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SALUTATION

Assalamuallaikum w.b.t,

Alhamdulillah, firstly I would like to thank Allah for showered us with His blessing. All the way that He helps and eases for me and team mates were such permission those we really hope for. What can be proud more is we have such a big and kind hearted person with strong determination lecturer, sir Azmi bin Abd Rahman. He is very eager in guiding us to publish our own writing and guiding us very well to publish our first TINTA publication in the defined way. He deserved so much credit and salutation. Not to forget, with the cooperation given together with all the joyful and tenses time to finish this book, it was a bitter sweet experience that worth to be going through together. Thanks to my assistant, my graphic designer, my editors and my reporters, we all did a very good job with all our dedication and effort to publish this book. Thank you all, with love, we should be proud with our selves!

To all dear readers, please enjoy reading ours writing, may it be useful for you, Thank You supporters!

Chief Editor SOK

Fatin Nurain binti
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INFORMATION

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ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This article presents about the problems and challenges faced by teachers in their teaching. The problems could be overcome by practicing certain approaches which is related to action research. Also included in this article are steps in implementing action research, types of action research, reasons of doing action research and misconceptions in the understanding of such practice.

KEYWORDS

Challenges in teaching; action research

Introduction

Teachers in school have constantly faced various kinds of problems and challenges in their teaching. Ideally, the problems that they faced would be rectified with certain sets of approaches, and the effectiveness of such practices would be reflected based on to what extent does the practices managed to solve the problem. Additional ideas could be added to weave across the features to strengthen the approaches taken for future use. Significantly, if teachers do such practices, they have actually exposed themselves with the vital concepts of action research. The stated practices could be regarded as the informal way of approaching the steps needed in doing action research. Other practices of such informal approach are the

try-outs of new strategy, different style of lesson planning as well as finding different approaches to deal with the problem.

Those actions could be transformed into formal practices by three approaches, which are careful planning, acting and evaluating. As suggested by Laycock and Long (n.d.), action research could be defined as '*formal, systematic way of doing something different, to find out what really works for both educator and students*'. Ference (2000) suggested the similar definition to action research, which is '*a disciplined inquiry done by a teacher with the intent that the research will inform and change his or her practices in the future*'. From the definitions given, the ideas that explain the concept of action research as stated beforehand could be deciphered with much more organized and structured comprehension.

Action research is regarded as a typical practice done in schools. It is a series of reflective processes in order to achieve improvement in teaching and learning setting, thus will benefit both the teacher and the learners. The practice of action research is also defined by collaborative work, where educators work together to find ways to solve everyday problem in their classroom. Plus, it does not only deals with perspectives in teaching and learning based solely on theories, but also engages in real-life situation with every aspects related to the framework of education. Thus, action research possesses the higher significant as it is closer and meaningful to them.

One major characteristic of action research is exemplified with reflective process or cycle. Usually, the process will be initiated by one area of focus. It is then followed by the process of reflection, following the changes brought by the action taken. New issues will then arise, and the same cycle will be taking place. There could be as many cycles as possible in order for the practitioners to achieve constant improvement. Apart from that, action research could be done on the basis of individual, group work, or even wider scale such as the ones which involve more

related individuals in certain school, thus not only involving the teachers, but also the administrative officers or other division such as discipline board. School-wide action research could be utilized to cater the needs to rectify school problems. A wider framework of action research could also be adapted to the ones done for district-wide, which ideally will involve more people.

Arthur-Kelly et al., (2007) suggested several points as the general framework of action research. The first point explains action research as '*a form of staff development, with participants' own practice as the focus*' (Spedding, 2005). Secondly, action research is about finding scientific and situation-specific ways to overcome certain problem in classroom. Finally, as suggested by Grundy (1995), action research revolves around the concept of involvement, which signifies the commitment of the researcher, and also improvement, which is specified by the changes achieved as the result of the implementation of actions. All in all, the definition paired up with the general framework could be used to explain about action research.

Steps in Implementing Action Research

Basically, one cycle of process in action research is represented by the combination of identify, execute, and reflect. However, the steps could have deeper explanation with each one of it being given individual focus. Laycock and Long (n.d.) listed five distinct steps in action research, generally based on the concept and definition of action research itself. The steps, although is different from one another, are interconnected, with each preceding step holds the vital basis for the following step.

i) Identify the issue

The first step that should be taken in doing action research is to identify the issue that is of the researcher's interest to work on. Related questions could be initiated with regard to the issue being chosen, as well as the possibilities

that could come out following the implementation of certain actions. Probing questions such as 'what *makes the students behave in certain ways*' and 'will the students follow the rules if the teacher do certain things' could be helpful to open wider insight towards the issue as the focus of the action research.

ii) Comprehend the issue

The second step is to comprehend the issue being chosen for the action research. This step could be done by doing a lot of library search and reading on the issue. Reading will provide the teacher as researcher with various perspectives regarding the issue. Good comprehension about certain topic will be very helpful in ensuring the researcher to stay focused. With the information and knowledge gathered from reading, it will provide the researcher the chance to reconsider the framework of the study, thus giving the chance to them to work on the changes that could make the study better. Series of adjustment and alteration could also be put into consideration once the researcher is equipped with good understanding of the issue.

iii) Try-out the idea

Following the comprehension of the issue is the try-out of the idea initiated, that could or could not be altered as the result of the reading done beforehand. Simply put, this stage will witness the application of the action, such as changes to approaches in dealing with issue in teaching and learning within the classroom setting. The data from the try out should be collected, by utilizing various methods such as interview, survey by questionnaire, journal entries, or classroom observation with the usage of checklist. Sufficient data will give credibility to the action research, thus it will make things really work. Any suspicion of made-up data could be prevented, and

the researcher will be able to be in the right track and stay focused along the process.

iv) Evaluate and reflect

The next step in action research is to evaluate and reflect. An individual involved actively in the process can evaluate the implementation of his action using all the data that was collected. Statistics and information gathered could provide the researcher with valuable input which is needed to gain improvement. In the other hand, the researcher could also ask for others' opinion, such as friends or colleagues whom share the similar background in teaching and learning. From that, the researcher will be able to do the analysis, with sufficient consideration given to other's perspective, which will make the input become richer.

v) Improve the action and make necessary adjustments

The final step that complete one cycle of process in action research is to improve the action taken to rectify the issue highlighted, and make necessary adjustments to the approach to suit the needs. Action research is regarded as a cyclical process as the steps could be repeated several times, as one end of a cycle could lead to another with the highlight given to other related issues. Thus, the situation will be different between the first cycle and the next ones. Researcher should consider additional steps that could be taken to improve the approach used, hence will lead to a better result of such action.

Types of Action Research

Action research could be differentiated to several types based on the involvement of the participants. The participant of an action research could be an individual classroom teacher, with his focus given to the issues arise in the classroom, a group of teacher working on a common issue or area of interest, or it could be a team of

teachers and other related individuals who work on an issue which is relevant to a wider scope, such as the whole school or district. Ference (2000) suggested four different types of action research based on the participants, which are individual teacher research, collaborative action research, school-wide action research and district-wide action research. The characteristics of each type of action research will be discussed from the aspects of focus, possible support needed, potential impact, as well as the side effects that could possibly be taking place.

i) Individual Teacher Research

The first type is individual teacher research. The focus of this particular type of action research is the issues in one single classroom, with the researcher as the active participant of the activities in the classroom setting. As individual teacher research is a small-scale type of action research, the issue and the approaches might be only applicable and unique to that particular setting only. In terms of possible support needed, individual teacher who is working on the action research could possibly benefit from the guidance from his coach or mentor, usually among the senior teachers in his school. Plus, technology could be adapted to help the individual teacher with the process involved, such as data collection and documentation. It will provide support to the individual teacher in organizing the gathered analyzed data into proper set of documents for future needs. This kind of action research has the potential in reflecting the curriculum used for the teaching and learning, assessment used to evaluate students' performance, as well as the instruction used by the teacher for that particular classroom setting. Due to the nature of the small scope of this type of action research, the information gathered as well as the approach taken might not be applicable to other settings or participants, as the issue chosen as the main framework of the action research is unique to that particular classroom setting only. Plus, the significant findings from the action research could only be shared if the

teacher as the researcher has the effort of sharing it via participation in a meeting, conference, or publishing the research.

ii) Collaborative Action Research

The second type is collaborative action research. As the name suggest, it involves a group of teacher, with the minimal number of two, who face the same issue in their teaching practices and experience. The focus of this type of action research could be highlighted either on single classroom, or several classrooms with a common issue. Collaborative action research could benefit the support from the action research team itself, with every participant helping each other out in any way possible. On top of that, the team could also gain support from the administration along the process of the action research, perhaps in terms of retrieving the database and information regarding the students of the classrooms involved. Possible impact from collaborative action research is quite similar with changes applicable to curriculum, instruction and assessment, but the scope is wider. Plus, the findings could also signify the policy related to teaching and learning, where adjustment could lead to better practices. This type of action research has a positive effect in terms of promoting and improving partnership and collaboration between teachers, who are also colleagues.

iii) School-wide Action Research

School-wide action research, as the name suggest has a wider focus than the previous two types. It focuses on school issues, the ones which possess shared concern among all related parties, such as the teachers, administrative staff, the students as well as the parents. Possible issues could be the participation of parents in school activities, or discipline problems which demand all-round supports and participation for it to be solved. This type of action research could benefit from the support contributed by any

resources, professional development, organizational structure and the policy are some of the aspects with the potential impact following the implementation of the action research. With regard to professional development, Hewitt and Little (2005) stated that *'such plan involving professional development at the school level should be developed, implemented, and sustained to provide teachers with opportunities to develop a knowledge base or action research'*. With the involvement of more parties, district-wide action research will be more likely to face challenges, especially in channeling the information throughout the community within the district. As the issue has become the shared concern, thus the information should ideally be reported to the whole community. Partnerships could be promoted and improved among those involved, which will benefit in terms of the smoothness of action research process. Thus, unity could be achieved with everyone's commitment and involvement to make things work.

Reasons of Doing Action Research

i) Situation-specific

Based on the concept of action research, there are several reasons that could be outlined as the basis of the practice. First of all, action research is situation-specific, and it allows the researcher to focus on his own problem in the specific settings. Sometimes, suggestions and ideas could be utilized to rectify the problems, but it could be too broad and general to be adapted there and then. Different settings such as class, grade, school or community with different participants might be facing unique challenges, thus the approaches should be specific to the situation. As stated by Arthur-Kelly (2007), localized and personal focus of action research is one of the most significant strength of this practice. The findings and action taken would be unique and valuable to the teacher and the other possible participants, thus

school-related personnel involved in the process. Besides, the role of leadership, such as the school principal or the chairman of parent-teacher association could also provide support in handling related matters. Plus, the support could also be gained from external support, which involves partnership with other possible parties like the police or the organization of the community where the school is located. One possible impact from school-wide action research is the restructuring of school policy, such as the rules and regulations. With the involvements from more parties, more concerns were shared and deeper consideration is given to re-evaluate the existing programs, hence leading to the betterment of such implementation in school. In the other hand, this action research will offer better partnership between all parties involved, and improving the communication throughout the school system and communities, thus elevating the quality of education of the school.

iv) **District-wide Action Research**

The fourth type of action research is the district-wide action research. Among all, this type of action research involves the widest scope in terms of focus and support. As school issue is the focus of school-wide action research, district-wide action research shed the focus to common issues shared by the whole district. It could be related to the aspect of organizational, performance, approaches in the implementation, as well as the decision-making process. The commitment from related parties across the district is needed to support the implementation of the action research. Aspects such as documentation, communication and partnership demand every possible personnel or organization in the district to contribute their skills as a support. This type of action research could have impacts on similar aspects like the ones that school-wide action research has, but the aspects are shared by a wider community with more people involved. Allocation of

it could be regarded as highly 'owned' by the teacher as the researcher, with higher personal value to them.

ii) **Open participation and collaborative**

Laycock and Long (n.d.) suggested that the nature of open participation and collaborative aspect of action research as another reason of doing action research. Open participation will allow more involvement of personnel or groups, thus opening the chance to gain more input from various related background or experience related to the issue. As stated by Spedding (2005), '*action research provides chance to develop new and creative partnership to promote educational change and improvement*'. Collaborative nature of action research, in the other hand offers the chance for the researcher to work in group, in order for them to find the solution. In the concept of collaboration, McNiff (2002) suggested the involvement of '*critical friend*', with valuable opinion and critics, as well as '*validation group*', who will provide professional judgments to the progress of action research. Collaboration itself is characterized by the concept of ideas exchange, and two-way of sharing, development and problem-sharing. Partnership could be explained as when the teachers and others working cooperatively to achieve positive changes. Arthur-Kelly (2007) suggested an example of partnership done within a school setting, which involves the class teachers, counselor, executives, principal, parents, as well as itinerant teachers. Such partnership will provide wider perspectives of the issue, thus will allow better approaches to cater the needs to improve the situation. Collaborative inquiry could also be done not only limited to intra-school settings, but also with separate stakeholders. For example, between the discipline teachers and the policemen in-charge with the safety of the school area. As suggested by Earl-Slater (2002), quoted in Maimunah Ismail and Nor Wahizah Abdul Wahat (n.d.), action research could be regarded as a fancy way of saying "*let's study*

what's happening and decide how to make it a better place for people or community to live in."

iii) Multiple ways of knowing

With regard to partnership and collaborative aspects of action research, it also allows multiple ways of knowing among the participants, involving multiple data source from different background and expertise. Such characteristics will provide richness of multiple views and perspective, also known as triangulation. This approach is common in studying human behavior; which commonly viewed as complex, and dynamics to certain context and situational variable. Methods such as follow-up interview after classroom observation will allow the researcher to find out the underlying reasons for certain actions, hence allowing the action researchers to check consistency of their findings while providing fairer justification to the subjects being studied.

iv) On-going self-evaluation

Action research is a way of doing self-evaluation, as stated in the definition part. Repetitive cycle of process in action research provide the platform for the researcher to practice enquiry and reflection along the process of teaching and transmitting knowledge and skills to the students. Enquiry focuses to the steps taken in the initial cycle of action research, while reflection focuses more on the ones done in the future cycles. Based on the concept of action research itself, enquiry involves the process of deciding the focus, planning the action, carrying out the plan, collecting evidence, and reflecting on the evidence as the basis of judgment about improvement. While sharing the same framework, reflection focuses more on the planning for the next action, acting it out, observing the situation, and again, reflects on the implementation. On-going self-evaluation is regarded as something

that teachers need to do to improve themselves in their teaching practices. Stenhouse (1975) in Tan (2005) stated that '*teachers must enhance their educational skills and experience continuously by research, thus they are able to change the world of the classroom*'. The statement itself portrays the benefit for teachers in their engagement in action research.

v) **Utilize existing knowledge**

Another reason underlying the practice of action research is for the practitioners to utilize their existing knowledge in a proper way. By doing action research, the researchers will be able to learn more and understand certain issues not only limited to their own perspective, but also the perspectives of others. Several theories require application in the real life for the individuals to really comprehend about the concept, especially in teaching and learning context. Thus, better improvement is more likely to take place with such utilization of knowledge. This is consistent with McNiff (2002), who stated that appropriate form of support is needed in professional learning, to help the practitioners to celebrate what they already know, as well as to generate new knowledge.

Misconception about Action Research

Regardless of the fact that action research is widely practiced in the education field, there are still a few misconceptions in the understanding of such practice. Ference (2007) explained that insufficient comprehension about related aspects of action research is most likely to be the major reason of the misconceptions. First of all, action research is not a library research, where all that the researchers need to do is to gain as much information about the area of interest by only reading. Action research is also not a way to solve a problem by only finding out what is wrong. Simply said, the focus in action research is given to ways of improvement, and not only to what is wrong in the implementation of certain practices. Besides, action

research shed its highlight more on the action and application, and not only on knowing; hence the name 'action research'. As suggested by McNiff (2002), action research is regarded as a way of transforming values into practices. Researchers need not to find information on certain issues or individuals by utilizing action research, but use it to make things work, ensure that certain practices are applicable, strategized, and use the skills and knowledge to achieve optimum results. Finally, action research is not about learning why certain things are practiced, but about how things could be done in a better way.

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INTERVIEW SESSION

With Encik Abduk Rahman Bin Abdul Rahman

Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA

1. What is your background education?

I come from Bachelor of Information Science Library Management at UiTM, previously known as ITM and I am also studied in Master of Library and Information Science at Universiti Malaya.

2. How long have you been working in this field?

I have worked around 15 years old in this field.

3. What is your opinion regarding the Faculty of Information Management?

For me, Faculty of Information Management is one of the new faculty. So, this faculty is not so well known unlikely from the other faculty but this faculty has expanded quickly and well.

4. How to provide fresh graduate in Faculty Information Management?

I think, this faculty can provide two types of fresh graduates that encompass well in both academic and non-academic. For the academic, they can get the best students by helping those students to achieve good and satisfactory pointer every semester. For the non-academic, this faculty can get the fresh graduates with good in non-academic matter by having the students involves in sport, associations and uniform units.

5. What is the different between Faculty Information Management and other faculty?

Faculty of Information Management is different with other faculty which is in term of the specialty of the field. If the Faculty of Information Management it takes pride in being the pioneer in providing professional education to fulfil the manpower need of the country in three very important fields namely are information management, library management, and records management. While, the other faculty might be the pioneer in engineering, languages and so on.

6. From your opinion what can be learn from Information Management?

For my opinion, Information Management is the collection and management of information from one or more sources and the distribution of that information to one or more audiences. This sometimes involving those who have a stake in, or a right to that information. Management means the of and control over the structure, processing and delivery of information.

7. What is the specialty of Information Management program?

From my knowledge, Information Management program can be considered as specialty because it is a field which teaches on how to manage information, plus it is also being taught at Univsersiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti malaya (UM), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIA) and Universiti Selangor (Unisel).

8. In your opinion, is it posible for graduate in Information Management join other field in employment for example the accounting program?

Yes, these graduates are more versatile and flexible to join other field in employment because there are one name of Faculty of Information

Management but it will be divide to many field based on the individual's interest.

9. From your observation, how far can Information Management go further?

For me, our philosophy is to provide students with knowledge and skill in effective delivery and use of information systems, together with an awareness of the continuing development in the field of information technology. Knowledge of the principle and techniques required of an information professional oriented to one or all types of library or information centre, system or service, including library, archival, and record management, and other related disciplines. So in future, students can use their knowledge and experience to use in the work.

10. What are the skill that needed by the fresh graduate in order to improve their quality and capability in Faculty of Information Management?

For my experience, use the keywords like P.I.E.S..P stand for physical need. That means it is most important that your physical needs are met. Physical needs induce food, drink, warmth and shelter. I stand for intellectual need. These are needs that are met by using that part of the mind that are we thinking. E stand for emotional need. As example, how do we weel about ourselves and others. How we feel is linked to our emotions. Lastly S stand for social need. It is being able to join in activities and to communicate with other people is a way of meeting out social needs.

11. Based on your experience, what are the challanges for information proffesional to survive?

From the challenges that I faced in my experience, the challenge that will be faced by information professional in the future is information technology.

Nowadays information technology is growing at a rate beyond anyone expectations. This means any staff or librarians need to constantly be improving their skills. New technologies are always appearing, leading to previous information becoming obsolete.

12. What are your expectation for Faculty Information Management in the future?

Sincerely, I hope this Faculty of Information Management can get the best faculty equal with other faculty in Malaysia. Although this faculty is not famous like other faculty but this faculty can follow them slowly. So, Faculty of Information Management can be the best faculty because they can divide to many fields that can be chosen by student according to their interest.

HONORARY
CONDESCEDENT



PROF MADYA DR.
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CONDESCEDENT



CHE ZAINAB HJ. ABDULLAH

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You are invited to submit manuscripts for publication in the TINTA. The scopes of the journal include, but not limited to, the areas in Information Management

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1. Content

TINTA publishes full articles, brief notices, conference reports, project briefings, opinions, letters, clippings, and pointers of broad interest in information management.

Full articles should:

- o be of interest to a broad community of information management, and
- o Reflect work that has been completed, rather than just beginning.

Articles should not have been published previously in another magazine or journal, nor been available in a final version on a publicly available web site.

2. Matters of style

We prefer *TINTA* articles that are 1,500-5,000 words in length but in certain circumstances accept articles that are 5,000-10,000 words in length. They should be in English or Bahasa Melayu. Articles must include a 100-200 word abstract. We have the following additional preferences:

- o Text should be in Microsoft Word or rtf format.
- o Images may be in gif, png, or jpeg formats. Images can be handled several ways- as in-lines or as linked files. They normally should be no more than 700 pixels in width.
- o Hyperlinks to external sources are encouraged. URLs should be spelled out rather than embedded as links, either following the appropriate name/text or, if preferred, within the References section at the end of the file.
- o References must be in APA format.

3. Mechanics of submission

While we often receive completed manuscripts, we would prefer that you contact the editors at tintafpmi@gmail.com before you finish writing so that we can determine whether the topic, style, and approach are appropriate for *TINTA*.

We accept only electronic submissions. For any correspondence, keep in mind that the tinta_editor@gmail.com email address receives a large amount of spam and email to that address is filtered. Prepare your message with a proper subject line, body and signature block.

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Each author will be asked to submit a brief (50 - 100 word) biographical sketch along with his or her manuscript. Please contact the editors for details upon acceptance of your article.

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- After the authors and editors have agreed on a final draft, the revised text will be formatted in doc or pdf by *TINTA* staff.
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