

attempts to present moral lessons through two narratives interwoven could benefit immensely from a more thoughtful implementation of the idea.

Overall, the writing in the book is easy to read and accessible. The author is successful in providing descriptions of surroundings and actions in the stories. However, from the perspective of English language teaching/learning there are times when the language used is colloquial. There are also occasions when the author uses phrases and/or words from the lexicon of the Armed Forces, or recycles clichés. This is noticeable; however, it is not a major distraction while reading the stories.

By virtue of offering a window into the world of those committed

to serving their fellow humans, and doing more than fulfilling their responsibility the book triumphs virtues that are eroding in modern society. Hence, as reading material, it can certainly make a contribution in shaping the moral compass of young learners. However, one limitation of the book is that it does lend itself to highlighting these values in contexts where the reader should be exposed to equally important issues such as environmental concerns, inclusion, gender issues, health and nutrition etc. The collection is an attempt to encourage people to share goodwill and extend care for those who need it and help build a tight knit society.

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## ***Becoming a Reflective Educator: How to Build a Culture of Inquiry in the Schools***

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There is a host of literature in the recent past that laid emphasis on the importance of reflective abilities and disposition in teachers. 'Reflection' is increasingly regarded as one of the core aims of pre-service teacher

education programmes and is marked as being an essential quality in in-service teachers.

This book is a remarkable account of why and how educators become 'reflective' practitioners. The use of

vivid case studies, their follow-up analysis and simultaneous linkages with the conceptual understanding of 'reflective practice' stands as the core strength of the book. The way it takes the reader on a literary journey of peeping into the ground dilemmas faced by the teacher and their struggle to resolve them, is simply engaging and refreshing.

The first chapter of the book titled 'Reflective Practice and the Teacher' lays the ground for the coming chapters by describing why 'reflective practice' should be a desirable goal for teacher education. It begins with the portrayal of six case studies that basically illustrate the 'Continuum of reflectivity' that these teachers engage in. It talks about the nature and manifestation of reflective practice. It further depicts the possibility of differential ways in which novice and experienced teachers get engaged in reflective practice. Reflection as a complex skill can be used to deal with complex dilemmas of curriculum diversity, professional ethics and reporting child abuse.

This chapter argues that teaching just like other profession is a combination of both artistic and technical skills. The role of a teacher as a decision maker is also highlighted while emphasising the role of reflective thinking in this process. Thus, a teacher must justify her/his actions in the class by being reflective about it.

The last part of the chapter deals with the theoretical insights

on reflective practice. Theoretical approaches of John Dewy, Donald Schon, Van Manen, Killion and Todnem, Georgea Spraks – Langer and Amy Colton are discussed by briefly explaining the way reflective practice is perceived by each.

Chapter 2 is titled 'Toward a Culture of Inquiry in the School' and it introduces few very captivating case studies wherein the teacher is engaged in a conscious and arduous inquiry in their class and school. The case studies differ from each other on account of triggering problem and context. However, it is the willingness to reflect and improve the practice that has fuelled each of these inquiries. A brief discussion of positivist and naturalistic tradition of inquiry is presented. However, focus is brought to the realisation that inquiry and its objects are placed in a social and normative context. Inquiries of all kinds, whether quantitative, qualitative or action research make certain demands on the part of the researcher or inquirer. Intellectual curiosity, motivation, openness in inquiry and openness to challenge are further described as few of the central characteristics necessary for an individual to engage in inquiry.

Moving on from individual characteristics akin to inquiry, the author describes the overall characteristics of schools that promote systematic and ongoing culture of inquiry. Such schools look at inquiry as a conscientious, collaborative and continuous exercise to ensure

reflective and analytical practice. The point is further made explicit by sharing three more case studies wherein the teachers are engaging in classroom and school based inquires adopting different methodologies as per the nature of the problem.

'Transformational Curricula and Instruction' is the title of Chapter 3. In this chapter, an attempt is made to put forth the role that reflection plays in issues pertaining to curriculum and instructional strategies. The chapter begins on a note of three case studies and further builds an argument that irrespective of the socio-cultural and economic milieu of the school, it is always desirable to probe into the curriculum and instructional innovation and bring desirable changes. Theme based teaching or project based teaching with its interdisciplinary focus emerges as a strong curricular innovation. Teachers are urged to look beyond the monopoly of textbook in the class and explore ways to make curriculum engaging, contextual and vibrant. As the authors describe; 'ownership' (p.70) of learning, it should be increased on the part of the learners. The common scenario of discrepancy of planned, enacted and experienced curriculum is explained and the need for infusing each stage with a reflective approach is established.

Chapter 4 of the book titled as 'Transformational Leadership in the School' brings the focus of the reader to the immense importance of leaders and administrators in generating a

sense of reflection in the teachers as well as creating an overall culture of reflection in schools. By taking examples of three case studies, a lucid explanation is given about how the power relationships that exist between administrators, principals, teachers, parents and students define the overall culture of the school. Leadership plays a central role in making an organisation effective, efficient with sound moral grounds. Three different types of leadership as given by Burns (1979) are discussed; it includes transactional leadership, transformational leadership and moral leadership. Transformational leadership, as also the title of the chapter suggests, is the one that is highly desirable and gives 'reflective practice' its due place in the overall ethos of the school. Transformational leadership is one in which 'leaders and followers raise each other to higher levels of morality and motivation' (p.87).

The authors very aptly state; "Transformational leadership is critical for principals and teachers since so many of the problems confronting education are basically questions of values, ethics, and vision" (p.87). Reflection is seen as a potent process that can solve problems of education and schools and is an invariable part of the transformational leadership. One crucial example of Kitchener and King's reflective judgment model is given with the emphasis that leaders must understand that individuals

who are engaged in problem solving, act on the basis of different levels of assumptions (as given in the model). Such realisation and identification help the leaders to guide and support the individual according to the level they are at.

'The School as Community and the School in the Community' makes the 5th Chapter of the book and addresses a very pertinent issue of school and community as an aid to further the process of reflective practices in schools. Schools are social institutions which are rooted in the socio-cultural and economic milieu of the society and are very much linked to the community that they cater to. School and community are not isolated independent systems but are essentially woven with each other. When the link between the school and the community (people of the community, organisations and local groups) is strengthened by mutual trust, decision making and sharing of resources what emerges is an efficient, effective and democratic school. The authors argue that the problems faced in the schools of America should be seen from multiple angles. Further, meaningful solutions can be rendered only when schools fully recognise the need of taking community into the loop to understand the problems and pool ideas and resources to deal with them. Whether a school understands the wants and needs of the groups that the school is comprised of makes it either a progressive or a conventional

school. Maintaining status quo and furthering the interest of chosen segments of society is a biased and non-critical approach. The role of teachers, principal, superintendents and other administrators combined together decide what kind of association is geared between the school and the community.

Chapter 6 titled as 'Values, Ethics, and Reflective Teaching' talks about the core issue of ethical dilemmas as experienced by teachers. Ethical dilemmas, confrontations and conflicting values all form a major portion of the life of a teacher. In the wake of such situations, a teacher has to act reflectively and reach to some solution. An excerpt from the book makes the connection of ethical issues resolution with reflective practice very vivid.

"Ethical decisions and decision making are inevitably necessary part of teaching, as we have seen, and, at the same time, ethical decision making is as resistant to 'cookbook' types of approaches as are other aspects of good teaching. In short, the same kind of concerns and considerations that affect reflective practice in general will affect ethical decision making in particular" (p.127).

Moreover, sorting an ethical dilemma is not about personal claims but about value judgment; it should be taken in the light of best resources possible. It should be defended and supported with evidence as well as sound logic. The case studies presented in the chapter showcase the

vastly different ethical dilemmas and the ways to respond to them. Quite ironically even when the dissolution of the dilemma does include some level of reflective thinking, still it doesn't mean that the final decision will be right. However, good ethical judgments can be found if opinions are sought from a neutral party preferably an expert of the concerned area and if the decision is not rushed to. Two major theoretical perspectives on ethical decision making are presented; consequentialist ethical theories and non-consequentialist ethical theories.

'Toward Reflective Practice' is the title of the 7th and last Chapter. This briefly written chapter very aptly raises the view that though there is no secure way as to which one is sure to become reflective. However, as a basic requirement, reflective educators are the ones who are constantly probing into their own understanding, methods and assumptions. Strategies such as journal writing, portraiture (teachers' teams observing each other, writing and sharing observation with each other), action research and professional development endeavors encouraging teachers to solve the critical issues confronted the class and school, are advocated to make reflection an inseparable part of teaching profession.

So, overall in these seven chapters the book tries to put across the notion of reflective practice from various dimensions and makes a very persuasive case in favour of reflective practices in the school. Each chapter covered in the book makes a valuable contribution in understanding what 'reflection' entails and why it becomes the central phenomenon when one talks about good teachers or good schools. Written in a comprehensible manner, this book makes a very good use of case studies to give a realistic feel to each chapter. Case studies revolve around a plethora of issues and set the tone of the chapter.

This book has the potential to strike a chord with pre-service and in-service teachers, principals and administrators. Written about one of the most desirable aspects of teacher education and teaching i.e. the skill and disposition to reflect, this book is a very apt read for anyone who is concerned about the quality of their own teaching and wishes to make a worthwhile contribution in uplifting a culture of inquiry in their organisation.

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