



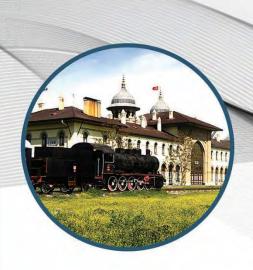






International Balkan Education & Science Congress

Trakya University Faculty of Education www.bes2018.org







SEPTEMBER 6-8 2018 Trakya University Balkan Congress Center

PROCEEDINGS

Trakya University Faculty of Education Edirne / Turkey 02842120808 bes2018@trakya.edu.tr



13th International Balkan Education and Science Congress

6-8 September 2018

Trakya University – Edirne

http://bes2018.org

PROCEEDINGS

ISBN: 978-975-374-228-3

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Action Research as Teaching Strategy for Individualization of Learning

Dean ILIEVa, Daniela ANDONOVSKA-TRAJKOVSKAb, Fariz FARIZIc

Abstract

The paper presents different ways of individualization of pupils' learning by using different models of action research. The first part is consisted of theory regarding relationship among action research models, individualization of learning and teaching strategies. The Method is a place for determination of the methodological aspects of the research. The research question is: Are there any benefits from using action research during teaching for pupils' learning? The used methodology is: descriptive, quantitative, based on questioning as a research technique. The general hypothesis is: By using different models of action research as a teaching strategy, the individualization of pupils' learning can be improved. 20 Primary school teachers and their classes are selected as sample of the conducted research. The data was collected by using questionnaires, interview and participatory observation of pupils and classrooms as research techniques. The discussion about the results is based on statistical-quantitative techniques: average, means, standard deviation and ranking. The results prove that the general hypothesis is confirmed. Hense, we concluded that the teachers who understand and use action research in their teaching practice employ more types of individualized pupils' learning. Therefore, action research can be used by teachers as a teaching strategy for innovation and improvement of pupils' learning.

Keywords: Action research, Teaching strategy, Pupils learning, Individualization of learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The action research (AR) is a creation of the modern world for the purpose of modern living that is based on adaptation and change of the theory, contexts and situations in order to improve our own practice. It is difficult to give precise and static definition of AR, because it is "...fluid, open and responsive" (Koshy, 2005: 5) process; "collaborative, critical and self-critical inquiry by practitioners..." (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996:2). AR helps in "creating the learning environment, interacting with your students, developing lesson plans, assigning homework, and almost everything you do in your daily routine of teaching..." (Pelto, 2010: 4). In addition, it is essential that AR has become "in a wide variety of intellectual and social practice domains, an important alternative to traditional and positivistic ways of linking knowledge, ways of knowing, and knowledge production with social progress" (Rowell, 2017: 7).

If we perceive the learning process as "essential for those who intend to develop activities that will have the potential to lead to effective learning, taking place in classroom" (Pritchard, 2009: 1), and the process of "replacing transmission instruction with transactional instruction" (Koenig, 2010: 1) we can argue that the most reasonable step for improvement of the learning and teaching

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is to use some creative, practical and transformative strategy. We have improved the essence of AR through widening of its usage as teaching strategy (more in Iliev, 2017).

2. METHODOLOGY

The research question was: Are there any benefits from using AR during teaching for pupils' learning? The used methodology is descriptive with quantitative and qualitative aspect of the problem. The general hypothesis of the research is: By using different models of AR as teaching strategy, the individualization of pupils learning can be improved. Two actions were implemented during the AR: Building the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the action research models as a form of individualization of learning and teaching and practicing AR models in the classroom as a strategy for individualization of learning and teaching. 20 Primary school teachers and their pupils (N=324) were selected to participate in this AR as research sample. The data was collected by using questionnaires, interview and participatory observation of pupils and classroom activities. Pupils and teachers were surveyed, the teachers were also interviewed and the pupils were observed during the lessons. The data from the questionnaire is calculated in frequencies, average and standard deviation.

3. FINDINGS

The teachers were asked to present their perception about the processes of individualization of teaching and learning during the implementation of the two actions as steps of the AR by selection of one category (Strongly disagree; Disagree; Partly agree; Agree and Fully agree) for each given statement. The steps were implemented consecutively, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers' Perception of the Processes of Individualization of the Teaching and Learning

	Initial perception		Perception after		Perception after	
			the first action		the second action	
Statements	X	Σ	χ	Σ	χ	Σ
Pupils learn according to their	2.300	1.187	2.850	1.388	4.100	1.300
personal dynamic and intensity.						
Pupils are satisfied with the	2.800	1.400	3.300	1.552	4.650	0.572
organization of the learning context.						
Pupils can reach their own capacities	2.650	1.459	3.350	1.590	3.600	1.685
during teaching in the classroom.						
Pupils are actively engaged in the	2.000	1.449	3.550	1.596	3.900	1.480
processes of cooperative learning.						
Pupils participate in the activities	1.700	1.308	3.000	1.789	4.350	1.152
according to their own capacities.						
There is a peer support for the	1.250	0.698	1.950	1.322	4.300	1.100
learning processes provided in the						
classroom						
Pupils are willing to collaborate with	2.800	1.749	3.450	1.627	4.250	1.043
the others during learning.						

My classroom is a place for individual growth.	1.550	1.071	3.150	1.621	3.450	1.532
Pupils can create personal expectation from the teaching and learning process.	1.900	1.375	3.750	1.445	4.100	1.179
My classroom promotes research activities of every pupil.	1.250	0.887	2.550	1.830	3.950	1.203
Pupils can construct their knowledge in the classroom.	3.000	1.732	3.250	1.699	4.150	1.314

The similar statement were given to the sampled pupils (N=324), and they were asked to present their perception of the individualization of the teaching and learning during the implementation of the two actions as steps of the AR. The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Pupils' Perception of the Individualization of the Teaching and Learning Processes

	Initial perception		Perception after the first action		Perception after the second action	
Statements	χ	Σ	χ	Σ	χ	Σ
I learn according to my personal dynamics and intensity.	2.441	1.438	2.809	1.432	3.410	1.397
I am satisfied with the organization of the context of learning.	2.373	1.388	2.543	1.345	3.272	1.372
I can reach my own capacities during teaching in the classroom.	2.725	1.477	2.778	1.501	2.877	1.543
I am actively engaged in the processes of cooperative learning.	1.809	1.327	2.475	1.609	2.963	1.737
I participate in the activities according to my own capacities.	1.966	1.226	2.756	1.457	3.003	1.543
I am supported by other pupil/s in the classroom in the learning processes.	2.559	1.237	2.895	1.345	2.941	1.425
I am willing to collaborate with the others during learning.	2.809	1.006	2.975	1.138	3.306	1.406
My classroom is a place for individual growth.	2.778	1.189	3.136	1.255	3.806	1.055
I can create personal expectation from the teaching and learning process.	2.531	1.686	2.892	1.611	3.515	1.417
My research activites are promoted in the classroom.	2.148	1.498	2.818	1.622	3.198	1.488
I can construct my knowledge in the classroom.	2.577	1.396	2.830	1.612	3.818	1.470

The teachers were interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the project, and the most frequently used statements for description of the students' activities at the beginning and at the end of the AR are as following:

- Statements of the teachers at the beginning of the action research: The pupils: raise hands; ask maximum two questions per lesson; write in their notebooks on their own; are active listeners; use their books; can give sugesstions; participate in group work; are directed to the content and ask for examples of their everyday life.

- Statements of the teachers at the end of the action research: The pupils are: motivated to participate in the activities; are engaged with all of their potentials; learn in their own ways; are focused in their research activities; create constructive proposals; set the hypothesis; learn together; enjoy during learning; collaborate with others as part of mutual growth; participate in designing of the classroom and make decisions on their own learning.

The pupil were observed during the lessons in 20 classrooms at the beginning, after the first and after the second action. The results from the observation are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Check List of the most Frequent Pupil Activities during Action Research

XX XXX XXX XXX	XX XXX XXX	XXXX X XX
XXX XXX XX	XXX XXX	
XXX	XXX	XX
XX		
		XXX
	X	XX
	XXXX	XXXX
X	XXX	XXXX
XXX	XX	XX
XXX	XXX	XXXX
X	XXX	XXX
-	XX	XXX
X	XXX	XXXX
	XX	XXX
	XXX	XXX
	XX	XXXX
X	XXX	XXXX
X	XX	XXXX
-	XXX	XXX
	XX	XXX
	X	XXXX
	XXX XXX X X	XXX

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The findings show that different models of action researches have positive impact as teaching strategies on the pupils' learning, which can be observed in the teachers' and pupils' perceptions presented in Table 1 and Table 2. The statements in the teachers' questionnaire in the initial stage of the AR have the lowest values of the pondered value of the aritmetic means, compared to the later phases of the research. After the implementation of the first and the second action, the pondered value of the aritmetic means is increasing for every given statement, which means that using different models of action research in the classroom has positive impact on the individualization of the pupils' learning according to the sampled teachers.

¹⁹⁴ Explanation of the signs: XXXX- always; XXX- often; XX- rarely; X- never.

In addition, pupils' perceptions are similar, i.e. the majority of the pupils don't find the innitial stage of the classroom activities as means for creating educational context that enables individualization and the pupils' personal growth. According to the pupils (Table 2), during the implementation of the first and the secong action in the action research the processes of individualization of learning are qualitatively improved. The pondered values of the aritmetic means for every given statement confirm the latter.

The teachers were also interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the action research. The results show that there are more complex, more participative, and more integrative pupils' activities at the end of the research, compared to those activities at the beginning of the research which can be described as normal, simple and obligatory.

To make the picture complete, we should take into account the perception of the pupils' activities in the classroom (See Table 3). The observation taken at the beginning and at the end of the research shows that the mentioned pupils' activities are more recognizable in frequency and in intensity at the beginning then at the and of the research. In addition, the participative, collaborative and individual pupils' activities take place at the end of the research.

By comparing and contrasting the two sets of findings, we have eventually come to conclusion that the general hypothesis of the research *By using different models of AR as teaching strategy, the individualization of pupils' learning can be improved,* is confirmed, i.e. using different AR models as teaching strategies has positive impact on the activities, the engagement, dedication and participation of the pupils in the processes of learning with accordance to their personal characteristics.

5. REFERENCES

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