

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES: ENCOURAGING TEACHERS TO CONDUCT ACTION RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

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Action research is a powerful tool that allows teachers to investigate and improve their teaching practices within the context of their own classrooms. It involves systematically gathering data, reflecting on instructional strategies, and implementing changes based on the results. While action research holds great potential for professional growth, there are common issues and challenges that teachers encounter, leading to apprehension and reluctance to engage in this practice. This article aims to explore these challenges and provide strategies to address them, enabling teachers to embrace action research in their schools.

Lack of Time and Resources

One of the primary concerns faced by teachers is the perceived lack of time and resources necessary for conducting action research. Teachers have busy schedules filled with teaching responsibilities, lesson planning, and other additional tasks. The absence of dedicated time for research and limited access to resources can discourage them from initiating research projects.

How to address this challenge?

Advocate for dedicated time: School administrators can provide dedicated time during professional development days or faculty meetings specifically allocated for action research activities.

Allocate resources: Schools can invest in research materials, equipment, and tools, ensuring that teachers have access to the necessary resources.

Foster collaboration: Encourage teachers to form research groups or teams, allowing them to share resources and divide responsibilities.

Limited Research Knowledge and Skills

Many teachers feel apprehensive about conducting action research due to limited exposure to research methodologies and data analysis techniques. The fear of inadequate knowledge and skills can create a barrier to entry for teachers who desire to engage in research.

How to address this challenge?

Professional development programs: Schools can offer workshops and training sessions to enhance teachers' research knowledge and skills, focusing on areas such as research design, data collection, and analysis.

Mentoring and peer support: Pair experienced researchers with novice teachers to provide guidance and support throughout the research process.

Collaboration with universities: Foster partnerships with local universities or research institutions that can offer expertise and training opportunities to teachers.

Fear of Negative Evaluation or Criticism

Teachers may fear being judged or criticized by colleagues, administrators, or the members of the research committee if their research findings do not yield the desired outcomes. The fear of negative evaluation can hinder teachers from sharing their research findings and implementing changes in their classrooms.

How to address this challenge?

Create a supportive culture: Foster an environment where teachers feel safe and encouraged to engage in research without the fear of judgment. Emphasize the importance of professional growth and learning from research outcomes, regardless of the results.

Disseminate successes: Highlight success stories and positive outcomes of action research projects to showcase the value of these endeavors and inspire others to participate.

Encourage peer feedback: Establish a system where teachers can provide constructive feedback and support to their colleagues, fostering a collaborative and non-judgmental atmosphere.

Perceived Irrelevance or Disconnection from Classroom Reality

Some teachers may question the relevance of research to their day-to-day classroom practice. They may believe that action research is disconnected from the realities and challenges they face in their classrooms, leading to reluctance to engage in this process.

How to address this challenge?

Focus on practicality: Emphasize the practical benefits of action research, such as identifying effective teaching strategies, improving student outcomes, and addressing specific classroom challenges.

Start small: Encourage teachers to begin with small-scale research projects that align with their immediate classroom needs and address issues they encounter regularly.

Share success stories: Highlight examples of action research conducted by teachers within the school or district, showcasing the direct impact it had on teaching and student learning.

Action research holds immense potential for teachers' professional growth and the improvement of classroom practices. However, several challenges can deter teachers from engaging in research projects. By addressing these challenges through dedicated time, resources, professional development, a supportive culture, and emphasizing practical relevance, schools can foster an environment where teachers are encouraged to conduct action research. Embracing action research not only enhances teaching practices but also contributes to a culture of continuous improvement and learning within educational institutions.

References:

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