



ACTION RESEARCH: BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

There is mismatch between the English needs of the society and the English education provided by the educational institutions. Even after 10-15 years of systematic teaching of English as a core subject the average Indian graduate seldom possesses English speech and communication skills. When they are required English to use English in interaction, they fail miserably in communication. The demand-supply gap in the English education scenario of the country manifests in the sprouting up of Institutes of English and the so called spoken English Classes. But their phenomenal growth all throughout India is an index of the failure of the English language teaching system in the educational institutions. This negative fallout of the English language teaching can be minimized if the institutions and teachers take up the English language skills enhancement task systematically by action-research.

INTRODUCTION

Action research is carried out by teachers in their own classrooms. It encourages a teacher to be reflective of his own practice in order to enhance the quality of education for himself and his pupils. It is a powerful method of bridging the gap between the theory and practice of education. Teachers are encouraged to develop their own personal theories of teaching from own class practice. Almost every teacher faces a number of problems in the classroom situations which need immediate solutions. However, teacher educators today, stress the need for the role of a teacher as researcher. The outstanding characteristic of the professional teacher is the capacity for autonomous professional self- development through the study of work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures. Research is important for the future development of the profession. A teacher is not a mere distributor of knowledge but an agent of change; an educational scientist.



The revised skill based syllabus of English recommends a learner centred methodology, which is reflected in the language and teaching procedures included in course books. Traditionally, class room practices have been dictated atleast in theory, by particular methods of teaching, based on theories of language and language learning. In practice, teachers use a variety of teaching techniques—eclectic approach, grammar-translation method are used side by side with elements of the direct method or communicative exercises. Heterogeneity of teaching activity is a prominent feature in most teachers' practice.

Features of Action Research:

1. Teacher himself/herself is the research worker. He himself/herself tries to solve the problems.
2. It is the difficulty of a teacher in his/her regular teaching, by scientific method he/she studies and brings about the necessary changes in teaching.
3. The action of the teacher is to uplift the standards of teaching in the local professional area.
4. Scientific attitude is developed amongst the research worker.
5. The teacher being the research worker and administrator the research is finished in limited time.
6. After the research the findings are brought into action therefore it is called as action research.

The Importance of Action Research:

1. Dissatisfaction is lessened. The status of the profession is increased as the problems in the teaching are searched and the solutions to them are sought.
2. The factual study of why the problem has cropped up and what effective measures can be taken to solve them is possible.
3. The new horizons of knowledge are opened for a teacher.
4. Action research is the best way of judging the utility of the new methods that have come up in the educational field. The teacher can maintain a balance between the findings of the research and the actual administration of it in education.

Some Areas of Action Research:

1. Students take less interest in learning English how can it be improved?
2. Students are weak in comprehension, how can their comprehension be improved?
3. Students commit many mistakes in writing how can it be minimized?
4. How can reading ability of students be improved?



5. How can writing ability of students be improved?
6. What are the effective methods of teaching?
7. To find measures to make teaching more effective
8. How to develop study skills and language skills
9. How to enrich pupil's vocabulary

Steps for Action Research

1. **Selection of Area** : First of all, the area in which the researcher feels interested is selected.
2. **Selection of the Problem** : The problem is pin pointedly found out, as per interest and liking of the research worker.
3. **Analysis of the problem** : Probable causes of the problem are traced out. That may be the hypothesis
4. **Tools** : The tools that are to be used are finalized.
5. **Selection of Sample** : Sample of students is selected on which the experiment is performed.
6. **Analysis of Data** : The data collected is analysed.
7. **Findings and Conclusions** : The teacher finds out the result by analysing the data. Conclusion are drawn

Now time has come when the teachers can be persuaded to come forward and undertake new researches. These researches will help to evolve new methodologies adopting appropriate teaching-learning strategies. This can play a decisive role in changing the scenario. The main thrust is on equipping the learner with communication skills useful in real life contexts.

New methodologies with emphasis on the four language skills will have to be initiated both in schools and colleges. These methodologies should depend on techniques that will motivate students to learn English and to enjoy learning it.



The quality of educational research is dependent upon scholarship, creative thinking and teaching that stimulates researchable questions. Developing your own theory of practice requires patience and perseverance. It evolves over time, through determined effort. It involves the development of a level of knowledge, skill, attitude, and autonomy that is necessary to give you the confidence and the competence to embrace a self-directed pedagogy. Above all, it involves the ability to critically engage your own beliefs and values, understandings and assumptions, and change them if necessary.

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