7 Steps of the Practitioner Research Method

Payam Sheikhattari, MD, MPH

Practitioner Research Cycle

- ORIENTATION
- FOCUSING
- PLANNING
- DATA COLLECTION
- ANALYSIS & CONCLUSION
- DOCUMENTATION & PRESENTATION
- DESIGN & INNOVATION
What are the common reasons for engaging in practitioner research, and what techniques could practitioners employ to choose and become oriented to a significant practice problem?
Step 2: Focusing

Provide technical instructions for performing an in-depth problem analysis.

Formulate your research objectives, which later will guide you through the process of identifying and formulating important research questions and their respective sub-questions.

Key Question:

What are some activities and inquiries that could assist practitioners in crafting their research questions?

Types of Research Questions

1. DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS
   Seek to describe the issue under study or provide information about needed improvements.
   Example: "What do our young people know about drugs and their effects?"

2. DEFINING QUESTIONS
   Seek to define an important idea or concept from the perspective of a particular group of people.
   Example: "How do youth in our neighborhood define violence?"

3. COMPARATIVE QUESTIONS
   Aim to identify differences and similarities between different groups or situations.
   Example: "What problems do girls need help with, as compared to boys?"

4. EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS
   Focus on assessing the effectiveness of a specific action or intervention.
   Example: "Has our neighborhood action resulted in safer streets?"

5. EXPLANATORY QUESTIONS
   Seek to understand the reasons or causes behind a particular phenomenon.
   Example: "Why is the new family center so successful?"
Step 3: Planning

Identify methods for data collection.

Identify target groups and estimate the number of needed respondents.

Prepare an effective work plan, appropriate budget, and cohesive research plan.

Step 4: Data Collection

Select data collection tools and activities that can be used in professional practice settings.

- Document Analysis
- Systematic Observation
- Interviewing
- Questionnaires
- Site Visits
- Alternative Data Collection Methods
Step 5: Analysis and Conclusion

- Different types of data (qualitative, quantitative)
- Preparing collected data for analysis
- Specific methods used for analyzing data
- Approaches for formulating conclusions from the analyzed data
- Strengthening the analysis and conclusion process

Step 6: Design and Innovation

Two phases of design research, specifically relevant when testing a new intervention:

**EXPLORATORY RESEARCH:**
Collect and analyze data needed for identifying the key elements (design principles) for a possible intervention

**INNOVATION LOOP:**
Guides the development and implementation of the intervention, repeated as many times as needed to develop the intervention
Step 7: Documentation and Presentation

Consider the characteristics and interests of the target audience

Select format/medium and communication strategies for disseminating the findings (Reports, Presentations, Etc.)

Implement innovative activities informed by the findings

Introduce strategies that could maximize their impact

Evaluate the research

Reflect

Develop recommendations for future research