



The Teacher as an Educational Researcher: From Methodical Action to Field Practice

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Abstract

This article aims to highlight the qualitative shift in the teacher's roles, transitioning from a mere conveyor of information and a curriculum implementer to an educational actor and a researcher of classroom practices. The paper explores the mechanisms for integrating educational research into daily practice to transform the teacher from a consumer of knowledge into a producer of it, demonstrating the impact of this transition on developing educational action and enhancing the quality of learning outcomes. Adopting a descriptive-analytical approach, the study deconstructs the concept of the "Teacher-Researcher" and analyzes the requirements for moving from spontaneous practice to systematic action. Emphasis is placed on fundamental action research tools—such as observation and the analysis of educational documents—as mechanisms for data collection and the interpretation of classroom phenomena. The study targets the classroom environment and educational stakeholders, focusing on the research competencies that a contemporary teacher must possess. The findings reveal that a teacher's success in transitioning into a researcher hinges on acquiring critical thinking skills, receiving continuous training in action research methodology, and the urgent need for a supportive institutional environment that fosters reflective practice based on scientific evidence.

Keywords: Teacher-Researcher; Action Research; Classroom Practice; Systematic Action; Research Competencies; Continuous Training.

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Introduction and Research Problem

The teacher today is considered a central educational actor whose role is no longer limited to instruction and curriculum implementation. Rather, the teacher has become a researcher within educational practice itself. Contemporary education calls for the integration of educational research into classroom practice. In this regard, Mohamed Driouech, in his book *Purposeful Teaching, emphasizes that teachers must possess research competencies that enable them to decode learning obstacles, thereby becoming producers of knowledge rather than mere consumers (Driouech, 2016, p. 226).

Similarly, Donald Schön, in *The Reflective Practitioner*, highlights that professional excellence lies in “reflection-in-action” and “reflection-on-action.” His reflective model encourages continuous learning and professional development, as analyzing thinking processes and reviewing current and previous challenges enables educators to make more informed, evidence-based decisions rather than relying solely on intuition (Schön, 1983, p. 156).

The concept of the teacher-researcher is based on observation, problem identification within the classroom, and interpreting these issues as educational phenomena through the use of basic research tools such as observation, interviews, and document analysis. This process aims to improve teaching practices and enhance students’ learning outcomes.

The transition from routine practice to methodological action requires continuous professional development, the strengthening of research competencies, and institutional support that promotes action research as an effective tool for improving classroom practice. This perspective is reinforced by Eric Jensen in *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*, where he asserts that recent discoveries in brain research have profoundly challenged traditional educational models and compelled educators to reconsider and redesign their teaching practices (Jensen, 2008, p. 12).

Through this process, the teacher becomes a reflective and critical practitioner who continuously evaluates and develops his or her teaching based on scientific evidence. From this standpoint, the present study seeks to answer the following research question:

How can a teacher transition smoothly from methodological planning to effective classroom practice?

Importance of the Study

- ✓ Highlighting the importance of educational research in improving classroom practice.
- ✓ Guiding teachers toward adopting roles that go beyond instruction and implementation.
- ✓ Providing a theoretical and practical reference framework for the concept of the *teacher-researcher*.

Objectives of the Study

- ✓ To define the concept of the teacher-researcher and trace its development.
- ✓ To analyze the foundations of methodological action in educational practice.
- ✓ To propose practical mechanisms and tools that enable teachers to conduct research within their classrooms.

Definition of Key Concepts

Conceptual Definition of the Teacher-Researcher

Hargreaves defines the teacher-researcher as a teacher who goes beyond instruction to systematically investigate classroom practices in order to improve teaching and learning.

Shulman (2004) views the teacher-researcher as one who employs scientific research tools in instructional practices to produce pedagogical knowledge.

Al-Murabit (2017) describes the teacher-researcher as a critical agent who continuously reassesses and develops professional practices based on scientific evidence (Al-Adili, 2008, p. 95).

Operational Definition of the Teacher-Researcher

In this study, the teacher-researcher refers to a teacher who conducts classroom teaching while employing scientific research tools that encourage both teachers and learners to produce knowledge rather than merely consume it.

Conceptual Definition of Methodological Action

John Dewey (1938) defines methodological action as behavior guided by an organized scientific method based on observation, experimentation, and verification.

Grounds (2001) describes it as an educational practice based on a structured, evaluable, and improvable plan.

Abdelhamid (2015) defines it as practical activity grounded in systematic scientific steps aimed at achieving accurate and objective results.

Operational Definition of Methodological Action

In this study, methodological action refers to the teacher's transition from spontaneous practice to a practice grounded in systematic scientific research procedures.

Here is a formal academic English translation of your text, written in clear scholarly style and suitable for inclusion in a research paper or thesis:

Conceptual Definition of Classroom Practice

Freire (2015) defines classroom practice as the educational action formed through the interaction between the teacher and students.

Pearson (2009) views it as the set of pedagogical activities carried out by the teacher in the classroom with the aim of achieving learning outcomes.

According to Al-Assaf (2012), classroom practice refers to all instructional procedures implemented by the teacher within the classroom to achieve educational objectives.

Operational Definition of Classroom Practice

In the present study, classroom practice refers to all interactive activities conducted by the teacher inside the classroom—such as explanation, discussion, organization, and assessment—considered as a fertile field for action-oriented educational research.

Operational Definition of Research Competencies

In this study, research competencies refer to the clear and observable set of research-related skills and abilities (such as data collection, analysis, and interpretation) and the manner in which they are measured and applied in practice in order to achieve instructional objectives.

Operational Definition of Continuous Professional Development

Continuous professional development is defined in this study as an organized and ongoing process aimed at updating and enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and professional competencies.

From Methodological Action to Classroom Practice

Methodological Action

Methodological action refers to the teacher's transition from spontaneous practice to a conscious, research-based practice governed by inquiry and systematic investigation. It is not limited to teaching but transforms classroom practice into an analyzable scientific activity based on clear steps:

Problem identification: Defining educational problems accurately.

Formulating hypotheses: Developing explanatory assumptions based on classroom observation.

Experimentation and verification: Applying and testing new instructional strategies.

Evaluation and modification: Reviewing results and refining practice accordingly.

This view aligns with Stenhouse (1975), who argued that the teacher-researcher does not merely transmit knowledge but produces pedagogical knowledge through reflective inquiry. Likewise, Carr and Kemmis (1986) emphasized that methodological action is embodied in action research, which enables teachers to understand and transform their educational reality simultaneously (as cited in Field Meyer, 2011, p. 4).

Psychological Foundations of Methodological Action

Before addressing methodological action and its characteristics, it is necessary to introduce the concept of reflective practice. In 1987, Donald Schön introduced reflective practice as a process through which individuals refine their professional performance by examining their actions. He viewed it as a fundamental method for novices to recognize coherence between effective practices and outcomes. This concept later became widely adopted in teacher education programs, as reflective teaching connects John Dewey's philosophical principles with classroom realities, enabling teachers to refine and improve their instructional practices.

Reflective Awareness

Reflective awareness involves continuous self-examination and reconsideration of teaching practices. Schön (1983) emphasized that reflective teaching enhances teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, positively influencing their confidence in achieving learning objectives and in the effectiveness of their instructional strategies. It also strengthens teachers' awareness of their professional roles and responsibilities.

Cognitive Organization

Cognitive organization refers to transforming classroom situations into analyzable data. According to Hargreaves (1999), classroom interactions—whether emotional, verbal, or behavioral (such as dialogue, emotional reactions, participation patterns, conflict, motivation, or disengagement)—should not remain subjective impressions. Instead, they must be cognitively structured and analyzed to become meaningful educational data that stimulate students' thinking and help them interpret complex situations through structured learning frameworks (Jensen, 2007, p. 85).

Continuous Professional Development

From this perspective, research becomes a tool for professional learning and instructional improvement (Shulman, 2004). The classroom is a dynamic space offering continuous opportunities for growth, particularly in the presence of individual differences among learners. Each lesson represents a challenge that requires the teacher to refine cognitive, communicative, and persuasive skills in order to sustain student engagement. This process reflects a high level of professional commitment and mastery of subject matter (*ibid.*, p. 370).

Conclusion

Methodological action thus represents a qualitative shift in the teacher's role—from a traditional practitioner who repeats routine practices to a reflective researcher who produces knowledge and contributes meaningfully to the development of educational practice as a whole.

Below is a ****formal academic English translation****, faithful to the original content and suitable for inclusion in a research paper or thesis:

Field Practice

Field Practice of the Teacher-Researcher

The concept of the teacher-researcher reflects a fundamental shift in the role of the teacher, who is no longer merely a transmitter of knowledge but becomes a producer of knowledge through the integration of teaching and scientific inquiry. Field practice represents the applied extension of methodological action in educational research, whereby the teacher moves from the role of a pedagogical executor to that of a reflective practitioner who employs research tools to understand classroom realities and improve daily professional practices—not for theoretical purposes alone, but to enhance classroom interaction and improve student learning. Action research is considered the most closely related approach to the concept of the teacher-researcher, as it is based on identifying real classroom problems, collecting data through observation, questionnaires, or interviews, and developing practical plans to improve practice. In this way, the teacher engages in a continuous cycle of action and reflection (Cochran & Lytle, 1993).

From this perspective, the classroom becomes a small research laboratory in which the teacher observes educational phenomena, analyzes them, and proposes evidence-based solutions. Stenhouse (1975) emphasized that when teachers engage in research, they become active contributors to curriculum and practice development rather than mere implementers

(Solion, 2005, p. 108). Thus, the teacher-researcher does not simply apply curricula or follow pedagogical directives, but critically examines classroom processes based on real challenges arising from daily practice.

Classroom Practice as a Research Field

Field practice is grounded in viewing the classroom as a dynamic space for producing educational knowledge. Classroom interactions, learning patterns, and students' emotional and cognitive behaviors become observable and analyzable data. In this context, the teacher assumes the dual role of observer and actor, systematically documenting educational phenomena while avoiding subjective judgments, and relying on tools such as structured observation, reflective journals, analysis of student work, and semi-structured interviews (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Action Research as a Framework for Field Practice

Field practice is primarily embodied in the adoption of action research as a methodological approach that integrates action with reflection. The teacher identifies an authentic instructional problem, formulates interpretive hypotheses, implements pedagogical interventions, and evaluates their impact on learning outcomes. This type of research is characterized by its close connection to practice and its focus on improving educational performance rather than producing generalizable theoretical knowledge (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

Professional Reflection and the Transformation of Experience into Knowledge

Professional reflection constitutes a core component of field practice. Through reflection, the teacher-researcher revisits instructional decisions and analyzes pedagogical choices in light of observed outcomes. Reflection is not merely an individual activity but a structured cognitive process that transforms practical experience into transferable professional knowledge within the educational community (Schön, 1983).

Ethical Dimensions of Research Practice in the Classroom

Field practice is governed by a set of ethical principles, most notably respect for students' dignity, confidentiality of data, and avoidance of any research practices that might disrupt the learning process. The teacher-researcher must maintain a careful balance between pedagogical and research roles, ensuring that students' educational interests remain the primary priority and that the learning environment remains psychologically and academically safe (Bryman, 2016).

From Individual Practice to Institutional Action

Field practice reaches its full potential only when it evolves from individual initiative into an institutional culture grounded in research and experimentation. Failure to achieve instructional objectives does not necessarily indicate poor teaching, but rather highlights areas requiring further professional development and skill enhancement. Documenting classroom experiences, sharing findings from action research, and participating in professional learning communities all contribute to reinforcing the teacher's role as a reflective practitioner actively engaged in educational reform (Perreault, 2010, p. 228).

In light of the above, the transition from methodological action to field practice requires continuous professional development, strengthened research competencies, and institutional support that promotes action research as a tool for improving classroom practice. Through this process, the teacher becomes a reflective and critical practitioner who continuously evaluates and refines practice based on scientific evidence. Embracing this transformation enables teachers to move beyond traditional instructional models and become active contributors to knowledge production, thereby enhancing learning quality and fostering a research-oriented professional culture within the educational system.

Here is a formal academic English translation of your conclusion, suitable for inclusion in a research paper or thesis:

Conclusion

Building a culture of the teacher-researcher should not be understood as an individual choice, but rather as a strategic option for improving the quality of education. A teacher who reflects, experiments, and analyzes is a teacher capable of innovation and of making a meaningful impact in both classroom practice and student learning. From this perspective, the transition from methodological action to field practice represents the essence of true professional practice in education.

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