

# Project CURE (Cuenca Unleashing Research Enthusiasts): Capacitating Teacher-Researchers

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**Abstract:** *Being a researcher has been an integral part of teaching career as it produces well informed decisions through collected data, and a deeper solution to identified problems. Despite its benefit, teachers are hesitant to complete a research study due to some factors brought by the job. This paper aims to assess the impact of the implemented project in terms of the authentic response of the participants from the survey and the open-ended questions. A descriptive survey was employed with 27 participants who presented their research in the compendium. Based on the findings, a) teachers found research as an important tool to improve their professional career because it is proven to improve their skills in their own specialization. b) It improves teachers' instructional practice by applying factual solutions to the problem presented. c) But despite this gain, teachers are hesitant to conduct research due to time constraint brought by their workload. As a result, it was recommended to continue to offer opportunities for researchers to start a research project, manage time to produce one, and provide channels to capacitate teacher-researchers.*

**Keywords:** Action Research, Teacher-researcher

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st Century Skills required to be developed among learners push teachers to embrace research and be a teacher-researcher. Research has been an essential part of the education system since policy and practices in the bureau must be data driven. To develop learners' ability in terms of critical thinking and analyzing the given data, teachers must also be equipped and skilled. Conducting research informs teachers on the actual scenario on the gaps that need to be addressed. At the same time, it develops teachers' ability to analyze, synthesize, conclude, and plan for the next step to address the problem.

Research is an integral part of teaching, but teachers struggle to even propose a research topic. Most of the teachers voiced out the workload accompanying the teaching profession thereby making it difficult to add another task, conducting research. Teaching itself is a job that requires much time and effort. Accompanied by research, it becomes more difficult for teachers to balance time on their priority job and the time to conduct research. Even teachers who had been conducting research quit from doing so due to the other tasks demanded by the profession.

Studies show improvement in the conduct of research when teachers are given training and equip them with skills that give them confidence in conducting research (Lunar et al., 2021). Training provides teachers with necessary skills and opportunities to improve their craft. Project CURE (Cuenca Unleashing Research Enthusiasts) tried to provide teachers-researchers with knowledge and skills for teachers to start and conduct their own research. Opportunities were also provided to showcase their concept and guide them on the proper format and presentation. This study aims to see through the project and find out what else to be improved in terms of conducting research.

The Cuenca District research department provided teachers with opportunities and capacity-building activities that may encourage, enhance, and develop their research skills. This includes LAC sessions, mentoring, coaching, information dissemination, and research compendium. The final output of the project is the complete research to be submitted and qualified to Division Conference of Basic Research.

Following the schedule of Division Research Agenda for CY 2022, DM 33 s 2022, Cuenca District proposed the sequel of Project CURE that aims to capacitate teachers in terms of conducting research. A series of activities were planned and implemented in the whole district through a district memorandum.

Beginning April 2022, the research department announced the submission of research proposal. Some schools asked for assistance through LAC Session, to help teachers craft their title and research questions which will be their guide in the proposal stage. Emmanuel Elementary School, Tomasa C. Pasia Memorial School, and Cuenca Central School grabbed the opportunity to conduct LAC Session that trained teachers to craft their own research title/ topic and the research questions that may bridge the identified gap. A group chat through a common social media platform was created to help the researchers with the proper layout and content of the proposal. Updating, mentoring-coaching, and answering queries are the most common activities in the platform. Proposals were uploaded in a drive, then, comments and suggestions were given to those who uploaded their proposals.

Mid-August of 2022, a Research Compendium was carried out in the district. On August 12, 2022, at Cuenca Central School, Cuenca District Research Compendium was conducted through the leadership of the PSDS, Dr. Nenita A. Adame and the district research coordinators, Mrs. Welnie P.

Lunar and Lucky May L. Pasia, from secondary and elementary, respectively. A total of 17 complete research was presented during the compendium. Research enthusiasts from the district served as the panelists or corroborator who reviewed the participants' paper. Completed research is submitted to the Division Conference of Basic Education Research (DCBER) 2022.

This study generally aims to evaluate the impact of the project and the possible improvement to capacitate teachers in conducting research. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What learning and development are gained by the teacher in conducting research?
2. How does the project impact their practices and their career in general?
3. What hinders the teachers in completing a research study?
4. What solutions can be proposed based on the result of the implemented project?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

This study is categorized under participative action research design. The participants were surveyed and questioned on the impact of the carried-out project. According to Creswell (2012), practical action research seeks research problems in the educational setup to improve own professional performance through systematic study of a local problem.

### 2.2 Samples

Participants were the teacher-researchers who presented their research during the District Research Compendium 2022 and the researchers who presented their paper in VDCBER and VCBER 2021. Out of 27 teacher-researchers, 25 respondents were able to answer the survey. The respondents were public school teachers from elementary and secondary schools in Cuenca District who submitted their research.

### 2.3 Research Instrument

A descriptive survey was used to find the respondents' experience in the project and its impact in their motivation to conduct and complete action research. Simple weighted mean was used to identify the intensity of their response. There are open-ended questions where respondents give their perception and opinion of the from the result of the project and its impact to their practices.

To triangulate the result, an interview and follow up questions were gathered from the participants of the latest District Research Compendium for this year.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

This study employed a simple interpretation of the result using weighted mean for the responses in the questionnaire. A 4-point Likert Scale was used to interpret the result of the weighted mean gained from the responses of the researchers. Descriptive inferences were drawn from the result of the weighted mean, then synthesized the whole responses.

It also employed the thematic analysis from the responses in the open-ended questions. Based on the responses of the participants, common themes, topics, or ideas which were repeatedly given were harvested. Using the simple ranking of the frequency of the mentioned factors, Themes were extracted and interpreted.

The result of the survey and the themes gathered from the open-ended responses were compared and analyzed as to its coherence and relativity.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The year-long project exerted effort to raise teachers' knowledge and skills in the process of conducting research thereby expecting impact among researchers in the district. The tables presented give an overview of the result of the implementation of the project and its interpretation.

### 3.1. Learning and development gained from conducting research

Teacher-researchers were asked about the importance of research after being exposed to conferences, Table 1 shows their response. Teacher-researchers find research as a valuable way to improve teaching and learning. Though it appears to be the highest in rank, other indicators appeared to gain positive impact among teachers who had been involved in research since most of the teachers extremely agree.

**Table 1.**  
**Importance of research**

<i>Research is...</i>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>R</b>
1. <i>a valuable way to improve teaching and learning</i>	4.00	EA	<b>1</b>
2. <i>a valuable way to develop my knowledge as a teacher</i>	3.76	EA	<b>3.5</b>
3. <i>important to the teaching and learning process for my learners</i>	3.76	EA	<b>3.5</b>
4. <i>will positively impact my students' achievement</i>	3.76	EA	<b>3.5</b>
5. <i>may help me progress personally</i>	3.76	EA	<b>3.5</b>

Legend: WM = Weighted Mean; VI = Verbal Interpretation; R = Rank; EA = Extremely Agree

To measure whether teachers gained confidence in the process of conducting research, table 2 presents their responses. Teacher-researchers gained confidence in most of the process in the conduct of research specifically in using

technology for literature review and data gathering. Hence, in terms of statistical analysis and writing publishable article, teachers still need more guidance and training. This result has improved as compared to the first year of the implementation of the project.

**Table 2.**

**Confidence in the process of conducting research**

<i>I am now confident in...</i>	<b>WM</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>VI</b>
1. identifying issues and problems to be studied or to be the topic of research	3.48	5.5	EC
2. searching relevant literature of my preferred topic	3.48	5.5	EC
3. choosing the design or method to be used collecting and interpreting data	3.48	5.5	EC
4. interpreting the gathered data	3.48	5.5	EC
5. organizing and writing the findings	3.44	9	EC
6. presenting the complete research	3.48	5.5	EC
7. writing publishable article	3.24	10	C
8. using technology in "literature review"	3.56	1.5	EC
9. using technology in "data gathering"	3.56	1.5	EC
10. using technology in "statistical analysis"	3.12	11	C
11. using technology in "data presentation"	3.48	5.5	EC

Legend: WM = Weighted Mean; VI = Verbal Interpretation; R = Rank; EA = Extremely Confident; C = Confident

**3.2. Impact of Project CURE on teachers' practice and career**

Open-ended questions came along with the survey to harvest teachers' authentic and significant learning that they gained from conducting their own research. Table 3 reflects the thematized response of the participants on how engaging in research impacts their professional and personal growth. Specifically, this paper asked participants about the long-lasting effects of research in their professional career, on personal empowerment, and on their instructional practices.

**Table 3.**

**Gain in professional career**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>R</b>
1. Improves professional skills	12	1
2. Gains new perspective	8	2
3. Develops research skills	3	3.5
4. Strives for excellence	3	3.5
5. Motivation	2	5.5
6. Promotion	2	5.5

Legend: F = Frequency; R = Rank

Table 3 shows the themes gained from the open-ended questions addressed to the participants after the

implementation of the project. The themes formed when asked about the long-lasting effect of conducting research in their professional career are improving professional skills, gaining new perspective, developing research skills, striving for excellence, motivation, and promotion. These themes are explained as follows:

**Improves professional skills.** This theme pertains to the participants' improvement in terms of teaching skills. As teachers they were able to see the issues and problems that must be given attention and be able to create solutions that may effectively address the gap. Through research, participants felt equipped with the proper skills for their profession. This theme appeared to be on the top among the professional gain from conducting research.

*"It encourages me to use research-based actions in dealing with issues and concern in teaching, as well as in improving the teaching-learning process."*

**Gains new perspective.** For teacher-researchers, being engaged in the conduct of research gave them a new perspective in their profession. They felt the transformation gained from the skills, and the learnings they gathered as they go through the process of conducting and completing their research.

*"As a teacher and as I engaged myself in action research, it allows different opportunities in me both personal and professional."*

**Develops research skills.** The participants' engagement in the training and mentoring opportunities provided by the project, and the experience of presenting research itself, developed their skills in conducting research.

*"It develops my research skills and passion."*

**Strives for excellence.** This theme pertains to the eagerness of the participants to do better the next time they present their paper or to do better in their practice as teacher.

*"This AR helps me to strive more for excellence."*

*For I know it would greatly help my professional growth yet at the same time can make a difference among my colleagues, school, leaders, community and most especially our students."*

**Motivation.** Conducting research gave the participants motivation to improve their craft as teacher and as a researcher as well.

*"This project thoroughly helped my internal motivation to do more research and influence my co-teachers to do the same because we are confident, competent and well-oriented on the context of research making."*

**Promotion.** This pertains to the opportunity that participants may gain once they have been able to submit their paper. It gives them an edge among others in terms of points in their IPCRF in ranking.

*"The Certificate of Recognition received can be used as supporting documents in the IPCRF and in the promotion."*

Table 4 shows teacher-researchers' perception on how research empowered them as a teacher. Description of each theme is given after the table.

**Table 4.**

**Empower the teacher or the teaching**

Themes	F	R
1. Improves skills	9	1
2. Informs decision	7	2
3. Addresses specific problem	5	3
4. Boosts confidence	4	4

Legend: F = Frequency; R = Rank

**Improves skills.** This theme talks about the skills learned from conducting research and how it improves their way of thinking. It also talks about the gain in the way they address the needs in the classroom which is specific to their specialization. It also includes the increase in productivity brought by the improvement in their skills.

*"As a math, statistics and research teacher, I believe this experience gave me a lot of learnings to apply."*

*"It empowers me to be more observable and motivated teachers in everyday scenarios in our classroom."*

**Informs decision.** The theme reflects how the participants gain concrete knowledge on the real issues and learned to make decisions based on the outcome of the study.

*"Action research gives the teacher-researcher a baseline/idea where they could create a project innovation or intervention for learners that were proven effective and increase the academic performance of the learners."*

**Addresses specific problems.** It pertains to the long-lasting solution the participants gained upon addressing a specific problem that undergone the study.

*"It will significantly affect the way I analyzed and provide solutions to the existing problems in my area of expertise."*

**Boosts confidence.** Teacher-researchers gained confidence as they improved their craft through the conduct of research. This is a feeling of fulfillment after finishing a paper and providing a solution to the presented issue.

*"It brings me more confidence to solve problems in my teaching career."*

Table 5 shows how research informed teachers' instructional practices. The themes formed from the participants' responses are guided application of factual result, reflection, and centered on specialization. These are explained after the table.

**Table 5.**

**Informed instructional practices**

Themes	F	R
1. Guided application of factual result	13	1
2. Reflection	4	2
3. Centered on specialization	2	3

Legend: F = Frequency; R = Rank

**Guided application of factual results.** After engaging in research, teachers were able to gain act or apply the solution obtained from the result of the study. Interpreting the result of their study provided them with facts that needed to be understood and seen through the lens of the subject. This gives them a chance to address the real issue.

*"With the help of so many excellent studies related to my studies. I can see the different angles, views, strategies and the like that will help my teaching practices improve and develop. Benchmarking thru this AR is absolutely a good idea."*

*"It could give me ideas on what innovations or interventions I could give and offer to the learners that will meet their needs."*

**Reflection.** This pertains to teachers' ability to reflect on their own practice as they go through the process of research.

*"As I engaged myself to research it encourage me to review my own practice and further develop new ideas."*

**Centered on specialization.** The researchers were able to focus on their specialization as it gives the opportunity to identify the real gap.

*"Instructional practices will be more learner-centered thus increasing class engagement and improving learners' achievement."*

Based on the presented tables, teacher-researchers found the core purpose of research and were able to gain learning and development personally and professionally. Once asked if the participants still want to conduct another research, their response is positive, but they were not yet that confident to be of influence on other teachers to become teacher-researcher.

**4. Hindrances in conducting research**

Despite the positive response of the teacher-researchers, there are still hindrances that keep them from conducting and submitting complete research. Table 6 shows the teachers' stated difficulties and hindrances in completing a study. Topmost problem why teachers cannot complete a research paper is time and workload, followed by knowledge and skills, attitude and motivation, and respondents' participation.

**Time.** Regarding time constraint due to conflict with the priority task brought by the job itself and the lack of strategy to manage it. This also includes the bulk of responsibilities for their ancillaries or other teaching-related tasks.

*"Conflict with scheduled activities. We know that research takes more of our time. If the teacher can balance everything, may they will be able to conduct studies."*



*“Time constraint was the number one factor that hinders teachers from working on their research. Ample time must be given.”*

**Table 6.**  
**Hindrances in completing research**

Themes	F	R
1. Time and workload	21	1
2. Knowledge and skills	8	2
3. Attitude and motivation	7	3
4. Respondents’ participation	4	4

Legend: F = Frequency; R = Rank

**Knowledge and skills.** Teachers were hesitant to be engaged in research because of the feeling of incapability to conduct one. There is this feeling of lack of knowledge and skill to carry over the task.

*“Some of the factors that hinder teacher from conducting research are the ff: lack of self-confidence shortage of time available for research lack of support & motivation.”*

**Attitude and motivation.** Pertains to teachers’ behavior towards research and not feeling the importance of conducting one.

*“Most of them feel bored and some says because they are too old to do it.”*

**Respondents’ participation.** Difficulty in gaining response from the respondents.

*“Respondents are also hard to contact which provides no opportunity to attain the appropriate number of samples.”*

Despite the effort provided by the research department through Project CURE, it is still not enough to gain many teachers to participate in the conduct of research. Hindrances are great that teachers chose to act only on the most urgent needs of the department than to get into the real issue and solve it. Time is the most difficult part of the problem since conducting research truly requires extra time.

To raise the level of practice in conducting research in the district, the following activities are suggested.

**Project CURED (CULTURE of Research in EDUCation):  
Showcasing Quality Research**

Program / KRA	Objectives	Activities	Timeline	Persons Involved
Support Group	To provide researchers with technical assistance while working on their paper	Creation of research committee in the district composed of and research focal persons	September 2022	PSDS Focal person - (Representative from each school)

		from each school		
Research Proposal	To provide opportunity to collaboratively think of the research topic that is suitable for the need of the society at the moment	District Research Proposal	October 2022	Organizers TWG Panelists Participants
Conduct of Research	To allot ample time for researchers to conduct and write their paper	- Collecting Data -Writing the Paper	November 2022 - April 2023	Researcher Respondents/ Participants
Research Compendium	To showcase the result of their study	Submission of Completed Paper Presentation	May 2023	Organizers TWG Panelists Presenters

**4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following results were derived from the study.

1. Teacher-researchers find research as a valuable way to improve teaching and learning.
2. Teacher-researchers gained confidence in most of the process in the conduct of research specifically in using technology for literature review and data gathering.
3. The long-lasting effect of conducting research in their professional career are improving professional skills, gaining new perspective, developing research skills, striving for excellence, motivation, and promotion.
4. Teacher-researchers are empowered by research in terms of improving skills, informing decisions, addressing specific problems, and boosting confidence.

5. Research informed teachers in their instructional practices in terms of guided application of factual results, reflection, and centered on specialization.
6. Hindrances in conducting research include time, knowledge and skills, attitude and motivation, and respondents' participation.

The researchers recommend utilizing the project CURED (CULTure of Research in EDucation): Showcasing Quality Research which aims at raising the level of practice in conducting research in the district.

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