

## PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES: AN OVERVIEW OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

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### Abstract

Pedagogy has come a long way from 'Methodology' to 'Reflective Practice'. The current approaches to imparting learning are in favour of 'Reflection – in – Action' as advocated by Schon. It is experienced that teachers spend considerable time for 'Pre-class Preparation'. The pertinent question that draws attention is, whether the reflection improves the performance. This paper aims at emphasizing the efficacy of Reflective Practice.

Key words: pedagogy, methodology, reflective practice, pre-class preparation

The productive result of any academic activity is said to be accomplished only when the the human resources are harnessed to the core and are designed to contribute to the development of a nation. "Thoughtful people in all walks of life are greatly disturbed by a progressive erosion of values and the resultant pollution of public life. It is therefore being urged that the process of education should be reoriented" (Challenge of education, a policy perspective, Government of India 1985) . In the light of the statement, it is surmised that Education or the dissemination of knowledge requires a serious attention. It needs to be liberated from the narrow confines of the curriculum. The onerous responsibility lies with the teachers as torch bearers. In this process of realizing the avowed aim they need to standardize their own methods, modes and approaches to teaching. Teacher as disseminator of knowledge has a key role to play in the teaching - learning process. In order to fulfil the task successfully, teachers should always move abreast with the changes that are taking place in the society while upgrading their skills and performance. The very act demands introspection and reflection on their own class room practices.

**Pedagogies:** Pedagogic practices can broadly be divided into two, though it may yield to many a nomenclature, *Applied Science model and Reflective model*.

**Applied Science Model:** The applied science model is the practice of teaching based on 'Received

Knowledge of the Teacher'. This model is an attempt to execute the popular methods ,which have their basis in theory. It is a result of theory developed by someone and applied by someone else in a novel situation. It may not result in the proper application and sometimes misfits to the situation which is the inadequacy of the model. Thus it is a separation between theory and practice.

More over depending upon the constext the academic process moves on utilizing the text book, which may not fit into the frame of the theory. On the other hand, it may be a theory confined to a methodology which serves a limited purpose. Professional compulsions necessitate to take amendments to the theoretical base for the functional purpose.

In the conventional testing environment, a student is subjected to a forced performance in the form of rote learning and undertaking the tests. In order to surmount the hurdle, ' essence of lesson plan capsules' are prepared. These capsules of directions are ought to be followed by the teachers in toto, which is a stifling of the natural practice of pedagogy. The dependence on superficial sources becomes an impediment to the growth and hence blind adherence to documented methods.

### Reflective Model:

Reflective Model is founded on 'Experiential knowledge' which is based on two phenomena according to Schon. They are : a) Learning in action  
b) Reflection

**The Reflective Practice**

Reflective Practice is a practice of teaching that integrates 'thought' and 'action' with reflection. It entails analysis of action with a of enhancing professional growth. In order to undertake reflective practice, individuals require to assume the perspective of an objective observer. The objective perspective leads to identifying the assumptions and feelings underlying their practices. It helps to speculate about how these assumptions and feelings affect the practice (Kottkamp 1990, Osterman 1990, Peters 1991). According to Peters, the Reflective Practice "Is a special kind of practice that involves systematic inquiry into the practice itself".

Donald Schon (1983,1987) advocated that learning is dependent on the integration of experience with reflection and of theory with practice. According to Osterman, in Reflective Practice, "Reflection is the essential part of the learning process, because it results in making sense of extracting meaning from the experience. According to Schon, "...the stage is set for reflection when 'Knowing – in – Action' the sort of knowledge that professionals come to depend on to perform their work spontaneously produces an unexpected outcome or surprise. This surprise can lead to one of the kinds of reflection - Reflection – on – Action, which occurs either after the activity or by interrupting the activity. 'Reflection – in – Action' occurs during (without interrupting) the activity by thinking about how to reshape the activity while it is underway".

Kottkamp (1990) uses the terms 'offline' and 'online' to distinguish between Reflection – on – Action and Reflection – in – Action. Teachers have the advantage acquainting themselves various kinds of learners. The styles of learning of the students shall be understood and analysed in a proper manner. It has the advantage of treating the subjects without imposing patterns. As a result the outcome is unbiased and establishes the objective outlook. Despite the existence of many classifications of learning styles, Knowles' (1982) classification has a fundamental rationale in it by being nearer to the Indian Scenario. **Concrete Learning Style: Analytical Learning Style: Communicative Learning Style: Authority - Learning Style**

Documented methods of learning are not sufficient to address the needs, tastes, preferences and aspirations of all the learners. The pedagogic system relies on the goals, values, beliefs that teachers hold in relation to the content process of teaching and their understanding of the systems in which they work and their roles within it (Jack Richards and Charles Lockhart 1996).

Pragmatic processes of decision making and action develop the right "Culture of Teaching". Teaching cultures are embodied in the work related beliefs and knowledge teachers share i.e., beliefs about appropriate ways of acting on the job and rewarding aspects of teaching and knowledge that enables teachers to do their work (Feiman – Nemser and Floden 1986). Hence, a pragmatic culture of teaching can be realized through reflective practice only.

Teachers make judgments of quality for which there may not be an adequate criteria. Judgments and recognitions form the criteria often. Working with a background of "Received Knowledge" and "Previous Experimental Knowledge", the teacher develops and refines his or her experiential knowledge by a process of professional practice and reflection on the practice. The acquisition and improvement does not take place in isolation, the reflective practice is to be considered as on the pragmatic approaches of teaching practices. As Zeichner(1992) puts it .... "Learning to teach is a process that continues throughout the career of a teacher and no matter what we do in our teacher education programmes and no matter how well we do such programmes, at best we can only prepare teachers to begin teaching".

The teachers of reflective practice advocate some of the tenets that emanate from their experimental understanding of the pedagogy.

A) Meta-knowledge about teaching.

Teaching is a multi-dimensional activity. The teacher who possesses knowledge and insight about the process of teacher is better equipped to put the theory to practice. Broader understanding of the background helps pass right judgments in teaching.

B) Introspection:

Instead of being judged by super-authorities, the teachers themselves are encouraged to introspect,

which forms the first source of feedback. The observations of external academicians may be a useful source of information. Teachers' reliance on intuition backed by experience evolves a model to suit the situation, which is far more practical than a theoretical adherence.

#### C) Channelising Experience:

Experience is one of the most deciding factors for teacher development. It is a time tested method and is deemed as the only tool for professional growth. Real learning takes place in handling every day teaching assignments. However, many classroom practices are applied almost automatically and don't involve a great deal of conscious thought or reflection (Parker 1984). It is a fundamental fact that experience makes a teacher, such experience should be systematically channelised.

#### E) Reflection broadens conceptual clarity:

Reflection involves examining teaching experiences, which forms a basis for evaluation and decision making and a source for change (Barlett 1990, Wallace 1991). It interrogates the "how, why, when" of a concept. Critical Reflection has to be a guiding principle in the ongoing process of regular teaching. It enables teachers to acquire confidence in trying different options and assessing their pedagogic performance as presented by Richards, J.C and Charles Lockhart (1996).

#### Conclusion

It is surmised that the teachers do not get comfortable teaching environment and situations all the times. Utilizing the contexts teachers have to create conducive learning environment, for which they should have reflection. In course of practice the teachers are encouraged to undergo a feedback mechanism to analyze the advantages of their learning methods. It can be understood that the pedagogic expertise cannot be achieved overnight and it is a strenuous process only learnt by doing. A teacher has to construct his own theories of teaching, basing on their knowledge, skills, training and their experiences of teaching.

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