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Reflection on the Action Research Journey

The theme for the 2014 - 2015 action research project – Boys as makers – was something I could definitely relate to. As a mathematics teacher, I have constantly been striving to get my students to improve their understanding of concepts by working from the concrete to the abstract. Throughout my teaching career, reflection and looking for methods that will enhance learning has been extremely important to me. Therefore when I applied to be part of the action research team, I was confident that, if accepted, it would be a great learning experience for both my students and for me.

I was not disappointed. I soon realised that I knew very little about what action research really entailed and the insight provided by Stringer, McNiff and Martinez was enlightening and evoked a new desire to apply action research not only in my classroom, but also to other aspects of my life. I have been an educator for over 20 years and looking back on the past two years I realise that being part of the action research project has given my teaching a much needed injection of life. I was shocked to realise that my idea of reflecting and improving my teaching was very basic. I had been doing many of the same things – with a few minor adjustments - for a long time and this project forced me to ask questions about my approach as an educator, took me out of my comfort zone, and challenged me to do things differently.

The biggest hurdle for me has been allocating time for this project. I was promoted and given more responsibilities at work and this impacted on the time I could spend on my action research. I constantly felt that I had to give priority to my other duties. On the positive side, the people that I met at the conferences, the interaction that we engaged in, as well as the networks that were created, resulted in learning and professional growth that cannot be matched in any other formal or informal setting.

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