EXPERIMENTATION & INVESTIGATION INTO KEY TEACHING ACTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning are complex relationship. For the last 10 years we (at Mongolian National University of Education) have been interested in conducting action research to improve our teaching learning methodologies; and implementing the results of our teaching activity in content and; teaching strategies. Also, we have studied its implementation by teachers in Mongolian secondary school.[1]. As a result of our decade of research, we have found that teachers know that 1. Teaching is impossible without action research investigation and; 2. They now have general knowledge about information on action research and its importance. However we have found that teachers still usually conduct traditional research using questionnaire, observations, and literature review methods to initiate conclusions without taking further action. Our investigations also found that teachers have lack of depth of knowledge, understanding and attitude for how to conduct the action research cycle; and that action research is conducted without any theoretical baseline nor a scientifically based system. Therefore we have found that the teachers do not focus on respond deeply to 'What is action to be taken?'. MNUE Academician Jadambaa wrote "Quantum theory of Action Research[2]" book in 2016; the third chapter of his book reveals 'Action Studies' concept and its theoretical background clearly. I continue to use the content of this chapter in my teaching by using his concept "Action" to support future excellence in using action research in Mongolia.

Key words: choose action, inquiry, improve action

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[1](Baigalmaa Ch., Enkhbayar Lk., 2015)Implementation of action research of Mongolian teachers, Филологическое образование в современных условиях, Международная научно-крактическая конференция, 274-280 лист
[2]Жадамбаа.,Б (2016) Үйлийн судалгааны квант онол. Улаанбаатар. Гэрэлт судар ХХК

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are talking and writing about action research at this time of rapid development of educational reform. However, the result is not good because they are not able to implement action research according to quality requirements and of its nature. In other words, they prefer more general attitude and strategies rather than comprehensive and in-depth. We have attempted to explain this concept exemplifying our own teaching to reach more audience in order to reveal that implementing quality action research can intensify instructional technologies and development of teachers and learners and change their attitude and thinking in steps positively.

We introduced about one example of action research taken from the article "Implementing 'learning in action' when student teachers acquire basic skills of designing a curriculum" before. In this study, we aim to explain the concept 'learning in action' sharing our experiences in which the investigator attempted to help student teachers to plan or improve their understanding and ability to do planning in the seminar lessons as 'Planning of extracurricular activities for children' of the subject 'Instructional theory and methodology' (practical action research Drawing Grundy 1983).

ISSUES

When student teachers plan extracurricular activities, they make a number of mistakes such as not being able to define certain or specific aims and make differences between content and aims to state. Although they explain their teaching content, they are not able to describe them clearly. As well as, there are some incidences where they cannot choose appropriate teaching content, teaching techniques and strategies in regard to developmental level of learners/children. They are not able to describe broad explanation about assessment rule, teaching learning materials, teaching topic, content, aims and situations in their teaching/instructional guide materials.

MAIN PART

Jadambaa B, an academician, revealed 'Action Studies Concept' and explained its theoretical background. When we see the answer of the question "What's action?" from Mongolian dictionary, there are a number of definitions of meanings. "Action" is defined as 'to do action-to produce, good action-good event, conscious action-action that is done on basis of recognizing and comprehending its matter'. This definition or meaning has been considered as appropriate to describe teaching and this study will emphasize this meaning of action in the study. Teaching and learning are a complex

process while each one is a complex process, in this case, we need to analyze and investigate their understanding thoroughly. In detail, teaching consists of the following levels to be carried out.

- Process – broad and rich content, and continuous for certain duration

- Activities – A set of actions and teaching consists of two activities as curricular and extracurricular activities.

- Action – Unit action and physical, mental and language action

Actions asking questions & raising problems

Two activities as curricular and extracurricular activities

Teaching process
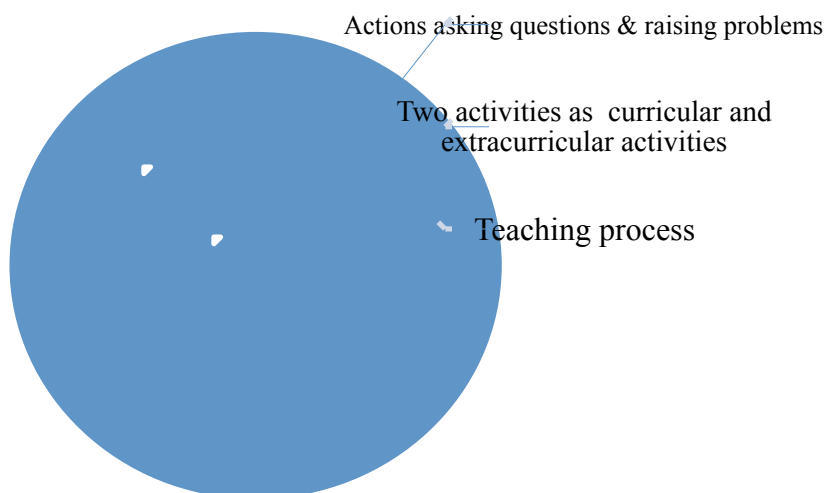
'Lesson' is a set of actions and activities so teaching and learning consist of a number of actions. It is not possible for teachers to improve all lessons once and they need to study the action-unit action separately to feel the nature of action research. The aim of teachers is to create conditions of carrying out and assessing learning for students or learners, and thus to support and improve learning.

Teaching & Learning actions in Lessons

Teaching	Learning
Describing a poster (visual image)	Observing & comparing / contrasting
Passing information	Receiving information & combining previous knowledge
Working with information	
Raising information	Reading and listening comprehension
Ask questions & get answers	Processing information
Managing group works	Analyzing and synthesizing
Preventing making mistakes / errors	Talking with each other & participating in discussion
Demanding and suggesting	Ask questions & answer questions
Correcting errors/mistakes and assessing	Reflecting and judging
Encouraging supporting	Writing down ideas logically

	Working in groups

Aim: To improve the process of acquiring the ability to plan extracurricular activities of students

Goals: 1. Experimenting possibilities of improving the ability of planning of students

2. Determining/Revealing model strategies of acquiring the ability of planning

Table 2

№		Action to do	Results
1	Teaching	Improving content of the seminar "Strategies of planning extracurricular activities"	Improved seminar content
2		Organizing seminars on basis of active participation of students (by individuals, in pairs and in groups, in a whole class)	Improved student participation
3	Learning	Experiment 1: Planning after they heard about a presentation on extracurricular activities planning	Planning not meeting requirements
4		Experiment 2: Designing structure, scheme and tables of planning of extracurricular activities and planning according to them	Improved planning quality
5		Experiment 3: Planning after formulating content of planning structure in questions	Improved content of planning structure
6		Sharing planning with peers to improve	Improved planning without mistakes

Note: Teaching in red color

Learning in blue color

Selected action:

➢ Being aware of planning action while students receive and process information

➢ Planning extracurricular activities according to the tables and schemes they designed

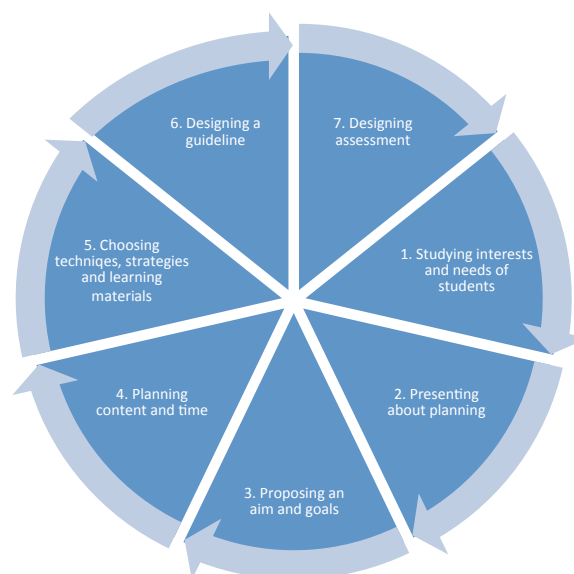➢ Discuss about designed planning in groups to improve

How will you perform the action? How will you observe and reflect about the action? When we made an analysis on seminar materials 'Strategies of planning extracurricular activities', there is much information that is not necessary for planning. We deleted unnecessary information, made necessary information certain and add the necessary information. We guided students to prevent any mistakes while planning.

First stage of experiment in 2015

- Put more questions about planning to improve awareness of planning
- Active students imitate planning of other people
- Students were late to submit their independent works on time
- Most students did planning that did not meet the requirements
- The planning structure was not fully described

We reflected about why the ability of students' planning is not good enough when they were taught the strategies of planning extracurricular activities in the seminar. The presentation information they heard is not enough to learn to do planning. We decided that we need to systematize the information students would hear and we need to help them to create their knowledge. Then we organized the seminar focusing on students' participation and assigned them to design a scheme a model table "Planning structure of extracurricular activities".

Scheme 2

A Model Table for Planning of Extracurricular Activities

Table 3

Planning introduction:			
Topic: Title given to the activity	Framework: Interests of students and demand of the society and other stakeholders	Rationale: Necessary demands of organizing the work	Principle: Norms, rules and regulations to be followed during the activity
Aim: Expected outcome for students organizing the activity			
Goal: Midterm expected outcome for students organizing the activity			
Content: The nature of the activity to be organized and activities, actions and work to be done by the participants			
Strategies and Activity types: The activity type will be chosen considering the features of participants and the activity. For example: Interviews, debates, visits, community volunteer works, competitions and contests etc. Management styles of students are group works, pair works, and a whole class work etc.			
Stages and Time: Planning time will be set considering the activity content, strategies and types and management of students.			
Activity Guideline: A guideline will be designed for students and other participants. In this, the topic, aim, content, condition, strategy, type, stage, time and assessment will be clearly stated.			
The work materials: The number and amount of materials for each participant will be specifically planned.			
Assessment: A rule and methods of assessing the performance and results of the activity organized will be designed.			

Second stage of experiment in 2016

Table 4

Strengths	Weaknesses
Planning was completely done considering the structure. The relationship between each structure of planning is tried to make.	The content for each structure of planning is not accurately determined. The assessment of planning is not stated.

What were the strengths for the previous experiment? Students did not understand about the planning structure in the previous experiment but this time they have good awareness that the structure need to be followed for planning. As well, students need to understand about what should be included for each structure element. We thought about how to get students understand about it and what ways are appropriate to work with them. Then we decided that if questions are formulated for each planning structure, the answers will be clear and the content will be accurate.

A

A Model Table for Planning of Extracurricular Activities

/formulated by questions/   *Table 5*

№	Planning structure	Content for each structure
1	Planning introduction А. Topic Б. Framework В. Rationale Г. Principle	А. What will you do? What activities will you organize? What topic will you give to the activities you will organize? Б. How does the activity help to provide social needs? В. Why is it necessary for students to do the activity? Г. What are norms, rules and regulation that will be followed by participants?
2.	Aim	What outcome will you reach by implementing the activity?
3.	Goal	What midterm outcome will we reach by implementing the activity? What understanding, thinking and beliefs will students/pupils have? What abilities and strategies will students study? What attitude and behavior will students develop? What features of socialization will students develop?
4.	Content	What will you observe, reflect about, study and implement? What will participants do?
5.	Method and Type	How will you observe, reflect about, study and implement?

		(group work, competition, debate, interview, project work etc)
		What methods and types will you use to organize participants? (group work, pair work and class work etc)
6.	Time and stages	How many stages will the activity have? How much time will be allotted to implement each stage?
7.	Guideline	How will you carry out the following as aim, content, condition, method, type and assessment for the activity?
8.	Materials	What learning materials, handouts, equipment and other resources will participants use? How many pieces and how much amount will they need?
9.	Assessment	How and what rule will you use to assess the activity performance?

Third stage of experiment in 2017

After students were given an independent work on curriculum design, the following was observed.

Table 6

Strengths	Weaknesses
The content of each structure elements was accurately described when students followed the planning structure.	Who will assess the activity performance? When will the activity performance be assessed? How will the activity performance be assessed?

Students were not good at describing assessment for their planning. They need to learn to plan the methods and strategies that identify and reveal the performance and results of the activity they would organize.

CONCLUSION

When students are doing the assignment of "Planning of extracurricular activities", we identified that learners need to be aware of the action when they do new action that they have not done before.

In order to help students to acquire the ability of planning action, teachers are recommended to work with students using the strategies as analyzing and processing information, guiding them by asking questions and discussing the performance and results to improve.

In addition, we observed that it was effective to design a scheme and a model table for students to acquire the ability of planning action. The most effective action was that students

designed reflective questions in order to describe the content for each elements of the planning structure. In other words, the action was guided by 'Reflective questions'.

Students become knowledgeable by performing productive physical, mental and language actions while working with information. And they apply their knowledge in practice. As a result of these actions, students develop their competencies.

Teachers need to involve students in actions to experience and solve problems. In this case, they will have more chances to comprehend what we teach. It is recommended that teachers need to support students to take part in an action to create something and work and work again to improve what they did before. Then students can be able to learn strategies to do planning.

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