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Active Learning: The Panacea to Miseducative Practices in Teacher Education

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Abstract

Traditional education has ripple effects in education. The way the educator was taught is almost always the way the educator teaches the learners. Traditional education has a narration sickness (Freire, 2000) and the so-called educators are proselytising ideologues who are after the production of copy cats. Active learning in teacher education is anchored in reflective thinking on all practices. The teacher education student should be encouraged to embark on action research which makes one to be introspective. Thus action research makes the teacher involved in active life-long learning. The teacher who has been groomed in action research abhors routine and ritualistic methods of teaching. The action research oriented teacher makes learners active in learning episodes.

Keywords: active learning, mis-educative practices, teacher education

1. Introduction

The educator has an unequivocal role in the education situation, that of facilitating learning. By and large, the extent of learning is influenced by the learning approach that is employed by the educator. Some educators are obsessed by the monological approach which has emphasis on the teacher-centred approach. The educator becomes more active than the learner. The monological approach is condemnable [1]. The approach is deemed vicious in terms of development of the disposition for life-long learning. The more virtuous approach to effective learning is active learning which shares a lot of virtues with the dialogical approach.

Active learning has been considered virtuous by academics in many nation states. There is the Chinese adage that emphasizes on active learning which reads, 'I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand'. Active learning is critical in teacher education since without it there could be stagnation in the construction of knowledge. Some educators have a tendency of transmitting almost the same knowledge using the same mode that their educators transmitted to them. In such a situation, education becomes a means for the perpetuation of the status quo. The teacher education learners who are exposed to the active learning approach are likely to engage the learners they would have before them in active learning episodes.

The purpose of this chapter is an exposition of discourses on the essence of active learning in teacher education. There are explications of the concepts and practices that are indispensable to active learning. The intended beneficiaries of active learning, the teacher education learners are always experiencing situations which are vicious and/or virtuous to active learning. In order to minimise speculations about the practices that promote or stifle development active learning, an empirical investigation was done with learners exposed to action research and traditional research. The interpretations of experiences of the learners are used as excerpts in corroboration of some standpoints in the discourses.

2. Active learning

Active learning is an approach employed by the educator which actively engages the learners as participants in their learning. The learners who are active find learning more interesting and meaningful when new knowledge, skills and attitudes are contextualized to their previous experiences and what they are to experience in the immediate future. In active learning, experience is not about what happens to the learner but is concerned with what the learner does with what happens to him or her. The experience of the learner should always be given meaning by him or her through reflective thinking.

The term 'active learning was coined' by Charles Bonwell and James Eison in 1991 in their seminal book entitled *Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom*. In this book, active learning is considered to be the panacea to pedagogic and andragogic ills that emanate from monological, mis-educative techniques of traditional education. The traditional education techniques can be traced back to the 14th century. The then educators of the Medieval times were oratory and narrative of knowledge that were got from scarce resources. The modus operandi of learning of the then times was the taking of copious notes and memorizing information.

Active learning is informed by the constructivist philosophy which was advocated for by theorists like; Dewey, Vygotsky and Piaget. Constructivism focuses on constructing meaning from experiences when one reflects on the experiences. Thus in this context, active learning is a reflective activity which implores learners to learn how to learn to construct meaning and subsequently knowledge.

Without guidance from constructivism, there could be rote learning as an approach that is employed by some teacher educators. The teacher educators are referred to as lecturers and they live to the label when they succumb to the narration sickness [1]. In the wake of constructivism that emphasizes on creation of knowledge, the educators should involve learners in active learning. The learners especially those at tertiary level should be considered to be responsible learners who can learn more meaningfully when they are actively involved rather than being exposed to passive listening and note taking. The learners should be engaged in higher-order thinking which entails reflective thinking.

3. Essence of active learning

The education system of any nation state strives for the provision of authentic education which is concerned with human development in all the spheres of life. In many education systems, authentic education is obscured and thwarted by the craving for high paper education credentials which are acquired by memorization of stale knowledge. If this was the authentic yardstick for quality education, then

the panacea to socio-economic and political problems could have been considered got. The criteria for high level of education should be concerned with wisdom to interact with one's environment for the enhancement of societal development. The active interaction with the environment to give it meaning is critical for realisation of authentic education which involves the interpretation of experiences in order to acquire requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for both personal and societal survival. One could have attained a high level of paper qualification but without a disposition and knowledge of learning how to learn to attain authentic education. The contradistinction of authentic education is illusory education which is characterised by the regurgitation of notes given by the 'educator' [2]. Such 'education' comes about through non-educative experiences and miseducative experiences which are mal-educative experiences and are the antithesis of active learning [3].

The involvement of the learners in the mal-educative experiences is reinforced by a defective education system. Some 'educators' perpetuate the mal-educative experiences by employing rote and ritualistic approaches to learning. In other words there is status quo in education whereby some 'educators' with 'experience' have developed some habits that define their interactions with the learners. They become resistant to change since anything that is new has the potential of throwing them in the zone of incompetence. For the newly 'qualified' teachers, there is a tendency that they interact with the learners in the same manner in which their 'educators' interacted with them. More so, the parents of the learners are sceptical about any education interactions that are radically different from what they experienced [4].

Education that is hinged on the maintenance of the status quo alienates the learners from the realities of life and is not meaningful. Thus educators should be aware of that education which is meaningful accords the learner the freedom to intellectually and actively interact with the environment in order to interpret it. Such a model of education is democratic since it values the learners' experiences in the creation of a collective body of knowledge about the environment [3]. When the learners are actively involved in the interpretation of the reality around them, there is authentic education [2]. In defining education, it is imperative to include the learners' experiences. Thus education is the reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases one's ability to direct the course of subsequent experience [5]. The reconstruction and reorganization of experiences are hinged on reflection which is about the processing of the meaning of experiences. Reflection is indispensable to interpretation of experiences. Thus Aldous Huxley postulate that experience is not what happens to an individual, it's what the individual does with what happens to him or her [6]. The emphasis is on reflections on the experiences.

Education that is meaningful is focused on the quality of experience and the reflections thereof. There are two closely intertwined principles which are interaction and continuity [5]. The principle of interaction is about the learner's active involvement in learning when the learner gets inputs from the active interaction with the environment for the creation of knowledge. Interaction which is reflective is a critical hallmark of active learning.

The continuity principle is about how the active learning experience influences future learning experiences [3]. Thus the continuity principle calls for linkages of present experiences with past to illuminate the future and subsequently evoke the motivation of continued learning. Spontaneously the principle of continuity is when the subject-content that the learner is supposed to learn about has been psychologised. The psychologising of subject-content is about relating it to the learners' prevailing experiences which are the real life-experiences [5].

4. Educator responsibility

The responsibility of the educator is to create educative experiences that would result in the development of the learner through active learning [5]. The educator should take into consideration the requisite educative experience principles which are continuity and interaction. Thus the educator should design education experiences for the learners that are hinged on the learners' past experiences. In other words, the educator needs to be able to design for the learners, meaningful and interactive experiences that are connected to the learners' environment and experiences for them to be actively involved in learning.

The learners should be made to think reflectively about their experiences in order to learn from these experiences. It is the responsibility of the educator to critically interrogate his or her teaching practices in order to accommodate learners' experiences that would make their learning more meaningful. The educator should be able to realise his or her procedural epistemic gaps that stifle reference to learners' experiences [7]. Thus the educator should employ the dialogical techniques that call for reflection on the experiences of both the educator and the learners.

5. Reflection and reflective practice

Reflection is the requisite for experiential, active learning [5]. Dewey considers reflection as a systematic, complex, rigorous, intellectual, and emotional process that gets improved through continuous processing of experiences. In other words, reflection is a meaning-making process that deepens the understanding of one's experience for the illumination of interpretations of the other experiences. Reflection is the nodal point between past and present experiences. Thus a realisation of the relationships and connections of experiences enhances continuity of education.

The motivator of reflective thinking is the doubt that one has about experiences [5]. The experience which is perplexing needs to be analysed and interpreted by reflecting on the outcomes of employing past experience and prior knowledge. When reflection is incorporated in practice, then there is reflective practice which has the potential to dissipate mis-educative and non-educative experiences which are associated with non-active learning.

Thus through reflective practice, educators get engaged in continuous professional learning and learners get engaged in active learning. Both the educator and learner are conscientized to look back on their practices and reflect on how best to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

6. Experience

Experience is the conscious involvement of a person in a situation or event which requires that one thinks, feels, does and concludes at the time or immediately thereafter [8]. Thus experience is given meaning and value when one does some reflections which involves recapturing experiences, thinking about them, mulling them over and evaluating them.

7. Experiential learning

Experiential learning is akin to active learning and is reactive to traditional learning which according to Dewey was anti-democratic in terms of selection of

content and learner participation in learning [9]. Traditional learning does not consider the learners' experiences as valuable thus the learners are found to be not actively involved in their learning. Non-active learning is a mal-educative practice which can be mitigated by experiential learning which stresses on that the goals of learning are best achieved through experiences that are directly related to the learner's life [3]. In experiential learning, learning happens through actually doing something and subsequently reflecting on the experiences. The educators are not supposed to employ the monological teaching techniques in which content is presented via lectures but through dialogical techniques which employ continuous conversations about how to meaningfully interpret the experiences in the learning situations [1]. The dialogue that occurs in the interpretation of experiences entails reflection and subsequent explanations of the relationship between experience and knowledge. Thus experiential, active learning is anchored on experience and reflection.

Reflective, active learning is aimed at learning how to transform experience into knowledge and how to employ the knowledge for individual and societal development [1, 3]. However, active learning from experiences is not the panacea to the vices of traditional education *per se*. It should be borne in mind that not all experiences are essentially virtuous for learning. The virtuousness of experiences should be judged focusing on whether the learner was developed; intellectually, emotionally and socially. The development is manifested in the insatiable desire to learn which culminates in lifelong learning.

8. Active learning in teacher education

8.1 Reflection-in-action

Active learning involves intellectual engagement in the form of reflections during the course of learning. The learner does reflection-in-action which entails active, persistent and careful interpretation of experiences for the construction of new knowledge [10]. Reflection-in-action is indispensable in action research where practice is critical. The employing of reflection-in-action in professional practice makes the practitioner realize his or her shortcomings and then think of mitigations thereof. Thus the practitioner reflects in action by evaluating the efficacy of the interactions during the teaching-learning situation [11].

Reflection-in-action incorporates a wide range of the practitioner meta-cognition of activities during the teaching-learning situations. The practitioner reflects on reflections in the creation of new knowledge about approaches he or she employs. The learner also reflects on reflections when refining the conceptualization of phenomena. Reflection-in-action of both the practitioner and learner ignites dialogue for the construction of knowledge.

8.2 Reflection-on-action

Reflective practice entails reflection-on-action which engages the learner in a process of continuous, active learning [12]. The reflection that the learner does on own actions is interrogative of experiences in order to interpret the experiences. Reflection-on-action involves paying critical attention to experiences which are the basis for giving meaning and practical value to learning [13]. Thus learning outcomes should be examined reflectively and reflexively to give them meaning.

Reflection-on-action is indispensable in practice-based learning that the teacher education learners are involved in especially when they are engaged in action research.

The learners get involved in learning from their actions rather than from the transfer of knowledge by the 'educator' [14]. The learner who is involved in action research develops the disposition of reflection on actions. There is conscious scrutiny of emotions, experiences, actions, and responses to situations in order to gain insights of interpretations of knowledge being gained. The learner does not merely review the past actions and events but processes them in order to construct new knowledge [15]. Thus the learner understands phenomena within his or her own context which provides a strong anchorage to understanding phenomena at global levels [16].

The practice of reflection-on-action is critical in the field of teacher education and teacher professional development since it is the basis for many programmes of initial teacher education [17]. The teacher education learner is expected to embrace the practice of reflection-on-action since it entails the process that the practitioner studies his or her own teaching methods to discover the best practice of learning facilitation [17, 18].

Reflection-on-action can be regarded as learning from experience and is critical to the learner taking responsibility in the learning situations. The learner gets engaged in meta-cognition [19]. Without reflection-on-action, learners are not intellectually active in their learning so as to come up with concrete knowledge about phenomena.

Reflective practice moves teachers from their knowledge base of distinct skills to a stage in their careers where they are able to modify their skills to suit specific contexts and situations, and eventually to invent new strategies [20]. Thus through reflective practice educators are able to develop themselves beyond existing theories in practice and become responsive to the dynamic environments of their day to day practices.

9. Action research in teacher education

Action research embarked on by teacher education learners is hinged on praxis. The learners are supposed to be actively involved in testing the feasibility of theories in the contexts that they will be practicing. In praxis, there is also a focus on practice for theory. The engagement of the teacher-education learners in action research enables them to generate theory when they are practicing in their contexts.

Action research is a mode of research in quest for the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes about how to improve on one's practice. The educator-researcher embarks on research to improve on the self in terms of teaching skills, techniques and strategies. The value of action research is in the improvement that occurs in classroom interactions. Action research can be viewed as a tool for classroom practice reform [21].

Action research is defined as;

... a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social and educational practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out [22].

Thus action research is a form of applied research which is done by practitioners to try to solve immediate problems in their working environments [23]. The teacher-education learner is encouraged to become an educator-researcher bridging the gap between practice and research. Thus the special feature that distinguishes action research from other forms of research is that research is conducted at the

same time as action is being taken to improve on the practices [24]. The purpose of action research is for the practitioner to investigate and improve own practice and the process of action research is one of self-study [25].

10. Benefits of action research

The teacher-education learner who embarks on action research implicitly engages him/herself in active life-long-learning which ultimately develops one into an effective educator. Effective educators are themselves reflective-educator-students who research on ways to enhance their existing procedural knowledge. The educator who embarks on action research never boasts of experience of having so many years as a practitioner. He or she becomes aware of the truism that experience is not about the number of years spent doing routine things but how one has geared up his mental agility to find solutions to problems. The educator thus considers himself or herself as the educator-student-researcher and the learners are considered as the research informants. The educator is encouraged to be introspective whenever there is a problem. He or she is expected to blame the self before blaming anyone else for any educational problem experienced by the learner. Thus the educator is oriented to focus on the problem in relation to personal shortcomings.

Action research offers an alternative to educators who have been oriented to look to others rather than to themselves and their students to find ways for improving on learning [26]. Thus action research empowers the practitioners by promoting their involvement, engagement, participation and critical consciousness in exploring strategic and effective actions to improve professional competency and the quality of learning [25].

The educator who embarks on action research develops open-mindedness about the educational issues [27]. One who is open-minded is receptive to new knowledge and hence develops faster in the profession. The educator finds to it that the sources of knowledge are not the published texts only but the colleagues he or she works with and the learners whom he or she teaches.

An educator who embarks on action research does not experience solitude in research. At some instances, action research requires some collaborative effort from colleagues [28]. The colleagues are there to reflect on the educator-researcher's performance and then they advise accordingly. Thus the educator-researcher has an opportunity for professional discourses with the colleagues. The partnership that is created is conducive to sound professional development since the educator-researcher gains some insights on issues to consider when reflecting on the self [16]. Thus action research encourages the sharing of reflections and makes the educator willing to learn from their mistakes and improve on their practice for the benefit of everyone affected by it.

The educator who is an action researcher has a proclivity towards initiating some changes in the ways of facilitating learning [29]. He or she is never contented with how he or she does his or her work. The educator always researches on the self in relation to educational issues so as to anchor his or her practices on functional, epistemic rationalities rather than on technical rationality.

Action research encourages the practitioner to get into partnerships with colleagues in studying the self in order to improve. Thus the practitioners individually and collectively try to understand how they are formed and reformed as individuals, when they work together to improve processes of teaching and learning in the classroom [30]. Action research is participatory in the sense that practitioners can only do action research "on" themselves, either individually or collectively. It is *not* research done on others.

Action research engages the practitioners in examining the social practices that link them with others in educational interaction. The practitioners explore their practices of communication and social organization and try to explore how to improve their interactions by changing the actions that they are comprised of.

Through action research, practitioners explore the ways in which their practices are shaped and constrained by wider technical rationalist ideas which are socio-cultural, academic, economic and political. The teacher-education learner does not become parochial in employing the age-old theories and personal hunches.

Action research aims to make the practitioner investigate reality about the self in order to change it [31]. In particular, it is a deliberate process through which practitioners aim to transform their practices through a spiral of cycles of critical and self-critical action and reflection.

11. Rationality for dearth of active learning in teacher education

Some teacher-education learners enter higher education without the motivation of being actively involved in their learning. They do not think reflectively about their experiences [32]. One of the reasons is that some college lecturers follow a curriculum design that focuses on subject-matter content when teaching rather than on the development of reflective thinking [33]. The lecturers who simply follow guidelines in curriculum documents do not teach the teacher-education learners to be intellectually involved [32]. Such lecturers have a lecturer-centred orientation that incorporates misconceptions that lecturing is about imparting information or transmitting structured knowledge [34]. They use retrieval or recall types of questions which inhibit reflective thinking [32].

The lecturer-centred teacher educator is obsessed by employing monologic techniques that are manifested among other ways in the use of the presentation and demonstration methods. The learners are supposed to absorb bodies of 'stable, eternal knowledge' that are transferred by the lecturer. The learners are immersed in a mass culture which is supposed to be contented with the status quo [35]. The aspects that imply active, intellectual involvement such as inquisitiveness, analyticity, reflectivity, reflexivity and truth-seeking are consciously thwarted. The learners are deprived of learning how to learn [36]. Thus the monological techniques obviate learner active involvement in their learning.

12. Learner reflections on their learning

Some teacher education learners were interviewed about their reflections on their learning experiences when they were carrying out research projects. The interviews were premised on the phenomenological hermeneutics paradigm [37]. The purpose of the phenomenological hermeneutics paradigm is to understand the lived experiences of the informants from their own perspectives [37–40]. These lived experiences were expressed in the informants' own words to authenticate the interpretations of the researcher.

The informants were selected purposively to have balances in the type of researches that they carried out and the sexes. They were considered to be information-rich on the basis that they had experiences in either traditional research or action research which they reflected upon with regards to learning efficacy. The table below shows the type of research and sex distributions of the informants.

Informant	Research type	Male	Female
Informant 1	Traditional		X
Informant 2	Traditional		X
Informant 3	Traditional	X	
Informant 4	Traditional	X	
Informant 5	Action		X
Informant 6	Action		X
Informant 7	Action	X	
Informant 8	Action	X	

The interviews were audio-taped in order to capture all the data that were being generated. The data were then transcribed. Analysis of the data was done by employing the thematic approach while focusing on the Johnson and Christensen method which generates themes from excerpts in the interviews transcripts [41–43]. The emic interpretations (informants’ reflections on experiences in their own words) informed the *etic* interpretations (the researchers’ reflections on informants’ interpretations) [23].

The reflections of the teacher education learners on how they experienced learning when they carried out researches are classified according the value that they attached on their experiences during carrying out researches.

13. Non-educative experiences

There are instances in teacher education when learners are exposed to non-educative experiences which do not afford them any time for active learning when they reflect on the experiences [7]. In informant 1 postulated,

“I am not aware of what is going on in my research project. My supervisor tells me what to write. I am doing research just for the sake of it. I want a diploma and nothing more.”

The learner is not actively involved in learning and is not motivated to do further learning. The ‘educators’ who do not engage learners in active learning, perpetuate non-educative experiences and are bearers of incontrovertible knowledge since their experiences dominate the experiences of the learners [4, 44]. Confirmatory remarks were given by informant 2 who posited;

“My supervisor gave me the topic to research on. What disturbed me most was that the problem I was forced to research on was not realistic since I was not experiencing it. To me it was an imaginary problem.”

The situation in the non-educative experiences is that ‘educators’ do not engage learners in active participation in the teaching-learning situation and the learners are made to be aware of that their experiences are sanctioned by the ‘educator’ since all interactions are enforced by rules and regulations [41]. The ‘educator’ is the moderator of all experiences and reflections are determined by him or her. Thus the meaning of experiences is vicariously made by the ‘educator’.

Furthermore, non-active learning is non-educative since the learner becomes docile, receptive, and less reflective on the experiences [3]. The learners' experiences are not considered since they have the potential to conflict with the status quo. Informant 3 made the remark;

"I went on teaching practice when I had gone half-way my research. I was told what to write by my supervisor. He said that the problem I would 'experience' was supposed to fit in what I had done at college. I had to fabricate some 'data' in order not to get at loggerheads with the supervisor. I needed the blessings of the supervisor."

The traditional 'educators' who expose the learners to the non-active learning experiences are the disseminators of incontrovertible, static knowledge [3]. They have the conviction that learning is about absorbing vast bodies of processed knowledge. Thus according to these education traditionalists, it is not necessary to have the learners reflect on 'purified' knowledge that was generated by renowned academics.

Traditional education is considered to be non-educative on the grounds that it is detached from the experiences of the learner. Thus the methods of learning are foreign to the existing experiences and capacities of the learners [3, 45]. Informant 4 explained;

"I do not know anything about research methodology. The supervisor just talks about things that I do not understand. I am confused by everything."

The quotation above implies that the learner just passes through the rhythms of the narrations by the 'educator' without any enthusiasm and not making any sense of the content [3]. Thus the non-active learning experience is considered to be undemocratic since it does not consider the interests of the learner and it separates the learner's experiences from learning.

14. Mis-educative experiences

Traditional education has been distinguished largely by its negative influences on future experiences [3]. The learners who experience traditional education are tied to subject-content without consideration of its relevance to real life [46]. Informant 2 postulated;

"I was given the research topic by the supervisor. The topic that I wanted to research on was brushed aside. The supervisor said that she had no time to grapple with a topic she was not interested in. I had to follow the interests of the supervisor for me to pass. My interests would not make me survive in this academic jungle. I was not motivated to do my research study."

The learners who are exposed to the situation that is described by informant 2 lose "the impetus to learn" [3]. The experiences which the learner undergoes stifle the principle of continuity and are referred to by Dewey as mis-educative. A mis-educative experience obstructs growth for future experiences and also arrests or distorts growth [47]. After having gone through a mis-educative experience, the learner would not be motivated to be engaged in similar experiences due to the unpleasantness and/or meaninglessness of the experience. A mis-educative experience can be disjointed with the previous experiences and this makes the learners unable to make sense of future experiences [48].

A mis-educative experience can also be one that engages the learner into routine action which does not give room for new experiences [11]. The learner's environment becomes confined to the same things thus narrowing new and further experience. Routine action is repeated action which does not promote active learning for the broadening of the meaning-making horizon [10]. Confirmatory remarks were given by informant 4;

"The supervisor gave me a finished research project to copy from. He said that I would get a distinction if I would copy the project that he once awarded a distinctive mark. My conscience told me that I was cheating on myself."

Similar remarks were given by informant 1 who postulated;

"It is some sort of a tradition that a research project is hard to complete without copying. I was told by my sister who is a teacher. My supervisor is not explicit about it but is implicit. She encourages me to get what I want from a finished research project."

The supervisor who is a pseudo-educator gets the learner involved in vicarious experiences which are characterised by routine actions. The learner is alienated from his or her experiences to the extent of not being aware of the meanings that could be created from interactions with one's environment. Routine action makes learners unaware pawns in the midst of their own experiences [3]. The learners become enslaved in routine that any deviations render them the negative labels such as being dull or disobedient [11]. In order to avoid the negative labels, the learners become alienated from themselves and thus become prone to self-estrangement.

15. Educative experience

The principle of continuity also known as the experiential continuum embraces active learning and is one of the principal criteria for judging whether an experience is an educative one or not [3]. The principle is involved in attempting to assess the educational worthiness of experiences [3]. The criterion is manifested by the learner when he or she develops intrinsic motivation to continuous learning. Informant 5 expressed the principal of continuity by postulating;

"The problem that I am researching on is a result of my own experiences. The tuition that I am getting from the supervisor is meaningful since it is about a realistic problem. After my course, I will be able to carry out researches on my own to improve on my practice."

In corroboration, informant 6 remarked;

"The relationship that I have with my supervisor is dialogical. The supervisor listens to my challenges and then suggests how I could surmount the challenges. I have been enlightened on how researches are carried out. I can do my own researches for professional development."

Active learning is an educative experience which wards off complacency in the learner and instils an attitude of further exploration of the meaning of the present experience in connection with the past experience. The learner processes the data generated in the current experiences by using the meanings given by the previous experiences. Informant 7 explained;

“The experiences I got when I was doing action research have provided me with valuable knowledge, skills and attitudes to be continuously engaged in research in order to improve on my practice. I can make reference to my research findings when trying to solve similar problems.”

An educative experience is realised when there is reflection on the experiences and meaning is made. It is the meaning that the learner attaches to an experience which gives the experience some value. Informant 8 remarked;

“I experienced the problem that I am attempting to find a solution to. I am also experiencing the shortcomings of my practices in trying to solve the problem. I have since realized that I can improve on my teaching practices when I am introspective.”

16. Conclusion


Active learning in the teacher education curriculum is requisite in the construction of meaning from experiences. The learners are supposed to be engaged in reflective practice. The explicit realisation of the reflective practice in teacher education is in carrying out action research which entails reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection is indispensable in active learning situations since it is the nodal point between past and present experiences. Any situation that stifles reflection on experiences begets non-educative and mis-educative experiences. According to the teacher education learners, the teacher educators who are traditionally oriented are pseudo-educators since they are responsible for the sustenance of traditional education which maintains the status quo. On the other hand, the learners who are exposed to action research are actively involved in professional development. The learners develop a disposition for open-mindedness and knowledge insatiability in their profession which culminates into life-long learning.

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