CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH: EXAMINING EVERY CORNER

By Andres C. Matawaran
Senior Education Program Specialist

In this world where everyone knows that change is the only permanent thing, it is a necessity that everything should undertake modification. The same concept applies in the field of education. With the fast pacing change in the needs of learners, teachers must respond to it on an ongoing basis. One method, which teachers can use, is the classroom action research.

Defined as a tool that is used to help teachers and other educators uncover strategies to improve teaching practices (Sagor, 2004), classroom action research provides an avenue for teacher learning. It is also considered as a form of research that is authentic and meaningful to the teacher-researcher because the teachers in their own classroom space conduct it and it provides opportunities for teachers to be learners by improving instructional practices and reflecting pedagogical choices as well. Although action research is not a new method or idea to education, the notion of conducting research in a classroom setting can be an intimidating idea to some teachers, especially when the thoughts connected to traditional research, such as engaging in statistical analysis or establishing control and experimental groups come in.

Apparently, when teachers conduct research in their own classrooms, the procedure needs not to be as formal as traditional research due to the nature of student learning. The action research process can be defined as a recursive ongoing process of systematic study in which teachers examine their own teaching and students' learning through descriptive reporting, purposeful conversation, collegial sharing, and critical reflection for the purpose of improving classroom practice (Miller and Pine, 1990). While there is no requirement that the findings be generalized to other situations, as in traditional research, the results of classroom action research can add the knowledge base.

Albeit it is often heard that many practicing classroom teachers are too busy to read research studies, let alone conduct research. For many practitioners, research appears to be a complex set of steps too difficult and time-consuming for classroom teachers to participate in or
lead. Teachers who are immersed in their own classrooms may find research irrelevant because there is little research written by practicing teachers, and many times it does not relate to the daily activities in classrooms (Ferrance, 2000; McBee, 2004). However, research is conducted in many educational settings and often has a positive impact.

In Johnson and Button’s 2000 study, teachers noticed the links between their own learning and the learning of their students, affirming that the principles of good learning that they used with their own students applied to their own classrooms. They found by using action research, teachers began to appreciate their own ability to increase knowledge through their own projects. According to Sax and Fisher (2001), action research allows teachers the opportunities to identify changes they need to make in their teaching practices by providing teachers with the framework to build their own classroom projects. In many cases, when teachers design their own action research projects, they use a systematic approach to ascertain answers to instructional questions or issues. This type of implemented professional development is powerful because it is ongoing, interactive, and systemic.

Therefore, it can be said that teacher improvement and teacher change occur as teachers learn more about their teaching and instruction.

Sources:

Action Research: A Tool For Improving Teacher Quality And Classroom Practice
Katherine A. O’Connor, H. Carol Greene, Patricia J. Anderson
Department of Curriculum and Instruction, East Carolina University

The What, Why and How of Classroom Action Research
*PDF File from Google

Action Research in Teacher Education: Classroom Inquiry, Reflection, and Data-Driven Decision Making
Carrie Eunyoung Hong and Salika A. Lawrence
William Paterson University
Florida Literacy and Reading Excellence
Professional Paper
Action Research