protection and cultural sensitivity; ensure that practicum schools are prepared; respect school policies; and support follow-up and reflection, not just data collection.
- ***Student Teachers*:** As emerging professionals must be particularly vigilant about consent, confidentiality, safeguarding, voluntary participation — and aware of their dual role as teacher and researcher which may blur boundaries in the eyes of students. They should avoid imposing their authority to encourage participation and must seek guidance when sensitive issues emerge (e.g., child abuse disclosures).
- ***Classroom Teachers (who may also act as AR researchers)*:** Should maintain professional boundaries; avoid coercion or pressure on students; be transparent about their dual role; ensure that data collection (observations, interviews) does not interfere with teaching responsibilities or students' learning; and uphold the duty to protect children above research goals.

Moreover, all must commit to reflective practice and ongoing ethical reflexivity: continuously re-evaluate whether the research remains in the best interest of participants, whether harm may be emerging, and whether changes are needed.

When to Seek Ethical Oversight

Although many practitioner-led AR projects may be considered "classroom improvement," if the research addresses sensitive issues (violence, child protection), involves minors, or collects identifiable data (especially photos, video, or names), it is good practice — and sometimes required — to submit the project for ethical review by a relevant body (e.g., institutional ethics committee, local school authorities, or community child-protection committees). In Cambodia, when working in public schools or with external stakeholders, teacher educators / student teachers should seek approval (or at

least informed permission) from school leadership, and if possible, abide by national child-protection policy — ensuring that the AR does not contravene existing school or governmental guidelines.

Action Research for Non-Violence holds great promise for transforming Cambodian classrooms into safe, respectful, and child-centered learning spaces. But without careful ethical practice, this very research risks causing harm: *re-traumatizing students, violating privacy, reinforcing power imbalances*, or *provoking unintended negative consequences*. By grounding AR in the principles of respect, beneficence, justice, confidentiality, safeguarding, cultural sensitivity, and integrity — and by building in practical procedures for informed consent, data protection, voluntary participation, and reporting — teacher educators, student teachers, and classroom teachers can pursue meaningful change while protecting the dignity and rights of all participants. The ethical obligations are not a burden but a foundation: they ensure that the shift toward non-violent, positive-discipline education is itself conducted with care, respect, and professionalism — modeling the very values that the research seeks to promote.

3. The Action Research Process

3.1 Lewin's Action Research Cycle

To conduct action research effectively, teachers and student teachers need a clear process to follow. Kurt Lewin (1946), often recognized as the "father of action research," introduced a cyclical model that has become foundational in the field. His framework—*Planning, Action, and Fact-Finding (Evaluation)*—provides a systematic approach to identifying problems, testing interventions, and reflecting on outcomes. This section explains Lewin's Action Research (AR) cycle in detail and illustrates how teacher educators and student teachers can apply it to their classrooms.

Lewin developed action research during the 1940s to address pressing social and community issues. He proposed a **three-stage cycle**—*Planning, Action,* and *Fact-Finding*—that could be repeated as necessary to solve problems and generate new knowledge (Lewin, 1946). Although the model was initially applied to social issues, it has since become widely used in education (Burns, 2010; Mertler, 2019).

The cycle involves three interconnected stages:

1. Planning
2. Action
3. Fact-Finding (Evaluation)

Each stage is explained below with applications in classroom contexts.

3.1.1 Planning

The planning stage is the foundation of action research. Teachers begin by identifying a **problem or concern** in their classroom. This may involve low student participation, difficulties in understanding a concept, disruptive behaviors, or challenges with learning materials.

Key activities in the planning phase include:

- **Problem identification:** Clearly defining what issue needs attention.
- **Data gathering:** Collecting initial observations, student feedback, or academic records to better understand the situation.
- **Setting objectives:** Determining what the teacher hopes to achieve (e.g., "increase student engagement in group work").
- **Designing an intervention:** Planning a strategy or change to test in the classroom, such as introducing cooperative learning techniques or using visual aids.

Effective planning requires reflection on both teacher practice and student needs. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2011), careful planning ensures that the research is purposeful, manageable, and contextually relevant.

3.1.2 Action

The second stage is the implementation of the planned intervention. Teachers put their strategy into practice within the classroom environment.

Examples of action in teacher education include:

- Implementing new teaching strategies (e.g., peer teaching, group projects).
- Modifying classroom management approaches.
- Introducing new resources such as digital tools or learning aids.

During this stage, teachers act not only as instructors but also as researchers. They observe how students respond to the intervention and make adjustments if needed. Burns (2010) emphasizes that action in research is not a rigid process but a flexible one, where teachers adapt their methods according to classroom dynamics.

3.1.3 Fact-Finding (Evaluation)

After implementing the action, teachers evaluate its impact. This involves **collecting and analyzing data** to determine whether the intervention achieved the intended outcomes.

Typical evaluation activities include:

- Gathering student work samples.
- Observing behavioral or participation changes.
- Conducting short surveys or interviews with students.
- Reflecting on teacher journals or notes.

The fact-finding stage is crucial for determining what worked, what did not, and what might need to be revised in the next cycle. Lewin (1946) emphasized that evaluation should be systematic and evidence based. For student teachers, this stage also develops skills in reflection and critical analysis.

Applying Lewin's Model in Teacher Education

For teacher educators and student teachers, Lewin's cycle offers a practical framework to bridge theory and practice.

- **For student teachers:** The model provides a manageable process for exploring classroom challenges during their practicum or early teaching experiences.
- **For teacher educators:** It serves as a pedagogical tool to train student teachers in inquiry-based approaches, fostering reflective and evidence-informed teaching.

An example application could be:

- **Planning:** A student teacher notices low participation in a Grade 6 reading class. They plan to introduce structured group reading sessions.
- **Action:** They implement group reading activities twice a week, assigning roles to students.

- **Fact-Finding:** They record participation levels and interview students about their experiences. Results show improved engagement, but some students struggle with their assigned roles, suggesting refinements for the next cycle.

This simple but iterative process allows for ongoing professional learning and classroom improvement.

Why We Should Use Lewin's Cycle

- Provides a clear, structured starting point for beginners.
- Encourages systematic reflection and data-informed practice.
- Flexible and adaptable across disciplines and contexts.

What to Think When Using Lewin's Cycle

- Some critics argue the model is too linear and simplistic compared to the complex realities of classrooms (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).
- Later models, such as Kemmis & McTaggart's spiral, expand on Lewin's framework to include more iterative and participatory approaches.

Nevertheless, Lewin's cycle remains a valuable entry point for teacher educators and student teachers conducting action research for the first time.

Lewin's (1946) Action Research Cycle provides a foundational framework for teacher educators and student teachers. Its three stages—*Planning, Action,* and *Fact-Finding*—guide practitioners in identifying classroom challenges, implementing interventions, and evaluating their effectiveness. While later models have expanded on Lewin's work, his framework continues to serve as an essential tool for building reflective, inquiry-based teaching practices that enhance both teacher development and student learning.

3.2 Kemmis and McTaggart's Spiral Model

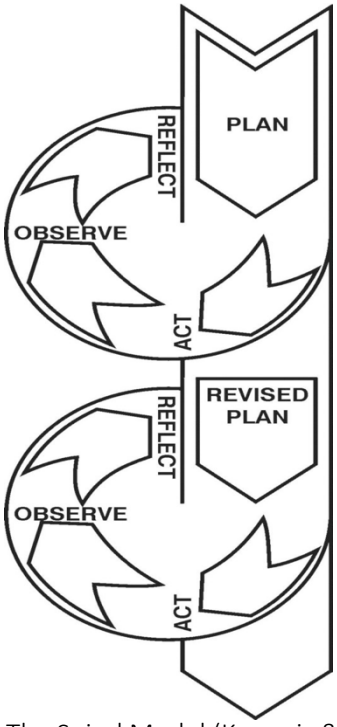
While Kurt Lewin's (1946) three-stage cycle laid the foundation for action research, subsequent scholars refined the model to better reflect the complexities of educational practice. Among these contributions, the spiral model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988; 2014) has become one of the most influential frameworks in education. This model emphasizes the iterative and cyclical nature of action research, where each step informs the next, enabling teachers to continuously improve their practice. This section explains Kemmis and McTaggart's Spiral Model in detail and illustrates how teacher educators and student teachers can apply it in classroom settings.

3.2.1 Overview of the Spiral Model

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) extended Lewin's linear cycle into a more dynamic and recursive spiral, consisting of the following stages:

1. Planning
2. Acting
3. Observing
4. Reflecting

The spiral metaphor highlights that action research does not simply end after one cycle: instead, reflection on one cycle feeds into the next, creating a process of continuous improvement (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014).



The Spiral Model (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982, p. 8)

3.2.2 Detailed Explanation of Each Step

Planning

Planning is the starting point of the spiral. At this stage, the teacher identifies a problem or area of concern in the classroom and develops a plan of action to address it. Planning is informed by initial observations, professional experience, and, where possible, insights from educational literature.

Key tasks include:

- Identifying the focus of inquiry (e.g., student motivation, group participation, reading comprehension).
- Consulting relevant theories or prior studies.
- Designing an intervention that is practical and achievable within the teacher's context.
- Establishing criteria and tools for evaluating the intervention.

For student teachers, planning may involve close collaboration with mentors or supervisors to ensure that the proposed intervention is pedagogically sound and ethically appropriate (Burns, 2010).

Acting

In the acting stage, the teacher implements the planned intervention. This may involve introducing new instructional strategies, modifying classroom organization, or experimenting with resources.

Examples include:

- Using cooperative learning methods to increase group engagement.
- Incorporating technology-based activities to improve student participation.
- Adjusting classroom routines to reduce disruptive behavior.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) stress that action should be deliberate and systematic, allowing the teacher to test specific strategies in a controlled way. Importantly, action is not final; it is one step in a cycle that anticipates further modification.

Observing

Observation involves systematically collecting data about the implementation of the action and its impact on students. This step provides evidence to determine whether the intervention is effective.

Data collection methods may include:

- Classroom observation checklists.
- Teacher journals or field notes.
- Student work samples.
- Audio/video recordings.
- Student interviews or questionnaires.

Observation must be intentional and linked to the research question. For instance, if the goal is to improve student participation, the teacher may record how many students contribute during group discussions. Careful observation ensures that subsequent reflection is based on evidence rather than assumptions (Mertler, 2019).

Reflecting

Reflection is the process of analyzing the data collected during observation and considering what it means for practice. Teachers critically examine the outcomes of their intervention: *Did it achieve the intended results? What challenges emerged? What could be improved in the next cycle?*

Reflection can be both individual and collaborative. *Student teachers* may discuss findings with peers or mentors, while teacher educators might engage with professional learning communities. *Reflection is essential for professional growth*, as it enables teachers to move beyond surface-level impressions and develop deeper insights into their practice (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

3.2.3 The Spiral of Continuous Improvement

Unlike Lewin's three-step model, Kemmis and McTaggart's framework explicitly emphasizes that the process is ***cyclical and ongoing***. After reflection, teachers may re-enter the planning phase, refine their strategies, and begin a new cycle. Each cycle builds on the lessons of the previous one, gradually leading to sustained improvements in teaching and learning.

For example:

- Cycle 1: A teacher introduces group work to improve student participation. Reflection shows that while participation increased, some students dominated discussions.
- Cycle 2: The teacher refines the strategy by assigning roles within groups. Observation reveals more balanced participation.

- **Cycle 3:** The teacher integrates peer assessment to further enhance accountability and engagement.

This spiral process embodies a **practical theory-building approach**, where teachers continuously adapt their practice based on evidence and reflection (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Application for Teacher Educators and Student Teachers

- **Teacher Educators**: Can use the spiral model to mentor student teachers in systematic inquiry, modeling reflective practice in real classrooms.
- **Student Teachers**: Can adopt the model for small-scale classroom research projects, developing skills in problem identification, systematic data collection, and critical reflection.

The model is especially effective in teacher education because it balances practical action with theoretical reflection, helping novice teachers become both practitioners and researchers of their own practice.

Kemmis and McTaggart's Spiral Model provides a comprehensive and flexible framework for conducting action research. Its four stages—Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting—offer a systematic yet iterative process that enables teachers to continuously refine their practice. For teacher educators and student teachers, this model serves as a powerful tool for linking classroom practice with professional inquiry, ultimately contributing to higher-quality teaching and learning.

Why We Should Use Kemmis & McTaggart's Spiral Model

- **Iterative and Reflective:** The spiral model emphasizes continuous cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, allowing teachers to refine their practice over time. This iterative nature encourages deeper learning and ongoing improvement rather than one-off interventions (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).
- **Practical and Contextualized:** The model is grounded in the realities of classroom practice. Teachers investigate problems in their own settings, ensuring that interventions are context-specific and immediately relevant (Burns, 2010).
- **Integrates Theory and Practice:** By linking action with reflection, the spiral model enables teachers to connect educational theory with practice, promoting professional growth and reflective thinking (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).
- **Supports Collaborative Inquiry:** The model encourages collaboration among teachers, student teachers, and sometimes students themselves. This participatory dimension enhances shared learning and builds professional learning communities (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014).
- **Empowers Teachers as Researchers:** Teachers and student teachers become active agents in their own professional development. The model fosters a sense of agency and responsibility for classroom improvement (Mertler, 2019).

What to Think When Using Kemmis & McTaggart's Spiral Model

- **Time-Intensive:** Conducting multiple cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection can be time-consuming, which may be challenging for student teachers or in-service teachers with heavy workloads (Mills, 2020).

- **Complexity for Beginners:** Novice teachers may find the model conceptually complex, especially in balancing simultaneous responsibilities of teaching and conducting research. Adequate mentoring and guidance are often necessary (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).
- **Requires Accurate Data Collection:** The effectiveness of the spiral depends on systematic and accurate observation and reflection. Inconsistent data collection can lead to misleading conclusions and limit the model's reliability (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).
- **Context-Specific Findings:** While the model encourages context-sensitive solutions, findings may not always be generalizable to other classrooms or settings. Teachers must recognize that results are tailored to their unique environment (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).
- **Risk of Superficial Reflection:** If reflection is rushed or treated as a formality, the iterative benefits of the spiral may not be fully realized. Teachers need support to develop authentic reflective practices (Burns, 2010).

Overall, Kemmis and McTaggart's Spiral Model offers a **robust and flexible framework** for teacher-led action research. Its strengths—iterative cycles, contextual relevance, integration of theory and practice, collaborative focus, and teacher empowerment—make it especially suitable for teacher educators and student teachers. At the same time, attention must be paid to its limitations, such as time demands, complexity for beginners, and context-specificity, to ensure that action research is conducted effectively and yields meaningful improvements in classroom practice.

3.3 Stringer's Model

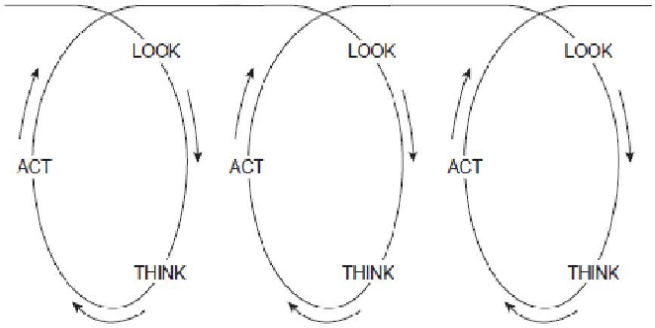
While Lewin (1946) and Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) provided important foundations for action research, Ernest Stringer (1999; 2014) developed a model that is particularly well-suited for use in educational and community contexts. His framework—often referred to as the **Look–Think–Act** model—is practical, user-friendly, and highly adaptable for teachers and student teachers. Stringer's model emphasizes simplicity without sacrificing rigor, making it ideal for practitioners who may be new to research but still want to engage in systematic inquiry to improve teaching and learning.

This section outlines Stringer's Action Research model, explains each stage in detail, and highlights its application for teacher educators and student teachers.

3.3.1 Overview of Stringer's Action Research Model

Stringer (1999; 2014) describes action research as a **"systematic approach to investigation"** that enables people to "find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives." His model is structured around ***three major stages***:

1. **Look** – gathering information to understand the situation.
2. **Think** – analyzing and interpreting the information.
3. **Act** – planning and implementing practical solutions.



The Stringer's action research model
(Stringer, 2007, p. 30)

This cyclical process enables teachers to move from **observation to reflection to action** in a clear and manageable way. The simplicity of the model makes it especially accessible to student teachers and teacher educators working in diverse classroom contexts (Mertler, 2019).

3.3.2 Detailed Explanation of Each Step

Look

The "Look" stage involves carefully examining the situation to develop a clear understanding of the problem or issue. Teachers collect information from a variety of sources to gain insight into what is happening in the classroom.

Key activities include:

- **Identifying the focus of inquiry:** Teachers clarify what problem they want to investigate (e.g., low participation, classroom conflict, lack of engagement with reading).
- **Gathering data:** This may include observations, student work samples, test results, journals, or informal conversations with students.
- **Mapping the situation:** Teachers record evidence in systematic ways, often using observation logs, photographs, or diagrams.

The goal of this stage is to develop a comprehensive and objective picture of the current situation before planning changes. According to Stringer (2014), looking closely at the situation prevents teachers from making assumptions and ensures that interventions are grounded in real evidence.

Think

In the "Think" stage, teachers analyze and interpret the data collected. This stage emphasizes **reflection and interpretation** rather than simply describing what is observed.

Key activities include:

- **Analyzing data:** Identifying patterns, themes, or recurring problems in the classroom evidence.
- **Interpreting meaning:** Considering why certain issues occur. For example, if students are reluctant to participate in discussions, is it due to language barriers, lack of confidence, or unclear instructions?
- **Collaborating with others:** Discussing findings with colleagues, mentors, or even students to gain multiple perspectives.

For student teachers, this stage provides an opportunity to build critical thinking skills and to link classroom practice with theories of learning and pedagogy. Stringer (1999) highlights that reflection should lead to understanding the deeper causes of issues rather than only their surface symptoms.

Act

The "Act" stage involves developing and implementing practical solutions based on the insights gained from the "Look" and "Think" stages. Teachers design strategies to address the identified issue and put them into practice in their classrooms.

Key activities include:

- **Planning action:** Developing a concrete plan of intervention. For instance, to address low participation, a teacher may design structured group activities with assigned roles.
- **Implementing the plan:** Carrying out the action in the classroom, paying close attention to how students respond.
- **Evaluating the results:** After implementation, teachers gather evidence again to see whether the action has made a difference.

Importantly, the "Act" stage does not conclude the process. Teachers then cycle back to "Look" to assess outcomes, leading to further cycles of refinement. This makes the model both **iterative and sustainable** in improving teaching and learning (Stringer, 2014).

Application in Teacher Education

For **teacher educators**, Stringer's model provides a straightforward framework to guide student teachers through their first experiences with action research. Because the stages are clear and easy to follow, it helps reduce the complexity of research design.

For **student teachers**, the model offers:

- A simple entry point into research through manageable steps.
- Opportunities to build skills in observation, reflection, and classroom problem-solving.
- A way to connect theory with practice in real teaching environments.

An example might include:

- **Look:** A student teacher observes that students rarely ask questions during science lessons.
- **Think:** Analysis suggests that students lack confidence and fear making mistakes.
- **Act:** The student teacher introduces a "question box" where students can submit anonymous questions, leading to increased participation.

This practical, evidence-based approach strengthens both teaching skills and research capacity.

*Why We Should Use **Stringer's Model***

- **Simplicity and Accessibility**
  One of the key advantages of Stringer's model is its clarity. The three-stage cycle—Look, Think, Act—is simple enough for novice researchers and student teachers to understand, while still

being rigorous (Mertler, 2019). This accessibility makes it a highly practical entry point into research for educators without extensive research training.

- Contextual Relevance
  The model places strong emphasis on addressing **real-life problems** faced by teachers in their classrooms. By grounding inquiry in actual practice, it ensures that research remains meaningful, relevant, and directly applicable (Stringer, 2014).
- Collaborative Orientation
  Stringer highlights the value of involving stakeholders—students, colleagues, parents, and community members—in the research process. This collaboration makes the model suitable for participatory research in education, where multiple voices can contribute to understanding and solving problems (Burns, 2010).
- Iterative and Flexible Process
  Although the model has only three stages, it is cyclical. Teachers can move through multiple Look–Think–Act cycles to refine their practice continuously. This flexibility encourages ongoing professional learning and adaptation (Stringer, 2014).
- Focus on Practical Solutions
  Unlike some traditional research models that emphasize theory-building, Stringer's approach is oriented toward **practical outcomes**. Teachers can directly apply solutions to improve student learning, which strengthens professional confidence and skills (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

*What to Think When Using **Stringer's Model***

- Risk of Oversimplification
  While its simplicity is a strength, it can also be a weakness. Complex educational problems may not always fit neatly into three stages. Compared with Kemmis and McTaggart's Spiral Model, Stringer's framework offers fewer explicit steps for rigorous data collection and reflection (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014).
- Dependence on Teacher Reflection Skills
  The success of the model relies heavily on the teacher's ability to engage in **deep and critical reflection**. If reflection is superficial, the outcomes may be limited, and the research may fail to uncover root causes of classroom issues (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).
- Time and Resource Constraints
  Even though the stages are simplified, the process still demands time for observation, analysis, and planning. Teachers with heavy teaching loads or limited resources may struggle to implement each stage effectively (Mills, 2020).
- Limited Generalizability
  Since Stringer's model is highly context-specific, findings are often limited to the local classroom or school context. While this is appropriate for action research, it means that results may not easily generalize to broader educational settings (Burns, 2010).

Stringer's Look–Think–Act model is an **excellent practical framework** for teacher educators and student teachers embarking on action research. Its **strength lies in simplicity, accessibility, and direct relevance** to classroom practice. However, educators must also be aware of its limitations—particularly the risks of oversimplification and the demands it places on teacher reflection and time. When used thoughtfully, the model provides a **powerful tool for professional growth and classroom improvement**.

3.4 Participatory Action Research Cycle

Participatory Action Research (PAR) builds on the foundational ideas of Paulo Freire (1970), whose work in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* emphasized dialogue, critical consciousness, and the empowerment of marginalized groups through collective inquiry and action. Unlike traditional research models, which often separate researchers from participants, PAR positions all stakeholders—teachers, student teachers, and learners—as co-researchers. This democratization of the research process makes PAR particularly relevant in education, where the voices of students and teachers alike need to be recognized (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014).

For teacher educators and student teachers, PAR offers not just a research methodology but also a **pedagogical stance**. It treats the classroom as a community of inquiry where power is shared, dialogue is fostered, and action is taken collaboratively to address issues of peace, conflict, or inequality.

3.4.1 Key Principles of Freire-Inspired PAR

Freire's approach to participatory research is guided by several interrelated principles:

- **Dialogue:** Genuine, horizontal communication between teachers and students as co-learners (Freire, 1970).
- **Critical Consciousness:** Developing the ability to analyze structural causes of problems rather than accepting them as natural.
- **Praxis:** The ongoing cycle of reflection and action.
- **Empowerment:** Ensuring participants take ownership of both the process and outcomes of the research (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991).

These principles directly shape the steps of the PAR cycle.

3.4.2. The Freire-Inspired PAR Cycle: Stages in Detail

Identifying the Problem (Listening and Naming)

The cycle begins with **listening** to participants—teachers, students, and sometimes the wider school community. Instead of assuming what the problem is, facilitators engage in open dialogue to allow participants to articulate their concerns. This is often called the "naming" stage, where issues of classroom violence, exclusion, or lack of participation might surface.

For example, in a Cambodian teacher education context, student teachers may identify that group discussions often become dominated by a few voices, silencing quieter students.

The emphasis is on recognizing lived experiences and validating them as the basis for inquiry (Freire, 1970).

Reflecting and Analyzing (Critical Dialogue)

Once issues are named, the next stage involves **critical reflection**. Here, participants move beyond describing problems to analyzing their root causes. Reflection takes place through structured dialogue circles, journaling, or collaborative workshops.

For instance, in the example of group discussions, reflection may reveal that classroom hierarchies, cultural norms, or teacher-student power dynamics contribute to the silencing of some voices. Teachers and student teachers work together to **critically examine the context**, often linking local issues to broader social or institutional structures (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

3.4.2 Planning and Acting (Transformative Praxis)

In Freire's framework, action cannot be separated from reflection. At this stage, participants collaboratively **plan strategies** for addressing the identified issue. Importantly, these plans are **co-created**, ensuring ownership and accountability.

Possible actions could include:

- Introducing structured turn-taking systems in discussions.
- Training students in active listening.
- Redesigning group tasks to ensure equitable participation.

The subsequent step is **acting**—implementing these plans in the real classroom. Unlike traditional interventions imposed by external researchers, here the actions are participant-driven, context-sensitive, and oriented toward transformation.

Observing and Documenting (Monitoring Change)

As actions are implemented, the process requires careful **observation and documentation**. Teachers and student teachers act as both practitioners and researchers, using tools such as observation notes, student feedback, recordings, or surveys to capture evidence of change.

Observation is not neutral—it is guided by the critical questions generated in the reflection stage. For example: Are quieter students more engaged in discussions after implementing turn-taking strategies? Has the classroom climate improved?

Reflecting Again (Ongoing Dialogue)

Following action, the cycle returns to reflection, but now enriched by the evidence collected. This is a deeper reflection—participants ask whether the action produced meaningful change and what unintended consequences may have arisen.

This recursive nature of PAR ensures that the cycle does not end with one action but continues iteratively. Teachers can re-enter the cycle at any point, refining or expanding their inquiry.

Sharing and Sustaining Outcomes

Finally, Freire-inspired PAR emphasizes **sharing findings with the community**. Results are not merely academic but serve as tools for collective empowerment. Student teachers may present outcomes to peers, teacher educators, or even local communities, encouraging broader dialogue and sustaining change.

This dissemination reinforces Freire's vision of education as a **practice of freedom**, where knowledge is co-created and shared for social transformation (Freire, 1970).

Why We Should Use Freire-Inspired PAR

- **Democratic and Inclusive:** Ensures that multiple voices, especially marginalized ones, are heard (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991).
- **Empowering:** Builds agency among student teachers and learners by treating them as co-researchers.
- **Context-Sensitive:** Solutions emerge from the lived realities of classrooms rather than being externally imposed.
- **Transformative Potential:** Moves beyond technical fixes to address deeper social and structural issues (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014).

What to Think When using Freire-Inspired PAR

- **Time-Consuming:** Genuine dialogue and collaboration require significant time, which may be challenging in teacher education programs with tight schedules (Mertler, 2019).
- **Requires Skilled Facilitation:** Without strong facilitation, power imbalances may persist, and dialogue may remain superficial.
- **Challenging in Hierarchical Contexts:** In education systems with strong top-down control, empowering students and teachers equally can be politically sensitive.
- **Complexity of Analysis:** Critical reflection requires high levels of abstract thinking, which may be difficult for novice student teachers without adequate support (Burns, 2010).

Freire-inspired Participatory Action Research offers teacher educators and student teachers a **powerful framework** for conducting classroom-based inquiry. By foregrounding dialogue, reflection, and collective action, this model goes beyond problem-solving to **transform educational relationships and practices**. While it requires time, skill, and commitment, its potential for empowering teachers and students makes it a valuable addition to the action research toolkit.

4. Six-Steps Synthesized Model in Conducting AR for Non-Violence

Action Research has long been recognized as a practical, reflective, and collaborative process for improving educational practice. It allows teachers and student teachers to systematically inquire into their own teaching, identify issues, test solutions, and reflect on the outcomes.
Four of the most influential models that have shaped the development of classroom-based action research are:

- Kurt Lewin's Model (1946)
- Kemmis and McTaggart's Spiral Model (1988)
- Stringer's Look–Think–Act Model (2007)
- Participatory Action Research (PAR) Cycle inspired by Freire and community-based empowerment approaches.

While these models vary in structure and terminology, they share common principles—***planning***, ***action***, ***observation***, ***reflection***, and ***participation***. This synthesized model integrates key strengths of four prominent Action Research (AR) frameworks—Kurt Lewin (1946), Kemmis and McTaggart's Spiral Model, Stringer's Look–Think–Act Model, and Participatory Action Research (PAR). As the purpose of this manual, this synthesized AR cycle is designed specifically for teacher educators and student teachers to use in classrooms as a collaborative, reflective, and cyclical process aimed at improving teaching practice through promoting peace, non-violence, and learner participation.

Table 2: The matrix table of the four models of the action research

Models	Stages	Core Features
Kurt Lewin	**Planning** → Action → Fact-finding (Evaluation)	First cyclical model emphasizing systematic problem-solving.
Kemmis & McTaggart	Plan → Act → Observe → Reflect (→ Re-plan)	Emphasizes collaborative and self-reflective spiral of improvement.
Stringer	**Look** → Think → Act	Simplified and highly practical for classroom or community use.
PAR	Plan → Act → Observe → Reflect → Re-plan *(with emphasis on participation and empowerment)*	Highlights dialogic process and participation of all stakeholders.

Action Research offers Cambodian teacher educators, student teachers, and classroom teachers a powerful tool for transforming classrooms into safe, nurturing, and non-violent spaces. Although AR frameworks differ in terminology, scholars consistently describe a cyclical process of identifying problems, taking action, observing effects, and refining practice (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Mills, 2017; Mertler, 2019). This manual introduces a ***six-step synthesized model*** developed specifically for action research for non-violence in Cambodian schools. The model supports both novice and experienced practitioners and aligns with local educational realities, including hierarchical school culture, limited resources, and ongoing national commitments to child protection:

1. Identifying and Diagnosing the Problem
2. Planning for Action
3. Taking Action (Implementation)
4. Observing and Collecting Data
5. Reflecting and Interpreting Results
6. Revising and Sharing

Figure 1: Synthesized Model

Here is the cycle diagram. It should be noted that each step interconnects, forming a continuous loop of inquiry and improvement grounded in reflection andparticipation. This synthesized model helps student teachers bridge theory and practice by combining the analytical rigor of Lewin, the cyclical reflection of Kemmis and McTaggart, the participatory focus of PAR, and the practical clarity of Stringer. It, also, empowers teacher educators and student teachers as well as classroom teachers to take reflective action, promote peace, and cultivate democratic learning spaces.

① IDENTIFY & DIAGNOSE
- Explore the classroom situation
- Define a clear, researchable problem
- Gather initial evidence (observation, student feedback)

➤ ***Derived from***: Lewin's "Planning"; Stringer's "Look"; PAR Inquiry

② PLAN
- Develop an intervention plan collaboratively
- Set goals, timeline, indicators, and data collection tools

➤ ***Derived from***: Lewin's "Planning"; Kemmis & McTaggart's "Plan"

③ ACT
- Implement the planned strategy in the classroom
- Engage students in active, peaceful, and inclusive learning

➤ ***Derived from***: Lewin's "Action"; Stringer's "Act"

④ OBSERVE
- Collect data and monitor classroom changes systematically
- Record student responses, participation, and behavior

➤ ***Derived from***: Kemmis & McTaggart's "Observe"; PAR Documentation

⑤ REFLECT
- Analyze findings and discuss with peers or mentors
- Identify lessons learned and unexpected results

➤ ***Derived from***: Kemmis & McTaggart's "Reflect"; Stringer's "Think"

⑥ REVISE & SHARE
- Revise plan for next cycle based on reflection
- Share results with colleagues or in workshops

➤ ***Derived from***: PAR's "Re-plan"; Lewin's "Fact-finding"

BACK TO STEP ① (New cycle begins)
- Continuous improvement toward peaceful and reflective classrooms.

4.1. Step 1: Identifying and Diagnosing the Problem

The first step in action research involves recognizing, clarifying, and understanding the problem that affects the learning environment. For non-violence initiatives, this means pinpointing specific forms of violence—physical, verbal, emotional, or structural—occurring within the classroom or school. According to Mills (2017), this diagnostic stage ensures that the researcher investigates authentic, context-specific issues that truly affect learners.

In Cambodian schools, violence may include shouting, humiliation, threats, hitting with rulers/sticks, peer bullying, or exclusion. Research must begin with a careful, honest appraisal of what is happening and why.

Teacher educators and student teachers may use the followings to diagnose the problem. Mertler (2019) suggests triangulating data sources to avoid assumptions and ensure accuracy.

- Classroom observations
- Informal conversations with students
- Focus-group discussions
- Review of school discipline logs
- Reflective journals
- Discussions with mentor teachers and school leaders

Example

A student teacher during practicum in Battambang notices that several Grade 5 students appear anxious during English class. During observation, she hears the classroom teacher regularly shout phrases like "អត់ស្តាប់! [Ot sdap!]" ("You don't listen!"). Some students later share in a drawing activity that they "feel scared" during the lesson. The student teacher identifies verbal intimidation and fear-based discipline as the central problem.

Outcome of step 1: A problem can be diagnosed
A clear, researchable problem statement such as: "*Many students in Grade 5A demonstrate signs of fear and disengagement due to frequent verbal reprimands and shouting used as discipline.*"

4.2. Step 2: Planning the Action

Once the problem is clearly diagnosed, the next step is designing an intervention grounded in proven non-violent, child-centered strategies. Planning requires *reviewing literature, selecting strategies* aligned with positive discipline principles, and ensuring feasibility in Cambodian classrooms, which may be overcrowded and resource limited. Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) emphasize that planning should be collaborative, when possible, especially when the problem involves shared cultural norms around discipline. A comprehensive plan includes:

- Specific goals (e.g., reduce shouting by 70% within one month)
- Intervention strategies (e.g., use of positive reinforcement, non-violent communication, classroom agreements)
- Responsible persons (teacher, student teacher, mentor teacher)

- Timeline
- Resources needed
- Data collection methods
- Ethical safeguards

Example

After diagnosing the problem, the student teacher consults her mentor teacher and reviews UNICEF Cambodia materials on positive discipline. She creates a one-month intervention plan including:

- Introducing a "Classroom Respect Agreement" co-written with students
- Using praise, recognition cards, and supportive feedback
- Replacing shouting with hand signals and calm verbal cues
- Taking a 30-second pause when frustrated
- Weekly class meetings to discuss emotions

Outcome of step 2: A written action plan, ready for implementation the planned actions above.

4.3. Step 3: Taking Action (Implementation)

During this step, the student teacher/classroom teacher as a researcher starts implementing the planned intervention (see step 2). This is where change actually occurs. According to Mertler (2019), implementation must remain flexible to allow adaptation as unexpected challenges arise. Here are the key considerations:

- Maintain consistency
- Communicate clearly with students
- Monitor emotional safety
- Document actions taken
- Coordinate closely with mentor teachers
- Model non-violent behavior

It is worth to remind that the teacher educators should guide student teachers to maintain professionalism while they experiment with new approaches.

Example

During the first week, the student teacher introduces the "***Classroom Respect Agreement***," engaging students in discussions about *how they want to be treated*. She notices that some students are shy to speak up, so she uses visual cards (happy/sad/unsure faces) to let them express feelings non-verbally—a culturally sensitive adaptation.

She practices using calm tone and gestures instead of shouting. On two occasions when she feels frustrated, she pauses and uses breathing techniques. Students quickly learn to respond to the new hand signal for "quiet attention," reducing the need for verbal scolding.

Outcome of step 3: A transformed classroom environment begins to emerge, and the researcher gains experiential insight into successes and challenges.

4.4. Step 4: Observing and Collecting Data

Once action is underway, researchers collect evidence of the intervention's effects. Observation helps determine whether the strategies reduce violence and improve student behavior, emotional well-being, and learning. Observation must be systematic and ethically conducted (Mills, 2017), and triangulation strengthens reliability (Mertler, 2019). Data collection methods which are suitable for the school:

- Structured observation checklists
- Pre- and post-intervention surveys
- Interviews or focus groups
- Student journals or drawings
- Behavior logs
- Video/audio recordings (with consent)
- Researcher reflection journals

Example: The student teacher uses three tools:

- Observation checklist tracking number of times the mentor teacher or she raises their voice.
- Student emotion drawings twice a week.
- Short interviews with five randomly selected students (with parental consent).

After three weeks, shouting incidents drop from 12 per week to 3 per week.
Students' drawings increasingly depict a "happy classroom."

Interviews show students feel "more comfortable" and "less scared."

Outcome of step 4: A collection of valid, reliable, ethically gathered evidence.

4.5. Step 5: Reflecting and Interpreting Results

Reflection allows researchers to analyze the data, identify successes and challenges, and interpret the meaning and implications of the findings. Reflection is central to the action research because, as Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) argue, action gains value only through thoughtful interpretation. The common Reflective Questions are:

- What changed?
- Why did these changes occur?
- What challenges persisted?
- How did students respond emotionally and behaviorally?
- What did I learn about teaching, discipline, and children's feelings?
- What does the data suggest about next steps?

Example: The student teacher notes:

- Shouting reduced significantly.
- Students became more cooperative.

- Two students continued showing anxiety due to home violence.
- Mentor teacher occasionally slipped back into shouting, especially on busy days.

She reflects that the intervention was effective but needs reinforcement and expansion. She also acknowledges that non-violence strategies are new for some teachers and require mindset shifts.

She concludes that positive discipline contributed to a safer classroom, but sustainability requires stronger collaboration with her mentor teacher.

Outcome of step 5: A clear picture of results and lessons learned, forming the basis for the next cycle.

4.6. Step 6: Revising and Sharing

The final step closes the research cycle and opens the door for future cycles. *'Revising'* means adjusting the intervention based on findings. *'Sharing'* means disseminating results to colleagues, school leaders, teacher education programs, or the wider community. Sharing builds collective capacity for non-violence (Mertler, 2019). Here are some Forms of Sharing can be put in practice:

- Staff meetings
- Community presentations
- Teacher training workshops
- Mentor teacher discussions
- Posters or videos
- Written reports
- Presentations in Teacher Training College (TTC) courses

Teacher educators should encourage student teachers to document and share their findings of the action research systematically.

Example: The student teacher revises her plan by adding:

- More co-teaching discussions with her mentor.
- A "calm corner" for students who feel overwhelmed.
- Monthly parent meetings to discuss positive discipline.

She shares her action research findings with the entire primary school during a staff meeting and later presents them in a TTC seminar for other student teachers. Her data encourages two other teachers to try non-violent discipline strategies.

Outcome of step 6: Knowledge spreads, practices improve, and the cycle of reflection and action continues.

5. Key Cautions When Conducting AR for Non-Violence

Conducting Action Research (AR) to promote non-violence in Cambodian classrooms is deeply meaningful, but it also requires careful attention to ethical, cultural, procedural, and relational aspects. The following cautions and recommendations help ensure that research remains safe, respectful, effective, and genuinely transformative for teachers and learners.

***Risk of re-traumatizing students**:* Discussions about violence—physical, verbal, emotional, or structural—may trigger painful memories for some learners.

Suggestions:

- Use sensitive questioning techniques (e.g., *"If someone experiences…,"* instead of *"Have you ever been hit?"*).
- Give students the right to skip questions or activities.
- Focus on present behaviors and positive solutions, not traumatic past events.
- Seek support from school counselors or trusted adults when needed.

Power imbalance between teacher and students: Students may feel pressured to give "good" answers because the teacher is also the researcher.

Suggestions:

- Use anonymous data collection whenever possible (e.g., drop-box surveys).
- Invite students to "correct the teacher" by positioning data as shared learning, not teacher authority.
- Emphasize that honesty helps improve the classroom, not affect grading.

Sensitive nature of school violence: Topics such as shouting, threats, hitting, or humiliation involve serious professional and institutional concerns.

Suggestions:

- Focus AR on improving practices, not blaming individuals.
- Make it clear that the research aims to strengthen teaching, not evaluate teachers.
- Avoid naming specific teachers when discussing findings.

Fear of professional risk: Some teachers may worry that admitting to classroom challenges will affect their reputation or job.

Suggestions:

- Protect teacher identity by using labels like "Teacher A," "Class B," or "a Grade 6 classroom."
- Share findings in ways that highlight growth, not mistakes.
- Emphasize that AR is a tool for professional development, not judgment.

Collecting data that involves minors: Research involving children must ensure their safety and dignity at all times.

Suggestions:

- Seek verbal consent from students in age-appropriate language.
- If interviewing minors, conduct the task in a public space (e.g., open classroom) to avoid misunderstandings.
- Use methods comfortable for children (drawing, role-play, stories).

Cultural sensitivity related to discipline: Cambodia still carries traditional norms that accept harsh discipline such as shouting or hitting.

Suggestions:

- Use gentle, culturally respectful language, focusing on "improving classroom harmony and effectiveness."
- Avoid describing practices as "wrong"; instead describe evidence-based alternatives that support learning.
- Engage elders, mentors, or school leaders respectfully when discussing findings.

Confidentiality risks in small school communities: In small Cambodian schools, it's easy to guess who is being described.

Suggestions:

- Avoid any detail that can identify a specific student (e.g., "the tallest boy in Grade 5").
- Store recordings, notes, and surveys in locked or password-protected spaces.
- When sharing data, use general patterns and themes, not individual cases.

Lack of research skills among teacher educators and student teachers: Some researchers may not be confident about data collection, analysis, or ethical protocols.

Suggestions:

- Provide simple tools (checklists, observation templates, consent scripts).
- Collaborate with mentors or senior teachers.
- Conduct small-scale AR cycles first to build confidence.

Overly ambitious projects: Trying to solve "all violence" at once makes research unrealistic.

Suggestions: Encourage teachers to select one clear, manageable issue, such as:

- reducing teacher shouting during group work,
- strengthening peer respect during games,
- preventing name-calling during lessons.
- Start small. Improve continuously.

Time constraints for teachers: Teachers already have heavy workloads; AR should not overwhelm them.

Suggestions:

- Integrate data collection into daily teaching (e.g., observe behavior during normal activities).
- Use short cycles (2–3 weeks).
- Use tools that take no more than 10 minutes per day.

Misinterpretation of data: Teachers may misread student behavior or overgeneralize findings.

Suggestions:

- Use multiple data sources (observations, student voice, assessment records).
- Discuss interpretations with a mentor or peer.
- Focus on patterns, not single incidents.

Biased interpretation due to personal beliefs: Teachers may interpret data based on personal assumptions about race, gender, ability, or family background.

Suggestions:

- Reflect on personal biases before starting AR (e.g., "Do I assume boys are more disruptive?").
- Use evidence to challenge assumptions.
- Prioritize child-centered and rights-based practices in all decisions.

P*otential conflict with parents:* Parents may misunderstand the purpose of AR involving classroom discipline.

Suggestions:

- Explain AR in simple terms: "We are trying new ways to improve student respect, safety, and participation."
- Avoid sharing sensitive student data.
- Highlight how AR aims to support the whole school community.

Ethical reporting and sharing: Sharing findings may unintentionally expose individuals or create blame.

Suggestions:

- Focus reports on patterns, solutions, improved practices
- Use non-judgmental language.
- Share results as learning stories, not evaluations.

6. Guideline for Teacher Educators

As a supervisor you *coach*, *monitor*, *challenge*, and *support* student teachers as they carry out classroom Action Research. Your role is to ensure the research is *practical*, *ethical*, *rigorous enough for learning*, and *completed on time*.

Action Research is a powerful professional development tool that allows student teachers to investigate real issues in their classroom, implement practical actions, and reflect on the impact of these actions to improve the learning environment (Stringer, 2014). When directed toward reducing or preventing violence, AR becomes not only a research exercise, but also a moral and pedagogical responsibility that directly contributes to child well-being, positive discipline, and safe learning environments (UNICEF, 2019).

This guideline supports teacher educators in effectively mentoring student teachers as they design, implement, and report an AR project focused on promoting non-violence in the classroom. The six-step synthesized AR model used in this manual includes:

Step 1: Identifying and Diagnosing the Problem
Step 2: Planning for Action
Step 3: Taking Action (Implementation)
Step 4: Observing and Collecting Data
Step 5: Reflecting and Interpreting Results
Step 6: Revising and Sharing

The guideline outlines cover the *purpose*, *procedures*, *monitoring points*, and examples that teacher educators can use for mentoring and assessment of each stage.

6.1. Identifying and Diagnosing the Problem

The purpose of this stage is *to help student teachers understand the nature, root causes, and manifestations of violence* in their assigned classroom. Understanding these can assist student-teachers to be well-prepared for their next stage, especially for their intervention. Thus, teacher educators should guide them to:

- Clarify the meaning of violence in their assigned classrooms
  - Physical violence (e.g., hitting, pinching, throwing objects, etc.) and/or verbal violence (e.g., shouting, insults, name-calling, threats)
  - Emotional violence (e.g., humiliation, exclusion, sarcasm)
- Support student teachers to narrow down a specific issue of the identified violence
  - Encourage them to avoid vague topics such as *"violence in my classroom"* and instead focus on specific patterns. For example:
    - ➔ "*High frequency* of teacher ***shouting during group work***"
    - ➔ "Students ***insulting*** each other ***during activities***"

➔ "Boys ***teasing*** girls ***during class discussions***"

- Help them collect initial diagnostic data. Student teachers should use simple tools:
  1. **Informal conversation with school mentors**: Informal communication with school mentors helps student teachers gain contextual, historical, and relational insights that are not easily captured through observation checklists or surveys alone. School mentors possess valuable tacit knowledge about recurring student behavior patterns, past discipline practices, classroom norms and school culture, students' family and community contexts, and what interventions have been tried before and with what results.

     Informal communication allows student teachers to learn without judgment, avoid blaming students or teachers, and frame the action research problem realistically and ethically. In the Cambodian context, where respect for hierarchy and harmony is important, informal communication is often more effective and culturally appropriate than formal interviews at the early diagnostic stage. **In the action research, *Informal communication refers to natural, conversational exchanges between the student teacher and the school mentors that occur during daily school routines, rather than structured interviews or formal meetings***. These conversations are usually short, flexible, relationship-based, non-threatening, and focused on understanding rather than evaluation.

     Importantly, ***informal communication is not gossip, complaint, or judgment***. It is purposeful listening and gentle inquiry ***aimed at understanding classroom behavior and discipline issues related to violence or non-violence***.

     There may be many ways or forms to hold the informal communication between student teachers and school mentors or other parties for this purpose. However, teacher educators can guide student teachers using the following process:

     Step 1: Choose appropriate moments: Student teachers should look for natural opportunities which can reduce pressure and make conversations more open such as: after class, during break time, after school, while preparing lessons, during staff-room conversations.

     Step 2: Start with appreciation and curiosity: Within this step, teacher educators can encourage student teachers to begin their conversation with respect, for it builds trust and avoids defensiveness, for example: *"I'm learning a lot from observing your class. I'd like to understand more about how students behave so I can improve my practice."*

     Step 3: Ask open, non-judgmental questions: Questions should invite reflection, not justification. You should alert your student teachers to understand that they should avoid using any Yes/No question as it may not help them to prob or deeply understand the situation. Let consider some examples below:

     "What kinds of behavior challenges happen most often in this class?"

     "When students argue or shout, what usually causes it?"

"How do students usually respond to discipline or correction?"
"Has this issue been happening for a long time or recently?"

Step 4: Listen more than speak: After addressing the question, student teachers should be advised to listen attentively. They should avoid interrupting, avoid correcting or advising, take brief written notes afterward, notice patterns and repeated themes.

Step 5: Reflect and triangulate: This step is crucial to gain the real issue. This helps avoid bias and over-reliance on a single perspective. Thus, after the conversation, student teachers should compare what they heard with their own classroom observations, student behavior records, (informal) student feedback, etc.

2. Quick observation checklist: *A rapid tool for teacher educators or student teachers to capture visible signs of physical and verbal violence, classroom climate, and relationship dynamics*. With the checklist, it helps the observer quickly identify patterns of non-violent or violent behaviors, emotional climate, and student teachers' interactions during a 15–20-minute classroom visit.

Observation Checklist

Conduct 2–3 short observations at different times of the day. You can consider using the marks to represent the observed violence (√ = Yes, × = No, ? = Unsure). You can add short notes if needed. This teacher student can use this observation checklist to help them identify a precise problem (e.g., "Frequent peer name-calling in Group 3," "Teacher uses public scolding," etc.)

Teacher Behaviors

Observation Item	*√, ×, ?*	*Notes*
Teacher uses calm, respectful tone.		
Teacher raises voice loudly at students.		
Teacher uses threats (e.g., "I will punish you!").		
Teacher uses physical control (pulling, pushing, hitting).		
Teacher explains rules clearly and positively.		
Teacher models non-violent communication.		
Teacher resolves conflicts fairly.		
……		

Student Behaviors

Observation Item	*√, ×, ?*	*Notes*
Students shout, tease, or name-call peers.		
Students fight or use physical aggression.		
Students ignore classroom rules.		

Students cooperate in groups.		
Students show respect during discussions.		
Some students withdraw or look fearful.		
……		

Classroom Climate

Observation Item	*√, ×, ?*	*Notes*
Seating arrangement supports positive interactions.		
Classroom rules are visible.		
Emotional atmosphere appears calm.		
Clear routines are used (entering, transitions, group work).		
Students feel comfortable asking questions.		
Some students withdraw or look fearful.		
……		

Then teacher student can start summarizing in two categories based on the number of ticks:

Summary

**Main problems observed*:

- ……
- ……

** Possible causes*:

- ……
- ……

3. Short anonymous student survey:

Student Survey Template

Part A: *Feelings of Safety (Circle One)*

(1) I feel safe in this classroom.
😊 *Yes* 😐 *Sometimes* 😟 *No*

(2) Students in this class treat each other with respect.
😊 *Yes* 😐 *Sometimes* 😟 *No*

(3) The teacher speaks to students in a calm and respectful way.
😊 *Yes* 😐 *Sometimes* 😟 *No*

Part B: *Experience of Violence*

(4) Have you seen students being teased, insulted, or laughed at?
□ *Often* □ *Sometimes* □ *Never*

(5) Have you seen hitting, pushing, or fighting?
□ *Often* □ *Sometimes* □ *Never*

(6) Has anyone made you feel scared or uncomfortable in class?
□ *Yes* □ *No*
If yes, what happened? *(optional)*_____

Part C: *[Optional]*

(7) What should change to make our classroom safer and kinder?
_____
_____

(8) Is there anything else you want the teacher to know?
_____
_____

4. Review of behavior records or seating plan patterns:

A systematic way to record incidents, identify patterns, and connect them with seating arrangements, group dynamics, or conflict zones. This tool can help the student teacher to:

- Track repeated behaviors (e.g., name-calling, fighting).
- Identify specific individuals or locations where violent incidents occur.
- Understand triggers (group work, break time, teacher absence).
- Plan non-violence interventions based on concrete evidence.

This can be used the incident log each time verbal or physical violence occurs and updated the seating-plan map after each incident.

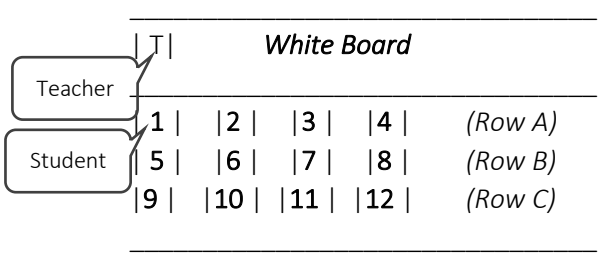
- After collecting data for 1–2 weeks, analyze patterns:
  "Most incidents happen near the back corner."
  "Same two boys fight during group tasks."
  "Students tease weaker learners."

Behavior Incident Log

Date	Time	Type of Behavior	Students Involved	Location in Room	Trigger/ Activity	How it was handled	Notes
20-11-25	7—8	shouting					
	8—9	teasing					
21-11-25	7—8	throwing objects					
……	……..	……..					

Seating-Plan Pattern Tool

- *Step 1: Draw classroom layout*



Legend:
X = incident location
! = student involved in multiple incidents

- *Step 2: Mark each incident*
  For example:
  - Put an (**X**) in seats where conflicts occurred.
  - Put (**!!!**) if multiple incidents happened in the same place or involved the same student.
  - Use arrows to show movement (e.g., "Dara walked to Vira to tease him.")

- *Step 3: Identify Patterns*
  Teacher-student can identify the typical patterns. Examples of typical findings:
  1. **Hotspot zone**: "Most conflicts occur in the back-left corner."
  2. **Peer dynamic pattern**: "Same pair of students repeatedly tease one girl."
  3. **Group issue**: "Group 3 always argues during group work."
  4. **Teacher proximity effect**: "Incidents increase when teacher is writing on the board."

NOTE: To strengthen the first step –Identify and diagnose the problem, the data from the three tools can be combined, so the student teacher can gain:

- Triangulated evidence (observer, students, behavior log)
- Clear, specific problems that can be turned into an Action Research question
- Concrete baseline data for later comparison
- A strong foundation for planning non-violence interventions

Example

A Grade 6 student teacher notices that during group work, several students call each other "crazy" or "stupid", leading to emotional distress. Initial observation reveals that this happens most often when students are competing to answer questions quickly.

Try this: You can think how you can help your student-teacher to:

- refine the research question.
- ensure confidentiality and ethical awareness.
- validate that the problem is appropriate, manageable, and relevant to non-violence.

6.2. Planning for Actions

After the problem is identified, planning and designing the actions to reconnect with students begins, aiming to design realistic, culturally appropriate interventions that reduce violence and promote positive discipline. Teacher educators can consider guide student-teacher to:

- **Connecting the plan to theory and evidence:** Student teachers should read short resources (e.g., Child-Friendly Schools, Positive Discipline guidelines, related empirical literature, and related theories).
- **Selecting an intervention strategy** such as:
    - **Positive discipline techniques**: Positive discipline refers to non-violent, respectful approaches to managing student behavior that focus on teaching appropriate behavior rather than punishing misbehavior. It emphasizes guidance, consistency, empathy, and logical consequences instead of shouting, humiliation, or physical punishment. Research shows that corporal punishment and harsh verbal discipline are associated with increased aggression, fear, and disengagement, while positive discipline supports emotional safety and better learning outcomes (Gershoff, 2017). The following can be considered as the Key Features:
        - Clear classroom rules agreed upon with students
        - Calm verbal correction instead of shouting
        - Logical and restorative consequences (e.g., apology, repairing harm)
        - Praise and reinforcement for positive behavior
        - Teacher self-control and emotional regulation

Example

During group work, a student teacher notices ***frequent shouting and teasing***. Instead of yelling, they:

- Co-create 2 or 3 simple class rules with students (e.g., “Speak kindly,” “Hands are for helping”)
- Use a calm signal (raised hand or bell) to regain attention
- Praise respectful behavior publicly
- Privately remind students of expectations when problems arise

her educators, to ensure this process, they can guide their student teachers to:

- reflect on their own reactions to misbehavior
- Ask themselves some questions: Example: “*Which behaviors am I trying to teach, not just stop?*

- Keep in mind that positive discipline requires practice and consistency, not perfection.

- **Cooperative learning with structured rules**: Cooperative learning involves students working together in small groups with clear roles, rules, and shared goals. ***When structured*** properly, it reduces competition, exclusion, and aggressive behavior by promoting mutual responsibility and peer support. However, ***unstructured group work*** can increase conflict, bullying, or domination by stronger students. The cooperative learning can be seen in the following features:
  - Small groups (3–5 students)
  - Clearly assigned roles (leader, recorder/notetaker, timekeeper, reporter)
  - Clear behavioral rules for cooperation
  - Teacher monitoring and guidance
  - Reflection on group behavior, not only academic output

Example

To reduce pushing and name-calling, a student teacher can:

- forms mixed-ability groups
- assigns rotating roles
- posts group rules such as "Listen before speaking" and "Help, don't blame"
- observes interactions and gives feedback on respectful cooperation

Similarly, the below points can be examples of teacher educators' guidance:

- Remind student teachers that rules must be explicitly taught
- Encourage short reflection questions: "How did your group treat each other?" "What helped you work peacefully today?"
- Emphasize that cooperative learning is both an academic and behavioral intervention

- **Peace-education mini-lessons**: This mini-lessons are short, focused lessons (5–15 minutes) that teach students skills related to: *emotional awareness, conflict resolution, empathy, non-violent communication,* and *respect for differences*. This can be conducted in different feature: *short and regular* (once or twice a week), *interactive* (stories, role-play, discussion), *age-appropriate language*, *direct connection to real classroom situations*. These lessons help students learn alternatives to aggression, especially in contexts where violence has been normalized.

Example

A student teacher notices *frequent insults during playtime*. They conduct a mini-lesson on:

- Identifying feelings (e.g., anger, sadness, frustration)
- "Stop–Think–Speak" strategy before reacting
- Role-playing how to disagree without insults

Teacher Educators may consider to use the below guidance. They can consider:

- encouraging student teachers to keep lessons simple and practical
- linking lessons directly to observed problems (from Step 1)
- reminding them that peace education is preventive, not only reactive

- Explicating teaching of respectful language: Explicit teaching means directly teaching students what respectful language sounds like, instead of assuming they already know. Many students repeat language heard at home, in the community, or online without understanding its harm. Student teachers can promote through:
  - modeling respectful phrases,
  - teaching alternatives to insults or shouting,
  - practicing through role-play,
  - correcting language calmly and consistently, and
  - displaying respectful sentence starters in class.

  Example

  Instead of allowing "***You are stupid***," the teacher teaches alternatives such as: "I don't agree," "Please stop," and "I feel upset when…" They practice these phrases during role-play and reinforce them during lessons.

Teacher educator as the supervisor can encourage student teachers to model respectful language themselves, ask them to reflect: Do my words reduce or increase tension? And emphasize that language shapes classroom culture

- Preparing implementation materials
  - ***Lesson scripts***: this material is referred to a short lesson plan (including all five steps as required by MoEYS) used to strengthen the positive behavior students should use in their classroom.
  - ***Behavior expectations posters***: for example, student teacher would like to focus on developing a 'Safe and Respectful Classroom.' They can work together with students to form a 'Classroom Agreements' sentence or a 'Classroom Culture.' Here are some examples:
    - We speak kindly and respectfully
    - We listen when others are speaking
    - We keep our hands and feet to ourselves
    - We help, not hurt
    - We solve problems peacefully

    By contrast, when someone breaks the agreement they should be reminded from teacher or peer, or supported to conduct a self-reflection though asking: what happened? what can I do better? Also, a restorative conversation should be done between student teacher and the concerned student (no hitting, shouting, or humiliation).
  - ***Group work rules***: This can be considered clear steps of each stage: before, during and after group work.

- *Before Groupwork*: everyone has a role, everyone listens, everyone is respect. Also, roles (rotate weekly if they are assigned in the same group for a project) are set (e.g., group leader, time keeper, recorder/notetaker, and peace helper (helps solve small conflicts of members during groupwork)
- *During Groupwork*: One person speaks at a time, we disagree politely, we help group members, not laugh at them, and we ask for help using kind words.
- *After Groupwork*: a group reflection technique may the better one, for this can help them learn from their actions and plan for the better action later. Student teachers can encourage each group ask themselves some questions such as *What went well? Did we speak respectfully?*

- ***Role-play materials***: Role-play allows students to practice non-violent responses safely, develop empathy, learn conflict resolution skills, and express emotions without punishment. This technique is especially effective for verbal aggression. For example, the issue is about 'Sharing classroom material.' Two students want to use the same book. One student (**Student B**) shouts.
  - Then student teacher can design one student as Student A, and another one as Student B, while another student as the Observer.
  - Student teacher give instructions to **Student A** to act out the problem using respectful language, and try at least two peaceful solutions.
  - While **Observer** takes notes on *respectful words used*, *body language*, and *how conflict was resolved*.

6.3. Take Action (Implementation)

Following the identifying a problem to improve, and the plan for intervention, it is time to implement what have planned in the sequencing organization. This stage aims to try out the intervention in real classroom conditions. To ensure the smooth intervention, teacher educators should consider guiding student teachers to:

- **Encourage fidelity of implementation:** Student teachers should follow the planned actions closely while remaining flexible in response to classroom realities.
- **Promote professional reflection during action**: Student teachers should keep a **daily reflective journal** including:
  - What worked today?
  - What challenges emerged?
  - How did students respond emotionally and behaviorally?

Teacher Reflective Journal

Date:	Monday 12 November 2025
Class/Subject	Mathematics
Positive Behavioral Strategies Used Today	……
Situations Where I Avoided Harsh Discipline	……
Student Reaction/Outcome	……
Reflection	……
Next Steps/Adjustment for tomorrow	……

Student Reflective Journal

Date: ***Monday 12 November 2025***	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I felt the teacher treated me fairly	√		
One positive thing I noticed about classroom discipline is …			
One change I still wish for is ….			
One ……			

Note: *There is no clear format of the reflective journal, so student teachers or teacher educators can create one which may respond to your needs.*

- Ensure ethical conduct
    - Avoid shaming students who display violent behaviors.
    - Maintain confidentiality in written notes.
    - Protect student dignity at all times.

Example

During implementation, the student teacher notices that some ***students still whisper insults****. She adds a quick de-escalation technique: a hand signal reminding students to "****reset and speak kindly****."*

To support student teachers under your supervision, teacher educator should encourage student teachers to:

(1) Conduct classroom visits to observe implementation.
(2) Offer feedback on tone, language use, and non-violent discipline approaches.
(3) Help the student teacher adjust actions when needed.

6.4. Observing and Collecting Data

When implementing the planned action, student teachers are supposed to observe their own actions and collect all data. This stage helps them to gather rich evidence to understand the impact of the intervention. In Action Research for Non-Violence, data collection is not about punishment, inspection, or blaming, but about understanding classroom behavior patterns, monitoring change, and informing reflection and improvement. To ensure credibility and ethical rigor, student teachers are encouraged to use multiple data sources (triangulation), combining observations, student voice, and behavior records (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Burns, 2010). During this stage, teacher educators should guide:

- Student teachers to use multiple data sources, such as:
    - **Pre- and post-surveys**: In non-violence AR, surveys should be short, anonymous, age-appropriate, and non-threatening. The pre-and-post survey may take about 4—8 weeks or it may take longer upon the type of issue you wish to make change. This type of survey helps student teachers to:
        - Understand students' perceptions of safety, respect, and discipline
        - Measure changes over time after non-violent interventions are implemented
        - Give students a voice in evaluating classroom climate

When implementing this pre-and-post survey, student teachers and teacher educators should note some ethics like do not ask students to name teachers or classmates, and explain clearly that answers will not affect students' grades or treatment.

Survey Template

Please tick (√) the answer that best matches your feeling.

Statement	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I feel safe in this classroom.	√			
My teacher speaks to students respectfully.		√		
Students are treated fairly in this class.	√			
When problems happen, we talk instead of punish.	√			
I feel comfortable asking questions.			√	
……				

Note: *Same template can be used for both pre-survey and post-survey. You should use any survey code (e.g., St001) to ensure the anonymous.* If possible, you can create an open-ended question after the survey, so students can provide you with more information, for example:

Optional Open Question:

What makes you feel safe or unsafe in this classroom?

_____

_____

- **Observation logs**: Observation may be very useful in Cambodia, where some violent practices may be normalized and unnoticed unless systematically recorded. This log allows the student teacher or teacher educators to record real classroom interactions, identify triggers of verbal or physical conflict, document teacher responses and student reactions.

Classroom Observation Log

An observer should describe what you see and hear, ***not judgments***, and also should avoid words like "bad," "lazy," or "naughty"

Date: …	Lesson: ……		Observer: ……	
Time	What Happened (Objective Description)	Type of Behavior	Teacher Response	Notes
8:15	Two students argued during group work	Verbal conflict	Teacher reminded rules calmly	Conflict stopped
8:30	Student shouted answer without raising hand	Disruptive	Teacher ignored and praised others	Behavior reduced

8:45	……	…….	…….	…….
9:00	……	…….	…….	…….

- **Behavior frequency checklists**: This tool helps quantify behavior by tracking how often specific behaviors occur, comparing frequency before and after intervention, and supporting evidence-based conclusions. Also, this is particularly helpful when addressing such as shouting, physical aggression, and positive behaviors (e.g., helping, respectful speech).

Behavior Tacking Sheet

Week: ….			*Class: …..*			
Behavior	**Mon.**	**Tue.**	**Wed.**	**Thu.**	**Fri.**	**Total**
Shouting	√			√		**2**
Pushing / hitting	√					**1**
Using polite language		√	√		√	**3**
Helping peers	√	√	√	√		**4**
Mocking						
….						

Note: *(√) behavior observed at least once during lesson*

- **Samples of student reflections**: Student reflections can help student teachers understand *how students feel about classroom changes, whether they understand non-violence values*, and *how interventions affect emotions, relationships, and learning*. These reflections can be written, drawn, or orally recorded depending on age.

Student Reflection Sheet (Optional & Anonymous)

(1) One thing I like about our classroom now is: _____
(2) One thing that helps us solve problems peacefully is: _____
(3) When there is conflict, I feel:
☐ Calm ☐ Afraid ☐ Confused ☐ Happy ☐ Other: _____ (please specify)

You may consider asking student (especially younger students) to draw a picture of a peaceful classroom since picture may describe their feeling better.

- Short interviews with students or mentor teachers: Interviews provide deeper insights and explanations that surveys cannot capture, such as *why certain strategies work or do not work, how students perceive teacher behavior changes*. The interviews should be short (approximately 5–10 minutes) and conversational (two-way dialogue); however, the duration of the interview may be varied according to the age group or issue you wish to probe. It should be noted that one-to-one interview is the best strategy for the non-violence AR rather than focused group discussion. It should be conducted in a friendly, non-formal way, and avoid any leading question *(do not give any hint, so your student may answer to what you prefer instead of talking the truth of their feeling)*.

Short Interview Questions (Student)

(1) Do you feel safer in class now? Why or why not? _____
_____
_____

(2) What does the teacher do when problems happen? _____
_____
_____

(3) What helps students get along better? _____
_____
_____

Interview Guide (Mentor Teacher)

(1) What changes have you noticed in student behavior? _____
_____
_____

(2) Which strategies seem most effective? _____
_____
_____

(3) What challenges remain? _____
_____
_____

(4) What advice would you give the student teacher? _____
_____
_____

- Student teachers have to ensure that data must not create fear or pressure. The data collection must avoid identifying specific students when reporting. Also, observation should be objective and descriptive.

  Example

  Data collection shows:

  - Verbal insults decreased *from 12 incidents per week to 4*.
  - Students report "*feeling happier in group work*."
  - Mentor teacher reports "*class atmosphere is softer*."

  Note: It may be very helpful for your student teachers, if you, teacher educators, can consider:

  (1) teaching student teachers how to record data systematically.
  (2) checking the quality and accuracy of collected evidence.
  (3) alerting them to ensure ethical storage of data.

6.5. Reflecting and Interpreting Results

This stage is the heart of action research. In Action Research for Non-Violence, reflection goes beyond asking "Did the intervention work?" It asks deeper professional questions such as:

(1) What patterns of violence or respectful behavior changed?
(2) Why did change happen (or not happen)?
(3) What does this mean for my teaching practice? and
(4) What should be improved in the next cycle?

This step helps teacher educators and student teachers move from raw data to professional learning, and from isolated classroom incidents to evidence-informed improvement. It requires student teachers to have different skills such as analyzing and comparing data/patterns and interpreting the meaning from the results. Many student teachers face challenges in this stage. Therefore, what you, teacher educators or supervisor, can do is to guide or collaboratively work alongside with them to:

- analyze patterns, not individual incidents: Why patterns matter in the non-violence action research is a common question asked. In Cambodian classrooms, isolated incidents (e.g., one student shouting, one teacher raising voice) may occur due to many factors: fatigue, exam pressure, class size, or emotional stress. Action Research should not judge individuals but instead identify repeated patterns that signal a classroom climate issue. Therefore, focusing on patterns helps:
    - Reduce blame and defensiveness
    - Promote professional reflection
    - Identify structural or instructional causes of violence
    - Align with positive discipline principles (Gershoff, 2017)

  Following the question: why patterns matter, student teachers should be guided through a step-by-step of 'How to Analyze Patterns'. There are different ways of this; however, here are the FOUR simple steps for analyzing patterns.

    - Step 1: Group Similar Data
      Group incidents by type, for example:
        - Verbal aggression (shouting, insults)
        - Physical aggression (hitting, pushing)
        - Disrespectful language
        - Peer-to-peer conflict
    - Step 2: Look for Frequency Trends
      To begin this step, you can keep asking yourself the following questions and answer each by the data or evidence you collected, for example:
        - Which behaviors occur most often?
        - At what time of day?
        - During which activities (group work, transitions, exams)?
        - …
    - Step 3: Identify Triggers:
      The Common triggers may include:
        - Unclear instructions
        - Competitive tasks
        - Seating arrangements
        - Teacher stress or time pressure

- **Step 4: Summarize Patterns**: This step may require you to guide your student teachers to write concise statements such as: "***Verbal shouting occurred most frequently during group work transitions, especially when roles were unclear***."

- **compare data before and after the intervention**: This aligns with action research principles of systematic inquiry (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Comparison the data (between pre-data and post-data) is essential as it allows teacher-researchers to:
  - demonstrate evidence of change
  - avoid relying on personal impressions
  - show improvement (or lack of improvement) transparently

  You should also guide your student teachers to understand some common steps when comparing the data.

  - **Step 1: Identify Baseline Data**: This set of data may include: pre-survey results, initial observation records, and behavior frequency counts during your intervention.
  - **Step 2: Collect Post-Intervention Data**: This set of data was collected by using the same tools after your intervention have completed. You may use the same survey questions, same observation checklist, and same behavior categories.
  - **Step 3: Compare Side-by-Side**: It depends on your purpose or how you would like to display your data to make an ease for you to observe the differences between Pre-data and Post-data. You may consider creating simple tables or charts (see table below as an example). You may, also, think of comparison your data in different types, for example, ***Quantitative*** (numbers, percentages, frequency), ***Qualitative*** (student comments, reflections), and ***Mixed*** (Combining numbers and voices)

Comparison Before-and-After Intervention

Behavior	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Comparison
Teacher shouting	12 times/week	4 times/week	-8 times/week
Student insults	15 incidents	6 incidents	-9 incidents
Cooperative talk	5 instances	18 instances	+13 instances
…….			

- **interpret why changes happened *or* did not happen**: You should guide them to interpret data in a balanced, evidence-based manner. Simply put, they should ensure that the interpretations are grounded in theory or literature. Interpreting means moving beyond "It Worked" or "It Didn't Work", therefore you should remind your student teachers that the interpretation answers **why**, ***not*** just **what**. They can ask the following questions, and then explain why that strategy is more effective and affect the outcomes:
  - *What aspects of the intervention influenced change?*
  - *Which strategies were most effective?*
  - *What contextual factors affected outcomes?*

  Here are some steps you can use to guide your student teachers during the interpretation process.

- **Step 1: Link Change to Intervention**: For example: *Student use of respectful language increased after explicit teaching and role-play*.
- **Step 2: Consider Classroom Context**: You can consider explaining WHY from the different contexts such as class size, students' mixed ability, exam period, and/or teacher experience, etc.
- **Step 3: Consider Partial or No Change**: Not all changes you want to see appear in your action research. No change does not mean failure. However, it may indicate insufficient time you invested in your intervention, or some adjustments in your intervention/tool/technique are needed, or deeper systemic focus on the identified issues. Any of these can be served as your limitations or your recommendation for the next cycle of your action research.
- **Step 4: Connect to Literature**: You can briefly relate findings to other research, for example: *This finding aligns with Gershoff (2017), who found that positive discipline reduces aggression more effectively than punishment*.

- **encourage honest, non-blaming reflection**: Your job is to help them recognize both success and areas needed for improvement. In Cambodia, where respect for authority is strong, teachers may feel shame or fear when discussing violence, so non-blaming reflection plays a crucial part for professional improvement. Action Research must be safe, supportive, and developmental. Reflection should focus on practice, not personality. Some reflective questions which you should encourage your student teachers to reflect in their 'Professional Practice' are from themselves and their students: Here are some example:
  - What did I do differently?
  - What felt challenging?
  - What surprised me?
  - How did students react emotionally?
  - Who benefited most?
  - Who still struggled?

  Sometimes, something did not happen as you expected due to some ethical issues. Thus, it is good to encourage your student teachers to keep asking themselves these following questions:

  - Did students feel safe?
  - Was participation voluntary?
  - Did the research reduce harm?

<u>Example</u>

Case:	Grade 5 classroom in a public primary school in Battambang.
Class size:	42 students
Problem identified:	Frequent shouting by teacher and verbal conflicts among students during group work

Proposed Title:

Reducing Verbal Aggression in a Grade 5 Classroom through **Positive Discipline** and **Cooperative Learning**

This action research aims to:

(1) reduce verbal aggression (shouting, insults) in the classroom.
(2) increase respectful language among students.
(3) improve classroom climate during group activities.

To fulfill the intended objectives, the following intervention strategies are used in this action research:

(1) Explicit teaching of respectful language.
(2) Cooperative learning with clear group rules.
(3) Positive discipline techniques (praise, calm reminders).
(4) Role-play activities on conflict resolution.

Collected Data

1. Behavior Frequency Checklist (Weekly Average)

Behavior	Before intervention	After intervention
Teacher shouting	10	3
Student insults	14	5
Calm conflict resolution	4	16

2. Student Survey (using selected items)
   Question: I feel safe to speak in class.
   - Before: **48%** of participants chose 'agree'
   - After: **78%** of participants chose 'agree'
3. Student Reflection
   - Before: Teacher ***angry*** when we make mistake.
   - After: Teacher ***talks calmly*** and *helps us* solve problem.

Data Analysis

1. Pattern Analysis:
   - Verbal aggression decreased across multiple data sources.
   - Respectful communication increased during group work.
   - Improvements were consistent, not isolate.
2. Before–After Comparison
   - *Before*: Significant reduction in shouting and insults.
   - *After*: Increase in student confidence and participation.

Interpretation of Results

The reduction in verbal aggression appears linked to *(1)* clear behavior expectations, *(2)* modeling respectful language, and *(3)* structured group work roles.

These findings support existing research showing that positive discipline and cooperative learning reduce classroom violence (Gershoff, 2017; UNICEF, 2019). However, some conflicts remained during competitive activities, suggesting the need for further refinement in the next cycle.

Reflective Conclusion *(Non-Blaming*)*

This action research helped me realize that my reactions influenced student behavior. When I remained calm and structured activities clearly, students responded with respect. I will continue improving my strategies rather than blaming students*.

[You are required to list down key references in your report in case you have some]

6.6. Revising and Sharing

After completing the first cycle of your intervention, you surely see what have been changed and what require more actions (see example in Step 5). As you know, action research requires more than one cycle at least or it may keep moving. Thus, it is now time for you to support your student teachers to reflect and re-plan. This stage is used to improve the intervention for future use and contribute to the professional knowledge of the school. You should guide your student teachers to consider revising the action plan by encouraging them to ask some questions:

- What should be kept?
- What should be modified?
- What should be avoided next time?

At the same time, you have to encourage them to share their findings professionally with their colleagues or teachers of the school in which they were in for their teaching practicum as well as student teachers and teacher educators at their own teacher training college. They can share as s short research report, a presentation at the teacher training college or a conference, a poster session, a sharing meeting with classmates or mentor teachers.

When sharing their results and findings, more benefits can contribute to the students (participants) such as extending positive communication lessons to the entire school, and training older students to become 'peer communication supporters'.

6.7. Suggested Monitoring and Follow-up System for Teacher Educators

6.7.1. Monitoring and Tasks

As you know, AR is a kind of circle process regardless of any AR model you follow, so it may take time to complete its purpose/objective set at the beginning. Here I presume you're your student teachers have a six-month timeframe to complete their AR report, therefore I develop one plan for you as an example. It is worth to view that timeframe is crucial in this process as they need to complete their report on time or they may face some challenges in fulfilling their practicum report or they may run out of time to see the change they have planned. To ensure this achievement, you –teacher educator –are required to play active role in your student teacher's AR process. Thus, teacher educators should schedule *monthly check-ins (minimum 6) plus 2 major review meetings* (proposal review & final report review).

Different persons may have their own strategy to create a follow-up action plan with their supervisees. Some may require a very detailed action plan while other may just list down the main tasks to complete within each step. In some institutes, the follow-up template is designed and all teacher educators or supervisors are required to use that template. Using the given template may make an ease for the institute to monitor the clear process of teacher educators' monitoring and follow-up action during the set timeframe of the student teachers' actions. There is not simple to seek one common template. Therefore, one simple template is created in this manual; however, it may not work for all readers.

A clear and precise monitoring and follow-up system can help you as teacher educators as well as research supervisor to ensure that:

- Your student teachers make steady progress throughout all six steps of the Action Research process.
- You can provide structured support, feedback, and guidance at appropriate stages on time or with timely manner.
- Your student teachers' AR consistently maintains all (or relevant) institute's ethical standards.
- The final report and presentation are completed within the 6-month timeframe.
- Research realities (delays, context challenges, classroom constraints) are quickly identified and addressed.

Table 3: Brief Tasks and Deliverable

Month	Key Tasks to Perform	Deliverables / What to Complete
1st Month	Orientation, topic identification, problem diagnosis, ethical briefing	Problem statement, initial data, AR proposal draft
2nd Month	Action planning, designing interventions, preparing tools	Finalized action plan, data tools, consent forms
3rd Month	Implementation (Cycle 1)	Daily journals, observation logs
4th Month	Continued implementation, data collection	Mid-cycle report, raw data collection completed
5th Month	Data analysis, reflection, revision	Preliminary findings, revised intervention plan
6th Month	Final report writing, presentation preparation	Full report, slide preparation, sharing session

A six-month time flies when all actions are on the right track; however, it may not really when all do not happen as plan. The below are some common tasks that you are supposed to take within that six-month period. Those tasks may help you to consider adding in the plan template above to make it as precise as you wish.

Table 4: Types of Tasks

Tasks	Required Meeting	Support Meeting	Your responsibility
Introductory Meeting: Orientation to the action research for the non-violence	☑		

Proposal Review Meeting *[End of Month 1]*	☑		✔1st review
Monthly Monitoring Meetings *[Months 2 to 6]*	☑		
Final Review Meeting *[End of Month 6]*	☑		✔2nd review
Classroom observation visits		☑✪	
Peer group feedback sessions		☑✪	
(Online/phone) check-ins when challenges arise		✪	
Review all written submissions			✔
Provide corrective feedback within 7 *[just a suggestion, but it is your choice]* days			✔
Monitor ethical compliance			✔
Verify authenticity of student work			✔
Approve each step before moving on			✔

Note:

☑ = required ☑✪ = *either required or optional*

✪ = *optional* ✔ = *highly required*

6.7.2. Monitoring Checklist for Each Step for Teacher Educators

Conducting an AR for non-violence or for teaching and learning effectiveness takes long time to make the change you wish to see after the issue to be changed was identified. Additionally, series of actions have to be done to identify the issue. Simply put, many actions and commitments are needed in all steps of the AR, and each each step cannot be skipped. Therefore, the collaboration between plan and actions should be monitored and supported on time. Below is a detailed checklist teacher educator can use for progress tracking.

Table 4: Checklist for Teacher Educators Use to Monitor Student Teacher's AR Progress

Deliverable Tracking by Step

Teacher educators can use a tick in any box which applies to the quality of each task. Please read the meaning of each choice you may need. You may need to develop this table for each student teacher under your supervision.

- ***Re-Do*** = Student teacher is required to re-read and re-write as well as re-structure.
- ***Okay*** = It looks good, but its information is required more precise.
- ***Revised*** = It needs more attention and student teacher needs to make it clearer.
- ***Accepted*** = It is good enough, then keep moving to the next step.

Step 1: Identifying & Diagnosing the Problem	Re-Do	Okay	Revised	Accepted
Clear description of the violence-related issue				
Based on evidence (preliminary observation, conversation, survey)				
Feasible for a 6-month AR				
Root causes identified				
Ethical risks assessed				
Research question formulated				
Step 2: Planning for Action	Re-Do	Okay	Revised	Accepted
Interventions clearly described				
Theory or research supporting the intervention cited				

Teaching materials, tools, and schedule prepared				
Stakeholders informed (mentor teacher, school leader)				
Ethical considerations included (consent, confidentiality)				
Supervisor approval received before implementation				
Step 3: Implementation	**Re-Do**	**Okay**	**Revised**	**Accepted**
Intervention implemented as planned				
Daily/weekly reflection logs completed				
Challenges documented with possible solutions				
No harmful or punitive actions observed				
Step 4: Observation & Data Collection	**Re-Do**	**Okay**	**Revised**	**Accepted**
Data tools used correctly				
Multiple sources of evidence collected				
Data stored safely and ethically				
Data reflects both positive and negative outcomes				
Preliminary trends identified				
Step 5: Reflection & Interpretation	**Re-Do**	**Okay**	**Revised**	**Accepted**
Findings compared with baseline data				
Reflective analysis demonstrates honesty and critical thinking				
Evidence supports conclusions				
Limitations acknowledged				
Revised plan drafted (if time allows)				
Step 6: Revision & Sharing	**Re-Do**	**Okay**	**Revised**	**Accepted**
Revised ideas presented (even if not implemented)				
Full AR report completed				
Final presentation prepared				
Student teacher shares results with:				
• School mentors	*(a tick here means it is done)*			
• Peers	*(a tick here means it is done)*			
• School or college (if applicable)	*(a tick here means it is done)*			
Supervisor confirms completion				

6.7.3. Follow-up Meeting or Monthly Check-in

As I presumed above, within the six-month period for the action research for the non-violence, teacher educators should have regular check-ins at least once a month, excluding the 2 review meetings to validate the proposal and the final report, aiming at keep tracking the progress of your student teachers. You can refer to any supervision report or template you are most familiar; however, you can refer to the recommended supervision form of your institution. Here one supervision form, which may assist you to follow up your student teachers' AR progress. This form is to be filled by you during each monthly meeting/check-in. This form consists of SEVEN categories –progress summary, documents reviewed, strengths observed this month, challenges/concerns, supervisor feedback, required actions before next meeting, and supervisor approval (see example below).

This note in this supervision form can be used as an official communication means between you and your student teachers during the AR process. On top of this, you can use it as an academic report of the individuals (student teachers) for your institution or for the school mentors in case of necessity or inquiry.

Example 1

Monthly Supervision Form

Student Teacher: _____ Teacher educator: _____ (optional)

Month: _____ [Date: _____]

1. Progress Summary

What step are you currently completing? _____

_____

What have you accomplished since last meeting? _____

_____

2. Documents Reviewed

☐ Problem diagnosis ☐ Daily journal ☐ Data collection tools

☐ Action plan ☐ Observation notes ☐ Draft report section

3. Strengths Observed This Month (e.g., observation detail, ethical sensitivity, creativity)

_____

_____

4. Challenges/Concerns (e.g., time management, data collection, student resistance)

_____

_____

5. Supervisor Feedback (Practical, constructive guidance for improvement)

_____

_____

6. Required Actions Before Next Meeting (e.g., revise plan, collect more data, address ethical issue)

_____

_____

7. Supervisor Approval

☐ Student teacher is on track

☐ Needs targeted support

☐ At risk of delay (intervention required)

In case you wish to make the supervision form simpler, you can consider using the below example. This form is more economical as you can use more than one student teacher's progress on the same printed paper. You can just tick the box if the student teacher completes each step, and if that student teacher complies to all ethical requirement. However, you can write your comments of what you want them to improve or to be ready before the next check-in/meeting in the column of 'Your notes/comments'.

Example 2

Monthly Supervision Form

Student teacher: _____		Teacher educator: _____	
Steps in AR	*Ethical Compliance*	*Risk Level*	*Your Notes/Comments*
Step 1 ☐	☐	None / Low / Medium / High	
Step 2 ☐	☐	None / Low / Medium / High	
Step 3 ☐	☐	None / Low / Medium / High	
Step 4 ☐	☐	None / Low / Medium / High	
Step 5 ☐	☐	None / Low / Medium / High	
Step 6 ☐	☐	None / Low / Medium / High	

The below form may be optional if your institution does not require. This final supervision form can be used as the summary report or the evaluation report to prove whether the student teachers under your supervision is qualified enough or successfully completes their project within the timebound. In case of six-month timebound, this form is completed at the end of the 6-month research period.

Example

Final Supervision Summary Form

Student Teacher: _____

Action Research Title: _____

1. Overall AR Quality

☐ Excellent ☐ Satisfactory

☐ Good ☐ Needs improvement

2. Completion of All Six Steps

☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

3. Ethical Conduct

☐ Fully ethical

☐ Minor concerns (not harmful)

☐ Major concerns (intervention required)

4. Strengths of the Research Project: (Describe impact, innovation, contribution to non-violence)

_____

_____

5. Areas for Improvement: (Methodology, organization, analysis, writing)

_____

_____

6. Recommendation for Graduation

☐ Recommended

☐ Recommended with minor revision

☐ Not recommended yet (resubmission required)

7. Sample Case Studies

7.1. Showcase 1

Addressing Each Other by Surname *(Verbal Insults)*

In a Grade 6 class at one primary school in Battambang, the student teacher observed that during break time, students frequently called each other by their surnames (family names). In Cambodian culture, calling peers by surname—especially without respectful titles—can be interpreted as mocking, disrespectful, or insulting, particularly when spoken loudly or repeatedly.

This case can be observed that: Over time, this behavior (calling each other by surname) led to some effects such as:

- Hurting feelings and emotional conflict among students
- Some students refusing to talk or work with each other in class
- Increasing tension during group work, and/or reducing cooperation and classroom harmony

Although the behavior did not involve physical violence, it constituted verbal and emotional violence, which negatively affected student relationships and learning. Therefore, the student teacher, guided by a teacher educator and school mentor, decided to conduct an AR to address this issue.

Proposed Action Research

Title: Reducing Verbal Insults through Respectful Language Practices among Grade 6 Students

When observing and identifying this case, you may consider to achieve some of the following objectives *(Note: you may be able to choose one or two of these objectives)*:

1. To identify how and why calling surnames is perceived as insulting among Grade 6 students
2. To reduce the frequency of surname-calling during break time and class time
3. To promote respectful language and positive peer relationships
4. To improve classroom cooperation and group work participation

Step 1: Identifying and Diagnosing the Problem

- The student teachers suggested to:
  - Conduct informal conversations with the school mentor about student behavior during break time
  - Observe students during recess and noted patterns of surname-calling
  - Hold short, informal chats with a few students to understand their feelings
  - Record incidents in an observation log (without naming students)
- The student teacher stated to diagnose the issue: It was identified as verbal violence rooted in:
  - Lack of awareness of respectful language
  - Habitual teasing normalized among peers
  - Absence of explicit classroom norms about respectful address

As Teacher Educators, you should:

- Remind student teachers not to label students as “bad” or “rude”
- Ensure the problem is framed as a behavioral pattern, not individual misconduct, but
- Encourage culturally sensitive interpretation (surname-calling has different meanings across contexts)

Step 2: Planning for Action

- Student teachers prepare some interventions:
  - Explicit teaching of respectful language (using first names + polite titles)
  - Class discussion on how words can hurt feelings
  - Role-play activities showing respectful vs. disrespectful language
  - Class agreement on respectful communication
- Some tools below can be used:
  - Lesson plan with short peace-education mini-lesson
  - Behavior expectations poster: “We Speak with Respect”
  - Role-play cards with everyday school scenarios

As Teacher Educators, you should:

- Ensure interventions are educational, not punitive, but
- Help student teachers choose simple, age-appropriate strategies
- Confirm that planned actions align with school culture and mentor teacher agreement

Step 3: Taking Action (Implementation)

Imagine that this plan is implemented with that class over 4 weeks.

- Actions Implemented
  - A 30-minute lesson on respectful language and feelings
  - Students shared experiences of being hurt by words
- Role-play activities during class
  - Poster displayed in classroom as a reminder
  - Teacher modeled respectful address consistently

As Teacher Educators, you should:

- Remind student teachers to model respectful language themselves
- Avoid forcing students to confess or apologize publicly, but
- Encourage consistency rather than one-time activities

Step 4: Observing and Collecting Data

Data Sources Used

- Observation checklist (frequency of surname-calling before/after)
- Short anonymous student survey
- Behavior record during break and group work
- Informal feedback from mentor teacher

Sample Data (Summary)

- ***Before intervention***: surname-calling observed 8–10 times per break
- ***After intervention***: reduced to 2–3 times per break

➔ **75% of students reported feeling "more respected" by classmates.**

As Teacher Educators, you should:

- Ensure anonymity, especially in student survey, but
- Encourage use of multiple data sources, not only observation
- Remind student teachers to collect data before and after

Step 5: Reflecting and Interpreting Results

Reflection by Student Teacher

- Students became more aware that words can hurt
- Classroom atmosphere became calmer
- Group work participation improved
- Some students still occasionally used surnames out of habit

Interpretation

- Change occurred due to explicit teaching + modeling + shared norms
- Remaining behavior suggests need for continued reinforcement

As Teacher Educators, you should:

- Guide reflection away from blame ("students are stubborn"), but
- Encourage reflection on what worked, what didn't, and why
- Link findings to literature on positive discipline and respectful communication

Step 6: Revising and Sharing

Revisions Planned

- Continue reminders during morning routines
- Add respectful language reminder to group work rules
- Involve class monitor to support positive language

Sharing Results

- Shared findings with mentor teacher
- Brief presentation in teacher education seminar
- Written AR report submitted as part of graduation requirement

As Teacher Educators, you should:

- Ensure sharing protects student identity, but
- Encourage sharing lessons learned, not naming individuals
- Support student teachers to see AR as continuous improvement, not a "final answer"

Note for Teacher Educators

This case illustrates how non-violent issues such as verbal insults, often seen as 'small' or 'normal,' can significantly affect classroom relationships and learning. Through systematic action research, student teachers learn to recognize hidden forms of violence, respond with educational, restorative strategies, reflect professionally and ethically, and build safer, more respectful classrooms.

7.2. Showcase 2

Deny to Separate their Group Member *(social exclusion, peer conflict)*

In a Grade-7 classroom at one secondary school, four students consistently refuse to participate in group work unless they are allowed to work together as a fixed group of four. When the teacher assigns mixed-ability or rotating groups, these students resist joining new groups. When the teacher forced to separate: two students withdraw completely, remain silent, and do not contribute to tasks, while the other two students become disruptive, teasing or disturbing new group members and intentionally breaking group agreements. As a result, other students feel annoyed and frustrated. Some groups openly refuse to accept these students. This creates tension, exclusion, and verbal conflict. Therefore, the classroom atmosphere becomes uncomfortable and less cooperative.

Although no physical violence occurs, *social exclusion*, *peer conflict*, *withdrawal*, and *disruptive behavior* are evident. These behaviors are forms of non-physical violence that negatively affect students' dignity, relationships, and learning.

Proposed Action Research

Title: Reducing Exclusion and Conflict in Group Work through Cooperative Learning Structures in a Grade-7 Classroom

When observing and identifying this case, you may consider to achieve some of the following objectives *(Note: you may be able to choose one or two of these objectives)*:

1. To identify the causes of students' refusal to join new group work arrangements.
2. To reduce exclusion, withdrawal, and disruptive behavior during group work.
3. To promote respectful interaction and cooperation among Grade-7 students.
4. To improve classroom climate by implementing non-violent, inclusive group-work strategies.

Step 1: Identifying and Diagnosing the Problem

- The student teachers are suggested to:
  - Conduct informal discussions with the mentor teacher about the four students' behavior history.
  - Use a quick observation checklist during three group-work lessons.
  - Record incidents of:
    - Refusal to join groups
    - Withdrawal (e.g., silence, non-participation)
    - Disruptive actions (e.g., teasing, agreement breaking)

- Holds informal conversations with students (outside class, in a non-threatening way, or safe environment mode).

The findings about this showcase, after the above action were taken, may not like what the student teachers first saw (the issue may go beyond the surface itself). The below can be the key findings:

- The four students feel "safer" only with each other.
- They fear being judged or rejected by other classmates.
- Other students perceive the four as "difficult" and "uncooperative."
- Forced grouping increases resistance and conflict.
  - ➔ If so, when using the Non-Violence Lens, we can say that: '***The issue is not disobedience, but social insecurity, exclusion, and breakdown of peer trust***.'

As teacher educators, you should:

- Remind student teachers not to label students as "problematic."
- Emphasize diagnosing patterns, not blaming individuals, but
- Encourage use of multiple data sources, not one incident.

Step 2: Planning for Action

- Student teachers start to review some documents and literature or theories and start planning interventions. For example, the student teacher plans to implement:
  - Cooperative learning with structured roles: each group member has a clear role (e.g., leader, recorder, timekeeper, encourager).
  - Gradual group mixing strategy: students work first in pairs, then small mixed groups.
  - Explicit teaching of group-work norms: respectful language, listening, inclusion.
  - Peace-education mini-lesson: short discussion on inclusion, empathy, and teamwork.
  - Positive discipline approach: encouragement and reflection instead of punishment.

As teacher educators, you should:

- Ensure interventions are realistic within practicum time.
- Avoid interventions that publicly shame students, but
- Encourage planning that reduces fear, not forces compliance.

Step 3: Taking Action (Implementation)

Imagine that this plan is implemented with that class over 4 weeks.

- After planning some interventions, now they can begin their plan. The below can be some actions to be taken within this period of intervention. They can:
  - Introduces group-work rules visually (poster).
  - Models respectful group language.
  - Begins with pair work before larger groups.
  - Assigns supportive peers to groups strategically.
  - Praises positive attempts at cooperation.
  - Uses reflection questions after group work:

    What went well?

How did we help each other?

During the intervention process, for example, student teachers Observed some changes:

- The four students show less resistance when groups change gradually.
- Withdrawal decreases when roles are clearly defined.
- Disruptive behavior reduces when expectations are explicit.

As teacher educators, you should:

- Monitor emotional safety closely.
- Remind student teachers to stay consistent, not reactive, but
- Encourage reflective journaling during implementation.

Step 4: Observing and Collecting Data

- During this step, student teachers can consider collecting data from different sources such as:
  - Observation logs (before and after intervention)
  - Behavior frequency checklist
  - Short anonymous student survey
  - Mentor teacher feedback
- Data can be summarized using the table below:

Indicator	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Change Observed
Refusal to join group	Frequent	Rare	Yes -> Good
Withdrawal behavior	High	Moderate–Low	Yes -> Good
Disruptive actions	Frequent	Occasional	Yes -> Okay
Peer complaints	High	Reduced	Yes -> Good

As teacher educators, you should:

- Remind student teachers not to exaggerate success.
- Data should reflect what actually happened, not what is expected, but
- Encourage triangulation of data.

Step 5: Reflecting and Interpreting Results

After the data collection process was completed, the student teacher:

- compares pre- and post-data.
- identifies patterns rather than single incidents.
- reflects on: (1) *Why gradual grouping worked better than forced separation, and* (2) *Why clear roles reduced conflict.*
- links findings to cooperative learning theory and non-violent classroom principles.

Based on the data and findings, it can be interpreted that: '***The behavior problem was rooted in fear of exclusion, not unwillingness to learn. When safety, structure, and respect increased, resistance and conflict decreased.***'

As teacher educators, you should:

- Discourage blaming students or parents.
- Reflection must include limitations, but
- Guide student teachers to connect practice with theory.

Step 6: Revising and Sharing

After going through each step, student teachers may see either more benefits of their interventions or some gaps during the intervention. They may wish to extend that experience to other classes/subjects, or to plan for another cycle of intervention. Here are some examples that student teachers can consider:

- Plan to extend cooperative strategies to other subjects.
- Adjust group roles based on student feedback.

More than revisiting the intervention, student teachers plan to share their results, for example:

- Student teacher presents findings in a research seminar.
- Shares practical strategies with mentor teachers.
- Submits AR report as part of graduation requirement.

As teacher educators, you should:

- Ensure confidentiality (no real student names).
- Sharing should focus on learning, not "success stories only," but
- Encourage professional dialogue and peer learning.

Note for Teacher Educators

This case demonstrates that non-violence in classrooms is not only about stopping physical punishment, but also about addressing exclusion, withdrawal, peer conflict, and emotional harm. Through structured, reflective action research, student teachers can learn to respond to such challenges ethically, respectfully, and effectively.

7.3. Showcase 3

Grade-8 Students with Different Accents

This case takes place in a Grade-8 classroom at a public secondary school in Battambang Province. The class consists of students from mixed backgrounds, including several students who recently moved from very rural areas. These students speak Khmer fluently, but with a noticeably different local accent. During Khmer language lessons, particularly when students are asked to read texts aloud, or answer the teacher's questions orally, some classmates mock, imitate, or laugh at the rural accent of these students. Although the teasing is often framed as "just joking," it has become repetitive and humiliating. Over time, the affected students avoid raising their hands, refuse to read aloud, speak very softly or remain silent, sit at the back of the classroom, and begin to disengage and "disappear" socially and academically.

This behavior represents verbal and emotional violence, undermining students' dignity, participation, and right to a safe learning environment.

Proposed Action Research

Title: Reducing Accent-Based Mockery to Promote Respectful Oral Participation in a Grade-8 Khmer Classroom

When observing and identifying this case, you may consider to achieve some of the following objectives *(Note: you may be able to choose one or two of these objectives)*:

1. To identify patterns and causes of accent-based mocking during Khmer lessons.
2. To reduce verbal and emotional violence related to accent differences.
3. To promote respectful language and inclusive classroom norms.
4. To increase oral participation and confidence of students from rural backgrounds.
5. To strengthen a positive, non-violent classroom culture.

Step 1: Identifying and Diagnosing the Problem

The student teacher can consider:

- Conduct informal observation during reading-aloud and Q&A activities.
- Keep brief notes on:
  - when mocking occurs,
  - who is involved,
  - how often it happens, and
  - how targeted students respond.
- Engage in informal conversations with:
  - the mentor teacher (about class culture),
  - affected students (privately and sensitively),
  - a small group of students (about classroom norms).
- Use a short anonymous student survey asking about:
  - feelings of safety when speaking,
  - experiences of teasing or laughing.

The findings in this case can be diagnosed as below:

- Mocking mainly occurs during oral activities.
- Students perceive accent differences as humorous or inferior.
- No clear classroom rule exists regarding respectful listening.
- Targeted students feel ashamed and afraid of embarrassment.

As teacher educators, you should:

- Do not label students as “bullies.” Focus on behaviors, not identities.
- Ensure student conversations are confidential and non-threatening, but
- Guide student teachers to frame the problem as verbal violence and exclusion, not “discipline issues.”

Step 2: Planning for Action

Student teacher may think of these interventions:

- Explicit teaching of respectful language
- Peace-education mini-lessons on diversity and dignity
- Class agreement on respectful listening during oral activities
- Structured oral participation routines (e.g., pair-share, small group rehearsal)
- Teacher modeling of respectful responses to accent differences

After planning the inventions, student teacher decided to implement this plan between 4 and 6 weeks by:

- integrating into regular Khmer lessons
- using low-risk strategies that do not publicly single out students

As teacher educators, you should:

- Avoid plans that expose or "spotlight" affected students, but
- Encourage preventive and educational strategies rather than punishment.
- Ensure alignment with child-friendly and non-violent principles.

Step 3: Taking Action (Implementation)

After planning for the intervention, the student teacher starts to:

- Introduce a lesson on 'Different Accents, One Language'
- Co-create class rules such as:
  - *We listen without laughing.*
  - *We respect how everyone speaks.*
- Practice oral reading first in pairs or small groups before whole-class sharing.
- Praise effort and courage, not accent or 'correctness.'
- Intervene calmly when mocking occurs: *'In our class, we respect every voice.'*

As teacher educators, you should:

- Student teachers may feel nervous correcting mocking—provide coaching, but
- Encourage calm, consistent responses rather than emotional reactions.
- Remind student teachers that modeling matters more than lecturing.

Step 4: Observing and Collecting Data

Student teacher can use the following sources to collect the data:

- Observation logs (frequency of laughter/mockery)
- Pre- and post-student surveys on feeling safe speaking
- Participation records (number of students volunteering to read)
- Short reflective notes from targeted students (optional, anonymous)

As teacher educators, you should:

- Do not rely on one data source only.
- Avoid collecting sensitive data publicly, but

- Guide student teachers to look for patterns, not isolated incidents.

Step 5: Reflecting and Interpreting Results

After the data collection, student teacher may consider about these key reflections:

- Mocking incidents decreased noticeably after class agreements were established.
- More students volunteered to read aloud in small groups.
- Targeted students showed gradual increase in participation.
- Some students still laughed quietly—indicating the need for sustained effort.

Some key interpretation that can be considered, for example:

- Explicit norms + structured participation reduced verbal violence.
- Respectful classroom culture requires time and reinforcement.
- Non-violent approaches were more effective than punishment.

As teacher educators, you should:

- Discourage blaming students or the community, but
- Promote honest reflection: what worked, what didn't, and why.
- Link findings to non-violence and inclusion literature.

Step 6: Revising and Sharing

After going through each step, student teachers may wish to plan for another cycle of intervention. Here are some examples that student teacher can consider:

- Adding regular reminders of respectful listening.
- Including peer role-models to reinforce norms.
- Integrating respect language into assessment rubrics.

More than revisiting the intervention, student teachers plan to share their results, for example:

- Present findings in a research seminar at the teacher education college.
- Share summary with mentor teacher and school leadership.
- Reflect on implications for future teaching practice.

As teacher educators, you should:

- Ensure reports anonymize students and school.
- Avoid portraying the school negatively, but
- Emphasize learning, growth, and ethical practice.

Note for Teacher Educators

This case illustrates how everyday verbal behaviors, often normalized as "joking," can become non-violent harm that silences students. Through action research, student teachers learn not only to improve classroom climate but also to develop professional identities rooted in care, reflection, and ethical responsibility.

By guiding student teachers carefully through each step—while modeling non-violent values—teacher educators play a crucial role in shaping safer, more inclusive Cambodian classrooms.

7.4. Showcase 4

Repeated Lateness

This case takes place in a Grade-6 classroom in a public primary school in Battambang province. During social studies lessons, three students frequently arrive late. The classroom teacher, feeling frustrated, regularly reminds them to be punctual. Rather than explaining their difficult home situations (e.g., household chores, caring for siblings, long walking distance), the students usually respond with apologies and promises to be on time.

One day, the three students arrive late and stand at the classroom door asking permission to enter. The teacher ignores them and continues teaching. Only after finishing her explanation does she turn to them, scolds them in front of the class, and allows them to enter. The students appear sad, frightened, and embarrassed, and remain very quiet for the rest of the lesson.

Although no physical punishment occurs, this situation reflects emotional harm, public shaming, and fear-based discipline, which contradict principles of non-violent, child-friendly education.

Proposed Action Research

Title: Reducing Emotional Harm and Improving Student–Teacher Communication Related to Student Lateness

When observing and identifying this case, you may consider to achieve some of the following objectives *(Note: you may be able to choose one or two of these objectives)*:

1. To identify the underlying causes of repeated lateness among three Grade-6 students.
2. To examine how current teacher responses to lateness affect students' emotional safety and participation.
3. To implement non-violent, respectful strategies for addressing lateness.
4. To improve student–teacher communication, trust, and classroom climate.

Step 1: Identifying and Diagnosing the Problem

During this step, the student teacher can consider:

- conducting informal observations of late arrivals (frequency, timing, teacher response).
- holding informal communication with the mentor teacher to understand her perspective and stressors.
- having private, respectful conversations with the three students (not interrogations).
- recording reflective notes on students' emotional reactions (fear, silence, withdrawal).
- reviewing school rules related to punctuality.

They can take these into their consideration. The problem they can identified can be:

- The issue is not merely lateness, but lack of understanding of students' home situations, use of public reprimand and silence as discipline, and resulting emotional distress, fear, and disengagement, so this constitutes non-physical violence (emotional harm).

As teacher educators, you should remind student teachers to:

- look beyond 'misbehavior' to root causes
- avoid blaming language when describing teachers' actions
- focus on systems and interactions, not individuals, but
- do not allow student teachers to "diagnose" without student voice
- ensure consent and privacy when talking to children

Step 2: Planning for Action

Student teachers should realize that interventions are low-cost, respectful, and realistic, and they need to focus is on relationship repair, not punishment. Student teachers may think of these non-Violent Interventions

- Private Check-In System: *Teacher briefly checks in with late students after class or during break*.
- Agreed-Upon Entry Routine: *Students may quietly enter class without public attention if late*.
- Teacher Reflection on Language & Tone: *Teacher avoids public scolding or ignoring students*.
- Simple Morning Support Strategy: *Flexible seating or short catch-up task for latecomers*.

As teacher educators, you should guide student teachers to:

- plan small, manageable changes
- align actions with child-friendly school principles
- discuss plans with mentor teachers respectfully, but should remind them:
- do not impose plans without teacher agreement, and
- avoid interventions that shame students, for example: lateness charts on walls.

Step 3: Taking Action (Implementation)

After planning for the intervention, the student teacher starts to implement some or all of the following interventions:

- Teacher agrees to stop public reprimands.
- Late students enter class quietly and sit down.
- Teacher meets students privately once a week.
- Student teacher observes and records changes during implementation such as:
    - Students appear less fearful when entering class.
    - They begin participating more in lessons.
    - Teacher reports reduced frustration.

As teacher educators, you should guide student teachers to:

- conduct ongoing mentor–student teacher communication
- maintain flexibility if some strategies don't work immediately, but remind them that:
- they should not correct school mentor/classroom teachers publicly
- avoid over-intervention that disrupts normal teaching

Step 4: Observing and Collecting Data

In this case, student teachers can collect data through:

- Observation logs (teacher responses, student behavior)
- Brief student reflection notes (optional, verbal)
- Teacher reflective journal
- Attendance records (lateness frequency)

During the data collection, they can observe:

- Reduction in visible fear and embarrassment
- Improved teacher–student interaction
- Slight improvement in punctuality

As teacher educators, you should remind student teachers to:

- focus on patterns, not one incident
- use simple, ethical tools, but remind them
- Not to record any sensitive personal stories, and
- to protect student confidentiality at all times

Step 5: Reflecting and Interpreting Results

After the data collection, student teacher may consider about these key findings:

- Public reprimand increased fear but did not reduces lateness.
- Respectful communication improved trust and participation.
- Some lateness linked to factors beyond students' control.

Some key interpretation of non-violence responses that can be considered, for example:

- Support emotional safety
- Strengthen student–teacher relationships
- Encourage honest communication

As teacher educators, you should remind student teachers to:

- maintain honest reflection without blaming
- link findings to non-violence and child rights, but
- Avoid framing results as "teacher failure"
- Emphasize learning and growth

Step 6: Revising and Sharing

After going through each step, student teachers may wish to plan for another cycle of intervention. Here are some examples that student teacher can consider:

- continuing private check-ins
- adjusting morning routines
- sharing insights with grade-level teachers

More than revisiting the intervention, student teachers plan to share their results, for example:

- Presentation at school meeting
- Reflection shared with teacher education college

As teacher educators, you should remind student teachers to:

- cling with an Ethical (e.g., no names, no blame)
- focus on practice improvement, but
- Do not share sensitive stories publicly
- Ensure mentor teacher approval before dissemination

Note for Teacher Educators

What teacher educators should keep reminding the student teachers during the action research process are:

- Non-violence includes emotional safety and dignity
- Small changes in teacher behavior can have big impact
- Action Research empowers teachers to respond with empathy, not punishment

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Book Review (used to print on the back cover of the book)

Action Research for Non-Violence in the Classroom is a timely and practical manual designed for teacher educators and student teachers in Cambodian teacher education colleges. Developed to complement the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport's Action Research guidelines, the book places a strong focus on addressing classroom violence—physical, verbal, and relational—through reflective, evidence-based practice.

Grounded in Cambodian classroom realities, the manual offers a clear six-step action research process, supported by practical tools, templates, case studies, and ethical guidance. It empowers teacher educators to guide student teachers systematically, while encouraging student teachers to become reflective practitioners capable of improving classroom relationships and student behavior.

Funded by forumZFD Cambodia, this manual serves as both a professional learning resource and a supervision guide, contributing to safer classrooms, stronger teacher–student relationships, and improved teaching and learning across Cambodian schools.