A scaffolded approach to collaborative action research in an ESL endorsement program

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Our framing questions

- What's the end goal of engaging students in action research?

- How do we reach this goal in an undergraduate ESL endorsement program?

Our theoretical perspective

McHargue (1994) found that, when engaged in professional development, **teachers learn best from other teachers**, and that problem-solving and creativity are enhanced by **diverse groupings which create collective wisdom that surpasses individual expertise** (Mitchell et al., 2009, p. 345)

Our theoretical perspective

Furthermore, since action research is a form of practitioner research, it encourages teachers to become **lifelong learners**, makes them more open to developing a **variety of teaching methods** and **verifying whether these methods work**

(Sowa, 2009, p. 1027)

Dixie State's approach

- Cohort model program
- English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement embedded into elementary licensure program for all graduates
- Components of action research embedded into each semester, and linked to practicum experiences

Dixie State's program flow

Semester 1: Early Childhood Emphasis	Semester 2: Intermediate Emphasis	Semester 3: Content Methods
• Principles of Early Childhood • Curriculum & Assessment courses • Literacy in early childhood • Elementary fine arts • **Foundations of language acquisition + bilingual education** • **Practicum in grades K, 1, or 2**	• Differentiated instruction • Literacy for intermediate grades • Classroom management • **Assessment for ESL education** • Methods for health/PE • **Practicum in grades 3, 4, or 5**	• Content methods courses: English/ language arts, math, social studies, science • **Family/Parent Involvement** • **Content area literacy for ESL** • **Practicum in grades K-6 (student choice)**

Action Research layers

Semester 1: Early Childhood Emphasis

- Emphasis on contextual factors within practicum classroom, and understanding who English language learners are

Semester 2: Intermediate Emphasis

- Emphasis on administering assessments, interpreting data from various populations of students, and using this data to create action steps

Semester 3: Content Methods

- Emphasis on using data to formulate an action plan to benefit an ELL in some way, and implementing and reporting on this plan

Students-as-teachers, and teachers-as-researchers

Within your program, how do you engage your students in research, and assuming teacher-as-researcher identities?

Successes

Our successes related to scaffolded action research in an undergraduate ESL program

Key areas of success

- Rigor of action research leads to high expectations for student performance
- By the end of 3rd semester, students report feeling more comfortable with data-driven decision-making and responsive action
- Projects lead to students' increased attention to the whole learner
- Serves to connect courses + practicum experiences within and across each semester

Your successes in student research?

As your students engage in your programmatic experiences, what successes do you notice, experience, or observe?

Challenges

Our challenges related to scaffolded action research in an undergraduate ESL program

Key areas of challenge

- Limited formal focus on the research process within ESL content courses

- Researcher-as-participant as a challenging identity for undergraduate pre-service teachers

- Students' presentation of findings and related analyses

Your challenges in student research?

As your students engage in your programmatic experiences, what challenges do you notice, experience, or observe?

Where do we go from here?

Clarifying our takeaways

Our takeaways

- What are ideas we heard today that we can apply to our future practice?

- What questions do we still have regarding supporting students in undertaking action research?

Contact us!

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