

REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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Abstract: English has been a prominent language for the last twenty years. When it becomes the global language, everybody shows interest in learning English. Now-a-days teachers have been inundated with new teaching methods and techniques. Teaching-learning process is quite interesting, insightful and thought-provoking as universities like JNTUK are giving priority to teaching-learning process. Reflective practice in the classroom is the best method to enhance the skills of the students as well as to promote teacher’s development. Teacher plans for the session in the class, for that he/she thinks about the lesson before teaches, while teaching and after finished teaching. This process is called the reflective practice. In the present scenario it becomes a worldwide phenomena in teacher education programmes. In my paper, the focus is on critical and logical thinking, journal writing, peer observation, student centric method and classroom aids and resources. Reflective practice is professional development and a cycling process. In spite of differences in defining and implementing the process of reflection, it is clear that challenging and affirming the learner and teacher identities through reflective practice is crucial for the journey of professional self-discovery.

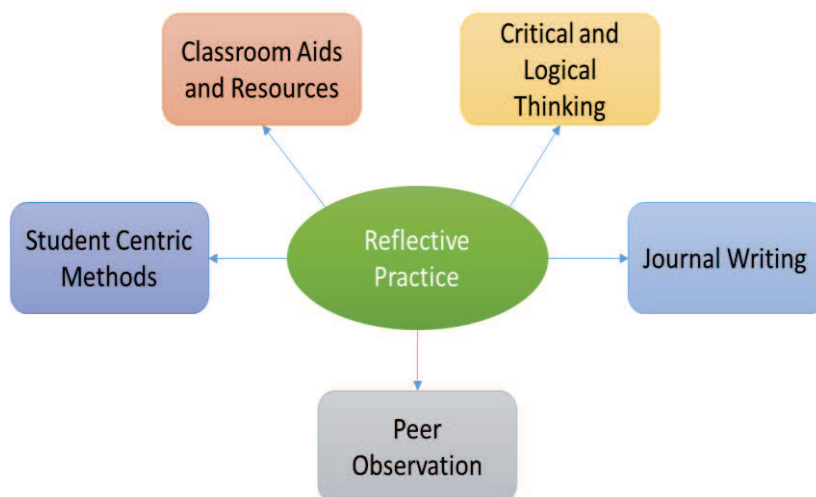
Keywords: language, reflective practice, professional development, teaching-learning process.

Introduction:

Reflective Teaching Practice in English Classroom: English has been a prominent language for the last twenty years. When it becomes the global language, everybody shows interest in learning English. English Language Teaching has become a dominant paradigm in teacher's education in recent years. Now-a-days teachers have been inundated with new teaching methods and techniques. Teaching-learning process is quite interesting, penetrative and thought-provoking as universities like JNTUK are giving priority to teaching-learning process. Reflective practice in the classroom is the best

method to enhance the skills of the students as well as to promote teacher’s continuous professional development. Reflective practice is not a new approach as it has been taken place around for centuries (Newton, 2004). The idea of reflective practice has become a dictum for the last two decades for good praxis in teaching learning process. The seismic shift in engineering education is observed due to increasing student number from the past decade, globalization of the student populace and diversity in the schooling of the students etc. These factors pressurise the English teacher that she/he has to be multifaceted.

The major areas of reflective practice are:



- ❖ Critical and Logical Thinking
- ❖ Journal Writing
- ❖ Peer Observation
- ❖ Student Centric Methods
- ❖ Classroom Aids and Resources

Critical and Logical Thinking: Present technical education aims to improve the critical and logical thinking skills of the students. In this era of technological advancement and knowledge proliferation, developing the intellectual dimensions

of student becomes even more important as logical and critical thinking is the key to academic and personal progresses (Thompson, 2011). If critical thinking becomes the habit automatically logical thinking accompanies it. According to Brookfield, critical thinking is an ability to interpret the events and to grasp the origins of situations. If personal advancement is the aim, engineering colleges must prepare students to 'exercise judgment and creative thinking to gather, evaluate, and use information for effective problem solving and decision making in their jobs, in their professions, and in their lives' (Swartz and Parks, 1994:1). This notion gives the enormous responsibility on shoulders of the classroom teacher, who must help students acquire good thinking skills. Similarly, it accentuates the importance of teacher education in developing the critical thinking skills of teachers. If teachers start fostering intellectual development and critical judgment in their students, at first they themselves need to be improved and trained in becoming reflective practitioners, internalizing reflection and invariably applying it in their practice.

Journal Writing: Maintaining a journal is essential to the English teacher. Journal writing helps remembering the things later. It is like a record book. Journal writing can pave the way for knowing oneself better. It gives a clear picture of what happened earlier and what were the consequences. It will reflect on what a teacher has done, what a teacher has learnt and how she/he has found his/her work in the day or week. This journal writing makes an individual to grow creatively, personally, professionally and spiritually. Journal writing includes teacher's thoughts of the experiences, moments of enjoyment, moments of embarrassing, things which have done well and things that she/he could have done better. Journal writing is purely personal so it is hard to give guidance to others as it is about one's personal work. Jennifer Moon says about her journal writing:

"A journal is a friend that is always there and is always a comfort. In bad moments I write, and usually end up feeling better. It reflects back to me things that I can learn about my world and myself. It represents a private space in my life, a beautiful solitude, the moments before I go to sleep just to stop and note what 'there' is about the day or about my life at the time. I think that it has enabled me to feel deeper and more established as a person, more in control and more trusting of life. On a less introverted note, I think that it contributes to my ability to write in general, and it underlies an interest in poetry and creative writing which awaits a quieter time in my life for fulfilment. In addition, I consider that journal writing is closely associated with the extensive counselling and hypnotherapy work that I have been doing over the years. It has been a support

and a resource and a means of exploration, though I cannot say whether journal writing led to counselling or whether they both emerged as a result of particular traits in my personality."

Peer Observation: Peer observation has been supported as a means of supervising and improving the quality of teaching in engineering education while peer support and review have been used to provide feedback and monitoring in the classroom teaching. The process of peer observation of practice in educational and managerial settings could facilitate improvements in all aspects of practice; have relevance as a tool for continuing professional development. Depending on the wishes of the person being observed, feedback may focus on general performance or more specifically on teaching and learning strategies, assessment or the achievement of learning outcomes.

Peer observer for the teacher should be an unbiased person who has adequate understanding of the teacher's role. Peer observer should be a more experienced colleague. Providing proper feedback after observing the class of the particular teacher is most important point. Ultimately constructive feedback works well regardless of seniority. Involvement of the peer observer will not take any active part while observing the class and has to make the notes on the teacher's activities. Following the class the peer observer has to provide the feedback otherwise there will be numerous distractions taken place. Revealing the feedback report should be confidential and private. Teacher should get ready to accept the negative feedback. The teacher has to take everything discussed by the peer observer and find the ways to improve the quality of teaching. The time frame for follow up evaluations can be entirely flexible to suit the needs and constraints of the peer pair.

Student Centric Method: JNTUK has recommended the Student Centric Method for teaching the engineering students. Language learners' participation is more important in the communicative language classroom. Every student is encouraged to communicate in the classroom which reduces the talk time of the teacher. If the teacher possesses the habit of talking more about the concept all the students remain passive in the class. The teacher should stick to 20% to 30% talk time and student is given 70% to 80% talk time. It is a difficult task to the teacher to motivate students to speak but constant practice and self-evaluation techniques used in the classroom will help the teacher to improve the communication of the students. The teacher should active like a facilitator of the students' learning. The teacher has to observe and supervise the communicative activities of the students. Planning the classroom session meticulously will help the

teacher to improve the communication of the students. David Schon (1987) says: "In a carefully planned classroom session the teacher has to constantly monitor the session as it progresses. An awareness of the classroom session that is in progress allows a teacher to make changes as the situation demands. After the completion of a classroom session, the post-action of reflecting, analyzing and evaluating informs a teacher of the subsequent planning and preparation leading to a cycle of continuing improvement."

Reflective practice gives scope for the teachers to understand the learners' needs and abilities in the language classroom. In a student-centered approach, the teachers can effectively motivate learners to reflect, evaluate, examine and improve their own learning. In reflective practice, teachers focus on the importance of the talk time. Though it is difficult, teacher's honesty and practice motivates the learners to focus on their improvement.

Classroom Aids and Resources: A teacher uses various aids and resources in the classroom to teach the class effectively. Those aids and resources are textbook, black board and chalk, LCD projectors, sound systems etc. Availability of the text book prescribed by the JNTUK for engineering students in the departmental library is the first and foremost resource. Instructional activities will be taken from the prescribed textbook to improve the communication of the students. On the other hand, teacher cannot ignore the fact that the students require the current trends as usually the textbook versions are very old. So instruction of the teacher is invaluable to the students to improve their real time applications. No teacher can question the university about the designing of the curriculum as the

responsibility of the teacher is to assess and evaluate the relevance and significance of the content.

Dewey identified the three important attributes of a reflective teacher that are open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness. "An open-minded teacher listens to more than one side of the issue and gives attention to alternative issues. A responsible teacher carefully considers different alternatives and takes the responsibility of the success or failure of classroom teaching to his or her stride. The attribute of whole-heartedness give scope for evaluating the classroom procedures through self-evaluation or evaluation by the peers and make meaningful changes for effective classroom instruction."

Conclusion: As Clegg et al. (2002) stated, "Reflective practice is becoming the favoured paradigm for continuing professional development in higher education." Therefore importance is given to reflective practice in all engineering colleges. All the processes such as critical and logical thinking, journal writing, peer observation, student centric methods and classroom aids and resources are improving the professional development of the teacher. Effective reflective practice is drawn from the ability to frame and reframe the practice sessions which enhance the wisdom of the teacher. Teachers, in their reflective practice, need to respond to the needs of the students and their issues. Søren Kierkegaard was noted as saying, "The irony of life is that it is lived forward but understood backward." In spite of differences in defining and implementing the process of reflection, it is clear that challenging and affirming the learner and teacher identities through reflective practice is crucial for the journey of professional self-discovery.

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