



European **Basic Skills** Network



Andragoški center Republike Slovenije
Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

A strong professional identity is linked to exploring own professional practice

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Content

- Introduction to the context and the topic
- Reasons for the link Identity - Exploring practice
- Definitions
- Slovenian experiences with action research
- Authentic testimonies from practitioners

Reasons for the Identity - Exploring own professional practice link :

Challenges of the present, changes in the teaching paradigm :

Need to develop professional identity/self-image

Necessary consolidation of a holistic human identity/self-image

Both in harmony leads to the ability to cope with unpredictable change

RESILIENCE

RESILIENCE

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO BE A FULFILLED PROFESSIONAL :

- In direct learning situations, intuitively selects effective didactic elements
- Apply them in a new, creative way
- Relates the information to his/her reflective experience
- Creates new forms, approaches, methods during the teaching process itself
- Is capable of dialogue with learners (listens to them, learns from them)
- Feels part of the organisation in which he/she works
- Feels part of a wider professional community, which he/she enriches with his/her knowledge

WHAT MAKES A RESILIENT PERSON/PEOPLE WHOLE:

- It is personally validated by mastering professional challenges and success
- Work is linked to his/her well-being
- His/her life is meaningful
- He has a mission that he is pursuing
- Feels professionally fulfilled

Contemporary concepts of professional identity:

- **Identity is a dynamic process:** This idea emphasises that professional identity is fluid and shaped over time. Researchers have focused on how identity changes according to **career transitions, experiences and context**.
- **Occupational identity and self-image:** Many researchers have explored the links between occupational identity and self-image. They have focused on how occupational identity influences **an individual's self-esteem, sense of worth and self-concept**.
- **Diversity and inclusiveness of professional identity:** **integrating different identities into professional identity** was also an important theme in 2020. Researchers explored the impact of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other aspects of identity on the formation and experience of professional identity.
- **The impact of organisational culture on professional identity:** research has also focused on the role of organisational culture in shaping and influencing professional identity. The focus was on how **the organisation influences** the identity formation of employees.

POWERFUL
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

What is a strong
professional identity?

What is the exploration of
one's own professional practice?

EXPLORING YOUR OWN
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research on the impact of a strong professional identity

Contemporary authors:

Wrzesniewski, Berg in Dutton (2020),
Pratt (2000, 2003),
Ragins in Cornwell (2008)

Amy Wrzesniewski, Justin M. Berg in Jane E. Dutton: "[Job Crafting: The Art and Science of Changing Your Job and Your Life](#)" (2020), Michael Pratt: "Fitting Square Pegs into Round Holes: Mapping the Domain of Contingent Workforce Identities" (2000), "Leadership and Identity: A Case Study of a Female Engineer" (2003)
Belle Rose Ragins and John M. Cornwell: "Disclosure Disconnects: Antecedents and Consequences of Disclosing Invisible Stigmas across Life Domains" (2008)

Older authors:

Bandura (1997),
Sennett (1998, 2008),
Schlossberg (2009)

Albert Bandura: "Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control" (1997)

Richard Sennett: "The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism" (1998); "The Craftsman" (2008)

Nancy Schlossberg: "Revitalizing Retirement: Reshaping Your Identity, Relationships, and Purpose" (2009)

POWERFUL PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

- ❑ It covers only part of a positive human identity
- ❑ Work is more than a source of income
- ❑ A deep sense of belonging
- ❑ Self-esteem
- ❑ Fulfillment
- ❑ High levels of motivation and productivity
- ❑ Clear self-image (in professional terms)
- ❑ Willingness to learn, to change

FACTORS:

- Time
- Education
- Work experience
- Achievements at work, in profession
- Values (openness)
- Interests and personal qualities (research)

POWERFUL PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

How to make it stronger:

- Awareness of your own achievements, your areas of strength
- Continuous development of expertise
- Help, role of mentor
- Connection with colleagues from related disciplines
- Developing own brand, originality
- Maintaining work-life balance

EXPLORING /RESEARCHING
OWN PROFESSIONAL
PRACTICE

Method:

- Action research
- Research group
- Identification of key steps in advance
- Modifications of results and search for common patterns
- Ongoing analysis of the process
- Merging practice and theory

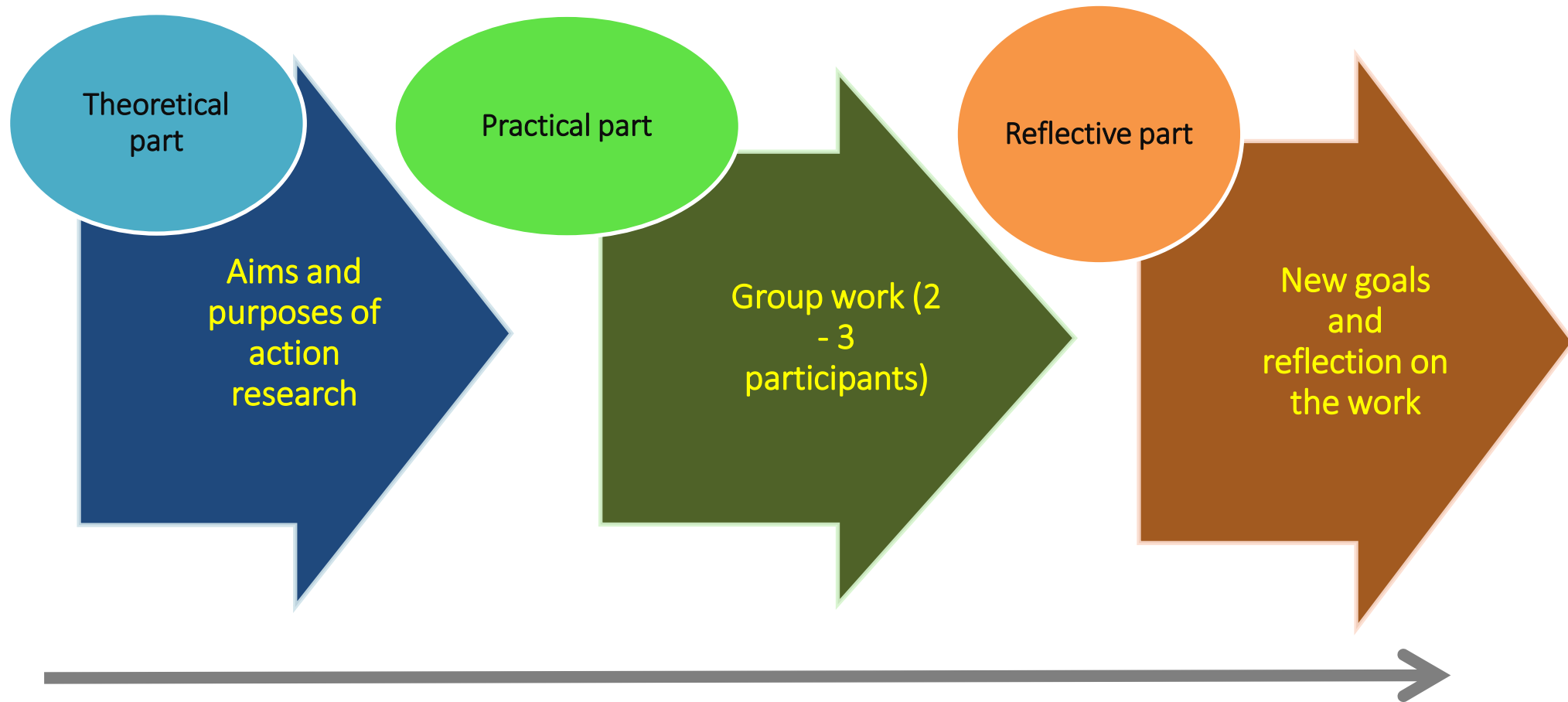
Composition of the research team

SIAE 4-member team

Other - occasional lecturers

Selected teachers, practitioners

Research steps on the action research group meetings



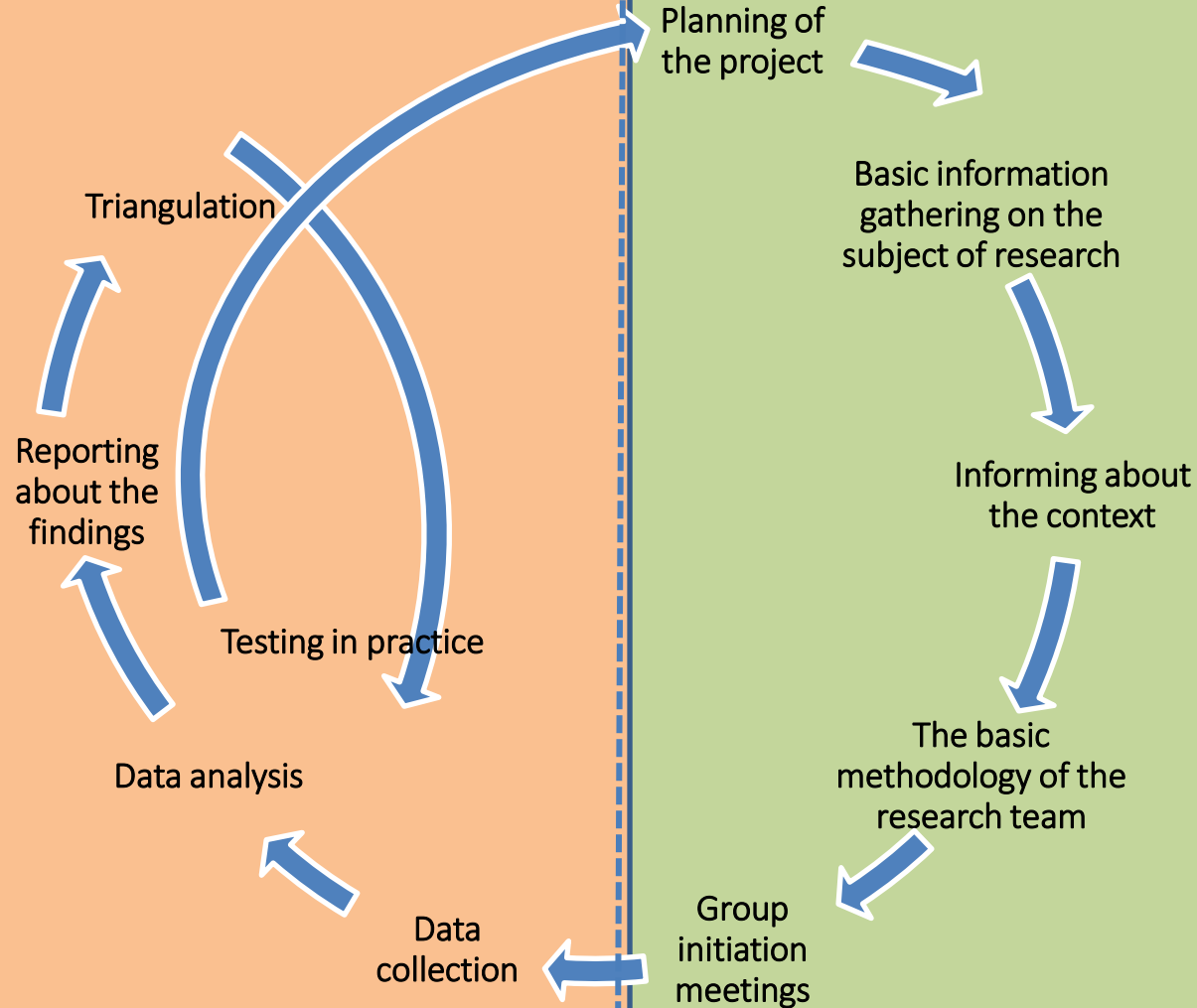
COMMON STEPS OF THE RESEARCH GROUP (18 months)



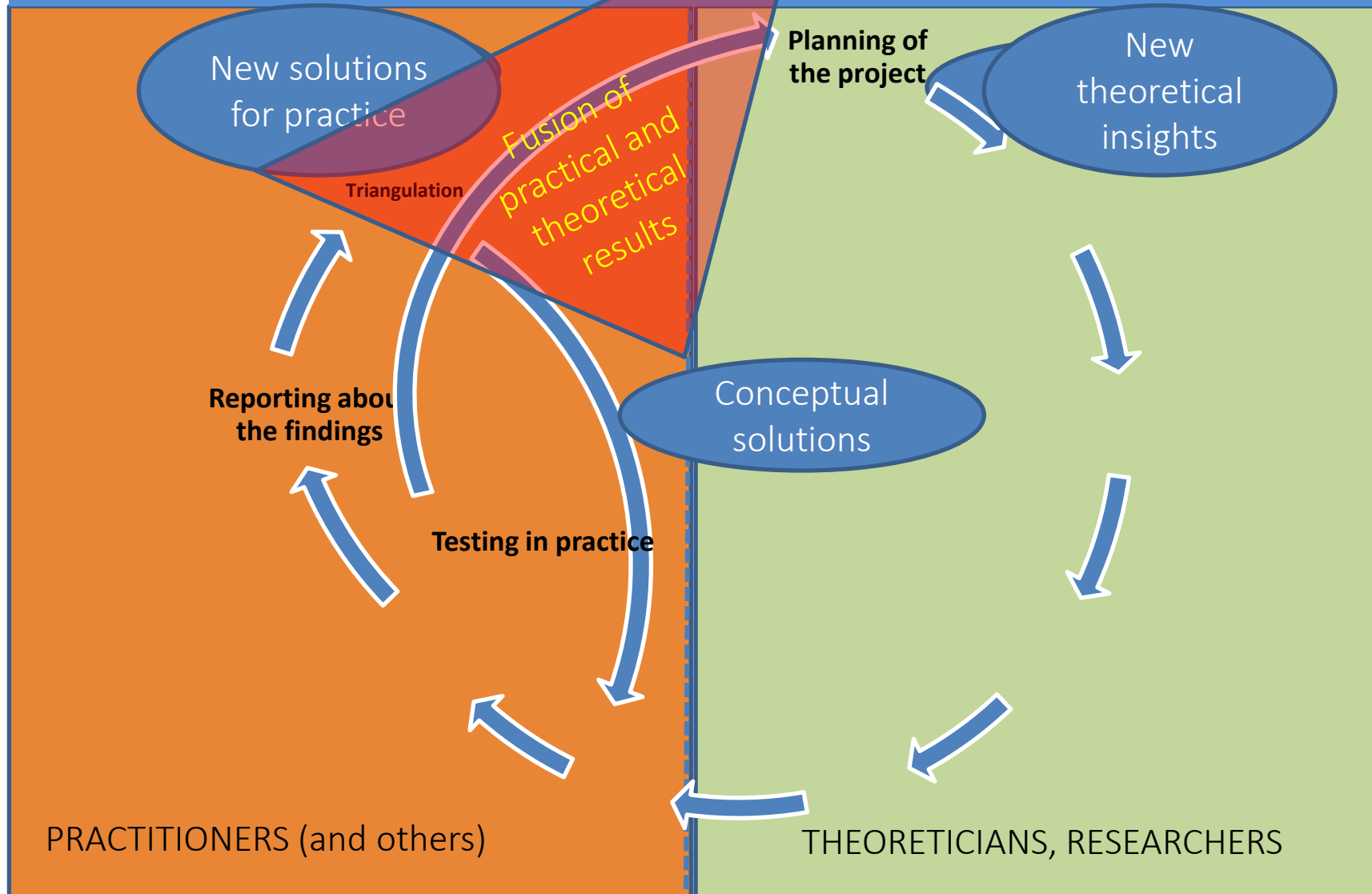
18
MONTHS

- 1 Agreement on co-operation
- 2 Setting common rules of participation
- 3 First meeting of the group – an agreement about the research and exploring plan in selected environment – plan on collecting data even during the work (working process)
- 4 Initiation of data collection
- 5 Analysis of the collected data in the process of cycles of meetings and exchanges of knowledge
- 6 Acquiring common theoretical knowledge + exchange of experiences
- 7 Small experiments in practice
- 8 Creation of the reports, phase findings and reporting of the results
- 9 Finalisation of the whole cycle – preparation and presentation of the results

CYCLE OF THE ACTION RESEARCH



Research team activities in action research



ACTION RESEARCH IN PRACTICE: PRACTITIONERS' EXPERIENCES

"Being part of the Action Group has given me new skills and an additional breadth of understanding - just what I need to do my job."

Katarina Bertoncelj, Multigenerational Centre Worker

ACTION RESEARCH IN PRACTICE: PRACTITIONERS' EXPERIENCES

"At the beginning, I couldn't imagine the dynamics, the importance and the way this kind of research would work. In the initial planning, it took a lot of commitment, discipline and thinking outside the box to develop a broader set of descriptors of core competences. Testing the descriptors with different participants was a challenge for me. I have gained valuable insights that I will use in my professional field as well as in life in general."

Edita Tamše, coordinator and implementer of the Social Activation projects

ACTION RESEARCH IN PRACTICE: PRACTITIONERS' EXPERIENCES

"Through individual meetings and individual work, I found that action research unfolded step by step and that we eventually came to a common result. In between, I had the feeling that everything was falling apart. This happened after I had done the PRODUCT testing with the participants. That's when we realised that we had to rethink and rewrite everything."

Urška Novak Lešnik, training organiser and teacher

ACTION RESEARCH IN PRACTICE: PRACTITIONERS' EXPERIENCES

"One of the outcomes of the action research is that the practitioners who participated in the action research will become ambassadors of the new knowledge within our organisations, both to other practitioners and teachers and to any individual who visits our organisation."

Dragica Glažar, Training Organiser and Consultant

ACTION RESEARCH IN PRACTICE: PRACTITIONERS' EXPERIENCES

"This is the first time I have come across the action research method. The first sensation of seeing 'a beach with a lot of rocks', which was a pictorial representation of our action-research work, was overwhelming. However, as the mosaic continued to come together, time was no longer defined, the method was no longer a barrier. Now I cannot imagine how we could have conceived this work differently, so that we could have achieved the same or at least a comparable result. There was a moment when I was able to positively motivate and convince a colleague who had encountered this way of working for the first time abroad, or who had learnt about the theoretical basis of action research, that it was reasonable and sensible. Even though people in the group have different opinions and it is difficult to reconcile them, I now say that I can apply these methods of working to other areas and thus achieve consensus.,,"

Gregor Sepaher, teacher

Thank you for your attention!

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