



PREVALENCE OF REFLECTIVE JOURNAL WRITING AMONG COLLEGE TEACHERS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Education

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ABSTRACT

Reflective practice is essential for continuous professional development of teachers. Through reflective practices teachers can look back on events, make judgments about them, and alter their teaching behaviors. The purpose of the present study was to find out and compare the frequency of adopting journal writing as a strategy of reflective practice among college teachers based on their teaching experience. The findings of the study reveal that teachers adopt journal writing as a strategy of reflective practice and there is significant difference in the frequency of adopting journal writing as a reflective practice strategy among college teachers based on their years of teaching experience. Researches indicate that journal writing is one of the effective reflective practice strategies for professional development. Hence steps should be taken to promote this among teachers so that they remain ever committed to their professional learning and improvement.

KEYWORDS

Reflection, reflective practice, Journal Writing, Professional Improvement

The quality of education depends on the quality teachers and teaching. Teachers are the greatest assets of any education system. They stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, skills and values. Teachers, who enable interaction among the main elements of educational system and who take the responsibility of educating young individuals, have a distinctive place and importance in the society (Posner, 1995). Being competent and well-performing personality, teacher is one of the most important resources in any educational system and is considered as the professional agent and the most responsible person in the process of learning.

According to Schon (1991) reflection on the experience is essential for continuous professional development of teachers. Taylor (2000) defined reflection as "the throwing back of thoughts and memories, in cognitive acts such as thinking, contemplation, meditation and any other form of attentive consideration, in order to make sense of them, and to make contextually appropriate changes if they are required" (p.3). Thus, reflection refers to an activity or process in which an experience is recalled, considered and evaluated in relation to a broader purpose. More and more experience, does not guarantee more and more learning. Twenty years of teaching may not equate to twenty years of learning about teaching but may be only one year repeated twenty times. Hence one should actively seek ways to ensure that reflection itself becomes a habit, ensuring continuing development as a professional teacher (Schon, 1991).

Reflective practices allow teachers to identify their constraints, reactions and responses and devise new ways of teaching rather than being a slave to tradition. The journal is one form of narrative writing often associated with reflective practice. Writing about experiences is a useful tool for reflection, because it enables to make explicit the knowledge that is implicit in their actions (Schon, 1991). Farrell (2004) argues that journal writing can help teachers question and analyze what they do both inside and outside the classroom, thus consciously exploring and analyzing their practice. Farrell (2007) suggests that writing regularly in a teaching journal can help teachers clarify their own thinking, explore their own beliefs and practices, become more aware of their teaching styles, and be better able to monitor their own practices. Holly (1989) has pointed out that regularly writing in a journal can be a cathartic experience, especially if the journal is used to let off steam about frustrations encountered during the teaching day.

Based on the above review of literature, in the present study the investigators have attempted to find out and compare the frequency of adopting journal writing as a strategy of reflective practice among college teachers in relation to their years of teaching experience.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the frequency of adopting journal writing as a strategy of reflective practice among college teachers.
2. To compare journal writing frequency among college teachers based on teaching experience.

Hypothesis of the Study

There is significant difference in journal writing frequency among college teachers based on teaching experience.

Method Used in the Study

The investigators have employed survey method and the sample consisted of 312 teachers from different colleges of Kerala. Teachers' Reflective Practices Inventory (TRPI) constructed and standardized by the investigators is used for data collection. The data is subjected to statistical analysis such as mean, standard deviation, percentage analysis, ANOVA and the post hoc Scheffe Test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the college teachers through the administration of TRPI were analyzed. It is observed that the mean score of journal writing in TRPI is 19.88 with standard deviation 9.97 and range between 0 and 40. The minimum and maximum scores possible for journal writing in TRPI are zero and 40 respectively. Low, moderate and high level frequency of adopting journal writing as a strategy of reflective practice among college teachers with the percentage are given in Table 1

Table 1 Frequency of Adopting Journal Writing as a Strategy of Reflective Practice among College Teachers

	Low		Moderate		High	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Journal Writing	60	19.23	189	60.58	63	20.19

From Table 1 it is observed that 19.23% of college teachers have low, 60.58% of them have moderate and 20.19% of them have high level frequency of adopting journal writing as a strategy of reflective practice. Hence from the analysis of scores on journal writing in TRPI of college teachers, it can be interpreted that college teachers adopt journal writing as a strategy of reflective practice in their teaching profession.

Comparison of the mean scores of journal writing among college teachers based on experience.

The data collected from the college teachers having less than 6 years, between 6-15 years and more than 15 years of teaching experience were analysed

Table 2 Scores of Journal Writing of College Teachers based on Experience

Experience	n	Range		M	SD
		Minimum	Maximum		
Less than 6 years	75	0	33	12.56	9.17
Between 6-15 years	153	4	40	24.18	9.08
More than 15 years	84	7	35	18.57	7.9

The mean scores on journal writing of college teachers between 6-15 years of teaching experience is higher than the teachers having more than 15 years and less than 6 years of teaching experience.

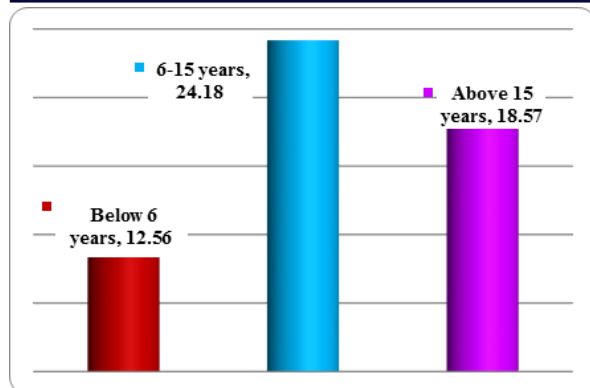


Figure 1. Mean Scores of Journal Writing of College Teachers based on Experience

In order to determine whether there is any significant difference in the mean scores of journal writing of college teachers based on teaching experience, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed. The results are given in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Total Scores of Journal Writing of College Teachers based on Experience

Experience	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F value	Significance level
Between Groups	6986.838	2	3493.419	45.111	P<0.01
Within Groups	23929.29	309	77.441		
Total	30916.13	311	-		

The F value is 45.111 which is significant at 0.01 level with df 2/309. It indicates that mean scores of journal writing in TRPI of college teachers having less than 6 years, between 6-15 years and more than 15 years of teaching experience differ significantly. Thus the null hypothesis that 'no significant difference in the mean scores of journal writing among college teachers based on experience' is rejected. Hence it can be interpreted that the college teachers having less than 6 years, between 6-15 years and more than 15 years of teaching experiences differ significantly in the frequency of adopting journal writing as a reflective practice strategy. Further in order to know which group's mean score differ significantly from others the data were further analysed by using the post hoc Scheffe Test and the results are given in Table 4

Table 4 Summary of the post hoc Scheffe Test Analysis of the Mean Scores of Total Scores of Journal Writing of college teachers based on Experience, Taken Separately

Experience (I)	Experience (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Less than 6 years	Between 6-15 years	-11.62*	1.24	.000
	More than 15 years	-6.01*	1.4	.000
Between 6-15 years	Less than 6 years	11.62*	1.24	.000
	More than 15 years	5.61*	1.2	.000
More than 15 years	Less than 6 years	6.01*	1.4	.000
	Between 6-15 years	-5.61*	1.2	.000

* The mean difference is significant at the .01 level.

From Table 4 it can be seen that the mean scores of journal writing of college teachers having less than 6 years of teaching experience is significantly lower than that of between 6-15 years and more than 15 years of teaching experience. The mean scores between 6-15 years of teaching experience is significantly higher than that of teachers having more than 15 years of teaching experience.

Hence it can be interpreted college teachers having between 6-15 years of teaching experience were found to adopt journal writing as a reflective practice strategy more frequently than those having less than 6 years and more than 15 years of teaching experience and college teachers having more than 15 years of teaching experience were found to adopt journal writing as a reflective practice strategy more frequently than those having less than 6 years of experience.

Major Findings of the Study

1. College teachers adopt journal writing as a reflective practice

strategy in their teaching profession.

2. There is significant difference in the frequency of adopting journal writing as a reflective practice strategy among college teachers having less than 6 years, between 6-15 years and more than 15 years of teaching experience. The college teachers between 6-15 years of teaching experience were found to adopt journal writing as a reflective practice strategy more frequently than those having less than 6 years and more than 15 years of teaching experience.
3. The college teachers having more than 15 years of teaching experience were found to adopt journal writing as a reflective practice strategy more frequently than those having less than 6 years of teaching experience.

CONCLUSION

Today in our country there seem to be growing demands on teachers in quality improvement and excellence. The results of the study have proved that college teachers adopt journal writing as a reflective practice strategy in their teaching profession. However, these practices have to be strengthened and improved further. Researches indicate that journal writing is one of the effective reflective practice strategies for professional development (Çimer & Paliç, 2012; Davis, 2003; Klenowski & Carnell 2006). Hence steps should be taken to promote this among teachers so that they remain ever committed to their professional learning and improvement. From this study it is clear that college teachers having less than 6 years of experience adopt journal writing as a reflective practice strategy less frequently. Orientation programmes may be organized for them about the need and importance of adopting journal writing as a reflective practice strategy for improving teaching profession.

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