

Case Study

90th School

A large school in Astana with 1,787 students and 128 teachers. We applied to participate in the SHARE project and attended the seminars. The reason for participating in this project was the low quality of education at the school during the 2023–2024 academic year and the need for methodological support for teachers. In September 2024, the school's core research team was formed. The core team members are: G.A. Abdramanova, B.A. Ortayeva, G.Z. Zhanzakova, Zh. Omirzakh, and G. Shaimardan.

This initiative was driven by the question of whether it could support changes in our school and help our teachers' professional development. The central issue was whether the direction had shifted: improving student learning through teacher practice in the classroom depends on whether the teacher can deliver knowledge at a level appropriate to the student's needs.

This raises the question: how competent is the teacher in supporting student learning, engaging all students in the learning process, and delivering instruction tailored to students' needs? Our main goal is to support teachers in using action research as a tool to improve teaching and learning, by creating the right conditions and a favorable environment.

To engage teachers in action research, we first conducted a survey to identify the challenges they face in teaching students. The survey helped uncover teachers' needs, barriers, and difficulties.


The survey included questions such as:

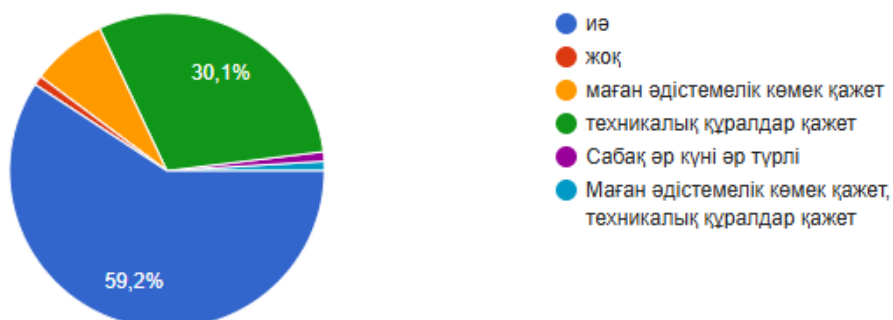
- What is an effective lesson?
- In your opinion, what are three criteria for an effective lesson?
- Do you feel you have enough experience to deliver effective lessons?
- Are you satisfied with your lessons?
- How is your relationship with your colleagues?
- What is the main role of a teacher in the school?

A total of 103 teachers participated in this survey. The majority of them indicated that they still need support in delivering effective lessons. As a result, the following indicators were identified.

Сабақтарыңызға көңіліңіз толады ма?

103 ответа

 Копировать диаграмму



Are you satisfied with the lessons conducted?

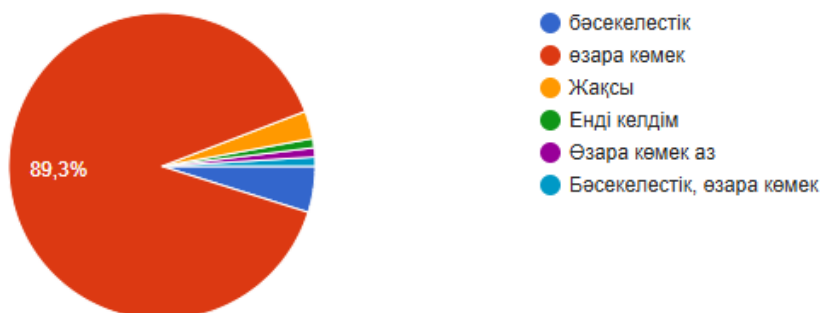
- Blue (59.2%) – Yes
- Red (3%) – No

- Yellow (5.7%) – I need methodological support.
- Green (30.1%) – Technical equipment is needed.
- Purple (1%) – The lesson is different every day.
- Light blue (1%) – I need methodological support and technical equipment.

Әріптестеріңізбен қарым-қатынасыңыз қалай?

 Копировать диаграмму

103 ответа



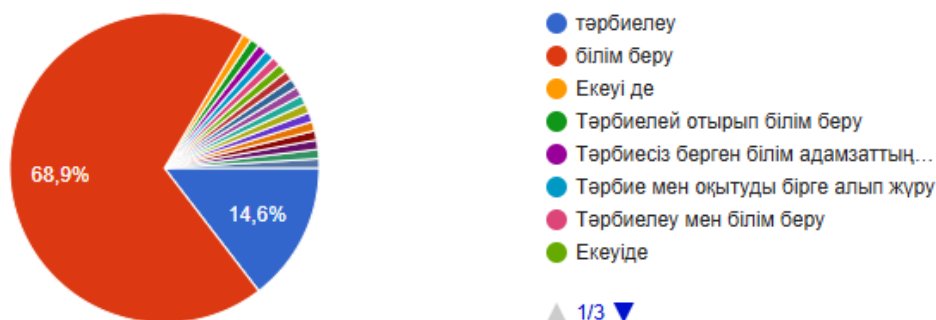
How is your relationship with your colleagues?

- Blue (4.3%) – Competition
- Red (89.3%) – Mutual support
- Yellow (3%) – Good
- Green (1%) – Just arrived
- Purple (1%) – Little mutual support
- Light blue (1%) – Competition and mutual support

Мектептегі мұғалімнің басты рөлі қандай?

 Копировать диаграмму

103 ответа



What is the main role of a teacher in school?

- Blue (14.6%) – To nurture
- Red (68.9%) – To teach

The core team members conducted a seminar for the entire school staff on action research. To verify the authenticity of the survey responses, individual interviews were held. As a result, it became evident that there were differing views between school administration and teachers regarding research lessons. A meeting was held with the core team to address this issue. To provide support, it was decided to organize comprehensive coaching sessions on the SHARE project.

After identifying the issues, data was collected, and based on that data, research groups were formed. For instance, subject-based research groups were created. Using the data, we identified two focus groups for ourselves. What were the problems in these classes? It wasn't just about the quality of education—there was also an absence of a supportive learning environment, a lack of peer relationships, and low student motivation.

We didn't view the data from a single perspective; instead, we looked at several problem areas in those classes: the lack of a positive social environment, students' lack of desire and interest in learning, and a general disengagement. Was attending class meaningful for these students, or was it just a matter of being present? We needed to understand whether these students were capable of adapting to learning, or if they were struggling to do so. Therefore, we conducted multiple surveys with both students and parents of these classes, as well as with the teachers who taught them.

Through this action research, collaborative planning was carried out with subject teachers, and seminars and coaching sessions were conducted with them. However, these classes are still considered the most challenging to teach by their subject teachers.

So, we set ourselves a new goal: how can we better support the teachers in the research groups? We continued collecting data and developed an action algorithm based on our findings.

Collected Data on Class 7 "G"

Students' Psychotypes

№	Оқушының аты-жөні	Тұлғаның типтері
1	A-1	<input type="checkbox"/> Schizoid
2	A-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotive
3	A-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Asthenic
4	Ә-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious
5	Ә-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotive
6	F-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Asthenic
7	E-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotive
8	E-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Epileptoid
9	E-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotive
10	Ж-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Epileptoid
11	Ж-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Hysteroid
12	К-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotive
13	M-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotive
14	M-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Asthenic

15	O-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Hyperthymic
16	C-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Asthenic
17	C-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Paranoid
18	C-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Hyperthymic
19	T-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotive
20	T-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Asthenic
21	Y-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Hyperthymic

Summary of the Survey Results from Students



Which subjects do you have difficulties with in your studies?

- 12 students – Physics
- 6 students – Algebra and Geometry
- 3 students – Geography
- 2 students – Biology
- 2 students – Russian language
- 2 students – No difficulties

Which subject do you like?

- 5 students – Russian language
- 6 students – Kazakh language
- 2 students – English language
- 2 students – Algebra
- 7 students – History

3 students – Chemistry
 1 student – Biology
 3 students – Labor (work-related subject)
 3 students – Physical education

Does discipline in class disturb you?

7 students – Yes
 7 students – No
 6 students – Sometimes

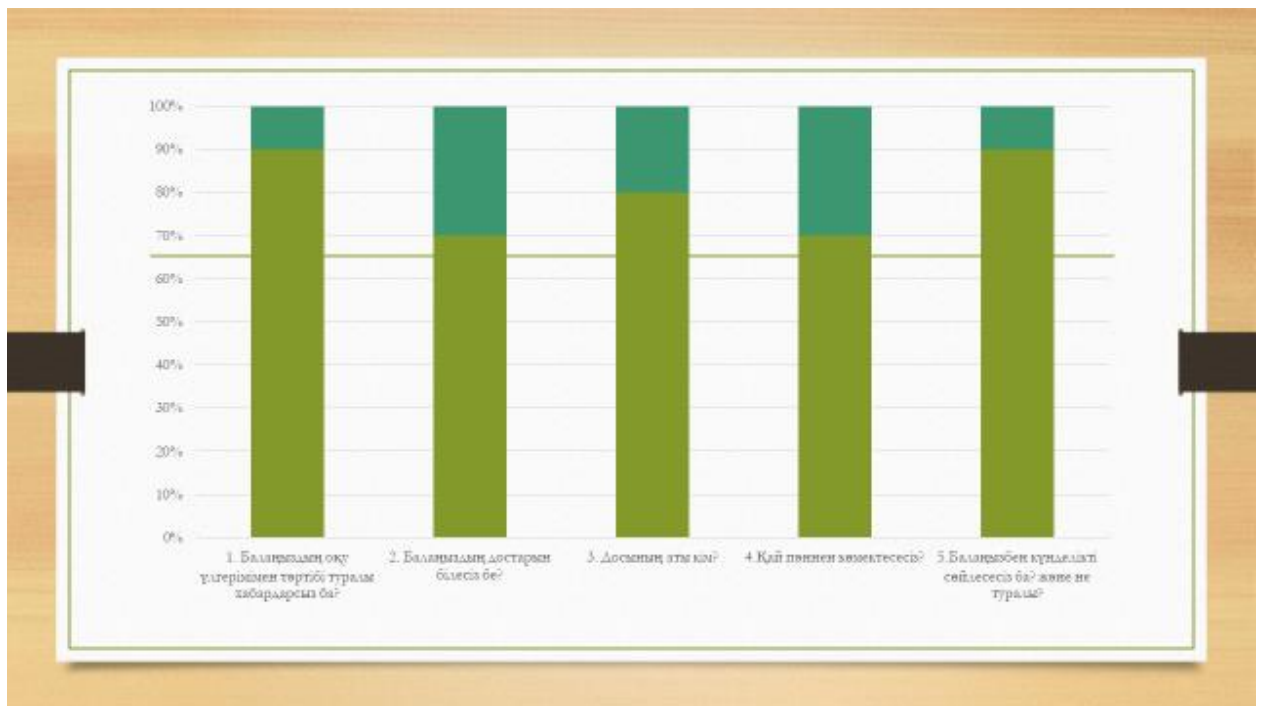
What kinds of tasks do you like in lessons?

8 students – Group tasks
 4 students – Individual tasks
 1 student – In the form of a game
 2 students – Oral tasks
 1 student – Testing
 2 students – Written tasks
 1 student – Reading text
 1 student – Fun tasks

How are your relationships with classmates?

14 students – Good
 4 students – Average
 1 student – Bad
 1 student – Hardly communicate

Ата-аналар сауалнамасының қорытындысы				
1. Балаңыздың оқу үлгерімімен тәртібін туралы хабардарсыз ба?	2. Балаңыздың достарын білесіз бе?	3. Досының аты кім?	4. Қай пәнмен көмектесесіз?	5. Балаңызбен күнделікті сөйлесесіз ба? және не туралы?
Иә	Иә	Пр	Ррр	Про
Иә	Иә	Медиа	Елжамбай	Күнделікті сабақтан кейінде сөйлесеміз. Мектеп жайлы, достары жайлы, сабақ жайлы.
жауабы	на	Алихан, Аян, Игорь, Мұрас, Назгуль, Тұрар	физика	мәңгілі түрде
Өзіме	Білемін	Жанерке	Елжамбай	Көптеп разговариваю
Иә	Онда емес	Медиа	Елжамбай	Иә
Иә	Жоқ	Білемеймін	Математика	Надмостары
Иә	Иә	Көп достары	Елжамбай	Өзіме
Бар	Хабары бар	Аман	Оян үлгерді	Күнделікті жаңалықтарын сұрап отырамын
Жоқ	Жоқ	Білемеймін	Елжамбай	Иә, әртүрлі
Иә	Омар Нұрсұлтан	Дәуірханов	Жоқ	Иә
Иә	Иә	Нұрасыл Арсен	Орыс тілі	Иә, әр түрлі әңгіме туралы сөйлесеміз
Иә	Жоқ танымаймын	Танымаймын	Өзіңсі көмек бересі Математикадан	Иә анда саңда
Иә	Иә	Арыстан	Ауылдаш балалардан	Сөзге жайлы, оқып жатқан кітабы жайлы
Иә	Иә	Іну	Математика қазақ тілі	Иә



Мұғалімдердің сауалнамасының қортындысы		
7"г" сыныбында сіз беретін пәнге қолдау қандай?	Сабақ берудің тиімді әдіс тәсілдері қандай?	Сынып оқушыларымен қарым-қатынасыңыз қандай?
Оқушылардың тәртібі	Синтагм және орфографиялық жазба	Жақсы
Оқушы қызығушылығының тез көгеруі, азын тапсырмаларды оқушы.	Оқушылардың орын ауыстыру, үлгерімі төмен оқушыларға қолдау көрсету, жұптық жұмыс	Жақсы
Оқушылар тәртібі. Оқушыларға компьютерлердің жетіспеуі.	Сабақты әртүрлі платформалар арқылы қызықты етіп өткізу. Практикум тапсырмалар пайдалану.	Орташа
Оқушылардың оқушы міндеттерімен түсінеуі	Рөлдік ойындар	Жақсы
Білім деңгейінің төмендігі	Жақсымын интеллектуал	Жақсы
Өткен сыныптағы оқушылар	Сараптама оқыту	Жақсы
Оқушылардың өзінге қызығушылығы арттыру	Жауап әдістері	Жақсы
Оқушылардың еңбектенуіне қызығушылығы жоқ, материал игерінеді	Өткізуді, ойын түрде өткіземін. Тәжірибелік сабақ жасау	Жақсы
Оқушылардың тәртібі туралы жазба	Белсенді оқыту әдістері : топтық жұмыс, жеке жұмыс, Сараптама оқыту әдістері	Жақсы
Оқушылардың арасында мүлде сабаққа қызығушылығы жоқ	Ыстық орындық, міндет шешу	Жақсы

Collected Data on Class 9 "B"

Summary of Student Survey Results

1. Subjects students struggle with:

- **Common responses:**
 - Algebra, Geometry
 - Mathematics
 - Russian Language
- **Other responses:**
 - All subjects

- No difficulties
- "None" or "No struggle"

2. Favorite subjects:

- Kazakh Language and Literature
- World History
- Physical Education
- Biology
- English
- Literature
- Some answered: "None" or "No favorite"

3. Does classroom behavior disturb your learning?

- **Responses:**
- No: Majority
- Yes: Some
- Sometimes
- No disruptions at all
- "Yes, it does"

4. What types of tasks do you enjoy in lessons?

- Writing essays
- Doing different kinds of tasks
- Book-based tasks
- Writing in general
- Some responses indicated enjoyment of all tasks
- A few answered: "None"

5. How is your relationship with classmates?

- Good
- Very good
- "So-so"
- "Good, but the class is divided into groups"

Teacher Survey Summary – Class 9 "B"

1. What challenges do you face when teaching your subject in class 9 "B"?

- Students show indifference or lack of motivation.
- As the subject is taught only once a week, students often arrive late or skip class.
- Difficulties with listening and speaking skills.
- Many students are not interested and demonstrate poor discipline.

2. What are your effective teaching strategies?

- Dialogues, debates, group presentations, SWOT analysis, and comparative tasks.
- Pair work using computers and reinforcing the lesson with online games.
- Ethnographic writing.

- Text-based tasks, differentiated assignments, and critical thinking (CT) strategies.

3. How is your relationship with the students?

- Good.
- At a positive level.

4. Suggestions:

- Students need to understand the importance of learning and the value of skills developed through completing tasks.
- Collect smartphones from students; boys tend to play games during lessons.
- Increase student responsibility in learning.
- The class should be restructured or regrouped.

Summary of Parent Survey Results

1. **Are you informed about your child's academic performance and behavior?**

All 17 parents answered "Yes."

2. **Do you know your child's friends?**

1 parent answered "I don't know," 1 parent answered "No," and 15 parents answered "Yes, I know."

3. **What are your child's friends' names?**

Zhan

Meirlan

Not from the class

Ahmet

I don't know

Azamat, Darkhan

Nurbakyt, Daniyar

Kuralay, Asel, Adelina

Kuralay

Kausar, Kasiet

Asel, Aigerim, Kasiet, Azamat, Alibek, Meirlan, Kausar, Asilay

Ansar, Aizere, Asyl

Dastan, Absattar, Alibee

Nazym

Asilay, Kausar

Almas, Elkhan

4. **Which subject do you help your child with?**

Kazakh language

Russian language

I can help with English, but Anel never asked for help

Russian language

All subjects

None

He/she does it by themselves

I don't help

No

Varies at times

Russian and English

English

I don't help, he/she does it by themselves

Algebra

None

Kazakh language

5. **Do you talk to your child daily? If yes, about what?**

Yes

We often talk about all kinds of topics

Yes, daily. Generally about school and other issues

Yes, about lessons

We talk about behavior and studying

Yes, about everything

Yes, about all matters

Of course, daily. On various topics

About lessons

Because we faced such challenges, it became important for us to distribute roles to share responsibility. When participating in the lessons of these classes, the difficulty was that students were not focused and were restless, making the lesson very difficult. This problem made us reflect on how education should be delivered in these classes and how we can help. We divided roles among ourselves for this purpose. Each team member started their tasks accordingly.

A work plan was developed by the core team in line with the research question for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The core team's research question:

How can action research be used as a tool to improve teaching and learning?

As the core team, how can we help such classes at school? Will our research and the tools we offer actually be effective for them? Based on these questions, teacher research teams were established.

During this phase, teachers assessed their teaching methods and identified the main difficulties encountered during the learning process and in each other's lessons. The difficulties included low student motivation, challenges in mastering the material, and not considering individual student needs. Teachers decided to conduct action research to solve these problems. They sought ways to increase student activity and change teaching methods by taking into account each student's individual needs.

Two focus groups were selected from the school research teams.

The Kazakh language research team conducted studies in Grade 7 "F." This class was chosen as a focus group due to the low quality of academic performance, aiming to find ways to increase student interest. Teachers conducted research lessons based on surveys, interviews, social profiles, and observation results from students. To increase interest, active methods and AI technologies were used. Three cycles of lessons were conducted in the 2024-2025 academic year. Lesson plans were prepared based on collected data and research lessons were delivered. Reflection was done before and after each lesson. Lessons were co-planned taking into account suggestions from participating teachers and students. Students noted that using AI and digital technologies increased their interest in the lessons. Additionally, they mentioned that tasks assigned by teachers according to their abilities helped boost their activity.

The second focus group was the English language research team working with Grade 9 "B." It was found that difficulties in interpersonal relationships among students affected the class's

quality. The research team, considering the classroom situation, planned collaboratively based on students' behavior, social conditions, and interests. Tasks were prepared in accordance with the students' characteristics. The research involved tasks aimed at improving interpersonal relationships. Improving relationships among students was considered a way to enhance the quality of education. Conducted lessons were supported by teachers based on recommendations. Reflection was conducted before and after each research lesson. Teachers were critical friends to one another.

Coaching and methodological hours were held to assist teachers in conducting action research according to the plan.

The data processing algorithm was introduced to the administration and research team leaders. Work with data started in each group.

On February 6, a coaching session on "Role distribution and lesson observation" was held.

The coaching sessions were organized based on problems identified from teacher surveys and interviews.

Problems that arose in our research and ways to solve them

№	Problems	Solutions
1	There is a lack of alignment between the lesson objectives, research questions, and tasks during lesson planning.	<p>We organized two types of support. The first is the "methodological lesson" held every Wednesday. The second: the main researchers from the SHARE school shared experiences from the WALs-2024 conference, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My Lesson Study Journey" – Catherine Carol Lewis • "Visualizing Students' Thinking through Bansho in Lesson Study" – Shirley Tan • "Lesson Study – Collaborative Professionalism" – Kristin Kim-Eng <p>These resources were recommended to the research groups for use in their upcoming lessons. We will provide support to monitor the teaching process.</p>
2	Students respond in unison (chorus response), limiting individual participation.	
3	Pair and group work activities are not properly organized in the lesson objectives, research questions, and tasks.	
4	Challenges in fostering a collective (team) culture.	

Problems Identified During the Research:

1. **Lack of shared understanding:** There is insufficient knowledge and attitude about action research between school administration and teachers.
2. **Limited information about the importance of the research goals, objectives, and outcomes.**
3. **Insufficient preparation:** Lack of mastery of the research process algorithm; improper explanation of data collection and analysis methods.
4. **Weak communication:** Low level of connection and interaction between administration and teachers; lack of teamwork skills.
5. **Insufficient time and resources:** No dedicated time allocated for research.
6. **Low motivation:** Lack of interest from teachers and administration in conducting research.

7. **Lack of professional support:** No clear guidance on how and where to start research; limited opportunities for professional development such as coaching and training.
8. **Teachers not fully understanding their roles or fulfilling their duties properly.**

Work Done to Address the Issues:

- Interviews conducted with teachers;
- Research lessons held;
- Lessons observed;
- Lesson plans discussed;
- Common recommendations developed;
- Research groups formed and roles assigned;
- Training on providing effective feedback conducted.

Result: It was determined that there is no common understanding of action research between school administration and teachers.

Steps Taken to Solve the Identified Problems:

Coaching sessions were held:

1. **Theoretical part:** Introduction to the purpose, significance, and objectives of action research.
2. **Practical part:** Working with cases. Analyzing data on school quality and relationships. Identifying problems and formulating research questions. Developing data skills: training on data collection, analysis, and drawing conclusions. Using data visualization tools (graphs, charts).
3. **Developing teamwork culture:** Strengthening the connection between teachers and administration. Developing skills for joint discussions and decision-making.
4. **Building a professional community:** Creating a platform for experience sharing among teachers. Using experiences from similar research in other schools.
5. **Becoming a “critical friend” in peer lesson observations:** Emphasizing the importance of providing genuine and constructive feedback.

Result: Participants understood the importance of data work and teamwork. They realized their roles, and team work became more active. Through thorough reflection before and after lessons, effective planning for subsequent lessons was enabled. This contributed to the real and concrete conduct of research group work.

What Teachers Learned Through Observation:

- They learned to observe students’ authentic behavior. Actions during lessons or breaks provide more accurate information than surveys. Identifying student psychotypes helped develop tasks tailored to them, aiding teaching and learning.
- Indirectly identifying reasons for low engagement or motivation, such as teacher-student relationships, peer interactions, or difficulty understanding topics.
- Clarifying situations that increase or decrease motivation.

Example: Students with peer support tend to be more active.

Using Surveys, Interviews, Tests:

- Gaining insight into students' opinions and inner views that may not be observable.
- Understanding parents' attitudes and relationships with their children, which affect behavior and academic performance.
- Revealing teachers' perspectives and challenges; understanding what they focus on and which methods work best.

Summary:

- One method alone is insufficient – it is important to combine methods.
- Real situations and student opinions may differ.
- Empathy, trust atmosphere, and systematic observation are crucial when working with students.
- It is necessary not only to identify problems but also to develop concrete solutions.

New Questions Raised by the Research:

1. Why do some teachers avoid professional development?
 - Do they really not understand, or lack confidence?
 - Does the school atmosphere or leadership style suppress them?
2. Why is it difficult for participants to share their experiences?
 - Is there negligence in conducting research?
3. How honest are the participants?
 - Did they speak openly and truthfully?
 - Did responses change when teachers or administration were present?

Conclusion:

As a result of the research, teachers learned what they can do and how to plan by asking research questions. Trust developed not only toward the teacher but among colleagues. Teachers realized they are not alone but part of a team.