

Application of Action Research in Art Education

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Abstract

In light of recent events in research methodology, it is becoming extremely difficult to ignore the existence of action research which would focus on developing the systematic plan in the special situation in order to solve the practical problems in the real world. The theory of action research provides a useful account of how to reform and innovate the solution by an exploratory process, rather than building up a theory. Whilst some researchers have carried out on the vital effects of action research, there have been few empirical investigations into the application of action research in art education. Under such circumstances, this paper will illustrate two parts. The first section will examine a literature review which would explain the application of action research in art education, including but not limited to its background, characteristic, procedure, data collection and analyses, benefits and limitations. In the second part, I would attempt to show my draft research proposal. Throughout this essay, the findings should make an important contribution to field of art education, explaining how to help art educators guide students to absorb the professional knowledge in the art lesson in a better way. Meanwhile, it would be more effective for the students and teachers to improve their achievement.

Keywords

Action research; Application; Art education.

1. The Literature Review of Action Research

1.1. Definition

The significance of action research in various field has been investigated by a large and growing body, in order to solve the practical problems. According Cole & Knowles (2008), action research allow practitioners to investigate and solve problems within their practice [1]. All forms of action research underline the use of action and reflection to solve real-life problems (Whitehead & McNiff 2006) [2]. This types of research and theory are different from common practical research because of focusing on scientific research. A further definition of action research is given by Cole& Knowles (2008), who describe this research to support the practitioner investigate, and analyze the data to solve the practical problems [3]. Broadly speaking, a large number of researches defining various understanding of action research, while the similarity of them existing to solve the actual issue through practical research. Historically, previous studies of action research have not been deal with scientific system. However, most of psychologists and educators interpret comprehensively and improve the knowledge of this discipline.

1.2. Characteristic

In a study investigating action research, Mills(2001) reported that action research encourage teacher to learn continuously professional knowledge among classroom and school, so as to facilitate teacher to hold a rethinking attitude and assist them to make inspection on dynamic state in the classroom, also pay attention on students' interaction and action [4]. Teacher would be a observer who verify the challenge of practice and assume the risk in the process, and then

teacher would adjust the teaching strategy according to students' response and receptivity so as to improve educational quality. This reveals the characteristics of action research are participatory and interactive between researcher and candidate. Action research needs to change the strategy in the practical situation because the reflection can raise new understanding and modify the project, so it shows this research methodology becomes more flexible and targeted.

1.3. Action Research in Education and Art Education

1.3.1. Action Research in Education

The existing literature on action research is extensive, and focuses particularly on the education field. John Elliott (1991) uses 'action research' to refer to the process of cooperation and practice by educators so as to raise the understanding of individual theoretical basis, attempting to innovate the teaching methods and record the education work and share the common purpose to develop the teaching theory [5]. Compared with other teaching methods, action research is a type of effective and systematic solution, especially suited for a specific situation. It not only enhances teachers' study and lifestyle, but also increases the work efficiency of those practitioners within the educational field. For instance, action research shows a direct effect on teachers' professional development. Hensen (1996) has attempted to draw several advantages of action research for educators, like assisting teachers to acquire and improve new knowledge in the actual classroom. Besides, it enhances the relationship between practice and student achievement while promoting educators' teaching reflection after the class [6]. Regarding raising efficiency, teachers need to be trained by various curricula, including an active attitude in study, and expand individual thinking and enhance the assimilation of information, so as to keep the consistency of conception and current lessons, purpose and problems. In the same vein, Johnson (2012) holds the view that action research promotes teachers' empowerment in the whole teaching strategy because teachers can do the collection and then analyse the data to make a wise decision in the realistic classroom. During the class, capable teachers can implement the teaching strategy for the students and seek a philosophical and vivid teaching style to attract the students [7]. Specifically speaking, the practitioner can use theoretical understanding of action research to observe and analyze what is happening in the classroom. Meanwhile, teachers can gather the first-hand information to put into teaching theoretical research, taking into consideration of the best meaningful practice.

1.3.2. Action Research in Art Education

For the past few years, art research methods have been discussed in art education. Art educators and artists attempt to use action research to promote their professional technical ability. A broader perspective has been adopted by Clarke & Bautista (2017) who state that researchers should emphasize the vital effects on self-development and the combination of action research and reflective practice to achieve teachers' comprehensive development [8]. Teachers' reflection is closely associated with artists' introspection in action research, which can be used frequently in art academic and art education (Irwin & de Cosson 2004) [9]. However, Bourriaud (2002) asserts art practice is a process that relates to building the relationship and conservation among people [10]. Thus, the findings of these studies suggest that teachers would increase interactive communication with students and encourage them to think of dialogical dimensions and the connection of daily life, events and space, which is different from other discipline teaching. However, the paper makes no attempt to analyse how to undertake concrete steps for teachers to take the art lesson. Meanwhile, the study would be more persuasive and targeted, if the author adopted the diversified teaching strategies for students of various age groups, since every age period has its own characteristics.

1.4. The Process of Action Research and Data Analysis

1.4.1. Procedure

Unlike other methodology, action research allows practitioners lack of explicit assumption and research theme at the beginning, significantly, it should base on that practical handler suffering from confused situation and predicament. Generally, the process of action research shows as a series of four stages: plan, action, observe and reflect and would be record in detail by the researchers. Through these steps, teachers can study a lesson issue and solve the problem in a short time. Also, the procedure is a development of spiral cycle, which practitioners should reflect each process and proceed next step again and again until find the solution, further more, increasing the information on each stage which can help researchers generate the new understanding. However, a large number of complicated information would be raised in the process, practitioners need to seek the significant information and filter unnecessary thing. So the most important skill researchers should train the reflected ability because action is basis on reflection. In the first part, researchers need to make a plan to guide the activity and show the various stages. At the same time, research theme, purpose, meaning, and question would be raised and finding the key point of research. This plan is prepared for the second part to record the action which is a important stage in the whole process, because it is the sources of practical data. For the next part, researcher need to observe the candidates' response and record the information (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1990) [11]. Finally, collecting the data and analyse the reason, result and verification in the reflection, then modify and improve the project in order to proceed next cycle reflection until finding the solution to solve the problem.

1.4.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection and analysis of action research is closely related to the design of procedure. This is a participatory research which need researcher and candidate both take part in the action and change, also communicating frequently and making co-operative plan are the effective ways to support the progress in the action research. Also observing and reflecting would be basis on the research of quantitative and qualitative. In the classroom, the students would be separated into several groups at the beginning; meanwhile, teachers not only can do the checklist, take notes and record by the video for observation, but also can make the questionnaire and interview the students in order to gather important information. After that, assessing the procedure by various perspective and analyse the data for feasibility and effectiveness to identify the key features of the research objective.

1.5. Advantage and Limitation

Compared with other research methodology, action research shows some benefits. The significant advantage is flexible and adaptive, because action research can be widely used in various types of situation. During the research period, researchers can change the plan by data analysis and reflection in order to offer an innovative and develop understanding, so it can be suitable for some complex and specific situation. For instance, phenomenology emphasizes the subjectivity and help people to find the understanding and meaning of a phenomenon, which cannot be used for the complex problems. Because it lacks of the process of reflection and ignores the practicality, specifically, researchers cannot find the solution only by gathering the information from people's experience. However, action research has strong practice. Although lacking of assumption or topics, researchers can start the action research to find the improvement in the practical process. It is an effective way for examining the result and benefiting for innovation.

However, researchers would accept a greater deal of information in the process of data collection, sometimes they would magnify the secondary data and ignore the vital information. This needs the practitioner to focus on the reflection to seek the key point of the phenomenon.

In addition, action research is more likely to be interactive and collaborative which needs cooperation between researchers and participants, if one of the people can barely coordinate and follow the step, so the quality and result of action research would be affected.

2. Research Proposal

2.1. Theme: The Application of Action Research in Primary Art Education

2.2. Introduction

Different from other disciplines, art education focuses on expanding the art knowledge and expressing students' idea about themselves. Students should finish the main part of creation by themselves but not every student would be fond of art and painting. Therefore, how to stimulate the students' interests and help them to acquire better achievement in art subject which is a question for art teachers. Generally speaking, action research is widely used in education field which acquires excellent result to help practitioners to solve the problem. Under such circumstance, this draft research proposal would attempt to focus on the application of action research in primary art education. Action research is an effective teaching method to assist primary teachers to improve the quality of teaching strategy and promote the professional technology.

2.3. Research Aim

Using action research to find the solution for how to stimulate the students' interest about art in the art lesson. Helping teachers to improve the professional technology and promote the development of teaching strategy in the field of education. In addition, it is a effective way for practitioners to reinforce the connection of students.

2.4. Research Method and Data Collection

Action research would be the research method in this proposal, which concentrates on improving the teaching strategy and facilitating the innovation of art education. Using scientific and systematic theory to solve the practice question in the classroom.

For the data collection, there includes several various ways as follows. One of the first way is the observation of making the detailed checklist from which teachers need to prepare the form before the class. It is a fast way to record the information. Another is that teachers taking notes in the classroom, who can write down more details. Besides, teachers can use mobile phones or videos to record the voice of the students in the classroom. This kind of way would be more convenient to gather the information. In addition, teachers can design the questionnaire to the student, particularly, it related to ethical considerations. Therefore, teachers need to pay close attention to ethical issues if the research out of the moral standard in the questionnaire. Also, teachers can interview the students for several groups to ask them some questions which can be set by open or structured question.

2.5. The Design of The Research

The research design would be adopted at an art lesson, including four stages: plan, action, observe and reflection. There are three plans in the process in order to reflect and innovate in the art lesson. In this research design, the students who are in Class1 Grade 3 would be the targeted participants, and the size of the class is 30 people. In addition, research the different types of the students in the primary school to be the target. Generally, depending on the various practical situation, researcher can modify the process of action research and focus on the important part.

For the first step of the teaching strategy, teachers prepare art teaching material and adopt the traditional way to teach, showing the picture from an art book, meanwhile reflecting the theme

of creation. Then teachers find that some students pay no attention to the art painting and they start to talk with their classmates, even though others attempt to do the homework in the art lesson. This would be recorded by notes and checklist. Then practitioners analyse the data and find the problem of teaching strategy, because this course would be more traditional and boring. From the teaching reflection, researchers have an awareness of the responsibility that is to help students to seek the interest of art and finding interesting teaching method is effective for the lesson. So researchers would find the disadvantage of the previous teaching strategy and develop the professional teaching ability in order to suitable method for the young pupil, then teacher would take the lesson with new teaching strategy again.

In the step 2, teachers tell the story about the art creation and play a part of movie to show the background and technique of the art work to students. Then most of students would be more likely to improve the understanding and start to learn how to appreciate master's creation. So they want to mimic some pictures in the class. Teachers also use the checklist and notes to record the situation. Through the data analysis, there is a great progress of art achievement for the students, even though some students would draw some extra painting to show to their love. Meanwhile, this changes and response of students can be recorded by taking notes and making the checklist in order to assist the teachers to make the reflection about the whole teaching process. At that time, practitioners find a better way to teach art in the class through the process of action research.

Generally, the process of two cycle would be common. But in this situation, it is necessary to make plan 3 to find the solution. Therefore, in order to stimulating students' interest, teacher use cycle 3 to examine the result. In this term, teachers attempt to take the lesson in the art museum which is a novel way in the school. Particularly, pupils can watch closely to the art works and feel deeply about the atmosphere of art at the lesson; meanwhile, they acquire new understanding. However, it is difficult to manage the discipline out of the classroom. Therefore, practitioners realize the art museum that is not suitable for many people, so changing the idea for taking lesson in the classroom and attempt to mimic pattern of museum to bring the creation in the classroom and improve students' comprehension.

2.6. Practical Consideration

The action research design exist some limitations currently because researcher need to consider the practical consideration in the school. This research is participatory and cooperative, so it is more likely to be suitable for senior students, because they can share the idea and be responsible to communicate with researchers, so as to improve the teaching development. Whilst the junior student cannot understand the research, sometimes researcher would encounter the question in the practical situation. So it needs practitioners to improve the comprehensive ability when something happens. Besides, compared with other research methodology, like phenomenology and case study, teachers should spend more time on the process of action research because they need the implement of the systematical cycle to analyse the information and make the reflection of teaching strategy in the field of art education.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, action research is a flexible and practical methodology to improve the solution in the real world. One of the characteristics is to promote the innovation in reflection. Because it shows the participation and cooperation between researchers and participants and to solve the problem in a practical way. This essay attempts to interpret action research for two parts, including the literature review of action research and the draft research proposal in order to show the application of action research in an art education. Besides, action research can improve the practitioners professional and comprehensive abilities and help teachers to improve teaching strategy in the field of education. However, this research exists some

limitations currently, such as time-consuming and the necessary of participation between researcher and participant.

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