

Transforming Reflective Practices: A Case Study Of Primary Teachers In Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The intent of this study is to explore the role of head teacher in transforming reflective practices in government primary schools. Reflection is a high impact practice that develops teacher's pedagogical practices which ultimately develop and facilitates the development of new knowledge and skills. Reflective practices enable teachers to continually examine their own thoughts, perspectives, beliefs, and actions. Findings of this study revealed what sort of research is needed to train and prepare primary teachers to make instructional decisions regarding their classroom practices as a strategy of continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program. This study was based on the objective: To investigate the role of school head teacher in primary school teacher's reflection. The study follows qualitative research design and was based on exploratory single case study design. The instruments used for data collection were included semi structured interview, analysis of primary school teacher's reflective diaries and observational notes of participant teacher lessons in order to find out the complete process of reflective practice in the context of Government primary school. The participants of this study included teachers of grade 1 to grade 5 and the head teacher. For data analysis content analysis method was applied and thematic categories were developed for interpretations. The findings of this study revealed that reflective process create sophisticated teaching learning process as well better students learning outcomes. It was found that the head teachers accomplished central role in enhancing process of reflective practices. It is recommended that the head teacher needs to carry out planning and continuity of a process of reflective practice, arranging of seminars, formulating the goals of reflection for different purposes making an observation notes, communicating and cooperating with teachers and to support teachers' reflective practices.

Key words: Reflective Practices, Primary school teacher's, Teacher performance, Metacognition

INTRODUCTION

Reflection helps in inculcating critical thinking regarding an individual values, attitudes, beliefs,

and behaviors. It is significant part of the learning process that develops a new perception that directs an individual future action. Reflection helps in understanding our metacognitive practices (Lee, 2005). The learning process involved in reflection leads to experiences, and these experiences build reflective observations that are an essential part of learning development (Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D. 2013). Reflection in education involved the readiness for self-development and distinction between routine action and modification in action. Reflection is a behavior that helps to think and look at all consequences required for thinking, action, and consideration of a practice that leads to support the practices (Kohonen, V. 2007). Reflection renders the teachers with feedback on their experiences for the betterment of teaching learning practices. Primary level education in Pakistan comprised from grade 1 to grade 5 (Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D. 2013). The issue of the quality of teaching at primary schools is also under inquiry by government of Pakistan, Educational institution and researchers, the community and teachers themselves (Shandomo, H. M. 2010).

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary & Secondary Education Department (ESED) implemented the model program of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in 2012. The program results revealed improvements in teacher performance and students success. The Working Group for CPD recommended some modifications in the previous CPD program, the Educational Authorities in KPK approved to update this program (with some reforms) as proposed by the working group and implement this at primary level schools. This program was successfully implemented in all the concern districts (Nawab, A., & Bissaker, K. 2021)

Rationale of the Study

In last five years in Pakistan the curriculum departments brought many changes in school

curriculum, and this too happens in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government primary school curriculum. One of these changes includes the medium of instruction for many subjects have been changed in to English language. Teachers needs to constantly search for learning new strategies which could help in strengthening teachers' self-skills. Teaching to primary grades from 1 to 5 there exist some problems in students learning related to those subjects which are mostly in English language. These problems are carried to the higher grades if they were not solved in the primary level. It is observed that students learning is affected by teaching quality in fact it is directly associated to the process of teaching, in other words, it is the consequences of the methods we apply for teaching the subjects which are in English language. In Pakistan, primary school teachers have to teach all subjects along with English. To teach this new revised curriculum for most of primary school teachers face difficulty of transforming the content knowledge in a foreign language. In this respect as in other parts of the country (CPD) program was implemented in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for developing primary school in-service teachers' skills and in order to overcome the problems of the teachers. A process of reflective teaching practice as a part of CPD is implemented in government primary schools of Pakistan on segmental basis. This study accomplished valuable facts for understanding primary school teachers' reflective practices and its role in building self teaching capacity.

Objectives of the Study

To investigate the role of head teacher in government primary school teacher's reflection

Research Questions

What is the role of school Head teacher in in-service primary school teacher's reflection to improve their teaching skills?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed interpretive single exploratory case study design based on qualitative approach. The goal of this method was to explore and explain the teacher's reflective practices, beliefs and their instructional decision making. This approach helped to select individuals for an in depth semi structured interview of how teachers' reflective practices influence the teaching methods they utilize. Interpretive researchers observe social facts as being rooted within and incredible to abstract from their social backgrounds, they interpret the reality through a "sense making" practice rather than a hypothesis testing method.

In order to investigate the target information multiple instruments i.e. semi structured

interview, observational notes of participant teacher lessons and document analysis based on analysis of teachers' reflective diaries, were used for data collection to maximize understanding of the context.

Sample of the Study

Generally case study has a sample, based on purposeful sampling. This study employed purposeful sampling technique for sample selection because this type of sampling allows a researcher to focus deeply on a phenomenon.

In order to gain an inclusive and complete picture of reflective practices being implemented in primary schools of Pakistan as a strategy of CPD the focused aspects were the experiences, actions and beliefs of the participants, as well as on the context in which the phenomenon or human activity take place.

Characteristics of Participants

S.No	Participants	Qualification	Experience	Age
1	Head teacher	M.A , Med	30 years	48
2	Teacher 1	B.A ,Bed	20 years	42
3	Teacher 2	B.A, Bed	14 years	39
4	Teacher 3	M.A, M.Phil	6 months	33
5	Teacher 4	M.A , Bed	7 years	38
6	Teacher 5	M.A , Bed	5 years	38

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The Role of School Head teacher in Primary School In-Service Teachers' Reflection

When the head teacher was asked about their role in teachers' reflection, a range of interpretations appears during data collection. Furthermore the statements of teacher and also analysis of teacher reflective practices proved the importance of primary school head teacher role in teachers' reflection. The content analysis revealed the following themes:

Implementing Reflective Practice Culture in School

After analyzing the interview data it was found that the primary school head teacher had systematically implemented reflective teaching process in their school. When the head teacher were asked to explain the process of implementing reflective practice for in-service teachers professional development at school, the head teacher thoroughly explained the way of implementing reflective practice culture .In this case the participant teachers also presented their views.

Head teacher Role in Implementing Process of Reflective Practice in Primary

Schools

Statements	Respondents
Implementation of a reflective practice culture In school	Head teacher
Deliver reflective practice skills to the teachers	Head teacher
Head teacher is responsible to implement a Process of reflective teaching at school	Teacher-4
The head teacher reflects teachers' performance	Teacher-4
The head teachers assist teachers in self reflective practice.	Teacher-4

From the table above it is revealed that the head teacher is responsible for implementing reflective culture in government primary schools.

The primary school head teacher systematically implemented reflective practice culture in school by following the orders and guidelines of the head department i.e. Elementary and Secondary Education (E&SE) with the help of pedagogical Institute, Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) of KPK developed a program of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for in-service teachers' professional development. PITE is a tertiary level institute at provincial level in Pakistan and is responsible for in-service teacher education and trainings at provincial level. It mainly uses seminars, arrange workshops and train in-service teachers for a purpose to support the professional advancement of both primary and secondary school teachers. Head teacher is responsible to deliver these guidelines of reflective practice to the school staff teachers in order to implement reflective practice for teachers' improvement. The following statements indicated these views:

(Head teacher)

“Following the orders of our Head department I implement a reflective practice culture in our school. First of all we get trained by the head department then we give guidelines to our school teachers that how they will conduct reflective practice on daily basis for professional development.”

(Teacher grade- 4)

The head teachers have the general responsibility for the smooth and effective implementation of the reflective teaching practice in schools they run. They are responsible to support this practice in order to achieve better student learning outcomes. The head teachers not only reflect teachers' performance but also assisted the teachers in self-reflective practice.

The statements show that the head teacher role is very significant in implementing, reflective teaching culture in government primary schools. It is found that the primary school head teachers received training from the head department (Elementary and Secondary Education) about implementing this process through a systematic plan. After receiving the training and guidelines

from the head department the head teacher deliver the reflective teaching skills to the staff teachers at school. In this process the head teacher role is to reflect teachers' skills and to assist them in self

-reflection which proves that the head teacher play a central role in implementing reflective practice culture for improving teaching quality.

Head teacher Feedback on Teachers' Performance

Statements	Respondents
Reflection of teacher lessons	Head teacher
Reflection of student feedbacks	Head teacher
Identify teacher strengths and weaknesses	Head teacher
Give feedbacks in a positive way	Head teacher
Head teacher use various suggestions and actions in Order to reinforce the efforts of the teachers	Teacher-5

From the above table it is clear that the head teachers give valuable feedbacks while assessing primary school teachers' performance.

The most important aspect of primary school head teacher role in teachers' reflection is to give regular feedback on teacher performance in order to improve their skills. It is revealed that the head teacher positively commented on teachers' performance for effective teaching learning process.

(Head teacher)

"I do reflect on teacher lessons gradually and after observing their classroom activities I give feedbacks in a positive way to enhance their teaching skills for better results."

(Teacher grade-5)

"The head teacher uses many ideas and actions in order to support the efforts of the teachers that aim in giving each child the best possible education (e.g. Physical, emotional, moral, and social, cognitive and psychomotor)".

Summary

This section depicts the role of primary school head teacher in primary school in-service

teachers' reflection. It is revealed that the primary school head teachers are given proper trainings about implementation of reflective teaching culture in government primary schools of KPK. It was explained that these trainings were arranged by the joint efforts of (E&SE) and KPK (PITE) for improving teaching quality at primary level schools in KPK. It was portrayed that the primary school head teacher systematically reflect different aspects of primary school teachers' performance lively, It was explained that primary school teachers are given enough opportunities for self-reflective practice, Furthermore this was revealed that one responsibility of primary school head teacher is to check primary school in-service teachers' daily classroom activities such as lesson plans and student feedbacks and overall teaching outcomes, and to give constructive feedbacks to encourage teachers' efforts for more better results.

Findings of the Study

The Role of Primary School Head Teacher in Teachers' Reflection

Data analysis revealed that primary school head teacher holds the responsibility and a central role in the implementation of reflective practice culture at primary schools and it is indicated that the head teacher perform this task by following the orders and guidelines of the head department i.e. Elementary and Secondary Education with the help of pedagogical Institute, Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) implement the developed programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for in-service teachers' professional development. PITE is responsible for in-service teacher education and trainings at provincial level. It mainly uses seminars, arrange workshops and train in-service teachers for professional growth of both primary and secondary school teachers. It is revealed that the head department (E & SE) provide guidelines to the primary school head teachers through proper training which is arranged by (PITE) about the conduction of reflective practice at primary level schools in KPK Pakistan for teacher professional development. It revealed that primary school head teacher is responsible to deliver these guidelines of reflective practice to the school staff teachers in order to implement reflective practice for teachers' improvement.

It is revealed that the primary school head teacher is responsible for reflecting on teachers' performance, it is shown that the head teacher reflected on teacher lessons, teaching methodologies, and teachers' use of audio visual aids, teachers' instructional delivery and also the student responses about teachers' lessons. The data revealed that the head teacher provide guidelines to the teachers coordinate them in performance, check and asses the teachers' practice and students development along this all the head teacher also assisted teachers' reflective practice. These findings proved the central role of primary school head teacher in process of reflective practice and implemented as a (CPD) program in government primary schools of Pakistan.

It is revealed that the most important aspect of primary school head teacher role in teachers' reflection is to give regular feedbacks on teacher performance in order to improve their skills. It is revealed that the head teacher positively commented on teachers' performance for effective teaching learning process. It is explored that the head teacher give suggestions and procedures to support the practices of teachers, It is discovered that the main aim of the head teacher is to achieve better Student Learning Outcomes(SLOs) , and to deliver quality education to the students which includes physical ,emotional, moral and social education. It is found that the government primary school head teacher improve their staff teachers' skills through constructive feedbacks which build teachers' capacity to deliver a well standard education to the students which is based on physical activities, emotional relaxation and moral and social education in order to develop the students in each and every aspect of life.

CONCLUSIONS

Role of Head Teacher in Primary Teachers' Reflection

1. Findings revealed that the primary school head teacher implement reflective practice culture in their schools very systematically and with the lines as guided and trained by the head authority i.e. the Elementary and Secondary Education (E&SE) Department.
2. It is evident from data analysis that the primary school head teacher regularly check teachers' dairies which is based on notes regarding teacher daily classroom activities such as lesson plans, lesson delivery and student feedbacks on a delivered lesson.
3. It is concluded that primary school head teacher give constructive feedbacks while evaluating teachers' performance and student progress. The findings revealed that the head

teacher commented on teacher performance positively and instructed teachers to deliver quality education to the students.

Recommendations

Based on conclusions of the study, following recommendations were extracted

Recommendations for

Primary School Teachers

1. Primary school teacher's needs to utilize the results and follow-up supervision to encourage active, creative, and innovative learning and to update self-skills.
2. It is recommended that primary school teachers should use effective strategies of self-reflective practices.
3. Video recording is the best tool for self-analysis. It is recommended that primary school teacher's in Pakistan should use to record self-practice in order to identify those areas that needs improvement.

Recommendations for Head Teachers

1. It is recommended that the head teacher should carry out planning and continuity of a process of reflective practice, arranging of seminars, formulating the goals of reflection for different purposes, making an observation notes, communicating and cooperating with teachers and to support teachers' reflective practices.
2. The head teacher should give right to teachers to choose the type of reflective practice which suits their capabilities to engage with.
3. The Head teacher should encourage primary school teachers in increasing professionalism in teaching, developing self-skills, engaging in learning modern strategies of teaching and giving

appreciation toward teachers who performed well.

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