



The Incorporation of Action Research into Teacher Education: Perspectives and Challenges (A Case study of Teachers and MA students)

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Abstract

Educational research plays a crucial role in teacher education programs and training. Basic research has been a subject of concern and study in different Algerian universities and higher education institutions and schools. However, action research as practical research remains a theoretical subject in research methodology classes. This case study aims to explore the views of ENSB teachers and MA students of the English Department about action research and the challenges of incorporating this design in pre-service teacher training. The study employed a questionnaire for teachers and a focus group interview for MA (2) students to elicit their opinions about action research as a research methodology and the possible challenges that limit its use in research projects. The results revealed that teachers and students acknowledge the importance of action research as a relevant research design to practitioners and called for the need to incorporate it in teacher education. They also pointed out to issues of time, training in using the design and taking action as well as collaboration in conducting action research between teachers and their students.

Keywords: Action Research, Incorporation, Perspectives, Challenges, Teacher Education.



Introduction

Research in education has been subject to scrutiny and evaluation in recent decades. Starting from the application of pure quantitative research in the study of educational matters to conducting qualitative inquiries, educational research has recently adopted the mixed methods approach for its complex and inter-disciplinary nature. The study of educational issues is characterised by complexity because of the overlap existing between the variables of the study and by considering the subjects of inquiry as human beings who have attitudes, opinions, and feelings, etc. These subjects are educators, students, and educational practitioners in general. Academic research exists in most graduate and post-graduate institutions all over the world. Yet, practitioners' research in which the researcher is the educator or the teacher and the subjects are the students is not common practice in most EFL educational settings. Thus, this paper aims to highlight the status of practitioner/teacher research, referred to in the literature as Action Research, in the Algerian EFL context by considering teachers and master students' perspectives and the possible challenges of incorporating it in teacher education. This qualitative case study explores the views of six teachers and ten MA students from the Department of English of the pre-service teacher training college-Bouzareah in Algiers (Ecole Normale Supérieure- Bouzareah).

Action research as originated by Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) in the 1930's is a tool of systematic inquiry in the quest of effectiveness through the inclusion of all participants. He argued that action research 'gives credence to the development of powers of reflective thought, discussion, decision and action by ordinary people participating in collective research on "private troubles" that they have in common' (Wright & Mills, 1959, as cited in Adelman, 1993, p. 8). He also contended that no research exists without action and no action can be taken without research. Therefore, Lewin, the social-psychologist, coined the term 'action research' to the field investigations conducted at that time as a means to address societal issues mainly. Action research spread from the social sector to education after Lewin's ideas were adopted at the Horace-Mann-Lincoln Institute in Columbia University, and in England at the Tavistock Institute (Creswell, 2014).

Action research designs in education are 'systematic procedures done by teachers (or other individuals in an educational setting) to gather information about, and subsequently improve, the ways their particular educational setting operates, their teaching and their student learning' (Mills, 2011, as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 609; Bozkus, 2014, p. 283). In other words, action researchers aim to improve educational practices by dealing with the issues they face; they reflect upon them, collect and analyse data and propose solutions based on the results they obtain. These educators work on practical research problems and try to find solutions for them.

Action research is also called teacher research, practitioner research or teacher inquiry. It can be conducted by teachers or by other education professionals. Its aim is 'to create an inquiry stance toward teaching where questioning one's own practice becomes part of the work and of



the teaching culture' (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Razavieh, 2010, p. 513; Ayhan & Ozel, 2020, p. 155). Thus, it is based on reflection which is a key component of this design. Reflection and action characterise this design and alternate in a cyclical manner leading to change and improvement. Ary et al. (2010, p.514) emphasise on three features of action research:

1. The research is situated in a **local context** and focused on a **local issue**.
2. The research is conducted by and for **the practitioner**.
3. The research results in an **action** or a **change** implemented by the practitioner in the context

Therefore, action research is described as problem-focussed, context-specific, participative, and involves change (Wood & Smith, 2016). The former researchers also highlight that it is often small scale, specific and aims at transformation. It is important as it:

- Encourages change
- Fosters a democratic approach to education (i.e. involvement of different participants)
- Empowers teachers and other participants through collaborative projects
- Positions teachers and other practitioners as lifelong learners
- Bridges the gap between theory and practice for practitioners
- Encourages reflective practice
- Promotes the process of testing new ideas (Mills, 2011, as cited in Creswell, 2014)

These factors and others, as reported in the literature, encouraged further inquiry of this research design as it seems appealing to teachers especially in a FL context where practitioners are often looking for opportunities for professional development and growth. Although action research design seems simple in its procedure, its incorporation in teacher education has to be considered in a thoughtful way. This is the case of the present research work whereby Algerian EFL teachers and MA students' views of this research methodology are reported along with the possible challenges in its implementation. For this purpose, four main research questions are addressed in this qualitative case study:

1. **What is the status of research in the pre-service teacher training college (ENSB)?**
2. **What is the status of action research in the pre-service teacher training college (ENSB)?**
3. **What are the possible challenges of conducting action research in the pre-service teacher training college (ENSB)?**
4. **Can action research be incorporated in the pre-service teacher training college (ENSB)? And how?**

The literature and previous research on action research and teacher education report the benefits that this design brings to teachers and practitioners. It also reviews the problems that stand in the way of its integration in teacher education programs. For example, in a study conducted by Ulvik and Riese (2016) in Norway, 32 student-teachers enrolled in a five-year



integrated teacher education programme for secondary school teaching provided insights about how they perceived action research. It inquired about how student-teachers experience the process and outcome of doing action research and what their teacher-educators can learn from these experiences. The findings from the questionnaire reported that the majority of the student-teachers (27 out of 32) expressed a positive outcome, 'action research was largely regarded as beneficial in professional development' (Ulvik & Riese, 2016, p. 450). The researchers added that: 'The experience offered a possibility to challenge themselves and to try something out that expanded their horizon and made them reflect in depth and become more critical' (p. 450). Action research also created 'an opportunity to challenge and explore teaching' (p.451) and to reflect more on routine practices. However, students complained that the time pressure during the practicum did not allow them to assess the effectiveness of the actions taken. Therefore, the study concluded that an important condition to ensure that action research functions as a tool for professional development is enough time and space to make it possible to reflect in depth.

In a second study, 89 Iranian EFL English teachers answered a questionnaire which explored their beliefs about action research and an in-depth interview followed up with three teachers from the same sample. The results showed that most teachers regarded research as 'the duty of professional researchers not teachers' (Dehghan & Sahragard, 2015, p.46). They also believe that it is only needed for those teachers who want to acquire a professional degree like the MA and thus, they do not consider it as a professional aid. In the second part of the questionnaire which is about teachers' beliefs about solving their classroom problems, the responses revealed that teachers have concerns about changing the problematic situations in their classes and actually take some actions to solve these problems. However, they prefer individualistic solutions rather than collaborative ones and tend not to share their effective changes with their colleagues. For interview data, all three teachers stated that they were familiar with the action research design through in-service courses and workshops, but they also mentioned that these were purely theoretical conceptions and thus, they considered them irrelevant to their classroom practices.

In relation to the challenges encountered in conducting action research, the literature illustrates a number of limitations as reported by student teachers. For example, Hine (2013, p.160) recognized three main 'caveats' (as he described them), these are:

- Lack of clarity of focus for the project,
- Managing constraints of time, and
- Holding a presumed foreknowledge of the solution

Furthermore, Vaughan and Burnaford (2015) discussed the 'lack of effective incorporation of research into professional education or graduate teacher education programs' and highlighted areas of concern about 'the qualifications that teachers in graduate programs should have in order to conduct research in schools and communities and the requisite coursework in research methodologies that could and should prepare them for such studies' (p. 283).



Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009, in Vaughan & Burnaford, 2015) also draw attention to the possible outcomes of lack of attention to action research in colleges of education and warned that it can lead to ‘suspicion regarding research among practitioners as well as a lack of authentic information about classrooms and schools among the university researchers’ (p. 284)

In the study at hand, Algerian EFL teachers and MA students perspectives on action research and the possible challenges in using it are explored. The next section describes the participants and instruments used in the study.

Methodology: Material and Method

The sample of the present study consists of six Algerian EFL teachers from the Pre-service Teacher Training College of Bouzareah (ENSB, Algiers) and ten MA students (who are also in-service high school teachers) from the same school. All teachers in the school are required to supervise pre-service teacher trainees who are graduating at the end of the academic year 2019-2020 in writing their research papers. The MA students are taking semester 3 classes to move on to semester 4 where they need to write a dissertation to obtain their master’s degree. Therefore, all participants are involved in doing research. As for the data collection instruments and considering that this research is an exploratory case study, a questionnaire with open ended questions was used for teachers and a focus group interview was conducted with the students to elicit their views on action research. These instruments were designed by the researcher according to the needs and the nature of the study that is purely qualitative. The questionnaire contains seven questions about the status of research in the school in general and action research design in particular (See Appendix A). For the interview, seven questions were discussed with the MA students about action research and its incorporation in teacher education (See Appendix B).

Data presentation and analysis

The teachers’ questionnaires were filled and returned to the researcher and the focus group interview data were recorded during a course session at the beginning of the academic year 2019-2020. The questionnaire data elicited from teachers are presented first.

Teachers’ questionnaire results

The six teachers responded to the seven questions of the questionnaire. Their answers are reported as follows:

Supervision

Years of supervision vary among the six teacher participants. The table below presents how long they have been involved in supervising research papers for graduation.



Table 1: Teachers' years of supervision

Teachers	Years of supervision
Teacher 1	16
Teacher 2	8
Teacher 3	5
Teacher 4	1
Teacher 5	1
Teacher 6	6

The table shows that years of supervision vary from one teacher to another. Some teachers explained that it is because of other research commitments like involvement in PhD research that they were not able to supervise. Others argued that students did not consult them for supervision.

The status of research in ENSB

Teachers were also asked about the status of research in ENSB in the second question of the questionnaire. Their views were reported as follows:

Teacher one listed the types of research existing in the school stating that: '*I divide research at ENSB into undergraduate research, MA research and faculty research (which is either independent or within a lab)*'. She also characterised each type referring to undergraduate research as business, and MA as nascent.

Teacher two believes that students are doing their best to write good research papers. She added that: '*it [the research paper] is an introduction to research, thus we do not expect from the students to write perfect dissertations*'

Teacher three thinks that real research does not exist in ENSB. She argued that: '*I have never seen a collaborative action research; that is, no group of teachers working together to explore a given problem*'

Teacher four mentioned that '*little research is done*' in ENSB and added that '*we don't feel a research atmosphere neither with the students nor with the teachers*'

Teacher five acknowledged that she does not know much about the status of research in ENSB. She rather complained about the evaluation of the research paper being done by the supervisor arguing that: '*the supervisor is the one responsible of giving the grade, which I find unfair. The research paper should be assessed by at least three teachers*'

Teacher six reported that most fifth year students in the school she had supervised prepared research papers about teaching and learning the four language skills. She added: '*many of these students prepared memoirs that are worth reading and came up with implications for teaching that are very interesting. Many deserve to be among theses in the School's library but, unfortunately, once they are ready and given to the Department for graduation, we no longer hear about them*'. She also mentioned students who were ready to start their research



at the end of the fourth year and those who were not interested and conducted their studies at the end of the fifth year.

From these answers, we can say that teachers have different perspectives about research in ENSB. Some teachers claim it exists and that students are making efforts to conduct good research while others do not consider it as real research.

Students' commonly used research design/methodology

Question three of the questionnaire investigated the research designs or methodologies that students adopt in their research papers. The types of research commonly used by students in their research papers as reported by teachers are presented in table 2 below:

Table 2: students' commonly used research designs/methodologies

Teachers	Designs/methodologies
Teacher 1	Mostly quantitative, few mixed or qualitative
Teacher 2	Case studies, descriptive (questionnaires and observations as tools)
Teacher 3	Case studies, descriptive and quantitative, some use qualitative or mixed research (classroom observation and interviews as tools)
Teacher 4	Descriptive (questionnaire as a tool)
Teacher 5	No answer
Teacher 6	Qualitative, descriptive (questionnaire as a tool)

The table presents the most commonly employed research designs by fifth year students in ENSB when conducting their studies. It is clear that most designs are descriptive quantitative or case studies and the most commonly used tool of data collection is the questionnaire. Only teacher one justified the use of the quantitative approach in research by students stating that: *'it is commonly quantitative as they limit their understanding to using surveys, means, etc.'*, she also added that: *'I think this is due to the instruction they have received, the time constraints, the easiness associated with quantitative methods'*. The other five teachers did not provide justifications for the designs used.

Teachers' views about action research

Question four of the questionnaire inquired about teachers' views on action research. Teachers' responses are presented as follows:

Teacher one mentioned that it is: *'a very good, useful design that should be part and parcel of the research toolkit'*

Teacher two described action research as *'a research design that fits better the research related to education'*



Teacher three believes that *‘engaging in action research as a research design can be more effective in education’* and adds that *‘it may be the best means to improve the quality of teaching and learning’*

Teacher four argued that action research *‘helps educators be more effective. It is relevant, because it helps the actors (researchers) to improve their actions in education’*

Teacher five claimed the necessity of conducting action research stating that *‘it enables to evaluate one’s teaching and find the best practices that better fit our students’ needs and learning styles’*

Teacher six reported that action research is *‘a very interesting research method’*; yet, she thinks it is not suitable for students because *‘once they prepare their memoirs and leave the School, their research stops and they do not change anything with the results they get from their study. (AR) is, on the other hand, interesting for teachers researchers in the School because they have the opportunity to carry on their research’*.

Therefore, it is worth noting that all teachers agree on the usefulness and effectiveness of action research as a research design and its relevance to education and teaching in particular.

Students’ use of action research

Question five of the questionnaire elicited data about whether students use action research in their research works. The teachers’ answers are displayed in table 3 below.

Table 3: Students use of action research

Teachers	Students’ use of AR
Teacher 1	Not often
Teacher 2	No
Teacher 3	Often used
Teacher 4	No
Teacher 5	No
Teacher 6	No

As the table shows, five teachers stated that action research is not used by students in doing their research. Only one teacher, i.e. teacher three, answered that they do use it. Teacher one justified that students do not use AR because of *‘lack of access to research sites in the schools, authorizations, etc’*. Teacher two said because it *‘requires more time to be used’* and that *‘students are in fact preparing research papers’*. Teacher three, who claimed that AR is used by students, argued that *‘topics of their studies often tackle real learning/teaching problems encountered in FL classrooms in an attempt to find possible solutions’*. Teacher four thinks that action research is not even used by teacher colleagues and that students *‘prefer to use either the descriptive method or the experimental’*. Teacher five reported that the students she is currently supervising are not using action research. Finally, teacher six stated that AR is not used because *‘once we reach the results, we do not stop there. We carry*



on research and generalise the results. We take action. And as students leave the School when they finish their memoirs, they do not have the opportunity to further their research’.

Therefore, teachers’ responses vary regarding the reasons for not using action research by the students. The main reasons are: lack of access to research sites, lack of time, AR is not common practice among teachers, the inability to take action.

The integration of AR in teacher education: advantages and challenges

The questionnaire for teachers also addressed the idea of integrating AR into teacher education in question six. The question is divided in two parts; one for teachers’ views about its integration and the second is about its advantages and challenges.

Teacher one agreed on the idea of integrating AR in teacher education and claimed that *‘it will be more useful’*. She suggested allocating more time to AR instead of using it in modules like civilization and literature. The teacher stated that the advantages of AR are known, yet the challenges will be in *‘accessing research sites’*.

For teacher two, the integration of AR in pre-service teacher education is *‘a good idea if only taught and practiced correctly and the steps to follow this design are made clear’*. However, she thinks that the main challenge is the unavailability of time to use AR. she also added that AR is about *‘taking actions’* and wonders how pre-service teachers can take actions and put into practice the findings of their research.

Teacher three noted that integrating AR in pre-service teacher education *‘can only do good’* posing the question *‘what best than promoting professional development and providing a reflective process to bring about changes in the classroom?’*. She contended, however, that the main challenges may be lack of collaboration and time limitation.

Teacher four reported that *‘it is a good idea’* to integrate AR in teacher education and argues that *‘it may teach students to be agents of change to improve the learning and teaching experience’*. She also suggests that *‘it has to be integrated one year before graduating since students need time to use such design’*.

Teacher five also considered the integration of AR a good idea as teacher trainees *‘would benefit from it’*. The main challenge is time according to this teacher but *‘it is worth it, she adds that ‘we really need to stop from time to time and take time to evaluate actual teaching practices to improve them’*

Teacher six stated that AR *‘takes more than one year’* because in this design we need to go beyond the results of a study and thus she concludes that AR *‘cannot be integrated in pre-service teacher education’*

It is clear from the teachers’ responses that the integration of AR in teacher education is rewarding and relevant to teacher trainees, yet most of them agree on the fact that it is time



consuming. Besides, the practical part or ‘taking action’ would not be possibly accomplished within only one year of study.

How to integrate AR in teacher education?

The last question of the teachers’ questionnaire aimed to gather data on how AR can be integrated in teacher education.

Teacher one suggested that it can replace the memoire or ‘*replace the civilization and literature classes of fourth and fifth year*’

Teacher two put a condition for the integration of the AR design arguing that it is possible ‘*if only it is taught, explained and shown all the steps to undertake it in the module of methodology*’. She added that it might be more feasible with MA students who are also practitioners rather than with fifth year students who already have time consuming tasks such as the memoire, exams and training.

Teacher three proposed ‘AR tutorials’

Teacher four stated that AR can be integrated as ‘*part of research methodology where the students should be required to make research proposals in different topics*’

Teacher five did not provide an answer to this question

Teacher six admitted that it is challenging to integrate AR in pre-service teacher education. She added that: ‘*It is almost impossible to integrate unless students take other previous students’ memoirs and base their research on the results of those memoirs and then take informed action*’

From the teachers answers to the last question on the integration of AR in pre-service teacher education, it can be concluded that it is a process that requires careful consideration and thoughtful planning. The responses varied from incorporating AR as a module in the curriculum (replacing other modules), teaching AR as a design by itself or within research methodology, the need to assign research proposals that adopt AR as a design to the last view that declares the impossibility of integrating AR in pre-service education.

After presenting questionnaire data from the six ENSB teachers, data collected from the 10 MA-2 ENSB students, through the focus group interview, is presented next.

Master-2 students interview results

The focus group interview data were analysed using qualitative content analysis. The researcher transcribed the interview data and extracted the common codes, then these codes were categorised into major themes. This follows on what educational researchers claim to be the process of analysing text in qualitative studies, for e.g. Creswell (2014, p. 267) stated that: ‘the [further] process of analysing text (or images) in qualitative research begins when you



code the data. Coding is the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data'. In addition, Wood and Smith (2016, p. 120) also argue that: 'transcription and coding of data are essential steps in ensuring a valid and representative interpretation of the data collected'

The codes elicited from the interview data

The MA students' interview transcript underwent the process of coding. In this section, the main codes are presented as they emerged from the beginning of the interview to the end. They were elicited from the responses and classified according to the questions addressed in the focus group interview.

Students' current state of research

Reading and collecting data

Finding references

Looking for topics and ideas

Discussing with teachers

Attitude towards research in ENSB

Research in ENSB is serious

Trainees' involvement and training in doing research

Teacher trainers' involvement in research

The existence of a research atmosphere

Experience in doing research

Preparation for research

Small scale research

Evaluation of research in ENSB

Introduction to research

The move from introducing research to conducting research

Learning how to do research

Lack of training in research methodology

Practical part limitations

Methodology issues

Research paper requirement for middle school trainees



Research designs and approaches

The use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches

Students' preferences and rationale

Lack of knowledge about research design and methodology

The demands of the mixed approach

Descriptive qualitative research

Topic and approach relationship

Action research process and its relevance to pre-service education

Action research relevance to teachers

Classroom based research

Field research

Action research process

Teacher research

Problem- based research

The active teacher researcher

AR relevance to pre-service teachers

Problems in implementing AR in pre-service training

AR relevance to pre-service teachers

Challenges of AR implementation

Time limitation

Research experience limitation (taking action)

School and sample permission

Teacher trainer permission

Integration of AR in teacher education

Workshops

Integrating AR design as a subject (theory and practice)

Integrating/teaching AR within research methodology



Early integration of AR in teacher training

The need to practice research

Lack of time and opportunity to conduct research

Integrating AR in the MA degree (first and second year)

These are the main codes gathered from the interview transcript. They are presented above in relation to the main themes of the study.

Discussion and interpretation of findings

After presenting the data collected from both the teachers' questionnaire and the MA students' focus group interview, this section aims to discuss the findings and relate the themes of the present research. It also provides an interpretation of the findings in light of the literature and the context of the study.

Teachers' and students' views about the status of research in ENSB

The teachers' responses revealed divergent views concerning the status of research in ENSB. While some of them claim it exists through faculty research, teachers' research and students' research, others declare that it is scarce and blame teachers for not working collaboratively to conduct (action) research. MA students, however, consider research as a common practice in the school. They reported that research is conducted seriously and regularly by both trainers and trainees, and that they were introduced and prepared for research from the early stages of the in-service training even though it was small scale. The difference between the teachers and the students' views on the status of research might be due to the different levels of understanding of the nature of research, its requirements and involvement. While teachers are at advanced levels of conducting research, students seem to view it as the act of reading some material and presenting it ignoring the methodological and practical requirements. This was clear in their statements, for example, one student stated: *'I think from the very beginning when we come here in our first year so they start introducing the notion of research so in the very first year students are asked just to make presentations'*. Another student added: *'In the first year we had a small project to do a project about teaching in Algeria in general compared with the other countries, it was a kind of real research'*. However, one teacher claimed that *'little research is done'* in ENSB and added that *'we don't feel a research atmosphere neither with the students nor with the teachers'*. Therefore, perceptions of what research is from both parties differ considerably and this might explain their disagreement over the idea of the existence of a research atmosphere.



Teacher's and students' views about action research

Both teachers and students agree on the practicality and relevance of action research as a suitable design for teachers. The school teachers argue that it improves teaching practices if teachers use it to address learners' needs. MA students also characterise it as teacher research, field research, classroom-based and problem-based research. They also stressed its relevance to teacher education. This has been emphasized in the literature where AR is equated with practitioner inquiry that encourages change (Wood & Smith, 2016; Mills, 2011, in Creswell, 2014). However, most teachers (5/6) declared that it does not exist in the school and some students only thought of using it when they designed their research for graduation. One teacher stated that AR is not even used by teachers and that students '*prefer to use either the descriptive method or the experimental*'.

Challenges of conducting AR in the pre-service teacher training college-ENSB

The school teachers and MA students mentioned a number of limitations related to conducting AR in the pre-service education college. Teachers reported issues of time, access to site, lack of knowledge about the design and its procedure and the late integration of the subject in the curriculum. Students, on their part, similarly pointed out the time limitation in addition to the difficulty of obtaining permission from schools, trainers and samples to conduct action research. They added lack of research experience and the impossibility of 'taking action' as a key obstacle in the way of conducting action research in the school. Some of these challenges like the time constraint were also reported in previous studies as mentioned in the introduction of this paper (for e.g. Ulvik & Riese, 2016) and also by Hine and Lavery (2014) who described it as a time-consuming process especially that students have high demanding instructional practices. Others relate to the attitudes of teachers who consider action research and research in general as a requirement for professional career seekers and the responsibility of research experts (Dehghan & Sahragard, 2015). Other researchers (like Hine, 2013) go beyond these into methodological issues such as lack of clarity of focus in designing the study.

Incorporation of AR in the pre-service teacher training college

The teachers put forward a number of conditions for the integration of AR in pre-service education. They suggested the replacement of other modules by teaching AR instead, integrating it as a subject per se, giving AR tutorials and devoting more time to conducting it or incorporating it early in the curriculum (first or second year). The MA students agreed with the teachers on some propositions like teaching AR as a subject in the first years of the training and within research methodology classes. They added the use of workshops to train students to use the design and to implement it in the master degree course (year 1 and year 2) so that in-service teachers gain theoretical knowledge and use the design for conducting their own research in their own classrooms and writing their dissertation.



Conclusion and recommendations

This small scale qualitative study described the state of research in the teacher training school in Algiers with the aim to position action research in the pre-service education curriculum. Its ultimate goal is to try to find an answer and negotiate the possibility of incorporating action research in pre-service training. The findings from teachers and students stressed the practical relevance of the design to both teacher practitioners and trainees. Yet, they also pinpointed the key limitations of the integration of action research, most notably, time and practice. The idea of implementing action research in teacher education seems to be highly demanding due to the short period of the practicum where the trainees need to prepare lessons and receive feedback from trainers. But, this research, through its findings, stresses the need to involve all teachers in a form of research, albeit small scale. This has been common practice in similar teacher education institutions in other contexts and has proved to be effective for student teachers and trainers. For example, Ryan, Young, and Kraglund-Gauthier (2017, p. 3) argue that: ‘Within pre-service, AR enables and supports student teachers, as they plan lessons, take action in practicum and pre-service classes, observe, and reflect on their experiences’. In the same line of thought, Barbre and Buckner (2013, p.3) acknowledged the difficulty of integrating AR in pre-service training stating that:

‘The incorporation of action research into the student teaching experience might at first seem daunting, given the perception of the workload. This is partly because student teaching is an experience that can be intimidating because of the lack of complete familiarity with the curriculum and/or classroom responsibilities’

Yet, they called for the need to include teachers to work collaboratively with their pre-service students to complete the AR task in a more effective way. They recommended ‘the mentoring function of the cooperating teachers’ that ‘would be a natural asset’. These teachers ‘would be able to support the student teacher in gathering this data and making sense of it’ (p.3). This recommendation seems to go hand in hand with one of the key features of action research and that is collaboration or participatory practice. The idea of implementing AR in teacher education in our school can further be investigated and validated with future research findings.



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