



IMAGE AS A COMPONENT OF PERSONAL PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN ACCOUNT OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS

Meeta Arora

Ph. D. Scholar, Jamiamilliaislamia, Meeta5187@gmail.com

Abstract

The present study is a part of research of development of Personal Practical Knowledge of twenty preservice studying in a Preservice Teacher Education Programme. The study attempted to study how image of preservice teachers formed a major part of her Personal Practical Knowledge. The study was conducted on one preservice teacher studying B.El.Ed Programme. Narratives were constructed using variety of resources, drawings, metaphors, interviews, observations, interviews. It was found that image has a practical as well as personal aspect which coloured the teaching actions of preservice teachers. Implications for teachers and teacher education is also indicated.

Keywords: Image, Preservice teachers, Narratives



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

INTRODUCTION

Exploring teachers' beliefs provide an insight of teachers' classroom processes. These beliefs influence the perceptions and judgments of the teachers which affect their behavior in the classrooms. Understanding these beliefs and belief structures are essential in improving the professional preparation and teaching. According to Pajares (1992), understanding beliefs is a game of players' choice. Investigation of teachers' beliefs is a necessary avenue for understanding and exploring the beliefs and their nature. This is crucial for understanding relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and their planning, instructional decisions and classroom practices. Traditional inventories present and ask teachers to respond to a list of beliefs that may or may not correspond to beliefs relevant to unique professional reality. Also, they provide limited information to make inferences and generalizations. (Munby,1982; Pajares,1992). This is not to say that these should not be used. However, a greater insight needs to be explored regarding the teachers' thinking processes.

As research on teachers' knowledge, beliefs became more prominent, it became important to identify the place of this teacher knowledge in total knowledge base of teaching. The definition is not 'behavioral prescriptions' based on effectiveness studies but as 'all professional-related insights that are potentially relevant to classroom activities'.

There have been few studies that attempt to discover something about teachers' beliefs or knowledge from the perspective of teachers themselves. It becomes important to try to capture the thinking of teachers in their own language rather than in the language of researchers and to attempt to have this language represent the thinking of teachers by having it emerge in the context of professional issues and practice that were of teachers' own choice. The present study is based on the work of Elbaz (1981) and Clandinin and Connelly's (1982) notion of practical knowledge. Experienced teachers hold a certain kind of knowledge which is both practical and experiential. This knowledge reflects both individual's prior experience and acknowledge the contextual nature of teachers' knowledge, which is carved out and shaped by situations. This study is aimed at understanding how this knowledge develops.

Elbaz (1981) believed that a spectrum of knowledge is exhibited by teachers. It was this knowledge that help and guide teachers' work. Since, teachers are believed to be knowledgeable persons, they can make decisions appropriate to the educational context. It helps them they can carry tasks independently. Teachers' knowledge is broadly based on their experiences in classrooms and schools and is involved in handling of problems that arise in their works. The knowledge included: knowledge of subject matter, instruction, curriculum, milieu of schooling (social framework of school and surrounding community, self). This knowledge is acquired, held by teachers and used in distinctive ways and is marked as 'practical knowledge'. They viewed that what teachers know is capable of being formulated as knowledge. The practical knowledge covered the following aspects- 'Practical aspect', 'Personal aspect' and 'Interaction aspect'.

He also identified five orientations of practical knowledge. Every area of knowledge (subject matter, instruction, curriculum, milieu and self) is oriented to particular kind of teaching situation.

- a) Situational orientation- teachers' knowledge grows out of and respond to specific practical needs.
- b) Social orientation –It believed that Teachers' knowledge is socially conditioned.
- c) Personal orientation - Teacher use their knowledge to work in personally meaningful ways.
- d) Experiential orientation- Teachers' knowledge grows out of world in teaching as her experiences gives shape to the world and allow him to function.
- e) Theoretical orientation- Teachers' views and knowledge can be explained in terms of general orientation which pervaded her knowledge and which conditioned its use.

The practical knowledge teachers hold is practiced in three distinctive ways- a) Rule of practice b) Practical principle c) Image.

Clandinin, J (1989) in the study explores the development of personal practical knowledge of one teacher who is beginning her career in teaching. The article analyzes the dilemmas that were originated when the teachers' images conflicted with the cyclic nature of school time. The study poses in great detail the experiences of the novice teacher which helps in development of the personal practical knowledge. These narratives are constructed and reconstructed during the experience of the teachers. The study takes into account the embodied character of the narratives while considering the embedded nature of the practical knowledge. This was clearly seen when the kindergarten was the choice of the grade chosen. The particular image was seen in the instructional process, knowledge of himself as the teacher and a person, subject matter. The image was also a search for evaluation and record keeping process. The image served to function as experience based structure; several dimension of the image became apparent. The dimensions of morality and emotionality were also particular striking features. The image finds expression in both his personal and professional experience. The emotional and moral dimensions of the image binds the experiential sides together.

The present study deals with the image acted as a personal practical knowledge of one preservice teacher in relation to teaching and learning. It also captured the impact of Preservice Teacher Education Programme on the beliefs of the preservice teacher.

METHODOLOGY

The study follows a constructive paradigm where reality of knowledge is constructed from the perspective of preservice teachers. Narrative accounts of one pre-service teacher were constructed using variety of methods to study the personal practical knowledge of teachers. Narratives of preservice teachers included studying of teachers' images of teaching and learning using metaphors, drawings, reflective journals, observations and interviews. The preservice teacher studied B.El.Ed Programme of Delhi University.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Using variety of sources, the narrative of Shilpa was constructed.

Background of the Participant

Shilpa joined the B.El.Ed programme in 2010-11. She did her schooling from the government school. She had parents, grandparents and a brother and sister living with family. Her brother was elder to her. He was studying in college and her younger sister studied in school.

Copyright © 2018, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies

Images of Teaching and Learning.

Shilpa had not entered into the teaching profession by choice. She joined the programme just because her parents wanted her to join. They considered the profession ideal for girls. Before joining the programme, Shilpa believed that teaching requires a lot of ‘*coordinated practice.*’ When asked the reasons, she said “*I have seen teachers doing so many tasks; teaching, managing students interests, planning, communicating with parents, homework and the list continues. She believed that it required an effort on the part of the teacher to manage so many tasks.*” She believed it to be a cumbersome process. She remembered and related experience of her schooling “*I had a very bad experience of teachers. My teachers did a lot of work apart from teaching but much of the work was done by students; managing the meals, maintaining records etc.*”

According to Shilpa, Learning is like a ‘*playing instrument.*’ When asked to further explore, she viewed “*It all depends on and is in the hands of the teacher. Learning will always be dependent on how it is played by the teacher. You are in the hands of the teacher. If a teacher plays well and is able to touch the chords of the instrument, you rise and become something. If the talent is unexplored, whatever effort you do, students’ career and life will not take shape as desired. It is all in the hands of the teacher.*”

Since she didn’t want to join the teaching profession, this impacted her studies and interaction with others in the Programme. However, the components of the Programme changed her beliefs. She became student oriented. Her teaching practice reflected concern for students. She grew the components of her personality which did not outshined in her as a student. Initially, she criticized the gender images because of which she had to enter the B.El.Ed Programme. But during the fourth year, she was seen sensitizing the students of the prevailing gender practices. Since she was self-reflective, she very well integrated the theories and applied for the development of child. Her images of teaching and learning went an overhaul during the programme and this had a strong impact and reflection in her teaching and belief practices. The B.El.Ed Programme made a change in her experiences and beliefs. It was continuously seen in her teaching excerpts wherein she was continuously being self-reflective and tried to adapt and modify the teaching practices in her school. Also, she tried to develop self confidence in the students and used variety of methods for building confidence in the students. It gave her a further scope of improvement and a base to try and understand the teaching learning process.

B.El.Ed had a strong impact in envisioning her role as a teacher. It not only gave a further scope of growth in her development but also further strengthened her images of teaching and learning.

Social conditioning, the background and interests of the students, theoretical orientations, personal philosophies, and content knowledge played an important role which affect the teaching learning situations. All these situations further guide the preservice teachers as they formed a part of their own experiences. All these experiences played an important role and were reflected Shilpa's teaching.

It would be impossible to understand a preservice teachers' thinking, merely by observation processes and quantification of behavior. The landscape aspects-personal, behavior in the classroom and out of classroom behavior of a teacher were important to understand the teaching practices. The study showed that Images formed by Preservice teachers had their origin in the past experiences, before joining the Programme. These past experiences included the educational as well as personal aspects. These images helped to identify their current teaching practices. Exploration of images through metaphors also helped to explore meaning of a situation in an effective way which was difficult to describe using literal language. Metaphors helped to construct the professional realities in which they worked.

Discussion

Image formed a strong component of Personal Practical Knowledge of Teachers. These images were influenced by their personal and practical conditions. The images had a personal aspect as they worked meaningfully towards their goals. These images had an interaction aspect as they continuously modified according to the situations faced during the Programme. Understanding these images helped the preservice teachers to reflect on their self as learner. Understanding the self in terms of the situations helped them to provide an insight to the teaching situation. Teachers tend to attach themselves to the images before joining the programme as they had their own dealing mechanisms to understand unknown situations.

Implications

Shilpa indicated that adapting the teaching according to the needs and interests of the students helped them to integrate their knowledge in an effective way. She also tried to relate the theory and practicum courses in real life context and make the students understand teaching and learning in an effective way. This clearly showed that Personal Practical Knowledge of teachers was reconstructed according to their Personal Philosophy which is formed from various situations surrounding her. Images formed by Preservice teachers had their origins in

Copyright © 2018, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies

past experiences before joining the Programme. These past were experiences included the educational as well as personal aspects. These images helped to identify their current teaching practices. The study could help teachers and teacher educators to consider the beliefs of teachers in a more qualitative way. It could help teachers to understand that beliefs of teachers can't be broken into objectifiable scientific skills. Instead, the beliefs must be studied into a more integrated fashion.

References

- Clandinin, D.J. (1989). *Developing Rhythm in Teaching: Narrative Study of a Beginning Teacher's Personal Practical Knowledge of Classrooms*. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 19(2), 121-141.
- Connelly, F.M., Clandinin, D.J. & He M.F. (1997). *Teachers' Personal Practical Knowledge on the Professional Knowledge Landscape*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13(7), 665-674.
- Clandinin, D.J., Pushor, D. & Orr, A.M. (2007). *Navigating sites for Narrative Inquiry*. *Journal for Teacher Education*, 58(1), 21-35. DOI:10.1177/0022487106296218.
- Elbaz, F. (1981). *The Teacher's "Practical Knowledge: Report of a case study*. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 11(1), 43-71.
- Munby, H. (1982). *The Place of Teachers' Beliefs in Research on Teacher Thinking and Decision Making, and an Alternative Methodology*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association, Austin
- Pajares, M.F. (1992). *Teachers' Beliefs and Educational Research: Cleaning up a Messy Construct*. *Review of Educational Research*, Vol.62, No.3, 307-332