RESEARCH ARTICLE

TEACHERS' CRITICAL REFLECTION AS A TOOL FOR SELF-REGULATION AND SELF-MONITORING IN CLASSROOM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Hany Zaky

College of Education, (Indiana University of Pennsylvania), 37 Regency Square, Indiana, PA, 15701

ABSTRACT

To formulate meaning is to make sense of the experience and interpretations of the same situation. Reflection equips educators with the methods to correct distortions in beliefs and problem- solving errors in classroom context. Critical reflection involves a critique of the presuppositions on which beliefs have been built (Mezirow, 2011). Educators strive to apply the designated curriculum purpose in classrooms. However, the application process starts with redefining the purposes and make changes for the implementation progress. Thence, educators need attaining the self-regulatory skills to enhance not only students learning growth but also their own perceptions of self-efficacy over the learning process. The thrust of this article is to pinpoint educators' transformation during curriculum implementations' processes. It highlights the major roles of self-regulation, self-efficacy, and self-monitoring as ways for transformation and professional developments.

INTRODUCTION

Within the Social Reconstructionist approach, educators experience the tools by which they can overcome the imbedded structures and practice that could work against better education for these recent pluralistic societies. To realize the change in classroom, many teachers should begin with transforming their attitudes and beliefs to shape a dynamic changing socialization in schools' setting. Teachers' preparation should provide teachers with the tools for thinking, conceiving new alternatives for educational environment improvement (Ladson and Billing, 2001). During the age of technology, there is a need for technical skills to enhance the lifelong learning. Therefore, the teachers' role should coup with these changes outside the school setting. Thence, the teachers need attaining the self-regulatory skills to enhance not only their students learning growth but also their own perceptions of self-efficacy over the learning process. Educators' experience in classrooms life situations leads to pedagogical interpretations that open the ways for more effective decision making. These decision -making procedures guide our professional development. The process of reflection spurs us to modify the deviations with our problem-solving.

Corresponding author: **Hany Zaky**
College of Education, (Indiana University of Pennsylvania), 37 Regency Square, Indiana, PA, 15701

Based on Mezirow' contribution (2011), critical reflection involves the presupposition critique on which educators' beliefs have been constructed. Therefore, we could understand the nature of adult learners' education based on our critical reflection that guides the process of teaching and learning in contexts. It is helpful to differentiate between two dimensions of teachers' classroom managements: the expectations that govern the classroom management sequence, and teachers' perspectives that guide the experience in classroom environment (Mezirow, 2011). Through these two dimensions, educators could redefine their personal identity, self-concept and values (Mezirow, 2011), it is the perceptive that provides principals for interpreting the classroom experience (Boekaerts and Rozendaal, J. S. 2010). Reflection is generally used as an equivalence to higher- order mental process (Mezirow, 2011). Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) reported that reflection is "a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to direct them to new understanding and appreciation" (p. 3). Therefore, reflection could include making inferences and evaluations as well as remembering and problem solving. Dewey (1932) wrote: It refers to assessing the grounds (justifications) of one's belief (p 9). Reflection is understood as an action predicated on the assumption's assessment. Thoughtful action is reflexive to critically examine the justification of one's belief (Mezirow, 2011). Critical reflections and thoughtful interpretations are the gates for

educators to explore their visions to develop the self-professional development.

Explanation: The reflection process includes: (1) looking backwards to gauge what is achieved/ succeeded or failed with in order to make sense of what is our successful situation as implementing our curriculum, (2) looking forward towards achieving our future curricular goals is a crucial process, and (3) responding to the situation at the moment which is improvisation that could be the heart of creativity within the curriculum application that needs a high teachers' awareness. So, taken these processes together, reflection involves both reviewing and projection. During our teaching process, we encounter some unfamiliar practices, we begin with partial insights to direct the way we collect data and compare incidents, key concepts, or words. Consequently, we relate emergent patterns to our perspectives. When the results do not fit our existing schema, we create new schemes to integrate them. Each item of relevant information becomes a building block of understanding which a step is forward for transforming our insights (Mezirow, 2011). It is a similar cycle to the hermeneutic circle described by Beane (2005). Thus, educators ought to be aware of the various styles of reflections (See Table 1).

Validating your justifications: Validating a belief in a realm of communicative learning and teaching involves making judgements regarding the situations in which what is asserted is justified (Hiebert, Gallimore and Stigler, J, 2002). It could be by turning to the authority, tradition, rationality, social norms, and cultural codes. The validity could be established with the existence of comprehensibility, appropriateness, and authenticity of what are practices in classrooms. Our perspectives on the other hand could trap us; hence, we could not make interpretations of our experience free from bias. Thence, our great assurance of objectivity comes from exposing an expressed idea to rational and reflective discourse. As situation change, social norms change and validity of what is asserted are subjects to change as well. We never have complete information, so we lack the ability to engage in rational and reflective argumentations. However, the fundamental need is to understand the meaning of our experience (Boekaerts and Rozendaal, J. S., 2010). This fundamental need suggests an epistemological foundation for understanding such constructs as rationality, freedom, objectivity, adult education development, social responsibility, and self-directedness (Mezirow, 2011). It is all about how you can critically reflect on your experience as educators during the implementation of your curriculum segment.

Critical Reflection (CR): CR addresses the question of the justification for the premises on which a situation is defined. It is by checking our prior knowledge to confirm that we have correctly proceeded to solve problems and dilemmas but become aware of our habitual expectations' patterns, and the perspectives' meanings with which we have been made sense out of our encounters with the world, others, and ourselves (Mezirow, 2011). Simply, we become critically reflective by challenging the known which is crucially personally learning and developing dynamic that could be a paradigm shift that Thomas Kuhn (1970) described as a way revolutions happen in science. As we encounter new perspectives, we understand our reality, personal, and the scientific paradigm shifts within our curriculum application that redirect the way we engage our world for the betterment of our students learning growth.

It is not clear how many teachers' educators are doing the critical reflection, Merryfield (2000) reported that the educators' consciousness of multiple perspectives and the process of making meaning from the interactions with the curriculum implementation directs those educators' future interaction with the curriculum implementation. Those educators could acquire the level of knowledge that is characterized by the concreteness and contextual richness than its generalizability, which enhances both their independence and interdependence (Hiebert, Gallimore, and Stigler, 2002). Thus, educators realize the urgent need for their vision transformation.

The need for transformation: Educational researchers have identified self- identification as a main characteristic that supports what is commonly referred to as cultural relevant or cultural responsive teaching (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). The teachers always examine their own privileges as employing their instructional methods during the curriculum implementation (Pennington, J. 2007). It is an urgent demand and a pervasive challenge to equip teachers with the tools that transform schooling into a just and equitable learning experience for all learners. Thence, that transformation starts with self-study of teacher education practice to their reflections on the various designed curriculum phases implementations as well as exchanging these reflections with the other colleagues for more insights.

What is transformation? Much of the research to date asserts that the transformation is the process of creating a significant change with the belief set (Valenzuela, 2002). Educators could examine their influence on their students within a single taught course through their supervision. That influence might lead to a transformation of students' learning attitudes. The teachers' transformation should be concurrent with the students in order for the curriculum to be successfully implemented. Transformation is the progressive evolution of one's own understanding and perspectives to meet more effectively the needs of all learners (Brookfield, 1995). It is marked by a disruption of cultural beliefs, and values through critical reflection in order to save more socially just teaching. It is a process in which teachers should think critically and challenge the ideas of how power and control are constructed in the curriculum implementation setting. This process can help educators understand their own cultural position and analyze why they might find particular students' behavior within the implication processes. The transformation of teachers to meet the progressive change with students' needs can lead to more democratic classroom where teachers recognize the power dynamics in educational processes and society as well (Beane, 2005). With better understand themselves, teachers' educators begin better understanding their students and curriculum.

Critical pedagogy and Transformation: The term transformation has many application and inquiries; however, all these inquiries suggest that teachers should undergo the "mental somersault" needed to challenge their cultural beliefs (Spindler and Spindler, 1993). To meet the increase diversity in classroom, educators should trace evolutionary patterns that could be through the various developmental stages with the curriculum application (Howard, 2007). Howard (2007) describes five transformative stages: (1) building trust, (2) engaging personal culture, (3) confronting issues of social dominance and social justice, (4) transforming instructional practices, and (5) engaging the entire school community (p.

17). I think that the process of transformation starts with personal relationship with the learning processes with regard to the contents and students and then moving to the community context.

Transformation is a progressive process. In teaching, one could not achieve high level of mastery and keep growing without being static. Brokfield (1995) reported that critical pedagogy is the process in which teachers are penetrators of their false consciousness that redirect their classroom practice for better curriculum applications. Moreover, Samaras (1998) wrote that preservice teachers: "Need the opportunities to confront their own situatedness, as male or female, and as members of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic groups" (p. 272). Thence, the teachers' transformation is the process of breaking the seal of the actual cultural encapsulation (Howard, 1999).

Transformational process and cognitive dissonance: The cognitive dissonance as a concept is not a new term. Many educators use the term in their work. For instance, Feldman (2003) proposed that cognitive dissonance is a frustration that is essential to true learning, it is the experience in which learning could occur through crisis. Thus, he raised the idea that teachers should be interested not in new information but in the path this new information could open for new curriculum application. Newmann (1987) stated that cognitive dissonance could lead to a discrepancy between the educators' stated beliefs and those educators' actions. Thence, increasing the educators' awareness of their culture and their students' social cultures is necessary.

Transformation and Multiculturalism: Within multiculturalism, teacher educators work to disrupt their cultural assumptions through their curriculum application procedures, field experiences, and supervision. Darling Hammond (2006) proposed the importance of developing the ability of educators to see their own perspectives as well as experiencing the powerful intervention with their students' cultures through reflection, guided experience, and inquiry.

Struggling with transformation: Samaras (1998) reported that there is an urgent need to equip educators with the power and desire to transform their students and themselves:

I wanted to create a classroom aura that prompted students to work at the rough edges of their competence and understanding. I had envisioned an environment of cognitive dissonance, in which students' notions of teaching were challenged by moral and intellectual discussions with peers, cooperating teachers, and professors, and where students were permitted to make and share their mistakes. (p. 63) Like Samaras, many educators struggle in their own pursuit to gain insight into the way through which they could create opportunities for transformation with both their students and themselves (Regenspan, B. 2002). It is a complex process as one tries to pass on opportunities and experiences with particular outcomes. It is a struggle within and against oneself. Alquist (1991) stated that it is as a ""double-bind situation" where she felt "simultaneously like the oppressor and the oppressed" (p. 165). Thence, Young (1998) stated that educators should open honest discussions that could provide opportunities for developing multiple explanations for better and influential curricular applications. The way for transformation is working on the critical pedagogy that could save the opportunity to meet the learners' needs. Teacher

educators are facilitators in this context, they are not an authority to control the content of the course. Ressler (2001) proposed that critical pedagogy provides teacher educators with golden opportunities for exploring their own understanding of their students' identities and examining the related issues with the curriculum. These accumulated insights direct educators' transformation for the influential curriculum implementation; however, tracing our biases in the field should be avoided.

Check your own bias: MacGillivray (1997) stated that educators are highly needed to deem their own biases as these biases could influence their understanding of both the taught content and learners. She explained that educators could keep wrestling with their teaching style as they did not consider teaching situations. Self- study is the process that occurs along a course of time, it is a key for transformation.

Explore your identity as an educator: The process of transformation starts with the educators' desires to learn and develop their professions. Felman (2003) reported that most educators have not had the experiences for learning transformation that could provide them with opportunities for redirecting their practice. Therefore, educators should negotiate the process of transformation between themselves and their learners. We need to identify the ways by which we could make sense of our identities, assumptions, and dispositions in the educational context.

Your philosophy aligns the pedagogical transformation: In order to understand the contradictions within our own theoretical beliefs, we urgently in need to "self-study". Without the conscious reflection on the encountered situations within the course application, teacher educators would not understand the modifications needed for their practice improvements. Many educators conduct self-studies in their classrooms in order to align their curriculum application with their philosophical belief system. Through this created alignment, educators could achieve the transformation of their practice. Ahlquist (1991) wrote: "A White female, examined her teaching of a multicultural foundations class in an effort to improve how she instructs her students, "to challenge the status quo in the hopes that they, as teachers of the future, will choose to take a stand in the interests of social justice" (p. 158). Ahlquist examines both her course materials and teaching strategies to better understand her students for effective engagement that leads to improving their contributions.

Transformation caveat: The examination of one's identity is complex and painful. It recalls thinking and rethinking of our familiar assumptions as well as knowing the means that we have to use for changing. Brookfield (1995) reported that conducting transformation in the presence of others can lead to cultural suicide which he stated that it could happen when "people who make public their questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations find themselves excluded from the culture that has defined and sustained them up to that point in their lives" (p. 235). Thence, teacher educators' self-study could keep the transformational process effective. However, as educators we need to be aware of these challenges that could be faced when thinking about actions. Redwood et al (1999) set out ten major action challenges that

Table 1. Reflection styles

Reflection style	Description
• Reflection in action (Reflection on a particular action) • Reflection on practice (Reflection after the event) • Reflection for action(reflection on thing have been done) Reflection with action	• It is formulated with the improvisation process during the implementation process. • It is formed with the reflection on something significant during the practice course. It is better to go back and look at events again. • When you are planning your future interventions. Its purpose is to understand what you have done better. • It is formulated with the consciousness existence for the future actions. It is about your conscious of your own skills and competencies.

Table 2. Action challenges

| Action Challenge	Description
1-Plan for action	All our action needs to be directed and guided by a plan.
2-Allocate for action	We need to have appropriate resources for effective actions.
3-Lead for action	The leading to improvement actions need to be well based on exercises, power, and persuasion.
4-Strengthen for action	The actions that lead to create chances for solid positions.
5-Mobiliz for action	Actions need motivated people to keep it going.
6- Clarify for actions	The actions of explain the reasons for changes in order to persuade the members to pursue the work for change.
7-Cultivate for action	The actions need understanding the individual talents.
8-Intergrate for action	Actions for improvement need different ways for working in order to overcome the barriers/ obstacles that could be faced.
9-Wire for action	Some actions need the support of information technology, and the well- managed information systems.
10-Re-energize for actions	Any action needs power and energy to keep it continuity.
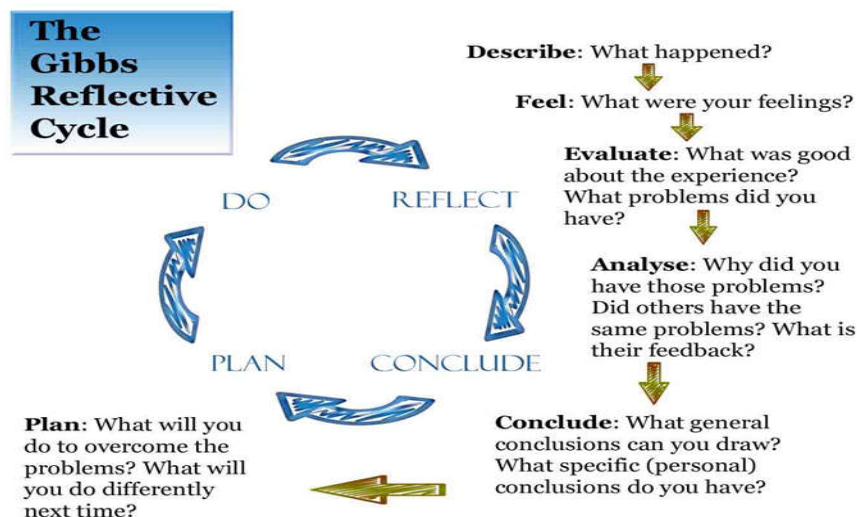
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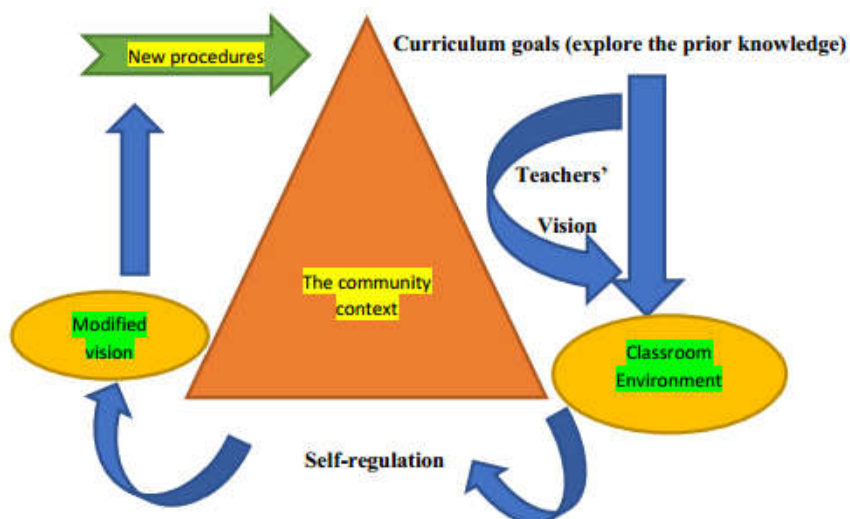
Figure 2. Teachers' transformational triangle

could be our way for creating more positive environment for more cogent curriculum application (see Table 2).

Transformational and effective teaching: Transformational teaching could transform the lives of students in classroom. Transformative educators are sensitive to the needs of their students' needs, constructing a rapport with them, and helping them to become self-actualization (Boyd, 2009). The Effective teaching is constructed on the ability of teachers to prepare, transform, and adapt the curriculum content to the needs of learners. Thence, teachers could encourage active learning culture by engaging and motivating learners in stress free classroom (Bista, 2011). Transformational educators set a communication respectable tone with students/ learners and deliver school's mission and curriculum goals to encourage their students (Mulford, andSilins, 2003). Therefore, educators could help his/her students to achieve the curriculum academic goals.

Self-regulation and transformation: The most important quality of human is the ability of regulating behavior (Zimmerman, 2000). The process of self-regulating learning is considered self-regulating in the range of learning contexts, or classroom setting. Pintrich (2000) stated that self-regulated learning encompasses the cognitive, motivational, behavioral, and contextual parts influencing goal-directed learning; therefore, it is the mediation among the learners, environment and achievement. In this context, self-regulating learning is contextual (Winne, 2010) that controls all the components to achieve the learning goals. It is a tool for adjusting the future performance; therefore, teachers' educators could manipulate it as a tool for their curriculum achievement goals. Within self-regulating learning, educators could actively construct meaning, goals, and strategies based on internal and external knowledge. The self-regulated learning provides learners/educators with the ability to monitor, and control their behavior, cognition and motivation along with some of their environmental aspects (Greene and Azevedo, 2007).

Zimmerman (1997, 2000) indicated that monitoring is a definitive quality of Self- regulation; it is away for learners and educators to monitor, regulate and control their learning environment. Self-regulation equips educators with the tools to control the contextual factors that are biological and developmental and the differences across the learners' congregation. Through the self-regulation, educators set their goals, and monitor their progress. These goals are considered tools for examinations as they relate to the professional development process in classrooms (see figure one). The content and achievement within classroom context could highlight the educators' ultimate performance. Wolters, Pintrich, and Karabenick (2003) stated that saving self-regulatory knowledge provides a cogent link between the ability and achievement. Finally, self-regulation reflects the process of planning, monitoring, and controlling that could have a general chronological structure. Pentrich (2004) proposed four stages for self-regulation: (1) forethought, planning, and activation, (2) monitoring, (3) control, and (4) reaction and reflection.

Self- mentoring and transformation: Educators could make a variety of monitoring judgement along the teaching path. Teachers could make judgements, and evaluations of their curriculum application knowledge to determine whether to continue with the use of the same techniques. Moreover, they might make evaluation for their performance by considering their learners' interactions to complete specific parts within the designed curriculum. Therefore, educators might control and regulate cognition by continuing use of a particular strategy or switch the strategy as an effort to progress improvement towards specific curriculum goals. They start with describing the situation that leads to evaluate the case and decide methods for improvement (Gibbs, 1988) (see figure 1). Finally, educators' cognitive reactions and reflections are grounded in task performance evaluation. Dewck (2006) reported that attributions of task success are associated with the strategy use; therefore, it is urgent for educators to construct their self-efficacy in terms of beliefs about the used strategy in classroom.

In the context of task goals, educators should monitor their motivational beliefs in order to increase their awareness of task performance. This task awareness could spur those educators' self-awareness of that current level of efficacy with the current implemented curriculum segment. Tracing this perspective may realistically guide educators along the learning goals applications. Within contextual monitoring, educators could involve the awareness of context aspects relevant to the implied task. They could recall their periodic reflections for the areas of success and failure for improvement. With active background knowledge, educators could build a base for their task application. They could progressively discuss and modify each phase of the curriculum.

Regulation of context: Through the context, educators could regulate the external environmental aspects that are within their control along the course of curriculum application. Perry, Turner and Meyer, 2006 stressed the impact of context on learning, educational contexts influence the self-regulatory strategies of learners and educators as well (Hadwin, Järvelä, and Miller, 2011). Thence, educators could create their transformational cycle for better curriculum implementation and professional development. It is the method and technique that help individuals reflect on their experiences to be engaged in progressive learning. It helps those individuals identify their paradigms and assumptions. Reflective practice enables educators to answer the question about what shapes their actions and supports their development. Reflective practice enables educators to answer the questions about how they could make a difference in their settings, and what good change is (Figure 2).

Conclusion

Understanding others' perspectives is in the heart of curriculum implications and development. One strategy educators should consider is acquiring the skills for critical reflections that is cogently related with self-regulation and pedagogical contexts. When promoting the progressive curriculum applications, it is important that in addition to understanding various curriculum application perspectives, we should be circumspect to what Irvine has called the cultural eye through which educators could watch their development and regulate their curriculum deliverance in the variety of classroom contexts. That cultural perspectives could increase the self-mentoring automatically; thence, educator could challenge their own cultural assumptions. Thence, I firmly believe that reflecting back values and beliefs along with the

continuous reflections on one' s own assumptions and biases as each curriculum segment is delivered is the only path of professional development.

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