

## REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICE: A KEY TO COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

*Soumita Ghosh<sup>1</sup> & Anju Verma<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Education, Sikkim University, Gangtok, Sikkim, India

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Sikkim University, Gangtok, Sikkim, India

---

**Received: 18 Sep 2018**

**Accepted: 08 Oct 2018**

**Published: 12 Oct 2018**

---

### ABSTRACT

*Teachers are life-long learners who strive to effectively support their students and the community. Although personal learning journeys begin much earlier, the professional learning journey of teachers begins in their Teacher Training program. Self Reflection is the only way to improve teaching competencies and efficiencies rather than other strategies. The teacher should reflect on their actions and try to improve their efficiency on the basis of present needs. The training programme for the prospective teacher also depends on the competent, effective and efficient teacher educators. Development of teaching competency and change require intellectual, emotional, social, and physical action and engagement. Teachers as learners must think, reflect, communicate their ideas, take action, and then think, reflect, etc. again, in a continuous learning cycle. Professional growth and development include self-analysis and collaboration. Professional competency is not simply about learning a new set of skills, but may also involve developing deeper understandings of self and others. A supportive professional and social climate, as well as self reflection, are necessary for the open exploration of ideas and professional growth. The present paper attempts to establish the importance of professional competencies of teachers, reflective strategies for the competency development of teachers to explore themselves as well as to engender the reflective practice as a key to quality improvement.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Teachers, Self Reflection, Reflective Strategies, Teaching Competency and Professional Competency*

### INTRODUCTION

Dewey defined the term Reflection as “an integration of attitudes and skills in the methods of inquiry”. The attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness are prerequisite to reflective action. It is therefore evident that there are a number of principles that guide a process by which teachers can become reflective. Dewey (1933) considered the following principles as the starting point of the process of reflection:

- The issue upon which the teacher reflects must occur in the social context where teaching occurs.
- The teacher must be interested in the problem to be resolved.
- The issue must be "owned" by the teacher; that is, derived from his/her own practice.
- Reflection on the issue involves problem-solving.
- The teachers' ideas need to be tested through the practice of teaching.

- Ideas about teaching once tested through practice, must lead to some course of action.
- Reflective actions may be transformed into a new understanding, redefined practice in teaching and changes in teaching.

Hadiya Habib (2017) assert that there is one quality above all that makes 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. Reflection is the key to successful learning for teachers and for learners. Wallace (1991) states, that reflection upon teaching practice will probably lead teachers to understand the pragmatics of classroom instruction and this will promote teachers' self-reflexive awareness of their assumptions about language instruction and willingness to explore how their implicit theories match or do not match their teaching. Critically reflective teaching occurs when teachers identify and scrutinize the assumptions that under grid their teaching and the way they work as teachers (Brookfield, 1999). The question that arises here is : How to become aware of such assumptions? Are we aware of our own conceptions of teaching? Teachers' pedagogical thinking informs their decision making and behaviors in teaching situations. Reflective practice assists teachers to confront inconsistencies between their thinking and their practice, and promote a conceptual change in teachers' views about teaching. Reflective practice for teaching is for those teachers who are disposed to think about their teaching practices, and are willing to put reflective practice into action. Reflective practice challenges teachers who have unquestioned assumptions about good teaching and encourages them to examine themselves and their practice in the interest of continuous improvement. According to Bailey (1997) "reflective teaching is about a skilled teaching of knowing what to do". Cruickshank (1981) defines Reflective Teaching as the teacher's thinking about what happens in classroom lessons and thinking about alternative means of achieving goals or aims. The purpose of Reflective Teaching is to engender good thought habits and development of teaching competency.

Walker (1992) developed the following definition of competency, the attributes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) which enable an individual or group to perform a role or set of tasks to an appropriate level or grade of quality or achievement (i.e. an appropriate standard) and thus make the individual or group competent in that role. S. Venkataiah (2000), defines, Teaching Competency as any single knowledge, skill or professional expertise which a teacher may be said to possess and the possession of which is believed to be relevant to the successful practice of teaching. Teaching competencies include the acquisition and demonstration of the composite skills required for student teaching like introducing a lesson, fluency in questioning, probing questions, explaining, a pace of lesson, reinforcement, understanding child psychology, recognizing the behavior, classroom management and giving an assignment. Encyclopedia Dictionary of Education (vol.1: 1997) describes teaching competency as the state of having demonstrating skills, abilities or aptitudes in the satisfactory execution of a learning task. Encyclopedia of teacher training and education (vol.2: 1998) defines teaching competency as suitable or sufficient skill, knowledge, and experience for teaching purpose. At several national seminars the following ten inter-related categories of competencies have emerged quite prominently by NCTE:

**Contextual Competencies:** Include not only educational but social and cultural systems also. It includes dealing with problems of wastage and stagnation, diversities in society, developing cohesive society and issues like urbanization and value inculcation.

**Conceptual Competencies:** Include knowledge about stages of child development, right perspective toward education and implications of education.

**Content Competencies:** Include joyful activities, media intervention, individual learning and provision of the enriched environment for learning.

**Transactional Competencies:** Include planning of action and evaluation, the inclusion of activities like storytelling, singing etc in the teaching process.

**Competencies Related to other Educational Activity:** Includes human values, a celebration of national events and community life activities.

**Competencies to Develop Teaching Learning Material:** Includes innovative ways of teaching and other resources.

**Evaluation Competencies:** Include a positivistic evaluation process, the importance of feedback etc.

**Management Competencies:** Include skills of classroom management, role, and responsibilities of the teacher.

**Competencies Related to Working with Parents:** Include ability to deal with parents and knowledge about the requirement of their cooperation in teaching-learning process.

**Competencies Related to Working with Community and Other Agencies:** Include the knowledge about the importance of community in the holistic development of students.

## **REFLECTIVE TEACHING AND TEACHING COMPETENCY**

Development of competency not only includes the simple acquisition of knowledge and skill; although the curricular knowledge, pedagogical skills, professional skills and application, professional values and practice are important. Teachers while reflecting on their professional context they should refine their practice. Rodriguez (2008) states, that Reflective Teaching serve as a mechanism to allow teachers to modify their knowledge and expertise. Reflection is in fact, a cyclical or spiraling process in which teachers continually monitor, evaluate, and revise their own practice. Reflective practices of the teachers are always related to teaching competency of them. To develop the teaching competency the teachers should reflect on their teaching processes and accomplish reflective teaching, teachers need to have a set of knowledge and attitude, such as an open mind, intellectual responsibility, and enthusiasm (Marcelo Garcia, 1992). They should also respect students' knowledge, accept the new thing, reject discrimination of any type, be humble, tolerant and demonstrate professional competency and commitment (Freire 1997).

Teachers need to apply different approaches, evaluate and reflect upon their practices in order to become competent and professional teachers. Hence, teachers' competence involves a balance between enhancing the students' learning and accomplishing their careers and conduct research studies to align with the updated world and gain sufficient knowledge by continuous professional development (Shukri 2014). In order to develop the teachers' professional competency the self-analysis is very important for all teachers.

Development of teachers' Professional competency begins in teacher training programs (or, perhaps even earlier), and continues throughout each teachers' careers. Effective professional development takes into account teachers' diverse backgrounds and the contexts in which they work, and thus should be adapted by individuals to address their specific learning needs, and those of their students. Teachers themselves must take initiative to acquire pedagogical knowledge and share it with others, with the support and encouragement of administrators and administrative offices. Reflective teaching constitutes the prerequisites for the teachers to be able to develop certain competencies. A teacher can use the reflective strategies for development of curriculum; they can evaluate the objectives to develop the teaching-learning process.

So, to develop the teaching competency teachers should reflect on their teaching-learning process and adopt the strategies of reflective teaching so that they can bring out the necessary changes within themselves.

## STRATEGIES OF REFLECTIVE TEACHING

It is important for all the teachers to participate in practices such as reading books and professional journals, attending workshops, and taking courses, but those activities alone are not sufficient for deep and transformative growth and change to take place. In order to achieve deep learning, personal and professional change and successful implementation in practice, teachers must involve themselves in a variety of forms of personal learning and group practice. Development of teaching competency can be formal (e.g. in-service and professional development sessions and professional growth plans), and it can be informal (e.g. collegial conversations and idea sharing with colleagues, and regular attention to classroom practices). Some of the important strategies are as under:

**Maintaining Reflective Dairy:** The teachers have to maintain and keep their reflective dairy. They have to write everything about their class in that dairy. After each and every activities related to curricular and co-curricular activities, they have to write what happened during that session. They can write their own feelings and perceptions about those activities. They have to maintain their dairy every day on a regular basis and they can reflect on their every day's activities in order to improve their teaching competency.

**Team Teaching:** The idea of team teaching originated in the USA in 1954. It is a good innovation in teaching strategies. It is also called co-teaching and collaborative teaching. The team teaching strategies are the very simple form where all teachers of a subject collectively teach a class in that subject. Sterns (1972) has explained the advantages of team teaching. It provides a teacher with an opportunity to receive feedback from their peers and supervisors regarding their teaching performance. It helps the teachers to perform a variety of roles, gaining experience in a leadership role and supportive roles.

**Collaborative Groups:** Educators and teachers may form a discussion or study group focused on a particular theme or themes related to their professional practice. For example, teachers may read about, study, talk about, observe, debate, and implement changes to their practices.

**Learning Walks:** Teachers can visit one another's classrooms and institutions to observe instructional practices in action, discuss approaches, share resources, consider student work, and plan to improve their practices.

**Electronic Conference or Bulletin Board:** Authority can develop an interactive website or e-conference related to professional development that provides a forum where educators can share resources, ideas, strategies, ask one another questions, post examples of effective lessons and project ideas and participate in discussions to develop their teaching competency.

**Peer Coaching Among Colleagues:** Teachers may liaise with each other or with a school administrator to provide supportive critiques and advice on their professional practice. They can observe each other's teaching and provide constructive critiques in the discussion. But teachers should remember that the accomplishments and supportive critique are provided in a nonjudgmental and helpful way.

**Self Analysis:** One of the most important parts of this process may include teachers' videotaping of their own lessons and completing a self-critique/analysis.

**Lesson Study Group:** Lesson study is a process in which small groups of teachers of a particular subject jointly plan, observe, analyze, and refine actual classroom. This process is repeated multiple times, allowing for greater depth of analysis, reflection, and adaptation to teaching practices. The group may share their experiences and findings with other teachers at their school, and publish their research lessons in a way that makes them accessible to the broader community of teachers.

**Book Reading and Discussion:** The institution may choose to organize book reading and discussion amongst the teachers. For example, choices may include: A general book on education and pedagogy relevant to teachers of various subjects (thus, the reading/discussion groups could facilitate sharing of ideas of teachers with different specialties), or A subject-specific book could be chosen to address subject-specific issues, concerns, and opportunities. These exercises are framed around reading and face-to-face discussion and can include a reflective writing component as the extension.

**Student Involvement:** Student input can be sought in a variety of ways, such as through a student advisory council, student representatives on school growth plan committees, feedback surveys, etc. If student input is sought, it must be responded to thoughtfully and respectfully. Teachers can reflect on their competency by the feedback of students.

**Collaborative Curriculum Development:** Collaborative curriculum development provides an opportunity for teachers to think deeply into their subject matter. Working together, teachers can design new planning materials, teaching methods, resource materials and assessment tools and these practices always help the teacher to develop their teaching competency.

**Action Research:** Teachers may choose an area of their professional practice that they are personally concerned about, and carry out small-scale, classroom-based research on that practice. For example, if they are interested in attempting a new instructional strategy, they could complete assessments of student understanding before, during and after the application of the strategy, and then analyse the outcomes. They may share their experiences and findings with their colleagues in collaborative groups and conferences.

**Professional Reading and Writing:** Reading books and articles related to education and keeping professional journals create an opportunity for teachers and educators to review their own experiences, reflect on their students' experiences, examine their beliefs and practices, stimulate new ideas, evaluate and develop their own learning, and apply what they have learned.

**Workshop with the Principal, Ex-teachers, Invitees, and Experts:** Teachers can participate in teachers' professional competency development programme. The authority can organize the workshop or conduct a discussion meeting with resource persons to create and discuss their own professional growth plans, and as well as the authority can organize some programme to share the success and growth of teachers.

**Workshops with Parents:** A workshop for parents to explain current classroom practices and to demonstrate how instruction is targeted and learning is supported helps the teachers to smooth running of their teaching-learning process and they can explain the procedures that enable parents and students to monitor homework, provide support, and give feedback to teachers.

## CONCLUSIONS

The achievement of teaching competency depends on reflection on practice and through dialogue with colleagues because while engaging in reflection it is very important for all the teachers to examine the wider context of teaching, analysis the effectiveness of teaching by evaluating self-teaching practice and reframing the lesson plan, using new teaching strategies according to the feedback and new experience. Teachers should engage in practicing reflective strategies to solve classroom problems and conducting action research is also very important to enrich teaching competency. Hence, Reflective teaching is prerequisite to develop teachers as Researchers as well as develop the teaching and professional competency of teachers.

## REFERENCES

1. Bailey, M. (1997). *Reflective Teaching: Situating our stories*. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7, 1-19. Retrieved April 02, 2018 from, <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk>
2. Brookfield, S. (1995) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. Jossey -Bass: San Francisco.
3. Cruickshank, D. R. (1981). *Evaluation of Reflective Teaching Outcomes*. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 75(1), Retrieved 13 March, 2018, from <http://doi.org/10.1080/00220671>
4. Dewey, J. (1998). *HOW WE THINK: a restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*.
5. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. ISBN 0395897548. Retrieved February 12, 2018 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/competence>
6. Freire, P. (1997). *Pedagogy of autonomy: Knowledge necessary for educational practice*. Rio de Janeiro: Peace and Earth. Retrieved 15 March, 2018, from <http://scholar.google.com>
7. Habib, H. (2017). *A Study of Reflective Practice and its Role for Teachers*. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 5(4), 944-947. Retrieved February 10, 2018, from <http://www.ijcr.org/IJCRT704126.pdf>
8. Marcelo, G. C. (1992). *Paper presented to the conference, Santiago de Compostela*. Retrieved 4 March, 2018, from <http://prometeo.us.es/idea/mie/pub/marcelo/como%20conocen.pdf>
9. Mathew, P. & Mathew, P. (2017). *Reflective Practices: a means to teacher development*. *Asia Pacific Journal of Contemporary Education and Communication Technology*, 3(1).

10. NCTE (1998). *Competency Based and Commitment Oriented Teacher Education for quality School Education*. New Delhi: National Council for Teacher Education: initiation document, 21. Retrieved 11 March, 2018, from <https://books.google.co.in>
11. Rodriguez, S. J. (2008). *Teachers' attitudes towards reflective teaching: Evidences in a professional development program*. Retrieved 12 April, 2018, from <http://revistas.unal.edu.co>arcicle>view>
12. Sterns, N. (2014). *team Teaching: Student Adjustment and Achievement*. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 66(7), 323-327. Retrieved 19 April, 2018, from <http://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1973.1088449>
13. Schon, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.
14. Shukti, K. (2014). *Female teachers' perception of reflective teaching as a teacher development tool in the Saudi context*. *Advances in language and literacy studies*, 5(5), 192-201. Retrieved 25 July, 2018, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all>
15. *Teacher Professional Development Framework and Guidelines*. Department of Education. Central Tibetan Administration Dharamsala, India, January 2014.
16. Venkataiah, S. (2000). *Restricting of teachers work, Teachers and Society*. *Encyclopedia of Education for 21 Century*. New Delhi: Anmol Publication, 35, 219-221.
17. Wallace, M.J. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
18. Walker. (1992). *Teachers as Mentors: A practical Guide*. London: Flamer Press. Retrieved 13 April, 2018, from <http://books.google.co.in>
19. Zeichner, K.M. (1981). *Reflective teaching and field-based experience in teacher education*. *Interchange*, 12, 1-22. Retrieved 03 March, 2018, from <http://en.wikipedia.org>wiki>competence>
20. <http://study.com>academy>what-is-reflective-teaching>
21. <http://www.sheffield.ac.UK>lets>reflective >teaching>
22. <http://www.researchgate.net>publication>
23. <http://en.m.wikiversity.org>wiki>ref>

