



AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING STRATEGY---THE TRI-DIMENSIONAL CYCLICAL HEURISTIC METHOD OF ACTION RESEARCH

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Abstract

If a student becomes a researcher, then the learning process becomes successful in the true sense. But in Indian scenario it is not a reality. So, to adopt a research-based approach in the learning process has been a demand of the time. The present study seeks to know the different essential aspects of action research and to present the tri-dimensional cyclical heuristic method of action research as a strategy for learning and to analyze the same qualitatively. The study shows that action research may be a fruitful approach in the learning situation. It engages the learners more actively and more interestingly. The study bears implications for both the learners. The policy makers also may take a clue from the study.

Key Words: *student, learning strategy, action research, tri-dimensional, teacher*



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Introduction

Learning is an important part of any action based research because many problems come in front from its practical aspect. This occurs in the complex ecologies of individual, social, cultural, and political settings and in the interactions of local and global contexts (Hong & Lawrence, 2011). Basically, learning outcomes of students, who bring diverse experiences as well as other social factors in classrooms, determine teacher quality as well as the evaluation of effective teaching. It is possible that learners themselves, through their own problematization of the learning process within the contexts where they work, and through their own research can closely examine their role as change agents and decision-makers. Hence action research is one the major researches to sort out the problems being faced by the

individual learners who may solve them by making some sweating endeavor with a plan of achieving new way to crack the problematic situations.

Literature Survey

Hong & Lawrence (2011) present the insight gained through the action research process and the self-study impacting teaching and learning from review of 18 action research projects completed by classroom teachers enrolled in a graduate reading methods course. To analyze the teachers' projects qualitative research methods were used. The data revealed action research impacted literacy instruction, teachers struggled with how to make their literacy instruction explicit, projects focused on specific literacy topics, and teachers used a range of resources for their selected intervention and shared information with each other and with colleagues in their respective contexts.

Hine (2013) discusses the place of action research within a Master of Education degree, and within the teaching profession. He has highlighted the approaches adopted by two tertiary institutions (one in the United States, and one in Australia) to teach action research to educators. More particularly, one academic's professional practice for teaching the action research unit in a Master's degree course is described. The author feels that the skills and knowledge gained via action research are extremely valuable in teacher education and the teaching profession. He has also included in the text some examples of past action research projects designed and implemented by students.

Mishra (2016) has considered the way of research as a fundamental approach to forecast the effective teaching methodology for the expansion of knowledge. A logical organization of the theoretical, analytical and qualitative research approaches has been followed to build a practical base of study. The study revealed that research is an essential mechanism of study by which teaching methodology will be transformed into a multi-dimensional body of thinking.

Rationale of the Study

It is an accepted truth that the class is very much important for the real development not only of the individual teacher or the student but also of the whole country. So classroom learning must be effective in the true sense of the term. Even if the policy is good and curriculum is updated, then also the real objectives may not be achieved. The students may have different background and different problems—mental, physical, emotional, social, cultural and, economic, etc. But a true student may ensure his/her learning despite the problems of the

classroom to make it an effective one. For this, action research is a wonderful tool. In this context, the question of following an effective learning strategy arises. But in our country, in many cases, it is found that the students do not want to learn in the true sense; rather they want good results in a shortcut method. The hint is that many students do not want to have knowledge at application level, as it would be laborious and time-taking. So a less laborious approach is on the demand to yield much effectiveness, and in this context, the tri-dimensional cyclical heuristic method of action research may work better as a learning strategy.

Objectives of the study

The present study was undertaken with the following two objectives-----

- (a) To know the tri-dimensional cyclical method of action research in context of learning; and
- (b) To present the tri-dimensional cyclical heuristic method as learning strategy to ensure greater effectiveness.

Sources and Method

The study has basically based the secondary sources of data with a little bit of primary ones; and the analytical method has been applied to treat the collected data relating to the context of the present study.

Meaning of Action Research

The term ‘action research’ goes with the research work entitled “Action Research and Minority Problem” (1946) of Kurt Lewin. Stephen Corey was the first who used the term with teachers in his book entitled “Action Research to Improve School Practice (1953).” He describes it as “a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action”. Through repeated cycles of planning, observing, and reflecting, individuals and groups engaged in action research can implement changes required for social improvement. Action research is a collaborative process carried out by those with a shared concern. Action research is a process of systematic inquiry that seeks to improve social issues affecting the lives of everyday people (Hine, 2013). Moreover, these authors suggest that action research is a form of collective reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are executed.

Integration of Learning and Action Research

A student must take into account not only the information or skills to be learned, but also the characteristics and capabilities of the students in the class. To make a successful program of learning requires careful alignment of what is to be learned with the qualities of the individual learner and its capabilities. Learning is judged not only by the learning outcomes but also by some other aspects in this regard. Parental occupations provide a broad range of differences in life style, aspirations, attitudes, values and behaviors, and social orientations. The learner does have some demands and motives according to which they learn. Their behavior, interaction, performance feedback, and weaknesses of learning—each aspect is important in respect of learning. So true learning is a very difficult job in that sense. The tri-dimensional heuristic method of action research is a unique strategy of learning which may bring a novelty in the learning process. It may be an attractive option for the students as well as the true learners. The logic behind it is that action learning treats action research as a systematic process of inquiry or investigation that involves some interesting and effective learning activities.

Different Domains of Knowledge

As per taxonomy of educational objectives, different types or domains of knowledge are:----

- Knowledge----- Remembering and being able to recall information
- Comprehension----- Grasping the meaning of informational materials
- Application----- Using that information in new situations
- Analysis---- Breaking down information into component parts, developing divergent conclusions, making inference, and finding evidence to support arguments
- Synthesis---- Applying prior knowledge and skills to produce a new arrangement of the knowledge
- Evaluation---- Judging the value of a product

These cognitive skills are the basis of our educational endeavours, because students are expected to extend their capacity to engage these types of activity. However, the above taxonomy emphasizes cognitive or intellectual functioning, but equivalent taxonomies describe knowledge in the affective domain (feeling and emotion) and the psychomotor domain (motor skills). As students plan to learn something, they need to keep track of the multitude of learning tasks required to accomplish a very diverse set of learning outcomes. The purpose of incorporating action research routines into learning, therefore, is to provide

students with a framework or scaffold that enables them to systematically take into account these diverse issues. Students can organize the complexity they face by merging the various parts of learning through action research, which is a basic approach of systematic inquiry.

Heuristic Method of Action Research in Learning

The approach to action research as may be applied to learning is based on a simple Look > Think > Act heuristic method that frames the student learning activities. The three components act as a compass or map that guides learners through the systematic steps of a process of inquiry for *planning the learning task, performing the learning task and evaluating the learning*.....

1. Look (1st Dimension)-----Acquire information from different sources (data)
2. Think (2nd Dimension)-----Remember and Reflect on the information (analyze)
3. Act (3rd Dimension)-----Take action or use outcomes (plan, implement, evaluate)

This simple process is repeated in an ongoing fashion, providing a constant guide to ongoing processes of learning in the following way.....

Phase 1— Planning and Preparation

1. Reviewing information and resources (Look);
2. Selecting, sorting, and organizing information (Think);
3. Formulating a plan of Learning (Act).

Phase 2—Performing Learning Activity

1. Initiating learning activity and checking own responsiveness (Look);
2. Reflecting on the learning processes and performances (Think);
3. Getting necessary correction and information (Act).

Phase 3—Assessment and Evaluation

1. Reviewing lesson outcomes, reviewing student performance (Look);
2. Identifying successes and strengths; identifying weaknesses and gaps (Think);
3. Planning revision actions; planning ways of improving learning (Act).

The above action learning process may be applied to any part of any subject of the curriculum.

Application by the Author

The author himself applied the above-mentioned tri-dimensional cyclical heuristic method of action research as a learning strategy in his own learning first in the year 2016, while undergoing RC at NBU in New Delhi. On studying about and applying the new and unique

strategy of learning he found a new zeal. For him, the first dimension was like that of traditional one, but he discovered the real beauty in the two subsequent dimensions. While the second dimension guided him to know his own learning behavior, the last one helped him identify his learning weaknesses. Presently also he tries to keep the dimensions in mind in all the three phases while learning anything.

Conclusion

It is true that action research does not contribute to new knowledge, but it is also true that it improves and modifies the current practices. A student must be an action learner or an action researcher, and then the learning process will become successful. The reason is that the process of inquiry helps the students learn better as it arouses their interest and stimulates their imagination. The student must follow an effective strategy of learning to ensure greater learning effectiveness, and for this, the tri-dimensional method as discussed is the best alternative. The study bears implications for the learners. The policy-makers and the curriculum-planners also may take clues from the study. It is justifiably said that initiation of action research at all levels may increase the learner capabilities. To conclude, universities must encourage the tri-dimensional cyclical heuristic method of action research as a learning strategy at the undergraduate or postgraduate level.

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