

WE WANT TO LEARN ABOUT . . .

Additional documents are included to adapt the **MISO Method of Action Research** for primary classes, academic topics, and field experiences.

Purpose

- To investigate a topic of interest using the MISO Method of Action Research
- To collaborate in developing ideas while analyzing social issues and their underlying causes
- To draw upon the interests, skills and talents of peers while learning more about a topic

Materials

- ✓ Easel paper and markers for each group (one marker per person); sticky notes, about 8 per person

Context

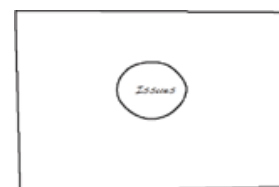
“We want to learn about . . .” is what we as educators are looking for: that pivotal moment when curiosity and the desire to know initiates a quest for knowledge. What then? Do students always know *how* to start and follow-up with their inquiry? This process guides students toward a successful launch to finding out about most any topic. The skills learned can be applied to academic studies as they use the MISO Method of Action Research. Anytime during this process, pause to ask: “What is this process like?” “What have you discovered?” “What skills are you using?” “What have you learned?” This models ongoing reflection and metacognition.

Through guided prompts and a sequence of group interactions, these constructs become avenues for discovery. Paramount is under-directing, i.e., offering minimal precise directions and reliance on teamwork and interactions within and between groups for interpretation, planning and moving forward.

For this description, the assumption is that the students all agree on a single topic to explore. This can be easily adapted for *one* group of students, typically up to 12, to work altogether.

Opening – What’s the Issue?

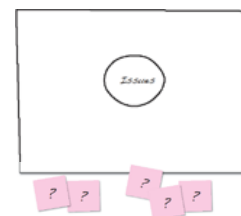
- What’s the issue of interest? In groups using easel paper, have students make a circle in the center of the easel paper and write the issue inside that circle.
- OPTION ONE: With everyone having a marker in their hand, for one minute, working simultaneously, everyone writes *inside* the circle all the subtopics related to that larger issue. Then have each group in one minute select one subtopic they want to focus on; a single subtopic may be chosen, or two or three subtopics can be combined if they fit together. Circle the subtopic(s).
- OPTION TWO: Go with the larger issue and move on to Process.



Process

What Do We Want to Know? Asking Questions

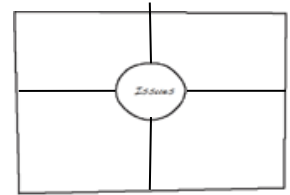
- Using sticky notes, each person writes two to four questions regarding the issue/subtopic on their table, one question per sticky note. Allow a few minutes. **Option:** Particularly for older students, announce all the different subtopics chosen by the different groups. List these subtopics on the board. As students write questions for their own group, they are encouraged to also write and deliver questions for other groups. Now all students can influence and provoke ideas. The facilitator also delivers questions, and any adults in the room do the same.



- Direct students to take two minutes to get to know their questions. Often, not always, students sort and categorize the questions; sometimes priorities and categories emerge. Additional questions are sometimes added. **Be certain to under-direct so students have choice on what they do.**

Preparing for Action Research

- Direct students to add four additional lines to the inside section of the frame: two vertical and two horizontal lines from the center circle.
- After developing questions comes research. Let students know there are four ways to conduct Action Research.



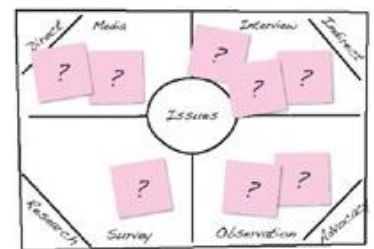
Note: If students are unfamiliar with the MISO Method of Action Research, lead this:

Ask, when told to do research, what is the first method they think of? Typically, students respond Google or other website. Write on the board, Research = Google. Ask if this is true. Let students know that Google and other such sites are *search engines* for looking up *other people's research*. To "research" or "*re-search*" means to *look again*. There is a quote from the 1930s that states: "Copying from one person is plagiarism; copying from two is research."

There are four kinds of Action Research:

- **Media** – internet, television, newspapers, films, maps, and more
- **Interview** – asking an expert
- **Survey** – using set questions with people who have knowledge on a topic or for general knowledge or opinions
- **Observation, Experiments, and Experience** – using our surroundings or memories of being somewhere, or creating an experiment or simulation

- The acronym is MISO, like Japanese soup. On the model to demonstrate for the participants, print Media, Interview, Survey, and Observation, one in each **large space**.
- Direct students to place the questions in the action research modality best suited for obtaining answers. Expect lively discussion. Students may ask the facilitator what to do with questions that can go in more than one category. Avoid answering. Let the students come up with their own ideas.



This drawing includes "four corners" with labels for different kinds of action: direct, indirect, advocacy, and research. Once students conduct the research they may decide to follow-up with action; these four corners encourage students to think through the different kinds of action they might take.

Conducting Action Research

Now students have a foundation for inquiry. They have an issue/subtopics. They have four ways to approach finding out. Collectively determine how to draw upon students' interests, skills and talents to move their inquiry from questions to carrying out their action research. Determine ways to record findings. When inquiry leads to action, draw upon the five stages of service learning to move forward.

For more resources on identifying trustworthy resources and conducting interviews and surveys, email cathy@cbkassociates.com.

Media in Action: Helping Our Community



Interview in Action: Helping Our Community



Who we can ask

What we can ask

What we found out

Who we can ask

What we can ask

What we found out

Survey in Action: Helping Our Community



What we are asking

Who we can ask

**Yes No
Other Responses**

1.

2.

3.

Observation in Action: Helping Our Community



What we did to observe

What we saw

Gathering Information about a Community Need

What does your community need? Use the questions in the following four categories as guides for finding out. As a class, you might agree to explore one topic, for example, how kids get along at school, or hunger and poverty, or an environmental concern. Or you might decide to learn about general needs at school or in the surrounding area.

Form smaller groups, with each group focusing on one category and gathering information in a different way.

Finding out about _____

Media

What media (newspapers—including school newspapers, TV stations, radio) in your community might have helpful information? List ways you can work with different media to learn about issues and needs in your community.

Interviews

Think of a person who is knowledgeable about this topic in your area—perhaps someone at school, in a local organization, or government office. Write four questions you would ask this person in an interview.

An interview with _____ .

Questions:

-
-
-
-

Gathering Information about a Community Need *continued*

Survey

A survey can help you find out what people know or think about a topic and get ideas for helping. Who could you survey—students, family members, neighbors? How many surveys would you want to have completed? Write sample survey questions.

Who to survey:

How many surveys?

Questions for the survey:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Observation and Experience

How can you gather information through your own observation and experience?

Where would you go? What would you do there? How would you keep track of what you find out?

Next Steps

Share your ideas. Make a plan for gathering information using the four categories. If you are working in small groups, each group may want to involve people in other groups. For example, everyone could help conduct the survey and collect the results.

***I never perfected an invention
that I did not think about
in terms of the service it might give others . . .
I find out what the world needs,
then I proceed to invent.***

Thomas A. Edison, inventor

Mapping the Community: Assets and Needs

When learning about a community, find out the specific assets and needs.

Why this matters:

How this can be accomplished:

Assets can be people, structures, the natural environment, an existing program, economic means, history, culture, and more.

Apply the **MISO** method to discover:

ASSETS

NEEDS

MEDIA

All kinds—
newspapers to maps

INTERVIEWS

Capture diverse voices

SURVEYS

Collect diverse ideas
and opinions

OBSERVATIONS

Widen your vision

USE ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS to develop questions, set a timeline, identify partners, clarify roles and responsibilities, and determine what you will do with the information you learn.

