

## Form A Focus Question

**F**ormulating a key question to be answered by in-school research:

- focuses the gathering of data
- helps identify key areas of the school's operation impacted by the impending innovation
- anticipates appropriate follow-up action
- suggests further questions that it may be necessary to pursue
- leads to the identification of roles in the research.

The question must have significance to:

- the implementation task
- the responsibilities of the administrator
- the staff, parents and the public whose cooperation and collaboration is essential
- the context.

Creating several different drafts or even versions of a question may be necessary as the issues are clarified.

## The Focus Question Checklist

**T**o make the question as useful as possible:

- ensure that a “yes” or “no” cannot answer the question
- define each major term or word in the sentence
- project into the future and identify the outcome of the research
- identify how it will be apparent when the in-school research is complete
- think about a particular teacher or student and how this question will impact that person
- reflect on the school's practices for a week

- keep a short journal
- brainstorm a list of ideas
- use a graphic organizer such as a concept map
- keep the focus question open-ended. Start with phrases such as “What happens when...”, “How do...”; “What is the role...”; or “What procedures...”.
- consider the first attempt at question-writing as a first draft, then revisit the thinking about the question repeatedly. Does the question respond to the implementation task?