

'CAR KIT' TO ENCOURAGE NOVICE TEACHERS TO CONDUCT CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Classroom Action Research has been introduced through seminars and workshops in Indonesia since 1990's. For experienced teachers, it has been a big help to provide another model of research which is considered effective as teachers' learning strategy. For novice teachers, however, action research is assumed to be an exclusive issue for it requires them to understand complicated terms and techniques. Moreover, various constraints such as teachers' limited time, scientific writing problems and insufficient knowledge resources often hinder teachers to carry out action research even in their own teaching practices. Therefore, there should be an effort to assist teachers to conduct an action research to cope with these constraints. Employing CAR KIT or Classroom Action Research Kit could be an effective starting point to conduct classroom action research. This instrument would be a very helpful means of inquiry during the process of research from planning, acting, observing and reflecting.

A. Introduction

Among hot issues of education in Indonesia, the teachers' low quality is often accused as one of the contributing factors. Apart from whether this assumption is evidential or not, there should be an effort to find out a more effective strategy in teachers' professional development.

Broker (1998), Owen (1990), and Ingvarson (1987) agree that at least there are 2 kinds of teachers' professional development models, namely: Innovation Focused model dan Classroom Action Research Model. Innovation Focused Model is developed based on the assumption that teachers'

professionalism will be well developed if there is a concrete input from the resource person, while Classroom Action Research Model is developed based on the thought that teachers' professionalism will be improved if they learn from their own teaching practice. And the later one is the model that, according to Penny Ur (1996) opinion can be the most ? sources of learning for teachers through self reflection in their profession.

B. CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH

Action Research term was initially introduced by Kurt Lewin (1946) from the United States of America carrying out an action research

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for his community services such as gaining equality in job opportunity and trainings for youths. Two significant characteristics of action research conducted are (1) 'group decision' (2) commitment to do a change.

Lewin's idea was then adopted by Kemmis dan Carr (1986), Stephen Corey (1953), Carl Glickman (1992) and Emily Calhoun (1994), with their own definitions about classroom action research.

Kemmis dan Carr (1986) define action research as a form of reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (1) their own practices, (2) their own understanding of the practices and (3) the situation in which the practices are carried out. Stephen Corey (1953) identifies action research as the process by which practitioners attempt to study their problems scientifically in order to guide, correct, and evaluate their decisions and actions. Meanwhile, Karl Glickman (1992) assumes that action research in education is a study conducted by colleagues in a school setting of the results of their activities to improve instruction. Similarly, Emily Calhoun (1994) defines action research as a fancy way of saying let's study what's happening at our school and decide how to make it a better place.

Further, in the strategy of teachers' professional development, action research is interpreted as an effort to put ideas in practices as a means to improve the teachers' knowledge about curriculum, teaching and learning. In other words, action research is one of the ways to bridge gaps between theories and practices to be a unity as

'ideas in actions' (Kemmis, 1992). In regard with how action research can be carried out, Emily Calhoun (1993) suggests that action research can be conducted (1) individually by a teacher in his own class, (2) collaboratively with other teachers and (3) collaboratively among schools which is usually called School Wide Action Research.

C. MODELS OF ACTION RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

There are at least three (3) models of action research strategy that are possible to be adopted, namely: Lewin's Model (1947), Skerrit's Model (1992), and Calhoun's Model (1994).

Lewin's Model describes stages of Classroom Action Research as a spiral from stage of (1) planning action, (2) Taking Action, and (3) Evaluating Action. Similarly, Skerrit's Model represents steps in carrying out classroom action research as a cyclical process of (1) Identifying Problems, (2) Designing strategy for solving the problem (3) Implementing and testing the strategy, (4) Evaluating the effectiveness, (5) Reflecting on the results, (6) Making conclusions and/or (7) Identifying new problems, (8) Repeating the cycle and (9) Reporting the findings.

Another model proposed by Calhoun represents steps in carrying out Classroom Action Research as a process of (1) Selecting an area or focus, (2) Collecting data, (3) Organising data, (4) Analysing and interpreting data, (5) Studying the professional literature, (6) Taking action. And further, phase 1 to 6 can be reproceeded.

These three models are not really different since they have relatively similar working principles. Lewin (1947) proposes the working principles of action research in general, while Skerrit (1992) and Calhoun (1994) describe it in more details. And these models share the importance of steps in problem identification, reflection and systematic problem solution through cyclical phases.

Based on the models above, Classroom Action Research can be carried out through a series of activities from: (1) Identifying problem, (2) Planning Action, (3) Implementing action, (4) Monitoring implementation, (5) Identifying the effects, (6) Reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of implementation, (7) Re-identifying problem followed by the 2nd step, etc. The last steps of a research is an **overall evaluation** and **report findings**.

D. CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH (CAR) KIT

Since 1990's, Classroom Action Research has been introduced through seminars and workshops in Indonesia. For experienced teachers, it has been a big help to provide another model of research which is considered effective as teachers' learning strategy. For novice teachers, however, action research is assumed to be an exclusive issue for it requires them to understand complicated terms and techniques. Moreover, various constraints such as teachers' limited time, scientific writing problems and insufficient knowledge resources often hinder teachers to carry out action research even in their own teaching practices. Therefore, there should be an

effort to assist teachers to conduct an action research to cope with these constraints. Employing *CAR KIT* or *Classroom Action Research Kit* could be an effective starting point to conduct classroom action research. This instrument would be a very helpful means of inquiry during the process of research from planning, acting, observing and reflecting.

CAR Kit is designed in such a way that classroom action research can be conducted step by step through a kind of teaching journal with the following components:

Phase 1: Problem identification

The sheet in this phase provides a teacher with spaces for *reflective questions, answers, and my reflection* in which a teacher can be directed to think about his class problem and write they assumption why the problem happen. (See appendix 4)

Phase 2: Planning Action/ Hypothesis of Action

This sheet provides a teacher with spaces for *reflective questions, answers, and my reflections*. Based on the problems and the contributing factors they have identified, a teacher can be directed to think about the kind of treatment that can be implemented to solve the problem; and the kind of preparation that can be used to implement this treatment. (See appendix 5)

Phase 3: Implementation

This sheet provides a teacher with spaces for *reflective questions, answers, and my reflections*. After providing himself with materials, strategy and various instruments to do monitoring, to measure the effectiveness of the treatment, a teacher can be directed to think about the kind of treatment that can be implemented to solve the problem and the kind of procedure that will be suitable to implement *the action he has chosen*. (See appendix 6)

Phase 4: Monitoring

This sheet provides a teacher with spaces for *reflective questions, answers, and my reflections*. After facilitating students in the learning process, a teacher can be directed to think about the kind of activities that can be used to monitor the activities and to identify the strengths and the weaknesses of the treatment he has implemented. (See appendix 7)

Phase 5: Identifying the Effects

This sheet provides a teacher with spaces for *reflective questions, answers, and my reflections*. Based on the results of monitoring, a teacher can be directed to identify any significant change after the implementation of the action he has implemented. (See appendix 8)

Phase 6: Reflection of Cycle 1

This sheet provides a teacher with spaces for *reflective questions, answers, and my reflections*. After identifying problem and its contributing factors, planning action, implementing action, monitoring, and identifying the effects, a teacher can be directed to (1) draw the conclusions of the whole process of Cycle 1, (2) identify the strengths of the action taken to solve the problem, (3) identify the weaknesses of the action in solving the students' problem. (See appendix 9)

E. CONCLUSIONS

Classroom Action Research (CAR) Kit can be chosen as an effective instrument to develop teachers' professionalism for several reasons, among others are:

- It provides teachers with reflective questions which are closely related to their own practices.
- It provides teachers with steps required in doing classroom action research which are designed in such a way so that
- Teachers participating in the classroom action research will have a willingness to improve their knowledge and skills in research methodologies. These improvements will arouse the awareness of self-evaluation and trigger the interest to conduct further research towards their teaching.

- Teachers involved in the classroom action research will have more positive attitudes such as critical thinking; be more responsible to make improvement; be more aware toward possible changes they can make; reflect more on their own teaching practices; as well as pay attention more on methods, perception, and understanding on teaching process approaches as a whole.
- Teachers' enthusiasm and positive attitudes, to some degree will certainly affect the development of teachers' personality. Not only will they get greater job satisfaction but also (will) be interested in pedagogical aspects and integrate research and teaching interest that will lead teachers to be more professional with wider insight that, in turn, will contribute to the advance of knowledge.

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