Exploring Practice through Classroom-based Research
Achilleas Kostoulas • Anita Lämmerer

Pencils "All in a Row", by JLS Photography – Alaska (CC BY-NC-ND-2.0)
What we will do today

• Explore possibilities of classroom-based research
• Demonstrate steps for engaging with classroom-based research
THINKING ABOUT
CLASSROOM-BASED RESEARCH
In your view, what might be some benefits of Classroom-Based research?

Click on the link below and write your answers in the text box in note form (max. 4 words per entry)

https://answergarden.ch/view/234647

Check answers
What are the benefits of classroom-based research?

- Access to data
- Student and teachers working together
- Insights can be implemented immediately
- Link between theory and practice
- Know problems
- Student motivation
- Inside view
- Feasible change
- Beyond intuition
- Practice-oriented, not theory-oriented
- Our motivation learner's needs
- Students benefit immediately
- Teacher expertise
- Fine-tuning your own teaching technique
- Professional development
- Contextualised understandings
- Student confidence
Why do classroom-based research

• It can inform our teaching decisions
• It can help with our professional development
• It can strengthen collaboration among colleagues
• It generates data-based evidence
Assumptions about research

Research involves:

• Technical expertise
• Grounding in the literature
• Contribution to knowledge
• Time & resources

Does this apply to classroom-based research?
I am not a professionally trained researcher :(.

I have not read many books and articles :/

I have nothing new to say...

I have no free time!

Teacher at Chalkboard, by cybrarian77 @ Flickr, CC-BY-NC
I CAN DO Research
PLANNING A RESEARCH PROJECT
Thinking about what to research

**Step 1: Defining a research question**

*Use this space to write down a tentative research question*

**Before we move on...** evaluate your research question against the following criteria:

- Can I find actual data that answer the research question by looking into my classroom practice, my students or myself?
- Do I have access to the resources I need to answer this question?
- Can this question be answered in a reasonable timeframe?
- Can the findings be used to inform practice?
Example research questions

• Why are students reluctant to use our lending library?
• How difficult are authentic listening tasks my intermediate class?
• Does increasing planning time help students in the elementary classes I teach to speak with more confidence?
Thinking about utility

**Step 2: Thinking about the pedagogical utility of the research project**

Think of all the people, including yourself, who stand to benefit from your findings. Write them in the left-hand column. Then, use the right-hand column to briefly explain how they might benefit from your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My study is useful to...</th>
<th>because...</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
Thinking about methods

**Step 3: Thinking about methods**

Think about the advantages of different research methods, with reference to your research question. Record your thoughts in the table below, and use them to guide your selection of the most appropriate research method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data generation method</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Drawbacks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questionnaire survey with open ended questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
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<td>Classroom observation</td>
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<td>Diary study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other...</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Example: a questionnaire-based project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning the project</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decide on research questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read-up on questionnaire design</td>
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<td>Obtain permissions</td>
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<td>Designing and piloting (testing) a data generation</td>
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<td>instrument</td>
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<td>Write a draft questionnaire</td>
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<td>Ask two friends to pilot and give feedback</td>
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<td>Rewrite questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generating data</td>
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<td>Discuss project w/students</td>
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<td>Administer questionnaire (homework)</td>
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<td>Analysing the data</td>
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<td>Collect questionnaires</td>
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<td>Use MS-Excel to record answers</td>
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<td>Create graphs to help understand data</td>
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<td>Think about what the data show &amp; draw conclusions</td>
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<td>Sharing your findings</td>
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<td>Create a poster showing most important findings</td>
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Some online resources

• **Questionnaire design:**
  http://achilleaskostoulas.com/category/notes/researching/research-methods-researching/questionnaires-design/

• **Research methods:**
  http://achilleaskostoulas.com/category/notes/researching/research-methods-researching/

• **Presenting in conferences:**
  http://achilleaskostoulas.com/2014/04/12/how-to-present-a-conference-paper/

• **Academic writing:**
  http://achilleaskostoulas.com/2013/11/04/academic-writing-some-resources/
Some more online resources

- **Brainstorming**: www.answergarden.ch
- **Questionnaires**: www.surveymonkey.com
- **Phrasebank**: http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/
- **Blogging**: www.wordpress.com, www.blogspot.com
More to explore!

- Benefits of Classroom-Based research
- Challenging assumptions
- The research process
- Types of classroom-based research
- Research ethics

Please send us feedback!
Thank you!

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