

# A conversation about supporting teacher research

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*Recent literature has acknowledged the value of teacher research as an empowering means of teacher professional development. However, to date, many teachers still remain uninformed or seem to attach little importance to classroom-based research. What are the sources of their seeming reluctance to conduct research? This article provides an explanation for some of the sources of difficulty that teachers face and offers practical suggestions for how teacher research may be supported.*

## Introduction

The call for classroom teachers to do research is getting louder by the year. Ministries of education and school administrators have been trying to encourage teachers, without much success, to do research as part of their professional development activities. The thinking behind this call is that teacher research can help teachers become more effective and reflective practitioners, which in turn would benefit their students.

We know of many teachers who are keen to do research on their own classroom, but who have not done any for various reasons. Some of the most heard reasons include lack of research skills, lack of time, limited access to relevant literature, or lack of interest in research as teachers often cannot see the link between research and teaching. The purpose of this

article is to discuss some of the difficulties that teachers encounter and suggest ways of supporting teacher research.

Instead of writing this article in an essay format, we thought our readers would appreciate a question-and-answer format, in which we will ask and respond to each other's questions about issues and concerns teachers often have about research. We hope readers will find this format more stimulating and invigorating.

But first, let's introduce ourselves.

We are what people have referred to as teacher-scholars. We both work in a university setting. Flora teaches skills courses (e.g., communication skills) and also methods courses (e.g., principles for teaching English as an International Language) in a university in Indonesia. Willy is a language-teacher educator, mostly teaching methods courses to pre-service and in-service teachers in a university in Singapore. Both of us have done pedagogical research both individually and also jointly. We have also co-authored a number of practical papers on some aspects of English Language Teaching.