

Designing a Collaborative Reflection Scheme for Senior Grade Three English Teachers in a State High School in China

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Abstract: Reflective practice (RP) is widely used in various professional education fields and is a central part of teacher education. Through reflection, they may make some adjustments or changes in order to improve their practice and become a better teacher. However, in RP the focus is often individual rather than collaborative and there is a lack of evidence-based accounts, which reduces the effect of reflection to a certain degree and similarly in China. Therefore, it is important to have a collaborative and evidence-based reflection scheme that fits a specific teaching environment in order to improve teaching and develop teachers.

Keywords: Reflective Practice; Teacher education; Senior Three English Teaching

This paper aims to propose a mock, paper-based test, in written form and dialogic form as a combined reflection scheme aimed at the English teachers who are teaching senior grade three students in a specific school. The suggested scheme is designed with reference to some relevant theories about RP, collaborative learning, error analysis and the demands of the context.

1 Context

The context for which the reflection scheme is proposed is a state high school located in a medium-sized city in central China. In order for students to obtain good scores in the highly competitive China's college entrance examination (or named Gaokao in China) and then gain admission to universities, the English mock exam will be held monthly in the grade three in this school according to the Gaokao standards. After each mock test, all the English teachers teaching grade three will be required to write a reflection about their teaching based on the students' mock examination results and then submit this to their leader who will make judgments about progress of the teacher. However, for many teachers, this reflective writing is often full of success stories or even some false achievements in order to conceal actual shortcomings in their teaching process in order to get a better response from the leader. In addition, the teacher's reflection content and corresponding measures based on the student's mock examination analysis are very simple. Teachers only have a general idea about which knowledge points have the highest error rate, and they then emphasize these in their future teaching or increase the amount of practice that involving these knowledge points for students. Few teachers will ask students to write a test reflection report and use it to come up with specific solutions. However, due to the lack of depth and detail of some students' reflections, teachers' judgment on the causes of students' errors may be incorrectly influenced, which may result in failing to adopt effective countermeasures to help students correct their errors and finally achieve progress. Furthermore, teachers seldom share or discuss their teaching experience with each other, as they usually focus on their own working and lack a sense of cooperation. In this way, neither the teacher nor the students could get any great benefits from RP, since the effects of reflection are remarkably reduced.

2. The Reflection Scheme

The first step of the scheme contains two parts, namely, the reflection report written by the students themselves and the teacher's analysis of their class students' exam errors. both of which are based on the results of the English mock test in the current month. For the student, some students may regard the reflection report as a task assigned by the teacher and may not be fully aware of the importance and benefits of writing it. In this case, teachers should play a facilitator role to cultivate students' reflective consciousness in their daily learning and enable them to reflect effectively. For the teachers, as mentioned in the context, some may even make fabricate some success stories to please the leader. However, error analysis is a step that requires teachers to directly confront their own teaching problems, which is intended to help teachers conduct a real critical reflection. Thereafter, in the second step, the teacher produces their individual reflection in written form referring to the data obtained in the previous step and combined the pedagogic purpose of the senior three. Since reflecting with learners may provide teachers with clues for their reflection, and "detailed understanding of the local context" is also the essential requirement for teachers conducting their action research (Mann and Walsh, 2017, P.28). Considering the next step is collaborative reflection with other peers in this proposed reflection scheme, the written form may be easily shared and read by others and may offer practitioners the time and space to organize their reflective contents and propose some solutions to the issues first, which lays a good foundation for the following dialogic reflection.

Then, moving to the teacher group reflection, in this step, the leader would take the responsibility for organizing and managing

this interactive reflection process. The main activities are the sharing of some teaching experiences and skills by those teachers who teach the class with the highest average score on one part of the mock test such as the listening part or reading part. However, teachers may focus too much on issues based on error analysis but ignore what they do well. In the reflection process, teachers should not only find and solve the problems, but also identify those areas they do well so as to achieve the ultimate success. As Farrell (2013) emphasizes, highlighting success as well as failure is very important during reflection. Next, there are many opportunities for other teachers to ask questions and further explore some specific or common problems that have been recorded down during the individual reflection. reflection is a critical thinking process, but it is not easy to be critical when reflecting on one's own individual behavior or practice. At this time, collaboratively reflecting with others may help. Therefore, the reason for designing this step in this model is aimed at providing teachers with opportunities to learn and communicate with each other and help teachers reflect more critically and fully.

The final step is combining the specific learning situation of each class with new understandings from the twice reflective process to make changes or adjustments in practice since practice is not only the source of reflection, but also the way to check whether the results of reflection are really effective. Teachers' professional competences and teaching level are improved through this constant cycle of reflection and practice. The most important thing in this step is making adjustments according to the specific circumstances of each class. Blindly following the teaching methods of other teachers may have the opposite effect due to the different English foundation and learning situation of each class.

3. Conclusion

This paper has proposed a reflection scheme for English teachers who are teaching senior grade three students in a specific context and tries to explore some potential problems and provide some corresponding suggestions in each step in order to make this reflection scheme as effective as possible for teachers in their teaching and professional development and have a positive impact on the work place. However, due to word limitation of this paper and the expansive field of teacher professional development, there are still some possible limitations which have not been explored, such as the motivation of teachers and appropriate time for reflection. It is hoped that this paper may not only help teachers in their teaching and self-development, but also may indirectly help students improve their grades.

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