

CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Classroom Action Research (CAR) atau Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) merupakan penelitian yang dilakukan oleh guru (pendidik) di kelas atau tempat ia mengajar yang terfokus pada penyempurnaan proses dan praksis pembelajaran. Penelitian Tindakan Kelas berfungsi sebagai alat untuk menyelesaikan masalah-masalah yang muncul di kelas dan juga sebagai alat untuk in-service training, dimana guru menggunakan keterampilan dan metode-metode yang baru serta mempertajam kemampuan analitisnya. Selanjutnya, sebagai alat untuk menciptakan pembelajaran yang inovatif, sebagai alat untuk memperbaiki komunikasi antara guru dengan peneliti ilmiah, serta sebagai alat yang memberikan alternatif bagi permasalahan yang terjadi di kelas. PTK dilakukan melalui suatu siklus yang terdiri dari empat tahapan, dimulai dengan perencanaan aksi, dilanjutkan dengan aksi pembelajaran dan kegiatan observasi dan di akhiri dengan refleksi untuk menganalisis data yang diperoleh melalui aksi. PTK berbeda dengan penelitian formal atau ilmiah, meliputi pelatihan yang diperlukan oleh guru, tujuan penelitian, metode dalam mengidentifikasi masalah yang akan diteliti, penetapan teori dasar, penetapan sample penelitian, disain penelitian, prosedur pengukuran, analisis data, dan aplikasi hasil penelitian. Artikel ini diharapkan bisa membantu mahasiswa Prodi PGMI dalam melakukan penelitian mengingat mereka diwajibkan melakukan penelitian tindakan kelas untuk penyelesaian skripsi mereka.

Key Words: *action research, classroom, teacher*

A. Introduction

This paper is written to benefit students of Program Studi Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry in writing their theses. Since the students are obliged to conduct a classroom action research in finishing their study, they need resources which guide them on how to carry out such a research. As they are trained to be good teachers as well as good researchers, they need to be expert in doing this kind of research, for the research is related to the problem faced by teachers in their classroom. Ur (1996: 328) states that

classroom action research is carried out by teachers on phenomena in their own classrooms. It is meant primarily to improve the teacher-researcher's own teaching process and is done based on a cycle of investigation, action and re-investigation by two or more collaborating teachers.

There are several important points which are described in this paper that are related to classroom action research. They are definition of classroom action research, the purpose of classroom action research, steps in carrying out classroom action research, the differences between formal research and classroom action research, and conclusion.

B. The Definition of Classroom Action Research

Bogdan & Biklen (1992: 223) explain that action research is the systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change. In addition, (Cameron-Jones: 1983) defines action research as a research carried out by practitioners with a view to improve their professional practice and understand it better. In accordance with that Allwright and Bailey (1991: 2) mention that it is a research centers on the classroom, and simply tries to investigate what actually happens inside the classroom. It treats classroom interaction as virtually the only object worthy of investigation.

The first definition refers to the general meaning of action research and the second reflects the meaning of *classroom* action research since it can be understood that the term *practitioners* used refers to teachers who practice and act in classroom. The last, perfectly indicates the action and the practice done by teachers in their own classrooms or issues on how teachers respond to learners' errors, how interaction occurs in classrooms, the feeling of teachers and learners during or after the lessons, and so on.

Action Research is a process in which educators examine their own practice systematically and carefully using the techniques of research. Participants design a research question, collect data throughout the year, analyze what they have learned, and write about their findings. Observations, interviews, surveys and journals are typical data methods that participants use to investigate their questions.

C. The Purpose of Classroom Action Research

The purposes of action research in school and classroom fall broadly into five categories (Cohen: 1989: 118). **First**, it is a mean of remedying problems diagnosed in specific situations, or improving in someway a given set of circumstances. **Second**, it is a mean of in-service

training, thereby equipping the teacher with new skills and methods, sharpening his analytical powers and heightening his self awareness. **Third**, it is a mean of injecting additional or innovatory approaches to teaching and learning into an on going system which normally inhibits innovation and change. **Fourth**, it is a mean of improving the normally poor communication between the practicing teacher and academic researcher. **Fifth**, it is a mean of providing a preferable alternative to more subjective approach to problem solving in the classroom.

In addition, other idea describing the topic is one of Borg, Gall, and Gall (1993: 391) that state other five purposes of classroom action research. **First**, classroom action research contributes to the theory and knowledge base needed for enhancing practice. **Second**, it support the professional development of practitioners by helping them become more competent in understanding and utilizing research finding and carrying out research themselves when appropriate. **Third**, it builds a collegial networking system for sometimes it involves several educators, even students and parents, working together. **Fourth**, it helps practitioners identify problem and seek solutions in a systematic fashion. **Fifth**, it can be used at all levels and in all areas of education, such as a mean of in-service training for principals.

Even though the explanation of different experts above seem to be different in form of statements, the essence of the idea is perfectly similar.

D. The Steps In Classroom Action Research

As mentioned in the introduction, a classroom action research is done through a cycle and is designed into four steps. Kemmis and Taggart (1988) state that the research is started by *planning* for an action. Then the plan is *implemented* as an action in classroom and the action is then *observed*. The *reflection* is done to analyze the data obtained during the action.

The following diagram displays a model of an action research cycle:

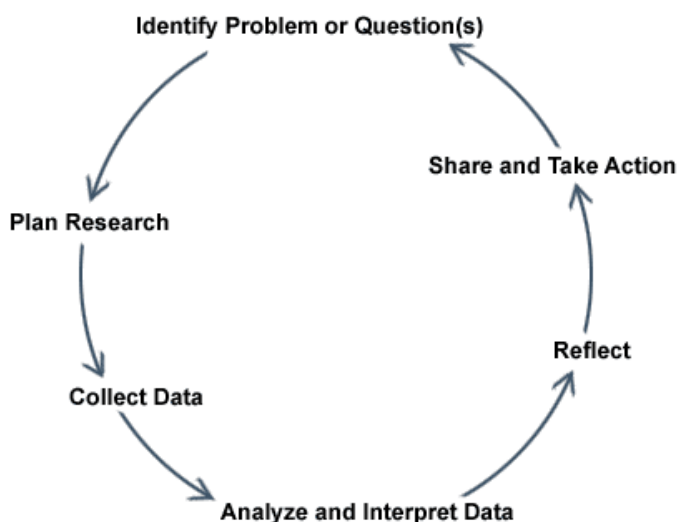


Figure 1: Classroom Action Research Model

Most models present action research as a cycle, starting with a question and ending with more questions. The image above is intended to capture the cyclic nature of classroom action research. Strickland (1987: 760) discusses the following sequence: 1) identify an issue, interest or problem; 2) seek knowledge; 3) plan an action; 4) implement the action; 5) observe the action; 6) reflect on your observations; 7) revise the plan.

In line with Strickland, Borg, Gall and Gall (1993: 392-394) explain that there are seven steps of action research. **First**, identify a classroom-related question that you would like to research. Good questions may include "Are my students more engaged when they work individually or when they work in groups?" or "Does computer research help students to understand the material better?" **Second**, examine any research applicable to your question. For example, you may look into studies about the impact of technology on learning.

Third, choose a teaching design that would work most effectively in answering your research question. For example, you may teach Chapter 1 using one particular method, teach Chapter 2 using another method, and then examine how the grades from the two chapters differed. This is not a controlled experiment, and you will not be able to prove anything distinct, but it will give you an idea of an answer.

Fourth, collect the data that you need to help answer your research question, such as student grades, results of a survey or your own anecdotal

notes about your classroom. Make sure to take notes on everything that you see or hear that relates to your question. **Fifth**, analyze the data you have collected to come to a conclusion. You can make a graph or table of test scores, categorize various anecdotes or make an annotated time line during the analysis process.

Sixth, implement a strategy based on your results. If you discovered that the strategy you were already using was helpful, the new strategy would simply build on what you were already doing. If you found, however, that an alternative way of teaching was more effective, you could brainstorm various ways to put that method of teaching into practice. **Seventh**, share your research with colleagues and others who might be interested. Discuss what you have discovered at team meetings or even during your lunch break. Alternatively, mention it to the principal and suggest that it be publicized to the rest of the staff.

To conclude, classroom action research follows a series of repeated steps. Finishing the first cycle, then the cycle begins once more, with the revision incorporated in a new action, which is itself observed, and so on. This process allows teachers who wish to investigate events in their own classroom to take constructive steps toward solving immediate problem, systematically reflecting on the outcomes. Thus the goals of classroom action research are achieving local understanding and developing viable solutions to problems.

E. The Differences Between Formal Research and Classroom Action Research

Classroom action research differs in some important ways from formal research. Borg, Gall and Gall (1993: 397-398) claim that there are nine differences between them. **First**, *training needed by researcher*. Most formal research methods require extensive training to be used properly. Individuals who do quantitative studies need to be skilled in using various measurement techniques and inferential statistics. Those who do qualitative studies need specialized skills in collecting and interpreting intensive data on selected cases. However, most education practitioners can carry out action research on their own, in collaboration with colleagues, or with the aid of a research specialist. They do not need advanced skills in research and interpretation.

Second, *goals of the research*. The goals of formal research are to produce knowledge that is generalized to a broad population of interest to develop and test theories. By contrast, action research is aimed at obtaining

knowledge that can be applied directly to the local situation. It has the goal of contributing to the training and hence the competent of education practitioners. **Third**, *methods of identifying the problem to be studied*. In formal research, problems for investigation usually are identified through a review of previous research. researchers may choose to study problems that interest them, but they tend to be problems that do not relate to their work responsibilities. In action research, by contrast, the educators investigate precisely those problems that they perceive to be interfering with their efficacy and perhaps that of their colleagues, or that involves important goals they want to achieve in their work.

Fourth, *procedure for literature review*. In formal research, an extensive literature review, focusing on the primary source materials, is necessary. The review is needed to give the research thorough understanding of the current state of knowledge about the problems being investigated. This knowledge enables researchers to build on the knowledge accumulated by others in designing and interpreting their own research. for action research, researchers only need to gain a general understanding of the area being studied. Hence, a more cursory literature review, focusing on secondary sources, is usually adequate. **Fifth**, *sampling approach*. Informal research, researchers aim to select either a random or representative sample of the population to eliminate sampling bias as a possible factor affecting the result. However, action researchers use as subjects the students or clients with whom they typically work.

Sixth, *research design*. Formal research emphasizes detailed planning to control for extraneous variables that can confuse the interpretation of the results. By contrast, action researchers plan their procedure more loosely, make change freely during the action phase of the study if they appear likely to improve the practical situation and complete the study fairly quickly. Little attention is paid to control of the situation or elimination of sources of errors or bias. Because the researchers tend to be personally involved, bias is typically present. **Seventh**, *measurement procedures*. Researcher who do formal studies attempt to find the most valid and reliable measures available. As a result. They may first evaluate available measure to conduct a trial run of the measure selected for the research prior to doing the research itself. Action researchers, however, often use convenient measures or standard tests, such as those routinely given in the course of classroom instruction.

Eighth, *data analysis*. Formal research often involves complex analysis of data, but raw data are rarely presented. Tests of statistical

significance are usually emphasized. In formal qualitative research, the researcher engages in careful, reasoned analysis of intensive case data to determine their consistency with the theory in which is research is grounded. However, most action research involves simpler analysis procedures, with a focus on practical significance rather than statistical significance. **Ninth**, *application of result*. Researchers who do formal research emphasizes the theoretical significance of their findings and implications for further research. they may discuss the practical implications of their result, but this is not a requirement or the reflection on the study's merit. In action research, by contrast, the practical significant of the result is of foremost importance. Action researchers report their findings mainly in an effort to clarify how the findings might affect their own work and to inform their colleagues about the possible implications for professional practice.

F. Conclusion

Action research is essentially the *scientific method* of teaching. Teachers use action research to figure out exactly what works in the classroom and what does not. With so many teaching strategies at their disposal, teachers need to determine which ones best work for them and for their students, rather than simply going along with the newest educational trend.

Classroom Action Research is a method of finding out what works best in a own classroom so that teacher can improve student learning. There are many ways to improve knowledge about teaching. Many teachers practice personal reflection on teaching, others conduct formal empirical studies on teaching and learning. Classroom Action Research is more systematic than personal reflection but it is more informal and personal than formal educational research.

The goal of classroom action research is to improve teacher's own teaching in his own classroom, department, or school. While there is no requirement that the findings be generalized to other situations the results can add to knowledge base. Classroom action research goes beyond personal reflection to use informal research practices such as a brief literature review, group comparisons, and data collection and analysis. Validity is achieved through the triangulation of data. The focus is on the practical significance of findings, rather than statistical or theoretical significance. Findings are usually disseminated through brief reports or presentations to local colleagues or administrators.

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