



A systematic review on the significance of reflective teaching in teaching performance

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ABSTRACT

Reflective teaching is vital for improving teaching performance. Self-reflection has been expected to bring a positive impact on reflective teaching. Hence, this study explores the significance of reflective teaching with two research questions: 1) How is reflective teaching through self-reflection seen? 2) What are the best strategies for implementing reflective teaching? The study was conducted with a qualitative approach through systematic review by analyzing some studies related to the research variables. Previous studies on the research questions were formulated, followed by analyzing and synthesizing the data. The result of the study indicates that the importance of journaling or keeping a diary for teachers as a means of self-reflection is still relevant today and still plays a role in teaching reflection. However, teaching reflection alone does not completely assist teachers in receiving thorough and beneficial reflection to enhance their teaching performance. Other important strategies such as peer observation, reflection training, peer observation, and the use of students' assessment and results also carry out important parts in reflective teaching.

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1. Introduction

Being a teacher is not just about understanding how to teach, assess, and evaluate students' work. A teacher should be a long-life learner who sees themselves as an actor who needs to learn how to be successful teaching actor (Motswiri, 2003). Being a successful teacher starts with self-reflection (Garmston, 1997), trying to see whether they professionally understand how to teach the students and meet their needs. Many researchers have brought strategies to improve teacher's performance in teaching. The most suggested thing to do is to conduct teaching reflection. It is seen to improve the teaching quality for individual development (Wang, 2022).

According to Dewey (1933), reflection is “the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further consideration to which it tends” (p. 9). In the 1980s, a wider acknowledgment of reflection was proposed by Kolb (1984) who argued that reflection encourages someone to shift concrete experience to abstract conceptualization with further action, which leads to further experience. After Kolb’s idea appeared, many former education experts brought the definition of reflection into wide recognition, which is broadly accepted. Scanlan, Care, and Udod (2002) argued that reflection means connecting theory to practice in education, but there is little empirical work on the conceptualization of reflection. The definitions of reflection have something in common, which can be concluded as the reflection of individual action to find a solution to their teaching issues. Hence, reflective teaching can be stated as a practice where educators engage in self-examination and thoughtful consideration of their teaching methods, approaches, and student interactions. This process of self-reflection can be a powerful tool for overcoming challenges in the teaching process.

Besides, the importance of reflective teaching has grown in the dynamic field of education, where pedagogical approaches are always developing, and classrooms are diverse and dynamic. Self-reflection is a purposeful and considered process that helps teachers assess and analyze their own approaches, experiences, and practices (Garmston, 1997). It entails reflecting inward to understand the teacher’s teaching decisions, relationships with students, enhancing teaching effectiveness, improving student learning, and promoting ongoing professional development (Pedrosa-de-Jesus, Guerra, & Watts. 2017). Making self-reflection, like writing a diary, is one of the most effective and adaptable strategies teachers can use to promote teaching reflection (Srimavin & Darasawang, 2003; Rahgozaran & Gholami, 2014).

Hence, the research questions formulated for this study are as follows:

1. How is reflective teaching through self-reflection described?
2. What are the best strategies for implementing reflective teaching?

2. Method

This study was conducted with the qualitative approach by analyzing some studies through literature studies. Research with systematic review is a research design to systematically synthesize existing research evidence by searching research articles, critical review (critical appraisal), and synthesis of research results to answer a question (Newman & Gough, 2020; Snyder, 2019; Lailiyah, 2016).

Some previous studies related to these research variables were formulated, and then a systematic review was conducted, followed by analysis and synthesis to answer the research question.

3. Results and discussion (This part is excluded for the non-research articles)

3.1 How is reflective teaching through self-reflection seen?

Hiemstra (2001) found the importance of journal writing like a diary for adult learners and adult educators as the aim of self-reflection. However, other significant factors can greatly contribute

to effective teacher reflection. To understand how to do self-reflection, teacher must be critical to evaluate themselves. One technique commonly used for teachers is writing a teaching diary per Hiemstra's premise. Teaching diary can be generally recognized as the main influencer in self-reflection. Many education experts, such as Gibbs and Kobb, have proposed self-reflection as the best strategy. Gibbs (1998) describes six stages in the reflection circle: description, feeling, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan. However, this stage is more likely to involve teachers' personal views strongly. Teacher will look at their teaching situation based on what they feel (Hargreaves, 1998). Several factors, such as individual characteristics, culture, and organizational factors, particularly facilitate how teachers plan and teach their subjects (Hativa & Goodyear, 2001). In this situation, there is a potential for mistaken reflection. Yet, in educational reforms, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) argued that respecting teachers' existing knowledge and skills is the best way to grow as professional educators. So, it can be suggested that the intervention of prior experience can be excluded but with the ability of the teachers not to involve prior personal negative emotions.

This situation could be risky because people often recall their past memories (Cameron et al., 2004). This situation may potentially happen to teachers. This situation can reduce the quality of teaching reflection itself. For example, their teachers' teaching method tends to adopt traditional teaching methods for teaching a new language. The method was initially to translate L1 to L2 word by word and have less communication practice. When teachers apply this to their reflective teaching, it may not be acceptable in today's teaching practice. However, Brookfield (1995) suggested that teachers can reflect on their previous experience as learners or teachers to become more aware of either paradigmatic assumptions or instinctive reasoning that shapes how teachers work. It is aimed to have a concrete reflection on what reflection should become. If the teachers bring their personal experience, careful consideration must be taken into account as the instrument of self-reflection is themselves.

3.2 What are the best strategies for implementing reflective teaching?

As there is a chance of conducting inaccurate self-reflection, another strategy proposed by Fullerton (1999) argued that peer observation of teaching is an effective strategy. The idea of peer observation is to provide constructive feedback (Sullivan et al. 2012). The characteristic of peer observation is observing the observed teacher with the help of the observer teacher. The benefit of conducting peer observation is not just useful for the observed teacher; the observer can reflect directly on their teaching practices. A part of its benefit, the hierarchy can become a problem because inequality and lack of mutuality become an issue. Keign and Waggoner (1995) proposed a solution in which both teachers must share mutual respect as genuine peers and disregard their status. Another solution that can be adopted from Keign and Waggoner's solution is conducting peer observation with the same teaching subject. In the case of teaching a second language, L2 teachers may be placed together. They must have shared or discussed the teaching subject in a formal teacher meeting or any other occasion. There is a possibility that they are professionally close as the meeting intensity is quite high. Consequently, the observer is more likely to be open and honest while commenting on their colleagues, while the observed teacher becomes highly genuine in teaching observation.

Another issue in peer observation is the observer's qualification. Many subject teachers can judge course content instead of the learning process as they feel good at commenting (Gosling, 2002). No absolute guidance assists an observer in becoming genuine and honest in observing teaching. They are prone to bring their previous experience of being taught (Cosh, 1998). It seems inaccurate because personal experience, which involves emotional factors, is also involved. So, there must be a strong and honest observer feeling to make a genuine judgment, and then the improvement of teaching quality can be reached. One must carefully look at what is seen and noticed when conducting observation. It does not simply rely on the eyes of the observer and then make a judgment. The observer needs to interpret what they see carefully by involving their education skills. So, the observer's experience may influence can lead to mistaken or constructive judgments.

As self-reflection and peer observation seem not to greatly contribute to the teaching reflection. The idea of using students' feedback through questionnaires is broadly used nowadays (Widya et al. 2020). It is conducted by designing a question list consisting of multiple-choice options or comments. Teachers distributed the questionnaire at the end of the semester or in the last year of study. Then, they analyzed it to find the overall reaction of students. Yet, a study conducted by Kember et al. (2002) revealed that using questionnaires is not associated with improving teaching quality. The procedures of making collected questionnaires were insufficiently rewarded, or there was a lack of awareness of the use of the feedback among teachers. This research outcomes seem relevant to today's teaching phenomenon. Even though teachers receive feedback from their students, many do not use it to improve their teaching quality. One of the main reasons is related to the previous paragraph, in which teachers are prone to focus on course content instead of teaching methods added to the low-standard questionnaires.

Based on the three methods of gaining teaching reflection, none of them is considered an effective reflection for improving teachers' quality. Each of them has indeed strong and weak points. Nonetheless, they can be used together to build strong teaching reflection. By combining the three in the process of teaching reflection, the possibility of achieving valid teaching reflection can be reached. Self-reflection, peer observation, and student feedback are combined but distributed in different phases. Self-reflection can be done after the class by reflecting on the teacher's own thoughts about their teaching performance. Peer observation can be conducted anytime during school (once in one semester), and the same teacher subject must be involved to become a relevant observer. Next, students' feedback through feedback can be undertaken at the end of every semester. Combining the three teaching reflection methods is not just to reflect on the observed teachers; students' needs are also indirectly involved.

Besides, Gün's (2010) study of quality self-reflection through reflection training revealed that training could improve teachers' awareness of their teaching strengths and weaknesses. Programs provided in training can help teachers to be more critical and honest in commenting and discussing their teaching practices. More importantly, reflective conversations among teachers can be mutually identified and give effective solutions in collaborative group interaction.

In addition, as suggested by Brookfield (1995), one of the best ways to be good reflective teachers is to use students' works, which are attained from students' assessments and results. It is more likely to become the real reflection. In teaching L2, for instance, teachers can analyze how good their

teaching performance is. There must be a difference between gender and class performance. However, at least it helps the teachers to seek solutions to tackle students with lower performance. The initial action that can be undertaken is redesigning their teaching approach to suit students' needs.

4 Conclusion

In summary, Hiemstra's finding on the importance of journal writing like a diary for adult learners and adult educators as the aim of self-reflection still remains important. There is also strong support from Brookfield (1995), who mentions self-reflection as one of the best reflection methods. Nonetheless, self-reflection does not fully help teachers get comprehensive and constructive reflection to improve their teaching performance. Peer observation can be another supporting strategy. It must be done by having an honest and genuine judgment from the observer so that the observed teacher can get reliable and accurate feedback. Peer observers from the same teaching subject can be the best observers as they are more likely to meet, share, and discuss the teaching subject in a formal teacher meeting or any other occasion. This can also prevent them from being genuine and open while observing or observing. Next, the presence of reflection training can be useful for the observer. Reflection training can become a solution because of a continuous issue with peer observation. Activities like reflective conversations among the teachers can be mutually identified and provide effective solutions in collaborative group interaction. Consequently, they can have strong relationships and construct genuine feedback on teaching observation. Lastly, using students' assessments and results can also become an effective way to reflect on teachers. They can analyze students' academic performance as a medium for reflecting on their own teaching performance.

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