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ASQ Higher Education Brief

Education
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Editor's Note: Time to Reflect

by Megan Schmidt, editor

Do you tweak lesson plans, question instructional strategies and classroom management techniques, or change how you engage with students? If you answered yes: Guess what? You're probably already conducting a form of action research, the focus of this month's *Higher Education Brief*.

Action research provides insight into one's own practice in an effort to bring change and improvement. In this issue, you'll find resources, tools and techniques that you can use to become a more effective and systematic action researcher. You'll also learn why Viterbo University in LaCrosse, WI, integrated the action research model in its approach to preparing future teachers in this month's exclusive video.

As you dig into this issue, you'll probably notice that action research has a lot in common with one of the cornerstone tools of quality—plan-do-study-act (PDSA). Like PDSA, action research is an iterative and cyclical method for promoting continuous improvement. What I like about action research, which is carried out through the steps of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, is its emphasis on reflection.

Teachers and administrators often balance overflowing plates. Usually, there's little time to evaluate if processes or techniques are working. Professional development gets placed on the backburner in order to keep up with the daily grind. But no matter how busy you are, I think it's crucial to carve out some regular time to reflect. Reflection is a necessary part of the learning process, and it's often the first step toward making positive change personally and professionally. I hope that this issue inspires you to push the pause button in your world.