

The way of self developing to be teacher as researcher: A case study of one elementary teacher

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Abstract—A case study was narrative-biography approach. The purpose of the study was to explore in the way of self developing to be teacher as researcher in context, method, turning point for developing and teacher's emic and characteristics. A case was one elementary teacher who was well known at classroom action research. Interviewing, observation, documentary and artifacts studying were used for collecting data. Data was analyzed by inductive analytic method. The study result was as follow: a case was a woman teacher who finished in B.Ed. and has taught in this school for 28 years. The educational reform in 1999 was the most affect for her to improve classroom action research. She has used every methods for enhancing herself to be good at classroom action research. Finally she evaluated herself and found that her knowledge and ability in classroom action research was not well. So, she stopped going out to improve herself in classroom action research. After that she paid attention to be a good teacher: doing a lesson plan, teaching, assessment, reflection and revising her learning management. Her characteristics is a good practice. She was proud in herself that her students were good at their learning outcomes.

Keywords—component; case study, narrative-biography, teacher as researcher

I. INTRODUCTION

Research is a systematic logic and accepted method of acquiring knowledge. Research can have many goals, for example, to describe, explain, and depict events. It can produce tentative results, resolve problems, disprove hypotheses, develop theories, and lead to action plans. Therefore, research can be applied by both individuals and organizations for problem solving. Knowledge obtained from research can be applied to clarify or address social troubles [3],[8].

The teachers are important men for promoting the students and themselves to learn about research [1]. Especially the action research, so the action research approach was a big sound for the teachers to learn about. Besides, action research creates new knowledge based on enquiries conducted within specific and often practical contexts. The purpose of action research is to learn through action leading to personal or professional development. It constructs theory from practice. The aims of the teacher-researcher scheme are worthy of consideration: to encourage teachers to engage with research and evidence about

students' achievements. To increase the capacity for high-quality, teacher-focused classroom research by supporting teacher involvement in the development of research. To support teachers in designing, applying and carrying out more medium and large-scale classroom-based research about pedagogy where teachers have an active role [5]. Moreover the quality of action research depends upon the reflexive sensitivity of the researchers, whose data collection, analysis and interpretations will all be mediated by their sense of self and identity [9].

Due to the influence of Educational Act in 1996, all Thai teachers was alerted to develop themselves to be teachers as researchers. They have done many methods such as learning by themselves: reading, discussing with experts, training, going to classroom. In this point I saw one elementary teacher who has learned to be a good researcher for 10 years. But she asked herself many question such as : “why I am not a good researcher? “ “What is a real concept and practical in action research?” Why do I have to go out my classroom for finding a good teaching method and practicing to be good at action research?” She considered herself and stopped to go anywhere for learning about action research. After that she has taken more a good attention to be a good teacher: conducted lesson plans, evaluated instruments and instructional medias, reflexed on her teaching and students' learning outcomes. She improved her teaching methods. finally, her students were achieved. She was well known and was awarded a good teacher prize.

From her biography in developing herself to be teacher as a researcher is interesting. So, I was allowed to present about her by using a narrative–biographical study approach. It was the author who told the story of a single individual as a central focus for the study. The data collection considered of conversation or stories the reconstruction of the life experience through researcher participant observations. The individual recalled a special event of life, an epiphany. The author reported details information about the setting or context of the study [11].

The result of this study may be one a good model for someone who wants to enhance himself for being teacher as researcher.

II. THE RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose was to study about the way of self developing to be teacher as a researcher in context, characteristics, method and turning point for developing and teacher's emic.

III. THE RESEARCH PROCEDURE

I selected one of the elementary teacher who was well known among teachers as a researcher. She has many classroom action research reports that shown the developing methods on her teaching and her students. I have known her for five years. She has consulted me about her action research. I found that she is a learning person and takes more attention in learning about action research.

I contacted her and told her that her biography in the developing method herself to be a teacher as researcher was very interesting and be useful for other teachers who want to learn how to promote themselves. She was very pleased and allowed me to get her biography for publishing.

I defined the scope of my studying. I called it "working hypothesis" because it could be changed on going while I was collecting data. I prepared myself in question guidelines for asking her, camera, tape recorder, field notebook, etc. I made an appointment with her for interviewing and observation her working.

For six months that I have collected data in many methods : formal and informal interviewing, construction and unconstruction observation in her classroom, studying her papers, and artifacts. At the same time I talked with the other person around her: her students, her friends, her students' parents and principal in her school.

I considered data that I have collected for making sure that it was accurate, valid and reliable. If I was not sure in my conclusion, I would collect it again by other resources, methods and time.

The one of the most important point when I collected data was my bias. I aware have reminded myself that I must not be bias on this participant and the research result.

The data was analyzed by inductive analytic. It was divided into five groups as 1) the context of the study 2) being to be teacher as researcher 3) turning point of the improvement way 4) the characteristic of teacher as researcher and 5) her emic on classroom action research and teacher as researcher.

After I have finished writing the report, it was read and reacted by her. She checked the research finding until it was made sure that it can be presented to the public. One of her statement to tell me on this research report

"...I was very proud that my life was useful for other teachers. When they read it, they would find that the beginning of the way to be teacher as researcher was paying attention in their classroom..."

IV. THE FINDING OF STUDY

The finding of this study was presented as follow:

The context of the study

The teacher of this study was a 53 years old woman. She got married with one son and one daughter. She was finished in Home Economic bachelor degree from the open university. She began to be an elementary teacher a small school in the local country. It was very far from the city. She hasn't moved to any school. She has taught in this school for 30 years. She noticed this school was look like the pass way of new administrators and teachers. They started for working here. They were looking forward the time for moving from here, too. Because it was very hardly capable- of supporting life.

At the first time, she had idea like the other men that when she could go to another better school. Her students were poor. The most of the students' parents were farmers and labors. After finishing of planting and cropping, all of them must go to the big city to be a labor. The children were abandoned with the old persons or lived on by themselves.

The most of her students were learning disable. They can't read, write and compute. She thinks these are big problems for her. Sometime her students didn't go to school because they must to help their parents working in the farm or looking after their sisters or brothers. She visited the students' home and found that they didn't have the time for doing their homework.

From these situations, she considers for her career. She used to think of retiring from school. But in spirit of teacher, she continued to be a teacher. She told herself that she would work for her students and enhance them to be good at learning outcomes. She hoped that her students will be able to read, write, calculate, and live in social happily and be a good citizen.

The beginning to be teacher as researcher

In 1999, there was educational reform in Thailand. The Educational Act was announced. It was a big power for educational movement. Learning about research was one of the most impact point. Everyone must learn about research. There was a policy that all teachers must/should conduct action research. Research report was the essential evidence for assessment teachers' promotion.

So every teachers must attempt to learn about action research. There are many questions for the teacher who have not learned about research before: What is an action research? Is an action research for only graduate students? Does an action research look like thesis? How is an action research conducted? Can we conduct an action research?

They tried to answer all above questions by many ways: asking the man who was well known on action research, supervisors, experts, going for training, seminar, conference, reading text, studying from example of research reports. Almost of these methods they must get out of their classroom.

From one time to another time, finally she found that she didn't know very well in action research. When the educational supervisor or the principal asks for an action research report, it was easy method. She asked for another teachers' research report for copying it.

The turning point of the improvement way

Although she has gone to many places and done many ways to learn about an action research for 12 years, finally she found that she wasn't successful, didn't understand and couldn't conduct it by herself. She probably asked herself what an action research was. She was mentally tried for learning in action research. She was so sad in her mind. Sometimes she left her students for finding an action research.

So, she stopped going anywhere and doing many ways for learning about an action research. The sound in her mind was a good teacher must pay more attention teaching to promote the students' learning outcome. After—_that she reconstructed on her work. At the first, she analyzed basic information to conduct her teaching plan: reading the curriculum, preliminary the students' potential, preparing the teaching aids, and construct evaluation forms.

Then she attempted to arrange many learning activities to the students. While she was teaching, she collected data about the students' behaviors, students' learning outcomes, learning circumstances. She took note in her teaching log. She reflected her instruction and asked herself that she was successful on teaching or not?, what was a weaken point? did all her students achieve in learning objective? how can she improve her teaching?

From these questions she tried to answers herself. She wrote her answers in report. She called it "How Developing Teaching Methods Report". She has taken note for one year. When she saw me, she took her report to me and asked me to recommend her.

I read it. I found that her report is meaningful of her work, because it was written about her action plan, teaching acting, evidence of her teaching effect and reacting of her teaching. It was many loops.

I told her that her report was an action research report. It was very well. Because it created new knowledge based on enquiries conducted within specific and often practical her teaching contexts for leading her to be a teaching professional development. It was worthy of consideration: to encourage her to engage with research and evidence about students' achievements. To increase the capacity for high-quality, teacher-focused classroom research by supporting teacher involvement in the development of research about pedagogy where teachers have an active roles.

She was very happy. She asked me again and again "Is it my action research report?"

Her emic on classroom action research and teacher as researcher

She reacted that she has just known about an action research after she has tried to learn about it for long time. She reflected that action research must be conducted in her classroom by herself as the following list: analyzing and identifying an instructional situation and context, reviewing a topic and analyzing the literature to gain her knowledge on teaching and evaluation, focus on the topic, following an action plans, instructional media, evaluation instruments, planning activities, gathering data, analyzing data, implementing, reflecting on outcome, reporting.

She told me that a good teacher can be a good researcher. The good teaching preparation was very important thing to do first. An action research can be conducted on going teaching. It was useful for improving teaching method and the students' learning outcomes and achievement.

The teachers who want to be a good researcher in an action research must be good at teaching, too. They don't need to go out of their classrooms. The classroom are valuable for conducting knowledge about their teaching.

The characteristic of teacher as researcher

When I spoke with her, interviewed the men around her, observed her behavior and studied her working papers, I found that she was good at Thai in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, able to think rationally, able to think analytically, able to think creatively, able to think synthetically, able to think critically, able to solve problem, able to work systematically, able to manage time, able to plan conducting, able to communicate / negotiate, able to present research's result, be curious, observant, be patient to troubles, open mind to others' opinions, able to keep secret, be honest, be friendly, sociable, brave in presenting the right things, be self-disciplined, be responsible for one's own doing, be careful, be fair/ without bias, respect others, be strong/healthy, be mentally stable, be able to control emotions, able to work with others, behave appropriately and have good personality.

Discussion

1. When she brought her teaching report to me and asked me to suggest about it. I think it was a good practice in an action research report. Because what she has done is a systematic logic and accepted method of acquiring knowledge in her classroom to improve her teaching. It can produce tentative results, resolve problems, develop theories from practice, and lead to action plans [8]. So an action research creates new knowledge based on enquiries conducted within specific and often practical contexts. The purpose of action research is to learn through action leading to personal or professional development. It constructs theory from practice. The aims of the teacher-researcher scheme are worthy of consideration: to encourage teachers to engage with research and evidence about students' achievements, too increase the capacity for high-quality, teacher-focused classroom research by supporting teacher

involvement in the development of research, to support teachers in designing, applying and carrying out more medium and large-scale classroom-based research about pedagogy where teachers have an active role. It can be set within a specific context or situation. The researchers can be participants. They don't have to be distant and detached from the situation. An action research involves continuous evaluation and modifications can be made as the project progresses. There are opportunities for theory to emerge from the research rather than always follow a previous formulate theory. The study can lead to open-ended outcomes. Through an action research, the researcher can bring a story to life [5].

2. The teachers should become researchers in their classroom. Over the ensuing years, the idea of the teacher as researcher progressively became more widely accepted [4]. The teachers are important men for promoting the students and themselves to learn about research [4]. The classroom action research did not happen suddenly but can evolve continuously in classroom. A search for coherence led the teacher to consider many changes and approaches to research appeared within that context of change. The quality of action research depends upon the reflexive sensitivity of the researchers, whose data collection, analysis and interpretations will all be mediated by their sense of self and identity [4].

3. Her methodology for conducting her action research is related to Koshy Valsa [4] that he recommend how to conduct an action research should be as the following list : Identifying a topic and setting context, Reviewing a topic and analyzing the literature, Focus on the topic, planning activities, gathering data, analyzing data, acting/ implementing, reflecting on outcome, reporting. Addition to Kemmis and McTaggart [10] who write the text on topic The Action Research Planner. They suggest the steps of action research as follow: The first step is planning, it means that the researcher must conduct an action plan, prepare evaluation instruments and others before acting an action. The second step is doing and observation. It means that the researcher take an action and collecting data for evaluation and action outcome, too. And the last step is reflection of the finding for developing. It means that the researcher reacts on their action to find the successful and weaken point.

4. In the study I found that she was very proud of herself because she has known how to improve her instruction and her student by herself. She can talk to others about her work. So, it can be concluded an action research was an empower promote shifts in power relationships with the classroom setting. This notion is related to what Downey-Skochdopole and Goldston [6] refer to empowerment promotes preservice teachers' into the realm of teacher as researcher.

5. One of the way to be teacher as researcher is self – study. Hama and Kaneb [2] studied on the way of self – study as researcher. The point, at which a 'self-study' might become 'research' is a matter of some discomfort even

among those who work and write in the self-study of teaching and teacher education areas. Those of us in the practitioner research, teacher researcher, action research and self-study in teacher education communities all forage somewhat nervously in the swamplands between the apparently infertile deserts of positivist detachment and the impenetrable jungles of postmodern self-inspection.

6. Her characteristics of teacher as researcher are good at Thai in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, able to think rationally, able to think analytically, able to think creatively, able to think synthetically, able to think critically, able to solve problem, able to work systematically, able to manage time, able to plan conducting, able to communicate / negotiate, able to present research's result, be curious, observant, be patient to troubles, open mind to others' opinions, able to keep secret, be honest, be friendly, sociable, brave in presenting the right things, be self-disciplined, be responsible for one's own doing, be careful, be fair/ without bias, respect others, be strong/healthy, be mental stable, be able to control emotions, able to work with others, behave appropriately and have good personality. They refers Thongthai's [12] studied about the desirable characteristics of educational researcher. It found as follow: 1) about the desirable characteristics of educational researcher and evaluate themselves 2) learning activity that could enhance them to have desired researcher characteristics and 3) how they realize on desired researcher characteristics. The students wrote their viewpoints in all topics and sent to the researcher. Frequency and content analysis were used for analyzing data. The results showed that the desirable characteristics of educational researcher based on students' metacognition were 1) knowledge both in methodology and content; 2) communication skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening: searching for the new information: using computer for typing and analyzing data and problem solving; 3) high orderly thinking: reasoning, analyzing, decision making and creativity and 4) habit of minds: self discipline, responsibility, honesty, carefulness, relationship, keep informants' secret, respect in humans' rights, and benefited between researcher and informants. Moreover it refers to Knight [7] studies one man who take the role as inspirational teacher, mentor and researcher. It found that performance of the man is a learning person.

7. A narrative – biographical approach was used in this study [11]. I told the story of a single individual teacher who was well known on action research as a central focus for the study. The data collection considered of conversation or stories the reconstruction of the life experience through interviewing, participant observations, studying document and artifacts. The individual recalled a special event of life, an epiphany how to be teacher as researcher. I reported detailed information about the context of the study, the beginning to be teacher as researcher, the turning point of the improvement way, her emic on classroom action

research and teacher as researcher and her characteristic of teacher as researcher

V. RECOMMENDATION

From the finding of this study, there are recommendations as follow:

1. The research subject used many methods for developing herself to be teacher as researcher, but finally she found that the classroom action research must be in classroom. The actor was important man to conduct an action research. The teachers should take a lot of attention in their teaching and gathering data for reflection and improve their work.

2. When I collected and analyzed the findings, I focus on the researcher characteristics. It is benefit for me and others to enhance myself and my students to be a good researcher.

3. I hope that this paper may be an example of research report that use a narrative – biography approach.

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