

Encouraging Teachers to be Reflective: Advantages, Obstacles and Limitations

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Abstract : Within the constructivist perspective of teaching, which views skilled teaching as knowing what to do in uncertain and unpredictable situations, this research essay explores the topic of reflective teaching by investigating the following questions: (1) What is reflective teaching and why is it important? (2) Why should teachers be trained to be reflective and how can they be prepared to be reflective? (3) What is the role of the teaching context in teachers' attempts to be reflective? This paper suggests that reflective teaching is important because of the various potential benefits to teaching. Through reflection, teachers can maintain their voices and creativeness thus have authority to affect students, curriculum and school policies. The discussions also highlight the need to prepare student teachers and their professional counterparts to be reflective, so they can develop the characteristics of reflective teaching and gain the potential benefits of reflection. This can be achieved by adopting models and techniques that are based on constructivist pedagogical approaches. The paper also suggests that maintaining teachers' attempts to be reflective in a workplace context and aligning practice with pre-service teacher education programs require the administrators or the policy makers to provide the following: sufficient time for teachers to reflect and work collaboratively to discuss challenges encountered in teaching, fewer non-classroom duties, regular in-service opportunities, more facilities and freedom in choosing suitable ways of evaluating their students' progress and needs.

Keywords : creative teaching, reflective teaching, constructivist pedagogical approaches, teaching context, teacher's role, curriculum and school policies, teaching context effect

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