

## Examining Questioning Strategies to Maximize Teacher Agency

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### Abstract

Exploratory Action Research (EAR) allows teachers to generate knowledge based on inquiries carried out within specific and often practical contexts and aims at creating situations to learn through action, which then leads to personal or professional development. Mentoring teacher research within the EAR framework involves asking questions; the quality of questions asked at different stages of EAR plays an important role in deciding the outcome of the EAR process. What types of questions can trigger critical reflection? Which stage of EAR demands what kinds of questions? How can questioning lead to enhanced teacher agency? Adopting an ecological framework to examine teacher agency, this study attempts to address the above questions. It discusses the trajectories of three in-service teachers who took part in exploratory action research projects over a period of nine months. With data collected through reflective conversations, journals, and questionnaire, this study attempts to understand how action research which is driven by questioning can become an empowering tool for teachers.

**Keywords:** exploratory action research, mentoring, teacher agency and teacher research

### Introduction

Exploratory Action Research (EAR) is an approach used for improving conditions and practices in a variety of professional spheres. It consists of self-reflective cycles which involve planning a change, acting, and observing the process and consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences and then re-planning. It has the