

What Contributes the most in Making a Good Language Teacher in this Ever-changing World?

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Abstract: The students' teachers do play a very significant role in shaping the lives and the formal education apart from building their overall personality and the long-term impact of the teachers' persona sometimes can be clearly felt in every individual even after they have embarked upon the final life journey or their career path.

If the teacher's role is so crucial in molding the character and the overall personality of the students, the moot question arises as to what extent the teachers themselves can bring about those much-desired changes in themselves to remain relevant and up to date in catering to the dire needs of the learners in their educational career and also keep themselves abreast of the current pedagogies and guiding principles in tandem with revolutionary and sweeping global technological changes.

Keywords: Formal education, career path, molding the character, crucial, pedagogies, global technological changes

INTRODUCTION

The pioneering role of a teacher in building up the edifice of every single student and paving the way forward for their career achievements and goal settings can never be overemphasized and this is a common knowledge that students always look forward to their teachers as a role model and the most trusty guide in their school, college and even university life not only for the instructional materials but also for extrinsic or intrinsic motivation for their career related assignments and projects completion.

In this light it becomes paramount for the teachers to continue being a reservoir of all the essential educational tools and stay equipped with the latest know-how of teaching and learning processes involved which may not be restricted to the coursebooks alone but also to the ever-technological advancements in this modern age.



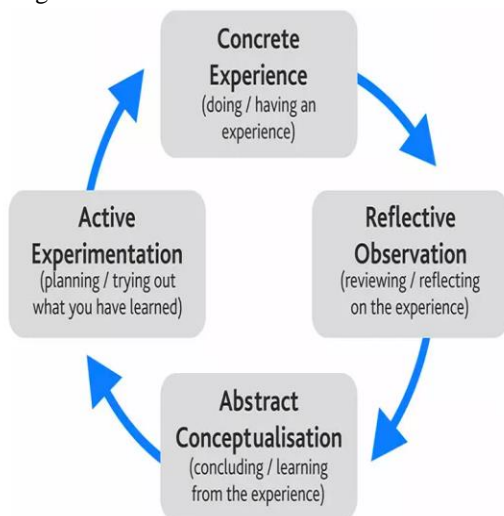
In order to facilitate the process of reflection on the knowledge and experiences people acquire during a capacity development trajectory or learning process we may have to alter our dogmatic approaches and brush up our pedagogic belief system.

We need a kind of learning that is able to make explicit and question our assumptions, values and ways of seeing the world, learning that invites us to continuously reflect on the tensions and contradictions between them, learning that reveals the powers and inequities that tend to keep things the way they are or force us in directions we may not want to go. In other words, learning that questions the taken for granted, the normalised, the hegemonic and the routine. But also learning that enables us to make change and to transform others, and ourselves while learning from trying to do so. And all this needs to happen in a world that is in constant flux, a world where what we thought to be true yesterday turns out to be quite different today.



BEING REFLECTIVE TO REMAIN PRODUCTIVE

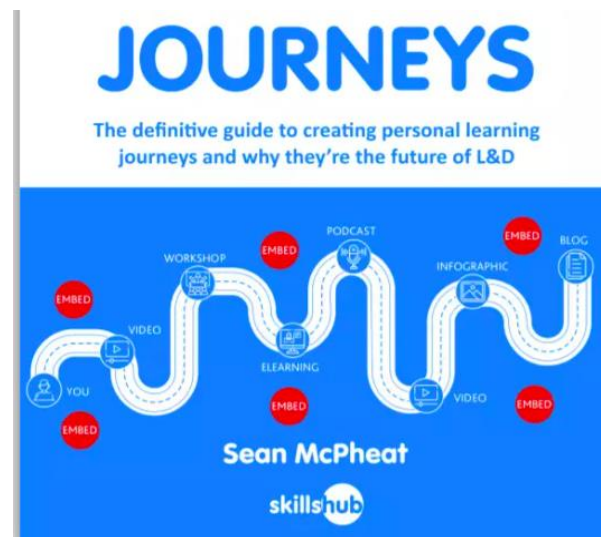
By explicitly integrating reflection in the learning process the learning will become clearer and better articulated and it will contribute more strongly to meaningful change in a complex context. They rightfully point out that being reflective, let alone being reflexive, is not something that always comes easily or naturally. In fact, people have a tendency to avoid the deeper questions and to steer away from the feeling of unease that is caused by friction, disruptions or dissonance. Yet it is these tensions and (inner) conflicts that create the kind of energy and questioning that is needed to actually learn, that is to actually re-think the way we think and, when the conditions are right, co-create new ways of thinking, seeing and doing.



ASSOCIATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Learning essentially takes place in the social as well as personal environment and both should be conducive to the teaching atmosphere also. At the individual level, we mainly rely on our internal cognitive and affective resources to gain any new knowledge. At social level, we keep interacting with other people who may share some common interests. During our interactions with others, we get many chances to revisit, reflect, refurbish or reform and refine our understanding of the nuances of certain language teaching and learning issues, rendering us more aware and knowledgeable. While both individual and social learning are useful, a growing number of scholars believe that social learning is vital in one's learning journey and professional development (Jacobs & Renandya, 2019; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Careful reading of the professional literature coupled with our own experience as language educators point to the importance of using a balanced approach to language learning (see Ellis, 2014; Nation, 2007).

GOOD LANGUAGE TEACHERS NEVER CEASES TO BE A GOOD LEARNER



We belong to a faced-paced world full of high frequency and rapid changes especially in the technological arena. In order to survive with these rapid changes, we need to evolve with new knowledge and skills, or we might run the risk of being irrelevant

and out of sync with new trends in the education fields and new challenges emerging out of their applications.

One such recent trend in language education is a concept of relatively more learner-centric approach, one that “seeks to facilitate a more active and more powerful role for students in their own present and future learning” minimizing their dependence on the teachers alone and devising ways of enhancing their own skills to gain more autonomy.

UNINTENTIONAL LEARNING

As learning’ is an authentic experience and encompasses sweeping across ‘Knowledge or competency transference’ within the colleagues as well as any ‘Communities of practice’

Learning is springled and spread across various activities, context and culture. It is more likely to be happening quite unintentionally rather than with the kind of sustained level of efforts required for other skills. This could be termed as process of “legitimate peripheral participation” and to foster such spontaneous learning process to set in social interaction and collaboration are vital. Knowledge needs to be presented in authentic contexts. In such situations learning has deeper layers. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.1)

In addition to learning new knowledge and skills, we are also supposed to be willing to relearn and unlearn some of our age-old beliefs about language learning and teaching which could have been practiced for ages but now has grown out of fashion with the advent of the technological revolution. For instance, the belief that a monolingual approach to second language learning is the key to enhance opportunities of learning in the target language does not hold much ground .

On the contrary ELT experts are of the strong views that students’ learning gets a lot more enjoyable when they resort to utilize the full repertoire of their linguistic resources while picking up any new language (Tupas & Renandya, 2021).

LANGUAGES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Using a multilingual or plurilingual approach in the language is being accorded a lot more significance than in the past. Despite all the progresses made in pragmatic knowledge description, instruction and assessment, foreign language teachers still face many

challenges in teaching it. Teaching and assessing pragmatic competence offer a plethora of challenges of varying nuances and one size solution never fits all. Teachers' perceived challenges might be related to their pre-service education program, orientation, content materials, mentoring process, assessment and evaluation, not to mention the opportunities for learners' exposure to natural language use outside the classroom boundaries and many more such dimensions.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE: A DOMINANT PARADIGM IN ESL/EFL TEACHER EDUCATION

Teachers scrutinizing their beliefs and practices of teaching with a critical analysis jolt forward to promoting reflective practices in various unique ways like keeping the habit of journal writing. There was a study conducted at my workplace which sought to investigate in what ways regular journal writing promoted reflective thinking. The study targeted ten highly experienced EFL teachers in(the kingdom of Saudi Arabian University) who came together weekly to reflect on their work. The process included regular journal writing by all ten participants in digital and hard forms. The study examined: 1) what the teachers wrote about in their journals; 2) whether the level of reflection was a just a narration of the past experiences or a critical appraisal. The teachers' journal entries were studied and color coded according to the topics they wrote about, and these served as a measure of critical reflectivity. The findings reflected that: 1) the teachers mentioned the day-to-day issues faced in their teaching, their personal beliefs and dogmas of teaching, and they described their approaches or modalities; 2) seven of the teachers were reflective in their orientation to teaching, the other three teacher were not which is indicative of the fact that journal keeping and writing helps in ascertaining the practicalities and barriers of teaching and learning.

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