

Action Research on Teacher Reflection

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Background/Rationale

- Reflection has been a staple professional development tool within the realm of education for a significant amount of time
 - John Dewey believed that reflection should address practical problems (1933).
- There is wide-spread, though not universal, agreement that reflection is a professional practice that should be undertaken.
- Reflection...
 - prompts practitioners to make meaning with their lived experiences
 - encourages the reframing of problems
 - provides the impetus for questioning assumptions
 - engenders life-long learning
 - provides opportunities to view situations from multiple perspectives
- Criticisms of reflective practices do exist
 - practice serves to reinforce existing beliefs rather than challenge assumptions (Fender, 2003).
 - Introducing a social dimension to reflections can mitigate this shortcoming.

Process of Action Research

- Action research: a process of systematic inquiry in which investigators seek to improve social issues affecting the lives of people with shared concerns (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).
 - Appropriate means of investigation for teachers and PSTs who want to improve the educative process (Hensen, 1996; Johnson, 2012; McTaggart, 1997).
- Offers multiple, beneficial opportunities for teachers and PSTs
 - Facilitation of professional development of educators (Barone et al., 1996)
 - Increasing teacher empowerment (Book, 1996; Fueyo & Koorland, 1997; Hensen, 1996)
 - Bridging the gap between research and practice (Johnson, 2012; Mills, 2011).

Participant/Researcher

- Olivia R Rydzewski
 - Research Question: How does discussion with a mentor teacher during retrospective video analysis impact a preservice teacher's reflection?
- Note: Dr. Diana K. Garlough, Principal Investigator

Code	Definition
BVR	Benefit of video reflection-used in any instance when a benefit was noted in the journal or was evident in discussions
BMD	Benefit of having a mentor to discuss with
P-ADV	Advice - mentor teacher/supervisor praised what PST did, how PST handled something

Methodology

- The methodology includes repeated cycles of planning, observing, and reflecting
- Audio recordings and transcription of mentor/PST discussions on videos
 - Once/every two weeks; approximately 10-minute reflection meetings;
 - Guiding principle for the meetings: Olivia has at least one area she wants feedback on, and lets Jill know which lesson it is so she can think about the specific lesson
- Olivia's journal after discussions with cooperating teacher
 - once/every two weeks
 - Asked PST to:
 - Compare video reflective experience to previous weekly reflection form experience
 - Describe the reflection process each time
 - Describe the feedback that was asked for and received
 - Choose a learning theory that best fits each teaching/reflection/journaling cycle
- Brief mentor teacher survey
 - Twice- at the midpoint and end of data collection

Preliminary Findings

- While it is too early in the data collection and analysis to discuss concrete findings, we offer the following:
- Benefits
 - Discussions have caused deeper reflection due to multiple exposures to teaching events
 - Initial teaching event
 - Analysis to select the discussion topic
 - Olivia views herself teaching and sees from another viewpoint
 - Mentor discussions allow Olivia to receive feedback from More Knowledgeable Other
- Limitations
 - Awkwardness
 - Vulnerability
- Three Preliminary Categories Emerged:
 - Benefits of video reflections (BVR)
 - Process of reflective discussions
 - Benefits of mentor discussions (BMD)

Conclusions/Recommendations

- Our recommendation with only a preliminary data analysis is that the College of Education should consider adopting video reflections in some format.
- This format has some limitations for PSTs in their Pre-Professional (Sophomore) and Junior Methods blocks such as:
 - Less time in the field
 - Puts Sophomores/Juniors at a disadvantage as strength of relationships with mentor teacher/students is weaker than those of a Student Teacher's
 - Vulnerability is greater
- A possible solution to this limitation is offering the students an option of reflecting with one of three options:
 - Peers
 - University Supervisor
 - Mentor teacher
- Selection of the mentor teacher is of vital importance so that this relationship can develop.

