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THE NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION IN TEACHING & LEARNING ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

3 in learner centered classrooms, John Dewey an American pragmatic pioneered
g Teaching methodology in the United States of America during the early decades of
tieth century. This methodology even today remains one of the effective teaching
logies in teaching learning process.

*Reflective Teaching is something that involves in self observation and self
n. In this methodology, a teacher assesses him/her self for the betterment of teaching
process. Donald Sachon suggests in his "Reflections of Actions" (1998) that
e Teaching is not momentary but a continuous process involving professionals and
iers. The present paper here focuses on a particular kind of Reflective Teaching
s, Reflective writing. Reflective writing is interconnected to Reflective thinking and
e Teaching.*

*Reflective writing is on what one is reflecting about to select just the most significant
the events or ideas. This paper broadly studies the salient features involved and their
use of Reflective writing with the special reference to the students of under
on who want to learn English as a second language.*

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believing in learner centred classrooms, John Dewey an American pragmatist
d revolutionary ideas in teaching learning processes, which routed out the traditional
ons of the classroom rubrics. The result was shift of classrooms from teacher centric
r centric. This shift caused the emergence of new trends in teaching learning process.
trends emerged in fields like curriculum, methodology etc. As the ways of traditional
learning process became irrelevant, new kinds of teaching learning processes
came into existence. The emerging demands in classroom teaching created the
to invent new trends in classroom teaching.

1 the process many new trends, techniques, strategies, methodologies are being
to cater the emerging demands. During the early decades of twentieth century John

Dewey pioneered many of these inventions. *Reflection* is one of the inventions during the course of time.

Jenny Moon defines Reflection as "*Reflection is a form of mental processing that we use to fulfil a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. It is applied to gain a better understanding of relatively complicated or unstructured ideas and is largely based on the reprocessing of knowledge, understanding and, possibly, emotions that we already possess.*" (2005)

In India seldom English is taught and learnt as second language. Usually learners learn English to fulfil their academic needs. Unfortunately till today in India English is treated as an elites' language rather than a house hold language. The status of English in India is an additional language besides mother tongue.

In the above circumstances the present paper focuses to trace out the necessity and importance of *Reflection* in teaching and in learning English as second language. The paper also tries to find out how reflective strategies such as *Reflective teaching* and *Reflective writing* contribute in learning English as second language. Reflective teaching is broadly concerned to teachers where as Reflective Writing is concerned to both the teachers and the learners as well.

To begin the discussion first we take one of the reflective strategies, *Reflective Teaching*, and to study how it is useful to teach English as second language.

Reflective Thinking

Reflective Teaching is one of the extended branches to reflective thinking. In reflective thinking one reflects one's point of view of experiences, situations, events that were encountered. Reflective thinking does not suggest the good or bad way of thinking but it examines the situation as it is. Thus reflective thinking provides an opportunity to analyze the situation. The analysis presents the total picture of the situation. Thus reflective thinking can be used as an instrument to examine the foundations like beliefs, values, attitudes etc.

Reflective thinking always adds new a finding to the existing knowledge. It is an inbuilt technology in every person. Reflective thinking teaches lessons, things to be remembered, and mistakes and so on, which guide a person to act accordingly to the situation.

Reflective Teaching

As said earlier, Reflective Teaching is one of the extended branches of reflective thinking. Donald Sachon suggests in his "*Reflections of Actions*" (1998) that Reflective Teaching is not momentary but a continuous process involving professionals and the learners. Sachon introduced and contributed to the concept of reflective practice as a critical process. Many scholars combine John Dewey and Donald Sachon in the birth of Reflective Teaching as a teaching and learning process.

Reflective Teaching a teacher involves in self observation and self evaluation. In methodology the teacher sets a self analysis of all aspects related to teaching and learning. Reflective Teaching is based on the principle of "Learning to teach and Teaching to

Reflective Teaching

Generally a Reflective Teacher follows the following step. The first step in Reflective Teaching is *planning*. To realize the set objectives, a teacher initially plans systematically a classroom teaching. In planning the teacher considers factors such as classroom size, content, methodology, use of technology etc.

The next step after planning is to *Act*. This is an execution phase. In this step the teacher executes his plan into action. The hypothetical part is being brought into action. This plan may or may not realize in total.

After the step "Act", the next step is "*Collection of evidence*". This is the very last step in Reflective Teaching.

The success of reflection depends on how a teacher devises effectively in collecting the evidence. The evidence is to be collected depending as per the requirement of reflection. The evidence may be taken orally, written or technology based. It can be collected from the teacher or peer group teachers. If it is collected from learners it may be done so from all the learners or selected group of learners as per the requirement. The collection process may be oral or written. The use of modern technology makes reflection more effective and reliable. With the help of modern electronic devices the teacher can record every incident and happening of a classroom.

The next important step is, "*analysis*". In this step the teacher has to analyze the evidence that have been collected. The analysis is to be done in a coherent and logical way. The analysis is not to be done with a pre occupied mind.

The final step in Reflective Teaching is *Reflection*. Here the reflection takes place on the analysis of evidence. The reflection may examine the perceptions of planning and execution. The reflection also considers experience, ideas, observations etc. The reflections are to identify the confusions, difficulties, obstacles etc. that are encountered during the process of executing planning. The reflection enables the teacher to know the success rate. It also throws light on the mistakes occurred and the areas to be improved. Thus resulting in a new way of teaching and learning process.

Reflective Teaching is a very useful methodology where English is taught as a second language. Generally in second language classrooms students prefer to observe to express. By using reflective teaching methodology in these classrooms, teachers may notice the short comings and can focus on the solutions. Reflective teaching provides an opportunity to reflect on their teaching particularly when they are teaching sound system of English. While teaching

phonetics teacher can collect evidences on the ways of articulation. By analyzing these ways teacher may advise the students for the betterment. By reflecting the total classroom teacher may improve the performance of classroom teaching. This methodology is also useful for teaching communication skills in English.

Reflective Writing

Reflective Writing is too like reflective teaching a useful strategy to teach English for second language classrooms. Among the various reflective strategies Reflective Writing is one of the prominent strategies. Reflective Writing is very much popular in the fields of Medicine and Law. Though Reflective Writing is widely used by the professionals, it is also useful to non-professional courses students. Reflective Writing as a strategy is useful to both the teachers and the learners. Reflective Writing contributes to explore the learning process. The systematic way of registration of data or content and its analysis provides students an opportunity to have clarity regarding to the learning process. It gives a better understanding of the learning process.

In India students who learn English are not much exposed to writing. When they have to produce something new in English they feel difficult to do so. Especially in examinations they try to reproduce the text that has memorized. When they are asked to reproduce something new they do not feel comfortable. To fill the gap teachers may assign Reflective Writing assignments to them. By verifying their responses teachers can advice where ever needed. It leads to the betterment of learning English as second language. Reflective Writing provides an opportunity to learners to improve their writing skills.

Reflective Writing involves four steps,

- 1) Responding an experience
- 2) Relating the experience to previous knowledge
- 3) Analyzing the causes
- 4) Reconstructing thinking.

Uses of Reflective Writing

- To make connections between previous and preset knowledge. . Reflective Writing helps to establish clarity in the connections between theory and practice.
- To examine learning process, Reflective Writing s very much useful.
- To integrate and relate knowledge Reflective Writing functions as an instrument.
- To reflect mistakes in learning process Reflective Writing is helpful.
- Reflective Writing keeps a learner always an active learner.

on Reflective Writing

It types of Reflective Writings are present to learn English as second language

Based on language content weekly entries may be made. Learners may enter their entries through these entries.

Group Diary: A group is formed and the group enters their reflections individually. It may be communicated to all the group members. It gives a scope for peer sharing.

Journal: In this, one can reflect source of evidence in one's essay. And also reflect one's learning.

Work: Generally for experiment based work reflections can be entered. This kind of Reflective Writing is useful in English language labs.

Peer Review: Students are involved to get feedback from their peers. It shows the peer group opinion.

Self Assessment: it is one's self critical comments on one's own work.

Conclusion

Students can be encouraged to adopt various Reflective Writing practices. They will enrich student learning abilities. Since Reflective Writing is mostly subjective, teachers should take additional care to incorporate Reflective Writing in writings like logical, analytical, hypothetical, critical and creative. For English language teaching Reflective Writing is much useful in teaching grammar, communicative skills, phonetics etc.

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