

Can you think of a particular teaching practice that you have improved on?



- Think of a particular experience that may have contributed to improving this particular teaching practice?
- What processes were involved in this achieving this improvement?

Action Research: My Own Journey of Discovery

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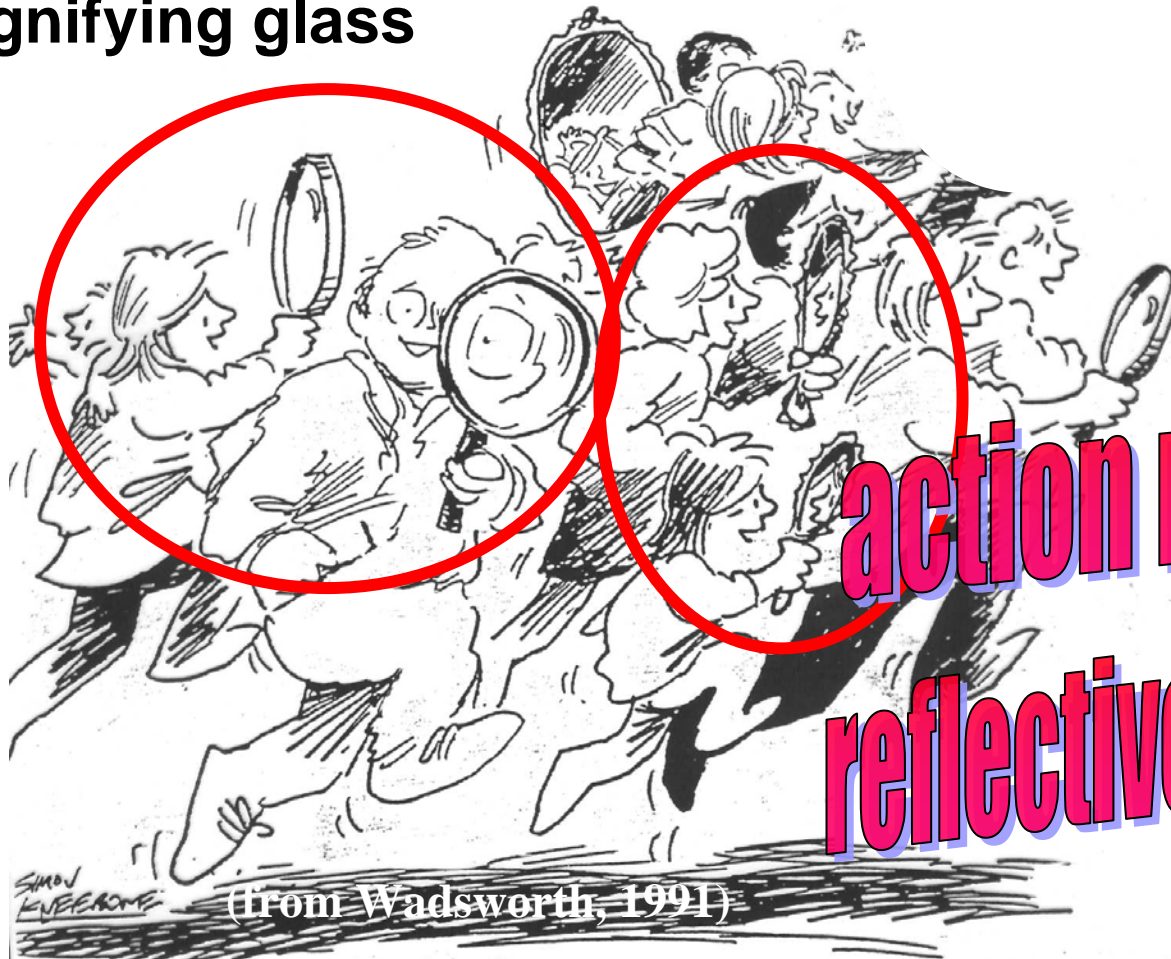
From biology research ...



(from Wadsworth, 1991) to social/educational research

Added a new
instrument, in
addition to the
magnifying glass

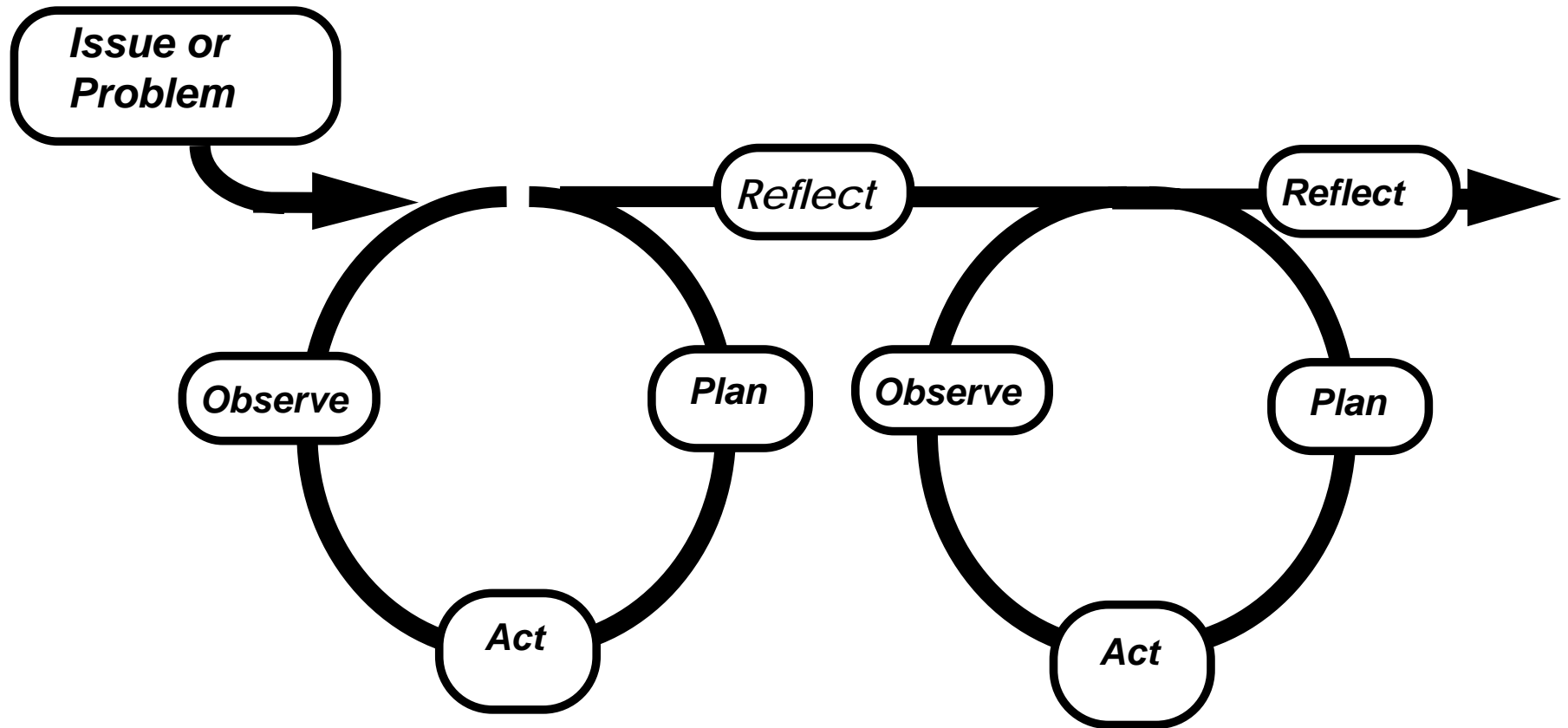
**THE
MIRROR!**



(from Wadsworth, 1991)

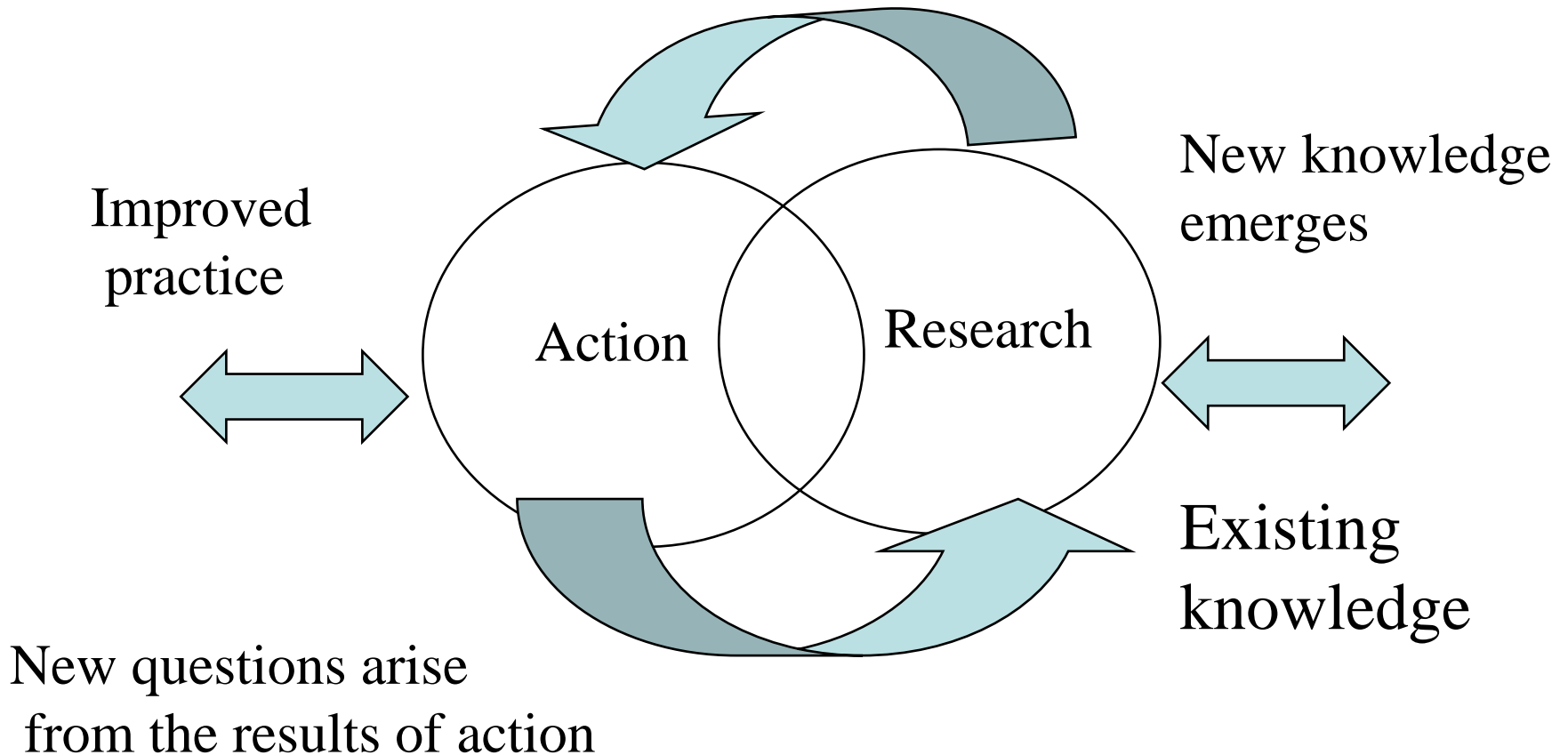
action research
reflective practice

Action Research Spiral



Researching Action, Action from Research

Critical reflection on action



Content (from scientific to ... interdisciplinary and holistic)

BSc Biology degree
**provided the
foundations** for work
as a community
environmental educator.

BSc Biology degree also
gave me **the blinkers**,
the narrow knowledge
system that made me
attempt to explain
environmental problems
through a scientific-
technical lens.



Content

(from one true knowledge to ...)

- Now I emphasise to my students that they need to be aware that **there are different knowledge systems** and more importantly to be aware of **how their own educational experiences have constructed the way they view the world.**
- I begin by acknowledging that I do not have all the knowledge, and **whatever knowledge I have to share is based on the context of my own life experiences.**



... knowledge is not only diverse but contextual

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Why name reflection?

Why not let it just happen?

For many practitioners, doing swallows up learning. Even staying aware of what we are doing does not itself create learning.

Learning is a purposeful activity, although not a complicated one.

Recognizing the necessary role of reflection in excavating learning from experience and becoming familiar with the basic elements of a **reflective practice will allow practitioners to begin to act on the notion that knowledge is embedded in the experience of their work, and to realize the importance of this knowledge in furthering their practice.**

Joy Amulya, Center for Reflective Community Practice, MIT

(<http://web.mit.edu/crcp/vitaldiff1/Documents/what%20is%20reflective%20practice.pdf>)

Principles and processes of action research

- As a **process** – it does involve steps of action, reflection, planning, action, reflection – in cycles/spirals
- It is driven – by a desire to **understand practice or action** in order to **improve** its ability to respond to a problem; hence it can be **problem-based**.
- It is guided by the commitment to involve the individuals and groups who “**own**” **the problem** and therefore wish to “**own**” **the solution(s)** – which others call an empowerment process.
- Recently it has also been used to build on the strengths of communities of practice (**appreciative inquiry**).
- It begins from the local – “**from where people are**” and builds on where they are
- In the process it generates local knowledge or often **co-generates knowledge**, when conducted together with outsiders
- **Learning is inherent** to the practice of action research.