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Improving pedagogical practices of teaching inquiry in primary science in Malaysia: a classroom action research study

How can I develop an inquiry approach in science teaching to improve my practice as a science teacher through the development of my pedagogical skills?

As *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* – the classic tale of a girl who disappears down a rabbit hole to a fantastic place full of bizarre adventures – that is how I situated myself in this unique piece of writing. As a novice teacher, I am getting '*curiouser and curiouser*' about my own pedagogical practices. Therefore, I have decided to put myself forward in the dual role of a 'teacher-researcher' to study how I can improve my own pedagogical practices in implementing the teaching of inquiry in a high-performing primary school in Malaysia. Based on the classical classroom action research model, this deeply personal and contextualised study, drawing on my values and beliefs, investigates my praxis through four sub-thematic concerns of i) perception and pedagogical knowledge, ii) planning component, iii) questioning techniques and iv) inquiry assessment. Progress was made as I engaged through a self-reflective cyclical process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. As a 'philosopher in the classroom', I was able to theorise my own practice by developing an appropriate pedagogical framework for teaching inquiry integrated with the Malaysian primary science curriculum and syllabus. I also empirically presented how the teaching of 'inquiry' should be conducted in my practice and demonstrated the impact of this approach towards the pupils' engagement from the perspective of a teacher-researcher. As Alice said '*it's no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then*', this journey made me realise the potential for me being a 'researcher' in my own classroom. It provided me with a systematic way of examining my current practice and a structure to enable me to plot my professional development path for the future. This journey has been truly 'living on the edge'!

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