

Classroom Action Research on Solving Problems in Janapriya Multiple Campus, Pokhara

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Abstract

The study on action research on solving classroom problems in Janapriya Multiple Campus (JMC) based on a preliminary study on the solutions of existing problems in the classroom. The objectives of the study were to identify the problems and manage to solve them through various interventions. All the students (62) in class 12 who were studying in the Education faculty of JMC were included in the sample through the census method, where the researcher taught two periods daily. It was done within seventy-five days, half of the academic year after the first lockdown and before the second lockdown, using qualitative research with the interpretive paradigm and narrative research design. The researcher observed the situations, listed the problems seen in the classroom, and conducted two FGDs with five teachers and eight students, respectively. Action research procedures for action research, namely planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting, were implemented, and a theory of change was used to evaluate the interventions. Baseline and end-line evaluations were used to find out the change. The researcher used observations, FGD, and tests to collect data. The data obtained were presented mostly qualitatively and less quantitatively. The findings show that regular attendance and keeping parents informed are effective in improving the attendance of the students. Similarly, the attendance in the alternative period help to solve the bunk of class. Proving questions to students make them more attentive and aware of their class activities. This can be seen from the improvements after each cycle. Each and every cycle help students get some progress in solving problems. It is very useful to maintain good relations among teacher, the students and their parents at the end of the cycle.

Keywords: *absentees, bunk classes, classroom action research, proving questions, theory of change*

Introduction

Action research is a process in which participants examine their own practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research. Classroom action research is a process of examining the practices of classroom actions and taking feedback from the experience and the teaching learning activities. Classroom action research was first proposed by Kurt Lawin in 1946 to bridge the gap between theoretical and applied research. Action research is conducted with the objective of solving the problems in his classroom while teaching. Action research is carried out to bring about change in the existing situation. It is behavioral and cyclic in nature because it addresses the real problems where action and research go side by side. Shirley (1994) said that teachers often engage in action research as a means of improving their individual pedagogical practice, and it is the practice of education at the whole school level. It is necessary to understand the improvement of the quality of education as a responsibility for school communities as a whole.

In my 25 years of teaching in colleges and high schools, I encountered numerous challenges. Since 2002, the researcher has been a Plus two teacher. The researcher has been educating students at JMC, where this study was carried out, since 2007. JMC was founded in 1991 (2048 B.S.) by a collaboration of 14 academics, neighborhood sponsors, and neighborhood social organizations. It is a nonprofit academic institution with a broad focus on fostering the growth of knowledgeable and adaptable human resources to meet the demands of education in the 21st century across a range of sectors.

It is assumed and believed that classroom management is essential for effective teaching and learning. Classroom management is the teachers' action to establish and strengthen an environment that fosters students' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. There might be many problems seen in the classrooms, so the teacher, as the manager of his or her class, should manage the class to solve the problems. Aibinuomo (2021) Classroom management is a comprehensive concept for various actions of a teacher designed to facilitate teaching and learning in the classroom. To manage a class room properly, students and teachers are expected to exhibit the required behavior necessary for effective teaching and learning activities. The teacher and students should develop the expected behaviors for better teaching and learning outcomes.

School culture is very important for creating better teaching and learning activities. It is related to the institution's policies for creating effective teaching and learning activities. Fullan (2007), "School culture" can be defined as the guiding beliefs and values from which the school operates. "School culture" can be used to encompass all the attitudes, expected behaviors, and values that impact how the school

operates. Every institution has its own culture, and that guides the institution. Similarly, JMC has more than 600 lifelong members who are the pillars of the campus. Respect to contributors and love for students is the main college culture. Cooperation, communication, and coordination among the stakeholders are the main cultural policies to achieve success. Now the campus is producing globally recognized, self-motivated, self-capable, life-skills-based graduates. The campus seeks the assistance and support of its stakeholders in order to transform this public campus into a deemed university. Although the campus has the dream of being deemed university, the teachers felt some problems in the classroom teaching and learning process, which were: noisy classrooms, bunk classrooms, absentees in the classrooms, and less motivation in the teaching and learning activities. If such problems are not solved in time, students won't do better in the future and the campus will lose its fame.

Classroom problems are seen for various reasons. There might be problems with seating arrangement, class sizes might be large, monolingual classes, personality clashes, and lack of appropriate classroom norms and culture. For the betterment of classroom management, the teacher should observe the context and find out the exact problems that he or she can manage. For this, John (2015) wrote that developing clear classroom norms is the foundation of both classroom management and classroom culture. The favorite way to develop norms is to talk with students about how they want their class to be. Developing classroom norms is just the beginning. The teacher also needs to figure out what he will do when students don't follow the norms. If the teacher needs ideas, talk with other teachers and find out the common discipline policy. Classroom management as a source of school culture and it is directly related to pupil's achievement. These were the most important aspects of the quality of teaching process. A comprehensive review indicates significant relationships between management and culture (Sashkin & Walberg, 1993). Similarly, there is a relationship between the culture and the efficiency of the teaching process (Cheng, 1993; Levine & Lezotte, 1990). Classroom management is the responsibility of the teacher for teaching learning activities. School culture and administrative support are helpful in managing the classroom activities properly. As a result, the relationships between teachers' leadership, school culture, and efficiency are interlinked to solve the classroom problems.

Hallinger and Heck (1998) conducted an action research study in the schools of the United States over a 15-year period and discovered that principals were the leaders of the planners and led the schools. They found that teachers and principals should work together to solve the existing situations through interventions. First, they have identified the problems and made the management plans to solve them with-

in a certain time frame. Teachers and principals become more effective when they examine and assess their own work and then consider ways of working differently. Teachers and principals help each other by working collaboratively. The teacher needs to manage the classroom to solve the problem. The teacher must collaborate with colleagues, administrators, and stakeholders to further their professional development. It shows that the teacher should have good relations with all the stakeholders to manage the classroom.

Being a teacher, many easy, hard, happy and sad circumstances are to be dealt with inside the educational institution. Many more teachers are assigned the duty of only teaching. Teachers are busy with their teaching and learning activities. All the students and the teachers have different characteristics. They have different knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Their demographic situation and socio-cultural conditions are also different. A classroom is a mini society in which the researcher can see their society's shadow in the classrooms. Their feelings, intelligence, morality, values, persuasion, and acting are diverted from their activities. Teachers everywhere in the world are faced with similar challenges. The teacher encounters many obstacles from students, parents, administrators, and even himself.

Dussault (2018) compiled a list of the top issues that kept coming up again and again in the classrooms. Teaching might be a joy, but that doesn't mean it's not a headache. The top eight challenges faced by teachers in 2018 were as follows: Coordination and cooperation were absent, or there was a lack of teamwork, empathy, and support among students and teachers. Similarly, the teachers needed to work in many roles at the same time in the institution, leaving no time to deal with bodily functions. It meant that the teacher had to contend with hunger, thirst, and refreshing as well. On the other hand, teachers are made accountable for more than they should be. As a result, the teachers had assigned many more classes. As a result, he or she had not had enough time to plan. As a result, he had tension. Mental work is more. Likewise, as a member of the school, he or she had the responsibility to keep up with the expectations of school admins. A teacher needs to apply a prescribed curriculum to all types of students, although they are different in many ways.

From the above literature and from my own experience in classroom management, I found that the teacher should find out the problems through participant observation for a week. The teacher needed to discuss with the other teachers and students in the class for listing problems. The teacher finalizes the plan of intervention for solving problems. The teacher should coordinate with the administration and the principal to solve the problems. So I observed the classroom problems for one week, arranged a FGD about them, and listed mainly three burning problems. Classroom

action research is mainly focused on one problem or issue and continues providing intervention on that issue, but here I chose three problems and made interventions as needed. Although the researcher had twenty-five years of experience in teaching and learning, this was the first experience of applying the action research process to solve the classroom problems, so the researcher had different and satisfying experience. The researcher worked together with the students in designing the plans, implementing the actions, making observations, and reflecting on the results. The researcher made some strategic plans to solve the problems on the basis of action research.

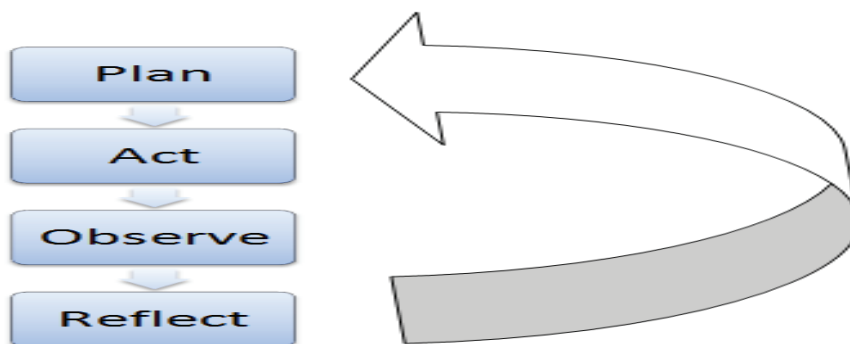
The objectives of the research were to identify the classroom problems and develop an intervention to solve them. in JMC.

Research Methodology

Action research is a type of qualitative research that is adopted by the researcher in order to solve the immediate problem that arises during a particular course of time. This approach is applied using qualitative research to explain what is happening and to understand the effects of some educational interventions. The researcher used an interpretive research paradigm and narrative design.

The JMC and the students of class 12 who were studying in the Education faculty (62) were selected purposefully because that was where the researcher had been teaching since 2007. Participant observation was done daily and made note if needed. An oral question and answer was done to find out their daily achievement level. It was recorded as needed. Two FGDs were done; one was with five teachers and the other was with eight students. As the qualitative study experiences, (through observation and field notes), enquiring (through asking and questioning) and examining (using and making records). This action research focuses on the changes in attitude, behavior, and knowledge of students during the 75 periods of the class.

Action research reports are often narratives, located in the context of the evolving experiences of those involved. It is reflexive and elaborates the story dialectically. The researcher planned, implemented, evaluated, and wrote the changes to the intervention again and again until the researcher felt the behavior was saturated. Observation is focused on the three classroom problems. The researcher applied some interventions to minimize problems. This study followed the four-stages model in action research as proposed by Mertler and Charles (2005) as: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.



Available primary and secondary data were incorporated into the writing of the paper.

Results and Discussion

Action research is facilitated by the participation and collaboration of a number of individuals with a common purpose. Such research focuses on specific situations and their contexts. In addition, the primary aim of the research is to solve the problems seen in the classes. Classroom Action Research (CAR) is intended to make a contribution to the improvement of teachers' techniques, approaches, methods, knowledge, style, materials, and evaluation in the classroom. It gives insight into the behavior of both teachers and students in applying the intervention as required. It uses an action research design in order to solve the research problem. Action research is based on action, evaluation, and critical analysis of practices based on collected data in order to introduce improvements in relevant practices. Action research design is systematic, occurs in an educational setting, focuses on the researchers' teaching, and is practical and relevant. This type of research is facilitated by the participation and collaboration of a number of individuals with a common purpose. The primary aim of the research is to solve the problems seen in the classes. This study tries to describe the implementation of intervention programs to minimize the problems. It is conducted by the teacher in his/her own classroom space. Action research helps teachers to "pick up threads suggested in academic fields."

The four main types of action research design are: individual research, collaborative research, school-wide research, and district-wide research. Action research is a form of research that is authentic and circles, and weaves them in their own classroom "(Ferrance, 2000, p.13). Action research allows teachers to take ownership over their teaching and occurs when teachers contemplate a classroom or instructional issue, design a study, execute the study, track data and results, and reflect. Action research progression is interactive; it is not a passive

process, as teacher-researchers are active constructors of knowledge (Abdul-Haqq, 1995, as cited by Katherine, Green, & Anderson, 2006). The researcher created an individual research type. It helps to find out the problems and their solutions through intervention.

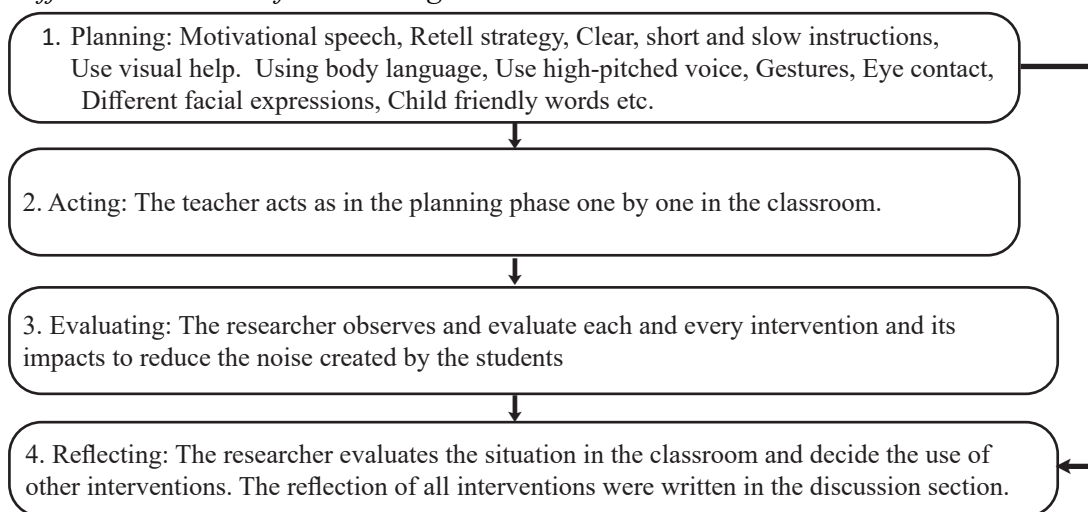
The researcher listed five issues from the participant observation but after the two FGDs. One is with five teachers and the other is with eight students of the same class. Following discussion, participants in FGDs all agreed on three themes or pressing issues, such as noisy classrooms, class bunks or absenteeism, and decreasing educational quality on a daily basis. Some strategies and interventions were made to minimize the problems and enhance the quality of education.

1. Noisy classrooms

Baren (2019) said that action research design is an educational research method involving collecting information regarding current educational programs and outcomes, analyzing the information, developing a plan to improve it, collecting changes after a new plan is implemented, and developing conclusions regarding the improvements. Students were talking to themselves in their own words. The focus group concluded that the possible reasons for the noisy class are that: instructions weren't clear for students, instructions were too complicated, and the task was not appropriate for the students' level. There might be no proper classroom management. The contents might be very hard or too easy, pre-task activity might be omitted, and so on. Motivation for learning might be less. The researcher, the other four teachers, and eight students had suggested the plan to solve the problems as:

Figure 1

Different Measures of Controlling the Class



First day motivation speech was given with examples of scope of learning and gaining knowledge. This motivational speech was prepared from the YouTube. Students were asked to write the theme in five sentences. Students were asked to write the conclusion. It was realized that twenty-five percent of the noise was controlled. Secondly, the researcher used the "Retell strategy." In this strategy, the teacher asked the students who were not paying attention to his teaching. The students were asked what the teacher had just said. They must pay close attention and repeat what their teacher has said. It could be asked at any time when the teacher thought they were not giving any attention to him. This strategy made them listen carefully. All the time, this strategy was not applied due to the time and other reasons like how many students were involved and how many times they were asked the questions. Students' questions and retelling of stories provided them with a clear vision of their content. Students had increased their speaking and logical power.

To control the class, the teacher sometimes makes clear, short, and slow instructions again. Similarly, the teacher could use audio and visual materials. Using body language, gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions are other ways to control noise or draw attention from the students. The teacher needed to speak in a high-pitched voice, not a low monotone or speak at the right volume for the students' ratio. A teacher doesn't speak too fast for his or her students to listen and understand. The language and the words should be used in a student-friendly manner.

From the observation and the discussion, it could be found that students came to class 12 with no fail system. As a result, the knowledge of one student differed greatly from that of another. Some students were excellent, and some were very poor. On the other hand, two types of students were present in the same class. One was from community schools (75%) and preferred the Nepali language, while the other was from institutional schools (25%) and preferred English. The administration could not make two sections for them. The teacher needed to write some tips and clues in two languages. The British Council (2021) suggested the following solutions to discipline problems: insist on students paying attention during the lesson, explain to them that their poor knowledge is the result of their disorganization, and encourage them to improve. Similarly, it suggested that when working in groups, the group leader needed to help weak pairs. Call the strongest pair to the blackboard to present their work to the class. The teacher clarified if needed. Students were given a task and asked to check if they were ready for the task according to their previous knowledge. If not, provide them with clues and supporting documents or reading materials with a time frame.

The researcher tried the above mentioned programs one after another. As a

result, the class was very good, most of the students listened to the teachers, and the students were happy to follow the instruction. Almost 85% of students were on track and had stopped making unnecessary noise. Sitting behind a desk creates a "distance" between the teacher and the students. The teacher tried to minimize the gap space between the rows so that he could easily reach those at the back. Similarly, the side-to-side reach style was applied in forming the desk and benches. This way, the teacher can talk to individual students, and the shy ones can ask questions quietly without the fear of humiliation, as well as check their work and help them.

The rest of them produce noise within their masks with a low voice, like whispering, as their interest. Wearing a mask, is compulsory due to the pandemic CORONA virus, it was difficult to identify whispering noises within forty to fifty students. An uninterested group of students needs extra work to cope with their educational problems. The above activities don't cover their learning style. The researcher concluded that mixed-language preferred groups were the main cause of making noise, so it is better to form the group and class in their preferred language if possible. After making different interventions, the researcher thought nearly 80 percent of the noise was controlled. However, only 20% of the noise was visible, and the voice level appeared low and soft. The teacher should lead the class to talk on the teaching subject matter rather than their individual interest.

2. Class Bunk

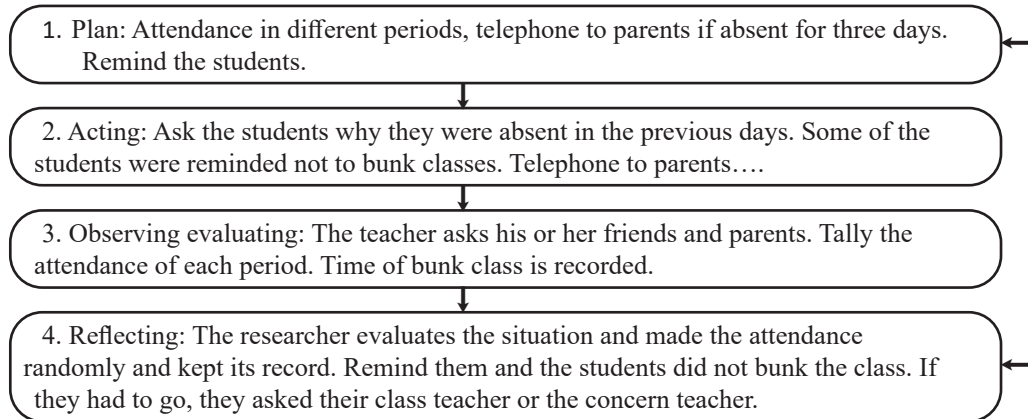
There were 62 students enrolled in class 12 in the education faculty. There were nearly 40 students who were continuously present in the classrooms. Nearly one-third of students were absent from their classroom. It was noticed that some students left classes and stayed outside the restaurants talking with their friends. Most of the students skip their first, fourth, and last classes for various reasons. The students who missed first period said that they had left their bus and were late to the class. They could not enter the college after 10 minutes of the class starting. The campus has the policy of not providing entry after ten minutes of the bell having rung. Some students skip classes in order to purchase a pen, pencil, copy, or book. Some students went to restaurants outside of the college because of the limited capacity in the college canteen. Some went to outside restaurants because there was stray smoke and facilities for smoking. When they went outside the canteen, some of them stayed for the fourth period and said they could not eat in time. Similarly, students went to the library to take books or summit the book, which is situated outside the main gate. Some students bunk their last period, saying they needed to go home because their parents sent something from the village and needed to receive it. These were the sayings of students before leaving their class. It was seen that some of the students

went to irrelevant classes with that group. Art students came to education, and education students went to art class. The researcher, the other four teachers, and eight students had suggested the plan to solve the second problem of bunking the class as:

The researcher asked the students how to reduce the bunking problems. Teacher and students made the policies or rules of leaving or bunk class with the discussion of students and other teachers. After talking to them, the researcher made the plan to take attendance at different periods.

Figure 2:

Action Research on Bunking Classes



If students were absent three days regularly, the researcher provided the names of absentees to the administrator to telephone their parents. Some were absent from college, but they were coming from home on those days. These alternatives and regular attendance made them come regularly, and they were asked to inform their class teacher why they were unable to attend the class. If students went to irrelevant classes or if the class teacher found any students in irrelevant classes, they were reminded not to leave the class. Their names were entered into the bunk or leave students list, and they were told that if they did such things five times in a row, they would be barred from class for five days. They were reminded of the scope and importance of teaching and learning every time they missed class. Students were not allowed to go outside for the purpose of buying copies, pens, and other stationary materials. These simple stationary materials were kept inside the canteen and asked to be bought from there.

Regular attendance was taken in the first or second period, which was taken by the researcher. Leaving the class without reason was a form of control with the best tries .evaluation of bunking classes, the researcher took sample attendance

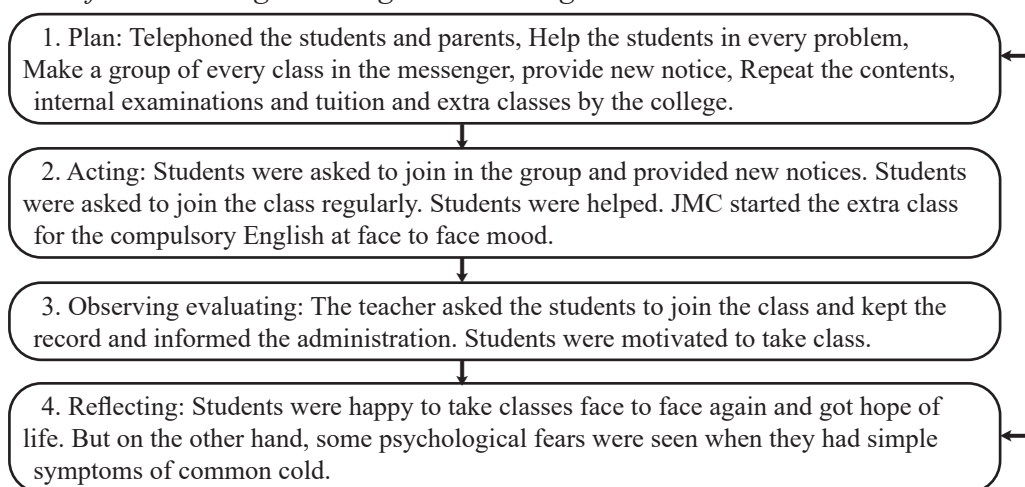
for two or three different periods in a day and compared the attendance among the periods. These comparisons were made ten days apart, secretly, with seventy-five days to go. Students on the first occasion left the class in a day, but at last only one student left their classes with the permission of the concerned teacher. If they will have to do the work outside, they need to ask their class teachers or need to inform the administration.

3. Decreasing the Quality of Education

The third problem was found to be that the teaching and learning activities were decreasing day by day due to the pandemic situation of the CORONA Virus. The research was done between the first and second lockdown. Ninety students were admitted to class 11 before the lockdown. Among them Only sixty-six students appeared on the final exam for class 11 after the first lockdown. For nearly seven months, students stayed in their villages and homes in the first lockdown. They said that their own village and home were needed in the pandemic, so they preferred to return to their own village. Some parents were compelled to leave their jobs, businesses, or work due to the pandemic, and their dependent children needed to leave college. Teaching and learning activities were poor at that time, although the college provided the MS team for the online teaching. Most of the students were from low socio-economic conditions. They lacked smart phones as well as laptops. On the other hand, the National Examination Board (NEB) provided the chance of taking exams from their nearest schools, so most of the students returned to their own village school to take the exams.

Figure 3:

Plans for Increasing Teaching and Learning Activities



Those schools took new arrival students' sentiments and motivated them to

study; some students preferred to study there and left the JMC. According to the parents and the students who wanted to leave the college, the reasons for leaving were different. They said that the pandemic was the first reason, and second, they said schools were more flexible for marking the students. The college, on the other hand, began online teaching and learning during the first lockdown, but the students lacked the facilities of the online classroom, so they preferred the privacy of their own village, where they felt more comfortable than in the city. Around 40 students were taking regular classes, although sixty-six took the examination for Class 11 and only 62 students admitted in class 12. Students were given their first internal examination, and the average score was 38.7. After teaching sixty periods, a second internal examination was taken and the average score was 49.2. The teacher motivated the students to take part in the learning activities. Student-oriented methods were somehow implemented. The helping culture was increased, which made it easier for them to tackle the problems themselves.

Students and parents were assured that they would run the regular classes in MS team. Students and parents were reminded that it was better to continue them in JMC, which they would need after passing plus two. It was realized that students' group in the messenger was needed to communicate in the group, so they were requested to join the messenger group, which was fruitful in conveying the notice, materials, and assignments too. Sometimes it is fruitful to telephone in a small group. Internal exams were useful in reinforcing previous teaching and learning materials. It made the students review as well as prepare for the next final exam. Similarly, the college started extra classes for compulsory English, which helped students pass their exams easily.

Conclusion

According to the research findings and discussion, before implementing Classroom Action Research (CAR), the teacher simply prepared for the subject matter and gave a lecture. The researcher used four steps of action research as: planning, acting, evaluating, and reflecting. The planning covered the objective, selecting suitable materials, preparing the methodology of teaching and evaluation. Acting is also called implementation, which consists of real teaching in the classroom. Evaluating means finding out the value of interventions. Reflection shows how the students and teacher throw back some knowledge, attitude, practice, behavior, and experience after getting or providing interventions. Classroom action research makes the researcher work hard, more capable, thoughtful and active. The research was based on a participatory approach, and communication, cooperation, and coordination with teachers and students were increased while implementing classroom action

research. FGDs provided feedback to plan for overcoming the problems. The Retell strategy, using teaching materials and body language, were the main ideas to control the noise in the classrooms. Attendance on a daily and period basis, as well as informing parents, were the most effective strategies for reducing class bunk. Face to face teaching learning activities is more appropriate rather than distance based learning due to poor socio economic condition of parents. The researcher concluded that mixed-language preferred groups were the main cause of making noise, so it is better to form the group and class in their preferred language if possible. It is better to make class codes and policies with the interaction of the students to manage and run a class smoothly. It is suggested that every teacher should perform action research to improve their own capacity on teaching learning activities.

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