

Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner

Tamalika Bose

Assistant Professor, Manoranjan Saha Memorial B.Ed College, India
Corresponding Author: Tamalika Bose

Abstract: A Teacher is said to be a candle that burns itself to light up the life of others. Reflective practice thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professional in the discipline (Schon, 1996)[1]. Reflection refers to an activity or process in which an experience is recalled, considered, and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose. It is a response to past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action. (Richard 1990)[2]. The paper focuses on the reflective thinking of the school teachers of Coochbehar district of state West Bengal in India. The investigator had adopted descriptive survey methods and through questionnaire data has been collected from 150 different levels of school teachers. The study revealed that the teacher's reflective levels of thinking were different. It had been also found that the gender, level of school and experience had no effect on the reflective thinking level because it was one's own thought process that influences the reflective thinking. Reflective teachers were those who think over their teaching practices, analysing how something was taught and how the practice might be improved or hanged for better learning outcomes.

Keywords: reflection, reflective thinking, school teachers, reflective teachers

Date of Submission: 26-01-2019

Date of acceptance: 09-02-2019

I. Introduction

With the changing in the era of education, teaching style provide teachers a means of coping with the demands of teaching. On the way of the doing this, critical thinking involves a wide range of thinking skills leading towards desirable outcomes and reflective thinking helps to integrate these thinking skills by helping with judgments (Shermis,1999) [3]. Reflective thinking is thought to enhance critical thinking. It is part of the critical thinking process specifically referring to the processes of analysing and making judgments about what has happened (Dewey, 1933) [4]. Teacher reflection can generally be characterized as: retrospection, problem-solving, critical analysis and putting thoughts into action (Body, 2008) [5]. Bartlett (1990) [6] points out that becoming a reflective teacher involves moving beyond a primary concern with instructional techniques and "howto" questions and asking "what" and "why" questions that regard instructions and managerial techniques not as ends in themselves, but as part of broader educational purposes. It is a response to past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action (Richard 1990) [2]. Reflective Practitioner is a person, employee or any individual who believe in learning constantly by reflecting on activities and updating their previous knowledge. Teacher's reflection is a more systematic, considered process of deliberation enabling analysis, reconstruction and reframing in order to plan for further teaching and learning (Day, 1999) [7]. Carr and Kemmis (1986) [8] examined that in order to change such practice for the purpose of improvement; teachers should make fundamental changes in their personal theories, beliefs, values and feelings about teaching and learning. Canning (1991) [9] & C. G. Navaneedhan [10] explained that reflection is an interpersonal experience leading to insight about individuals as actors in their own worlds. McIntyre (1993) [11] studied that after many years in teaching profession, much of experienced teachers' practice becomes automated or intuitive, dependent on understandings that are not usually articulated, that learning for them is dependent on bringing to consciousness and examining the assumptions and considerations which make sense of their actions as teachers'. Brookfield (1995) [12] indicated that ten years of practice might be one year worth of distorted experience repeated ten times, length of experience does not automatically confer insight and wisdom. The correlation co-efficient values were almost same for both sex showing that practice of reflective teaching methodology holds good in professional training of individuals irrespective of their sex. The reflective tendencies of teachers changed over time, depending on the type of schools and the subjects they were teaching.

1.1 Rationale of the study

Reflection or critical reflection refers to an activity or process in which an experience is recalled, re-considered, and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose. It allows teachers to stand outside their practice and see what they do from a wider perspective and consider alternative ideas and practices which take into account of the dynamics of power embedded within schools and classrooms (Nicholas, Tipping and Wiesemen, 1997) [13]. Teachers who were asked to reflect on their teaching found it to be helpful in problem solving and problem resolution (Hayden & Chiu, 2015) [14]. The teacher who evaluate their teaching through reflection, develop correcting attitude which can be beneficial for their professional growth as teachers, as well as improve the kind of support they provide their students. The study reveals the reflective attitude of the school teacher in various dimensions. After reviewing, a very few study have been found in this area.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study in order to find out reflective thinking level of school teachers following:

- To understand the reflective thinking level of the school teachers.
- To find out the significant difference in school teachers' reflective thinking in relation to their gender.
- To study the significant difference in school teachers' reflective thinking in relation to their level of school variation.
- To find out the significant difference in school teachers' reflective thinking in relation to their teaching experience.

1.3 Hypotheses of the study

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in mean scores of the school teachers' reflective thinking in relation to their gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in mean scores of the school teachers' reflective thinking in relation to their level of school variations.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in mean scores of the school teachers' reflective thinking in relation to their experience.

1.4 Operational definitions

Reflective practitioner is one who looks back at regular intervals at the work they do, and the work process, and considers how they can improve. They 'reflect' on the work they have done. Here School teachers refer to those who are teaching either at primary or secondary level in Coochbehar district of West Bengal. Gender means the male and female school teachers from Coochbehar district of West Bengal. It refers to the above 5 years and below 5 years teaching experience of the school teachers Coochbehar district of West Bengal.

II. Methodology

2.1 Method

The descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. Methodology of the research was chosen for the testing of the objectives and hypothesis. Statistical analysis was used in our attempt to get a more generalized understanding of the data.

2.2 Sample

Sample for the study is drawn from the primary and high schools of Coochbehar district of West Bengal. Total 150 school teachers were selected from the both primary and secondary schools by random sampling method in variation of gender and year of teaching experiences.

2.3 Tool

For collecting the data Questionnaire for Reflective Thinking of Teachers was used. The questionnaire consisted 33 questions, were created based on research by Hamilton (2005) [15] on the development of reflective thinking covering three major areas of development; ability to self-express, awareness of how one learns and developing lifelong learning skills. Later Choy & Oo (2012) [16] added another area influence of belief about self and self-efficacy. The participants were asked to rate on a 5 point Likert scale of- strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree respectively scored as 5,4,3,2,1.

III. Results & Discussion

To understand the different reflective thinking level of school teachers, the total percentage of the school teachers were divided into three categories high, average and low. The level was categorised on the basis of percentile rank such as above P₇₅ high, P₂₅ – P₇₅ as average level and P₂₅ and its bellow represents as teachers lower level of reflective thinking.

Table 1: Reflective thinking level of school teachers

Level of thinking	Percentile rank	Score range	No. of teachers	% of teachers
High	Above P ₇₅	Above 122	39	26
Average	P ₂₅ – P ₇₅	110-122	78	52
Low	Bellow P ₂₅	Bellow 110	33	22
Total			150	100

The above table shows that only 25% teachers has higher, 53% have average and only 22% teachers has lower level of reflecting thinking. So the finding doesn't support the hypothesis. The finding is supported by the evidence from earlier studies by Canning (1991)[9] explained that reflection is an interpersonal experience leading to insight about individuals as actors in their own worlds. So according to the individual differences the reflection level of the teacher may vary. The categorisation of having different reflective level of thinking on school teachers were presented in the figure bellow-

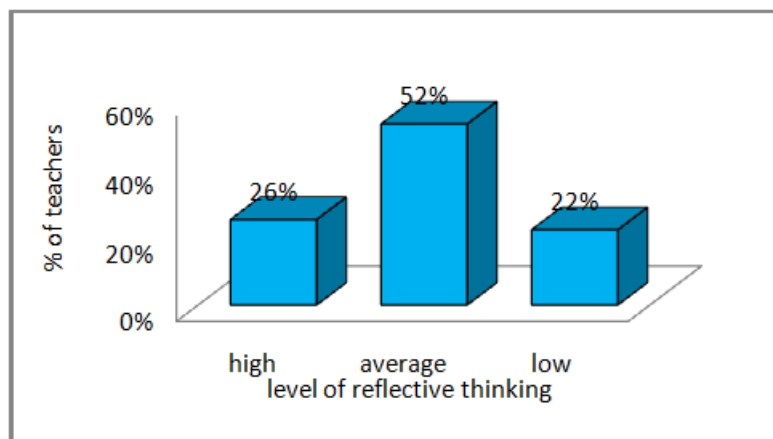


Figure (i) Categorization of the sample according to differential level of reflective thinking of school teachers.

- **Testing H₀₁:**

Table 2: Test of significant difference between the mean scores of school teacher's reflective thinking due to gender variations.

Variable	Sub sample	No.	Mean	SD	df	't'	Remark
Gender	Male	76	117.38	9.67	148	1.23	Not significant
	Female	74	115.56	8.34			

The table values are 1.64 at 0.05 levels and 2.33 at 0.01 levels.

The above result reveals that 't' ratio being 0.55 is not significant at 0.05 level at 30 degrees of freedom. Therefore the null hypothesis H₀₁ is accepted that "there is no significant difference in the school teachers' reflective thinking in relation to their experience". The study is supported by the previous study conducted by Canning (1991) [9] & C. G. Navaneethan [10].

- **Testing H₀₂:**

Table 2: Test of significant difference between the mean scores of school teacher's reflective thinking due to school variations.

Variable	Sub sample	No.	Mean	SD	df	't'	Remark
Level of school	primary	75	114.5	8.34	148	1.32	Not significant
	High	75	116.44	9.54			

The table values are 1.64 at 0.05 levels and 2.33 at 0.01 levels.

From the table it is clear that 't' ratio is not significant at 0.05 levels of significance. The calculated value of "t" 1.22 is less than the table value of significance at 0.05 levels at 30 degrees of freedom. Therefore from the result it can be said that reflective thinking level of the primary and high school teachers does not vary. So the null hypothesis H_0 "there is no significant difference in the school teachers' reflective thinking in relation to their level of school variations" is accepted. Kemmis (1985) [17] explained reflection is a process which involves an inward examination of our thoughts and thought processes, and an outward consideration of the situation in which individual find their own self.

• **Testing H_0 3:**

Table 2: Test of significant difference between the mean scores of school teacher's reflective thinking due to experiences.

Variables	Sub sample	No.	Mean	SD	df	't'	Remark
Experiences	Above 5years	78	118	8.97	148	1.81	Not significant
	Bellow 5 years	72	115.28	9.38			

The table values are 1.64 at 0.05 levels and 2.33 at 0.01 levels.

The result revealed that the calculated value of 't' ratio is lesser than the table value of 0.05 at 30 degrees of freedom which clearly mean that the result is not significant at that level. So, the null hypothesis H_0 "there is no significant difference in the school teachers' reflective thinking in relation to their experience" is truly accepted. Supporting the finding Brookfield (1995) [12] said that indicates that length of experience does not automatically confer insight and wisdom because it was one's own thinking for self-reflection and the emergence of new possibilities.

IV. Conclusion & Application

Reflection can help teachers to become lifelong learners as they can continuously generate and store of personal knowledge through engaging in the reflective process (Butler, 1996) [18]. Kemmis (1985) [17] explained reflection is a process which involves an inward examination of our thoughts and thought processes, and an outward consideration of the situation in which individual find their own self. In effect, reflection is a mirror to practice to open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness. It makes the teacher aware about their own thought process and behavioural situation. It is equally important for the professional and personal growth. The study reveals the reflective thinking level of the school teachers. It is also explore that the reflective thinking level of the school teachers is not changeable as per their gender, level of school and experience variations. The study did not investigate the every aspects of reflective thinking in school teachers. Further investigation could be done for a greater view because reflection is not be the only condition for effective teaching but is also promotes deliberative action in planning and implementation of instruction. Therefore, it is very necessary to identify teachers' level of reflective thinking for effective teaching. Not only can that, by this he also motivate his students towards self- learning.

References

- [1]. Schon, D, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC, 1996.
- [2]. Richards, Jack C, *The teacher as self-observer* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 118-143
- [3]. Shermis, S, *Reflective Thought, Critical Thinking*. (ERIC Digest, ED436007, 1990)
- [4]. Dewey, J, *How we think: A restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1933)
- [5]. Boody, R. M, *Teacher Reflection as Teacher Change, and teacher change as moral response*. (Education, 128, 2008) 498-506.
- [6]. Bartlett, Leo, *Teacher development through reflective teaching* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 202-214
- [7]. Day, C, *Developing Teachers: The Challenges of Lifelong Learning* (London, Falmer Press, 1999)
- [8]. Carr, W. & Kemmis, S, *Becoming Critical: Educational Knowledge and Action Research* (London, The Falmer press, 1986)
- [9]. Canning, C, *What teachers Say About Reflection* (University of Northern Iowa, 1991)
- [10]. Navaneethan. C. G, *Reflective teaching pedagogy as innovative approach in teacher education through open and distance learning* (Chennai).
- [11]. McLyntre, D. *Conceptualising Reflection in Teacher Development* (London, The Falmer Press, 1993) 39-52.
- [12]. Brookfield, S.D, *Becoming a critically reflective teacher* (Jossey-bass publishers. ISBN-0-7879-131-8, 1995)
- [13]. Nicholas, S. E., Tippins, D., & Wiesemen, K. A toolkit for developing critically reflective scienceteachers. *Journal of Science Teacher education* 8. 2: 77-106, 1997.
- [14]. Hayden, H. E. & Chiu, M. M, Reflective teaching via a problem exploration teaching adaptations-resolution cycle: A mixed methods study of preservice teachers' reflective notes. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(2), 2015, 133-153.
- [15]. Hamilton, S. J, *Development in Reflective Thinking*. 2005
- [16]. Choy, S.C. & Oo, P.S, Reflective Thinking And Teaching Practices: A Precursor For Incorporating Critical Thinking Into The Classroom. *International Journal Of Instruction*. Vol.5, No.1E-Issn: 1308-1470, P-Issn: 1694-609x, 2012.
- [17]. Kemmis, S. (1985) 'Action Research and the Politics of Reflection', Chapter 10 in Boud, D, Keogh., and Walker, D. (eds) *Reflection: Turning experience into learning*, (Kogan, 1985).

- [18]. Butler, J, Professional development: practice as text, reflection as process, and self as locus. *Australian Journal of Education* 40. 3: 265-283, 1996.

Webliography:

https://www.gtcni.org.uk/uploads/docs/GTCNI_Comp_Bmrk_Aug_07.pdf
<http://www.richmondshare.com.br/what-is-reflective-teaching-and-why-is-it-important/>
http://www.sharpy.dircon.co.uk/index_files/ReflectivePractitionerDefinition.htm

Tamalika Bose. "Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner". *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)* , vol. 9, no. 1, 2019, pp. 10-14.