

Chapter 4

A Booster for Turkish Novice Teachers: Reflective Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines the many ways in which reflective teaching could be adopted during formal teacher inductions. It sums up the induction policies, programs, and reflective teaching methodology facilitated in the curricula in a number of countries. Policies and activities in Turkey where reflective teaching has recently begun to show in informal teacher induction programs will be discussed. Problems regarding practice of reflective teaching during induction programs in Turkey and some others will be reviewed. Reflective teaching practices during pre-service training prior to formal induction will be mentioned. Research that highlights ways in which teachers can develop their reflective teaching will be explored. Finally, some recommendations that might help enhance novice teachers' reflective teaching perceptions will be made.

INTRODUCTION

A school manager was heard saying “We’ve had a tremendously hard year this year as we’ve worked with more novice teachers!” Though this statement propagates limited information, the following assumptions could still be made. Firstly, formal induction of the teachers that had started work just that year may not have gone very well and, as such, a number of shortcomings may have been experienced in the programme. Certainly, we would require more information in order to be able to draw any firm

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conclusions. However, one could easily say to the manager “It is absolutely normal for those new teachers to have had such a hard year and so have you!”

As professional knowledge is a required competency in the real educational contexts (Schön, 1987), as is the case in many other countries, novice teachers in Turkey face many professional, social and emotional induction problems (Akdağ, 2012; Korkmaz, Saban, & Akbaşı, 2004; Öztürk, 2008; Yılmaz, 2004). For novice teachers, reflection is a gateway to resolve such problems (Hammond & Collins, 1991) by the way of initiating to think on their teaching and get feedback from other stakeholders of the curriculum they instruct. Additionally, as Van Manen (1995) argues, reflection helps them investigate the very nature of teaching-related theories and the impact they bear on real-life learning situations.

Therefore, in order to help address some of the issues, induction programmes play an important role in novice teachers’ learning to deal with their multi-faceted problems as well as their continuous professional development (European Commission [EC], 2010). Many countries have recently designed and developed formal induction programmes. One of the key objectives of such programmes is to help novice teachers develop their reflective teaching skills (EC, 2010; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2014a).

This chapter has three purposes: to give theoretical knowledge about reflective teaching in summary, to present some studies on reflective teaching in Turkey, and to make some suggestions to improve the reflective teaching activities in induction processes. Furthermore, this chapter hopes to inspire teacher education policy makers in deliberation on reflective teaching for the novice teachers; to provide some knowledge and advice for teacher educators (school administrators, mentors and university staff) in terms of mentoring novice teachers on reflective teaching; to provide novice teachers with some practical hints to make the most of their reflective teaching in induction processes; and to help draw educational researchers’ attention to the research problems on reflective teaching.

BACKGROUND

Education can be likened to an ocean since it is a vast area comprising political, societal, economic, psychological, aesthetical, etc. constituents. In order to be able to live, develop and help others develop in this ocean, a teacher needs to be an expert swimmer/teacher. Also, learning to swim/teach is a life and career-long learning process that begins during pre-service. For that reason, acquisition of basic swimming/teaching skills is so vital for one so that they will not get lost in the ocean of education. Teachers whose reflective teaching practice has grown during pre-service education may assimilate fundamental teaching knowledge and skills and continue to develop

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