

**S. E. Efron & R. Ravid. (2013).**  
*Action Research in Education: A Practical Guide.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.  
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**Reviewed by Ronda Walker, University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

*Action Research in Education* by Sara Efrat Efron and Ruth Ravid is a practical, user-friendly textbook for evaluators who would like to learn more about action research, for students who are just starting to learn about evaluation, or for educators who are already working in schools but who may be interested in conducting evaluations of programs in the educational setting. Whether you are studying the book in class or needing a quick reference or answer to a question, it is easy to find what you are looking for, as the authors did a great job of organizing the chapters in a way that is easy to follow.

This is an important book for any evaluator, educator, or prospective educator who wants to learn more about evaluation in practice and how to make research-based decisions. This book is beneficial for evaluators who have an overall understanding of evaluation, but who do not know as much about action research and how that type of research can be used when conducting evaluations in educational settings. This book is also beneficial for school practitioners with students in pre-K through Grade 12. The authors want practitioners to have a better understanding of how they can use action research to see if practices that they are implementing with their students work. This book can also be used by professors to teach action research to those training to be evaluators or educators.

Where the book excels is in terms of its practicality. The authors say that they have had “long and extensive experience” with both teaching and conducting research. That is easy to see in the wording, layout, and organization of the book. For evaluators, the book breaks down how to conduct educational evaluations in different settings. For practicing educators who may not have that much experience, the authors explain the basic concepts involved in evaluation and research. For example, they give thorough explanations, definitions, and examples of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches. They also make recommendations about which approach to use based on the information one is trying to gather and the outcome one is trying to achieve.

Each chapter has a summary, exercises and activities, and additional readings. The chapter summaries are, on average, two to three pages long. Each summary gives a clear, concise recap of the main points from the chapter. The exercises and activities give the readers an opportunity to answer questions and form opinions. It is important to note that the questions asked in these exercises cannot

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be answered through simple rote learning of the information. The exercises and activities require the readers to reflect, form opinions, consider best practices, and apply information to solve problems and situations that may very well occur in actual educational settings. The additional readings provide the reader with more in-depth resources to get a better, deeper understanding of the specific topics covered within the chapter.

The textbook has been divided into eight chapters, and the information from each builds on the others. However, the reader does not necessarily need to read the textbook in order. Although that would be the best way to experience this text, one can go directly to a specific chapter and still understand the information presented. The chapters flow in a way that is similar to the construction, implementation, and sharing of information from research. The first chapter is an introduction to action research. This is an important chapter for evaluators who are not familiar with action research. It defines educational research, the role of practitioners as researchers and evaluators, the different historical perspectives of action research, and the unique characteristics of action research. The following chapters provide detail about topics including choosing and learning more about your topic; developing a plan of action; using assessment data in action research; data analysis and interpretation; and writing, sharing, and implementing the research findings. One chapter is devoted to different approaches to action research. Another chapter presents and explains the types of data collection tools used in action research, providing detail about the differences in observation, interview, surveys, and artifacts and documents.

Efron and Ravid have made it easy to search for information from this book. They have included an author index so that you can find referenced articles and information linked to specific authors. They also have a subject index to help readers quickly find information on a specific topic. The references are up to date, accurate, and full of perspectives from different evaluators in the field. The information in the book is highlighted with graphs, flowcharts, and tables that serve as both a quick reference and an explicit breakdown of the information.

Bottom line, Efron and Ravid have created a very thorough, practical, and user-friendly guide to action research that has been successfully geared to the educational evaluator and researcher. I would recommend it as an excellent resource for both future and practicing evaluators, as well as for future and practicing teachers.