

Learning Through Reflection: Enhancing Teaching Practices in Senior High Education

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Introduction

The process of educators reflecting on their teaching practices, decisions, experiences, and classroom effectiveness is referred to as "Reflection in Education". The process is strongly influenced by the writings and teachings of John Dewey, who believed that reflection was integral to the learning process.

Most importantly, educators have come to understand the importance of developing and maintaining a reflective practice as an ongoing professional development tool. As educators begin to understand that teaching involves more than just delivering content, they've also come to recognize that reflective practice encourages them not only to evaluate their teaching strategies but also to examine the influence of those strategies on student engagement and learning. By collaborating, sharing



insights and feedback, and leveraging technology to self-assess and evaluate one another's performance, educators create an environment of continuous improvement and responsiveness that reflects Dewey's notion of education as a product of both teacher and student experiences.

This background serves as a basis for discussing the theoretical frameworks that will support Educators in

developing and sustaining reflective practices in education throughout teachers' reflective journeys.

Theoretical Frameworks Supporting Reflective Practice

Theoretical frameworks for reflective practice in education provide educators with a structure for evaluating their teaching practices. David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle is one example. This framework describes four situational steps in the learning process: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Teachers follow these steps to evaluate their experiences and plan how they will use what they learn from their reflection in their future practices. Each cycle builds on previous experiences, creating an ongoing cycle of learning.

Another prominent theoretical framework for reflective practice in education is Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, which provides a step-by-step process for educators to systematically reflect. There are six steps in Gibbs' process: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action

plan. Teachers use all components of the framework to critically reflect on their experiences, identify areas for improvement or development, and build a plan for professional growth. By using this structure, educators can not only evaluate how and why certain experiences occurred in their classrooms but also determine what needs to change to continue improving their teaching practices (Barnden et al., 2023).

Donald Schön's concept of reflective practice emphasizes the significance of both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. As such, Schön encourages educators to reflect during the act of delivering instruction as well as after they have finished, facilitating opportunities to modify instruction in real time and promote deeper levels of learning. Educators can use the three aforementioned theoretical frameworks to create an environment that encourages continued professional development through reflective practice.

Combining a knowledge of the above-mentioned frameworks with a practical understanding of the reflective practice tools available to them, teachers are better prepared to develop strategies to implement reflective practice in their own classrooms. In addition, applying the three frameworks helps educators determine specific actions they can take to improve education and make a positive impact on their teaching. Journaling is one of the many ways that educators can incorporate reflective practices into their teaching. Through journals, students will consistently write down their thoughts about what they are learning and their experiences within the classroom. Research also allows students to self-evaluate, encouraging them to reflect on their learning and identify areas for improvement. Journals can also be a private space for students to reflect on feedback from their instructors and connect their personal experiences to their learning objectives.

Another strategy to implement is providing students with peer feedback. Peer feedback promotes collaboration between students and helps students develop their communication skills. In addition, when students collaborate with peers, they learn to view things from a different perspective, thereby learning more about the subject matter. Peer

assessment also allows students to develop skills in giving and receiving constructive feedback, which is vital for their continued academic growth (Ortega-Ruipérez and Correa-Gorospe, 2024).

Through technology, we can support both reflective practices with online learning platforms. Online learning platforms provide students with easy access to tools that allow them to both journal and provide peer feedback. Learning Management Systems provide a framework for educators to create peer assessment and interactive forums where students can engage with one another as they journal about their experiences when educators use these methods with their students, educators will be able to see the difference that these methods have on increasing how engaged students are with the class material and how well they understand what they are learning. In addition to demonstrating how educators can effectively implement these methods in actual classroom settings, these case studies also provide educators with an opportunity to examine various examples of successful reflective practice through reflective journals or teacher-student peer reflective strategies.

Through case studies of successful reflective practice, educators can see the benefits for their students and themselves. An example of this can be seen at a high school in California, where teachers implemented a reflective journal program into their science curriculum. Not only did the students become increasingly engaged in class discussions, but they also reported feeling more connected to the material by expressing their thoughts and questions more freely in their journals. One teacher stated that the journals have become an important part of understanding students' misconceptions, enabling teachers to personalize instruction to meet students' individual needs.

Additionally, in an English literature class at a high school in New York, educators implemented a peer-reflective practice in which students worked in pairs to give each other feedback on their essays. Not only did this encourage collaboration among students, but it also allowed them to develop a deeper understanding of the material they were studying. Educators noted that their students were more excited about writing and

had taken ownership of their learning when they had the opportunity to critique their peers' work. Thinking critically about their own writing and that of their peers, and developing analytical abilities are two benefits that emerged from this peer review process, as indicated by a teacher testimonial.

Reflective practices, as described in these case studies, are associated with improved academic outcomes and increased student motivation; however, identifying obstacles to implementing these practices may help educators develop solutions to implement effective reflective practices in the future.

The use of Reflective Teaching offers many advantages for educators and students, but its implementation also presents many challenges. The most common barriers to reflective practice for teachers include lack of time, lack of training, and lack of support from the school system to implement Reflective Teaching and provide the resources teachers need to succeed.

Teachers often have very busy schedules and often do not have time to reflect on their teaching practices. This makes it difficult to analyze their teaching and use Reflective Teaching. The majority of K12 teachers also never receive training on how to use Reflective Teaching effectively, leaving many teachers uncertain about how to begin or maintain the process. Many school systems provide little or no support for the use of Reflective Teaching, as they tend to focus on standardized testing rather than on giving teachers the time, resources, and support to innovate in the classroom through Reflective Teaching.

In the future, an increasing number of educators will use technology and greater collaboration to develop Reflective Teaching. Many educators will likely explore new digital methods for journaling and sharing reflections through digital platforms, enabling them to engage in real-time analyses of their teaching practices and participate in collaborative communities of practice. For example, the use of Virtual Professional Learning Communities (VPLC) will provide educators the opportunity to share challenges, successes, and insights about reflective practices and will

create opportunities for educators to feel supported and inspired as they grow together as professionals.

To address barriers to implementing reflective teaching, educators should proactively incorporate the importance of reflective practice into their professional development and actively seek additional resources that provide effective strategies for implementation. In addition, schools should create an environment conducive to reflective practice by offering flexible scheduling options and promoting collaborative opportunities for educators. By addressing barriers to implementing reflective practice and embracing emerging trends, educators can strengthen the process of Reflective teaching and ultimately create a stronger experience for both teachers and students in the high school education environment.



My Reflective Journey

The following are the principles that guide my evolution as an educator:
"Teaching is not merely about passing on knowledge from one generation to the

next, but rather it is about creating critical thinkers who will continue their journey of learning throughout their lifetime.” My background is in Electronics and Communications Engineering, and thus I have received



training in critical thinking, problem-solving, and problem-solving using accurate information. Once I started teaching my students in the field of Mathematics (Senior High School), I realized that the same skill set I had developed in electronics and communications would enable them to go far beyond just memorizing facts. In the early years of my teaching career, I recognized that all students learn best when they have had the opportunity to question, think critically, and reflect on their learning; this not only prepares them to succeed in school but also equips them for success in life.

After earning my M.A. in Education with a concentration in Mathematics, I gained a deeper understanding of how to teach students effectively through pedagogy and learning theory. As an example, I have learned that students learn through reading, interpreting, and analyzing information from multiple sources about how their minds think and learn. I have become very thoughtful in developing lesson plans to provide my students with opportunities to learn how to think and reason, as well as how to work collaboratively to conduct research. I now understand that all mistakes have the potential to present opportunities for learning and that engaging in discussions is a means of developing higher-order thinking skills. This

stage of my development has strengthened my belief that education should encourage students to use their reasoning and conclusions to form independent thoughts and participate actively in their education.

The achievement of my Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Management helped me see the educational system and how the role of Leadership has influenced my experiences as a Senior High School Teacher by attempting to create an environment that values critical thinking and continuous improvement. My experiences as a graduate student also provided me with insight into the fact that if we, as educators, want our students to become lifelong learners, we must model those behaviors. In addition, the time spent conducting research, reflecting on my own educational practice, and participating in scholarly dialogue has provided me with the skills necessary to critically analyze my own teaching style and develop a voice for meaningful educational reform within the school community.

Through reflective education and purposeful leadership, I continue to grow alongside my students, preparing them to navigate a rapidly changing world with insight, responsibility, and confidence.

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