

A STUDY OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND ITS ROLE FOR TEACHERS

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Abstract

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning. Reflection is a form of mental processing that we use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. Qualified teacher learning and skills status requires trainees to begin the practice of continuing professional development right from the start of their training by keeping a development journal. There is one of the above all qualities that make a good teacher –the ability to reflect on what, why and how we do things and to adopt and develop our practice within lifelong learning. This paper attempts to establish that reflective practice is a tool for teachers to improve their ability, think about their thinking and to judge the quality of their work based on evidence.

Keywords: Reflective Practice, Reflective Teaching, Teacher Development.

1. Introduction

The concept of reflective practice is now widely employed in the field of teacher education and teacher professional development and many programs of initial teacher education claim to espouse it. In education, a minimalist understanding of reflective practice is that it refers to the process of the educator studying his or her own teaching methods and determining what works best for the students. Teachers themselves learn lessons each time they teach, evaluating what they do and using these self critical evaluations to adjust what they do next time. Reflection is the key to successful learning for teachers and for learners. A commonsense view of reflection is that it involves just thinking about things. Perhaps thinking about the structure of the universe. Reflective practice is an ongoing dynamic process of thinking honestly, deeply and critically about all aspects of professional practice with children and families. Most of us spend time thinking about what we do and the effects we have on others, but do not always take it a step further and reflect on our actions and make plans to do things differently. In a professional setting, reflection is deliberate, purposeful, structured, about linking theory and practices, to do with learning, about change and development –becoming a reflective teacher. Akbari (2007) suggests that reflective teaching will make teachers question clichés that have learned during their formative years and will also enable them to develop more informed practice.

2. Review of related literature

John symth(1993) studied “Reflective practice in teacher education”. The results revealed that reflection should not be restricted to examining only technical skills; it should equally be concerned with the ethical, social and political context within which teaching occurs. Maura Sellars(2012) studied “ Teachers and Change: The role of reflective practice”. He found that quality of the educational changes that teachers have the skills

and opportunities to effect will only be as reliable and proficient as the teachers' individual capacities for reflective practice and development of self knowledge. Dr.Priya Mathew, et al (2017) studied "Reflective practices: A means to teacher development". They concluded that by developing knowledge and understanding the setting practice and the ability to identify and react to the problems, the student teachers can become effective teachers.

3. Reflective practice- why teachers should do it? :-

Reflective practice is a professional requirement that we have to provide evidence of, usually in a journal or log. This requirement brings teachers in the lifelong learning sector up to date with other professionals, such as nurses, social workers and human resource professionals. Reflective practice encourages teachers to understand their learners and their needs and abilities. Reflective teachers are more likely to develop reflective learners. If teacher practise reflection, he can more effectively encourage learners to reflect on, analyze, evaluate and improve their own learning. These are key skills in active learning and in the development of independent learners. Vakalisa and Gawe (2011) contend that reflective teaching offers teachers the opportunity to renew their practice and to understand the effects of their teaching. Some of the advantages of reflective practice are:-

- . The kind of knowledge –base that is being developed through reflective approaches, is much more comprehensive because it is directly tuned into what workers actually know about the work.
- .Reflective practice provides opportunity for rapid and progressive refocusing –a quality that is imperative in this new era of flexible specialization.
- .Reflection can help us to recognize and continue good practices.
- .Reflective practice can challenge practices that are taken for granted and can change and improve what is not working well.
- . Reflective practice can also help us to develop emotional intelligence particularly if we include a consideration of feelings as part of our reflection.

4. Reflective practice- How to do it?

There are various strategies to practice reflection. Some of them are as:-

4.1 Reflective journal

Journals or diaries can be good place for professionals to record their thinking about all aspects of their practice (for example, relationships, interactions, teaching, and learning, assessment, environments). Journal entries can include stories about practice, meaningful words, drawings, symbols, articles.

4.2 Meetings

Whole meetings are dedicated to critically reflecting on practice. Examples include breakfast meetings for room leaders, meetings of those working with specific age groups in education and care settings.

4.3 Mentor or critical friend

A mentor or critical friend, who guides, asks questions, offers a different perspective and provides resources and shares skills can be invaluable. It should be someone who challenge and encourage to consider different perspectives.

Reflective practice notice board:-

Designated notes boards for highlighting reflections about practice can help to include families and other professionals who work in the setting of critical reflection. Posters, photographs, articles, books and critical questions can provoke thinking and conversation.

4.4 Professional learning experiences

Professional learning experiences can be catalyst for reflecting on practice individually or with others. Professional learning experiences include joining a network, participating in professional learning programs, attending conferences.

4.5 Action research

Action research is an approach to professional practice involving a cycle of reflection and investigation on a topic of interest, a concern or a question about practice within a setting.

5. Reflective practice -means to Teacher Development

John Dewey (1993) recognized for first time that an individual can reflect on things particularly when there is real problem or a sense of difficulty. The notion of reflective practice as a means of professional development was later highlighted by Donald Schon (1987) and promoted reflection as an important tool for beginning teachers to improve their practice. 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. 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 a boarder educational purposes. Asking "what and why" questions give us a certain power over teaching. The teachers identify a variety of different aspects of their lessons for their partners to observe and collect information. These include organization of the lesson, teachers' time management, students' performance on tasks, time on task, teacher questions and student responses, student performance during pair work, classroom interaction, and class performance during a new teaching activity. The teachers gain a number of insights about their own teaching from their colleague's observations and that they would like to use peer observation on a regular basis. They may also obtain new insights into aspects of their teaching.

Conclusion

The reflective practice is an ongoing, dynamic process of thinking honestly, deeply and critically about all aspects of professional practice. Reflective practice is a process of systematic awareness to self analyse and self assess own practice, in order to design new strategies that can enhance teaching. Every teacher is different and there are likely to be varying interpretations of what we say and do within any group of learners. There are different worlds within our classrooms and skilled teachers will try to see themselves as their students see them. Reflective practice encourages teachers to understand their learners. In short, we can say that reflection is the key to successful learning both for teachers as well as for learners .

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