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Research Article

Capacitating Teachers' Research Skills Through Collaborative Action Research Buddies

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ABSTRACT

Action research is a valuable tool for personal and professional development. It allows teachers to assess their teaching practices, reflect on learning outcomes, and generate practical ways of improving their pedagogical competence. Consequently, it results in positive educational impact, such as increased academic performance and school effectiveness. Hence, this action research study aimed to capacitate the teachers of Kinan-oan Elementary School, Trinidad II District, Trinidad, Bohol S.Y. 2021-2022 through Collaborative Action Research Buddies – an approach that aimed to empower, retool, train, and foster action research skills. As an intervention to the difficulties encountered by teachers in conducting research, the researchers conducted a Capacity Building on Enhancing Teachers' Action Research Skills through Collaborative Action Research Buddies among the thirteen (13) teachers of the said school. This study employed descriptive statistics and individual interview to track the improvement of the teachers before and after undergoing the said intervention. The results showed an improvement in their capacity to undertake a research project, as shown by the increased number of teachers who could craft an action research proposal based on required standards. Interestingly, all participants were able to carry out their action research proposals and had produced completed action research manuscripts. Based on the participants' narratives, they attributed this success to the intensive training they underwent that targeted their weaknesses and deficiencies in research writing. This result implies that Collaborative Action Research Buddies, as a strategy, could enhance teachers' action research skills through its facilitative effect on their cognitive and affective domains. Hence, it is recommended that Collaborative Action Research Buddies be implemented in Trinidad II District to help the teachers from other schools improve their competence in crafting a research proposal and conducting it based on a specified timeline. However, further research is needed to identify other factors that could motivate and help teachers improve their competence in undertaking classroom-based action research.

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Introduction

Action research is transformative and emancipatory. It transforms teachers' behavior and emancipates them from conventional teaching methodologies that are proven less effective in teaching and learning. It is a valuable tool for teachers' personal and professional development, allowing them to assess their teaching practices, reflect on learning outcomes, and generate practical ways of improving their pedagogical competence. For instance, Mahani and Molki (2012) emphasized its role in quality classroom instruction. Hence, it results in positive educational impacts, such as increased academic performance and school effectiveness.

The study of Ullah et al. (2017) among public school teachers in Agusan Del Sur, Philippines, revealed that teachers are mindful of the benefits of conducting research in the teaching-learning process. By conducting action research, teachers can determine what went wrong in their practice and what appropriate solutions or practical steps could address and solve the identified problems and issues. Since action research is paramount in the teaching profession, particularly in classroom instruction, every teacher is expected to be adept in research writing. This is to ensure that their teaching practices are still relevant and responsive to the needs of 21st century learners.

Along this line, the Department of Education strongly advocates the conduct of action research in its agency to improve its governance, access to education, and delivery of quality education (DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2015). It also issued DepEd Order No.16, s.2017, which guides teachers and administrators in conducting research from the national down to the grassroots level through enhanced research support mechanisms like collaboration and capacity development.

Additionally, it is also one of the criteria for promotion and is embedded in the Individual Performance Commitment Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF). Every school year, teachers are expected to come up with action research as documentary evidence of their practice. This is based on the IPCRF (KRA 5),

Objective 12, which talks about "performing *various related works/activities* that *contribute* to the *teaching-learning process*."

Unfortunately, despite the motivation of the school administrator to conduct action research, it was found out in the previous IPCRF evaluations, particularly last school year 2020-2021, that none of the 13 teachers had submitted an action research paper. For this reason, the school head investigated the reasons behind this non-conformance. It was found that teachers have difficulties in conceptualizing and undertaking research project. Their assessment result in the Action Research Evaluation also showed a lack of technical skills in action research writing.

Interestingly, Grima-Farrell (2017) reported the crucial role of support (such as time, understanding, and resources) in research productivity and that research training must be based on their level of research knowledge and skills. It is also emphasized in the study that collaborative research practice has a positive impact on the participants' output. For this reason, the researcher ventured this action research to empower the 13 teachers of Kinan-oan Elementary School teachers to produce action research output for School Year 2021-2022 by conducting a program named KES-Collaborative Action Research Buddies Program, that would capacitate them, particularly on problem conceptualization, formulation of intervention, technical research writing, and referencing among others. This program is aimed at providing technical assistance through peer mentoring and other collaborative learning strategies.

On this light, this action research was aimed at capacitating the teachers to conduct action research through the Collaborative Action Research Buddies Program in Kinan-oan Elementary School, for the school year 2021-2022. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following aspects of the problem: (1) What is the teachers' research productivity before and after implementing the program? (2)How does the program foster teachers' productivity?

Methods

Design

This study employed an action research design utilizing quantitative and qualitative data before and after implementing the intervention. Action research involves collecting information about the current educational situation, analyzing the data, developing a practical plan to address it, collecting information about its progress, and drawing conclusions based on the improvements.

Participants

Thirteen (13) teachers of Kinan-oan Elementary School were the participants of this study, which comprised the entire population of the said school. They were selected because none among them had submitted action research output in the previous years. The school head's evaluation also showed that they have lack of competence in conducting action research.

Data Gathering Methods

The first step undertaken by the researchers was to determine the pressing problem experienced in their school. Based on the IPCRF evaluation, all teachers at Kinan-oan Elementary School failed to submit the required action research manuscript after the school year 2021–2022. They also showed less competence in research writing based on the end of the school year evaluation. The researchers conducted an intervention, capacitating the teachers to produce quality research output. The data were gathered using quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data was based on their research productivity or number of research proposals made after the intervention. Moreover, the researchers also used interviews to hear the participants' voices on how the program fostered research interests and boosted their research writing skills.

Intervention

As an intervention to the emerging problem, Collaborative Action Research Program aided the teachers in crafting action research, and enriched cooperation, built confidence and trust, enhanced effective communication and collaboration, and provided an experienced exploring the program. It was conducted with a

four-Friday orientation workshop that focused on discussions and mentoring in making action research.

Pre-Implementation. The researcher asked permission and approval from the PSDS before conducting and orientation about the Action Research. The standardized action research quiz were given to the teacher participants which assessed their action research skills. Furthermore, the researcher made a PowerPoint presentation on the scheduled topics discussed and the participants were given assigned task as their assignment and enhancement activities during the 4-Friday orientation and implementation of the program.

Implementation. The researcher conducted a 5-Friday orientation/training session with the assistance of the facilitators, who were members of the District TWG in Action Research. Complete enumeration were performed, particularly the total population sampling of Collaborative Action Research Buddies Program resulting a positive outcome.

A pre-assessment was conducted which measures the research skills of the participants. It was the measured based on the standardized action research quiz tool. After the pre-assessment, the Collaborative Action Research Buddies Program was implemented among the thirteen participants of Kinan-oan Elementary School on March 18, May 20, May 27, June 3 and June 10, 2022.

On March 18, 2022, the first scheduled date of the orientation, an opening program was conducted in the morning and after that discussion of the scheduled activities on how it will be done were discussed. There were short review of the steps in making action research happened in the morning. During the afternoon session, Overview of Action Research, How to craft Title and Research Questions in Action Research were tackled followed by a workshop. On May 20, 2022 the second schedule, teachers presented their Title and Research Question and the facilitators gave feedbacks. Context and Rationale were discussed in the afternoon. Making of context and rationale was their assigned task that were presented in the next meeting. On May 27, 2022, the teachers presented their output of context and Rationale and TA followed every after presentation.

Proposed Innovation/Intervention/Strategy and Research Methodology were discussed in the afternoon and their outputs was presented on the scheduled date for meets up. On June 3, 2022 participants presented their Proposed Intervention and Research Methodology which was TA right after the presentation. In the afternoon, Chapter 4 as well as referencing were discussed. On June 10, 2022, which is the last day of the agreed schedule, the participants presented their whole output of their study which was paneled by the District Research TWG headed by the PSDS, Dr. Percy P. Torres. The participants was monitored weekly on their assigned task in a particular week and mentoring and technical assistance was given right after the schedule presentation. The participants were able to present their outputs on time. Post assessment was conducted to determine the participant's action research skills and knew the program's effectiveness after the implementation.

Post-Implementation. The Public School District Supervisor received a copy of the accomplished action research study as a basis for rollout implementation to the other schools in Trinidad II District if significant progress was evident through LAC sessions, School Heads conference or Capability Building. Moreover, this was a basis for further investigation.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought parental consent and learner's assent to participate in the study. It was made clear to the participants that their participation was voluntary, and they were informed of the purpose of the research, which was solely for academic purposes. The confidentiality of the participants' personal information was ensured by replacing their names

with codes, which were kept or destroyed when no longer needed. The researcher had sole access to the code's master list, and research data files were password protected and encrypted. The data privacy of the participants was protected by Republic Act 10173, and any data or information could not be accessed, transported, or copied without the approval and consent of the Regional Research Committee. Overall, the researcher took measures to protect the participants' interests and ensured the confidentiality of their data throughout the study.

Data Analysis

This study utilized quantitative and qualitative data analytic procedures. The research productivity or number of research proposals produced before and after the implementation of the program was determined using descriptive statistics: frequency count, simple percentage, and mean difference. To explore how the intervention improved the competence of the researchers in conducting research, the researcher recorded the narratives of the participants.

Discussion of Results and Reflection

This chapter presents the results of the study. Interpretations were provided per table, reflection was also drawn from the results, and recommendations were proposed.

Results

Teachers' Research Productivity Before and After the Program Implementation

Table 1 presents the data on the teachers' productivity before and after applying the intervention.

Table 1. Teachers' Research Productivity Before and After the Implementation
N=13

Phases of Implementation	Frequency (f) of Research Output	Percentage (%)
Before	0	0
After	13	100
Total	13	100

The table showed that prior the conduct of the Collaborative Action Research Buddies Program, all the participants have zero research output. However, after the implementation of the said program, all participants had submitted research proposals. This means that the program capacitated the teachers to produce an output based on DepEd standards.

Improvement of Teachers' Productivity After the Implementation of the Program

Table 2 shows the improvement of the teachers' research productivity after applying the Collaborative Action Research Buddies Program.

Table 2. *Teachers' Action Research Productivity After Program Implementation*

Phases of Implementation	Frequency of Research Output	Difference	Remarks
before	0	13	<i>Research productivity has improved.</i>
after	13		

As shown in the table, all the participants in the Collaborative Action Research Buddies Program were able to write action research proposals, thereby boosting their research productivity from zero to 13. It means that they were benefited from the given intervention. The program capacitated them by enhancing their ability, skill, and strength to undertake a classroom-based action research.

The above result is consistent with the participants' narratives stating the effectiveness of the given intervention in enhancing their competence in action research writing particularly on the following aspects: (1) problem identification, (2) conceptualization of intervention and strategies, (2) technical writing (e.g., formatting, pagination), (3) referencing and paraphrasing borrowed ideas, (4) data analysis, and (5) writing the results and discussions. The essence of these concepts is supported by the following statements of the participants

*The program has contributed a lot to my success in writing a research paper. Before the program, I was hesitant and afraid to write a research paper because I don't have any background in research. However, the program enabled us in identifying the common issues and problems we meet in the classroom. From that standpoint, I can now write titles based on the identified gaps in my practice. **Teacher 1, Grade 11 Teacher***

The facilitators in the seminar-workshop taught us how to craft a

*research proposal by giving us examples and tips on how to make it easier. It was an amazing experience for me, because I can now proudly say that I know how to write a research paper. I really thought that I can't do it. **Teacher III, Grade 4 Teacher***

*After being exposed to this type of training, I can now write a sensible action research paper without plagiarizing from the internet. The practical tips shared by the facilitator on how to easily cite and track references made my work easier. **Master Teacher I, Grade 6 Teacher***

The result of the study is consistent with the findings of Grima-Farrel (2017) that support from school administration in terms of time, understanding, and resources is essential towards the success of any research endeavor. The study also strengthened the findings of Grima-Farrell (2017) that research training must be based on their training needs.

Conclusion and Reflection

The researchers realized that faithful adherence to the principles of action research could address several problems in the school setting, including the perennial problem of teachers in research writing. Amidst challenges brought by the pandemic, the researchers conducted a need-based assessment that became the springboard for crafting the intervention.

Since the intervention was specific to the micro-skills that are pre-requisites for writing action research, it successfully facilitated the learning difficulties of the participants. Hence, the researcher realized that a proper and systematic approach to problem-solving, as embodied in the principles of action research, is a gateway toward educational success. Furthermore, the teachers' honesty in telling their travails in conducting action research made the programs more responsive to their needs. Thus, the researchers deduced that interventions anchored upon the truth have positive outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are hereby recommended:

1. The Collaborative Action Research Buddies Program should be used as an intervention to aid teachers in enhancing their research skills.
2. The PSDS should encourage the members of the District Research Committee (DRC) to conduct an intensive seminar-workshop

on crafting an action research proposal for teachers who have not yet submitted their action research proposals.

3. School heads must conduct a need-based assessment of their teachers to determine the aspects of action research writing that they need technical assistance.

The researcher strongly recommend that the study will be replicated by other

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