

BEING A REFLECTIVE TEACHER EDUCATOR

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ABSTRACT

Developing reflective practitioners is an important goal of teacher education programmes world over and that reflective practice is worth persisting with, in the field of teacher education, is un-debated. But, the extent to which we, teacher educators, are reflective, remains a taken for granted aspect. With a presentation of a conceptual framework of reflection and reflective practice of teachers, referring to primarily to the theories of reflection by Dewey and Schon, the author has attempted to share reflective accounts from her experience of many years in the field, as a mentor and facilitator in the school internship programme. Critical reflections are preceded by recognising dilemmas in one's field of practice. The author has attempted to pose the intriguing questions that emerged from her practice as a case in point for presenting the reflective accounts. The diverse roles of a teacher educator, ranging from a mentor for initiation of a teacher-to-be, to, a facilitator of reflective practice, specifically in the School Internship Programme, have been captured to provide the context for the reflective accounts.

KEYWORDS: Reflection-in-Action, Reflection-on-Action, Peer Observation, Co-Analysis of Practice, Prescription, Collaborative Reflection, Reflective Journal Writing, Theorisations- The Small 't's and the Big 'T's

INTRODUCTION

Teacher professional development is a long journey in the career of a teacher on a long continuum of programmes and courses, starting from experiential understanding from student days to pre-service teacher education programme, in-service programme, on site programmes and refresher courses, to, the years of learning and maturing as a professional during practicing years. Facilitating reflective practice is one of the primary un-debated aims of any teacher development programme and the Teacher Educators have a major role to play in realising this goal. The school internship is a cardinal component of any pre-service teacher education programme and it is the site for inducting the Pupil Teachers into a reflective path. What about the reflectiveness of the Teacher Educator? The author presents the reflective accounts of self with her¹ experience as a Teacher Educator situating these reflective accounts in the School Internship Programme, with a description of the diverse roles of a Teacher Educator.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Theorisations on reflection and reflective practice are presented first followed with some of the principles of teacher professional development in internship. Classroom teaching practice is an intensely dynamic and complex process. The teacher knows best her* students and many on site decisions are taken by her to effectively carry out her role as a teacher. This implies that even without her conscious awareness, many on site theorizations and propositions are evolved

¹ Throughout the text, the words, 'she' and 'her' have been used to refer to the teacher and the teacher educator ease of reading, and is not meant to discriminate against male teachers or teacher educators.

and implemented to facilitate learning. As Schon (1991) states, what we have is a "reflective turn", in which practitioners are allowed to explain and reason out their practices in the classroom. According to Smyth (1993), our role as teacher educator becomes one of helping teachers to *make sense of experience*, often in quite strange and puzzlingly new sets of circumstances - rather than telling them what these experiences ought to look like. This is quite a different view as compared to the traditional view of "practice", regarded mainly as a field of application, where theorization or official knowledge developed by someone else is exported back to the field of practice, to be implemented by practitioners. In contrast, the emphasis in the reflective approach is facilitating teachers in the process of theorising from their own accounts of practice, and guiding them to use these theories as a springboard for action.

Reflection is not only a way of practicing teaching; it is actually a way of life. Pathways to becoming a reflective practitioner cannot be prescribed; each teacher must find her own path. Whatever be the path, willingness to be an active participant, in a continuous growth process requiring ongoing explorations and questioning on classroom practices, has to be knitted into. This journey entails developing a professional identity, weaving in personal belief systems and values that lead to developing a consciously evolved code of conduct.

Becoming an effective teacher is much more than acquiring a kit of skills and techniques; this journey entails moving beyond a knowledge base of discrete skills to a stage where they redesign and adapt skills to specific contexts, begin to examine the underlying assumptions of their practice and eventually mature to a stage when these skills are internalized, enabling them to develop their own methods tailored to the needs of the specific contexts. The judicious decision making regarding issues in teaching learning situations, unless tied to beliefs about the teaching/learning process and its underlying assumptions, and expectations for students, will make teachers stagnate as technicians. This process of reflection is critical reflection.

What is critical reflection? Reflection is not, by definition, critical nor does the depth, in itself, make reflection critical.

It is quite possible to be affective as a teacher by reflecting on routine aspects or processes like the use of ready-made slides and pre designed slides by the teacher or how strict a teacher should be with submission deadlines etc. But, critical reflection brings to light the assumptions related to paradigms and structures of the systems in the institutions and society. Situating the school curriculum in the social context and critiquing the curriculum content and the goals of education, the power hierarchies of society and its reflections in the classrooms etc are the cognitive processes of a critically reflective teacher. Critically reflective teachers can stand outside their practice and see what they do, in a wider perspective.

They know that curriculum content and evaluative procedures are social products located in time and space that reproduce the inequities and contradictions of the wider culture. (Brookfield, 1995).

Typically, the terms reflective thinking, critical thinking, as well as critical reflection have each been used to mean a way of thinking that accepts uncertainty and recognises dilemmas, while ascribing less significance to the role of self in the reflective process (e.g., Dewey, 1933,1938; King & Kitchener, 1994; Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991; Zehm & Kottler, 1993). In Dewey' s (1933,1938) writings, recognition of a problem or dilemma and the acceptance of uncertainty before initiation into reflection have been underscored. The dissonance created as a result of acknowledging

the existence of a problem, engages the reflective thinker to become an active inquirer, involved both in the critique of current inferences and the generation of new propositions and explanations.

Qualifying terms for teacher and teacher's practice, like, 'reflective practice', 'teacher as researcher', 'teacher as professional', all enfold within, some notion of reflection in the process of professional development and at the same time disguise a range of conceptual variations and corresponding implications for teacher education courses. Part of the confusion within the debate on reflection stems from the at least two very different dimensions within the process of learning to teach focused by different writers (Furlong and Maynard 1995). One perspective is derived from the theorisations of Dewey (1910, 1933) and the other from those of Schon (1983, 1987). According to Dewey, reflective thinking requires continual evaluation of beliefs, assumptions, and hypotheses against existing data, and against other plausible interpretations of the data (Larrivee, 2000. p.293).

Dewey distinguishes between routine action, ie: "...action guided primarily by traditions, external authority and circumstance...." and reflective action which involves "the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it". The notion that reflection is in contrast to routine action also challenges the technicist perspective to teacher education which sees the teacher as one who puts into practice theorisations by others without any questioning or criticism. As against this technicist perspective, in which teachers are portrayed merely as curriculum transacting agents, reflective teaching perspective recognises professional and thoughtful aspects of teacher's work (Calderhead and Gates, 1993. p.40).

Schon (1983, 1987) clearly writes about reflection that is intimately bound up with action. He talks about "reflection-on-action" and "reflection- in-action", the latter implying conscious thinking and modification, while on the job. But, both his forms of reflection involves judicious decision making through rational and moral processes about preferable ways to act. His reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action involve an epistemology of professional practice based upon knowing-in-action and knowledge in- action.

According to his theory, rather than attempting to apply the learned scientific theories and concepts in the field, professionals should learn to situate problems encountered in their specific context, test out various formula from their understanding of the context and then modify their practice as a result. In fact such practice based propositions and theories emerge as the small 't' s over time, reinforcing or perhaps archiving the official knowledge or theories, the big "T" s. The small 't's can emerge only as a result of reflective practice of teachers and the critical role of TE s is facilitating this reflection and theorization from experience in the field.

Principles that Guide School Internship Programme (SIP)

SIP is the stage at which a prospective teacher is initiated into teaching with a holistic perspective on the theory- practice linkages of the complex process of teaching- learning. The pupil teacher gets initiated into the discourse of teaching learning with its inter disciplinarity, enmeshing theories from other social science disciplines and linking these with the classroom processes.

It is in SIP that a Pupil Teacher gets inducted into the process of teaching. The stage is set for sharpening and nurturing of pedagogical knowledge, skills and personality aspects of a teacher, linking them to the theoretical discourse that encompass psychological, sociological and philosophical perspectives on education. In SIP, the spectrum of roles of a

Teacher Educator canopies the role of an observer and a facilitator, to a critical friend, to a mentor and an assessor. All the efforts of a Teacher Educator have to be geared at enabling the Pupil Teachers streamlined into a reflective path.

One of the main principles underlying the varied roles of a Teacher Educator is, it is the Pupil Teacher who knows her students best through the continued interactions between Teacher Educator and Pupil Teacher and nurturing of the Pupil Teacher that go on during the internship. The Teacher Educator witnesses the classroom processes only during discontinuous spells of observations as a passive observer and hence can only pose questions to make the Pupil Teacher to reflect, but cannot give any prescriptions for improving the learning by students. The ways and means of improving learning have to be evolved through continued interactions with the learners and reflections by the Pupil Teacher.

The second principle is that content and pedagogy are closely knitted into each other and cannot be seen as truncated aspects of teaching. Therefore, a Pupil Teacher can be helped with teaching methods only with reference to the content matter of the respective subject. This makes it imperative that the Teacher Educator, as a facilitator, has to also have adequate understanding of the respective subject matter.

Thirdly, all teachers, which include the Pupil Teachers, do reflect both 'while' teaching and 'on' teaching-each after the process of teaching. (Schon's 'Reflection in' and 'reflection on'). Many of the Pupil Teachers are unaware of this process as reflection, and this realization, catalysed by the Teacher Educator, helps them to get into the process of critical reflection in a more meaningful and intense way.

Lastly, associated with the process of 'reflecting in action', is the sensitivity and judicious decision making skill of the teacher. To state it more poignantly, through classroom transaction, a sensitive teacher feels the pulse of the class and, in case the ongoing method or technique is found to be ineffective, she deviates from the plan to try out new methods and media to match the level of the learners; or, choose altogether different set of strategies to realise the set objectives. Therefore, instilling in the Pupil Teachers, this sensitivity and judicious decision making abilities, to choose from a repertoire of methods and media to ensure learning, is a critical goal of the internship programme..

Silhouetted in the above conceptualisation is presented, the author's reflective accounts as a Teacher Educator during internship.

ROLE OF A TEACHER EDUCATOR

In SIP, what is the role of a Teacher Educator? An observer, who observes and criticizes? A supervisor, who observes, corrects, prescribes and evaluates? A mentor, who observes, shares the observations and facilitates the process of development of the Pupil Teacher through reflections on his own role and practice? It is the reflective process of the author that has resulted in the task analysis of self as a Teacher Educator and the emerging theorisation, presented below.

The role of the Teacher Educator in the process of facilitating learning to teach, is very challenging and complex and has many facets: The role of a mentor, a friend, a facilitator, a counsellor, an assessor and a guide. Although the mentoring role is supposed to be devoid of judgment, in the teacher education context, this aspect cannot be done away with, given the aim of any pre-service teacher education programme. It is this role of an assessor that makes the role of the Teacher Educator as a mentor, further complex.

An experiential elucidation of the different tasks carried out by the author as a Teacher Educator with reflective accounts has been presented below.

Planning of a Lesson

Are lesson plans the all-in-all of classroom teaching? To what extent should a plan be adhered to? To what extent should a Pupil Teacher be guided by a plan?

In the context of initiation into the process of teaching, the planning of teaching learning as an important tool in rendering the process of transaction effective has to be agreed upon by the group. This generally happens in the respective pedagogy classes and hence, Pupil Teachers come with the planned lesson. What is important is the shared understanding of the place of lesson plan in the whole process of classroom transaction.

Pupil Teachers are made to internalise the significance of a lesson plan in the teaching learning process. A lesson plan is seen as only a guideline for transaction where as it is the learning of the students and not the plan which should be the directive force for the transactional process. Students' responses to the classroom processes initiated by the teacher should guide the teacher on the movement of the lesson forward. For eg: during an going transaction, if it is realized that majority of the students are not in a mood or are not able to understand and participate in the classroom discussion, a sensitive teacher may decide to keep aside the prepared plan and take a detour through an entirely different plan of action as guided by the students' previous learning or state of mind or even decide to stop the lesson at that juncture and get into a more engaging and leisurely group activity. Development of this ability of a teacher to reflect in action, judiciously select and use the appropriate ways of facilitating learning from the repertoire of methods and media, to match the pulse of the class is absolutely critical in the internship programme.

Observation: Peer Observation as a Tool of Teacher Development

Various tasks under the process of observation are discussed below

Sharing of Guidelines for Observing and Recording with the Pupil Teachers

Is peer observation understood and followed as a tool for teacher professional development?

It is critical to impress on the Pupil Teachers that observation of classroom transactions of peer group is as important as teaching during SIP and significantly useful as a tool for professional preparation and development of teachers. If this is agreed upon, it logically flows out that a shared understanding of observing and recording of classroom transactions needs to be arrived at by peer group. For this, it is imperative that a format for observation is evolved from discussions within the group and this is adhered to for recording of observations. An initial discussion regarding how to observe and record is carried out. From the shared understanding emerges the consensus on how minute observations, quoting student-teacher dialogues wherever necessary are important for providing evidence based comments and emerging questions to help the colleague whose class is observed. Needless to say an open mind to suggestions and comments of peer group is essential to be a good learner in this process of sharing and discussion.

Initial Observation and Sharing of Observation by Pupil Teachers

In the initial days, Teacher Educator and Pupil Teachers observe the same classes of peers. Having observed the same class as the Teacher Educator, the peer group is in better tuning with the Teacher Educator during the sharing of

observations with the whole group. When Teacher Educator poses questions to the Pupil Teacher to reflect upon, Pupil Teachers are able to cognize better as it emerges from the same context shared by them. This practice provides scaffolding in the context of what and how to observe, how to reflect on these observations, how to share these observations and how to use these as a feedback for reflection and improvement. As the programme moves on, the pupil teachers carry out observations on their own and share observations with the peer group.

A common guideline for observation, evolved through sharing of understanding in the group, is basic to sharing the observations in the group with the Teacher Educator and making it an effective tool for professional development. The observations of the peer group are shared and discussed first, followed with those of the Teacher Educator to avoid the Pupil Teachers getting influenced by the observation by the Teacher Educator. During these discussions, feedback, by the way of recording and sharing of observations, is given by the Teacher Educator.

Observing the Classroom Transactions

Keen observation and meticulous recording of observations are the two important tasks carried out by the Teacher Educator. The Teacher Educator presents a mirror of the classroom processes through the presentation of the observations recorded. Reading from these observations, the Pupil Teacher is helped to reflect and work on the classroom transactions in the following days.

It is only when the observation is very minute and the recording is meticulous and elaborate can these be of help to the Pupil Teacher during the ensuing discussion. Observation of the classroom furniture arrangement, number of students in the class, facilities available, lighting etc are recorded for representing a comprehensive picture of the classroom process.

Challenges of a Teacher Educator as an Observer

How best can a Teacher Educator carry out this role as an observer of classroom transactions? What are the challenges in the way of a Teacher Educator with respect to this function?

Content Mastery

A question that has been haunting the author is, 'Am i doing justice to the Pupil Teacher in terms of support to her with the content being transacted?' One of the basic principles in teacher preparation is that pedagogy supports and complements the content transacted. Needless to say, a teacher educator may not be an expert in all content areas, apart, perhaps, in the areas from her/his parent discipline. Being a pedagogue, one would be updated on the developments in the concerned subject area. This does not completely hold good for those teacher educators who are not pedagogues. Therefore, while observing lessons, the Teacher Educators are handicapped, atleast, sometimes, if not always, with regard to content that is being transacted. So, while observing classroom transactions this does pose a problem. How do we address this issue? This can be resolved, to some extent, by referring to the concerned portion in the text book followed in the class. But definitely, full justice is not done to the Pupil Teacher in terms of feedback regarding pedagogy due to lack of insights in the subject. A general instruction to the pupil teachers, to provide the text book or one or two of the important references used for the classroom transaction, along with the lesson plan file, would be of help in this regard. Referring to these resources related to the specific content helps the Teacher Educator to follow the transaction to some extent, although this is grossly inadequate to provide specific subject related feedback to the Pupil Teacher.

The Vantage Position of the Teacher Educator

During classroom observations, in most situations, the Teacher Educator sits at the back most rows, facing the Pupil Teacher from where she is unable to see the facial expressions of the students. The importance of observing the facial expressions of children to understand the classroom process wholistically is perhaps not debated. So, the seat of the Teacher Educator at the back of the class does impact the understanding of the processes, to some extent. On the contrary, if the Teacher Educator sits in the front, facing the students, to counter this issue, the students may get conscious of the presence of the Teacher Educator and their behaviour may be affected to various degrees depending on diverse factors. In the context of the state run schools in developing countries, this issue can hardly be addressed in any meaningful way, given the crowded classrooms, with many not even having desks and benches!

Drawing Inferences

Classrooms are sites of dynamic power equations and complexities. To what extent can a Teacher Educator make inferences from observations over limited time period? How can the context of the class be understood adequately by her? Each day's script for a class can be so varied, given the erratic and dynamic mind of the students interacting to create, the context for and the process itself of learning. It is not a predictable situation, not a routine situation. In reality, more often and not, we infer from short and shallow observations justifying that it has been our regula practice since years and we know it all! As Smyth (1995) states, 'ofcourse we know what is going on in the classrooms. After all, we've been doing this for years, haven't we?' (p.4).

As Brookfield (1995) says, 'classrooms are not limpid and tranquil ponds, cut off from the river of social, cultural and political life. They are contested spaces.....' (p. 9). In many instances, it is challenging for a Teacher Educator to make inferences from the observations she makes. For example, observing from the back most row of the class that all children are writing down the content matter written down on the black board, it may not be appropriate to infer that 'students are all engrossed in learning'! In fact, this is a high inference. The extent to which a Teacher Educator can make inferences is as low as the limited knowledge of the class context that she has. Is it only just transaction that tells you about the class dynamics? How can a Teacher Educator know beyond the explicit processes? How can a Teacher Educator gauge the power relations and the undercurrents etc in the class? Don't all of these contribute to the class climate? There could be many such blanks in the observations and reflections of a Teacher Educator. These gaps are filled up to an extent only when these are discussed with the Pupil Teachers during the sharing session that follows the observation. It is a challenge for the Teacher Educator to be able to do full justice to the Pupil Teachers.

Having presented the issues in the task of observation by the Teacher Educator, the following section continues with the discussion of the tasks of a Teacher Educator.

Observing and Recording

The author is disturbed by many questions that affect the quality of observations used as a tool for providing a mirror to the Pupil Teachers.

To what extent are we as Teacher Educators able to observe and record the processes of the classroom? Are these enough to provide evidence based questions and comments to the Pupil Teacher? Or is there a hegemonic hierarchy and whatever TE says as the reality of the classroom has to be agreed on by the Pupil Teacher? To what extent do we,

as Teacher Educators, know the class context, the knowledge of which is a pre-condition to make comments on the classroom process?

Very minute observations, along with rapid and brisk penning down without missing much of the classroom processes, is a very challenging task for the Teacher Educator. Quotes captured from the transactions between the Pupil Teacher and the students become cardinal to facilitating evidence based post-transaction discussions. These evidences provide a mirror to Pupil Teachers and enable them to move to a reflective path. Pupil Teacher is given a chance to explain the transactional process with reasons for her methods and strategies along with reflections on these. As Schon (1991) states, what we have is a "reflective turn", in which practitioners are allowed to explain and reason out their practices in the classroom. As Schon (1991) states, what we have is a "reflective turn", in which practitioners are allowed to explain and reason out their practices in the classroom. 'Our role, as teacher educators, therefore, becomes one of helping teachers to *make sense of experience*, often in quite strange and puzzlingly new sets of circumstances - rather than telling them what these experiences ought to look like' (Smyth,1993).

Introduction of the lesson, body language, use of black board for content development, appropriateness of the use of other resources for facilitating learning, responding to students' answers and queries, questioning and probing, the linking of content points and content development, formative assessment, consolidation, the extent of inclusiveness of the classroom processes, the relevance of the content to the context of learners etc., are all to be observed and recorded by the Teacher Educator, which is a rather uphill task. The pace of observing and writing also determines the comprehensiveness of the recording which will subsequently impact the quality of discussion with the Pupil Teacher.

Post Transaction Discussion/Co-Analysis of Practice

Observations made by the Teacher Educator and the peer group can actually bring out only half the picture. The completeness of understanding of the process of teaching learning can be reached only when the Pupil Teacher and those who observed (both Teacher Educator and the peer group) enter into a dialogue. This post- transaction de construction of classroom processes through a dialogue between the observers and the teacher is what is technically termed as co-analysis of practice. The Teacher Educator and the peer group presents a mirror of classroom processes observed and pose questions to the Pupil Teacher who explains the class context and the reasons for the selection of the methods and techniques used by her/him for learning. In other words, the Teacher Educator or the peer group can only share their observations and comments, but, cannot cognize the whole reality of the classroom due to their limited understanding of the class context, and hence, they cannot be judgmental or prescriptive. One point remains ultimate in this context; it is the Pupil Teacher who knows the students the best, not the Teacher Educator. Therefore, the Teacher Educator can only pose questions and enable the Pupil Teachers to get into a reflective path.

The following section presents this process in more detail.

Sharing Among the Peer Group, the Pupil Teacher and the Teacher Educator

In order to make the observations and discussion of the transacted lessons effective, the pre requisite is that observations are carried out in a common format as referred to earlier in this paper.

Sharing of observation of the peer group and Teacher Educator in the group facilitates collective reflection beneficial for teacher development. As Smyth (1993) states, reflection should not be restricted to teachers *reflecting*

individually upon their teaching, there needs to be a collective and *collaborative* dimension to it as well. The peer group members, who have observed the transaction by the Pupil Teacher, are given the first chance to share their observations. The sharing of observations start with the title of the topic taught, the level of the class etc., basically to help those of the peer group who have not observed the transaction, to understand and learn from the discussion. Examples of how observations can be shared, ‘ I felt you were struggling to articulate the meaning of ‘organic’ and ‘inorganic’, followed with questions like, ‘Do you think that using illustrations could have made your task easier? Or, do you think eliciting from students would have been better?’ or, ‘what according to you, was the level of previous knowledge of the students?’

Next, the Pupil Teacher is given a chance to reflect on her class, respond to the comments and observations and queries of the peer group who shared their observation. Here, statements like, ‘yes, I wanted to knit in some illustrations into the explanation, somehow I got carried away and could not do it...’ Or, ‘yes, I realized my mistake while explaining, but it was too late to go back on it’ etc. There could also be reflections like, ‘I was not confident with my content today and that actually led to the messing up of the classroom processes’ etc.

The last is the observations and comments of the TE. It is important to start the sharing process with the question, ‘what were the objectives of the transactions?’, ‘To what extent, do you think you were able to achieve your objectives?’ and ‘How do you know that you have achieved your objectives?’ Wherever relevant, the efforts to achieve specific objectives of a lesson and also the developmental objectives, related to feelings, attitudes and values, all become points of discussion in a post transaction session.

While discussing attributes and skills related to teaching, it is effective to identify strong points in each Pupil Teacher and make each one, a role model for each of the identified attributes/skills. The other Pupil Teachers are, thus, guided to observe these and adapt to suit to their respective class contexts. This hand holding and support between peers go a long way in the molding of the Pupil Teachers. In fact, the role of a mentor can be understood better by the Pupil Teachers with this opportunity to actually practice the role.

Expectations of Prescriptions from Teacher Educators

In the context of expectations about the Teacher Educators by the Pupil Teachers, the author has always wondered: Why do the Pupil Teachers generally expect prescriptions?

It is usual experience that the Pupil Teachers ask, ‘ My students are just not manageable. Please tell me what to do’, or, ‘even after repeated questioning, some of my students just don’t answer. What should I do Ma’m?’ It is imperative that becoming prescriptive regarding the strategies of transactions and classroom management would deprive the Pupil Teachers from reflecting; a critically reflective Teacher Educator would pose questions on the basis of whatever is observed so as to streamline the Pupil Teachers into a reflective path thus helping them use their own wisdom and creativity to address the issues in the classroom processes. The Pupil Teachers need to realize that it is she/he who knows the students best, not the Teacher Educator because the Teacher Educator observes only a few classes and many times the observation may not be for the complete period of the transactional time. This principle is highlighted by Smyth,..... ‘Our role, as teacher educators, therefore, becomes one of helping teachers to *make sense of experience*, often in quite strange and puzzlingly new sets of circumstances - rather than telling them what these experiences ought to look like’

(Smyth,1993). Therefore, the ways and means of effective transaction have to emerge from the Pupil Teachers from their understanding of the learners and their reflections on the pulse of the class!

Teacher Educator takes on the role of posing questions to the Pupil Teacher after observation of the classroom transaction. It is this questioning, followed with the responses of the Pupil Teacher, that makes the whole exercise of understanding the transaction process complete, because observations by the Teacher Educators can only give half the reality, the other half being drawn up with the explanations given by the Pupil Teachers regarding what was planned and why she did that and what she felt about it. It is only with this complete picture of transaction that the Pupil Teacher can be led into a reflective path.

Development of supportive personality attributes of the teacher to be effective in the different roles, as a teacher, a facilitator, a mentor and a counsellor, is an important aim of SIP which has to be borne in mind while observing lessons and discussing with the Pupil Teachers. For this, a very holistic approach to observation and recording, situating the behaviour of the Pupil Teacher and the students in the respective contexts is to be practiced by a Teacher Educator.

Using Feedback for Further Planning and Transaction

The discussions that follow the observation of a lesson inform the planning and transaction of the following lesson. It is difficult for a Pupil Teacher to take into consideration, all of the points of the feedback of a lesson. It is more productive and practical to work upon three or four of the points of feedback in the ensuing class and progressively work on all the aspects of feedback aiming at improving the transactions from a holistic perspective.

Subject Grouping for Collaborative Reflection

Does grouping Pupil Teachers from the same discipline like language, social sciences, pure sciences and math better facilitate collaborative reflection?

Experience has confirmed the benefit of subject grouping for peer observation and subsequent discussion. After an initial period of supported planning, observing and discussing, subject groups or at least pairs of Pupil Teachers from a common subject area are formed and they help each other in planning, observing and providing feedback to each other. This collaborative reflection process, carried out in a subject specific group, facilitates a more pointed reflective practice.

Graphical Representation of Progress

How can Teacher Educator and Pupil Teachers have a shared understanding of the progress of each PT on a scale of progress?

In a group of Pupil Teachers, it is natural that each of them starts from different levels of effectiveness and confidence in teaching. Through SIP, all of them are expected to move forward from the starting point. In order to understand and follow this progress, the Pupil Teachers are helped to draw their own graph of progress, marking the indicators like students' participation in the class, systematic content development, consolidation, formative assessment, questioning and probing, clarity of explanation with illustrations, relevance of content to the group, inclusiveness of media and modes of transaction etc on the X axis and time period in weeks on the Y axis. In fact, there could be 3 graphs:

- Progress according to feedback from the Teacher Educator
- Progress according to feedback from peer group
- Progress according to self-assessment.

These graphs may be wavy, zigzag, or shooting up as the case may be. This representation is shared by the group as a feedback for improvement of Pupil Teachers. At the end of SIP, these graphs do give a visual, 'at a glance' view of the progress of the Pupil Teacher.

TE uses this record of graphical representation of the development of Pupil Teachers for the purpose of reflection and assessment.

Reflective Journal Writing

How can reflective journal writing be 'taught' to Pupil Teachers?

One of the most challenging tasks of a Teacher Educator is, perhaps, to motivate and induct Pupil Teachers into writing reflective journal. The post lesson discussions and sharing provide a strong stimulus for Pupil Teachers as also does sample of reflective journals and the discussion on it as a tool for professional development. Initially, journal writing happens in terms of just narrating what happened in the class and school without much reflection, slowly developing into an analytical mode of 'how did I teach', which is more technique oriented to improve practice. Slowly the Pupil Teachers are helped to reflect on 'why' aspects, moving on to 'what' aspects. It is true that when it comes to 'what' aspects, the control that a teacher can exercise on is very limited, as it is understood, the 'what' is decided by the state. But, it is universally accepted that it is the creativity and judiciousness of teachers that result in meaningful sequencing and interpretation of content to suit the needs of the learners. Based on this principle, a Pupil Teacher can reflect on 'what am I teaching?' When it comes to using illustrations, this aspect of 'what' is critical, especially when you are striving at an inclusive classroom transaction. Questions like, 'what illustrations can I use to make my point understood, given the diversity of my classroom, where students from different backgrounds are present?'

Illustrations of Reflective Writing

'I enjoyed my class today. I think students were with me. I was happy to see so many students wanting to answer.....'

'I was explaining continuously. But that boy in the left most corner, I forget his name, was he able to understand? His expressions were not very encouraging. Was he blank at times?!!! Still, why did I not pay any attention?'

'I was mad at my students today. Was I too harsh with Shweta when she misbehaved? May be it is because they could not understand the content that they were misbehaving! How could I be so insensitive?'

'I think the concepts were not clear to my students. May be tomorrow I will use visual aids to make them understand better.'

'What was the content I was teaching today in 'marginalization of the socially disadvantaged community'? I don't think the students understood. Could I achieve my objective of instilling empathy and sensitivity among students by the content given in the Text Book? Or, could I have used some other resources?' or,

‘The text book had content that my students from rural contexts could not relate to! Still I went on with that! Could I not have adapted the content to suit the context of my students?’ or,

‘Are my classes inclusive, in terms of the diversity of the class? Am I able to make the students from the economically weaker section feel as one with the group?’

It is imperative that reflective writing be discussed with the samples of writing shared in the group. Reflective journal writing by the Pupil Teachers needs to be read by the Teacher Educator and discussed, atleast, at intervals of a week or so, so that the Pupil Teachers can be helped to be conversant with it. This facilitation process of reflective writing can be considered complete only when the transactions are observed by the Teacher Educator, followed with a discussion between the two. Once the Pupil Teachers are able to get a grip on the task, this sequence of activities can be relaxed.

Encouraging Theorisation - The Small ‘t’s and the Big ‘T’s

How does a Teacher Educator encourage theorization by Pupil Teachers from the classroom experiences?

Pupil Teachers are actually in a position to develop their own theorisations, the ‘t’ s from their experiences in the classroom transactions followed with reflections on these. These ‘t’ s may or may not be congruent with the official knowledge- the ‘T’ s they are equipped with as they start SIP. In fact, it is only when the theory praxis linkages are understood and reflected on, that the ‘t’s would emerge. These theorisations that evolve out of the experiential learning and reflections are valuable assets to the fund of knowledge in the field of teacher education. Enabling these theorisations by providing an ‘eye’ for such theory-praxis linkages to Pupil Teachers is central to SIP and a significant role of Teacher Educator.

The list of tasks of a Teacher Educator presented is not in any way exhaustive although the attempt in this presentation has been to discuss and reflect on most of them.

Bonding between Teacher Educator and Pupil Teacher

How can the Teacher Educator facilitate the development of humane teachers without a humanistic approach which is all encompassed in the mentoring process?

It is the bonding between the Teacher Educator and the Pupil Teacher that develops through the mentoring process during SIP that facilitates the fulfillment of all other roles of a Teacher Educator. After all, mentoring is all about relationships. The role of Teacher Educator as a mentor in the whole programme of SIP is of prime value. She cannot become an effective mentor if the bonding between her and the Pupil Teacher is not warm enough. The warmth and care expressed over informal discussion during a tea break and lunch break go a long way in this path of bonding.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the author intends to reiterate the significance of reflective practice and the complex and multi-pronged role of a Teacher Educator in SIP, ranging from observation and recording, to discussing the observations of classroom processes, guiding reflective thinking along with maintaining reflective journals, enabling theorisations from experience, while also helping in developing appropriate personality attributes. Among all, hand holding and leading Pupil Teachers onto a reflective path is perhaps the most challenging and critical. Teacher Educators need to be humane and continue to remain as learners all through their professional career to be effective in fulfilling their complex role.

Unless diligent and seamless efforts are put forth by a Teacher Educator, no professional development of teachers can be facilitated and needless to say, it is only a reflective Teacher Educator who can groom reflective teachers-to-be.

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