



## REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

*The technique of reflective teaching entails the examination of one's basic ideas on teaching and learning as well as one's alignment with actual classroom practice before, during, and after the instruction of a course. This auto-ethnographic inquiry's goal is to investigate the reflective teaching practices of secondary school teachers in teaching, and its focus will be on secondary schools. The participants of this research were teachers of secondary schools. Secondary school was selected from province KP. I set up one-on-one interviews with six different teachers, and I decided to talk to one educator from a secondary school. As a result, six secondary schools were chosen to participate in this study's sample. According to findings, my experiences as a teacher of KPK 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 findings of this study suggest that other KP secondary school teachers opt to address similar challenges of student connectedness in a manner that is more institutional and less introspective. The recommendation is that teachers at KPK secondary schools should not be obsessed with "teaching to the test" in order to improve the academic achievement of their students.*

*Key words: auto-ethnographic, KP secondary schools, classroom practice*

### INTRODUCTION

One of the characteristics that differentiates reflective thinking from other types of thinking is how it relates to predicaments that have an element of ambiguity. In the work of Dewey (1960), the primary concern is not just gaining information from one's experiences, but also expanding one's understanding beyond those experiences. Dewey is also credited with being the originator of the connection between learning and reflection. These concepts have been taken by other educational theorists and used to form a movement in higher education that is centred on experiential learning. The utilisation of reflective thinking with the goal of personal growth and development is essential to this kind of education. Even Nevertheless, there are still issues to be resolved about the functioning of reflection, in particular with relation to evaluation. Although there is some consensus about auto-ethnography of reflective practice, what is meant by reflection is still somewhat beset by a lack of conceptual agreement among educators (Swanwick et al., 2013). This is despite the fact that there is some research on reflective practice.

There are those who feel that teachers are born with the capacity to instruct, while there are others who believe that teachers must undergo training in the locations in which they work (Rigg, 2008). Learning is a fundamental part of any journey, and becoming a teacher is no exception to this rule. My childhood is where this journey begins. When researchers take into consideration that teaching itself is an adventure, they make a wonderful discovery.

As a new teacher at school, the researcher came in with preconceived beliefs based on my own prior experiences of what teaching high school students looks like. These notions were based on my observations and experiences. These earlier experiences consisted of a significant amount of lecture, solo work, and whole-class discussion of the content throughout each and every class session. On the other hand, as a reflective practitioner and researcher, I forced myself to examine such notions and explore for approaches and strategies that were more productive.





I made it a goal to evaluate my own teaching, assess how effective it was, and make concerted efforts to enhance my instructional practices for the sake of my pupils. My interest in having teachers reflect on their practice was also very essential. Teachers have a significant influence in determining your current position by giving practical application to the concept of reflective practice (Rigg, 2018).

Improving not only their own professional development but also, eventually, their overall educational experience (Reed, 2009). This proclamation, in my view, is applicable to all levels of education; however, it is of the utmost significance that teacher educators take it into consideration because the teaching methods they employ serve as a model for the in-service teachers who are under their supervision. Reading and learning, the primary textbook for the class, makes one of the first points to the reader that effective educators teach these abilities directly, frequently through the use of modelling and demonstration (Richards, 2013).

As a teacher educator, the researcher has a responsibility to keep this in mind when working with in-service teachers, who are also his or her students, and to serve as an example of the abilities and tactics the researcher hopes the in-service teachers would adopt and internalize. The next thing that informed my inquiry of reflective teaching practice of a secondary school teacher was my belief in the significance of students' contributions to my development as the most effective teacher researcher I possibly can be.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

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. Through the use of self-reflection and the telling of my own story from a teaching viewpoint, this auto ethnography presents an auto ethnography. Researchers have shown that teachers do not use innovative approaches in their reflective practice when working with secondary school students.

#### **Research Questions**

1. How do the secondary school teachers value reflective teaching practice?
2. What researcher experience himself while practicing reflective teaching?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Root and Meaning of Reflective Teaching Practice**

Professional educators are continuously looking for new ways to make their classrooms better for their students. An interest in examining teachers' knowledge and practices has emerged as a result of the process of looking for more effective instructional methods to use in classrooms where students are learning a second language (L2). The concept of reflective teaching (RT) is one that has been incrementally incorporated into L2 teacher education after initially being introduced in more traditional forms of teacher education (Best, 2011; Burton, Farrell, 2012).

Wasiams and Burden (1997) found that in order for educators to improve their effectiveness, they needed to look internally as well as outward. To put it another way, educators have access to both external and internal resources that can help them improve their professional capabilities. Experts from the outside world, such as researchers, teacher trainers, expert instructors, and supervisors, could be considered external sources. They might also be teachers, administrators, or other personnel involved in the educational system.

There are occasions when instructional strategies or activities that are considered to be beneficial by educators or industry professionals may not be experienced in this manner by students. Therefore, teachers can have a better grasp of the classroom environment and procedures by monitoring students and learning from the students themselves.

When it comes to teacher professional development, one of the resources that is frequently one of the most neglected is the internal resource known as self. The ability to critically reflect on what one has been doing and the results that these actions have produced can, however, lead to an upgrade of performance for future initiatives.

It's ironic that many teachers don't evaluate their own performance or lesson plans before using them in the classroom for the first time or reusing them in subsequent years, yet it's a common practice to have students evaluate or proofread their work before submitting it for approval. Teachers routinely





have students critique and reread their work before turning it in for approval, so this is somewhat humorous. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to investigate and re-examine the strategies they use in the classroom to learn more about their strengths and areas for improvement, so that they can better serve their students in the future. They do this so they can help their students even more in the future.

Reflection on one's actions in order to take a critical stance or attitude toward one's own practice and that of one's peers, engaged in a process of continuing adaptation and learning, is the essence of reflective practice, as stated by Schon (1983). One definition of this term is "reflective and reflexive evaluation of practice in light of the ideals and theories that inform everyday acts." Reflective and reflexive practice assessment is yet another approach to explain this idea. This results in the birth of novel concepts and points of view (Bolton, 2010).

It is also an important means of bringing theory and practise together; through reflection, an individual is able to observe and label forms of thought and theory within the context of his or her own work, which is why it is such an important way to bring theory and practise together (Johns, 2001). Reflection is also an important means of bringing theory and practise together.

A practitioner who engages in reflective thinking throughout the course of their practice is doing more than simply thinking about things that happened in the past; instead, they are paying attention to their feelings, experiences, actions, and responses, and using what they learn to build upon their prior knowledge and achieve a deeper level of comprehension (Paterson & Chapman, 2013).

Donald Schon, in his 1983 book "Reflective Practitioner," proposed concepts like "reflection-on-action" and "reflection-in-action," which, respectively, explain how professionals overcome the challenges of their work through a sort of improvisation that is honed through experience (Bolton, 2010). Contrarily, the principles behind reflective practice have been around for far longer.

John Dewey was an early 20th-century novelist to explore the benefits of self-reflection in writing. John Dewey was an early writer to investigate the relationships between experience, interaction, and reflection. Shortly after that, other specialists, such as Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget, came up with helpful theories on how people learn and grow. Some scholars believe the first examples of contemplative meditation can be found in ancient texts like the Buddhist teachings and the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, a Stoic philosopher (Bolton, 2010).

#### **Methods for Practicing Reflective Teaching**

Many educators and academics (Bailey, 2006; Farrell, 2011; Richards and Lockhart, 1994), among others, have provided proposals for ways to put reflective teaching into practice. First, go to the classrooms of other educators and watch them in action. The instructors and researchers who were mentioned before recommend seeing experienced teachers in action; however, the researcher who was cited advocates watching any teacher in action, whether they are experienced or not. Because the goal of observation and reflection is to improve one's own teaching, it can be just as significant to get an understanding of what does and does not work successfully in the classroom.

It is possible to cast light on a particular issue in the classroom that had previously gone unnoticed by seeing the blunders of others and then thinking on whether or not one commits similar errors oneself. Second, one should videotape their own classroom in order to do an internal review and external analysis. Because it provides both audio and video presentations of the instructor as well as the reactions of the students, this researcher considers it to be one of the most helpful resources available to reflective practitioners who are interested in engaging in self-reflection.

#### **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 field notes, interviews, and personal documents; yet, it is frequently analysed 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 school was selected from province KPK.

### **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 analysed 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.

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 endeavour 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 (Holman et al., 2016).

I elaborate on and analyse the events that occurred over the provided period, which is my academic career from the beginning to the present, which spans the previous five years, using my personal reflexivity to interact with my academic context and the participants to co-construct the narrative. This is accomplished by setting the narrative's timeframe within the given period. However, I am aware that time extends beyond the region that may be described by the progression of the events with their predecessors. As a result, the interpretations of the study also take into account the study's larger time and place frame, which includes the time I spent in high school and college.

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

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.


## **FINDINGS**

### **Research Question: 1**

#### **How do secondary school teachers value reflective teaching practice?**

Reflective teaching practice may be seen as valuable by teachers of secondary school students for a variety of reasons.



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1. Improved instruction Reflective teaching practice can help teachers evaluate and improve their teaching practices, which can lead to more effective instruction and improved student learning.
  2. Improved student learning: Reflective teaching practice can help teachers evaluate and improve their teaching practices. Reflective teaching practice can help teachers get a deeper understanding of how their students learn and what elements contribute to student success. This is one of the benefits of reflective teaching practice. This can be used as a basis for the development of instructional and evaluation procedures that are more effective.
  3. According to the explanations provided by T5 and T6:
  4. *"People recover their experiences through the process of reflection in order to think about them, ponder them over, and evaluate them. Reflection is an essential human activity. Participating in activities that simulate real-life scenarios is an essential part of the learning process."*
  5. It is possible that a person is going through something when they say they are, but it can be challenging to organize thoughts, feelings, and experiences into a logical progression of activities while one is going through something. It is possible to classify events, feelings, ideas, and so on when a person rethinks or retells events, and it is also feasible to compare the intended purpose of a former action with the results of the activity when this comparison is made. Taking a step back from the activity allows one to better understand the flow of events. The development of in more recent years has come to be recognized as yet another method of reflecting on experience in an age dominated by technology.

According to T1, the RT approach is when teachers:

*"Collect facts pertaining to teaching, conduct an introspective examination of one's own teaching practices, beliefs, and assumptions, and make use of the acquired information to form the foundation of one's critical reflection on teaching."*

*"The T3 methodology is characterized as "collecting data about one's own teaching, evaluating those data, and using our reflection to enact change," as stated in the preceding sentence."*

The T4 document described six unique categories of knowledge that can be possessed by teachers, and those categories are as follows:

*"Knowledge of context, personal knowledge, knowledge of one's self, knowledge of one's environment, knowledge of pedagogy, and knowledge of reflection".*

The type of information that can be attained through the process of critical reflection is known as reflective knowledge. The information that is obtained through this method can then be put to use to improve the efficiency of learning and teaching activities by omitting or modifying portions of such activities.

The practice of reflection is not a recent development. However, in the context of SSC education, the concept of reflection may have different connotations for various individuals. According to T2, *"there are two main points of view when it comes to the topic of reflection in SSC education. The first perspective is a more casual one, which defines reflection as first thinking about something, but without putting in an excessive amount of effort or attention. In other words, being aware of something yet choosing not to respond to it".*

According to the T2 approach, *"reflection is a structured procedure that allows teachers to reflect methodically on their own teaching and the activities that students are engaged in. In this scenario, the classroom instructor is given increased accountability for the students' behaviour as well as the activities that take place in the classroom. Educators that hold this approach are more likely to be questioning their own assumptions regarding the teaching and learning of SSC subjects, compiling data regarding their own teaching abilities, and analyzing this data in order to effect positive changes in their classrooms."*

## **Research Question: 2**

### **What researcher experience himself while practicing reflective teaching?**

Researchers who engage in reflective teaching practice may experience a number of benefits. Some possible experiences include:

In my career, working as a full-time teacher at Education Department in KPK.





Up until very recently, I was employed at the Department of Education, which is a public school that is on the smaller side in comparison to other schools, and I served as the department's senior instructor. Due to the length of time I was in charge of, I was given the responsibility of managing both academic and administrative operations. This, combined with the fact that my team was understaffed, gave me the opportunity to make many important decisions on my own.

Nevertheless, I am not able to fully accept that I made such decisions entirely by myself in practise, with the exception of the academics who moulded my academic worldview and consequently my posture. Because I have developed into a reflective thinker and a teacher, and because I have faith in the paradigm of reflective teacher education, it was only natural for me to become a reflective teacher educator and to act in that capacity during the course of my professional life.

Over the course of the last few years of my work as a teacher, I have built the courses to align with the objectives of the curriculum and included reflective teaching in a variety of different methods. In this part of the paper, I will discuss how I intend to incorporate reflective thinking and learning, and consequently teaching, into the rest of my coursework. My primary and most important objective was to facilitate the development of reflective thinking among future educators by helping them better understand how to think for themselves. During their first and second-year classes, they were given opportunities to participate in pair and group projects, which had been mostly ignored during their earlier years of schooling.

My first steps consisted of developing a feeling of community among them, encouraging them to participate in the dynamics of groups, and giving them opportunities to hear their own voices amid those of others. My academic credo has always been "learning from each other and learning together," and as a result, I have always urged that students comprehend and implement this credo into their own learning in order to foster a sense of ownership over their education. They would be better able to internalise the phrase if they had some hands-on experience. At that point in time, they were already engaged in the process of practising the peer review and learning how to provide and accept criticism from one another.

The student-teachers were well-prepared for the reflective teaching stage in their third and fourth years of schooling thanks to discussion-based classroom tasks, during which I was repeatedly asking what, how, and why questions; and alternative assessment modules, such as letting them prepare projects, write opinion research, and describe their experience engaging the process of task completion.

They were then tasked with translating reflective thinking and learning they had done previously into reflective teaching during the following stage. Modules with multiple levels of complexity make up the techniques that I created as a result of their study. The student-teachers were required to read a significant portion of the material, which was then followed by oral and written reflective dialogues with themselves and their respective classmates.

The fact that students were involved not only in pedagogical and content theoretical knowledge but also in the actual aspect of teaching made reflective pair and group conversations, as well as the keeping of weekly professional journals, very promising. They even started to refer to me as "Mr. Journal" since I was always encouraging them to maintain their journals on a consistent basis and organising reflective dialogue meetings based on the students' writing. To become a reflective teacher was a tough road for all of the student teachers, and I could definitely see reflective thinking in their writing; nevertheless, they did not fully focus on their future self as much as I would have liked.

Not only was I able to become more reflective in my role as a teacher educator by working towards the goal of educating reflective teachers by carefully analyzing what they were capable of and what they required, but also in my roles as a syllabus and curriculum designer. In the course of my international interaction with the academics' thinking and practices in reflective teacher education, as well as in the course of reviewing my previous learning in the classroom, I was able to recognize certain pertinent patterns that exist between my students and the knowledge in the area.





## DISCUSSION

This research was driven mostly by these four questions: 1. How do educators of secondary school students regard the practice of reflective teaching? 2. What kinds of things did the researcher learn about himself while engaging in reflective teaching? 3. How exactly might researchers make use of the collaborative reflective teaching style to better the learning experiences of their students? 4. How can the practice of reflective teaching help strengthen the culture of school?

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 instructors to modify, it is necessary for them to realize certain realities in order to ascend from their monoculture perspective.

In light of the fact that I want to open a new chapter of inquiry as part of my ongoing attempts to develop, it is time for me to bring this aspect of my investigation to a close. Therefore, we cannot say that this is a complete conclusion because I do not feel that our queries are answered by newly discovered information. Instead, I am of the opinion that the conclusion of one phase marks the beginning of the next one. The most important question that needs to be answered is how I can effectively synthesize what I have learnt, as well as what the "so what" of this dissertation is. How exactly might this auto-ethnographic exhibition spark a movement toward change?

## IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section discusses the ramifications that result from instructing students. The article provides a list of specific recommendations that can be put into practice to improve the educational opportunities available to these children.

### For Myself

My introspective personality has been the single most important factor in enabling me to triumph over my pedagogical challenges and initial inability to connect with my students from the very beginning of my career in teaching. I chose to educate my students using a process that was more student-centered and reflective as I consistently questioned my own inadequacies, biases, and methods in an effort to become a more effective educator. This is in contrast to most other teachers of a similar status, who opt to educate their students using a more clinical or institutional approach. The consequences are quite evident when considering my experiences as a senior educator, which include both my failures and my accomplishments. In order for my pedagogical strategies to be constantly effective with my students, I always need to cater to and personalize them within, or regardless of, the system wide educational approach that is currently being utilized. Students are not reached by standardized examinations and methods to literacy that are implemented across the system. The job of a teacher. The learning process, in particular for the students, needs to be one that is both relevant and reasonable. To put it another way, these students ought to be aware of the purpose of their education and how it relates to their day-to-day life.

### For Teachers and Policymakers

Since the start of the 21st century, the most significant influence on educational policy has come from the use of high-stakes testing. In no other setting has this truth been more obvious than it has been in underprivileged schools. Schools have taken the brunt of this legal impact, which is consistent with the enactment of the No Child Left Behind legislation in 2001. This is due to the fact that schools are in the worst position to achieve the arbitrary requirements that are being imposed.

The repercussions are very obvious. It is not consistent with the individualized, student-centered approach that is necessary to impact students' lives in meaningful ways to view students as nothing more than their test scores or other units of measurement. Instead, a number of measures can be followed to guarantee that KPK secondary school teachers can interact with kids of the same hue and educate them more efficiently.





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