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Reflective Teaching Practice: Its Role in the Improvement of Students' Learning and School Culture

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Abstract

This auto-ethnographic inquiry's goal is to investigate reflective teaching practices of secondary school teachers in teaching, and its focus was on secondary schools. The researcher talked about his own experiences during an auto-ethnographic investigation on reflective teaching practice of secondary school teachers. Auto-ethnography provides potent avenues for connecting with one's self in meaningful ways in relation to others and the culture. The participants of this research were teachers of secondary schools. Secondary school was selected from province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). I set up one-onone interviews with six different teachers, and I decided to talk to one educator from a secondary school. Findings revealed that my experiences as a teacher of KP secondary school pupils were the focus of my study, in which I also evaluated how those events influenced my professional growth as an educator. The recommendation is that teachers at KP secondary schools should not be obsessed with "teaching to the test" in order to improve the academic achievement of their students. KP and secondary school teachers in economically disadvantaged educational settings will have a greater impact on their students' lives if the methods they use are current, consistent, caring, student-centered, and culturally affirmative.

Key words: Auto-ethnography, Collaborative teaching style, Reflective teaching practice, School culture

Introduction

Learning and thinking that is reflective is not a new concept, particularly in terms of learning throughout the records of pedagogical study, and it has been widely known in the field of education with John Dewey's perspectives for a very long time (1997). In order to be introspective in one's learning, he mentioned four points that were consecutive but not sequential.

- 1. Reflection is a form of critical thinking that is methodical and in-depth.
- 2. Reflection must take place in the context of contact with other people.

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- 3. It is a process of creating meaning in which the learner gains a deeper knowledge by studying their experiences and how those experiences relate to other people.
- 4. For intellectual development, reflection is necessary, and it demands a particular set of attitudes and ideals.

His ideas have provided new insights to a great number of academicians working in the education sector, and they have also been included in the training of educators. When one considers its relevance in the realm of teacher education, reflection has made its way into the discipline relatively late via various researchers and the seminal works that they have produced (Anderson, 2020; Sellars, 2017). This research showed that an inquiry-oriented paradigm for teacher education would allow for intentional and rational behavior change as well as the assessment of the merits of particular acts and instructional content. The majority of these studies were conducted in the context of higher education institutions in the United States of America and were positioned accordingly. According to them, the implementation of reflection in teacher education was bring about deliberate shifts away from behaviorist and traditional methods of teaching and toward a more reflective instructional structure. In order to encourage teacher educators to be more facilitative throughout the teacher education curriculum, using reflective thinking as a conceptual tool to ascertain student teachers' ideas and attitudes towards their own teaching would be beneficial. To learn what student teachers believe and how they feel about their own teaching, employ reflective thinking.

Research Questions

- 1. What reflective teaching styles are being practiced by secondary school teachers?
- 2. What are the learning experiences of secondary school students?
- 3. Has the school culture improved as a result of reflective teaching practices of the teachers?

Literature Review Auto-ethnographic

Auto-ethnography, which involves the researcher making connections between their own personal experiences and broader cultural, political, and societal meanings and understandings. It is classified as a type of qualitative research and/or research focused on the arts (Arıkan, 2015).

It is a method that has been implemented in a variety of academic fields, such as social sciences and physical sciences. Throughout the course of academic history, researchers have had difficulty arriving at a unified understanding of what exactly auto-ethnography entails. However, in most cases, it refers to study that entails making an analytical observation of an individual's actual experiences and then making connections between those experiences and bigger cultural, political, and social notions (Evişen, 2021).

According to Holman et al. (2016), the word "auto-ethnography" refers to study in which the researcher self-reflexively explores a group they are a part of or their own personal experience. In the 1970s, insider ethnography—studies of a group of which the researcher is a member—was a more specific definition of auto-

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ethnography. Auto-ethnography was set apart from other forms of ethnography using this definition. Adams et.al (2017) claim that auto-ethnography employs in-depth and careful self-reflection, which is typically referred to as reflexivity, to name and interrogate the connections between self and society, the particular and the overall, the personal and the political. It also acknowledges and values a researcher's relationships with others and uses personal experience to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices and experiences.

According to Yazan (2019) and Bochner et al. (2000) also described auto-ethnography as an auto-biographical genre of writing and study that displays several levels of awareness and relates the individual to the culture. Around the middle of the 1800s, anthropologists first started conducting ethnographic research in order to study the people whose cultures they considered to be unusual or primitive. The majority of the time, the primary intention of these early ethnographers was to merely watch and document these communities in a neutral manner for the purpose of enhancing others' comprehension of a variety of cultures. They were concerned with providing true, reliable, and objective interpretations in their writings, and they acknowledged and struggled with the challenges of how to generate literary narratives that would provide clear, accurate, and rich descriptions of the cultural practices of others.

Yalcın (2021) describe the early to middle of the 20th century, it became abundantly obvious that observation and fieldwork had a negative impact on the natural and usual behaviors of the cultural groups. In addition, researchers became aware of the function they play in the process of evaluating the behaviors of others. As a result of this, significant concerns have been raised regarding the viability and appropriateness of providing totally objective descriptions of cultural practices, traditions, symbols, meanings, premises, rituals, rules, and other forms of social interaction.

Reflective Teaching Practice

When teachers engage in reflective teaching, they are devoting time to assessing their own teaching practices, analyzing their curricular choices, taking into consideration comments from students, and making adjustments to increase students' sense of belonging and their capacity to learn. In order to complete this process successfully, you were need to collect information, assess data, and prepare for the future. Before, during, and after one teaches a course, teachers who engage in reflective teaching examine their core ideas on teaching and learning, as well as how well those views align with their actual classroom practices. Reflection is one of the most effective methods utilized by experienced educators (regardless of the content being taught), and it can be beneficial for students as well.

Teachers who engage in the practice of reflective teaching examine and assess not just their own methods of instruction but also the responses, behaviors, and achievements (or lack thereof) of their students. Teachers have a better understanding of not just what they are teaching, but also why they are teaching it and how they are going about it when they evaluate their own methods of instruction (methods and approach). Several aspects, including the lesson, the resources that was utilized, and the atmosphere in which the student was learning, are need to be taken into consideration. In addition to this, it is very

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vital to take into mind the students themselves, as well as the unique learning methodologies and requirements that each student possesses.

Even the most meticulously planned class runs the risk of being unsuccessful whole or in part. The majority of the time, educators who are swamped with work was just ignore difficult or unsuccessful situations. After a few months and into the following year, both those memories and the feelings that were associated with them came less vivid. It is most possible that the educator was approach the preparation in the exact same manner, putting in the same amount of time, professional investment, and approach.

If nothing is done differently, the educator is very likely to proceed in the same manner, which was unfortunately led to failure on more than one occasion. Your inner self is steadily bringing you down and wearing you out when you keep remembering an unpleasant experience that you had over and over again, or when you may have nightmares or physical indications of stress (intellectually, physically and emotionally).

Research Methodology

This is going to be an auto-ethnographic study for the most part. Auto-ethnography provides potent avenues for connecting with one's self in meaningful ways in relation to others and the culture. By broadening the scope of the paradigm of ethnography, it can be understood as a means of bridging the gap between academic research and actual life experiences (Anderson & Glass-Coffin, 2016).

An auto-ethnographic inquiry incorporates many of the standard qualitative data gathering instruments such as fieldnotes, interviews, and personal documents; yet, it is frequently analyzed in a manner that is distinct from traditional ethnography. In the manner in which the analysis is presented, the researcher's ego is made visible, along with strong reflexivity, relational engagement, personal vulnerability, and open-ended rejection of finality and closure.

Participants

The participants of this research were teachers of secondary schools. Secondary schools were selected from province KP.

Data Collection Tool

The 'I' is given a lot of importance in auto-ethnographic design, and it is via this 'I' that connection, location, and unfolding all intersect. Auto-ethnographic inquiry is carried out through the use of self-narratives, which makes "I" both the method and the text (Reed, 2010). Because of this, auto-ethnographic studies do not differentiate between subjectivity and objectivity; rather, they accept a research form that makes use of the researcher's subjective experience as the central component.

Since auto-ethnography focuses on the self or selves, it only makes sense that the data collected come from the researcher themselves. Researcher's relations in the form of events, decisions, coping mechanisms, and the surrounding experiences are directly analyzed in co-constructed narratives. These narratives also take into account the contributions of people who play a role in the unfolding of ideas, events, and decisions.

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One of the most important aspects of auto-ethnographic research is the strong reflexivity that the researcher must exhibit in order to be aware of the mutual effect that exists between himself or herself, the environment, and the other people who take part in the study. It is an endeavor in an introspective guide to understand both the self and the others' by scrutinizing his or her own framing the accounts with personal reflexive views of the self. This is done in order to understand both parties.

When readers are able to feel what it is like to live the lives of the auto-ethnographic, the auto-ethnography is powerful and persuasive. A genuine connection between the author and the reader can be forged through an in-depth engagement with the life stories as well as a robust reflexivity toward the author's own experience.

Data Analysis

In accordance with the aforementioned guidelines for auto-ethnographic research, I was conducting this study using myself as both the subject and the researcher. More specifically, I was delving inward into my own experience by intently concentrating on how my thoughts and emotions are related to the wider world.

My academic career from the start to the present, which covers the preceding five years, is the period I enlarge on and analyze. I do this by using my own reflexivity to engage with my academic context and the participants to communicate with them and co-construct the narrative. Setting the timeframe of the tale within the allotted span does this. However, I am aware that time is more expansive than the area that may be characterized by the relationship between the events and their forerunners. Because of this, the study's interpretations also consider the study's wider time and location frame, which encompasses the time I spent in high school and college.

In order to provide sections on viewpoints and applications of reflective thinking, I gathered all the data from my own academic experiences, including personal diaries, syllabi from the courses I taught, email conversations, lecture notes, academic theses, and publications.

I was able to group these portions into logical and thematic groupings the second time I went through the collection, which allowed me to give a more realistic account of the journey that brought me to a career as a secondary school teacher. The categories that were presented in the analysis section are exposed to critical reflection both before and after they are written, and they are also discussed with a limited number of coworkers. I am exempt from requesting approval from an ethics committee because I did not incorporate any data from other sources into this study.

Data Analysis & Results

How can researcher use the collaborative reflective teaching style to improve student learning?

The collaborative reflective teaching style is a process in which teachers work collaboratively to reflect on their own teaching practices, make adjustments to those practices, and then assess the impact those changes have had on the learning of their students. The following are some of the ways in which

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researchers might use this cycle to increase student learning:

- 1. Researchers can assist educators in working collaboratively to design and carry out the delivery of instruction, discuss and compare effective pedagogical strategies, and provide feedback to one another. Researchers may assist in getting teachers to work together by offering chances for cooperation. Some examples of these opportunities are frequent meetings, workshops for professional development, and online discussion groups. They are also able to give teachers with tools and resources, such as shared lesson plans, rubrics, and assessment tools, to make it easier for teachers to collaborate. Setting up peer observation and feedback sessions is another way for researchers to foster collaboration. In addition to this, the researcher is able to offer training on efficient methods and skills for collaborating with others.
- 2. This can ultimately lead to more effective instruction and greater student learning by helping teachers acquire insight into their own teaching practices and identify areas in which they can improve.
- 3. Making changes in practice Researchers can assist educators in making adjustments to their teaching methods on the basis of their own reflections and the feedback they receive from students. The provision of professional development opportunities and resources that are supportive of the changes that teachers desire to make in their teaching practices is one way in which researchers may assist teachers in putting those changes into practice. For instance, if educators desire to apply a new teaching method, researchers can provide them with training on how to most effectively use that strategy in the classroom. It is also possible for researchers to give educators access to pertinent information as well as best practices in order to help them make decisions. In addition, researchers are able to provide a hand to educators in the process of formulating and executing action plans that outline the particular adjustments they wish to bring about as well as the methods they were taken to bring about those alterations. In addition, researchers are able to offer ongoing support and guidance to educators as they make changes, thereby assisting educators in troubleshooting any problems that may arise.
- 4. As teachers continue to travel through the cycle, researchers can offer ongoing assistance and direction to them, assisting them in recognizing new areas in which they can improve and assisting them in making appropriate adjustments as required. In addition, researchers can lend a hand to educators by assisting them in documenting their development and spreading the word about their accomplishments in order to foster a culture of unending growth and development among the teaching community. By going through the cycle again and again, educators can continuously enhance their pedagogical strategies and the learning of their students throughout time.

It is crucial for both students and teachers to reflect on their learning as part of the educational process. It can give ties between what is to be taught and attained, on the one hand, and what is required to promote student learning, which is useful for teachers. It has been said that reflection in the context of learning and teaching is a process that turns experience into learning by "exploring frequently confusing and confused occurrences and focusing on the thoughts and feelings that accompany them."

Effective practitioners regularly digest new information and draw lessons from

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their past experiences. Using the term "reflection in action" to describe this method, he believes that reflection helps grow practitioners into researchers in practice by ensuring that reflection occurs at the appropriate time so that there is still enough time to benefit from and alter the situation. This method has been acknowledged in the research literature on learning and teaching as an example of effective pedagogical practice for the purpose of professional development.

How can reflective teaching practice improve school culture?

This can result in a more pleasant and supportive working atmosphere, which in turn can have a good impact on both the morale of teachers and the level of job satisfaction they experience in their jobs.

The cultivation of a culture of trust and open communication among educators, administrators, and other members of school staff is another potential benefit of reflective practice. Teachers can gain insight into their own strengths and flaws, as well as become more open to feedback and constructive criticism from students et al., by reflecting on their teaching practices and sharing those insights with students et.al. It is possible that this was lead to a more open and collaborative school culture, one in which educators was feel more at ease expressing their ideas and working together to enhance both the teaching and the learning of their students.

Involving both students and parents in the process of self-reflection can also contribute to the development of a more welcoming and accepting atmosphere within the educational institution. This has the potential to contribute to enhanced student involvement as well as a sense of responsibility towards the student's own learning process. In general, engaging in reflective practice can assist to promote a culture of continual improvement and professional growth within a school, which can have a good impact not just on the performance of teachers but also on the success of their students.

My fourth question was addressed by each of the six participants individually.

Raalitias

To better understand who I am as a KP secondary school teacher who reflects the socioeconomic gaps between teachers and students, I documented and categorized the formative experiences of my youth and early adulthood that shaped my outlook on education, friendships, and career. I conducted this to better understand the socioeconomic gaps that exist between educators and their students. After reflecting on my own upbringing and cultural background, I was able to evaluate whether or not my classroom's atmosphere and lessons reflected my own, and whether or not they were engaging and effective.

The curriculum, formulaic teaching approaches, and teachings that did not link to the student's environment outside of school expectations all contributed to the student's previously established academic anxiety towards learning. This leads to a breakdown in communication between the school and its pupils. Students become less and less receptive to learning over time when they are exposed to new teachers using the same methods.

Moreover, I was able to examine the possibility that working in economically disadvantaged high schools, which often have difficulties like a lack of specific and critical academic teachers throughout the school year, as well as teachers who are not trained to be teachers or who are inexperienced and less prepared,

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contribute to the achievement gap between economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged students.

There is compelling evidence indicating that there is a need to recruit more teachers who are academically able, that subject matter expertise should take precedence over pedagogical preparation, and that there should be discussion regarding whether or not teaching experience and education degrees matter for student achievement. When assessing the enormous discrepancy in academic, social, and principled accomplishment between poor students and teachers' building design in the classroom, these realities were as clear as day from the research. At either the first or the second observation, the change cannot be seen (Berry et al., 2009).

There is a possibility that some teachers in middle-class secondary schools are guilty of the same harmful stereotyping or lack of awareness of their students as white teachers. This kind of cultural issue brings to light the unfortunate fact that there are teachers of both black and white students who are completely unable to see people who are different from themselves in any way other than through the lens of their own culturally biased perspective (Delpit, 2006).

It was observed that sample participants T1 and T2 who were caught in a cultural split, discovered their discrepancy was maintained concealed through the use of a sample revelation. Because of this, the inquiry, which sought to uncover both experiences and insights, came to the conclusion that the private conversations that take place among secondary school teachers in education are significant to the professional development of the teaching community.

The findings lent credence to the hypothesis that the majority of teachers entering the teaching profession lack cultural knowledge. Students shifted their focus away from topics such as the attitude of poverty, how poverty influenced behavior, and how academic achievement was affected by poverty, and instead adopted a mindset of transformation. There are a lot of people who set out to teach, but they have trouble connecting with their students because they are unaware that their students even exist. Nevertheless, sharing our personal experiences, the truths that we've discovered, and the things that we've been thinking about could be one way to spark conversation, collaboration, and change.

The responses that two participants gave to the sample questions and scenarios that I provided demonstrated a variety of perspectives regarding socioeconomic awareness and the role that it plays in the progression of teaching techniques. For instance, T1, a teacher who has been in the profession for 10 years, mentioned in the interview how it was important for kids in her school to comprehend the concept of connection and to look at the world through a variety of cultural lenses over the course of their education.

He remarked that "a lot of his perceptions arose from his personal experiences, which inhibited his from reaching his students. He was referring to the fact that his students were unable to connect with him. He was unaware of the social and academic obstacles his pupils faced throughout their life, which impacted the way they viewed their education and had an impact on the way they viewed themselves as learners. He desired to assist them in achieving academic success and assist them in changing their attitude on learning, but due to the cultural barrier, he was unable to do so."

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In addition, T2, an additional experienced educator who has been working in the field for over twenty years, shared his opinion that he believes "teachers' connectivity to their students' culture is a crucial aspect in building motivation and change with their pupils. Your perception of them as a result of my words, deeds, and the people I associate with on a daily basis was determine whether or not they were entrusted you with their intelligence and success."

These statements reveal our fundamental beliefs about who we are, how we are linked to, and how we are disconnected from, the children that we teach. In addition, T3, who began their career as an experienced educator and currently works as an administrator, remarked that "teachers in general need to comprehend their place in education, their understandings of the pupils they educate, and the experiences they confront throughout the educational institutions."

The most important thing for us to do is to reflect on the teaching and learning practices that originate from our own cultural lenses, to respond to those practices, and to put those responses into action. When viewed from this angle, it is of the utmost importance that educators devise, define, and decide the manner in which they were engaged in the exchange of information, acceptance, and self-awareness. Three of the six participants, or fifty percent, were teachers who were open to sharing their thoughts and feelings regarding this subject. My theory is that some of the participants did not react because they had moved into administrative posts and found it difficult to recall their experiences from when they were students.

In addition to this, it's possible that the conversation would have discouraged people from adversely associating themselves with their own race. According to Murray (2015), the first phase in the process of self-reflection entails questioning one's own beliefs, values, cultural practices, and societal structures in order to evaluate the impact these factors have on one's day-to-day life.

T2 replied: "Well, there are some ways in which it did prepare me, and a lot of others in which it did not. When I was a kid, my family and the culture around me were quite different. At least, I was raised in KP, Pakistan. Despite the fact that I was brought up in a family that was considered to be upper middle class, my siblings and I attended local schools where students came from a wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. The culture was the same in spite of the vast differences in financial standing. Everyone recognized the importance of education, and parents raised their children using the "hands-on" method and the proverb that "it takes a village to raise a kid." I don't recall any kind of disrespect being shown by kids or teachers toward one another, and I don't think I ever saw a child who wasn't ready to learn. Therefore, when I first started teaching in urban classrooms, I found that I couldn't use my own pedagogical stance or practical examples to help my pupils learn. This shifted my perspective on theory and practice. Because of this, my perspective on how theory informs practice has shifted."

Immediately after T2 spoke, T3 responded with force:

"Despite the fact that I was raised in a world that was based on the upper middle class, I frequently found myself in the trenches with other youngsters who lived in neighborhoods with lesser socioeconomic status. I spent a lot of

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time with them, and as a result, I was familiar with the terminology, or perhaps I should say the varied jargon that helped keep me informed of both sides. When I first started working in the field of education as a teacher, neither lack of discipline nor lack of connectivity were problems. I believe that the experiences that I had outside of the official training that I received from my parents, as well as the exposure that my parents offered me, allowed me to prepare for working in schools like this."

These two individuals each held a distinctive viewpoint regarding the degree to which they were prepared to instruct Students. Each of their perspectives on how they entered new situations that were distinct from their own personal culture and the values that had been instilled in them by their families was shaped by their encounters in the outside world, including their social awareness, perceptions, and experiences. Understanding and connectedness into instructional procedures, as well as student motivation, are both hindered when cultural differences and lower socioeconomic forces are present. After analyzing the data about teacher connectivity and its influence on teachers' development, which is representative of differences in socioeconomic awareness, three significant themes emerged: cultural divide, private failures, and learnt behaviors.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that both the researcher and the sample participants faced a variety of frustrations, problems, and moments of self-doubt when working at schools serving students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. These experiences were mostly related to a disconnect that existed between the diverse cultural backgrounds of teachers and the students who were black and economically disadvantaged. According to Ghosh and Galcyniski (2014), in order for teachers to modify, it is necessary for them to realize certain realities in order to ascend from their monoculture perspective.

My lengthy interactions with students led me to assume that they had a substantial impact on my own pedagogical growth, but I didn't know how those influences manifested themselves in my classroom. This was something I thought about when I first started my research. I was conscious that I had a responsibility to contribute to the intellectual and social growth of my students, but I did not believe that I had the knowledge of how to instruct students while keeping the effects of poverty in mind.

My experiences as a teacher of KP secondary school pupils were the focus of my study, in which I also evaluated how those events influenced my professional growth as an educator. In order to evaluate my position as a teacher, I adopted an auto-ethnographic methodology and included several different kinds of data. In addition, the findings of this study indicate that other KP secondary school teachers may opt to address comparable challenges of student connectedness in a manner that is more institutional and less introspective. This is something that can be deduced from the fact that the research was conducted. This research serves as a general contribution to the absence of literature on the challenges and experiences of teachers of color and, in specifically, the cultural and pedagogical challenges facing privileged teachers within schools that primarily serve KP students. The purpose of this research is to fill this gap. In conclusion, the

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findings of this research serve as a general contribution to the dearth of literature on the obstacles faced by teachers of color and the experiences they have had. To put it another way, the findings of this research fill a gap in the existing written literature. This information was not previously available.

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