Review Number Three – Action Research

I found it very helpful to see three graduates present their action research to the class. I noticed many differences and similarities in their presentation. I also took note of the characteristics that I would like to adopt for my own research. I’d like to review all three presentations focusing on specific areas from the Johnson book regarding the action research thesis (p. 156, 2005). Most of the presentations had all the parts that are outlined in the Johnson book including an introduction, review of the literature, methodology, findings, and discussion. However, some of the presentations were not detailed enough, while others were too detailed given that it was just a presentation and not an actual paper.

All the presentations began with a title. The most powerful title was Jennifer J. Klipfel’s “Does explicitly teaching the nature of science (NOS) inform student views of the NOS and their understanding of science in the real world?” because it was in a form of a question. This is emphasized in the Johnson book as a means of stating the purpose of one’s study (p. 157 2005). While all the presenters did have research questions that they later posed to the audience, beginning the lecture with a main question really helps to focus the audience. I plan to incorporate this technique into my own action research paper.

George S. Lyle presented his research questions after his literature review, which I thought was confusing. In fact, Thomas Schuster and Jennifer J. Klipfel did the same thing, yet it was my impression that the literature review is there to provide a context for your research questions (Johnson, 2005, p. 157). In my own action research the reader
will have my research questions prior to the literature review in order to frame my questions in the specific context that I intend the reader to follow. All the while, Jennifer and George provided much more information from the literature review than Thomas which made me feel more involved in their project.

Jennifer’s presentation was most effective as it included clear and concise titles with a continuity that followed the Johnson text. Thomas presented sample data prior to reviewing his methodology; it seems that perhaps his slides were missing clear titles or were out of order. I think it is very important to use clear headings and titles for each section or your paper. There is also the importance of sub-headings, such as “Methodology – Instruments” from Jennifer’s presentation. I really like this type of organization and plan to use it in my own research and each sub-heading is stressed in the Johnson text as “heading, centered” (p. 158, 2005).

Overall, I found several aspects of Jennifer’s presentation that I would like to incorporate into my own action research. Her findings were great because not only did they include graphs and data tables but direct quotes from students which personalized the research. I realize that she probably had the simplest research project in that she had a very small sample size compared to the others but I see the benefit to a greater amount of focus. She was able to truly delve into her research questions. The other two presentations were much more complex with many graphs that addressed a multitude of questions. I know these are summaries of individual survey questions, but perhaps it would be possible to summarize a whole survey with one or two graphs instead of eight or nine. There were also finding presented followed by discussion, then back to findings such as in George’s presentation. I found this back and forth confusing and would group all the findings together and all the discussion together as it was intended by the Johnson text.

