


Book Review on ‘Classroom Research for Language Teachers’

Classroom Research for Language Teachers


Author/s: Tim Stewart
Publisher: Tesol Press
Pp. 67
ISBN: 978-1-953745-32-3
ISBN (ebook) 978-1-953745-33-0

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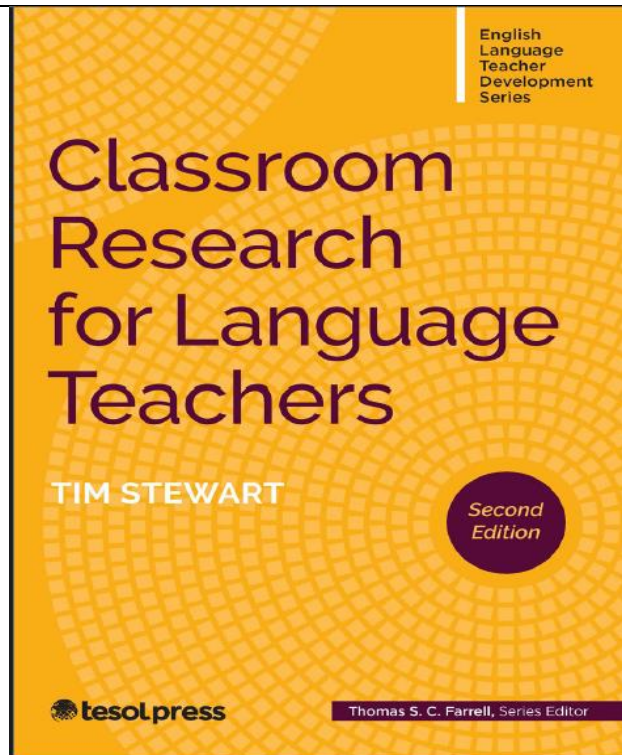
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51726/jlr.1712102>



Classroom Research for Language Teachers, published by TESOL International Association, serves as a practical guide for English language teachers, particularly new to the field of conducting classroom research. The book is well structured, covering major steps of the classroom research process like initiating research, data collection and analysis, publishing research findings, and maintaining research over time. Aligning with contemporary discussions in TESOL and applied linguistics that call for increased teacher agency in research, Stewart posits that teachers are not merely passive consumers of research. They are rather active contributors investigating diverse aspects of their pedagogical contexts through classroom-based research. The book can contribute significantly to professional teacher development of language teachers by demystifying classroom research and offering a concise step-by-step guide.

As one of the concise resource books among the English Language Teacher Development (ELTD) series, this book consists of five chapters. The chapters offer practical ideas about classroom research, including data collection, analysis, and publishing research findings. *Teachers and Research* is the first chapter in the book, and explicates the relationship between language teachers and classroom research. Stewart provides reasons for teachers to be a part of research by focusing on teaching in the 21st century and how research can serve as a method of professional growth for teachers. Indicating the gap between research and classroom practice, the author also underlines the necessity of teachers' voices in research discussions. *Getting Started* is the second chapter, introducing the initial decisions taken in the research process, covering how to determine research topics, questions, and appropriate research methods. Stewart also explains the nature of research and the

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Submitted: 02.06.2025

Accepted: 26.06.2025



difference between “emic” and “epic” terms while encouraging the teachers to reflect on their practices. *Data Collection and Analysis* is the third chapter, presenting an overview of general areas of classroom research by concentrating on teacher and student actions, and student learning. Stressing the role of planning and using multiple perspectives, the chapter explores an organized process of utilizing systematic methods to collect and analyze data inside a classroom. The next chapter, *Publishing Your Findings*, guides teachers on how to find an appropriate publication venue, where to submit articles to academic journals, or how to present research findings at academic venues like conferences. This chapter clarifies the steps of preparing a research paper for publication and provides a submission checklist. It signifies the value of writing quality and professionalism, and encourages novice teachers to share research findings with diverse stakeholders. To this end, the author provides a list of suggested academic journals and venues, too. *Continuing with Classroom Research* is the final chapter, and it discusses the challenges of making research sustainable over time and offers strategies for converting research into an ongoing professional activity. Each chapter includes reflective breaks for teachers to help them clarify key points and how to integrate research into their classroom practices. The book additionally provides an appendix including a sample classroom research report.

The book's practical orientation and accessibility are two major strengths. The practical orientation sets it apart from many academic books that deal only with theory, as it discusses the nature of classroom research with specific strategies to incorporate it into everyday teaching. It is practical for classroom teachers since it also presents reflective questions and step-by-step guides. As for its accessibility, Stewart adopts a jargon-free approach, making complex research concepts comprehensible for teachers with no previous research experience. By providing real-world examples of teacher-led research projects, the author reinforces the practical relevance of the book. Furthermore, the book situates itself within the long-standing debate on the role of teachers in educational research. The author builds upon Long's (1984) assertion that classroom research reveals what happens in classrooms, rather than what is assumed. The author draws language teachers' attention to recover their knowledge and to dispel the “research versus teaching” divide with a reference to Ellis (2012).

Another crucial aspect of the book is its encouragement of teacher autonomy. Instead of modeling the teacher as a passive consumer of research, it enhances the teacher active participant in information production. The authors argue that traditional research is conducted in a way that relies on teachers as passive participants rather than active contributors, resulting in a gap between research and practice in the context of teaching. The author invites teachers to approach research as a natural result of the reflective process, by making research both accessible and meaningful. Stewart bases his discussion on a blend of theoretical perspectives and real-world examples. He draws on previous studies in applied linguistics, second language acquisition, and teacher education, while also incorporating case studies of teacher-led research. By incorporating reflective questions and activities throughout the book, the author encourages teachers to engage actively and sustainably. Additionally, he uses a clear and understandable writing style, and this feels like talking to the reader. As a result, the author successfully manages to get readers to become a part of the book.

It is also important to note some weaknesses and suggestions. The book focuses more on qualitative data gathering tools. While the author highlights the importance of mixed-methods research, the discussion on the use of quantitative data in classroom research remains limited. Teachers seeking guidance on quantitative research or experimental designs may need to consult other resources. Additionally, it fails to address common challenges or barriers that teachers may encounter in their research process, during which some struggle with time constraints and a lack of administrative support. Incorporating a chapter on how to navigate these challenges would enhance the book's impact.

To conclude, the overall value of the book as a resource for teachers interested in meaningful research is significant. Stewart succeeds in his attempt to make classroom research accessible, pragmatic, and meaningful to language teachers. The practical approach and engaging writing style encourage readers to enhance their language instruction through research. The book is well-written

and informative, and is recommend it to anyone interested in language teaching- whether as a teacher, prospective teacher, teacher educator, curriculum developer, or someone seeking to bridge the gap between research and practice.

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