



Reflective Teaching pedagogy as innovative approach in teacher Education

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Abstract

Reflective teaching means looking at what you do in the classroom, thinking about why you do it, and thinking about if it works - a process of self-observation and self-evaluation. By collecting information about what goes on in our classroom, and by analyzing and evaluating this information, we identify and explore our own practices and underlying beliefs. This may then lead to changes and improvements in our teaching. Reflective teaching methodology involves questioning one own self to bring perfection by asking the following questions:

- Which teaching model am I using?
- How does it apply in specific teaching situations?
- How well is it working? Teacher educator should apply this theory in classroom practice, in order observe and reflects on the results so that the classroom becomes a kind of laboratory where the teacher can relate teaching theory to teaching practice.

Keywords: The role of Reflective teaching in teacher education, Methods of Reflective Teaching,

Introduction

Reflective teaching involves recognizing, examining, ruminating over the way an individual teaches. As individuals possess their own background and experience, bring certain beliefs, assumptions, knowledge, attitudes and values to teaching.

It is also seen that teaching takes place in a social setting that has its own unique characteristics, opportunities and constraints. The practice of Reflective teaching explores the implications of all these complex factors with the intention of understanding and improving teaching –learning practice. Schon (1993) suggested that reflective teaching practice is a continuous process and involves learner thoughtfully considering one’s own experience in applying knowledge to practice while being taught by professionals. It helps the individual’s to develop their own personality. Gibbs (1988) reflective practice suggests that individuals develop analysis of feelings, evaluation of experience etc. Jasper (2003) associated reflective teaching practice with lifelong learning resulting in the development of autonomous, qualified and self-directed professionals.

Bartlett (1990) points out that becoming a reflective teacher involves moving beyond a primary concern with instructional techniques and “how to” questions and asking “what” and “why” questions that regard instructions and managerial techniques not as ends in themselves, but as part of broader educational purposes. Asking questions “what and why” gives certain power over individuals teaching resulting in the emergence of autonomy and responsibility in the work of teachers. In reflecting on the above kind of Questions, teachers begin to exercise control and open up the possibility of transforming every day classroom life. (Lieberman & Miller, 2000) pointed out that the practice of reflective teaching, reflective inquiry, and reflection-on practice, results in gaining of the personal and professional knowledge that is so important to being an effective teacher and in shaping children's learning. Han (1995) stated that, the process element of reflection emphasizes how teachers make decisions, content stresses the substance that drives the thinking and reflective inquiry may set the stage for learning how to be a good teacher, (Day, Galvez-Martin 2000) proposed reflective teaching as the act of creating a mental space in which to contemplate a question or idea, such as, "What do I know now about teaching young children?" this of repeated questioning leads to mental transformation to a time and a situation that leads to a deeper perspective helping Students.

The role of Reflective teaching in teacher education

Reflective practice is used at both the pre-service and in-service levels of teaching. Coaching and peer involvement are two aspects of reflective practice seen most often at the pre-service level. In a 1993 study of how student teachers develop the skills necessary for reflective teaching during their field experiences, Ojanen explores the role of the teacher educator as coach. Teacher educators can most effectively coach student teachers in reflective practice by using students' personal histories, dialogue journals, and small and large-group discussions about their experiences to help students reflect upon and improve their practices. Kettle and Sellars (1996) studied the development of third- year teaching students. They analyzed the students' reflective writings and interviewed them extensively about their reflective practices. They found that the use of peer reflective groups encouraged student teachers to challenge existing theories and their own preconceived views of teaching while modeling for them a collaborative style of professional

development that would be useful throughout their teaching careers. Sellars (1996) analyzed the students' reflective writings and interviewed them extensively about their reflective practices. They found that the student teachers by practicing reflective teaching enables them to challenge existing theories and their own preconceived views of teaching resulting in professional development that would be useful throughout their teaching careers. Several research studies have proved that critical reflection upon experience continues to be an effective technique for professional development. Freidus (1997) describes a case study of one teacher/graduate student struggling to make sense of her beliefs and practices about what constitutes good teaching. Her initial pedagogy for teaching was based on the traditions and practices of direct teaching. Her traditional socialization into teaching made it difficult for her to understand that her views of good teaching were being challenged in her practice. After implementing reflective teaching technique in her classroom enabled her to acknowledge and validate what she was learning.

Methods of Reflective Teaching

To do a reflective teaching, a teacher can use several methods, such as teaching journals, lesson reports, surveys and questionnaires, audio and video recordings, observation and action research (Richard and Lockhart, 2007). Every method has its own advantages and disadvantages, a teacher should be wise to decide what method that he/she uses. We discuss about those topics below :

1. Teaching Journal

A journal is a teacher's or a student teacher's written response to teaching events that has two purposes, they are events and ideas are recorded for the purpose of later reflection and also the process of writing itself helps trigger insights about teaching.

2. Lesson Report

According to Richard and Lockhart (2007), a lesson report is a structured inventory or list which enables teachers to describe their recollections of the main features of a lesson. The purpose of a lesson report is to give the teacher a quick and simple procedure for regularly monitoring what happened during a lesson, how much time was spent on different parts of a lesson and how effective the lesson was. Published lesson report forms are available for many aspects of ESL lessons (Pak 1986).

In the procedures of making lesson report, a group of teacher can work in cooperation, the procedures can be:-

- A teacher or a group of teacher should identify and decide what activity, procedures, resource and media that he will use in the class.-
- Prepare the lesson report form.-
- A teacher use a lesson report to review what activity, procedures of teaching, resource and media he/she use to identify how effective the class.-
- Discuss the lesson report with other teachers to compare and discuss the differences of the report, then every teacher evaluate their own teaching and think about what action to for the better future teaching.-
- If there is just one teacher, he/she can review his/her lesson report him/herself after the class and try to answer the questions related his/her class, for examples:

- What were the main goals of the lesson?
- What did the learners actually learn in the lesson?
- What teaching procedures did I use?
- What problems did I encounter and how did I deal with them?
- What were the most effective parts of the lesson?

3. Survey and Questionnaire

A teacher can also use a survey or questionnaire to investigate his/her class and evaluate the teaching and learning process, for example, a teacher wants to identify the students' responses about the teaching and learning process, the teacher can use a questionnaire to ask the students' opinion and responses toward the teaching and learning process in the class.

4. Audio or Video Recording

The advantage of the preceding procedures is that they are relatively easy to carry out. However, a disadvantage is that they obtain subjective impressions of teaching and by their nature can capture only recollections and interpretations of events and not the actual events themselves (Richard and Lockhart, 2007). By using audio or video recording, a teacher can record what happens in the class, analyze it by replaying the recording and evaluates it to decide the future action.

The advantages of recording a lesson are (1) it allows choice of focus; this could be the teacher (if the teacher wears a microphone) or a particular group of students (if the recorder is placed close to them) and (2) the recording can be replayed and examined many times and can capture many details of a lesson that cannot easily be observed by other means, such as the actual language used by teachers or learners during a lesson.

While disadvantages of using audio or video recording are (1) the recording has limitation range and (2) replaying the recording is time consuming. It is like Schratz (1992) points out: Setting up the equipment for a lecture's recording and going through the various analyzing phases requires a lot of time. For this reason, this type of activity can never become an activity continued on a day-to-day basis. It will only be applied on special occasions.

5. Observation

Observation is a method where a teacher tries to gather some important data from his/her teaching, like Richard and Lockhart (2007) stated that in many language programs, teachers are often reluctant to take part in observation or related activities since observation is associated with evaluation. Thus in order for observation to be viewed as a positive rather than a negative experience, the observer's function should be limited to that of gathering information. The observation can be conducted by a group of teachers in cooperation and also by a teacher to observe another teacher's class.

Murphy (1991) suggested a guideline of Observation by a group of teachers as below:

a. Introduction

1. Teachers are busy professionals. Classroom observations are not always a welcome intrusion for the classroom teachers involved.

2. The observation of classroom teachers is serious business; it should not be approached casually.
3. Learning how to observe in a manner acceptable to all parties takes time, careful reflection, personal tact, and creativity.
4. An observer is a guest in the teacher's and the students' classroom. A guest in the classroom is there thanks to the goodwill of the cooperating teacher.
5. A guest's purpose for visiting is not to judge, evaluate, or criticize the classroom teacher, or to offer suggestions, but simply to learn through observing.

b. Procedures

1. Visitors should contact the cooperating teacher for a brief orientation to the class
2. A visitor who is planning to observe a class should arrive in the classroom a few minutes ahead of time.
3. If something unexpected comes up and the visitor is not able to observe a class at the agreed-upon time, the visitor needs to notify the classroom teacher as soon as possible. It is a visitor's responsibility to keep the classroom teacher informed.
4. Once having entered a classroom, the visitor should try to be as unobtrusive as possible, sitting where directed by the teacher.
5. If a student in the class asks the visitor a direct question (e.g., What are you doing here? Are you a teacher too?), the visitor should answer as briefly as possible. It is important to bear in mind that the visitor is not a regular member of the class. Visitors should not initiate or pursue conversations unnecessarily.
6. A visitor should be appreciative and polite. At the earliest opportunity, the visitor should thank the classroom teacher for having made possible the opportunity to visit the classroom.
7. A visitor who is taking written notes or collecting information in some other way should do this as unobtrusively as possible. The visitor must make sure that the teacher and students are comfortable with any procedures used for data collection.

6. Action Research

Action research typically involves small-scale investigative projects in the teacher's own classroom, and consists of a number of phases which often recur in cycles: Planning, Action, Observation and Reflection. For example:

- a. The teacher selects an issue or concern to examine in more detail (Planning).
- b. The teacher selects a suitable procedure for collecting information about the topic (Planning)
- c. The teacher collects the information, analyzes it, and decides what changes might be necessary (Action).
- d. The teacher develops an action plan to help bring about the change in classroom behavior (Action).
- e. Observes the effects of the action plan on teaching behavior and reflects on its significance (Observation).
- f. Initiates a second action cycle (Reflection), if necessary. Kember and Kelly (1992) suggested a guideline in conducting an action research as below:

a. Initial Reflection: To start an action research project, you need to decide on a theme. A theme may start at the level of a general concern, a perceived need, or a problem with a class you are teaching.

For example: 1) The students in my speech class seem to have great difficulty when 2) I ask them to do oral presentations.

3) When students write compositions, they make little use of the revision strategies I have presented.

4) The answers students give on examinations in my literature class are mostly reproductions of my lecture notes - there is little evidence of any reading.

For these concerns to become the focus of action research, you need to make each concern more concrete, so that it becomes susceptible to change or improvement. You need to devise a specific course of action, which you can try out to see if it affects your original concern. More specific questions for the preceding concerns might be:

1) What changes could be made to the speech curriculum to give students the prerequisite skills that are needed for oral presentations?

2) Are there any different teaching techniques that would better prepare students for using revision strategies in writing?

3) How can the examination questions be changed so that reading is encouraged?

Some preliminary observation and critical reflection is usually needed to convert a broad concern to an action theme. A concern does not often directly suggest the remedy: educational problems are not that simple.

The changes you might make will often fall into one of three categories: (i) Changes to the syllabus or curriculum, (ii) modifications to your teaching techniques or adoption of a new method, or (iii) changes to the nature of the assessment.

In action research you are promoting change. To report the effects of the change you need a record of the situation before and after the change.

What were the observations which promoted your concern? What are the current practices and the current situation? Some observation techniques can be before and after a change takes place to examine the effect of the change.

b. Planning

The most important outcome of the planning phase is a detailed plan of the action you intend to take or the change you intend to make. Who is going to do what, and by when? What are the alterations to the curriculum? How do you intend to implement your revised teaching strategies? Try to work out whether your plans are practical and how others will react. You also need to make plans for observation or monitoring your changes. Prepare any questionnaires or other information-gathering instruments you will use.

c. Action

In carrying out your plan, things will rarely go precisely as expected. Do not be afraid to make minor deviations from your plan in light of experience and feedback. Make sure that you record any deviations from your plan, and the reason you made them.

d. Observation

The detailed observation, monitoring, and recording enable you to report your findings to others. Those involved in action research should also keep a detailed diary or journal.

e. Reflection

At the end of an action cycle you should reflect critically on what has happened. How effective were your changes? What have you learned? What are the barriers to change? How can you improve the changes you are trying to make? The answer to the last question or two will usually lead you to a further cycle.

After conducting an action research, a teacher can identify what problem that should be solved in the class and decide what action to do in the future.

Conclusion

Reflective teaching is one of the best way to increase the effectiveness of teaching because the teacher can identify and re-think about his/her teaching detail and specifically, so, he/she knows what the problem of teaching are, what should be evaluate is, what the weakness of the teaching is and what the students get from the teaching and learning process, and the he can decide the future action for the better and more effective teaching.

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