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Chapter

Reflective Coaching Framework: A Lead for Teacher Trainers in TEFL Context

Mübeher Üröń Göker

Abstract

Many research studies have emphasized the significance of reflection and reflective practice but few of them provide teacher trainers with specific guidelines about the method and process of reflective practices and a restricted number of them have analyzed the extent to which teacher trainers carry out the reflective process. However, teacher trainers often have difficulty preparing an effective program for in-service teachers, evaluating and giving feedback on their strong and weak parts aiming to improve their weak parts. Focusing on addressing those research gaps, this paper mainly aims to present a reflective coaching framework as a guide for teacher trainers to make them understand how to use reflective coaching with teachers in the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) context. The framework developed and adapted by the researcher in 2017, is mainly based on the theoretical views and principles of reflection, self-analysis of strengths and weaknesses, the writing of personal statements, and reflective teaching. Employing a three-stage coaching cycle; (a) pre-conference as planning conversation, (b) observation, and (c) post-conference as reflecting conversation, it ultimately aims to serve as a professional development tool for teachers and teacher trainers in the form of self-analysis as part of reflective practice through the three-stage coaching cycle.

Keywords: reflection, reflective teaching, reflective coaching, in-service teacher practice, teacher evaluation

1. Introduction

Several studies and research studies put emphasis on the significance of reflection and reflective practice but few of them supply some important guidelines about the method and process of reflective practices to teacher trainers and a restricted number of research studies have analyzed the extent to which teacher trainers carry out the reflection process [1–4]. Although a few of them look suitable for encouraging reflective practice, this paper examined how a reflective coaching framework for in-service teachers facilitates their reflection during their teaching practice. It is expected to give critical perceptions to the teacher trainers and advocate the utilization of reflective coaching to ease reflective teaching and review among in-service teachers because the teacher trainers who want to refresh their program even though they have experience
through the years may have some difficulties finding an effective program for the in-service teachers from time to time. When it is thought about the workloads of the teacher trainers, it is not an easy job searching for something on the internet for hours and finding nothing or even finding something, it takes too much time to revise and adapt it according to the in-service teachers. In this sense, they need to find a guide including the answer to their question and summarizing the key points related to the needs of the in-service teachers to become a bridge to apply the theory and practice together in their classroom while teaching. From this perspective, it is important to have something with them like a guide that is used before by a lot of different pre-service and in-service teachers from different perspectives through the years.

In this sense, this paper aimed to be a guide with useful information for the teacher trainers to make them understand how to use reflective coaching in the in-service TEFL context and to show them its impact during the in-service teachers’ teaching career.

2. Literature review

This section is based on the reflection, components of reflection, reflection on teaching, reflection on teacher education, and reflective coaching in the TEFL context and it will be briefly outlined the literature review and focus on the main topics of discussion.

2.1 Reflection

Dewey ([5], p.9) expressed that “active, persisting, and careful thought of any belief or assumed form of knowledge in the light of the reasons that support and the other consequences to which it tends, constitute reflective thinking”. On the other hand, Schön’s [6, 7] principles on reflective practice have been recognized as the most widely accepted foundations of reflection in education since Dewey [8]. According to Schön ([7], p.30) practitioners “exhibit a kind of knowing-in-practice, most of which are tacit” and attend in reflection-in-action while reflecting on the process of practice and altering things during that practice. Practitioners specifically engage in reflection-in-action, standing middle of the action making changes and if necessary adapting their approaches to improve their practice [6].

To have a better understanding of the context of reflective coaching, one should comprehend what is meant by reflection. Schön [7], in an endeavor, to show the difference between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, clearly states that the first one is when the experienced practitioner learns to think on his/her own and deal with the new information and on the other hand the second one is related to the practitioner engaging in detailed analysis for a better understanding of teacher’s role in a learning context. Combining experience with theory by creating new opportunities to see weaknesses and to change, reflection is thought to improvise people’s feelings, thoughts, and actions.

2.2 Components of reflection

In any interference of learning from experience, reflection can be useful. From this point of view, Schön [6, 7] drew attention to the valuation of reflection in supporting the professionals to understand and improve their practice. That is the reason
why, reflection has been a catchy subject for professionals in educational environments following Dewey’s work, but educators were more concerned with being encouraged by Schön [6, 7]. There are two reasons for this: the first one is that Schön [7] claims that reflection is deeply related to action. The second one is that he deals with the entire professional’s “doing” cycle combined with the reflective practice that leads to changes in actions. These two important topics have always been of interest to educators and are embedded in professional development programs. Because it is believed that professionals should learn how to deal with the complicated and uncertain problems often faced, try out different analysis ways, and then reconstruct their performance instead of trying to follow specific theoretical frameworks for specific situations. Some types of “technical reflection” [9, 10] seem to rely on reflection on competencies or skills to evaluate their effectiveness by changing behavior immediately after an action. It is also what Schön [7] asserts. He addresses “reflection-in-action” and “reflection-on-action”, the first implying conscious thinking and modification while in practice. Besides, these two types of reflection require rational processes to make reasoned judgments about alternative forms of action because Schön’s “reflection-in-action” [6, 7] implies incidental reflection and doing whereas other types of reflection [11, 12] require looking back on action after a specific time it has happened. In another saying, deliberation should be encouraged sometime after the action has happened so that other options can be explored later. In this sense, reflection can be regarded to find a solution to real problems [13, 14]. Actually, it is an essential thing that educators or professionals need. But this may mean getting information to develop insights and understand the relationships between processing while a particular action is taking place, or what actually happened after a particular experience, what goals were set, and what challenges arose between different professional or cultural perspectives [15].

The reflective framework designed by Dewey [5] for our assessment of critical reflection covers all three important elements. In this context, the first element requires a systematic aspect of thought besides an end product. The second one concretes a specific reflective tendency using three basic attitudes: openmindedness as getting rid of prejudice, whole-heartedness as taking on a task with a whole heart, and responsibility as considering the consequences of targeted action. According to Dewey, these tendencies are not seen as passive attitudes, but a strong desire should be demonstrated by all people actively involved in the reflective process. In another saying, all teachers will utilize these tendencies in a significant in case they believe that the reflective process requires acting efficiently both inside and outside the classroom. The final element suggests that any reflective thinking uses appropriate use of language. Considering these points, it is seen that Schön’s framework includes all types and levels of critical reflection. His drafts including reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action include an epistemology of Professional practice based on knowledge-in-action and knowing-in-action [16, 17]. Because reflection-in-action as an element of knowing-in-action happens while individuals are attempting any action. For this reason, it can be considered the only tool that separates professional practice from non-professional practice. Thus, it is also considered part of the artistry or intuitive understanding gained through professional experience [18] including a reflective conversation with oneself that allows reframing the action by following holistic appraisal approaches [16].

It should be underlined that none of such reflections is increasingly seen as a desirable hierarchy because if reflection is considered as a learned process, it should be realized through encouragement, support, supervision, and practice. To that end,
a lot of methods including reflective writing, storytelling, diaries, lesson reports, portfolios, observation, action research, and emails have been used to assist teachers to improve their reflective teaching.

2.3 Reflection on teaching

It is quite obvious that the more teachers think about their teaching before the lesson, experience their implementation, and question it after each lesson, the more they learn about it. Briefly, each teacher learns more things about their teaching by implementing it and applying reflection-on-action. They think about their teaching in a critical way with each detail. They think about their presence, tone of voice, activities, time, passing, structure of the lesson, needs of the students, and more. After each lesson, they animate their teaching to understand their weak and strong parts, and this mirror effect is called reflection. As a result of this type of reflective thinking, they have a chance to admit what they have done or change it [19–21]. They think about values, beliefs, traditions...etc. targeted to hand in the students by being sensitive to the points in society. There are some important sample questions given below for each teacher to ask themselves after each lesson:

• How am I feeling after each lesson? Am I happy or sad? Why?

• Am I aware of my strong and weak parts?

• How can I turn my weak parts into strong parts?

• What I aimed before the lesson and what my students learned after the lesson?

• Did I meet the need of the students during the lesson?

• Did I good at time management and classroom management? Why?

• Did I arrange the teacher-talking time and student-talking time equally?

• Did I manage the teacher-student interaction and student–student interaction during the lesson?

• Could I create an environment where each student participated in the lesson?

• Did I care about the action zone during the lesson?

• Do I have any action plan for my next lesson?

In this sense, the teacher trainers lead the teachers to ask some similar questions like above to themselves after each lesson with the help of keeping a diary and then talking about the details in the reflective conferences and self-evaluation sessions. Improvement in instructional skills should be largely dependent on how much a teacher is concerned with a particular aspect of teaching. In other words, the larger their concern about a particular teaching component, the more attention, and attempt they should pay to improve that particular component. Through an RC program prepared according to the framework shared in this paper, teachers’ concerns
are influenced by their perception of their failure or weakness and their conception of a certain teaching component. Furthermore, through the RC program, the teacher trainers help the teachers bring to bear their awareness and understanding about their teaching in order to move in a constructive direction is needed.

2.4 Reflection on teacher education

Paying regard to the opinions of Dewey [5] and Schön [6], the current literature gives us many fundaments on why teachers’ reflectivity needs strengthen. In another word, besides Dewey and Schön, other researchers have also noticed reflection as a critical skill for educators in different environments underlying the importance of strategies of reflective teaching for learning and instruction [22–29]. These and similar scholars maintain that strategies aiming to improve reflective skills must be implemented as reflection informs teaching practices. All of these scholars reach a consensus on the issue that teachers should be reflective teachers based on the view that teaching is a moral attempt and reflection ensures them new strategies to be aware of the moral values of what they do and why. Moreover, from the point of accrediting, certification and recognition bodies such as NCATE, NBPTS and CHEA counseled reflective thinking and teaching for the prospective teachers’ professional development as it is a helpful tool. Reflection and reflective thinking are very essential for teachers to improve themselves because this type of thinking way brings them some solutions for certain dilemmas, ensuring doubt and puzzlement before prospective solutions could be achieved [30]. For the teachers to undergo reflective practice, they must undertake the process of learning through their own experiences to achieve new insights about themselves [7, 31–33]. This period involves their daily practice as well as the requirement for the teachers to be self-aware and skilled in critically evaluating their own answers to classroom situations and they gain a new understanding to improve future practice by doing this [34].

Atkins and Murphy [35] discussed that when people are aware of some uncomfortable feelings, they should analyze them critically with the experience in which they occurred. A change in practice can happen if they participate in this analytic process. According to Ratcliffe and Millar [36], the teachers’ practices can be changed if the time and required backing on their pedagogy is provided. Unfortunately, many teachers have a settled viewpoint about teaching that they improve before participating in a program and block their critical thinking. Low self-esteem, childhood experiences, and cultural conditions might have a deep root in a teacher’s soul and make them give up looking too closely at themselves or their work [37]. For this reason, to assist encourage effective reflection, teachers should be given time and opportunities to improve their reflective skills in a collaborative way. When reflectivity and collaboration are integrated with the interests and needs of participants involved in a professional development program, effective Professional development could be gained [38]. Collaborative reflection is a course of action during which participants are engaged in working collectively as a community of learners through classroom observations (live or video), discussions, workshops, and reflective writings on professional development [39]. The objectives in the reflective collaboration could be gained through the enhancement of teacher focus on teaching. According to Yoon and Kim [40], if the teachers share their teaching background with others through collaborative reflection, it will also be helpful for critical thinking and ease the duration of reflection and learning from past experience. It is important to create some opportunities for teachers by offering suggestions and support, critiquing ideas, analyzing each other’s teaching, and specifying targets to help teachers improve their reflection and in turn, can have some changes in practice [41]. Teachers will learn from the other teachers who have
implemented a new type of instruction more effectively and then they will expand their assumptions and their use of inquiry in the classroom [3]. But it is not an easy process and guidance, and simplification is necessary. If informed trainers give teachers new opportunities for learning experiences such as group discussions focused on videos of other's teaching practices, this provides them with opportunities to analyze lessons that contain vital components of high-quality teaching. These discussions are likely to create more learning opportunities by guiding teachers in connecting the pedagogy observed in videos to their own practice [42].

2.5 Reflective coaching in TEFL context

Reflective coaching, as a formative approach, plays a key role in encouraging self-evaluation and helping teachers develop their own teaching skills. It has mainly been advocated in educational contexts focusing on teacher learning, teacher development, teacher change, and certain coaching stances and epistemologies. It also creates endeavors giving priority to collaboration serving as a feasible and potentially reusable supervision model in the in-service TEFL context.

Professional development needs to take place within the context of the classroom and everyday instructional practices for teachers to learn to employ new teaching strategies in hopes of meeting the current standards [43, 44]. Reflective coaching helps teachers in many ways; for instance, they can learn how to use time efficiently, how to deal with classroom management problems, how to implement lesson structure appropriately, and how to evaluate themselves according to post-reflection, etc.... Mraz, Algozinne and Kissel [45] claim that a typical coaching model comes out of teachers and coaches forming an observation, demonstration, and reflection cycle. That is to say, they join together for observation, evaluation, demonstration, and reflection on how different teaching environments affect learners. It is very important to understand the weak parts of teaching in the classroom to change them immediately. So it can be said that the teachers need to change themselves and they can make it real only by observing their teaching through reflection. [46]. But some teachers are not aware of the reflection, they do not know how to apply it in their teaching environment so they need guidance. Any dialogs with a teacher trainer will help them to understand how to analyze their teaching, how to think critically, and how to apply the new attitudes and beliefs to their classroom. The teacher trainer will help them to change their thinking, belief, and attitude in a reflective cycle.

According to the research studies in the field of reflective practice, reflective coaching is a significant component in developing oneself as an expert and coaches engage in reflective practice continuously [1, 2, 47, 48]. In this sense, we can say that critical thinking also helps teacher trainers make some changes and apply new methods in different learning and teaching environments. And it is clear that this critical analysis ensures learners and teachers a new and deep way of understanding their classroom by bringing classroom experiences into the learning and teaching environment. That is to say, we can name critical analysis of any teaching environment as a reflective analysis of teaching, which is a strong way of advancing proper reflective practice culturally and developmentally [49–51].

3. Instruments for measuring the depth of reflection in reflective coaching

Reflection is a key component in the improvement of teaching, and it is not an easy process for the majority of teachers, thus they need to be guided. While the
teacher trainers examine the context of teaching and learning, they need to use some inquiry-based practices. During the daily analysis and examination of the context, teachers have a chance to gain a new understanding and they develop their implementation. Lesson reports, teaching journals, questionnaires, surveys, audio, and video recordings, observation, and action research have extensively been used in TEFL teacher education [24]. It is important for teachers to use them to develop a deeper understanding of their teaching. But to be able to do that it is needed to use a reflective framework. For this reason, different instruments have been designed to evaluate written reflection and to specify the reflective level, however, few of them have been designed to help teachers to reach a deeper level of reflection.

While the researchers and educators have stated the significance of developing the reflective practitioner in the field of education through the years, a few of them shows us how to measure its deep, support meaningful deliberation and how this reflection has happened. When it is searched for the instruments measuring or nurturing the reflection, it is clearly seen that many of them were designed for the field of nursing not for education. Besides a few studies looking at the analysis of the varying levels of reflection are different with their definitions of these levels and it causes further difficulty to determine which instrument is the best when it comes to decoding a teacher’s level of reflectivity.

A lot of frameworks were evaluated for the content of this paper and to develop our framework. The framework is based on the five instruments below, as it is believed that they address nearly the same reflective thought as our reflective coaching framework. These five instruments given below are believed to supply us with ways to be able to create an appropriate measuring framework for the evaluation of the program:

- Framework for Reflective Thinking developed by [28] proposing a framework for reflective pedagogical thinking,
- Use of video in reflection,
- Hierarchy of Reflection created by [30],
- Reflective Evaluation Framework developed by [52],
- and finally written reflective journals, logs, diaries, and rating them based on the frameworks prepared by [53, 54].

Within the context of the reflective coaching program to be used by the teacher trainers, the framework including the seven main stages to evaluate and give feedback to the in-service teachers for the process of reflective practice is given below (Table 1):

As discussed before, reflection is a key component in the improvement of teaching, and by using it, teachers can develop a deeper understanding of their own teaching. For that purpose, the framework above is mainly based on principles of reflection and reflective teaching and it includes the three-stage coaching cycle; (a) preconference as planning conversation, (b) observation, and (c) post-conference as reflecting conversation. The ultimate goal of the framework is to show how to make teachers aware of their weaknesses and strengths in the form of self-analysis as part of reflective practice through the three-stage coaching cycle. In this sense, the teacher
3.1 Impact of reflective coaching framework for the coaching conversations in the model

Teacher trainers should prepare their program through a three-stage cycle of a (a) pre-conference as planning conversation, (b) observation, and (c) post-conference as reflecting conversation to guide the teachers. The teacher trainers should plan some beneficial questions to help and ease the way of reflective thinking and they aim to foster reflective growth with the answers of the teachers at the end. For this reason, during the reflective conversations, if the teachers have an opportunity to express themselves by self-monitoring, self-directing, and self-modifying their abilities, the possibility of any growth or improvement on the part of their implementation will be more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To collect as much data as possible about what is actually happening in the class; use of materials, instructional skills targeted, classroom management, pacing of pre/while/post sessions of the lesson and learning environment</td>
<td>Video and audio recordings, reflective diary sheets, lesson reports, survey, and questionaries etc.</td>
<td>Reflective conferences and self or collaborative evaluation sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Organize reflective conferences to analyze the data collected and discuss them with all the teachers.</td>
<td>Video and audio recordings, reflective diary sheets, lesson reports, survey, and questionaries etc.</td>
<td>Reflective conferences and self or collaborative evaluation sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teach them how to do self-evaluation and teacher evaluation specifically with the weak parts targeted to be improved.</td>
<td>Video and audio recordings, reflective diary sheets, lesson reports, survey, and questionaries etc.</td>
<td>Reflective conferences and self or collaborative evaluation sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teach them how to become aware of their weaknesses and strengths</td>
<td>Video and audio recordings, reflective diary sheets, lesson reports, survey, and questionaries etc.</td>
<td>Reflective conferences and self or collaborative evaluation sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Let them discuss their weaknesses and strengths using a constructive and critical language</td>
<td>Video and audio recordings, reflective diary sheets, lesson reports, survey, and questionaries etc.</td>
<td>Reflective conferences and self or collaborative evaluation sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Plan the way in which materials and activities are decided upon and what alternatives are available</td>
<td>Video and audio recordings, reflective diary sheets, lesson reports, survey, and questionaries etc.</td>
<td>Reflective conferences and self or collaborative evaluation sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Evaluate the plan which will include a new perspective and perceptions leading to develop their teaching practices</td>
<td>Video and audio recordings, reflective diary sheets, lesson reports, survey, and questionaries etc.</td>
<td>Reflective conferences and self or collaborative evaluation sessions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Reflective coaching framework.
3.1.1 Pre-conference as planning conversation

This cycle happens before a targeted lesson. During this stage, the teacher trainer should first help the teacher(s) clarify aims by identifying the expected outcome of the task or lesson targeted. Secondly, intending to reach the desired outcome, the teacher trainer should present some questions to specify the strategies to be followed. Thirdly, the teacher trainer plans new questions to present the evidence of the result of the lesson during the observation to find observable behaviors. The focus of the fourth part of the conversation is on the self-directed learning of the teachers. Lastly, the teacher trainer should demand the teachers’ reflection on the coaching process by specifying the effect of the quality of the conversation in the sense of their thinking and decision-making. On the whole, encouraging the improvement of self-coaching skills and growing the instructional thought of the teachers is regarded to be the essential aim in the process of planning conversation. The teachers start to internalize the thinking process they experience during the process of planning conversation and start to think of each aimed lesson, activity, or task automatically., after the reflective conversations.

3.1.2 Observation

During this cycle, the teacher trainer should collect data about how effective the targeted task, lesson, or activity outlined by the teacher(s) is. In principle, the teacher(s) is expected to identify the data collection process qualities. Doing so, this process would assist them in gaining an awareness of their own actions or inactions. The content and processes will be discussed throughout the following part explaining the reflecting conversation.

3.1.3 Post-conference as reflecting conversation

This cycle comes out after the observed lesson or activity. Firstly, the teacher trainer should draft questions to help the teacher(s) to understand the things happening in the targeted class by reevaluating their implementation. Secondly, the questions presented by the teacher trainer are anticipated to help them to compare and contrast the planned lesson or activity with the things happening in their class. Thirdly, any possible personal acquaintance with the task or lesson targeted is analyzed by the teacher(s). Fourthly, they implement any new principles for the lesson or activity to be targeted. Lastly, the questions of the teacher trainer are expected to assist the teachers aware of the effect of reflecting conversation on decision-making and thinking processes. It is a necessity for the teacher trainers to show and share the data collected with the teachers to make them have some conclusions about the lesson during the reflecting conversation.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

The evaluation and assessment of any programs and models for in-service teachers still look to be problematic. Hence studies similar to this one that focuses on a specific framework or model of coaching are needed in order to help teacher trainers to develop a better comprehension of what other types of coaching framework could be
more influential in terms of meeting different needs and goals of coaching in various educational contexts.

All the things summarized in the paper are based on personal studies with the pre-service and in-service teachers from different contexts during the years except for the research on literature review. And the framework was created according to observation and studies with the pre-service and in-service teachers during the years.

From this point of view, this paper aimed to show how RC can be conducted and implemented with the in-service teachers in the TEFL context and how it improves the weak parts of teachers in their teaching careers. Since it emphasizes the importance of reflection and reflective teaching, it also aimed to provide useful information to pre-service teachers in this sense. It is also expected to provide EFL instructors, mentors, and curriculum designers with recommendations and new insights on coaching implementations.

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