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DIFFERENT WAYS OF PROMOTING REFLECTIVE TEACHING*

ABSTRACT

Since reflective practice appeared as an alternative approach to teaching, it has been one of the main focus areas of research in education and has received growing interest recently. The current paper aims to enable to gain an understanding of how reflective teaching can be implemented. Firstly, the paper will clarify the concept of reflective practice from theoretical perspectives. Secondly, it will discuss the important role of reflection in teachers' growth based on the scientific arguments and research findings. Then, forms of reflection will be explained. Finally, three different ways for applying reflective teaching practice; namely, reflective diary/journal, reflective video recording, reflective collaboration/session will be explained in detail and their role in making teachers reflective and powerful will be identified.

Keywords: Reflective teaching, reflective practice, reflective diary, reflective video analysis, reflective collaboration.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of reflection dates back to Dewey's suggestions and ideas. Dewey (1910), who viewed life itself as a process of education and self-development, introduced a new approach to education, suggesting that any individual has the ability to learn from their own experiences. In his approach, he criticizes that teachers were traditionally expected to solely develop technical skills such as knowledge of lesson planning, classroom management, and multiple assessment strategies. Thus, vital importance was placed on how to teach without considering underlying principles and philosophies of teaching. Valli (1997:70) also argues that teachers are educated as "skilled technicians" whose habits are based on actions rather than careful thinking. Similarly, Korthagen (2001) highlights that there exists an undeniable gap, not a bridge, between theory and practice, and that teachers come to the understanding that theory is out of keeping with practice and reality. Korthagen (2001) further notes that when teachers started teaching in real classrooms, their knowledge gained at university vanished. Thus, these teachers lose their motivation and enthusiasm; and face many challenges while endeavoring to apply what they have learned in traditional teacher education programs in their teaching practices. As Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) also emphasize, teachers were found to change their attitude towards a more traditional one when they started to teach in real classrooms as in-service teachers. In this regard, Kagan (1992) believes that teachers need to be trained to reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, behaviors, feelings, and concerns. In doing so, teachers would be prepared as reflective practitioners in order to solve unexpected problems and meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's society.

Given all these, it can be suggested that there is an urgent need for a teacher who is able to cope with the challenges faced in real teaching contexts, reflect upon past teaching exercises, and meet the needs of both students and society. In today's world, students are quite active and curious learners, who are good at questioning and competent in the use of technology, seek satisfying answers, have varying

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interests and share reflections. Hence, today's teachers have to serve in classrooms that are shaped by confusions, uncertainties and contradictions (Odabaşı-Çimer & Paliç, 2012). Within this context, teachers are required to tackle many important hardships and cater to the needs of these learners. Therefore, to do all these, it is a necessity for teachers to feel free and autonomous to make decisions on the procedure and the content of the classroom, and most importantly who are able to make reflections about their teaching experiences.

In this respect, building a bridge between theory and practice within the scope of reflective practice has, consequently, gained much significance for the development of teachers and the classroom environment and accordingly reflective teaching has started to receive increasing attention.

The recognition of the importance of reflective practice in education and teaching may also have resulted from the emergence of the post method era (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006). This new method era has appeared after searching for the perfect method for foreign language education because of the changes in language teaching and learning field and changing situations in educational, political, and economic contexts (Akbari, Behzadpoor & Dadvand, 2010; Drożdźiał-Szelest, 2013). Thus, reflective practice has turned out to be an alternative approach to teaching.

With the disappearance of the traditional method era (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006), reflective practice has obtained its vital position in teachers' self-development. This recognition of reflective practice in teaching is based on the belief that teachers are able to improve their teaching practice by consciously reflecting upon their teaching experiences (Farrell, 2007). Contrary to the traditional teacher education models, in reflective practice, teachers are positioned at the very center of their own development; they are believed to have the potential to take responsibility of their teaching practices, reflect upon their beliefs and actions, make self-assessment and make required amendments to enrich their teaching practices (Farrell, 2007; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Valli, 1997).

In the literature, the notion of reflection has been defined by many scholars and researchers. According to Dewey (1910:6), reflection is "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends". He considered reflection as thinking deriving from puzzlement experienced in a definite circumstance and as an important way of learning by gaining experiences. Williams (1998:31) views reflection as "a theory of metacognition which directs skilled behavior during professional activity or assists in the deliberative processes which occur during problem-solving". Reflection is also defined as "the process of mirroring the environment non-judgmentally or critically for the purpose of decision-making" (Milrood, 1999, p.10).

Reflective practice is generally seen as a process in which individuals go back over their experiences, critically envision their past actions and the situations (Al Mahmud, 2013). In the educational field, reflective practice refers to "making informed and logical decisions on educational matters, then assessing the consequences of those decisions" (Taggart & Wilson, 1998, p.2). It is a thought and an evaluation of previous experiences in order to take further actions. Thus, it is understood that with the help of reflective practice, people look back on experiences, people, and situations, evaluate all these and gain from them in educational sense (Çimer, Odabaşı-Çimer & Vekli, 2013). Jasper (2003) also suggests that basically, reflective practice is learning by thinking about the things that people experience and looking at those from a different perspective, which helps them to take further steps. In this regard, reflective practice necessitates critical thinking, developing self-awareness, using individual knowledge, and resolving problems (Chant, Heffner & Bennett, 2004). Moreover, it promotes the harmony of new experiences with the existing beliefs (Kumari, 2014).

As obviously understood, reflective practice is regarded as an important tool in empowering teachers and thus resulting in better education since reflective practice is reported to offer many benefits for education and teaching. For example, reflective practice contributes to teachers' improvement of "greater levels of self-awareness about themselves as practitioners and as people", which accordingly leads to personal and professional development (Blank, 2009, p.42). Richards and Lockhart (1994:1) put forward that teachers "collect data about their teaching, examine attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching" reflective practice. Similarly, Akbari (2007) suggests that reflective practice helps teachers to gain consciousness of their own behaviors, feelings and actions by providing them with a number of techniques. With the help of reflective practice, teachers can also have new perspectives and reform their teaching actions, and increase the quality of education (Fatemipour, 2013). Considering these

numerous benefits of reflective practice, reflection turns out to be a powerful tool and a vital component of effective teaching and education.

For effective teaching to occur, effective teachers, who are continually involved in reflection and investigation into their teaching practice, are needed. In other words, effective teaching crucially depends on teachers who are reflective practitioners, and accordingly on the quality of reflective teaching. At this point, it is better to know what characteristics a reflective teacher should have.

According to Clarke (1995), reflective teachers are always involved in the continuous cycle of self-observation and self-evaluation in order to have a better understanding of their own actions. Thus, a reflective practitioner can be characterized as someone who is active and decisive and someone who examines the basis of his/her practices in order to enhance professional growth. Dewey (1933:30-32) also believed that a reflective practitioner should have the attitudes of “open-mindedness”, “whole-heartedness”, and “responsibility”. According to Pacheco (2005), a reflective teacher looks at classroom practices from a different perspective. This opens the way for making the right decisions and judgments and contributes to teachers' professional growth. Ahmad, Bin-Said, Zeb, UR-Rehman, Ahmad and Khan (2013:74) asserts that reflective teachers are effective teachers who “set priorities and examine the purpose of classroom activities”. They further maintained that reflective teachers ground their teaching and learning on powerful planning and organization that aids them to achieve their targets, and they prefer to apply a variety of strategies and methods in the classrooms. They, as a result, develop consciousness of the purpose of the course and create attractive materials for meaningful learning. In other words, a reflective teacher revitalizes the teaching and learning environment by providing students with intriguing, demanding, and encouraging materials and activities.

All these characteristics mentioned above closely integrate with Zeichner and Liston's (1996:6) ideas. Accordingly, “A reflective teacher:

- examines, frames, and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice;
- is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching;
- is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teaches;
- takes part in curriculum development and involved in school change efforts; and
- takes responsibility for his or her own professional development”.

Since the importance of reflection and reflective teachers in teaching was identified, the role of reflection in stimulating teachers' improvement has been broadly under investigation, particularly in the 2000s. These studies mostly focused on examining teachers' current reflective actions and their perceptions, the impact of reflective practices, reflective teaching tools in education. The related previous research supported the value of reflective teaching, generally indicating that it can enable teachers to gain self-awareness, see their strong and weak sides, critically evaluate themselves, strengthen their teaching skills and improve their pedagogical practices (Abednia, Hovassapian, Teimournezhad & Ghanbari, 2013; Fakazlı & Gönen, 2017; Genç, 2010; Gözüyeşil & Aslandağ-Soylu, 2014; Gün, 2011; Lakshmi, 2014; Seitova, 2019; Woodman & Parappilly, 2013).

2. FORMS OF REFLECTION

Dewey (1933) thinks that reflective action is different than what we do routinely. *Routine action* is guided by habits, traditions, authority, institutional definitions, and expectations. Thus, routine action is rather static, not active; and it does not respond to changing circumstances. *Reflective action*, on the other hand, includes an eagerness to step into action for self-development and self-appraisal (Pollard & Tann, 1994). In this sense, Dewey emphasized reflective action and regarded it as an essential part of reflection. Schön (1983) elaborated on Dewey's ideas, extended his concept of reflection, and distinguished two types of reflection: ‘reflection-in-action’ and ‘reflection-on-action’. *Reflection in action* refers to reflecting on the unexpected, surprising, or confusing situation during the occurrence of the event, mostly in an unconscious way, while *reflection on action* refers to reflecting on these situations after the event occurs. Reflection-in-action is viewed as the process of considering something while doing it (Schön, 1983), and it takes place when professionals experience a surprising or an extraordinary situation and use their repertoire of examples to take a different approach to problems and produce new solutions (Griffiths, 2000).

Killion and Todnem (1991) expanded Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action typology to include another dimension of *reflection for action*. They defined reflection-for-action as thinking about future actions with the aim of changing or developing our practice. Reflection-for-action also refers to using the information obtained through the first two types (reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action). In other words, it calls for revising what has been achieved and ascertaining guidelines in order to continue to accomplish in the future task. However, all these three forms of reflection can be regarded as fundamental elements of the concept of reflective practice.

For teaching contexts, Zeichner and Liston (1996) divided Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action into five dimensions of reflective thinking. The first two dimensions are components of reflection-in-action; the other three dimensions are components of reflection-on-action. These are illustrated in Table 1. below.

Table 1. Dimensions of Reflection (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p.47)

1. Rapid Reflection	Immediate and automatic reflection-in-action
2. Repair	Thoughtful reflection-in-action
3. Review	Less formal reflection-on-action at a particular time
4. Research	More systematic reflection-on-action over a period of time
5. Re-theorizing and Reformulating	Long-term reflection-on-action informed by public academic theories

The first dimension; namely *rapid reflection* includes immediate and automatic reflection-in-action. In this dimension, repair occurs very rapidly; it does not involve much thinking to take action. However, *repair* is composed of deliberate thinking in order to make necessary adjustments. As for the next dimension, *review* is composed of thinking about teaching in a less formal way at a time before or after the lesson. The fourth dimension, *research*, is a more systematic thought about teaching, which is a long-term process over a period of time. The final dimension, *re-theorizing and reformulating*, requires long-term reflection-on-action informed by public academic theories. In this dimension, teachers critically assess their teaching practices on the basis of academic theories; make connections to other professionals' work as well as their own, reach academic publications about the points that they are searching for (Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

Along with these dimensions of reflection, different researchers have also proposed different typologies of reflective practices. These typologies define levels of reflective practices in educational contexts. Presenting these frameworks will provide useful information in order to have a better understanding of the true nature of the reflective practice.

Zeichner and Liston (1987), for example, came up with a framework, which is composed of four levels. In this framework, the lowest level of reflection is *factual discourse* deals with what happened and what will happen in a future teaching context. The next level is *the prudential discourse*, which deals with how experience is assessed. *The justificatory level* is the third level of reflection, which is concerned with reasons and rationales for actions. The highest level is *a critical discourse* where values and suppositions are examined and questioned. Additionally, it evaluates the efficiency of and reasons for actions.

Another framework, which was developed by Valli (1997), presents a hierarchical representation of reflection, which is comprised of five levels; namely, *technical reflection*, *reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action*, *deliberative reflection*, *personalistic reflection*, and *critical reflection*. Technical reflection includes considering general teaching skills and methods, and the application of studies to teaching contexts. Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action include considering one's own specific teaching practice or unique experience and employing one's own beliefs, classroom environment, and students as knowledge. As for deliberative reflection, it involves considering a wide range of issues such as students, classroom organization and rules, and curriculum. It further highlights decision-making on the basis of their own values, beliefs, experiences, communication with other teachers. Personalistic reflection refers to the consideration of one's own personal development, rapport with students, and fostering students' holistic development. Finally, critical reflection concerns the social, ethical, and political values such as social justice and equality, with the aim of enhancing the quality of life of the oppressed classes.

Jay and Johnson (2002) provide a recent typology and propose that reflection consists of three significant stages of *description, comparison, and criticism*. The descriptive step is the stage in which the teacher decides what aspect of classroom practice should be reflected upon. The second step; namely comparison, is the stage where the teacher is involved in “thinking about the matter for reflection from a number of different frameworks” (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p.78). During this stage, the teacher attempts to understand other people’s views, which helps “to discover meanings we might otherwise miss” (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p.78), and therefore helps to develop a broader understanding of the teaching environment and its complex nature. The final stage is the critical stage during which the reflective practitioner assesses various options and associates newly-learned information with his existing knowledge from his experience. This is practically a decision-making process, which will constitute a source for creating alternative means of teaching or dealing with the problem.

Moon (2004) also proposed a more recent framework to divide reflection into four levels. The first level is *descriptive writing* which is “a description of events or literature reports”. The second level is *a descriptive reflection* which refers to “some evidence of deeper consideration in relatively descriptive language”. *Dialogic reflection* is the third level, emphasizing the “consideration of the qualities of judgments and of possible alternatives for explaining and hypothesizing”. The final level is *a critical reflection* in which “the same actions and events may be seen in different contexts with different explanations associated with the contexts” (Moon, 2004, p.75).

To summarize, knowing about different forms and frameworks of reflection will offer fruitful information so as to deeply comprehend the concept of reflection and the role of reflection in teaching and educational contexts.

3. TOOLS FOR REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

Being reflective requires a process, and in order to become an effective reflective practitioner, there are various tools to be employed. It has been observed in the related literature that the most widely employed and cited reflective tools are reflective diaries (A’Dhahab & Region, 2009; Cohen-Sayag & Fischl, 2012; Abednia Hovassapian, Teimournezhad & Ghanbari, 2013; Gallego, 2014; Lakshmi, 2014), reflective video analysis (Eröz-Tuğa, 2013; Savaş, 2012; Tripp & Rich, 2012), peer coaching (Britton & Anderson, 2010; Garber, 2014; Prince, Snowden & Matthews, 2010; Soisangwarn & Wongwanich, 2014), peer observation (Day, 2013; Donnelly, 2007; Lakshmi, 2014), peer collaboration or discussions (Degeling & Prilla, 2011; DelliCarpini, 2008; Johnson, 2003), student evaluation of teaching and learning (Hajdin & Pažur, 2012; Üstünlüoğlu & Can, 2012). However, this paper only focuses on three of these reflective tools; namely reflective diaries, reflective video analysis, and reflective peer collaborations/sessions in order to help to gain insights into the role of these reflective tools in teaching and how these tools can promote teachers’ growth.

3.1. Reflective Diaries

A reflective diary or journal is defined as “typically a notebook, booklet of blank pages, or any other source for students to record thoughts, reactions to learning experiences, and even innermost fears about a learning activity” (Hiemstra, 2001, p.19). According to Gallego (2014: 97), a reflective diary is “a potential avenue for raising awareness and enhancing the practice of experienced teachers as well as advancing the professional development of novice teachers”.

Reflective diaries or journals are accepted as one of the invaluable tools that foster reflective practice in the teaching field. There is a large body of research that supports reflective journaling as a way of reflection (Boyd & Boyd, 2005; Chirema, 2007; Fakazlı & Gönen 2017; Genç, 2010; Kaur & Kaur, 2010; Kessler, 2004; Maarof, 2007; Seitova, 2019; Şanal-Erginel, 2006). Diary provides a valuable means of presenting a record of personal, important learning and teaching experiences that have occurred, offering teachers an opportunity to indicate their self-development (Hiemstra, 2001; Lee, 2007; Rezaeyan & Nikoopour, 2013). As similarly echoed in Burton’s (2005) beliefs, keeping a diary assists in systematically writing down particular events and feelings about their experiences, and returning to these recorded experiences when it is wanted. Hence, reflective journals can be considered as a way to re-think over the memories, prevent them from being forgotten, and make the events concrete (Silvia, Valerio & Lorenza, 2013).

In the related literature, the use of reflective diaries is regarded as beneficial on several accounts. For instance, in addition to the impact of diary writing on remembering and writing down past experiences, Lee (2007) claims that diaries also help individuals to discuss their concerns and problems, share their

opinions, and engage in reflective thinking. From a different point of view, Richards and Farrell (2005) argue that diaries aid teachers to question and monitor what they do in their teaching practices. In this way, teachers consciously examine and analyze their teaching practices. As a consequence of this questioning and analysis, a reflective diary allows for creating awareness and fostering the professional practices of teachers (Gallego, 2014).

Abednia et al. (2013) similarly suggest that writing a diary promotes teachers' self-awareness, helps them to gain consciousness about some issues related to teaching, and enhances their reasoning abilities. Besides, focusing on the same aspect, Genç (2010) also argues that reflective journaling enables teachers to strengthen their practices, raise awareness of and gain understanding about their own beliefs and knowledge about language teaching. Accordingly, teachers' awareness of their teaching beliefs and knowledge allows them to realize their strengths and weaknesses, and therefore, advance their teaching practices and broaden their perspectives (Abednia et al., 2013). What is more, writing a regular diary can assist teachers to develop a more profound understanding of their teaching styles, investigate their actions and values, and more confidently look back on their teaching experiences (Farrell, 2007).

The great potential of reflective journaling is also recognized by Lowe, Prout, and Murcia (2013). They regard this reflective tool as beneficial for helping teachers in demanding situations and gaining insights into the difficulties confronted in teaching contexts. Further, as Genç (2010) points out, critically reflecting upon classroom processes through a diary allows for gaining autonomy and improving decision-making skills. She also underlines the impact of keeping a diary on becoming more sensitive to students' needs.

In addition to the many advantages of diary writing, some drawbacks of this tool are also underlined in the literature. For example, keeping a diary is regarded to be a challenging and laborious activity, which requires a great deal of time, effort and discipline (A'Dhahab & Region, 2009; Cohen-Sayag & Fischl, 2012; Fakazlı & Gönen, 2017; Greiman & Govington, 2007; Lowe et al., 2013).

Even though diary has a few disadvantages, it offers innumerable benefits for teachers' being more reflective and improving their professionalism as teachers. Diary writing is viewed as an effective method that promotes meaningful reflection and increases critical thought on previous teaching experiences. In short, a diary creates a vital opportunity for teachers to critically look back on important incidents and details in the classroom, have a deeper understanding of their skills and practices, and guide them in evaluating their actions and in engaging in critical reflection.

3.2. Reflective Video Analysis

As well as reflective diaries, video analysis of actual teaching also emerges as another profitable tool that helps for engaging in reflective practice for the sake of enhancing teaching practices. Videos, as a part of reflective teaching, are regarded to be 'an innovative, effective and objectivity-driven tool' (Sayın, 2013, p.41).

Reflective video analysis can be defined as a way for teachers to record their own teaching, then watch and reflect on their teaching performances for the purpose of increasing the quality of their teaching. Increasing literature highlights the use of videos as a powerful way of improving teachers' ability, becoming more conscious of their own teaching, and encouraging reflective teaching (Bryan & Recesso, 2006; Picci, Calvani & Bonaiuti, 2012; Tripp, 2009; Snoeyink, 2010). Research conducted on the use of videos to promote reflection has generally revealed that teachers take advantage of recording and watching their video-captured lessons in various ways (Gün, 2011; Santagata & Angelici, 2010; Santagata & Guarino, 2010). The use of videos helps teachers to make a critical analysis of their teaching in detail and reflect on that (Savaş, 2012) and enhances teachers' awareness about teaching and learning (Kong, Shroff & Hung, 2009; Liu, 2012; Tripp & Rich, 2012).

As well as increasing awareness and reflection among teachers, the use of videos in teaching provides teachers with other benefits in terms of being more reflective and effective teachers. For example, videos offer an opportunity to understand the link between theory and practice (Dymond & Bentz, 2006), and make an analysis of the teaching and learning processes by allowing to "replay, freeze, or view actions frame by frame" (Hung Tan, Cheung & Hu, 2004). In this way, teachers realize certain aspects of their teaching and compare what they remember about their performance after the class and what they objectively see in the videos. That is, videos are considered as a "mirror" to one's own teaching since they reveal what really happens in the classroom as an authentic, real-world (Dymond & Bentz, 2006). Further, video-captured episodes of teaching allow teachers to "keep a record of and investigate their

actual performance in detail”, and “help teachers to track their own progress” (Chan, 2010, p.2). In this way, teachers have a great chance of analyzing, reviewing, and reflecting upon their individual, unique teaching practices (Lee & Wu, 2006). With the help of this analysis and evaluation through videos, teachers can identify their problematic areas, strengths, and weaknesses in their teaching performances (Eröz-Tuğa, 2013; Fakazlı & Gönen, 2017; Tripp, 2009). Rich and Hannafin (2008) also underline that video self-analysis may offer a window into teachers’ actual thinking, which aids researchers to understand the relationship between their beliefs and actions. Moreover, Lofthouse and Birmingham (2010) believe that video use is an advantageous medium for teachers to develop a more critically reflective approach, ascertain their own teaching behaviors in the classroom, and take actions for improving their professional actions.

As well as numerous advantages of video as a tool for reflection, it has also some limitations. Video use in the classroom entails much time and commitment (Lofthouse & Birmingham, 2010). It can be also demanding in terms of technical aspects (Lofthouse & Birmingham, 2010). Another disadvantage of video use is that it can arouse anxiety and stress in the classroom (Baecher, McCormack & Kung, 2014; Lofthouse & Birmingham, 2010).

However, the numerous benefits of this reflective tool compensate for its difficulties. It is clear above from the literature on video analysis of teaching as a reflective tool that video use is one of the effective ways of fostering reflective thinking, bringing about promising changes, creating awareness about one’s individual teaching performances, and thus expanding teacher professional development.

3.3. Reflective Peer Collaboration

Similar to reflective diaries and video recordings, reflective peer collaboration or session is a core way of engaging in critical reflection. During reflective peer sessions, teachers work and discuss together, produce ideas, interact with one another on their teaching practices, and learn from each other (Johnson, 2003). In this process, communication is an integral part of this reflection. The process that includes actively evaluating oneself ensures a supportive communication for professional improvement (Glazer, Abbott & Harris, 2004). In this regard, sharing with peers plays a powerful role in exchanging ideas and facilitating reflective thinking (Şanal-Erginel, 2006). In the current study, reflective peer session specifically refers to peer collaboration and cooperation by sharing critical teaching incidents from their classes with a peer, discussing the events and memories in detail, making reflections together, benefiting from each other’s opinions and suggestions, and thinking over the implications for further practices.

Reflective peer collaboration is also assumed to have a number of benefits for teacher development. For example, it helps to explore ideas about teaching and learning, enables reflection upon past experiences, enhances teacher quality, and accordingly improves the teaching and learning process (Britton & Anderson, 2010). Through peer sessions, teachers have a chance to become more conscious of their beliefs and assumptions and investigate the causes of these assumptions (Şanal-Erginel, 2006). In addition, it promotes both self-evaluation and collaboration for empowering teaching and facilitating learning (Fakazlı & Gönen, 2017; Kurtts & Levin, 2000; Vidmar, 2006). Likewise, Ross (1992) claims that collaborative reflection promotes student achievement by promoting the quality of teachers’ practices as well. As Johnson (2003) puts forward, collaboration with colleagues can open the way for continuous development and gaining more self-confidence. Besides, working together with other colleagues ‘triggers the sharing of experiences about cases and fosters the building of mutual understanding of common problems’ (Degeling & Prilla, 2011, p.133). Therefore, it allows for critically reflecting on classroom problems, trying out new ideas and solutions, creating new ways of instruction, providing fresh viewpoints, reviewing each other’s actions, and stimulating teacher growth (Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger & Beckingham, 2004).

Similar to reflective diaries and reflective video analysis, teacher collaboration can be also challenging. The difficulties of using this tool for reflection include time and space, the extra workload for teachers, lack of support by the institutions and extra organization (Lin & Xie, 2009).

Nevertheless, the advantages of reflective peer sessions outweigh their disadvantages. Thus, as the literature also supports, collaborative reflection with a peer or colleague can be accepted as another powerful way of promoting reflective thinking. It is not only working together but also a process of increasing cooperation with the help of careful planning and practice for the sake of being more reflective practitioners (Huston & Weaver, 2008).

4. CONCLUSION

It can be said that today the necessity for being a professional teacher arises from an increasingly complicated educational context, including a variety of students with diverse needs from different cultural and social backgrounds. In such a demanding educational setting, rather than depending on an accepted body of knowledge in teaching, it is strongly believed that teachers should be involved in reflective practices so as to become professional and effective teachers (Çimer et al, 2013). As a consequence of the professional enhancement of teachers through reflection, effective teaching is expected most likely to occur since reflective practice is considered as the essence of teachers' growth, professional development, and better teaching and learning.

Considering the importance of reflective practice as a valuable opportunity for teachers, the current paper aimed to indicate what reflection actually is and the role of reflective practice in teaching by drawing on the arguments and studies. Furthermore, the paper attempted to explain in what ways teachers can do reflective teaching practices. Specifically, the function of three different ways of doing reflective teaching; namely reflective diaries, reflective video recordings, and reflective peer collaboration were explained in the study. Therefore, the paper mainly intended to shed light on how important reflective practice is, how teachers can be reflective practitioners and how reflective teaching practices can be implemented through these three reflective tools.

To sum up, it is an undeniable fact that reflective practice has a considerable role in strengthening teachers. In the literature, reflective diary, reflective video analysis, and reflective collaboration are accepted to be some powerful ways for promoting teachers' reflectivity since they offer a good number of benefits to improve teachers' skills and practices.

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