

## **PEDAGOGICAL BENEFITS OF REFLECTIVE TEACHING FOR TEACHERS**

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### **Abstract**

*Most teachers / facilitators develop their classroom skills fairly early in their teaching careers. Teachers entering the profession may find their initial teaching efforts stressful, but with experience they acquire a repertoire of teaching strategies that they draw on throughout their teaching. The particular configuration of strategies a teacher uses constitutes his or her “teaching style”. While a teacher’s style of teaching provides a means of coping with many of the routine demands of teaching, there is also a danger that it can hinder a teacher’s professional growth. How can teachers move beyond the level of automatic responses to classroom situations and achieve a higher level of awareness of how they teach and work as a facilitator, of the kinds of decisions they make as they teach, and of the value and consequences of particular instructional decisions? One way of doing this is through observing and reflecting on one’s own teaching, and using observation and reflection as a way of bringing about change. This approach to teaching can be described as “Reflective Teaching”, and in this paper I want to explore how a reflective view of teaching can be developed.*

**Key- Words:-** *Teaching strategies , Teacher’s style , Reflective Teaching ,Reflective view of teaching.*



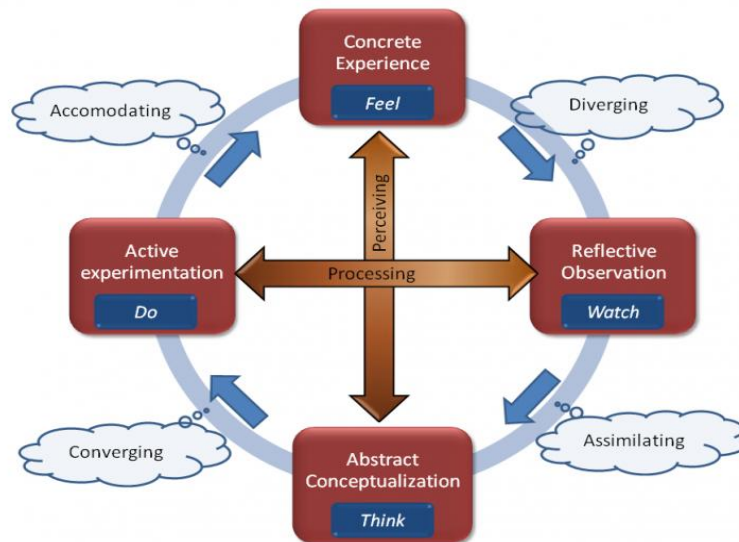
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Reflection or “critical reflection”, refers to an activity or process in which an experience is recalled, considered, and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose. It is a response to past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action.

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 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. Engaging in reflective practice is associated with the improvement of the quality of care, stimulating personal and professional growth and closing the gap between theory and practice. 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, facilitator and in shaping children's learning.



Many different approaches can be employed if one wishes to become a critically reflective teacher, including observation of oneself and others, team teaching, and exploring one's view of teaching through writing.

Let us examine approaches to critical reflection which reflect these processes.

### **Peer Observation:-**

Peer observation can provide opportunities for teachers to view each other's teaching in order to expose them to different teaching styles and to provide opportunities for critical reflection on their own teaching. In a peer observation project initiated in our own department, the following guidelines were developed.

#### **1. Each participant would both observe and be observed**

Teachers would work in pairs and take turns observing each other's classes.

#### **2. Pre-observation orientation session**

Prior to each observation, the two teachers would meet to discuss the nature of the class to be observed, the kind of material being taught, the teachers' approach to teaching, the kinds of students in the class, typical patterns of interaction and class participation, and any problems that might be expected. The teacher being observed would also assign the observer a goal for the observation and a task to accomplish.

The task would involve collecting information about some aspect of the lesson, but would not include any evaluation of the lesson. Observation procedures or instruments to be used would be agreed upon during this session and a schedule for the observations arranged.

#### **3. The observation**

The observer would then visit his or her partner's class and complete the observation using the procedures that both partners had agreed on.

#### **4. Post-observation**

The two teachers would meet as soon as possible after the lesson. The observer would report on the information that had been collected and discuss it with the teacher .

The teachers identified a variety of different aspects of their lessons for their partners to observe and collect information on. These included organization of the lesson, teacher's time management, students' performance on tasks, time-on-task, teacher questions and student responses, student performance during pair work, classroom interaction, class performance during a new teaching activity.

#### **Personal accounts of experiences:-**

Another useful way of engaging in the reflective process is through the use of written accounts of experiences. Personal accounts of experiences through writing are common in other disciplines and their potential is increasingly being recognized in teacher education.

#### **Self-Reports:-**

Self-reporting involves completing an inventory or check list in which the teacher indicates which teaching practices were used within a lesson or within a specified time period and how often they were employed (Pak, 1985). The inventory may be completed individually or in group sessions. The accuracy of self-reports is found to increase when teachers focus on the teaching of specific skills in a particular classroom context and when the self-report instrument is carefully constructed to reflect a wide range of potential teaching practices and behaviours .Self-reporting allows teachers to make a regular assessment of what they are doing in the classroom.

They can check to see to what extent their assumptions about their own teaching are reflected in their actual teaching practices.

#### **Journal Writing:-**

A procedure which is becoming more widely acknowledged as a valuable tool for developing critical reflection is the journal or diary. The goal of journal writing is,

1. to provide a record of the significant learning experiences that have taken place.
2. to help the participant come into touch and keep in touch with the self-development process that is taking place for them.
3. to foster a creative interaction between the participant and the self-development process that is taking place between the participant and other participants who are also in the process of self-development between the participant and the facilitator whose role it is to foster such development

While procedures for diary keeping vary, the participant usually keeps a regular account of learning or teaching experiences, recording reflections on what he or she did as well as straightforward descriptions of events, which may be used as a basis for later reflection.

### **Collaborative Diary Keeping:-**

A group of teachers may also collaborate in journal writing. A group of my colleagues recently explored the value of collaborative diary-keeping as a way of developing a critically reflective view of their teaching (Brock, Ju and Wong, 1991). Collaborative diary-keeping is more effective if the scope of issues considered is focused more narrowly.

### **Recording Lessons:-**

For many aspects of teaching, audio or video recording of lessons can also provide a basis for reflection. While there are many useful insights to be gained from diaries and self-reports, they cannot capture the moment to moment processes of teaching. Many things happen simultaneously in a classroom, and some aspects of a lesson cannot be recalled.

To cope with the fast changing and volatile environment, teachers need to adopt strategies, skills that would address the issue of internal efficiency, external competitiveness and being a leader in the global educational field.

### **Utilization of technologies:-**

Utilization of technologies for education is crucial in proving the quality of teaching and learning. Technologies for education may be classified in terms of broadcasting media, printing media and non-traditional including products and services that provide information using computer or the internet.

### **Pedagogical Benefits of Reflective Teaching:-**

- A perfect combination of theory and practice
- Online access anywhere, anytime
- Advanced E- learning models : face-to-face plus online training
- Personalized observations and recommendations by expert trainers
- Increase professional development .
- Personalized identification of teaching weaknesses plus solutions and support
- Tips and tools for identifying dropout students
- Ongoing professional support
- Personalized and global online teacher /Facilitator

### **Conclusions:-**

A reflective approach to teaching involves changes in the way we usually perceive our role in the process of teaching and as a facilitator. As the examples above illustrate, teachers who explore their own teaching through critical reflection develop changes in attitudes and awareness which they believe can benefit their professional growth as teachers, facilitators as

well as improve the kind of support they provide their students. Self-inquiry, reflective teaching, journal writing, self-reporting or making recordings of lessons, utilization of technologies However teachers engaged in reflective analysis of their own teaching report that it is a valuable tool for self-evaluation and professional growth. Reflective teaching suggests that experience alone is insufficient for professional growth, but that experience coupled with reflection can be a powerful impetus for teacher development.

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