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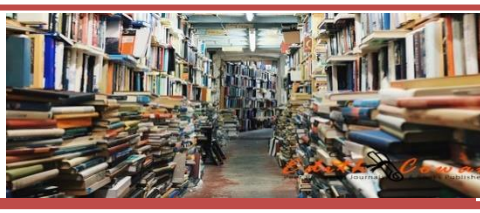

Preparing reflective teachers: An overview of instructional strategies which have been employed in preservice teacher education

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A B S T R A C T

This chapter describes several of the most common approaches to the preparation of more reflective teachers during preservice teacher education. After identifying the characteristics of and variability within this paradigmatic orientation, six specific strategies are discussed: action research; ethnographic studies; writing exercises; and the Ohio State 'reflective teaching' exercises. The paper also assesses the degree to which the benefits thought to be associated with inquiry-oriented strategies have been empirically validated by research.

Background

One continuing interest among teacher educators has been the development of training methods and instructional strategies which would facilitate the preparation of teachers who are reflective about their work. This chapter will provide an overview of several specific approaches to the development of more reflective teachers, which have been applied in pre-service teacher education together with an assessment of the empirical support which currently exists with regard to the efficacy of various approaches.

The preparation of reflective teachers is a goal which has a long history in teacher education. Conceptualizations have been developed and programs have been implemented which have had as their central aim the development of teachers who have the skills and dispositions to continually inquire into their own teaching practice and into the contexts in which their teaching is embedded. A few of the most common descriptors for the kind of teacher which is sought within this orientation have been the numerous programs based on Dewey's (1904) notion of "students of teaching", " teachers as action researchers" (Biott, 1983); "teacher scholars" (Stratemeyer, 1956); "teacher innovators" (Joyce, 1972); "teachers as participant observers" (Salzillo & Van

Fleet, 1977); "self monitoring teachers" (Elliot, 1976-77); "teachers as moral craftspersons" (Tom, 1984); "teachers as researchers" (Stenhouse, 1975); and "reflective teachers" (Cruickshank, in press; Zeichner & Liston, in press).

These conceptual orientations to the development of more reflective teachers differ sub stantially on a number of important issues. Tom (1985) has mapped out some of the most important parameters of this 'inquiry-oriented' approach to teacher education (Zeichner. 1983) and has identified several important dimensions along which the various conceptions may be distinguished.* Tom (1985) argues that there are at least three dimensions which can serve to distinguish varying approaches to inquiry-oriented teacher education. First. although there is consensus among teacher educators that the process of making the teaching situation problematic is central to the process of inquiry, differences arise among the various approaches as to which aspects of teaching should be the object of problematic thinking. Tom (1985) outlines various "arenas of the problematic" embedded in alternative approaches to inquiry-oriented teacher education which differ according to their scope and comprehensiveness. These arenas range from those which are very narrow in scope (e.g. encompassing the teaching learning process or the teacher's subject matter knowledge) to more comprehensive approaches which seek to make problematic ethical and political principles underlying the teaching act and the contexts in which teaching is embedded.

Tom (1985) also differentiates inquiry-oriented approaches according to the model of inquiry they employ. He distinguishes inquiry strategies which differ in their rigor (common sense versus disciplined approaches) and according to whether they lead to inquiry into knowledge alone or into 'actions' which encompass both thought and behavior. The final distinction that Tom (1985) makes is with regard to the stance taken within an approach toward the ontological status of educational phenomena. He distinguishes those approaches which regard educational phenomena as more natural and law-like from those which view reality as more socially constructed.

Tom's (1985) analysis emphasizes the important differences among the various conceptualizations of inquiry-oriented teacher education. Although teacher educators often use the same labels such as 'reflective teaching' and employ strategies (e.g. action research) which may appear similar on the surface, we need to recognize that those who employ the approaches described below are not necessarily committed to the same ends beyond their general agreement on the importance of providing some vehicle for structuring the analysis of teaching. What it is that teachers reflect about and the degree to which their inquiries potentially empower them to control their own destinies and the nature of the settings in which they work are areas where one can find substantial differences across approaches. Advocates of all of the approaches to be described below do agree however, that some form of reflectiveness needs to be engendered during pre-service training if we can reasonably expect teachers to display the qualities of reflective teaching during their in service years.

Strategies for the Development of Reflective

Teachers One way to distinguish various strategies for the preparation of reflective teachers is according to the level at which an intervention is directed. Here, while there have been several efforts to reformulate an entire pre-service teacher education program with the development of reflective capabilities as the driving force (e.g. Korthagen, 1985; Valli, Blum & Taylor, 1986), most inquiry-oriented teacher educators have sought to prepare more reflective teachers by altering specific courses or program components within an overall program context which remains unchanged. This failure of many inquiry-oriented interventions in teacher education to address the ways in which the institutional contexts of both campus-based and field-based components inhibit the reflectiveness which the interventions seek to promote, will become significant when we examine the efficacy of various inquiry-oriented approaches. Despite this failure of inquiry-oriented teacher educators to confront the limitations of their own instructional contexts with regard to the goal of reflective teaching, the approaches vary according to the degree to which they explicitly link the goal of developing reflective teachers with the need f& changes in the structure and organization of schools and the occupation of teaching. Here the approaches range from those such as Cruickshank (in press), Yinger and Clark (1981) and Lind (1984) who implicitly suggest that the development of reflective teachers by itself is sufficient to those such as Adler and Goodman (1986) and Zeichner and Liston (in press) who suggest various kinds of changes in schools which must accompany changes in the preparation of teachers to those such as Beyer (1984) who suggest the kinds of changes in the social and political and economic fabric of society which must also occur if changes in both teachers and schools are to be possible.

Another important difference among the various approaches to developing the reflective capabilities of prospective teachers is the degree to which an approach specifies a set of specific components for the reflective process or steps to be taken toward the goal of reflectiveness. * On the one hand we have approaches which advocate the use of a particular strategy such as journals without specifying either the components of reflection associated with the use of journals or the specific ways in which journals are to be used by teacher educators. On the other hand, we have very precise statements of the components of reflection and/or very specific suggestions as to how a particular instructional strategy should be used. For example, statements of the components of the reflective process range from the very general statements of those like Beyer (1984) who argues that we should help prospective teachers to adopt a 'critical' stance toward their teaching and the contexts in which it is embedded, to those like Zeichner and Liston (in press) who specify specific dispositions and types of thinking associated with reflectiveness, to those like Korthagen (1985) who specifies a set of specific phases or steps involved in the reflective process. The instructional strategies designed to foster reflectiveness range from the very detailed and precise steps or activities associated with particular strategies (e.g. Cruickshank, in press; Yinger & Clark, 1981; Gitlin et al., 1984; Posner, 1985) to more general discussions of the use of particular strategies such as ethnography, action research or student teaching seminars without discussion of the specific ways in which the strategies are to be used (e.g. Zeichner & Liston, in press; Biott, 1983).

A final distinction among the various approaches is the degree to which an approach is explicitly justified by reference to a particular theoretical position. For example, some inquiry-oriented approaches are supported by reference to particular learning theories (e.g. Korthagen, 1985; Yinger & Clark, 1981); particular conceptions of reality such as critical theory (e.g. Adler & Goodman, 1986; Beyer, 1984) or by the desirability of particular conceptions of the teacher's role (e.g. Zeichner and Liston, in press; Ruddick. 1985). Other approaches are presented as contributing toward a general goal such as enhancing the opportunities for teacher learning in a particular component of teacher education such as field experience but without any particular theoretical justification (e.g. Erdman. 1983).

Literature Review

Action Research

Action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in a social setting in order to improve their own practice, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out (Kemmis, 1985). Action research has a long history in education and has been employed periodically over the last forty years or so as a form of staff development for practicing teachers. It has also been employed less frequently within pre-service programs as one vehicle for preparing more reflective teachers who are capable of researching their own practice (Biott, 1983). Although there are many different versions available of the stepwise and cyclical action research process, Kemmis and McTaggart's (1982) description of the stages of reconnaissance, planning, acting, observing and reflecting is a typical example of the way in which teacher educators have conceptualized the strategy of action research. Sometimes prospective teachers move through the action research process individually (Zeichner & Liston, in press) and at other times teams of student teachers have worked collaboratively on common problems (Lind, 1984). Sometimes pupils have been involved in an active way in student teachers' action research projects (Biott, 1983) and sometimes they have not. Sometimes student teachers who are engaged in action research are placed in classrooms with cooperating teachers who are themselves practitioners of action research (Perrodin, 1959), but most often they are not. There is also a great deal of variation evident in the literature with regard to the kinds of problems prospective teachers have explored through action research. Some teacher educators apparently have very broad limits with regard to the kinds of problems which are acceptable for investigation. Other teacher educators provide more specific guidance for students and place limits on the topics which are acceptable for action research (Tinning et al., 1985). Some university personnel have been engaged in action research with regard to their own practice as teacher educators to provide a model for the kinds of inquiry which they seek to encourage in their students (Noffke, 1986). It should also be noted that in a few of the cases where teacher educators have claimed to involve prospective teachers in the action research process, the inquiry process described does not embody the commonly accepted characteristics of action research (Wanna, 1986; Cohen & Alroi, 1981).

Numerous claims have been made with regard to the benefits of engaging prospective teachers in action research. For example, it has been ciaimed that action research gives prospective

teachers greater insight into teaching, sharpens their awareness and reasoning capabilities and leads to improved problem solving and to greater flexibility and openness to change (e.g. Lind, 1984; Perrodin, 1959). Despite these claims, attempts to specifically investigate the impact of action research in preservice teacher education have been meager. What does exist are presentations of the case for the use of action research without any empirical validation of the claims made (e.g. Biott, 1983), and very general statements of the presence of the benefits made on the basis of observations of student teacher discussions of action research projects during seminars (e.g. Lind, 1984) or on the basis of comments made by student teachers in course evaluation forms or in writeups of action research projects (e.g. Cohen & Alroi, 1981; Lind, 1984; Perrodin, 1959). The Wisconsin Studies of Teacher Socialization (Zeichner and Liston, in press) address the character and quality of supervisory discourse and teacher learning within a student teaching program which has action research as one of its central components, but it is not possible to attribute any of the outcomes of this research specifically to action research apart from the other characteristics of the program.

Ethnography

Several teacher educators have advocated the use of ethnographic methods as a strategy for preparing more reflective teachers. Ethnography has been used both within campusbased courses (Gitlin & Teitelbaum, 1983; Beyer, 1984) and field experiences (Zeichner & Teitelbaum, 1982; Zeichner & Liston, in press). In both cases students spend some time in schools studying various aspects of classrooms, curriculum, and teacher-pupil interactions, with varying degrees of guidance provided by teacher educators. With the use of ethnography the school, which has most often been utilized as a model for practice, becomes a social laboratory for study, critique and discussion and potentially for reform (Salzillo & Van Fleet, 1977). Although the kinds of topics which students have investigated through ethnographic methods have been clearly illustrated in the literature, the specific methodological procedures employed by students have not been clearly decribed except by references to particular methodological texts (Spinder, 1982) in descriptions of training provided to students.

Through the use of ethnographic methods teacher educators hope to make problematic common sense, perceptions and assumptions about schooling and to help students see and invent alternatives to current practices. Most teacher educators who have described the use of ethnographic methods in preservice teacher education programs have also guided students to explore the ideological nature of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation and the interrelationships between these socially constructed practices within the school and the social, economic and political contexts in which they are embedded.

Several claims have been made by these teacher educators about the potential benefits which are likely to result from the use of ethnographic methods in teacher education. For example, Beyer (1984) has argued that the use of ethnography contributes toward the development of teachers who are ‘wide awake’, ethically sensitive, politically conscious and personally creative. Gitlin and Teitelbaum (1983) argue that ethnography will help sensitize prospective teachers to

the educational and political commitments embedded in even the most mundane of school activities, and will help expand students' ideas about what is possible to accomplish within schools. Here, as in the case of action research, there has been very little attempt to directly assess the impact of the strategy. At most, isolated anecdotes are cited (e.g., Gitlin & Teitelbaum, 1983) to illustrate how specific students saw aspects of the hidden curriculum in a school that they weren't aware of before or of how students saw possibilities for change that they hadn't noticed or thought of prior to engagement in ethnography. This scattered evidence of the presence of some of the potential benefits of ethnography is interesting but is hardly sufficient. Here again, the Wisconsin Studies of Teacher Socialization offer additional evidence from longitudinal studies of teacher learning within a program which utilizes ethnography. but it is not possible to sort out the effects of ethnographic studies from the effects of the other elements of the program. (Zeichner & Liston. in press).

Writing and Reflection

There are many examples in the literature of attempts to utilize some form of writing to stimulate reflection about teaching. Stover (1986) outlines several specific ways in which teacher educators can deliberately use writing to facilitate teacher learning rather than merely to evaluate it. Journals have been widely utilized in preservice teacher education programs for many years, but it has only been recently that materials have begun to appear which offer specific guidance to both teacher educators and teachers regarding the use of journals to foster personal and professional development (e.g., Yinger & Clark, 1981; Holly, 1984). Other more structured forms of written expression such as the 'systematic reflection' and implicit theory exercises of Yinger and Clark (1981), portfolios (Walker, 1985), or the autobiographical method of currere (Grumet, 1978) have been utilized in addition to the journal.

Yinger and Clark (1981) argue that the journal "puts writers in a position to learn at least four important things about themselves: (1) what they know, (2) what they feel, (3) what they do (and how they do it) and (4) why they do it." They as well as others (e.g., Walker, 1985; Stover, 1986) are able to cite several examples of research outside of teacher education which have documented the effects of writing on stimulating higher levels of thinking and increased awareness of the personal values and implicit theories through which one approaches experience. The empirical evidence supporting the role of writing in stimulating reflection about teaching, however, is rather weak. In one frequently cited study of Benham (1979), student teachers who were exposed to reflective writing activities showed less movement toward custodial attitudes about pupil control than those who weren't so exposed, but the differences were very small and could not be attributed to the writing activities alone. Yinger and Clark (1981) conducted two evaluations of the use of the 'teacher journal' in introductory educational psychology courses at Michigan State University. In both cases students' course evalutions indicated that the students felt that the writing experiences were useful in helping them to relate what they learned from the course to their experiences outside of class. Although prospective teachers' writings have been utilized for many years to help teacher educators understand teacher learning during pre-service

teacher education (e.g., Iannaccone. 1963) we don't as yet have clear empirical validation of the many claims made regarding the educative value of writing for prospective teachers.

Supervision and Reflective Teaching

As teacher educators have begun to restructure field experiences to enhance the degree to which they are utilized as occasions for teacher learning (Zeichner. in press), new supervisory methods have been set forth which place more emphasis on developing the reflective capabilities of prospective teachers than traditional supervisory methods. Examples of these inquiry-oriented supervisory approaches include "partnership supervision" (Ruddick & Sigsworth, 1985), "situational teaching'* (Cohn. 1981), "horizontal evaluation" (Gitlin, Ogawa Jt Rose, 1984), "selective supervision" (Tom. 1972) and some Developments in Training Methods 571 critically oriented versions of clinical supervision (Zeichner & Liston, in press).

There is some empirical evidence that supervision conducted in a particular way results in reflective discussions about teaching (during supervisory conferences) which include attention to aspects of teaching which have frequently been neglected in supervision (e.g., justifications for classroom actions, consideration of the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching). Gitlin et al. (1984) for example, show how student teachers' analyses of their teaching during conferences were truncated by supervisors' prescriptions in a control group who were not trained in horizontal evaluation. The students in the experimental group who worked with supervisors trained in horizontal evaluation engaged in more extended analyses of their teaching. Zeichner and Liston (1985)) in an analysis of supervisory conference discourse in a student teaching program with reflection about teaching as its control goal. Found higher than expected incidence of justificatory and critical discourse.

This evidence of the impact of particular forms of supervision on the supervisory process, however, does not address the impact of the supervisory methods on the knowledge, skills and dispositions of prospective teachers. Here we have some evidence based on case studies of four student teachers that 'partnership supervision' contributes towards the development by students of more balanced and reasoned self analysis skills and towards an enhanced ability to perceive significant detaIs in the classroom (Ruddick & Segsworth, 1985). Other than this one study, the literature on supervision in preservice teacher education does not demonstrate the impact of a supervisory approach on prospective teachers except by general references to observations by teacher education program staff (e.g., Cohn, 1981), or to studies of teacher learning which do not directly link evidence of teacher learning to supervisory intentions apart from other program characteristics (Zeichner & Liston, in press).

Curriculum Development and Analysis

Another approach to the preparation of more reflective teachers is the focus of some teacher educators on preparing teachers who are 'use~developers' of curriculum. Those teachers, according to Ben Peretz (1984), are aware of critical choice points in the curriculum development process and have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to participate in the design and/or

adaptation of school curricula. This active role for teachers in the curriculum development process is seen as an alternative to the currently dominant view of teachers as implementers of predesigned instructional programs (Adler & Goodman, 1986). Adler and Goodman (1986), Goodman (19&a, b) and Beyer (1984) provide descriptions of attempts to restructure methods courses and field experiences towards the goal of empowering prospective teachers as decision makers with regard to curricular issues. In each of these cases, students are taught a specific approach to curriculum design which entails consideration of technical, educational and moral issues at each stage of the process and which requires original contributions by students. Students are then required to develop, teach and evaluate a curriculum unit or project as part of a practicum experience. Zeichner and Liston (in press) and Ben Peretz (1984) on the other hand, describe ways in which prospective teachers are or can be involved in the analysis of school curricula and of the curriculum development process in schools. Here the focus is on increasing sensitivity to the values and assumptions embedded in particular curriculum materials and programs (e.g. assumptions about teachers and learners) and to the reasons for and influence on the curriculum development process in specific settings rather than on the development of curriculum.

Teacher educators have identified several potential benefits which are hypothesized to occur as a result of involvement in these 'teacher empowering' approaches to curriculum development and analysis. Goodman (1986a) for example, refers to students' broadened conceptions of teaching and enhanced sense of professional autonomy which are expected to result. Adler and Goodman (1986, p.7) are "encouraged by the fact that many of our students do begin to look critically at the processes and underlying values of school knowledge, at realistic alternatives within schools and at their role as future curriculum developers." These and similar conclusions from other inquiry oriented efforts which focus on curriculum development and analysis are based mainly on comments made by students in course evaluations and on informal assessments of students' coursework. Goodman (1986a, p. 119) in fact states that "systematic research into the way in which students were affected by their participation in this block has not been conducted." Although the examples of student comments which are cited in the reports of these efforts are suggestive of program impact, Goodman's statement applies to most of the work in this area. Much work remains to be done to systematically document the effects which are suggested by isolated cases.

Materials and Methods

Reflective Teaching'

One final approach to enhancing the reflective capabilities of prospective teachers which needs to be mentioned is the 'Reflective Teaching' procedure which has been developed and field tested at Ohio State University (Cruickshank, in press). This fairly structured approach to stimulating reflection on teaching which is implemented on campus as a supplement to school-based clinical experiences, involves repeated cycles of planning, teaching, testing and reflection. One individual in each of several small groups of prospective teachers teaches the same short lesson of about 15 minutes which is selected from one of 36 'Reflective Teaching Lessons'

developed by the program designers in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Immediately after each Reflective Teaching lesson. learner achievement and satisfaction are assessed using instruments provided with the lesson. Then students discuss the lesson in small and large groups with a focus on the variables which appeared to have affected teaching and learning. The original version of Reflective Teaching focuses on reflection about lessons which are intended to be 'content free's0 that attention can be focused on the process of teaching. Gore (in press) has criticized this separation of content from reflection about teaching and has proposed a modified version of Reflective Teaching which attempts to broaden the scope of what is considered problematic during the reflective process beyond the teaching and learning process and teaching techniques.

Despite an extensive list of benefits which are believed to be associated with participation in Reflective Teaching (Cruickshank, in press) and the unquestioned popularity of the approach, the empirical evidence which exists in support of the existence of these potential benefits is surprisingly meager. One frequently cited benefit of Reflective Teaching for example; is that students will grow in their ability to think and talk critically about teaching and learning. One study reviewed by Peters (1985) provides some support for this claim. Students who participated in Reflective Teaching produced proportionally more analytic statements than those in a control group in response to two sentence stems ("When 1 think about teaching . . . When I think about learning . . . "). The existence of other potential benefits has not been documented in studies of Reflective Teaching such as the enhancement of students' abilities to perceive a greater number of variables in a teaching episode. Gore (in press) has argued that '*the extensive list of potential benefits is not actually a summary of research outcomes, but is rather a series of cautious statements about the opportunities that Reflective Teaching might provide." As in the other approaches to preparing more reflective teachers described above, much work remains to be done to substantiate the efficacy of the approach.

Conclusion

A few general statements can be made about the extant research base for inquiry oriented approaches to pre-service teacher education in addition to the obvious conclusion that much more research needs to be initiated which systematically addresses the impact of specific approaches. This area of inquiry clearly needs to move beyond self-reports and isolated examples of success if it is to gain legitimacy within the teacher education community. One important aspect of this research should be efforts to assess through longitudinal studies whether, in what circumstances, and with what effects, teachers continue to employ various inquiry-oriented strategies which were introduced during pre-service training. The Wisconsin Studies of Teacher Socialization (Zeichner and Liston, in press) is the only example this author could find of an attempt to assess the degree to which the impact of an inquiry-oriented pre-service program persisted beyond the pre-service period. As has been already pointed out, this one example, although providing some evidence of programmatic impact, does not enable us to attribute the achievement of desirable outcomes to

particular components of the pre-service program. Inquiry-oriented approaches can only be considered to be effective if teachers continue to be reflective outside of the training environment.

Another important theme which emerges from a reading of this research literature is that most attempts to enhance the reflective capabilities of prospective teachers have occurred as isolated efforts within program and organizational contexts which remain unchanged. Benham (1979) has argued that an emphasis on reflective thinking needs to be incorporated into every aspect of a teacher education program from beginning to end. The genera1 literature on reflection and education has continually emphasized the importance of an organizational context which is supportive of reflective activity (Schon, 1983). Even with the small number of research studies which exists in this area, there is already evidence of the need to move beyond changing isolated components of pre-service programs to more comprehensive changes which provide organizational environments more supportive of reflective activity (e.g. Benham, 1979; Zeichner & Liston, in press). As more studies begin to accumulate, the need for more structural interventions in inquiry-oriented teacher education is likely to become a critical issue.

There is also some evidence in the literature that efforts to enhance the reflective capabilities of prospective teachers are more frequently successful with those students who are already reflective and less successful and more frequently criticized by those student who are not predisposed to reflect about their teaching (e.g. Korthagen, 1985; Goodman, 1986a). Ultimately research on inquiry-oriented approaches in pre-service teacher education needs to be able to document success with all prospective teachers, not just with those 574 H. H. TILLEMA and S. A. M. VEENMAN who in all likelihood would be reflective anyway. Formal programs of pre-service teacher education are only one of many factors which contribute to teacher learning. The research in this area needs to be able to document the particular contribution of pre-service programs apart from other influences and to identify the ways in which particular approaches enhance the reflective capabilities of teachers. The research agenda in this area is a large one. Hopefully, inquiry-oriented teacher educators will begin to move beyond the kinds of impressionistic studies that characterize the area and mount the kinds of systematic investigations which are warranted by the unquestioned importance of the goals which are sought.

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