

# Role of Critical Reflection in Practicum of Pre-service Teacher Education

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## Abstract

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*This paper is an attempt to enhance the perspective of reflection in the discourse of teacher education. The study tries to look at the notion of critical reflection as a possible source of pedagogical knowledge in the pre-service teacher education programme. Through this paper an attempt has been made to understand how student teachers' critical awareness of themselves and their beliefs lead to the development of personal and professional knowledge. The data for the study was obtained from the teaching experiences of student teachers of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) programme. The participants were six student teachers doing their practice teaching in a central school of Delhi. It was observed that student teachers come to teacher education program with a set of beliefs and preconceptions about teaching-learning process as well as of learners based on their own experiences as student. It was also found that through dialogue and guided practice student teachers can examine their and others' pedagogical practice as critical. The findings of the study could help in making the school experience programme more comprehensive and meaningful for the student teachers.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Recent researches in teacher education contend that in order for teachers to be transformative in practice, it is crucial that they reflect

on their experiences of teaching (Cochran, Smith and Fries 2008). This process of reflection and continuous critical examination of one's own teaching practice needs

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to be an integral part of pre-service teacher education programme. The *National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education* (NCFTE) 2010 has recognised the need of reflective practice as the central aim of teacher education. However, the current teacher education programmes seem woefully inadequate especially with respect to the contemporary social realities taken note of by the *National Curriculum Framework* (NCF) 2005, NCFTE 2010 and Right to Education (RTE) 2009. There is now a need to re-conceptualise how teacher professional knowledge takes into its fold the socio political and cultural discourses. In the Indian context, this becomes even more crucial as ours is a diverse society with varied culture and ethnicity. It seems that teachers are not prepared to grapple with situations of inequality and injustice. Consequently, development of a critical consciousness and thinking through the process of reflection can help in development of teacher as an agent of social change.

The majority of teacher education programme curricula focus on subject content rather than on socio economic and cultural realities of everyday life. A dominance of technocratic rationality can be seen as manifested in the training of prospective teachers. Majority of teacher education programme focuses on building 'techniques' of student teachers on how to control student discipline, teach a given subject effectively, and organise a day's activities as

efficiently as possible. The dominant understanding of teacher education in India till now stresses on the subject matter or content that a teacher needs to know before entering the classroom. However, the conscious neglect of inherent complexities of the pedagogical process remains absent from the student teachers educational process. The emphasis of teacher education programs need to be on educating future teachers as scholars who can develop solutions to immediate school problems, critique policies and substitute the discourse of management and efficiency through critical reflection. The practicum of teacher education programme can provide a crucial space where student teachers can build a critical outlook on various educational policies and on developing skills that will further help them in understanding socio-political-historical realities of the society. Viewed in such light, teachers can develop as professionals with their own agency and capacity to learn from experience.

For Giroux (2010), pedagogy has to be meaningful in order to be critical and transformative. This mean that personal experience can become a crucial and meaningful pedagogical resource that gives students the opportunity to relate their own narratives, social relations and histories to the theories learnt while furthering their understanding of the limits often imposed by such conditions. Developing this idea, Freire (1998, pp. 78) asserted the

importance of redefining teachers as cultural workers who are capable of “reclaiming, without romanticising, popular culture as a complex terrain of pedagogical struggle”. Thus as a cultural worker, a teacher questions commonsensical understandings, interrogates dominant beliefs and representations of social life. This perspective further helps in developing the idea of “reflection as a social process”, and not a purely individual one as our thoughts stem from a “socially constructed world of meanings” (Kemmis, 1985, pp. 145). Seen in this light, reflection is not only an isolated entity rather it needs to be viewed in social, cultural and historical contexts.

Keeping the above mentioned factors in consideration, this paper explores how the School Experience Programme (SEP) in pre-service teacher education of one year duration provides opportunities to student teachers to see themselves as an agent of change. To view oneself as an agent of change requires a student teacher to critically challenge his/her own self, knowledge, beliefs and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 2007). This means development of a critical consciousness through which student teachers can examine their beliefs and critically reflect on their pedagogical experiences. Through this paper an attempt has been made to understand the process through which student teachers’ critical awareness of themselves and their beliefs lead to the development

of personal and professional knowledge. Scholars all over the world acknowledge that learning to teach is not an easy task that simply requires implementing the given content. Rather it is a complex process that involves continuous interaction among the educational context, personal ideologies and socio-political knowledge. Knowing about teaching and knowing how to teach are two different things. The former are learnt by student teachers in the foundational courses whereas the latter is understood only through an active engagement with pedagogy. As a matter of fact, knowledge of teaching is acquired and developed by the personal experience of teaching which in turn develops the personal pedagogical competence of a student teacher (Munby et al., 2001). Thus, critical reflection can become a source of pedagogical knowledge that can aid in widening the professional knowledge base of student teachers (Husu et al., 2008).

### **CRITICAL REFLECTION**

The term ‘reflective practice’ carries multiple meanings ranging from reflexivity to self awareness and critical thinking. Critical reflection has been defined differently keeping in mind its complex and varied subjective aspects. Scholars differ in their approach in determining what constitute critical reflection keeping in mind the diverse interpretation the term has. However, all of them agree that critical reflection has a

positive impact on the teaching-learning process. Researches in the area reveal reflection as a completely beneficial practice for teachers that promotes critical understanding and development of professional practice (Husu et al., 2008; Mayes, 2001; Ghaye 2000; Swain, 1998). Dewey had been the foremost theorist in bringing and developing the idea of reflective practice as a specialised form of thinking. According to Dewey (1933), reflection is a dialectical interaction between the self and the world and is complex intellectual and emotional endeavor. According to Rodgers, (Husu et al., 2008 pp. 38), “Dewey gives us the means to look at reflection and reflective practice in a more precise way. This is done with the aid of the following four criteria: Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience to the next with a deeper understanding of the relationships with, and connections to, other (people’s) experiences and ideas; reflection is a systematic and disciplined way of thinking. It is comprised of the following phases: spontaneous interpretation of an experience; identifying the problem(s) and question(s) that arise out of the experience; generating possible explanations for the problem(s) posed; developing and testing the explanations, and efforts to sort out, or live with, the problem(s) posed; Reflection needs to happen in interaction with other people. This is crucial because expressing one’s ideas

or thoughts to others with sufficient clarity for them to understand, reveals both the strengths and weaknesses in one’s thinking. Reflection requires attitudes that value one’s own personal and intellectual growth as well as that of others. Awareness of our attitudes and emotions is an integral part of appropriate reflective practice.”

This would mean that teacher reflection as a process would encompass all the cultural and personal experiences of an individual. Critical reflection can thus be broadly explained as the “study of self including one’s culture, histories, worldview, and lived experiences that impact one’s personal knowledge and professional practice” (Sharma et al. 2011, pp. 11). It also suggests that critical reflection brings awareness about oneself by challenging existing knowledge and given assumptions or frames of references that include beliefs, assumptions, values, and cultural norms of thinking and acting (Banks and Banks, 2009). Subsequently, through critical reflection, student teachers can question how schooling experiences perpetuates the existing inequalities of the society. They need to consider that education is not a neutral but a political undertaking (Freire, 1970) and how it is determined by the larger socio political, cultural and economic realities. To put it simply it would mean that a student teacher has to questioning one’s own interpretation of ‘facts’ and ‘realities’ and become self

critical in his/her thinking. Reynolds (1998) lists four characteristics that distinguish critical reflection from 'reflection'. Firstly, critical reflection is concerned with questioning assumptions and facts; it has a social rather than individual focus; stress is paid on analysing the power structure; and lastly its ultimate goal is emancipation.

### **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Dan Lortie, in 'Schoolteacher: A sociological study' (1975), coined the term 'the apprenticeship of observation'. In his view, most of the student teachers' pedagogy is quite similar to their own teachers. He further builds that those beliefs teachers hold about teaching originate from their own personal experience as students. This could largely be responsible for many of the preconceptions that pre-service student teachers hold about teaching. Research on teacher beliefs showed that it operates on different levels ranging from personal to professional. Lortie contends that in this way, student teachers imbibe only a partial view of a teacher's job and 'sees the teacher front stage (actions) like an audience viewing a play' (pp. 65). However, he adds that, while students can only view the 'frontstage' behaviours such as monitoring, correcting, and lecturing, they do not see the 'backstage' behaviours which forms a crucial part of a teacher's job.

In his seminal work, Schön (1983) develops the notion of reflection in the educational contexts. He argued that the ability of reflecting on one's own action forms an important component of professional practice. He describes two types of reflection: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Together reflect in action (while doing something or during the event) and on action (after you have done it or after the event) helps teachers in the development of professional and personal knowledge. As argued above, Schön too contends that teacher preparation programme places undue importance to "technical rationality" where in content or discipline knowledge and methods are given preference. The knowledge teachers' gain through reflecting on their practice is often overlooked. His 'epistemology of practice' focuses on making pre service teacher education curriculum reflective especially the practicum aspect. This means designing school experience programme under the guidance of expert practitioners (teacher educators) who would assist student teachers to reflect on their pedagogical experiences.

In the contemporary times, the idea of reflection has been broadened to incorporate socio-cultural contexts. Scholars articulate that a teacher's perspective about learning, society and schooling is largely determined by his/her subjective experiences. Critical theorists such as Paulo

Freire sees education as a political and ideological undertaking and every dimension of educational practice as not neutral and objective. For Freire (1998) pedagogy needs to be seen as a deeply civic, political and moral practice. Therefore he urges teachers to critically reflect on their practice to achieve the goal of liberation from oppressive conditions.

### **CONTEXT AND DATA COLLECTION**

The School Experience Programme (SEP) is an important aspect of the B.Ed programme. The programme is spread over 40 days where the student teachers are expected to gain hands on experience in teaching. The SEP provides a crucial and transitional time for student teachers to question, discover, analyse, reflect and critique many educational issues by immersing themselves in the role of a teacher for a sustained duration. The SEP provides opportunities to the student teachers to live and acquire real teaching experience by engaging in developing planning, organising and assessing the pedagogical process. It also helps in development of professional competencies by serving an important step toward bridging the gap of theory and practice, the formation of teacher identity and the development of social and cultural consciousness. The SEP is supervised by experts from the University who guide student teachers in planning and provide feedback to their teaching.

The study undertaken is qualitative and participative in nature. In critical educational research, the purpose is to change as well as understand situations (Cohen et al. 2000). Therefore, this study used an action research approach with the researcher as the participant. The researcher participated in the study as a supervisor where she worked with the participants in order to make a difference in the professional knowledge base of the student teachers. The data for the study was obtained from the teaching experiences of student teachers of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) programme. The participants were six student teachers doing their practice teaching in a central school of Delhi. All of them were post graduates and were around 23-25 years of age. To maintain anonymity of the study and protect the identity of the participants, they were given codes such as S1, S2 and so on instead of their names.

The study was conducted throughout the SEP that is from student teachers first teaching day to their last in the school. The data was collected through participant observation, open ended interviews and document analysis of various documents such as reflective journals, lesson plans and peer observation notebooks. The data was analysed using the qualitative approach, where careful and selective reading of student teachers writings were done to comprehend the areas

of reflection. Constant comparison method (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982) was used through which the accumulated data was systematically searched and arranged to increase its understanding. The stimulated interviews were transcribed and the areas of reflection were further discussed with the participants. To assist student teachers in the task of reflection, probing questions were asked individually as well as during group discussions. These questions encouraged student teachers to probe deeply into their teaching, feelings, action and thoughts.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Nature of Reflection**

The task of reflection is a challenging process as it is not easy to learn how to extract meaning from one's own experience. Critically analysing one's own thought process does not come naturally. It requires a lot of assistance with the help of planned and organised dialogue then only true potential of reflection as a tool of fostering change in teacher's professional work can be noticed. In order to interpret and understand this process of knowing, it was found during the course of this study that it was very difficult to separate 'reflection-in-action' from 'reflection-on-action' as proposed by Schon. Reflection was seen as an ongoing process: before, during, and after teaching action, revolving around the teacher's reflecting self. It became a tool that helped

student teachers in the continuous construction of knowledge. As student teachers used both 'kinds' of reflection simultaneously, it was seen that initially reflection started from Schon's 'reflection on action' gradually incorporating the other one. Student teachers used to reflect on their teaching experience after they 'taught' the lesson gradually they started reflecting while teaching. This did not mean that prior to this study; student teachers were in an 'unreflective' state. It only intended that undergoing through the process of interpretation and reflection student teachers became conscious of their reflexive abilities. These unexamined experiences and actions generally lose their potential for future professional development of student teachers. The process of reflection helped them to tap all the incidents related to teaching, reflect on them and incorporate desired changes. Student teachers gradually started modifying their lesson plan depending upon the situation while teaching. However, the use of 'reflection in action' was observed during the last few days of SEP and not every student teacher went through the same process. It depended a lot on the student teacher own willingness to examine his/ her own practice and develop professionally.

### **ANALYSING CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

Certain "critical incidents" that invoke student teachers' emotion or any other that appealed to the student teachers\*

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\* 'Student teachers' is a form used for students of pre-service teacher education programme.

were brought forward for discussion. Such incidents were interpreted as critical for the analysis (Tripp, 1993). Usually such commonplace and ordinary events happened in the classrooms were usually not taken up by the student teachers as crucial factor that can affect their thinking and action. Only few incidents were taken up as critical as it was not realistically possible to reflect on each and every event happening in the classroom. It was assumed that each incident has the capacity to bring out meaningful aspect of reflection. Even the focus of the study was on learning the process of reflection in terms of degree rather than stressing on absolutes and every situation was regarded as having the potential of bringing transformation.

On the basis of the study it can be said that student teachers reflection was a way of relating to the world and a basis for understanding and responding to their experiences. Reflection as a process needs to be learned gradually rather than expecting it to master it suddenly. It was observed that there were levels through which the process of critical reflection moves gradually. Initially the student teachers started recognising and appreciating difference and diversity from varied perspective such as gender, class, culture, religion, disability, age as existing in the personal and professional front. They were asked to comment and describe their own actions/pedagogy during teaching. With a lot of introspection,

they identified the reasons for their behavior and the possible alternatives to deal with such incidents in future. Alongside they started questioning how these factors impact learning and teaching processes. At the next level, they started challenging their beliefs and assumptions about themselves, students and teaching. In the reflective journals, a lot of questioning and indecisiveness about themselves and teaching process was seen. The questioning moved from why we do something rather than how. Importantly it involved learning from this process and initiating change when and where required.

The process was captured through an incident where instead of labeling a learner as “destructive and not interested in studies”, a student teacher (S3) wanted to find out the reasons behind the disturbed behavior of that particular learner. The reasons were identified, discussed after deliberation with the supervisor. In an excerpt from the reflective journal, it can be seen how nurturing and facilitating outlook adopted by the student teacher enabled personal transformation in both student teacher and the learner.

S3: “Tarun is very notorious and irritating student. He disturbs the whole class. Not even his regular teachers or his classmates talk to him properly. Even I found his behaviour very casual. But after discussing his case with my supervisor, I decided to speak to him. Talking to him made me realise that he knows a

lot about his studies and is quite 'bright'. After that day, my relation with him has changed. Now I give him responsibility and opportunity to answer in the class. He always wishes me in the school and behaves nicely during class. What touched me was an incident where after the school I was standing outside to find a rickshaw to go back to my home. The moment he saw me standing, he jumped out of his rickshaw and told rickshaw driver to drop me".

### **REFLECTIVE JOURNALS**

The nature of writings in reflective journals changed; from being a mere descriptive account of what all happened in the classroom to actual reflective experiences. Comments from the supervisor and peers helped student teachers to critically view their own pedagogy. They started probing their own beliefs and this reflection was guided through further questioning. One student teacher (S4) acknowledged that "I was a bit judgmental (about learners) but now my thinking has changed a lot". Another one remarked (S3) "I do not have set notions about myself as a teacher. I think I explain well but I need to work on planning a bit, need to be more confident, get more organised. Because a teacher has to do a lot. Seriously a lot!".

By the end of SEP, most of the journal write-ups had more questions and reflections rather than description of the classroom activity. The writing style changed from descriptive to

analytical grounded in pedagogical and theoretical experience. Reflective journals saw frequent uses of phrases such as "continuing to improve," "never arriving," "continually growing," "always developing" "I think, I am yet to know" "I realised that it is very difficult to know". This described an understanding that the personal growth is an integral part of a teacher's life. Nearly all student teachers added their earlier experiences of teaching to the recent ones forming a loop of understanding thus making it an ongoing process. An inner dialogue about their teaching was clearly visible in their writing style such as S3: "I feel that I am becoming better at teaching younger (primary) learners. Starting my class with few activities helped me to gain their attention...earlier I only used to scream and shout...I am feeling so so good! Now I feel I can continue teaching EVS to them".

### **TEACHER BELIEFS**

Teachers' beliefs that are learnt as a student through observing their own teachers become a part of their identities. As explained earlier, Lortie termed this as 'the apprenticeship of observation' and described such an approach towards pedagogy as 'folkways of teaching'. Even Bruner termed such notions as 'folk pedagogy' as they shape a teacher's pedagogical experience. Beliefs, and their influence, tend to be unexamined by teachers because many are implicit, unarticulated, or

unconscious. On a contrary, they need to be debated and analysed and bring into the consciousness of the student teachers. Student teachers had very naïve views about teachers and teaching process such as S1: "I always believed that teaching is just another job that involves giving instructions to students". A lot of personal meaning and emotions were attached to teaching experiences that were in turn related to their own experiences as a student. A connection between personal and professional experiences can be seen where most of the student teachers related their own strengths and weakness as a human being with their identity as a teacher. S5: "I am quite soft spoken that is why my class is quite unmanageable". Such unexamined assumptions cause confusion and develop a feeling of helplessness in the new teacher who happens to be placed in a classroom with students of different ethnic, linguistic, cultural backgrounds. Therefore, for classroom to become a transformative space where learning and engagement can take place, the teacher needs to predispose to question herself, to see learners as subjects and to desire to learn with them rather than impose upon them.

Gradually, with the help of probing questions and discussion, student teachers could find out ways to re evaluate their work and beliefs so as to incorporate and accommodate new perspective into their teaching practice. A sense of agency develops

with such kind of reflective exercise. They would also try to integrate their teaching experiences in the classroom with the theoretical knowledge gained in the B.Ed programme to support or justify their pedagogical actions. Reflective journals provided the crucial space for describing the newly gained insights. The initial belief about themselves or teaching was challenged by the process of questioning and introspection. They mentioned problems in their own action that they need to focus on and issues in which they have to develop themselves. This kind of reflection provided student teachers to confront and even transcend their habits and constraints they otherwise regard as normal and typical to them. Reflective journals and peer observations aid student teacher to critically view their beliefs. It provided students teachers a critical space where they can challenge their preconceived notions about children, themselves and teaching and how all these clubbed to affect their pedagogy such as S1: "as a student, I always thought that teachers know all but now as a teacher I realised that how difficult it is 'to know'" and S3: "I always thought that working with the middle school students would be easier rather than the primary ones. But I was wrong. Middle school students do not like to be treated like kids but they are not adults as such. I too went through this phase but I find it very difficult to 'teach' them.....I don't know how much I have succeed.....but I tried."

It was observed that there was lot of introspection related to personal meanings of a situation that was going on the student teacher's mind. Student teachers interpreted their teaching experience with their chances of being a successful teacher. For example: S4: "to be patient...I am yet to learn that as a teacher...". The 'backstage' work of a teacher became prominent when they assumed the role of a teacher. All of them were involved in the process of assessment with the regular school teachers such as conducting summative tests, assisting and managing accounts of science labs and other administrative activities. S6: "...before SEP I always believed that teachers do all the work in the classroom but now I see that most of the work was done before coming to the classroom. A lot goes into lesson planning keeping in mind the interests of students. I have learnt that if one is well prepared even managing the class becomes easy".

### **VIEWING THEMSELVES AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE**

Initially, the student teachers did not engage with issues that are related to diverse cultural group of students. But with the help of probing questions asked by the supervisor on certain issues such as why a particular example was chosen by the student teacher to explain a concept went well and why a class was 'gone bad', helped student teachers reflect on such issues. Asking probing questions was crucial as meaningful questioning

helped student teachers uncover many taken for granted assumptions in the text as well as in their opinion. By the end of the SEP, most of the student teachers acknowledged a change in their perception of students belonging to different ethnic groups. They recognised and appreciated the classroom diversity from different dimensions such as gender, linguistic, religious, socio-economic and how these can affect the teaching-learning process. During a discussion, it came out that a conscious effort was done by the student teachers to reach out to every student. Some of those questions helped them to uncover and question the power structure presented in the text. They started viewing the text of a lesson critically, asking questions and moving from facts to how and why. It was observed that student teachers did try to make conscious attempts to challenge the unexamined assumptions by questioning the 'given facts' presented in the textbook. The feedback received by the student teachers from their learners on such kind of teaching was quite positive. Earlier the focus of student teachers was on to teach the given chapter by making information more interesting through teaching aids such as charts and models. Now they focused more on the chapter content; relating it to the learner's life.

In one instance, a student teacher reflected a lot before planning a sub-topic of retail and wholesale in the subject of Economics. Instead of

defining maximum retail price and consumer rights, she discussed with students how MRP is decided by a company and why certain countries become the guinea pig or the market for dumping defected/obsolete products. Initially, she was hesitant whether she should initiate such discussion with her learners but once she started off, it was heartening to see the level of discussion. The learners were quite aware of such issues and they actively participated in the discussion by adding more information about the topic. Even the discussion went beyond the designated concept that made the student teacher a bit worried about the completion of the lesson within stipulated time. While reflecting on her experience, she remarked that “I was taken aback and surprised, in fact shocked that students would be aware about such malpractices. They know so much...I never thought that...I felt so happy. It was an experience that I can do something in the lives of my students”. Most of the student teachers did acknowledge that students know much beyond the textbooks and they need and had to bring new things to keep them busy and make the task challenging. A need to reach out all the learners of the class was communicated throughout discussions with the student teachers. They felt that it is important to modify and plan the lessons to meet the challenges of learners with different abilities such as S6: “I struggle a lot to understand

the level of students.

*R: How do you do that?*

*S6: I observe students very carefully in the class. Sometimes outside too. I interact with them while teaching and see how they relate to a lesson.*

*R: Ok, but why do you think it is important?*

*S6: So that I can plan my lessons accordingly like I know Rajat is very well read and knows most of the lesson beforehand so I have decided that I will give him an additional story (text) on the concept (independence struggle) while I will continue with my lesson with rest of the class”.*

A change in the attitudes towards students’ background can be observed in the reflective journals of the student teachers. In one instance, a student teacher noted in his reflective journal, S2: “today, I used an example of maids while teaching a lesson on helper in EVS. I found out after discussing with students that all household work was done by their mothers and not by maids. I never thought about this... I realised that I need to be more careful while planning...” After this incident, it was seen that particular student teacher was more careful in selecting and designing his lesson plans and assessment (worksheets) carefully modifying them according to the level of students. Hence, a change in the attitude led to professional development. Student teachers developed sensitivity towards background of their learners which

in turn, strengthen their mutual relations.

## DISCUSSIONS

With the coming of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) and Right to Education Act (RTE), it is crucial for a teacher to be aware of the issue of power and dominance in the teaching and learning context to make education for all a reality. Giroux (1988) describes teachers as transformative intellectuals who combine scholarly reflection and practice in the service of educating students to be thoughtful, active citizens. Against the Freirean terminology of “banking education,” education should offer students conditions for self-reflection, and critical agency. Therefore, it becomes crucial for teacher education programme to incorporate critical reflection in their curricula. As argued above, nearly all researches in the area of reflection agree that it has considerable power and potential for professional development. However, it is widely assumed that with the help of reflection the prior ‘unreflective’ teacher suddenly brings about a transformation in her thinking and pedagogical styles. The potential of teacher reflection can only be realised through a planned and structured, which would in turn make the school experience programme more comprehensive and meaningful for the student teachers. It was observed that student teachers come to teacher education program with the set of beliefs and preconceptions about

teaching learning process as well as of learners based on their own experiences as student. It was also found that through dialogue and guided practice student teachers can examine their and others’ pedagogical practice as critical.

Through various components of the SEP programme such as reflective journals, discussions with supervisors and peer observations helped student teachers to shape their identities as an educator. It was also observed that initially the prime focus of the student teachers were on finishing the lesson plan rather than reflecting on their practice. It was felt that the duration of the SEP was short as the pre service programme is of year duration; there is an urgent need to extend the length of the SEP. The limited time student teacher spends in the school does not give space to move beyond in the area of critical reflection. Difficult questions related to equities in the classroom still needs to be brought out very clearly by the student teachers. Although the student teachers started bringing issues of criticality in their planning and pedagogy through probing questions and guided reflection used by the supervisor. But building and strengthening the aspects of criticality requires more deliberation and time. It was also felt to find out ways to include school’s regular teachers in guiding the process of teaching and reflection. Also, the process of reflection needs to be structured and designed in a way that it supports

professional development of student teachers. The benefits and potential of teacher reflection as a source of pedagogical knowledge will largely remain unspecified and unattainable until proper relevant methodological tools and their contextual applications are developed.

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