

Reflective Teaching Methods at Schools for English Teachers' Professional Development (International Turkish Private Schools)

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to find out the most applicable reflective teaching methods for English language teachers in Georgia and Muslim countries. The study tends to identify the general English language teaching tendencies and stresses the teaching discrepancies for Muslim countries. These peculiarities are analyzed to provide a clear-cut picture of reflective teaching practices, possible changes and desirable improvements, which would be different for Georgia and Muslim countries (Egypt, Turkey and Yemen). The data obtained from one survey showed that school administration supports teacher development, including via reflective teaching. Another survey, conducted in Egypt, Turkey and Yemen regarding the cultural and gender issues in designing reflective teaching practices, showed that the majority of teachers prefer to be involved in collaborative group work, rather than being observed by a peer due to Muslim cultural traditions concerning gender relations. Both genders avoid peer work, because there is a possibility to stay alone with the opposite gender for the discussions and this might cause some inconveniences. The interview conducted in Georgia showed that teachers do not like cooperative reflective activities. As Georgian teachers of English better liked journal writing and peer observation, the experiment conducted in Georgia dealt with them. It revealed the fact that the mixed model of reflective teaching (peer observation accompanied by journal writing) is more productive for Georgia more than just peer observation.

Keywords: Reflective teaching, peer observation, journal writing, collaborative group work

Introduction

In recent years, more and more information regarding the concept of reflection in teaching is available. Reflection is a kind of live experience that triggers educators to switch from one experience to another. It applies to new changes, modifies teaching methods and develops a thorough understanding of future developments, and improvements in their teaching practices. The constant developing nature of reflective practices is definitely obvious in English language teaching, which is the main concern of the article. Reflective teaching is a contemporary and highly approved method which many teachers employ to increase the level of self-awareness. As a part of reflective

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teaching, 'reflective practice' encompasses the action phase and tends to achieve self-reflection. The term *reflective practice*, coined by Schon (1987), focuses on understanding the people's experiences and responses in the process. 'This approach makes a clear distinction between "thinking on action" and "thinking in action". Thinking on action is the way of analyzing experiences as they happen while thinking in action determines how responses are formulated' (Clarke, 2007, p.2). Osterman (1990, p.134) wrote that reflection is "the mindful consideration of one's actions, specifically, one's professional action". In other words, on which this article will rely on, reflection is: Examining of what is done in the class, realizing why it is done, and determining if it works – it is an action of observation and evaluation. By gathering the data about what happens in the classroom, and by examining and assessing this data, we determine and discover methods and tailor our teaching practices.

The presented article refers to three types of reflective teaching methods: peer observation, journal writing, and collaborative group work. Peer observation refers to "a teacher or other observer closely watching and monitoring a language lesson or part of a lesson in order to gain an understanding of some aspects of teaching, learning, or classroom interaction" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 85). Journal writing is "an ongoing written account of observations, reflections, and other thoughts about teaching, usually in the form of a notebook, book, or electronic mode, which serves as a source of discussion, reflection, or evaluation" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 68). According to Dufour, collaborative group work is "a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement" (cited in Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). These three methods are discussed and analyzed through the technical, contextual, and dialectical levels of reflective teaching. On technical level, the focus is on valuable and practical usage of education in order to achieve the goal; teacher has an intention to examine the usefulness of different methods used in the classroom. The contextual level includes reflections concerning explanation and discussion of basic theories and inclination of classroom experience as well as the results of applied approaches. The dialectical level copes with the inquiring of moralistic and ethical matters connected precisely and obliquely to teaching. The level inspires the teachers to evaluate the effects that school and culture has on them and on their performance; they examine the problematic issues encountered because of disagreement between individual principles and institutional demands. Collaborative group-work is performed on all three levels of reflective thinking - dialectical, contextual, and technical - while reflective teachers probe possible practices; deal with moral, ethical and sociopolitical matters and pay attention to behavior, content, and skills. Peer observation method is the part of contextual and technical levels of reflective thinking. It probes possible practices; preferences are based on knowledge and it values the responsibility; content is based on context and students' needs; examination and explanation are involved in this practice. Journal writing can be identified with dialectical and technical reflective thinking levels. Reflective journal deals with moral, ethical matters; investigation method is organized; the author is personally independent in choosing the focus aspects; also journal writing practitioner pays attention to behavior, content, and skills.

Study I - English teachers 'attitudes towards reflective teaching practices in Muslim Countries.

Method

Study one involved two questionnaires and an interview, so it applied a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) methods. The goals of the study were to see whether international Turkish schools provide adequate conditions for professional growth and whether their practices create good conditions for reflective teaching practices.

Survey on teacher professional development conditions

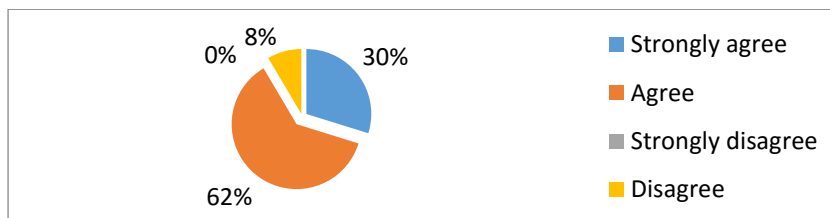
The first questionnaire was sent to 102 teachers from different elementary, middle and high schools. 48 elementary school teachers and 23 middle and high school teachers from Egypt, Turkey and Yemen sent back the filled out questions (totally 71). The survey contained 10 rating scale questions focusing on: working environment, administrative performance, students' achievements, educational opportunities and professional growth. The selected questions for the research are analyzed below.

Results

The school pays attention to my professional growth.

30% of teachers strongly agree and 62 % agree that the school provides a special atmosphere for their professional development. Yet, 8% disagreed with the statement.

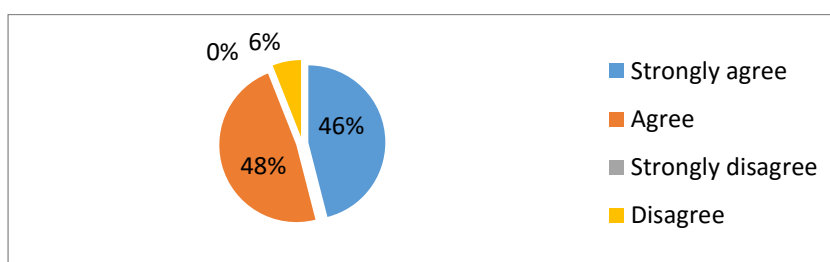
Figure 1.1. Professional Environment at school



I receive enough resources to use them while teaching at school

46% of respondents strongly agree with the statement, 48%-agree and 6% disagree.

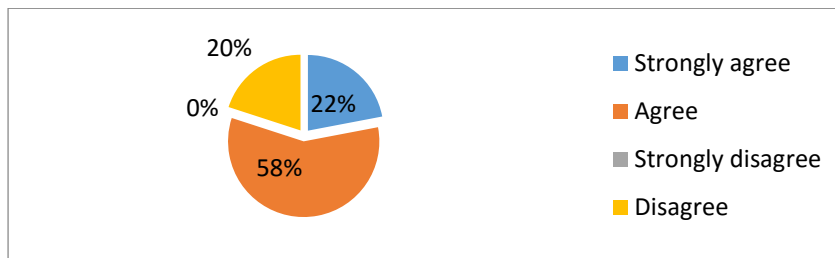
Figure 1.2 Enough resources to use in teaching



The school leadership supports teachers in student discipline matters

The majority (22% strongly agree, 58% agree) of the respondents asserted that school administration works hand in hand with them in student discipline matters. However, 20% disagree with the statement. 20 % is a high enough index and school leadership should pay more attention to the discipline.

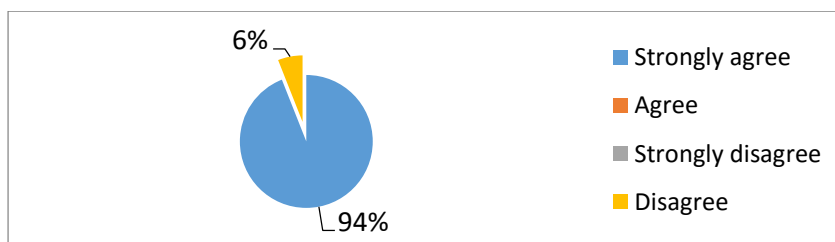
Figure 1.3 Leadership support in discipline



The school leadership fosters a collaborative work environment.

94% of teachers strongly agree and 6% disagree that the school fosters collaboration.

Figure 1.4 Collaborative Work Environment

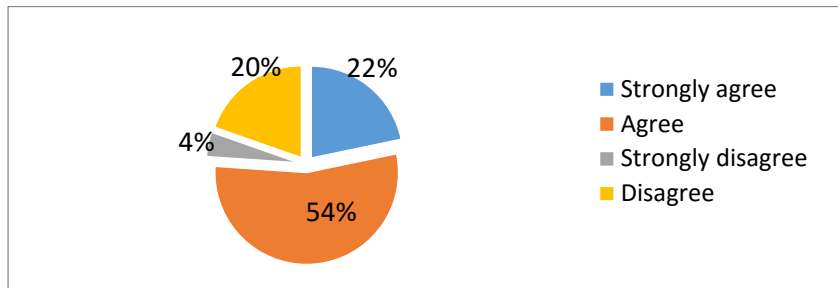


I receive clear and fair feedback on my performance.

As the results have shown, 76.3 % (22% strongly agree and 54.3 % agree) of the interviewed teachers positively answered the question, yet 24 % (4.30% strongly disagreed and 19.60 % disagreed) of the questioned teachers disagree with the statement. This helped the supervisors to rebuild the system of feedback in the organization. In addition, the reviews started to be conducted regularly and in formulated manner. If in the past, reviews were done for just some particular people with a low-quality performance, nowadays all the staff has the chance to meet and talk over with specially designated observer and supervisor. The teacher entering the class should clarify the objectives to the students. The principal should clearly formulate the goal and then give the feedback on employees' performance. The reflective observer should explain what is expected from an observed person for later discussions and feedback. To give fair feedback one has to justify beforehand what aspects will be considered and evaluated

and what guidelines will be applied to assess the performance. Teachers also remarked that they would like to know how they are doing.

Figure 1.5 Feedback on the performance



The survey helped us to maintain the coordination between the level of satisfaction, successful performance and professional growth. To commit energy to reflective practice, a teacher has to be convinced in what he / she is doing. The general picture showed that the surveyed English language teachers are satisfied with working conditions and are willing to involve in reflective practice, realizing the fact that it is crucial for the further career development and promotion. The key features in school management are approved and appear to have positive impacts on both learners and instructors. English language teachers at the surveyed schools have many educational opportunities and a positive teaching / working environment supported by the school administration to develop professionally and become competitive reflective teachers. It is thought-provoking to mention here some cultural issues that need to be tailored in designing reflective teaching practices.

The second, short, questionnaire was with closed-ended questions. 172 teachers participated. The majority of the respondents in the survey were Egyptian teachers (125 females and 25 males). Also, some teachers from Turkey (10 females and 8 males) and from Yemen (4 females) took the part in the survey. All respondents were asked to fill out the short questionnaire through e-mails or paper-based.

The questionnaire contained biographical questions about the age and teaching experience. In addition, the respondents were asked about their preferences to reflective teaching methods and applied forms. The results reveal interesting facts related to female and male teachers' perceptions about reflective teaching. Gender role gives a subject for debates in many different sources involving films, books, journals, and studies; however, the aspect of gender in reflective teaching methods has not been sufficiently examined and evaluated. The purpose of the study was to analyze the viewpoints of the respondents related to gender role in reflective teaching practice in Muslim countries. The information from this study portrays the general picture of how teachers reflect and wish to communicate with their peers. The administrative personnel as well as educators may make use of this information to promote and demand the reflective teaching practice at their educational institutions. The major research question was: Which reflective teaching method(s) is applicable for teachers in Muslim countries concerning the gender issue?

Questionnaire Results

What forms of reflection is more preferable for you?

The majority of the respondents - 114 teachers (91 female and 23 male) - chose group work for reflection. 31 (23 female and 8 male) respondents circled the peer work. And 27 teachers (20 female and 7 male) specified that they prefer to work alone (see figures 1.6 and 1.7).

Figure 1.6 The most preferable forms of reflection- Collaborative Group Work

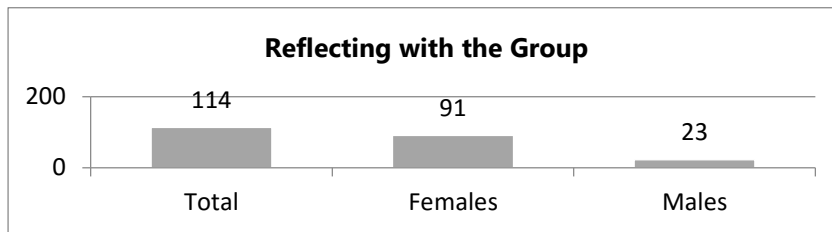
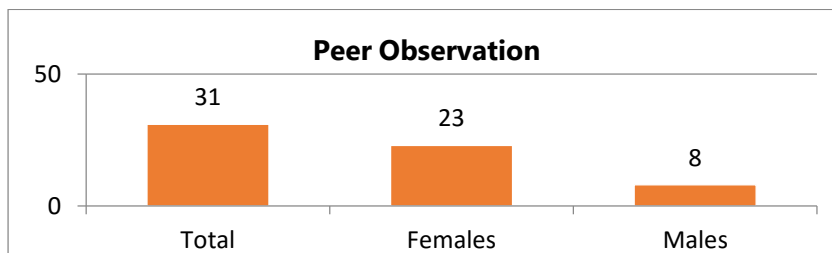
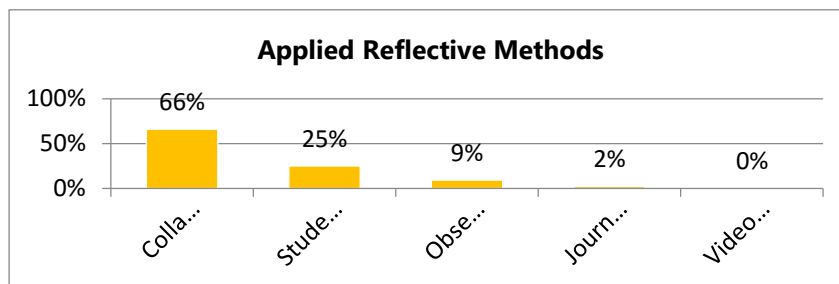


Figure 1.7 The most preferable forms of reflection- Peer Observation



Which method of reflective teaching do you apply?

Another question gives an obvious picture of which methods of reflective teaching instructors applied (see figure 1.8). 114 out of 172 teachers circled collaborative group work. The next popular method, such as students' feedback took the second place in teachers' choice. 40 teachers mentioned that they use the students' feedback as the reflection tool. The rest of the participants apply peer observation and journal writing methods. It should be mentioned that just 3 out of 172 teachers apply the journal writing in their teaching experience. Nobody chose the video/audio recording method.

Figure 1.8 Applied reflective methods

Interview Results

Besides, an interview was held with six teachers selected at random from the questionnaire study, to make the obtained results more credible, as an interview provides a valuable ground for deeper discussions and descriptions (Glesne, 2006). The participants had the chance to represent their experiences. In order to provide the valid and reliable information and to prevent the researcher's bias, the number of interviewed teachers was equally divided according to the gender – 3 female and 3 male teachers. In the interview, the participants were asked open-ended questions where they had to explain which method(s) of reflection they use and why.

The interview involved the data gained from the questionnaire. 6 interviewees (3 female and 3 male) from Egypt, Turkey, and Yemen explained their perceptions and aspirations.

The interview included the following questions:

- a) Which method of reflection do you accept?
- b) Why do you appreciate it?

The two Egyptian teachers, one female and one male, noted that they prefer working with colleagues in collaborative atmosphere. Both of them mentioned that if the administration will insist on peer work, then they will demand to work with a person of the same gender, woman-to-woman and man-to-man. On the other hand, it is interesting to listen to opposite gender's ideas because sometimes men and women have different points of view on distinct issues. And it is preferable to work in a group and listen to both sides' arguments to find the best solutions for the problematic issues.

An English language and Social Studies teacher working at Salahaldin International School, (Cairo, Egypt) answered that she prefers to work with colleagues because with the help of cooperation the teachers gain more information and share their experience. Individual work, interviewees believe, is not as fruitful as group-work. Peer work is also one of the valuable methods of reflection, but some circumstances do not allow the teachers to work in this way. She clarified her opinion about peer work. According to her, without any doubts, it is very interesting to share the ideas and communicate with both female and male teachers. But it is not acceptable to stay alone

and talk over the problematic issues with male peer(s) according to Muslim culture. Even the school staff offices are separate for female and male teachers in her country. Men and women do not work in one and the same room. So, in order to prevent awkward situations, it is better to work in a group where both female and male teachers will have equal opportunities and openly participate in debates. She also mentioned about the students' feedback. She approved that one of her favorite ways of reflection is analyzing the students' needs and comments. According to her, the teacher is working not only for the salary or for professional growth, but for the sake of the students. That is why, if an educator seeks for the successful results, he/she should adjust to the needs of the learners.

The Turkish male and female interviewees expressed the same idea. The primary class teacher (Manisa, Turkey) mentioned collaborative journal writing as an effective way of reflective teaching. According to him, journal writing can be used as a collaborative diary and can be created in the electronic version, which prevents different gender peers from face-to-face communication, but helps in co-operative work. With the help of the Internet, it is easy to send and receive comments about specific issues. However, this format requires good writing skills and is time-consuming, which makes it challenging and undesirable for many teachers. Therefore, collaborative group work is more preferable. A mixed-gender group is the place where a person, on the one hand, feels protected, and, on the other hand, can hear about various teaching approaches, techniques, strategies, interesting activities and some problem solving methods. Face-to-face communication in a group gives an opportunity to get instant messages from the colleagues. The other Turkish teacher (Kirsehir, Turkey) said that for her peer work is not acceptable because there is a great possibility that the peer can belong to the opposite gender. Students' feedback should be taken into account and discussed in a group of co-operative teachers.

The same comments were received from the teachers working in Yemen. The teacher at Turkish International School in Yemen mentioned that both genders need encouragement while working in single-gender classes. She pointed out that teacher is not just a person who transfers knowledge to his/her students, but teacher is someone who has to work with the students' psychology. Sometimes, when a male teacher (especially a novice one) enters the single-gender class and has to deal with female students, he will need a support from female teachers in order to work fruitfully. That is why it is good to reflect with a group of peers where he will get help and recommendations on the possible solutions for the problems. According to her, sitting alone with a man is not an appropriate form for reflecting concerning the Muslim traditions.

To sum up:

- a) Collaborative group work is the most preferable and used method in teaching experience regarding cultural and professional concerns. Group work helps teachers in the revision and reflection of their teaching experience. Educators who teach one and the same courses may come together routinely and review the strategies, plans, techniques and teaching resources.

- b) Peer work may be used, if the peer teachers represent the same gender. Despite the fact that much can be gained from the peer communication, because of a friendlier atmosphere, Muslim teachers try to avoid this method because there is a great chance of having one-to-one interaction with opposite gender teachers.
- c) Students' feedback is a tool for gathering information about the students' satisfaction and needs, which later will be discussed and analyzed in a collaborative group. The feedback obtained from the learners is one of the most important tools for reflection. Students play the role of a friend who criticizes or praises the teacher's work.
- d) Teachers of both genders, female and male, try to grow professionally and consider the gender role in their reflective practice.

Study II: Reflective teaching in Georgia: attitudes and application

The second study was conducted in Georgia to identify Georgian teachers' attitude towards reflective teaching and to assess its efficiency. Georgia is a dominantly Orthodox Christian country, however, its population and traditions represent an ethnic and religious mosaic. There are some international schools in Georgia, including schools opened by Turkish educational companies; staff and students in the schools is culturally diverse. It was interesting for the researchers how would findings of research held in a Turkish private school in Georgia compare to those in Egypt, Turkey and Yemen.

Method

The study involved a semi-structured teacher interview (qualitative method) and a quazi-experimental study (quantitative method), so mixed methodology was applied.

The following research questions were designed for the interview: What are the teachers' attitudes towards reflective teaching? Do the teachers who are involved in reflective teaching benefit from it? To answer the set of crucial questions, an interview was conducted and a special focus group was taken over. The interview was divided in two parts. The first section determined the beliefs and the assumptions towards reflective teaching. For the interview, five participant volunteer teachers of English language department were at random chosen from Chaglar Nikoloz Tsereteli International School in Tbilisi (Georgia).

Interview Results

Question1: How do you reflect on your teaching process?

Almost all the participant teachers agreed that they were engaged in self-evaluative approach. However, this approach is neither written nor oral. They try to answer to the occasional problems by keeping them in their minds and thinking about the best solutions. Occasionally, like twice a week, English language teachers attend workshops

where they discuss some crucial issues. One of the teachers commented that it would be better if, instead of the observations, journal keeping would be quite beneficial for her, unless she had 29 lessons per week.

Question2: Have you ever been under the observation?

The obtained data revealed the fact that none of the participants has ever been under peer observation. They all have noted that sometimes, when there is an 'open lesson' at school, the spectator colleagues just attend their lessons. Peer teachers do not comment or criticize their work. Therefore, there is no feedback. One of the participants mentioned about the probationer student teachers who just sit at her lessons and observe the session.

Question 3: How do you feel when your colleagues observe you?

Some of interviewed teachers answered that they do not feel anxious, because they believe that what they do is not wrong. They noted that if someone attended their lessons, nothing special would happen. One of the teachers replied that generally the society does not show the willingness of meeting the changes. Georgians do not easily accept novelties, including novelties in education, and prefer to take a long way in order to improve something. Besides, novelties are often associated with the possibility of losing one's job. That is why teachers often avoid sharing their ideas and prefer to work on their own. There is little collaboration between colleagues and the "healthy" competition almost does not exist. It is impossible to change quickly the mentality in the country where real competition practically did not exist. In the past, if one got a teacher's position, the job was practically guaranteed till the end of the teacher's life.

The school management system should more actively encourage practitioner teachers develop and feel free to take risks. Reflection practice shows that there should be endless exploration, development of teachers' work. It is vivid that without feedback from other people it is too difficult to be sure if one is doing the right thing. In order to meet the students' needs, teachers should review their teaching methods. It might be difficult initially, but later on teaching will become more enjoyable and productive, and less anxiety will disturb educators.

Not only school administration, but also learners' parents play a big role in implementing change in the education system. Even if / when school administration does not require any innovations, parents usually express the desire that their children are taught by up-to-date, effective methods. With the system of boards of trustees, relatively recently introduced in Georgia, parents can exercise an impact on what is happening at school.

As the respondents mentioned, there are open classes for the colleagues from time to time, but they are not used in a proper way and thus contribute little to the reflective teaching. No feedback, no post-session discussions are held after such lessons. This means no teacher really benefits from this activity. Collaboration and peer works are essential for professional development. Experience really matters, that is why expert teachers should help novice ones. School administration has to change its class observation policy and make it more fruitful.

Another aspect is the viewpoint expressed by one of the respondents. She claimed that suggestions from a younger colleague would not be always acceptable for her. We have to agree that experience matters a lot, but

sometimes during discussions a good idea may arise and teachers should listen to their colleagues, if they want to teach better. Those who are open-minded and are open to advice can improve their performance. Journal keeping was also mentioned in the response. Although journal records are very useful for reflection, it does not always have perfect results. However, the respondent preferred journal writing to peer observation practice, although it is more subjective.

Quazi-experimental study

The rationale for the choice of the groups was the fact that there are two parallel classes of the same age and language level at school, and the groups were already formed, so there was no possibility to randomly assign students either to the control or to experimental group. Both experimental and quasi-experimental designs are accepted under the conditions for educational research (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voefle, 2010, p. 30). The above-mentioned two groups became the control and experimental groups for the research. Anyway, the students in the groups had approximately the same level of English language skills and were studying according to the same syllabus, which made their results comparable.

There were several steps followed for keeping the records in journal for teachers in both groups - experimental and control:

- a) The participants determined the reason of keeping the journal and what was expected from it;
- b) The journal was for private means and for the mentor colleague;
- c) The questions about teaching practice were set: What teaching strategies were used? Was the lesson student-oriented or teacher-oriented? What resources were used for teaching? Were they successful? Before starting teaching, did the teacher set the objectives? Did the teacher face any problematic issues? Did s/he follow the lesson plan? What worked well and what not? If there would be a chance of re-teaching the topic, would s/he change teaching strategies and methods? What would s/he modify in her/his teaching? Did the teacher relate to all learners? Were the learners actively involved in activities? Did the teacher pay attention to different learner's needs? What did the learners favor?

The goal of the experiment was to prove that peer observation accompanied by journal writing was a more effective means of reflective teaching in the given context than just journal writing. The results had to be obtained by measuring students' achievements in the control group

Participants

The participants of the study were the second graders at Chaglar Nikoloz Tsereteli International School, Tbilisi, Georgia. For the purpose of the experiment, we chose two beginner level groups – one as the experiment group whose teacher participated in journal writing for reflection, and the other as the control group whose teacher combined journal writing with peer observation. Below are presented the data about the students of both groups.

Table 1.1 Parameters of Experimental and Control Groups

Experimental Group		Control Group
Number of the students	11	13
Nationalities	5 -Turkish	
	3- Georgian	10- Georgian
	3- Azerbaijani	3- Azerbaijani
Level of English skills	Beginner	Beginner

Procedure and results

The teachers in the experimental group organized pre and post-observation meetings in order to discuss the progress of the reflective process every week. They obliged themselves to share the notes taken in journals and debate over them at least once in two weeks. Consequently, the experiment of journal writing turned into a self-observation tool. The teachers used to write 3 times per workday. Yet, the number of entries per week reduced after the first two weeks. However, it has to be mentioned that they did not write right after the sessions. At the beginning of the experiment, they tried to answer as many questions as it was possible. After a while, the paragraphs were shortened mainly because of time shortage. The paper notes were later changed into online ones.

To see the progress of teachers' professional development, we designed an evaluation form for the teachers according to the sourcebook of Van Note Chism (2007). The special form for peer observation was shared with the observed teacher. The form focused on several issues with sub-questions. The following table represents the evaluation form for the observed teacher that was implemented in the experiment. The rating scale (1- very poor; 2-poor; 3-fair; 4-good; 5-excellent) was applied to evaluate the performance.

Table 1.2 Observed teacher's evaluation form

Observed Teacher's Evaluation Form	
Influence on learning	Score
• Teacher helps the students promote the problem-solving and creative skills.	
• Teacher maintains the healthy challenge to the students.	
• Teacher arouses independent thinking.	
• Teacher promotes appreciation of diverse points of view and feelings.	
Setting	Score
• Activities are well determined and arranged.	
• Steps and techniques are precisely explained and demonstrated.	
• Teacher assists during the activities.	
• Activities develop essential communicative skills.	
• The length of activities is relevant.	
• The level of the activities is relevant (difficult/easy).	
Teacher management	Score
• Teacher is ready for the lesson.	
• Teacher is aware of the class objectives.	
• Teacher controls class time effectively.	
Content awareness	Score
• Teacher is aware of the subject / theme.	
• Teacher is certain explaining the subject.	
• Instructions are appropriate for the students (their language level).	
• Different visuals are used for explanation.	
• Teacher is unbiased.	
Communication with learners	Score
• Teacher appreciates learner participation.	
• Teacher motivates learners.	
• Teacher provokes the interest in the subject.	
• Teacher reacts positively (well) to the learner diversity.	
• Teacher applies sufficient classroom management approaches, methods.	
• Teacher is objective and treats learners fairly.	
• Teacher considers students' needs.	

Adapted from Chism, N.V.N., (2007). Peer review of teaching: A Sourcebook. Bolton, MA: Anker

During the pre- and post- observation processes, the observed teacher was questioned about the practice of the peer observation and journal writing. Teacher X noted that there was no tension among the students, they were more mobilized and tried to do their best. She did not try to show-off herself and remained as she was. The given recommendations were taken into account by the observed teacher. For instance, in October, 2012 the students had to learn the names of months and the seasons in English. Teaching the names of the seasons was easier than teaching the names of the months. During the pre-observation meeting, teacher X introduced her lesson plan and discussed her instructions. The instructions were based on flash cards and drills. The researchers suggested focusing on the activities that would be well determined and aranged. The instruction process was carefully observed and evaluated later. The lesson structure seemed to be a little bit irrelevant considering the age of the students. The classroom management was good enough, but the result was not satisfactory. The students were not able to learn the names of the months. The post-observation session held several hours later was dedicated to the discussion of the lesson. The discussion was divided into three parts. In the first part the instructor who was under obserivation (X) commented shortly about her lesson. She told the observers that she used colorful flashcards for the topic explanation, but the students were confused and had problem memorizing the months' names. Teacher X remarked that even the appraisals to motivative them did not work well. The students' attention was distraced by candies which were used as positive reinforcement. In the second part, the observers reviewed the teacher's management skills and instruction methods. They appreciated that instructor was willing to listen to the suggestions and was open to the comments. It was important to emphasize the classroom management style. Teacher X fairly appreciated the learners' participation. She tried to motivate and stimulate the interest of the learners. Also, she controled class time effectively. However, the activities were not sufficient for the students. Considering the students' needs, teacher X was ready to discuss and replan the lesson under the guidance of the observers. They dedicated the third part of post-observation meeting to replanning the lesson. Here are some suggestions which were given for the further lesson planning:

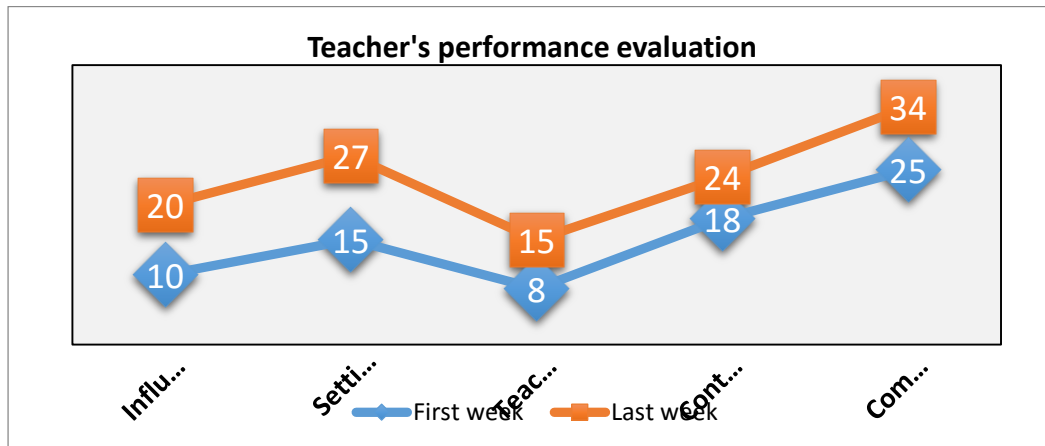
- a) Reducing the quantity of new vocabulary;
- b) Using more games instead of oral drills;
- c) Using more visuals (visuals must be high-qulity and easily recognizable, etc).

Teacher X agreed that 12 new words (months' names) were too many for one session. So, she decided to reduce the word number to 6. Instead of flash cards, larger size pictures and letters were presented in Power Point. Considering different learning styles, some games were carefully designed for the lesson. Group work using papers and glue were introduced to the students. Students had to match and paste correct month names to the seasons.

A and B plans were also suggested in order to prevent the failure of the session. Timing was reminded. The duration of the activites should be sufficient, on the one hand, but, on the other, students should not get bored. The instructor was notifed once more that independent thinking was very important for the students.

The figure 1.9. illustrates the compared scores of observed teacher's performance in the first and last week of the experiment.

Figure 1.9 Observed teacher's performance evaluation



As we could see from the diagram, the observed teacher really enhanced her teaching practices in terms of motivating students, providing them with a number of activities tailored in accordance with their needs and interests, managing time in the classroom efficiently and building a rapport with the learners. It is notable that the progress was quite visible even from the first week and reached the success point in the last week.

Description of tests used for the assessment of English Language skills

During the observation practice both groups were assessed 4 times: 1 Pre, 2-while and 1 post- tests. The tests were designed according to the course books, Family and Friends 1/ 2 (Simmons, 2009) and Oxford Primary Skills- Reading and Writing 1/ 2 (Thompson, 2009; Casey, 2009). The questions tested both receptive and productive skills. The oral component (speaking) was not included in the test to make the assessment less time-consuming. All four tests were written. The questions were formulated in a clear way. There were open and closed- ended questions to check students' level of reading, writing, and listening skills. The assessment was carried out by a 30-point system (24-30 Excellent; 18-23 Very good; 12-17 Good; 6-11 Satisfactory; 0-5 Need further work).

Test Results for the Experimental Group

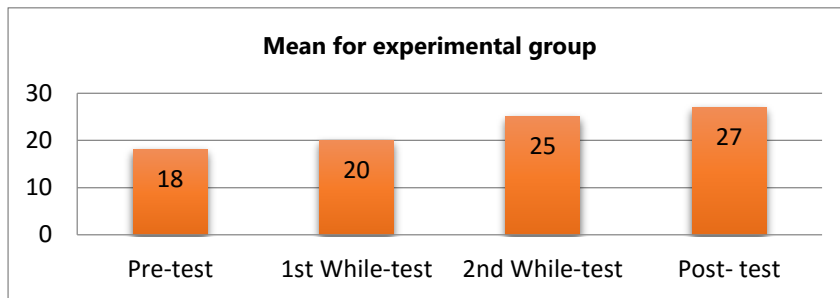
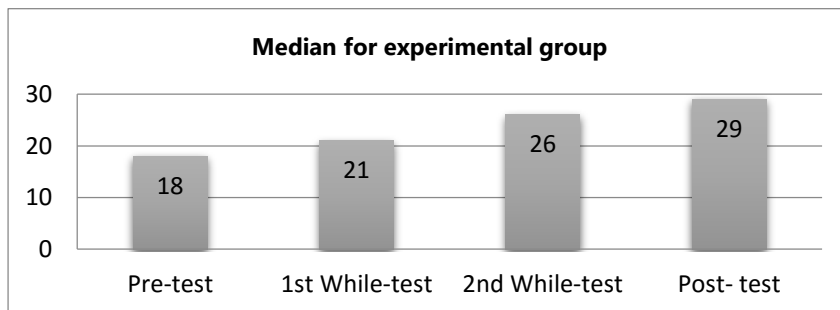
The test results for experimental group are presented in table 1.3. below, which illustrates 11 students' performances at four different stages of assessments. The information incorporated in the following table reveals the fact that all students had constant improvements in English language acquisition. However, if we look at the grades of pre- and 1st while test, we can infer that improvements were not so great, on the other hand, the grades impressively improved in 2nd while- and post-tests.

Table 1.3. Test results of experimental group

Student	Pre-test	1st While-test	2nd While-test	Post-test	Value Added
Student 1	18	24	27	29	+11
Student 2	21	21	26	30	+9
Student 3	16	18	23	25	+9
Student 4	22	24	29	30	+8
Student 5	10	12	16	23	+13
Student 6	14	14	19	23	+9
Student 7	17	19	24	27	+10
Student 8	25	26	30	30	+5
Student 9	17	18	22	24	+7
Student 10	20	22	27	29	+9
Student 11	22	25	30	30	+8
	Mean 18	Mean 20	Mean 25	Mean 27	
	Median 18	Median 21	Median 26	Median 29	
	Mode 10, 17, 22	Mode 18, 24	Mode 27, 30	Mode 30	
	Standard deviation 5	Standard deviation 4	Standard deviation 4	Standard deviation 3	

The results show that the average grade of the tests increased at each stage. In the pre-test the highest point was 25, in the 1st while-test the highest was 26, and in 2nd while-test and post-test the highest point was 30. It has to be mentioned that in post-test 4 out of 11 students got 30 points and the lowest mark was 23. All students increased their scores. The middle score (median) of pre-test grades was 18, 1st while-test – 21, 2nd while-test – 26, and post test – 29. The constant increase of median can be visualized through the figure 3.3.

From the given data it can be inferred that on the second stage of assessment just Student 1 had a significant improvement, since his score increased by 6 points (18 – 24). Yet, if we look through the third stage it can be asserted that 7 out of 11 students have advanced their scores by 5 points.

Figure 1.10 Mean for experimental group**Figure 1.11 Median for experimental group**

The Student 5 was the most successful in improving scores, since his/her pre-test score increased by 13 points in the last phase of assessment (10 - 23). The other students from the experimental group increased their scores by 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 points.

These results provide us with very important research material, as they show that even the student whose mark was the lowest in the class improved the performance. The Student 5 joined the group of excellent students while at the first stage his/her knowledge was only satisfactory.

Test Results for the Control Group

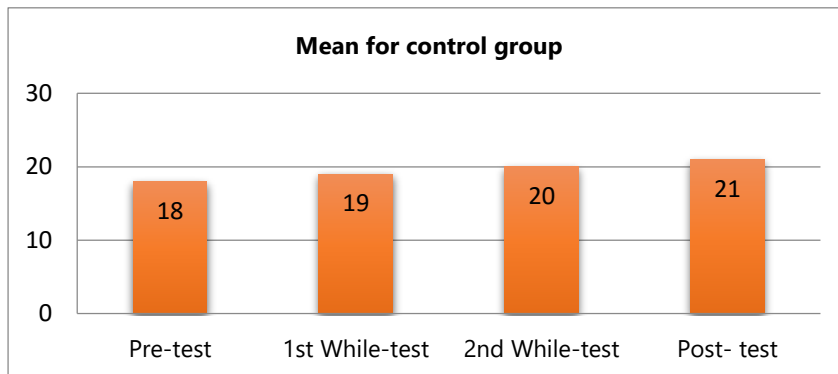
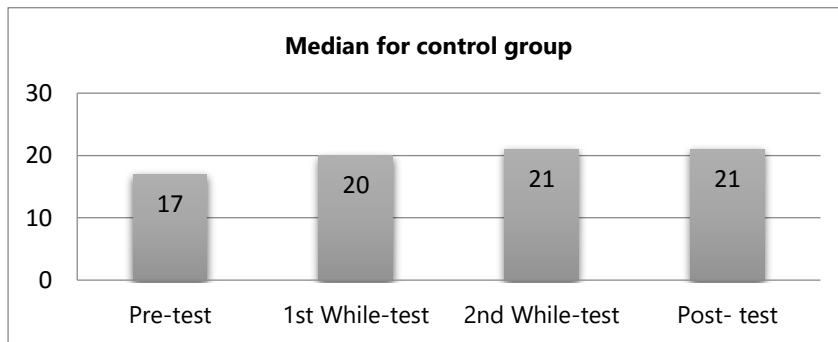
The test results for control group are shown in table 3.4. below, which illustrates 13 students' performances at four different stages of assessments. The information incorporated in the following table reveals the fact that the group was not as successful as the experimental one. 4 out of 13 students did not improve the scores.

Table 1.4 Test results of the control group

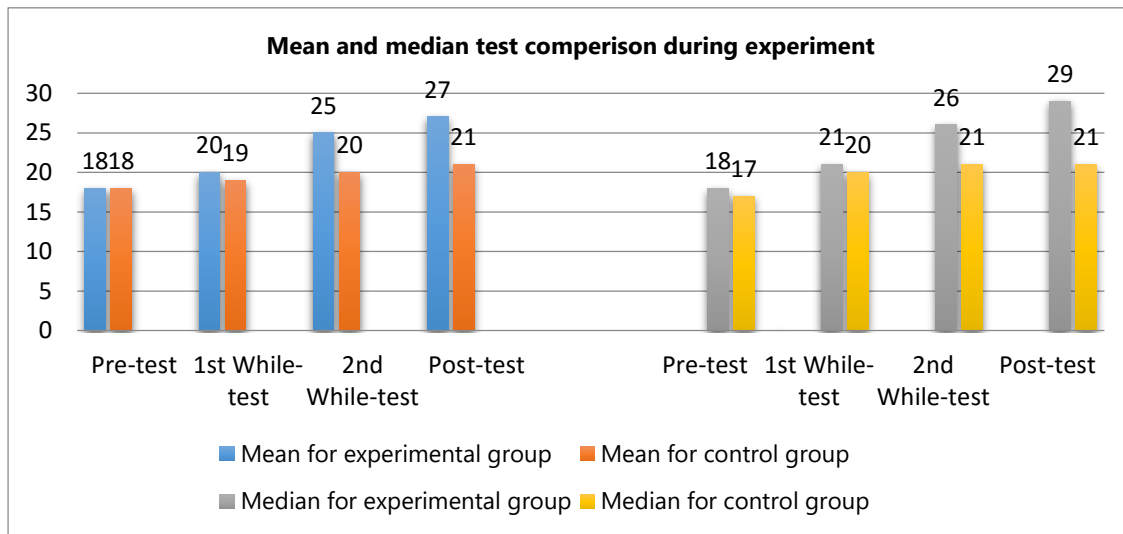
Student	Pre-test	1st While-test	2nd While-test	Post-test	Added Value
Student 1	14	11	16	17	+3
Student 2	20	21	25	25	+5
Student 3	12	16	19	21	+9
Student 4	16	17	17	20	+4
Student 5	15	12	16	20	+5
Student 6	25	25	23	25	0
Student 7	17	23	22	24	+7
Student 8	25	25	23	25	0
Student 9	26	20	25	26	0
Student 10	9	9	13	14	+5
Student 11	20	23	21	21	+1
Student 12	13	15	12	14	+1
Student 13	26	25	27	26	0
	Mean 18	Mean 20	Mean 21	Mean 21	
	Median 17	Median 20	Median 21	Median 21	
	Mode 20, 25, 26	Mode 25	Mode 16, 23, 25	Mode 25	
	Standard deviation 6	Standard deviation 5	Standard deviation 5	Standard deviation 4	

The Student 7 increased his score by 7 points, and the added value of other students equals to 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9. In the pre-test the highest point was 25, in the 1st while-test the highest was 25, and in 2nd while-test it was 27. Yet, if we look at the results of the post-test, the highest point decreased to 26. Student 3 significantly improved the mark by increasing it by 9 points. The middle score (median) of pre-test grades was 17, 1st while-test – 20, 2nd while-test – 21, and post test – 21.

The control group was multimodal (16,20,23,25,26) but at the last stage one mode - 25- emerged. The median of this groups did not grow rapidly and significantly (17, 20, 21) even stopped its growth at the last assessment (21). The students who had comparably high marks (25, 26) did not improve. The figures 1.11. and 1.12. below show the means and medians for the experimental and the control groups.

Figure 1.11 Mean for control group**Figure 1. 12. Median for control group**

If we compare these results to the results of the experimental group, we will definitely see the difference between the progress line. It is vivid that the control group did not advance much. The mean for the control group increased just by 1 point on each step. The difference between the median of pre-test and post-test is 4 index. The figure 1.13. shows the divergence of the mean and the mode of experimental and control groups. The mean of the experimental group improved from pre-test stage to the post-test stage by 9 points. The 6 points are between the means of experimental and control groups. And 8 points are between the medians of the experimental and the control groups. The median index of a group whose teacher was under the observation improved by 11 points from pre-test assessment to the post-test one.

Figure 1.13 Mean and median test comparison during experime

The initial language level in both groups was almost the same. The experiment revealed the fact the mixed model of reflective teaching (peer observation and journal writing) applied in the experimental group proved to be more efficient than the only-journal-writing model applied in the control group. The results taken from the four-stage assessment reveal the constant improvements in the experimental group. Even the Student 6 who had the lowest mark in pre-test (14) increased his performance by 9 points in post-test. If we check the lowest pre-test mark taken by the Student 10 (9) in the control group, we will see that his performance improved only by 5 point in the post-test. Thus, the experimental group had made a much better job and enhanced the knowledge. Collaboration of colleagues made the students to move forward with big steps. The highest mark in controlled group taken in pre-test equalled to 26. However this index did not change in post-test. In contrast to the controlled group, experimental group's student with the highest grade got the full mark (30) in the post-test.

The experimental group proved that peer observation and shared journal writing helped the teacher to teach more effectively and to achieve success in her group. On the contrary, the control group proved the opposite idea. Therefore, it can be inferred that there are pros and cons of using only journal writing. The positive outcomes depend on sharing the journal records and on getting the objective views about one's experience.

These are advantages observed during the combined reflective teaching in the experimental group:

- The lesson plans became more concrete.
- The teaching time was used more efficiently.
- The classroom management improved.

The disadvantages of only journal writing were observed in the control group; it cannot be said that with the help of reflective writings teacher Y could modify her teaching methods sufficiently, since she did not an observer

teacher to share her self-observations with. Some other disadvantages were noted during the writing the journal: It was time-consuming; sometimes important details were not written; just technical aspects were discussed.

Considering all these negative factors observed in the control group gives a clue to exploit the mixed model of reflective teaching (peer observation and journal writing) to see a vivid picture of success in teaching.

Limitations of the research

The following are the limitations to the research that should be mentioned:

- The experiment was a small-scale study, limited to one school, two groups only.
- The experiment included a limited number of teachers (just two of them), it will be better for future studies to include more participants and area in the research.
- The observation and the experiment duration can be longer in further studies.

The limitations of the research envisage a further research on the topic, in order to get farther-reaching conclusions. It is notable that the study supports the hypothesis of the research – the positive impact of reflective teaching on teachers' professional development and students' academic achievements.

Conclusion

The following outcomes of the research have been demonstrated:

- The data obtained from the survey which was conducted in Egypt regarding the cultural issues in designing reflective teaching practices, showed that **the majority of teachers prefer to be involved in collaborative group work, rather than being observed by the peer due to the Muslim traditional views of female and male relationships**. Both genders avoid peer work, because there is a possibility to stay alone with the opposite gender for the discussions and this might cause some inconveniences.
- The teacher interviews and the experiment conducted in Georgia revealed the fact the mixed model of reflective teaching (peer observation and journal writing) is the most productive and efficient way of reflective teaching in the Georgian context. It was proved that just implementing the journal writing as a tool of reflective teaching was not a very successful experience for the teachers due to some negative factors: subjectivity, time consumption and fewer improvements in method modifications. **It gives a clue to exploit the mixed model of peer observation and journal writing to see a vivid picture of success in both teachers' professional development and students' academic performances**. The experiment showed the higher academic success of students in the experimental group (mean: from 18 to 27 and median: from 18 to 29) compared to the students in the control group (mean: from 18 to 21 and median: from 17 to 21). **The experiment proved the efficiency of the mixed model of reflective teaching, involving peer observation and journal writing.**

- The study and the experiment revealed the importance of reflective thinking levels while implementing peer observation, journal writing and collaborative group work in English language teaching. The table below visualizes the outcomes:

LEVELS	Peer Observation	Journal Writing	Collaborative Group Work
Technical	+	+	+
Contextual	+		+
Dialectical		+	+

It can be seen that technical level, which aims to reexamine, evaluate and change the teaching methods, is realized in peer observation, journal writing and collaborative group work. The contextual level, which includes reflections concerning explanation and discussions of basic theories and inclination of classroom experience as well as the results of applied approaches, is realized in peer observation and collaborative group work. The study and the experiment both proved the successful integration of these three reflective thinking levels in English language teaching. It once again **proves the necessity of combining peer observation and journal writing together in one model to be responsive to technical, contextual and dialectical levels of reflective thinking. The collaborative group work can stand alone, as it covers all these three levels itself.**

Recommendations

- Based on the results of the experiment, English Language Teachers in Georgia can be recommended to become more oriented on the mixed model of reflective teaching, combining peer observation and journal writing.
- As Chaglar Nikoloz Tsereteli International School and Salahaldin International School organize the regular classroom walks, but do not have pre- and post-conferences, it would be desirable to provide the observed teachers with necessary feedback for their future improvement.
- It is desirable that those schools, which do not promote reflective teaching, to implement this approach. Some regular surveys and professional get-togethers could be conducted to get the teachers involved in the reflective process.
- It is advisable for English language teachers to attend periodic trainings, seminars and workshops to follow the demands of the 21st century classrooms.

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