**Cycle of Inquiry Plan for**

**"Students at Golden Goals are not reading on their grade level or can not read at all"**

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

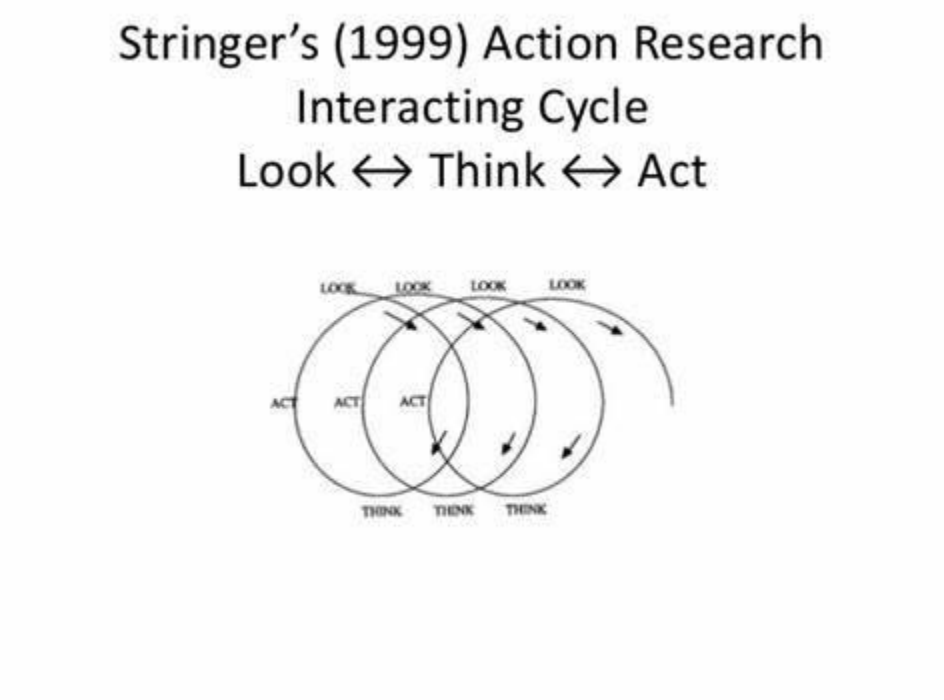
EDD-FPX8520 – Educational Leadership by Design

Instructor:

## Introduction

The purpose of this Cycle of Inquiry Plan is to address a critical organizational issue within Golden Goals. Our organization, dedicated to helping students achieve their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, has identified a pressing concern: a significant number of students are not reading on their grade level or, in some cases, struggle with reading altogether. Recognizing the

pivotal role of literacy in academic success, this plan aims to initiate a comprehensive inquiry into the factors contributing to this challenge. By understanding the root causes, we can develop targeted interventions to ensure that all students not only meet but exceed their reading expectations. This plan will guide the systematic exploration of the issue, drawing on elements of design thinking and action research cycles to inform our approach and move towards effective solutions.




**Initial Reconnaissance – Look**

The "Look" section of the Cycle of Inquiry represents the initial stage where the focus is on observation and gathering information. This phase involves examining the current state of affairs, both internally and externally, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the problem or issue at

hand. In the context of Stringer's Look, Think, Act cycle, this stage corresponds to the "look" phase, emphasizing the importance of a thorough environmental scan. The goal is to identify key elements, stakeholders, and potential factors contributing to the identified problem, setting the foundation for subsequent analysis and action.

**Issue Definition**

The issue at hand within Golden Goals is a notable discrepancy in reading proficiency among students. A substantial portion of the student body is not reading on their expected grade level, and some are encountering difficulties in reading altogether. This challenge is multifaceted, involving factors within and beyond the organization's immediate control.

Internally, potential contributors may include the effectiveness of current literacy programs, teaching strategies, and the alignment of these approaches with students' individual needs. Furthermore, the issue may be influenced by the availability of resources, teacher training, and the overall support structure for literacy development within Golden Goals.

Externally, broader educational trends and evidence-based best practices in literacy interventions could significantly impact the effectiveness of Golden Goals' approach. Socioeconomic factors, community influences, and external educational policies may also play a role in shaping the reading abilities of students.

**Reason for Inquiry**

The need for this inquiry arises from the critical importance of literacy in academic success and lifelong learning. Addressing the issue of students not reading on their grade level or facing reading challenges is imperative for Golden Goals to fulfill its mission of helping students meet their IEP goals and no longer requiring additional resources.

Literacy is a foundational skill that significantly impacts various aspects of a student's educational journey. Students who struggle with reading may experience challenges across multiple subjects, hindering their overall academic progress. By undertaking this inquiry, Golden Goals seeks to understand the root causes of the reading issue and develop targeted interventions to enhance literacy skills.

Moreover, the inquiry is essential for maintaining the organization's commitment to individualized education. Recognizing that each student has unique needs, the inquiry will help identify personalized approaches to address literacy challenges, ensuring that interventions are tailored to specific learning styles and requirements.

## Guiding Questions

### Question #01

What instructional strategies and literacy programs are currently in place within Golden Goals, and how effectively do they cater to the diverse needs of students with varying reading abilities?

### Question #02

How do socioeconomic factors, community influences, and external educational policies impact the reading proficiency of students within the organization?

**Question #03**

In what ways can Golden Goals enhance teacher training and professional development to better equip educators in addressing the individualized literacy needs of students, and how can these improvements be integrated into existing practices?

**Collaborators**

**Educators and Special Education Professionals**

- **Why:** Collaboration with teachers and special education professionals is crucial as they possess firsthand insights into the daily challenges students face in the realm of literacy. Their experiences in implementing existing programs and interventions can provide valuable context to the issue. Furthermore, their expertise can contribute to the identification of effective strategies and interventions tailored to the diverse needs of students.

**Students and Parents/Guardians**

- **Why:** The inclusion of students and their parents or guardians is essential for gaining a holistic understanding of the issue. Insights from students about their experiences, preferences, and challenges in reading can inform the development of more student-centric interventions. Similarly, parents and guardians can offer perspectives on the home environment, potential support systems, and any external factors influencing their child's reading development.

**Community Partners and Educational Researchers**

- **Why:** Collaborating with community partners, such as local libraries, literacy organizations, and educational researchers, can provide a broader perspective on external factors impacting literacy. These collaborators can contribute insights into successful models and evidence-based practices in literacy education. Educational researchers can bring a research-driven perspective, helping to interpret data and identify trends in the broader educational landscape.

**Policy Experts and Administrators**

- **Why:** Engaging with policy experts and administrators is crucial to understanding how external educational policies may influence the reading proficiency of students within Golden Goals. Collaboration with this group can provide insights into potential systemic challenges and opportunities for advocacy or policy adjustments to better support literacy initiatives.

**Technology Specialists**

- **Why:** In the digital age, technology plays a significant role in education. Collaborating with technology specialists can help explore innovative tools and resources that may enhance literacy programs. Their expertise can contribute to the integration of technology-based solutions tailored to the diverse learning needs of students.

## What is Known

The current information available about the issue includes:

**Internal Data**

- Student performance data related to reading proficiency.
- Details about existing literacy programs and instructional strategies in place.
- Information on IEP goals related to literacy.

**External Factors**

- Broader educational trends and best practices in literacy interventions.
- Potential influences of socioeconomic factors and community dynamics on student reading abilities.
- External educational policies that may impact literacy education.

**Teacher and Student Perspectives**

- Insights from educators regarding challenges and successes in teaching literacy.
- Student perspectives on their reading experiences, preferences, and challenges.

**Resources and Support Structures**

- Availability and adequacy of resources dedicated to literacy development.
- Support structures in place for students with reading challenges.

**Technology Integration**

- The role of technology in existing literacy programs.

While this information provides a foundational understanding of the issue, its trustworthiness and completeness need verification. Internal data should be cross-referenced for accuracy, and external factors should be validated through additional research and collaboration with stakeholders. Teacher and student perspectives may require further exploration through surveys or interviews to ensure a comprehensive and accurate representation of experiences.

## Organizational Data

Golden Goals routinely collects a variety of information that can have implications for understanding the issue of students not reading on their grade level or facing reading challenges. This information can be both qualitative and quantitative, providing a comprehensive view of the organization's landscape. The accessible data includes:

### Student Performance Data

- **Type:** Quantitative
- **Description:** Golden Goals likely collects data on students' reading proficiency levels through regular assessments and standardized tests. This quantitative data can highlight trends, identify students struggling with reading, and gauge the overall effectiveness of current literacy programs.

### IEP Goal Progress

- **Type:** Quantitative
- **Description:** Data related to students' progress toward Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals in literacy. This quantitative information provides insights into the alignment of instructional strategies with individual student needs and the overall success of IEP interventions.

**Resource Allocation and Utilization**

- **Type:** Qualitative and Quantitative
- **Description:** Information on the allocation and utilization of resources dedicated to literacy development, including staffing, budget allocations, and the availability of instructional materials. This combination of qualitative and quantitative data helps assess the adequacy and effectiveness of current resources.

**Teacher Feedback and Observations**

- **Type:** Qualitative
- **Description:** Qualitative data gathered through teacher feedback, classroom observations, and reflections. This information provides insights into the challenges and successes teachers experience in implementing literacy programs and the impact of instructional strategies on students.

**Technology Integration**

- **Type:** Qualitative and Quantitative
- **Description:** Information on the integration of technology in literacy programs, including the types of tools used and their impact. Both qualitative feedback from educators and quantitative data on technology usage can inform the organization's approach to leveraging technology for literacy improvement.

**Parent and Student Surveys**

- **Type:** Qualitative

- **Description:** Qualitative data collected through surveys or interviews with parents and students. This information can provide valuable insights into home environments, student preferences, and potential external factors influencing reading proficiency.

The accessibility of this data is crucial for the success of the inquiry. Regularly collected data should be easily retrievable and available for analysis. The combination of qualitative and quantitative information offers a nuanced understanding of the issue, supporting a more holistic and informed approach to the inquiry.

**Additional Data to be Gathered**

To augment the existing organizational data and address the key questions outlined in the inquiry, the following additional information would be valuable:

**Community and Socioeconomic Data**

- **Type:** Quantitative
- **How to Access:** Collaborate with local community organizations, census data, or educational research institutions to gather data on socioeconomic factors that may influence students' reading abilities. This could involve partnerships with external entities or accessing publicly available datasets.

**External Educational Policies**

- **Type:** Qualitative and Quantitative
- **How to Access:** Consult with educational policy experts, review relevant policy documents, and engage in discussions with administrators to understand the impact of

external educational policies on literacy education. This may involve interviews, document analysis, and participation in educational forums.

**Student and Parent Perspectives**

- **Type:** Qualitative
- **How to Access:** Conduct surveys, interviews, or focus groups with students and their parents to gain insights into their perceptions of the reading challenges. This qualitative data can provide a more nuanced understanding of the home environment, individual learning preferences, and potential external factors influencing reading proficiency.

**Best Practices and Innovative Approaches**

- **Type:** Qualitative
- **How to Access:** Engage with educational researchers, attend conferences, and collaborate with experts in the field to identify best practices and innovative approaches to literacy education. This qualitative information can inform the design of effective interventions and instructional strategies.

**Technology Effectiveness**

- **Type:** Quantitative and Qualitative
- **How to Access:** Conduct research on the effectiveness of specific technology tools for literacy development, considering both quantitative studies and qualitative feedback from educators who have successfully integrated technology. This information can guide decisions on the selection and implementation of technology-based interventions.

**Comparative Data with Similar Organizations**

- **Type:** Quantitative
- **How to Access:** Collaborate with peer organizations, educational networks, or industry associations to gather comparative data on literacy outcomes. This quantitative comparison can provide benchmarks and insights into successful strategies implemented by similar organizations.

**Professional Development Impact**

- **Type:** Qualitative and Quantitative
- **How to Access:** Collect feedback from educators on the impact of professional development programs related to literacy. This can be achieved through surveys, interviews, and observations to understand the effectiveness of current training initiatives.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, collaborations with external entities, and literature reviews, will provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Engaging with various stakeholders and sources will contribute to a more nuanced and informed analysis, guiding the development of targeted interventions to address the reading challenges within Golden Goals.

**Additional Information**

Exploring research literature, trade journals, and professional association resources can yield valuable insights into effective literacy interventions, best practices, and innovative approaches. Key topics to search for may include evidence-based instructional strategies for diverse learners, successful literacy programs in educational settings with similar challenges, the impact of technology on reading proficiency, and strategies for fostering collaboration between educators, parents, and the community in literacy development. Keywords for the search could encompass

terms such as "literacy intervention strategies," "individualized literacy programs," "technology in literacy education," "parental involvement in reading," and "community-based literacy initiatives." By delving into this rich source of information, Golden Goals can draw on the collective knowledge of the academic and professional community, informing the design of targeted interventions and enriching the overall inquiry process.

## Strategies

### Collaborative Workshops and Meetings

- **Tools:** Video conferencing platforms, collaboration tools.
- **Techniques:** Organize workshops and virtual meetings involving educators, special education professionals, and administrators. Foster open discussions to share insights, experiences, and perspectives on the reading issue. Encourage brainstorming sessions to identify potential gaps and causes collaboratively.

### Surveys and Interviews

- **Tools:** Survey platforms, interview scheduling tools.
- **Techniques:** Develop and distribute surveys to teachers, students, and parents to gather quantitative and qualitative insights on their experiences and perceptions regarding reading challenges. Conduct interviews with key stakeholders, including community partners and educational researchers, to explore diverse perspectives and potential contributing factors.

### Data Analysis and Visualization

- **Tools:** Data analytics software, visualization tools.

- **Techniques:** Analyze internal and external data to identify trends, patterns, and correlations related to the reading issue. Utilize data visualization techniques such as charts and graphs to communicate findings effectively, facilitating a shared understanding among collaborators.

**Focus Groups**

- **Tools:** Video conferencing platforms, collaboration tools.
- **Techniques:** Organize focus group sessions with students, parents, and educators to delve deeper into specific aspects of the reading issue. Facilitate discussions to uncover underlying challenges and gather qualitative data on potential gaps and causes.

**Literature Reviews and Research Synthesis**

- **Tools:** Academic databases, research management tools.
- **Techniques:** Conduct literature reviews on relevant topics, synthesizing research findings from trade journals, academic publications, and professional association resources. Summarize key insights to inform the inquiry process and identify evidence-based strategies for addressing the reading issue.

**Cross-functional Teams**

- **Tools:** Project management platforms, collaboration tools.
- **Techniques:** Form cross-functional teams involving educators, administrators, community partners, and technology specialists. Foster interdisciplinary collaboration to bring diverse expertise to the table, ensuring a holistic exploration of potential gaps and causes.

**SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)**

- **Tools:** Collaboration tools, SWOT analysis templates.
- **Techniques:** Conduct a SWOT analysis to systematically evaluate internal and external factors influencing the reading issue. Identify strengths to leverage, weaknesses to address, opportunities for improvement, and potential threats that may contribute to the issue.

**Action Research Cycles**

- **Tools:** Action research frameworks, project management tools.
- **Techniques:** Implement action research cycles, involving iterative planning, action, observation, and reflection. Engage collaborators in a continuous improvement process, allowing for real-time adjustments to strategies and interventions based on emerging insights.

By employing these tools and techniques, Golden Goals can create a collaborative and data-driven inquiry process. This approach facilitates a thorough exploration of gaps and causes related to the reading issue, ensuring that interventions are informed by diverse perspectives and evidence-based practices.

**Timeline**

| **Activities** | **Duration/Dates** |
|---|---|
| **1. Kick-off Meeting** | **Week 1** |

| **Activities** | **Duration/Dates** |
|---|---|
| Establish project objectives, roles, and expectations. Discuss the importance of the inquiry and the desired outcomes. | |
| **2. Internal Data Review** | **Week 2-3** |
| Review internal student performance data, IEP goals, and existing literacy programs. Confirm data accuracy and identify potential gaps. | |
| **3. External Environmental Scan** | **Week 4-5** |
| Investigate broader educational trends, community influences, and external policies. Collaborate with external partners and review relevant literature. | |
| **4. Collaborative Workshops and Focus Groups** | **Week 6-8** |
| Conduct workshops with educators and focus groups with students and parents to gather qualitative insights. | |
| **5. Surveys and Interviews** | **Week 9-10** |
| Distribute surveys to teachers, students, and parents. Conduct interviews with key stakeholders and experts. | |
| **6. Data Analysis and Visualization** | **Week 11-12** |
| Analyze collected data, identify patterns, and visualize findings. Prepare a preliminary report for review. | |

| Activities | Duration/Dates |
|---|---|
| **7. SWOT Analysis** | **Week 13** |
| Conduct a SWOT analysis with a cross-functional team to evaluate internal and external factors. | |
| **8. Literature Reviews and Research Synthesis** | **Week 14-15** |
| Complete literature reviews and synthesize research findings. Integrate relevant insights into the inquiry plan. | |
| **9. Action Research Cycles** | **Week 16-20** |
| Initiate action research cycles, implementing interventions, observing outcomes, and reflecting on results. | |
| **10. Final Report and Recommendations** | **Week 21-22** |
| Compile final report with comprehensive findings, insights, and evidence-based recommendations. Present to stakeholders. | |

This timeline is illustrative and can be adjusted based on the specific circumstances and pace of Golden Goals. Regular check-ins and flexibility in the timeline will be crucial to accommodate unforeseen challenges and ensure the success of the inquiry.

## Think

The "Think" section marks the transition from data collection to analysis and reflection. In this phase, the emphasis is on synthesizing the gathered information, identifying patterns, and developing a nuanced understanding of the problem. Stringer's action research cycle aligns with this stage, emphasizing thoughtful reflection on collected data. Additionally, the design thinking cycle encourages a collaborative mindset where teams come together to share insights and collectively define the problem. The "Think" section serves as the bridge between observation and strategic planning, fostering a deeper comprehension of the challenges at hand.

### Timeline for Reflection and Analysis

| **Activities** | **Duration/Dates** |
|---|---|
| **1. Kick-off Meeting** | **Week 1** |
| Establish project objectives, roles, and expectations. Discuss the importance of the inquiry and the desired outcomes. | |
| **2. Internal Data Review** | **Week 2-3** |
| Review internal student performance data, IEP goals, and existing literacy programs. Confirm data accuracy and identify potential gaps. | |
| **3. External Environmental Scan** | **Week 4-5** |

| Activities | Duration/Dates |
|---|---|
| Investigate broader educational trends, community influences, and external policies. Collaborate with external partners and review relevant literature. | |
| **4. Collaborative Workshops and Focus Groups** | **Week 6-8** |
| Conduct workshops with educators and focus groups with students and parents to gather qualitative insights. | |
| **5. Surveys and Interviews** | **Week 9-10** |
| Distribute surveys to teachers, students, and parents. Conduct interviews with key stakeholders and experts. | |
| **6. Data Analysis and Visualization** | **Week 11-12** |
| Analyze collected data, identify patterns, and visualize findings. Prepare a preliminary report for review. | |
| **7. SWOT Analysis** | **Week 13** |
| Conduct a SWOT analysis with a cross-functional team to evaluate internal and external factors. | |
| **8. Literature Reviews and Research Synthesis** | **Week 14-15** |
| Complete literature reviews and synthesize research findings. Integrate relevant insights into the inquiry plan. | |

| Activities | Duration/Dates |
|---|---|
| **9. Reflection and Initial Analysis** | **Week 16-17** |
| Allow individual team members time for in-depth reflection and initial analysis of the collected data. | |
| **10. Action Research Cycles** | **Week 18-22** |
| Initiate action research cycles, implementing interventions, observing outcomes, and reflecting on results. | |
| **11. Team Collaboration and Analysis** | **Week 23-25** |
| Facilitate team meetings to discuss individual analyses, share insights, and collectively analyze the overall findings. | |
| **12. Reflection and Analysis in Stringer's Cycle** | **Week 26** |
| Individual and collaborative reflection on data in alignment with Stringer's action research cycle. Identify emerging patterns and potential causes. | |
| **13. Design Thinking Cycle - Problem Definition** | **Week 27** |
| Team comes together to synthesize insights, share information, and collaboratively define the problem statement based on the analysis. | |
| **14. Final Report and Recommendations** | **Week 28-29** |

| Activities | Duration/Dates |
|---|---|
| Compile final report with comprehensive findings, insights, and evidence-based recommendations. Present to stakeholders. | |

This adjusted timeline includes specific stages for reflection and analysis within both the action research and design thinking cycles, recognizing the iterative nature of these processes.

## Act

The "Act" section represents the actionable phase where the insights gained from observation and reflection are translated into concrete plans and interventions. This stage corresponds to the third phase in Stringer's cycle, emphasizing the development of an action plan based on the analysis conducted. It is also where the design thinking cycle translates problem definition into actionable steps. In the "Act" phase, the focus shifts towards planning and implementing solutions, leveraging the knowledge gained in the preceding stages to drive meaningful change and improvement.

**Timeline for Developing an Action Plan**

| Activities | Duration/Dates |
|---|---|
| **1. Kick-off Meeting** | **Week 1** |

| **Activities** | **Duration/Dates** |
|---|---|
| Establish project objectives, roles, and expectations. Discuss the importance of the inquiry and the desired outcomes. | |
| **2. Internal Data Review** | **Week 2-3** |
| Review internal student performance data, IEP goals, and existing literacy programs. Confirm data accuracy and identify potential gaps. | |
| **3. External Environmental Scan** | **Week 4-5** |
| Investigate broader educational trends, community influences, and external policies. Collaborate with external partners and review relevant literature. | |
| **4. Collaborative Workshops and Focus Groups** | **Week 6-8** |
| Conduct workshops with educators and focus groups with students and parents to gather qualitative insights. | |
| **5. Surveys and Interviews** | **Week 9-10** |
| Distribute surveys to teachers, students, and parents. Conduct interviews with key stakeholders and experts. | |
| **6. Data Analysis and Visualization** | **Week 11-12** |
| Analyze collected data, identify patterns, and visualize findings. Prepare a preliminary report for review. | |

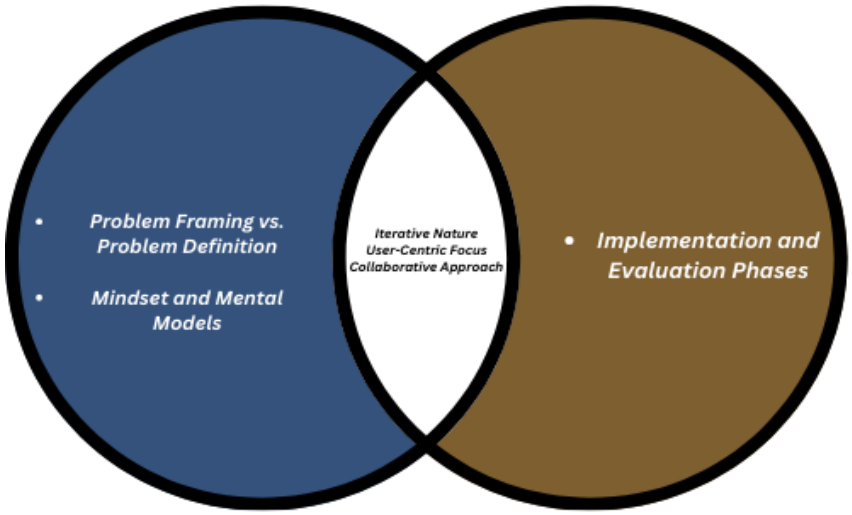
| Activities | Duration/Dates |
|---|---|
| **7. SWOT Analysis** | **Week 13** |
| Conduct a SWOT analysis with a cross-functional team to evaluate internal and external factors. | |
| **8. Literature Reviews and Research Synthesis** | **Week 14-15** |
| Complete literature reviews and synthesize research findings. Integrate relevant insights into the inquiry plan. | |
| **9. Reflection and Initial Analysis** | **Week 16-17** |
| Allow individual team members time for in-depth reflection and initial analysis of the collected data. | |
| **10. Action Research Cycles** | **Week 18-22** |
| Initiate action research cycles, implementing interventions, observing outcomes, and reflecting on results. | |
| **11. Team Collaboration and Analysis** | **Week 23-25** |
| Facilitate team meetings to discuss individual analyses, share insights, and collectively analyze the overall findings. | |
| **12. Reflection and Analysis in Stringer's Cycle** | **Week 26** |

| **Activities** | **Duration/Dates** |
|---|---|
| Individual and collaborative reflection on data in alignment with Stringer's action research cycle. Identify emerging patterns and potential causes. | |
| **13. Design Thinking Cycle - Problem Definition** | **Week 27** |
| Team comes together to synthesize insights, share information, and collaboratively define the problem statement based on the analysis. | |
| **14. Action Plan Development in Stringer's Cycle** | **Week 28-29** |
| Collaboratively develop an action plan based on the identified problem definition and insights. Define clear objectives, strategies, and responsible parties. | |
| **15. Final Report and Recommendations** | **Week 30-31** |
| Compile final report with the action plan, comprehensive findings, insights, and evidence-based recommendations. Present to stakeholders. | |

This timeline incorporates a dedicated stage for developing an action plan, aligning with Stringer's Look, Think, Act cycle, and ensuring a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to addressing the identified reading challenges.

# Conclusion

## Comparison of Design Thinking Cycle and Action Research Cycle




### Similarities

**Iterative Nature:** Both the design thinking cycle and the action research cycle emphasize an iterative approach. They involve repeated cycles of observation, reflection, and adjustment based on new insights gained throughout the process.

**User-Centric Focus:** Design thinking and action research share a common emphasis on understanding the needs and perspectives of the end-users or stakeholders. Design thinking often

uses empathy to understand user experiences, while action research values participant perspectives in the research process.

**Collaborative Approach:** Both cycles encourage collaboration and teamwork. Design thinking promotes multidisciplinary collaboration to generate creative solutions, while action research involves collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and other stakeholders to address a problem of practice.

**Differences**

**Problem Framing vs. Problem Definition:** In design thinking, there is a focus on framing the problem in a way that encourages creative ideation. Action research, on the other hand, emphasizes problem definition through systematic analysis and reflection, often involving a more structured research framework.

**Mindset and Mental Models:** Design thinking often adopts a "bias towards action" mentality, encouraging rapid prototyping and experimentation. Action research, while also action-oriented, places a significant emphasis on systematic inquiry, data collection, and reflective analysis.

**Implementation and Evaluation Phases:** The action research cycle typically includes explicit phases for implementation and evaluation following the planning phase. In design thinking, these phases are often more fluid and integrated throughout the entire process.

**Incorporating Design Thinking into Action Research and Vice Versa**

### Design Thinking into Action Research

**Empathy in Problem Identification:** Incorporate design thinking principles by using empathetic approaches, such as user interviews or observations, during the problem identification phase of action research. This can enhance the understanding of stakeholders' perspectives.

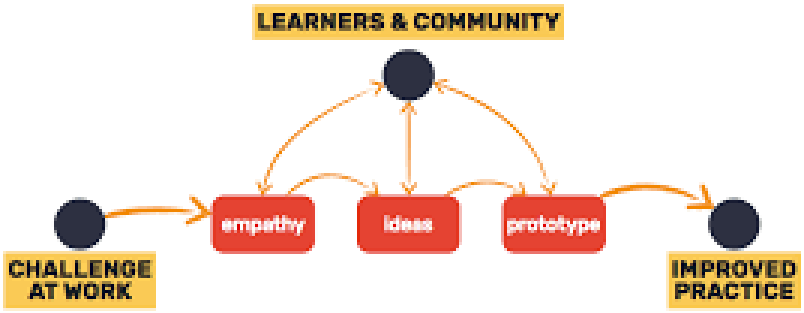
**Prototyping and Testing Solutions:** During the action planning phase, integrate design thinking principles by prototyping and testing potential interventions before full-scale implementation. This iterative testing process aligns with the design thinking mindset of learning through experimentation.

### Action Research into Design Thinking

**Data-Informed Ideation:** Utilize action research principles in the ideation phase of design thinking by incorporating data and insights gathered during the research process. This ensures that ideation is grounded in a thorough understanding of the problem.

**Structured Reflection in Prototyping:** Apply action research principles during the prototyping phase by incorporating structured reflection and analysis. This involves systematically evaluating the impact of prototypes, aligning with the reflective and data-driven nature of action research.

### Considering the Issue - Design Thinking vs. Action Research




Given the issue of students not reading on their grade level or facing reading challenges at Golden Goals, a hybrid approach could be beneficial. Starting with a design thinking cycle to empathize with students, teachers, and parents, and define the problem creatively, could set the stage for a well-informed action research cycle. The design thinking cycle can provide a space for innovative problem-framing and solution ideation, while the action research cycle ensures a systematic and evidence-based approach to understanding and addressing the issue. This integrated approach combines the strengths of both frameworks, leveraging creativity and structure to achieve a comprehensive and effective inquiry process.