

Running head: REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN
ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Reflective practices: the experiences of teachers in one NIS school in Kazakhstan

Xeniya Artamonova

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Educational Leadership

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

June, 2017

Word count: 17,649

©Copyright by Xeniya Artamonova 2017

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Author Agreement

By signing and submitting this license, you _____ (the author(s) or copyright owner) grant to Nazarbayev University (NU) the non-exclusive right to reproduce, convert (as defined below), and/or distribute your submission (including the abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video.

You agree that NU may, without changing the content, convert the submission to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation.

You also agree that NU may keep more than one copy of this submission for purposes of security, back-up and preservation.

You represent that the submission is your original work, and that you have the right to grant the rights contained in this license. You also represent that your submission does not, to the best of your knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright.

If the submission contains material for which you do not hold copyright, you represent that you have obtained the unrestricted permission of the copyright owner to grant NU the rights required by this license, and that such third-party owned material is clearly identified and acknowledged within the text or content of the submission.

IF THE SUBMISSION IS BASED UPON WORK THAT HAS BEEN SPONSORED OR SUPPORTED BY AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN NU, YOU REPRESENT THAT YOU HAVE FULFILLED ANY RIGHT OF REVIEW OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS REQUIRED BY SUCH CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT.

NU will clearly identify your name(s) as the author(s) or owner(s) of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to your submission.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

I hereby accept the terms of the above Author Agreement.

Author's signature:

Date:

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Declaration of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been submitted for the award of any other course or degree at NU or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. This thesis is the result of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated, and the views expressed here are my own.

Signed:

Date:

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Ethical Approval

Dear Xeniya,

The NUGSE Research Committee reviewed the project entitled " Reflective practices: the experiences of teachers in one NIS school in Kazakhstan " and decided:

To grant approval for this study subject to minor changes, to be discussed with supervisor

Approval subject to minor changes: The study is approved subject to minor changes.

Reviewers' Comments:

Anonymity: Please elaborate the recruitment procedure of the participants. For example, will the gate keeper be involved in finding the participants? The recruitment procedure may have implications of exposing the identity of a participant.

Before starting your data collection, you need to discuss these changes with your supervisor, revise your proposal accordingly, and then ask your supervisor to check the revised proposal.

Sincerely,

NUGSE Research Committee

11 November, 2016

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest respect and gratitude to my research supervisor Professor Dilrabo Jonbekova, who guided me through the process of research and writing the thesis, provided valuable feedback, was very supportive, inspired and encouraged me all the time.

I am grateful to all the faculty members of NU GSE for their contribution to my development as a researcher. I owe special gratitude to Deborah Brown for the knowledge she has shared and creating an 'atmosphere' in GSE. I am also deeply grateful to all my English teachers, without whom my education would have been impossible.

I would also like to thank my friend Davinder Gill, who inspired me to apply for a second master's degree and helped me to identify an area of research that I became passionate about.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends, who believed in me and supported me, provided free accommodation and professional advice.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of teachers related to the use of reflective practices (RP) and the underlying perceptions about a teacher as a reflective practitioner. As a result of the qualitative analysis, the study revealed how teachers reflect, how they think about reflection, what difficulties they face and how these difficulties may be overcome.

Since the study sought to understand the individual meanings of reflection for the participants, the qualitative methodology was employed. The data were collected through a series of semi-structured one-on-one interviews with ten teachers, who had been selected purposefully to ensure an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon. Another criterion was maximum variation among the participants to ensure inclusion of all the possible perspectives. Hence the participants represented different subject departments and age/experience groups.

The main argument of the study is threefold. First, teachers perceive reflection as a process of cyclic retrospective analysis leading to the improvement of teaching practice and the skill of reflection as developing naturally with experience. Second, the participants find writing and conversations with colleagues to be the most significant factors contributing to their RP. The content of their reflection may be subdivided into two categories: student behavior and quality of curriculum delivery and acquisition. Finally, the key difficulties of teachers in their RP are lack of time and fear of introducing something new.

These findings may be of use to a number of stakeholders. The process of research and its findings may raise the awareness of teachers about RP and their potential to improve their practice; school leaders will be able to make better informed decisions to

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

create conditions for teacher RP and develop a policy to promote and support the RP of
teachers; NIS best practices may be transferred to mainstream schools.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Аннотация

Бұл зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты мұғалімдердің тәжірибесіндегі кері байланыс практикасы мен мұғалімдердің өздерін кері байланыс практикасын қоладнушылар ретінде түсінуі және қабылдауы болып табылады. Зерттеудің нәтижесі ретінде мұғалімдердің кері байланыс жасауы, кері байланысты түсіну, кері байланыс жасауда кездесетін қиыншылықтар және оларды шешу жолдары анықталды.

Зерттеудің әр қатысушының жеке пікіріне және тәжірибесіне бағытталғандықтан, сапалық зерттеу әдісі қолданылды. Зерттеуге қатысушы он адам арнайы мақсатпен сұрыпталып, зерттеу бойынша бетпе-бет сұхбаттар өткізіліп, сұрақтар қойылды.

Сонымен қатар, сұрыптаудың негізгі критерилерінің бірі зерттеу қатысушыларының әр түрлі болуы. Бұл критерий түрлі көзқарастарды қарарстыруға септігін тигізді. Зерттеу қатысушылары әр түрлі әдістемелік бірлестіктер мұғалімдері болды. Жас ерекшеліктері де әр түрлі болды.

Зерттеу үш негізгі аргументтерге негізделген. Біріншіден, мұғалімдер кері байланыс жасауды сабақ беруді жақсартуға көмектесетін циклдық процесс ретінде қабылдайды. . Сонымен қатар, сабай бойынша кері байланыс жасау уақытпен және тәжірибемен келетін машық деп түсінеді. Екіншіден, зерттеу қатысушылары әріптестермен бірге кері байланыс жасау және жазбалар жүргізуді өз тәжірибелеріне септігін тигізетін маңызды факторлар деп анықтады. Кері байланыс мазмұнын негізгі екі категорияға бөлуге болады: оқушылардың мінез-құлқы және оқу бағдарламасын меңгерулері. Сонымен қатар, негізгі үрей тудырушы факторлар уақыт жетіспеушілігі мен жаңашыл идеяларды қолданудағы үрейлер.

Осы зерттеу нәтижелері қызығушылық танытқан тұлғаларға пайдалы болуы мүмкін. Зерттеудің барысы және оның нәтижелері кері байланыс туралы

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

мұғалімдердің білімін толықтырып, сабақ беру практикасын жақсартуға септігін

тигізеді. Мектеп әкімшілігі зерттеу нәтижелері негізінде ақпарат алып, кері

байланыс жасау жөнінде құжаттар қабылдауына болады. Сонымен қатар, НЗМ

мектептерінің тәжірибесі басқа орта білім беру ұйымдарына таратылады.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Аннотация

Целью данного исследования, основанного на качественных методах, было изучение опыта учителей, связанного с рефлексией учителя (РУ) и соответствующих представлений об учителе как о рефлексирующей практике. В результате качественного анализа, были исследованы следующие вопросы: как учителя рефлексии, как они воспринимают РУ, с какими трудностями они сталкиваются и как эти трудности можно преодолеть.

Так как мы стремились понять индивидуальное значение рефлексии для каждого участника, мы применяли качественные методы. Сбор данных осуществлялся через серию частично-структурированных индивидуальных интервью с учителями, которые были выбраны целенаправленно с целью глубокого понимания предмета исследования. Кроме того, критерием отбора участников было максимальное разнообразие, что позволило рассмотреть все возможные точки зрения. Таким образом, участники представляли различные методические объединения и возрастные группы, а также имели различный опыт работы.

Основной аргумент исследования состоит из трех частей. Во-первых, учителя воспринимают рефлексии как циклический процесс ретроспективного анализа, который ведет к совершенствованию практики преподавания, а также считают, что навыки рефлексии развиваются естественным путем по мере накопления опыта. Во-вторых, участники считают ведение записей и беседы с коллегами наиболее значимыми факторами, способствующими их рефлексии. Содержание РУ можно разделить на две категории: поведение учащихся и качество преподавания и освоения учебной программы. Наконец, основные трудности, которые испытывают учителя, - это недостаток времени и страх новизны.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Данные результаты могут быть полезны ряду заинтересованных лиц. Процесс исследования и его результаты могут улучшить знания учителей о рефлексии и ее потенциале для совершенствования практики преподавания; руководство школы получит информацию для принятия решений по созданию условий для РУ и сможет разработать политику для продвижения и поддержки РУ; опыт НИШ может транслироваться в общеобразовательные школы.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Table of Contents

Author Agreement	ii
Declaration of Authorship	iv
Ethical Approval	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Abstract	vii
Table of Contents	xiii
List of Tables	xvii
List of Figures	xviii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	2
1.3 Purpose of the Study	3
1.4 Research Questions.....	3
1.5 Significance of the Study and Intended Audiences	4
1.6 Outline of the Paper	5
Chapter 2. Literature Review	6
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 Conceptualizations of Reflection and Reflective Practice in Teaching.....	7
2.3 Approaches to Pre- and In-Service Reflective Teacher Development	13

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

2.4 Specific Tools of Reflective Practices	21
2.5. Conclusion	25
Chapter 3: Methodology	26
3.1 Introduction.....	26
3.2 Research Design	26
3.3. Research Site.....	27
3.4 Participants.....	27
3.5 Instruments.....	29
3.6 Data Collection Procedures	30
3.7 Data Analysis.....	31
3.8 Ethical Considerations	31
3.9 Limitations	32
3.10 Conclusion	32
Chapter 4. Findings	34
4.1 Introduction.....	34
4.2 Participants.....	34
4.3 Perceptions of Reflection and Reflective Practices	35
4.3.1 Retrospective analysis.....	36
4.3.2 Improvement of practice through a cycle of actions.....	37
4.3.3 Development of reflective thinking.....	39
4.4 Use of Reflective Practices	40

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

4.4.1 The role of writing	40
4.4.2 The content of reflection	42
4.4.3 The role of administration and colleagues	43
4.5 Difficulties in Reflective Practices	45
4.7 Conclusion	47
Chapter 5. Discussion	49
5.1 Introduction.....	49
5.2 Perceptions of Reflection and Reflective Practices	49
5.3 Use of Reflective Practices	51
5.4 Difficulties in Reflective Practices	55
5.6 Conclusion	56
Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations	58
6.1 Summary of the Research Findings	58
6.1.1 How do teachers perceive their RP and themselves as reflective practitioners?	58
6.1.2 How do teachers use RP in their work and professional development?	58
6.1.3 What are the difficulties that teachers face in their RP?	59
6.2 Recommendations.....	60
6.3 Implications for further research.....	60
References	62
Appendices	67
Appendix A.....	67

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Appendix B 72

Appendix C 76

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

List of Tables

Table 1. Participants Profile

Error! Bookmark not defined.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

List of Figures

Figure 1. The Cycle of Reflection

38

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Maybe reflective practices offer us a way of trying to make sense of the uncertainty in our workplaces and the courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos...” (Ghaye, 2000, p.7)

1.1 Introduction

Over several past decades, the system of education in Kazakhstan has been reformed in order to meet the demands of the changing economic and socio-political circumstances. The reform of the secondary education requires significant changes both in the classroom and in the way students and teachers think. One of the major objectives of the State Program of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020 (2010) is “training highly-qualified staff for educational system” (p.3). Accordingly, the system of teacher professional development is undergoing a significant transformation, mainly in terms of requirements to teacher qualifications. In this regard, Sagintayeva (2014) points out that “some progress has been made but teacher development remains a central priority in improving the quality of education in Kazakhstan” (p. 41).

A solution to the problem of teacher quality could be continuous in-service professional development. For example, for mainstream school teachers, there are the multilevel courses run by the Center of Excellence under the auspices of the Autonomous Education Organisation "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools' (NIS) aiming at “creating conditions for the continuous professional development of teachers” (Center of Excellence, 2015). In addition to these courses, NIS have an internal system of professional development, including various trainings and workshops, classroom-based and distance courses, a system of mentoring, regulated by the Recommendations on the organization of

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

professional development in Nazarbayev Intellectual schools in the academic year 2015-

2016 (2015). At this stage of reforms, the focus of administrators and researchers has to be shifted from providing professional development to providing effective professional development.

There are multiple approaches to and forms of professional development described in scholarly literature. Some researchers assert that “reflective practice can be a beneficial process in teacher professional development, both for pre-service and in-service teachers” (Ferraro, 2000, as cited in Finlay, 2008). Moreover, one of the priority directions set out by the Recommendations of NIS is “organization of the reflective practices of a teacher promoting their professional development” (Recommendations, 2015).

Although all teachers think about their teaching in one way or another, reflective practice is a relatively new concept in Kazakhstan. According to Chris Kyriacou, “reflective teaching goes beyond simply thinking about one's teaching on an occasional basis ... rather it refers to an orientation towards one's own practice which is based on inquiry and problem solving” (Kyriacou, 1994, as cited in Finlay, 2008). In the conditions of a distinct need for improvement in teaching quality, it may be beneficial for a number of stakeholders in the education system of Kazakhstan to investigate how reflective practices (RP) are used and perceived by teachers in this country.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As a result of the ‘post-method’ transformations of education in the world and the reforms in the education system of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstani teachers are given more power to decide how to address the needs of their students. They are required to be reflective practitioners improving their practice and developing professionally on an ongoing basis. However, there are no policies, either at the state or school level, addressing teacher reflection in terms of either guidelines or measuring how teacher reflection affects

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

teaching and learning. Although some elements of RP are employed within the NIS system (a section for reflections in the standard lesson plan, mentoring for new teachers), there is no clear-cut system guiding teachers through the process of reflection. As a result, the effectiveness of teacher RP, as well as the ways in which teachers reflect and perceive reflection, remain unknown.

Although, there is abundant literature on the notion of reflection, its use in teacher education, and specific strategies of reflection, there are only a few studies exploring the use of RP in the professional development of in-service teachers or their perceptions of RP. Moreover, there are no data on the use or perceptions of RP in Kazakhstan. We don't know if or how teachers reflect, how they understand RP, or what difficulties they may face regarding the use of RP. Consequently, the problem addressed by this study is that, though some elements of RP may be used by teachers, there is no data on their experiences related to RP in the NIS network or other Kazakhstani schools.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers related to the use of reflective practices and the underlying perceptions about teachers as reflective practitioners. As a result of the qualitative analysis, the study revealed how teachers reflect, how they think about reflection, what difficulties they face and how these difficulties may be overcome.

1.4 Research Questions

Main question:

What are the experiences and perceptions of teachers related to the use or RP?

Sub-questions:

1. How do teachers perceive their RP and themselves as reflective practitioners?

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

2. How do teachers use RP in their work and professional development?
3. What are the difficulties that teachers face in their RP?

1.5 Significance of the Study and Intended Audiences

This study explored the experiences of teachers related to RP, and the main argument of the study, based on the findings, is threefold. First, teachers perceive reflection as a process of cyclic retrospective analysis leading to the improvement of teaching practice and the skill of reflection as developing naturally with experience. Second, the participants find writing and conversations with colleagues to be the most significant factors contributing to their RP. In addition, the content of their reflection may be subdivided into two categories: student behavior and attitudes and the quality of curriculum delivery and acquisition. Finally, the key difficulties that teachers face in their RP are lack of time and fear of introducing something new.

This knowledge may be beneficial to a number of stakeholders. First of all, the process of research and its findings may raise the awareness of teachers about RP and their potential to improve their teaching and student achievement. Secondly, school leaders and decision-makers of higher authority will be able to make better informed decisions to create conditions for the RP and professional development of teachers, for which reflective practices may be a useful tool. They will have data on the current use of RP, the perceptions of teachers, and the difficulties they face. This may help to develop a policy to promote and support the RP of teachers. As the mission of NIS is “to enhance the intellectual potential of the nation” (NIS, 2016), their best practices are transferred to mainstream schools. Hence, data on the RP of NIS teachers may be useful in the professional development of mainstream school teachers. Finally, the research will contribute to the pool of knowledge related to RP by suggesting data on a school in Kazakhstan that may be used by other researchers.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

1.6 Outline of the Paper

This thesis is organized in the following way. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study by describing its background, stating the purpose of the study, outlining the research questions and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review and critical analysis of the literature that the study is based on. Chapter 3 is dedicated to a detailed explanation and justification of the methodology employed to find answers to the research questions. The chapter also includes a description of the sampling procedures and data analysis strategy. Chapter 4 contains a report of the main findings of the study. Chapter 5 provides an analysis and discussion of the study findings. Chapter 6 draws a conclusion of the study and includes recommendations, the study limitations, and implications for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As this study intends to explore the experiences and perceptions of teachers in Kazakhstan related to the use of reflective practices (RP), it is important to analyze the existing literature on the RP of teachers in terms of how RP are understood and used worldwide and the methodology of research undertaken in this area. The search of various educational research databases has revealed a considerable body of publications on RP in connection with the teaching profession. They may be roughly divided into the following thematic categories that will be discussed further in this section:

1. Conceptualizations of reflection and reflective practice in teaching;
2. Approaches to pre- and in-service reflective teacher development;
3. Specific tools of RP.

It is noteworthy that, despite the wide use and acclaim of RP as a philosophy and tool of teacher development, the notion itself appears evasive and, consequently, there are numerous papers attempting to define the notions of reflection and reflective practices. Another important observation resulting from the search for literature on RP is that most of such research papers focus on the use of RP in pre-service teacher education in the USA, Europe, and Australia. Meanwhile, there are few studies addressing the issues of the use of RP in the professional development of in-service teachers and no research at all investigating teacher RP in post-Soviet countries. Another theme embraced by a considerable number of researchers is the strategies of RP promoting higher levels of reflection in teachers, though, based on the existing literature, it is difficult to identify any specific RP strategies used or researched into consistently. Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of and analyze literature on the concepts of

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

reflection and reflective practice, use of RP in pre- and in-service teacher development, and strategies of RP.

2.2 Conceptualizations of Reflection and Reflective Practice in Teaching

This sub-section will summarize the attempts made by the modern researchers to define the notion of reflection in connection with teacher education and teaching practice. As the notion of reflection remains ambiguous, this section will summarize the varying attempts to define it as an act of thinking, as a practical activity, and as a sequence of actions. It will also consider the more modern definitions of reflection that suit the purpose of this study. Another key objective of this section is to place the present study in the historical context by explaining the reasons of the rise of reflective teaching.

Historically, RP gained popularity among educational practitioners and researchers only in the 1990s. The 20th century witnessed numerous changes in the approaches to teaching and teacher education. These changes resulted in the shift from the positivist to the constructivist paradigm, i.e. from ‘transmission, product-oriented theories’ to ‘process-oriented’ ones of teaching and learning (Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.241). Fat’hi and Behzadpour (2011) quote Cunningham (2001) claiming that “constructivism views learning as an active process where learners reflect upon their current and past knowledge and experiences to generate new ideas and concepts” (p. 2 as cited in Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.241). The new paradigm views a teacher as an active participant in the educational process constructing meaning and knowledge, including that about teaching (Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.241). Now teachers can “theorize what they practice and practice what they theorize” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001; p. 545 as cited in Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.242).

Modern researchers (Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Akbari, 2007; Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011) characterize the current development of pedagogy as a ‘post-method era’ implying

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

that teachers do not have any more to blindly implement the generally adopted ‘method’ and are entrusted with more autonomy and power to “observe their teaching acts, evaluate their outcomes, identify problems, find solutions, and try them out to see once again what works and what does not” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 539 as cited in Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.242). Akbari (2007) emphasizes the “eagerness to give more voice and value to teachers” inherent in the post-method rhetoric (p.193). The rise of reflective teaching in the 1990s was a response to the need to fill in the gap that formed in the place of ‘method’ and “reflection has become an integral part of teacher education” (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p. 73 as cited in Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.242) in the West. Farrell (2004) explains the mechanics of this process as follows:

Teachers can become more empowered decision makers, engaging in systematic reflections of their work by thinking, writing, and talking about their teaching; observing the acts of their own and others’ teaching; and by gauging the impact of their teaching on their students’ learning. In these ways, teachers can begin to locate themselves within their profession and start to take more responsibility for shaping their practice. (pp. 5-6 in Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.243).

Zeichner (1994), analyzing the reasons for the growing interest to the concept of reflective teaching, attributes this interest to the growing popularity of cognitive psychology, the beginning of research on teacher thinking, “the growing acceptance of diverse research methodologies”, greater attention to teachers’ voices and views of their work, and “the growing recognition that top-down educational reform efforts that merely use teachers as passive implementers of ideas conceived elsewhere, are doomed to failure” (p.11).

The evasive nature of the notion of reflection was grasped by Smyth (1992), who claimed that “...reflection can mean all things to all people...” (p.285). Although it is widely used as an umbrella term meaning something good or desirable, people, including scholars, have their own interpretations of this term “used as the basis for trumpeting the

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

virtues of reflection in a way that makes it sound as virtuous as motherhood” (Smyth, 1992, p.285).

Linguistically, the word ‘reflection’ means thinking deeply or carefully (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). People do it implicitly as part of their human identities, “through a process of negotiation between our sense of self and our experiences of others” (Demetriou, 2000, p.210). In the context of education, the use of the term ‘reflection’ can be traced back to John Dewey, who viewed it as an act of rational and purposeful thinking, an “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions to which it leads... it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality” (Dewey, 1933, p.6). Dewey (1933) identified open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness as the prerequisites of reflection.

Hatton and Smith (1995) identified four key issues arising from Dewey’s work and its interpretations in later publications:

- 1) whether reflection is limited to thought process about action, or is more inextricably bound up in action;
- 2) the time frames within which reflection takes place, and whether it is relatively immediate and short term, or rather more extended and systematic;
- 3) whether reflection is by its very nature problem-centered or not;
- 4) how consciously the one reflecting takes account of wider historic, cultural and political values or beliefs in framing and reframing practical problems to which solutions are being sought (p. 34).

Another prominent philosopher of reflection was Donald Schön, who introduced the notion of reflective practice within the framework of professional experience. He added a practical angle to Dewey’s idea of an act of thinking and distinguished between

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

‘reflection in action’ (reflection simultaneous with action), ‘reflection on action’

(retrospective reflection after an action is completed), and ‘reflection for action’ (planning future actions) arguing that reflection, especially the latter type, leads to the application of theory in practice and development of a practitioner’s ‘artistry’ in a specific discipline (Schön, 1983, 1987).

Similarly, Van Manen (1977) viewed reflection as a progression of three stages or levels (as cited in Brent, 2010, p. 29). However, his three levels are conceptually different from those of Schön. Brent (2010) represents them in connection with teaching as follows:

- 1) ensuring technical rationality and applying knowledge to reach educational objectives measure, such as effectiveness, economy, and efficiency;
- 2) investigating, questioning, and clarifying end objectives and assumptions behind teaching activities designed to achieve objectives such as lesson plans, activities, and evaluation in regard to outcomes;
- 3) conducting critical reflection - higher level of reflection – context incorporating moral and ethical questions into thinking (p. 29).

The latter of these stages/levels - critical reflection - is considered to be the highest level of reflectivity. It involves thinking and problem solving connecting theory and practice (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000). Critical reflection is a “cognitive activity during which one carefully considers the impact of one's actions upon others” (Brent, 2010). Hatton and Smith (1995) emphasize that critical reflection takes into account the social, cultural, and/or political forces underlying a decision or an event.

Boud and Walker (1998) add to the discussion of the definition of reflection by pointing out the need to consider subjective personal emotions in a reflective process, highlighting the holistic nature of reflection. They emphasize the human nature of the reflective process describing “the challenge of incorporating ideas about reflection, which

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

in some cases are only partially understood, into teaching contexts which are not conducive to the questioning of experience – that is, situations which do not allow learners to explore ‘a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt (Dewey 1933), ‘inner discomforts’ (Brookfield, 1987), ‘distorting dilemmas’ (Mezirow, 1990), uncertainties, discrepancies and dissatisfactions which precipitate, and are central to, any notion of reflection” (Boud & Walker, 1998, p. 192).

The contemporary attempts to define the notion of reflection are summarizing and generalizing in nature. Thus, Finlay (2008) summarized the ‘multiple meanings’ of the term ‘reflective practice’, though admitting that these “meanings range from the idea of professionals engaging in solitary introspection to that of engaging in critical dialogue with others”. According to the author, “practitioners may embrace it occasionally in formal, explicit ways or use it more fluidly in ongoing, tacit ways” (Finlay, 2008, p.2). She also argues that the meanings attributed to reflective practice may vary from “adopting a thinking approach to practice” to “self-indulgent navel gazing” and “carefully structured and crafted approaches towards being reflective about one’s experiences in practice” (Finlay, 2008, p.2). However, Finlay (2008) suggests a cumulative definition of reflective practice as a “process of learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and/or practice ... that often involves examining assumptions of everyday practice ... and tends to involve the individual practitioner in being self-aware and critically evaluating their own responses to practice situations” linking it to life-long learning.

The most recent attempt to clarify the notion of reflection was made by Clara (2015), who claims that “reflection consists of giving coherence to a situation that is initially incoherent and unclear” and assumes that reflection works along the following lines:

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

- 1) reflection works as a continuous interplay between inference and observation;
- 2) reflection works very much as a conversation between the subject and the situation to be clarified, in which the situation talks to the subject and reacts to the modifications (real or virtual) that the subject introduces in it;
- 3) at least five aspects of the interplay between inference and observation can be distinguished analytically: the unclear situation; the problem; the idea (inference); the observation of the coherence between the idea and the observed events and previous knowledge; and the reaction of the situation to the introduction of the idea;
- 4) some reflections reach a conclusion — a clarified situation — which has direct implications for action (reflection in action), whereas other processes of reflection reach a conclusion—a clarified situation — which has no such direct implications for action (reflection on action) (p.267).

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to consider the definition by Jay and Johnson (2002), who, although there is little agreement among other scholars as to the definition of reflection, suggest a description of the reflective teaching process that explains why reflective teaching has become so popular in the post-method era and suits the purpose of this study:

Reflection is a process, both individual and collaborative, involving experience and uncertainty. It is comprised of identifying questions and key elements of a matter that has emerged as significant, then taking one's thought into dialogue with oneself and with others. One evaluates insights gained from that process with reference to (1) additional perspectives, (2) one's own values, experiences, and beliefs, and (3) the larger context within which the questions are raised. Through reflection, one reaches newfound clarity, on which one bases changes in action or disposition. New questions naturally arise, and the process spirals onward (p. 76 in Fat'hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.243).

Thus, the analysis of the literature attempting to define the notion of reflection reveals that there is no consensus as to the meaning of the term among the scholars. However, more recent studies tend to devise more comprehensive definitions embracing

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

the whole thinking process in connection with practice and including various aspects of this process.

2.3 Approaches to Pre- and In-Service Reflective Teacher Development

This sub-section will discuss the approaches to the formation of reflective thinking in pre- and in-service teachers suggested by the current research literature including the various strategies tested by different research projects and tools devised to assess the levels of reflection as well as the remaining doubts as to the connection between reflection and effective teaching practice.

The term “reflective teaching” has been widely used in the recent discussion of the nature and guiding principles of teacher education and in-service professional development. In the West, many training courses have adopted “reflective teaching” as their “basic philosophy” (Calderhead, 1989, p.43). Calderhead (1989) summarizes his analysis of this discussion claiming that “a fast-growing and varied literature asserts the importance of reflection and self-direction, both in the initial process of learning to teach and in further professional growth” (p.43). The author has also found out that “several recent textbooks for use in teacher education have a focus on the promotion of reflection, and policy on teacher education, in several countries, has begun to acknowledge the role of teachers’ reflection, professional judgement, and self-evaluation” (Calderhead, 1989, p.43). However, Calderhead (1989), as a result of his analysis of the notion of reflective teaching, concludes that “... professional learning as it occurs in classrooms ... is largely unassessed” and “here is great difficulty in gaining any precise conceptual grasp of what reflection is ... in teachers’ professional development” (p.43).

In a similar vein, Zeichner (1994, p.9), in his overview of the instructional strategies employed in pre-service teacher education, states that teacher educators “... under the umbrella of reflective practice, tried to prepare teachers who are more thoughtful

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

and analytic about their work in some fashion”. However, analyzing available research on reflective practices in teacher training, the scholar emphasizes the lack of clarity on “whether it is necessarily a good thing that should be promoted” (Zeichner, 1994, p.9).

Zeichner (1994, p.15) identified five major traditions or reflective practice in the US teaching and teacher education: academic, social efficiency, developmentalist, social reconstructionist, and generic. The academic tradition “stresses reflection about subject matter and the representation and translation of that subject-matter knowledge to promote student understanding” (Zeichner, 1994, p.15). The social-efficiency tradition emphasizes “faith in the scientific study of teaching to provide a basis for building a teacher-education curriculum” (Zeichner, 1994, p.16). The developmentalist tradition “prioritizes reflection about students, their thinking and understandings, their interests, and their developmental growth” as it is based on “the assumption that the natural development of the learner provides the basis for determining what should be taught to students and how it should be taught” (Zeichner, 1994, p.16). The social-reconstructionist tradition views reflection “as a political act which either contributes toward or hinders the realization of a more just and humane society” (Zeichner, 1994, p.17). The generic tradition advocates “for reflective teaching in general, without much comment about what it is the reflection should be focused on, the criteria that should be used to evaluate the quality of the reflection, or the degree to which teachers’ reflections should involve the problematization of the social and institutional contexts in which they work” (Zeichner, 1994, p.17). This tradition implies that “teachers’ actions are necessarily better just because they are more deliberate or intentional” (Zeichner, 1994, p.17).

Earlier, in his 1987 paper, Zeichner classified strategies for the development of reflective teachers “according to the level at which an intervention is directed” (Is it enough to have a course in reflective teaching or should the school and the society be

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

changed?) (p. 566), “the degree to which an approach specifies a set of specific components for the reflective process or steps to be taken toward the goal of reflectiveness” (the approaches range from use of reflective journals to “specific dispositions and types of thinking) (p. 567), “the degree to which an approach is explicitly justified by reference to a particular theoretical position” (e.g. learning theories, critical theory) (p. 567). As a result of this analysis, Zeichner (1987) identified six major strategies that are claimed to “enhance the reflective capabilities of prospective teachers”: (1) action research; (2) ethnography; (3) writing; (4) supervisory approaches; (5) curriculum analysis and development; and (6) the methodology of ‘reflective teaching’ (p. 568).

Sparks-Langer and Berstein Colton (1991), in their attempt to synthesize research on the reflective thinking of teachers, found professional knowledge to be “coming both from sources outside the teacher and from the teachers’ own interpretations of their everyday experiences” (p. 37). They identified the cognitive, critical, and narrative elements of reflection and undertook an analysis of research on the development of each of these elements. As for the cognitive element, the authors conclude that “novices should be taught the schemata of experts” but emphasize that “expert teachers probably draw on their own contextually developed knowledge and prior case experience” (Sparks-Langer & Berstein Colton, 1991, pp. 38-39). Sparks-Langer and Berstein Colton (1991) infer that there are quite successful methods promoting technical reflection about methods, principles, outcomes, and contexts for pupil learning (structured journal writing, critical dialogue, examination of multiple perspectives, field experiences, and action research), but they are limited in developing critical reflection (about political, ethical, and moral values, beliefs, and attitudes) (p. 41). The research on narrative reflection provides “insights into what motivates a teacher’s actions and an appreciation for the complexity of teachers’

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

everyday lives”, these insights being valuable for the teachers themselves (Sparks-Langer & Berstein Colton, 1991, pp. 42-43).

Yost, Sentner, and Forlenza-Bailey (2000) question the assumption that reflective practice can be taught at all but highlight two elements that are necessary for it to occur: “supervised practical experiences” and “personally meaningful knowledge base” (pp. 40-41). They believe that “teacher education programs must designate critical reflection as a primary mission and interweave reflection throughout the teacher education curriculum” and warn against focus on the lower levels of reflection (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000, pp. 41-42). Among promising practices, the researchers list the constructivist ones of dialogue, action research, and writing experiences (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000).

Several scholars have attempted to identify effective strategies that help develop reflective skills. Thus, Hatton and Smith (1994, p.36) analyzed a considerable body of literature to identify strategies that promote reflection in student teachers:

- 1) action research projects;
- 2) case studies and ethnographic studies of students, teachers, classrooms, and schools;
- 3) microteaching and other supervised practicum experiences;
- 4) structured curriculum tasks.

However, according to the authors, reflection in pre-service teachers may be hindered by the following barriers:

- the persistence and strength of participants' own conceptualisation of teaching;
- lack of time and opportunity for development;
- lack of suitable knowledge base;
- negative reactions to demands for reflection, including feelings of vulnerability;

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

- lack of coherence in the structure and ideology of total programs (Hatton and Smith, 1994, pp.36-37).

Another example of research into effective teaching of reflective skills is the study by Finlay (2008), who believes that effective reflective practice can be nurtured if the following guidelines are used:

- present reflective practice(s) with care;
- provide adequate support, time, resources, opportunities and methods for reflection;
- develop skills of critical analysis;
- take proper account of the context of reflection (pp. 15-20).

The same issue was investigated by Kabilan (2007), who reports on the study of “reflecting on reflections” by future English language teachers in the Malaysian context to have proved that “observing the strengths and weaknesses of others and reflecting on them via writing and reading allow the students to be aware of their own practices, avoid possible mistakes, and, thus, develop a set of strategies to implant positive classroom changes or practice” (p. 697). The author emphasizes that “for reflective practice to have any meaningful impact on the students, it must occur in a learning community and not be carried out as an individual endeavor” (Kabilan, 2007, p. 698).

To assess the effectiveness of the formation of reflective skills, there is a need for an instrument to measure the level of reflection. B. Larrivee undertook to develop and validate a tool to assess the level of teachers’ reflective thinking and (2008) also concludes that “pre-service and novice teachers can be helped to reflect at higher levels with multifaceted and strategically constructed interventions” and suggests that “journaling with specific structures, such as providing deliberate prompts and strategically posing non-judgmental questions”, as well as “helping prospective teachers acknowledge, articulate, and challenge their beliefs” will promote higher order reflection “by creating authentic

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

dialogue” (Larrivee, 2008, p. 345). Based on the idea that “reflection is an abstract construct with its existence being assumed on the basis of observed performance and expressed beliefs” the researcher suggests an assessment tool providing “benchmark indicators of key behaviors of reflective practitioners” (Larrivee, 2008, p. 345).

Lee (2005) also suggests criteria to assess the depth of reflective thinking:

1. Recall level where “one describes what they experienced, interprets the situation based on recalling their experiences without looking for alternative explanations, and attempts to imitate ways that they have observed or were taught”.
2. Rationalization level where “one looks for relationships between pieces of their experiences, interprets the situation with rationale, searches for “why it was,” and generalizes their experiences or comes up with guiding principles”.
3. Reflectivity level where “one approaches their experiences with the intention of changing/improving in the future, analyzes their experiences from various perspectives, and is able to see the influence of their cooperating teachers on their students’ values/behavior/achievement” (p.703).

The researcher conducted several case studies among the participants of a Korean mathematics education program to identify the following factors affecting development and changes in student teachers’ reflective thinking: personal background, mode of communication, content of the reflection, protocol of dialogue and questions, placement context (Lee, 2005, p. 712). Lee (2005) found that reflective thinking is enhanced by the use of “various systematic aids”, such as journal writing, clinical interviews, dialogues, narrative inquiry, observational learning, and reflective teaching; creation of “various opportunities and climates where reflective thinking/practice can flourish” rather than “limiting students/teachers to a particular approach”; valuing student teachers’ “prior knowledge of what their personal backgrounds are” because “through awareness and

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

understanding of themselves, pre-service teachers can challenge and reinforce themselves and their teaching performance”; providing appropriate field experiences (Lee, 2005, p. 713).

There are just a few studies investigating the reflective practices of experienced teachers. For example, Osterman and Kottkamp (1993), relying on the experiential learning theory, contrast traditional and reflective approaches to the professional development of teachers and come to the conclusion that “reflective practice is a professional development process that ... is highly effective in achieving behavioral change” (p. 9). They suggest that “before we can adopt new behaviors, before we can begin to introduce reflective practice as a professional development strategy whether in a university classroom, a school, or a school district, it is necessary (a) that we develop an awareness of our habitual actions and the assumptions that shape those actions and (b) that we consider the effectiveness of actions relative to intentions” (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p.9).

As a result of a study conducted among teachers of adult English language learners based on the action research approach, Farrell (2008) claims that “the use of reflective practice in teacher professional development is based on the belief that teachers can improve their own teaching by consciously and systematically reflecting on their teaching experiences” (p. 1). He also emphasizes that there is only limited body of research on “how experienced language teachers have reflected critically on their beliefs, on critical incidents in the classroom, and on classroom practices” (Farrell, 2008, p.1). In addition, the author assumes that “teachers can choose a number of approaches to facilitating reflection over the course of their professional careers” (Farrell, 2008, p.2). Among such approaches, the author examines action research, teaching journal, teacher development groups. Farrell (2008) concludes that “teachers who engage in reflective practice can develop a deeper understanding of their teaching, assess their professional growth, develop informed

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

decision-making skills, and become proactive and confident in their teaching” (p.4).

“Professional development through reflective practice can be seen as an opportunity to enter a process of “mental growth spurred from within” (Feiman-Namser & Floden, 1986, p. 523), where teachers are supported in seeking their own growth” (Farrell, 2008, p.4). In Farrell’s view, “reflective practice takes place along a continuum” of phases occurring at different stages of teaching careers (Farrell, 2008, p.4).

Similarly, Stanley (1998) represents development of a reflective teaching practice as a series of phases: (a) engaging with reflection, (b) thinking reflectively, (c) using reflection, (d) sustaining reflection, and (e) practicing reflection (p. 585). However, many researchers raise doubt whether “increased reflection will translate into action and result in improvements in teaching and learning” (Cornford, 2006, p. 220). Cornford (2006) analyzed a considerable number of studies into the effectiveness of reflective teaching as measured by empirical research to conclude that “there is a strong tendency for studies assessing the efficacy of reflective teaching to reveal equivalence between reflective treatment and control groups on a range of measures” (p. 224).

Drawing on Cornford’s work, Fat’hi and Behzadpour (2011) also assert that “while it is self-evident that reflective approaches are theoretically rich, the hitch lies in their inability to translate into practice” (p.243). They emphasize that there isn’t any empirical evidence that reflective teaching approaches lead to better teaching or learning (Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.243). Quoting Akbari (2007), Fat’hi and Behzadpour (2011) indicate that “teacher educators are instrumental in enhancing reflective teaching practices in the classroom” (p.243). According to Akbari (2007), “though research indicates that reflection can bring about an increase in teacher job satisfaction, an improvement in interpersonal relationship with colleagues and students, and an improvement in teachers’ sense of self-

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

efficacy, there is very little evidence that reflection will necessarily lead to higher students' achievements and better teacher performance" (in Fat'hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.243).

To conclude, it is important to note that it has been proved by research that reflection can be taught or developed through various means but there is still doubt whether there is any correlation of reflection and more effective practice.

2.4 Specific Tools of Reflective Practices

There are many research projects investigating the use of a specific tool or strategy, ranging from traditional reflective portfolios and journals to modern technology-based approaches, to facilitate and develop reflection. Most of the 'traditional' approaches employ reflective writing in one form or another. For example, Chitpin and Simon (2009) examined the role of a professional portfolio in the development of pre-service teachers' identities as learners. A study based on interviews, informal classroom conversations and reflections over an eight-month period was conducted with 15 pre-service teachers enrolled in the Reflective Practice Seminar in primary/junior division at a Canadian university. The participants reported that constructing a professional portfolio made them question the 'taken-for-granted assumptions', articulate their progress and formulate their perspectives. The study also revealed that initially reflection was perceived as 'a labour-intensive task' but at later stages 'the scepticism dissipated' (Chitpin & Simon, 2009).

Similarly, the mixed-methods study by Oner and Adadan (2011) conducted within the framework of a teaching practicum course offered at a research university in Istanbul, Turkey, was focused on the use of web-based portfolios as tools for reflection in pre-service teacher education and revealed "a statistically significant improvement in the number of high-level reflective indicators" associated with the progress of the project (p. 477). The web-based platform itself was positively perceived by the participants as tools that as a tool allowing "easy access and the development of better portfolio artifacts" (Oner

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

&Adadan, 2011, p. 488). The authors emphasize the importance of carefully designed tasks and an electronic medium that supports easy access and revision to engage pre-service teachers in meaningful reflection (Oner & Adadan, 2011, p. 488).

Another category of research projects are focused on the use of writing to develop reflective skills. For instance, Francis (1995) investigated the reflective writing process based on reflective journals and found that pre-service teachers need time and a prescribed structure to develop reflective writing. As a result, some of them begin to challenge the generally accepted assumptions.

In a similar vein, Welch and James (2007) investigated the impact of guided written reflection on the development of reflective practices in pre-service special educators. They suggested a “user-friendly” template for reflection known as the ABCs of reflection and empirically confirmed its efficiency. The experiment was conducted with 26 pre-service teachers at a private Midwestern university. One group of the participants reflected without any guidance while the other used the ABC123 method. The researchers recorded a statistically significant difference in the depth of reflection between the two groups. The authors explain this difference claiming that clear guidelines and knowing the expected level and outcome of reflection enhanced the latter (Welch & James, 2007, p. 282).

The focus of the next category of studies is on the use of technology in the development of RP. Thus, Whipp (2003) studied the development of reflective skills in prospective teachers through online discussions and found that the latter need to be carefully structured to promote higher levels of reflection (p. 331). The author identified tailored and general questions from teacher educator and peers and critical readings to be “helpful scaffolds” for online discussions about field experiences. In addition, Whipp (2003) emphasizes the importance of explicit goal and expectation of critical reflection. The author also claims that students need to understand how to achieve higher levels of

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

reflection through a particular framework for critical reflection and modeling of critical reflection (p, 331). To achieve this, online communication has to be scaffolded by the course instructor who would create carefully structured questions and define roles for students, and based on critical reading (Whipp, 2003, p. 331).

Likewise, Jones (2014) studied the reflective practice of student teachers in the online space during the practicum component of a teacher education course. The findings suggest that reflective practice in the online space “offers an opportunity to engage pre-service teachers in meaningful reflection on their teaching practice” (p.171). Moreover, the students reported favorable perceptions of the weekly forum used in the study as a useful strategy supporting their learning (Jones, 2014, p.171).

Another example of technology-focused projects is the study by Ikpeze (2010), who investigated the role of technology in enhancing the reflective thinking of future teachers and found that “creating a structure that promotes reflection, use of multiple projects, thought-provoking readings, collaboration, hands-on activities and a problem-solving approach” enhance the quality of teacher reflection. The author emphasizes the importance of “varied contexts and experiences with various technologies” to increase the reflective abilities explaining this by the different learning styles and ways people engage with technology varying according to: “whether they worked on their own or in a group; whether they had a limited and extended knowledge base in the area; perceptions about their learning competence in the area and their beliefs” (p.344).

In addition, McCormack (2010) examined how teacher candidates responded to VoiceThread-based assignments that were expected to enhance teacher reflection and concluded that it can “augment, extend and refine teacher reflection experience by facilitating and structuring the analysis process” (p. 122). To support this conclusion, the author quotes Hawkes and Rosmiszowski (2001) whose research “has shown that

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

discourse through technology achieved a higher overall reflective level than do reflections generated by teachers in face-to-face interactions” (McCormack, 2010, p.111).

Finally, in his doctoral thesis, Brent (2010) has undertaken a grounded theory study of how technology can facilitate reflection. The author found that technology provides opportunities for reflecting on different instructional aspects, the choice of the modality for communication and contexts for reflection including, voice, video, text chat, recordings, Internet, etc, tracking systematic information and trends. Brent (2010) highlights the potential of video in enhancing reflection in student teachers opposing it to live observation. According to the researcher, technology may be used to reflect on teaching in the following ways: (a) looking for and analyzing feedback; (b) providing feedback to students; (c) recording and reviewing teaching activities and class sessions; (d) capturing and reviewing personal notes with journals and blogs; (e) making adjustments to class activities and resources as needed; (f) monitoring student progress and reviewing student understanding through participation, exercises, contributions to discussions, and grades; (g) communicating with students; (h) interacting and exchanging ideas through online teaching communities; and (i) archiving and organizing curricular information (Brent, 2010).

Moreover, Brent (2010) identified the following characteristics of technologies that support RP: (a) relative ease and speed; (b) ability to facilitate a variety of ways for feedback; (c) ability to record, store, and access resources and data for review; (d) systematic data to analyze trends and common features; (e) ability to organize and make changes as needed; and (f) ability to facilitate communities for discussion, sharing, and collaboration.

Overall, most of the recent studies focus on the use of technology to enhance reflection suggesting strategies varying in their efficiency, most of them relying on reflective writing in one form or another. Most of the studies also emphasize the

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

importance of guidance, i.e. questions posed before developing reflective practitioners

either by an instructor or through an electronic medium. The question that remains

unanswered is whether technology is critical to develop reflective skills or the same levels

of reflection could be achieved without technology.

2.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the available literature on RP demonstrates a struggle formulating an unequivocal definition of reflection and leaves many theoretical questions unanswered. For example, the connection of thinking and practice, the existence and order of stages or levels of reflection, the effective ways to develop reflective thinking, and the effect of technology on the quality of reflection remain unclear. The existing empirical research is largely based on the RP of pre-service teachers and, consequently, the RP of in-service teachers need more attention. In addition, there is a tendency in the modern research of RP to explore how the use of technology affects RP. However, there is little evidence of the effectiveness of one or another strategy.

In this regard, the present study explores the experiences and perceptions of teachers related to the use of RP in an attempt to clarify how new and experienced teachers understand RP and whether this understanding correlates with any of the definitions suggested by the scholars, how they use reflection in their daily practices and whether it helps them improve their teaching, what difficulties they face and what approaches they find effective.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed explanation and rationale for the qualitative interview-based research design selected to answer the research questions about the experiences and perceptions of teachers related to reflective practices (RP). The chapter includes a rationale for the research design, an explanation of the sampling procedures along with a detailed description of the research site and the participant profile, and a detailing of the data collection instruments and data analysis process. In addition, the ethical considerations that occurred throughout the research process and the limitations of this study are discussed.

3.2 Research Design

Since this study intended to explore the experiences of teachers related to RP focusing on their understanding and perception of the phenomenon in question, qualitative methodology was selected as the most suitable. This choice was guided by the idea that “qualitative methods are used in research that is designed to provide an in-depth description of a specific program, practice, or setting” (Mertens, 2010, p. 225). Creswell (2013) describes the qualitative approach as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). The present study sought to understand the individual meanings of reflection for the participants and, for this reason, the qualitative methodology was employed. In addition, Kumar (2011) emphasizes that “the main focus in qualitative research is to understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences” (p. 104). Hence, the qualitative approach was selected to deepen

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

understanding of the meaning of RP for the participants and foster interpretation of their personal experiences and perspectives of reflection in their work and professional development.

3.3. Research Site

The Nazarbayev Intellectual School was selected as the research site for two reasons. First, this school has some elements of reflection in its policies (e.g. a requirement for a teacher to be reflective) and daily practices (e.g. a special section in the standard lesson plan). Due to these, participants from such a school, who are familiar with RP and have some experience using them, could help the researcher to understand the central phenomenon. Second, this research site is accessible for the researcher as the latter is employed there and could receive permission from the school administration to conduct the research. In addition, the school is explicitly open to research and innovation and willing to cooperate. The full name of the school is not revealed for ethical reasons.

3.4 Participants

According to D. Mertens (2010), “the strategy for selecting your sample influences the quality of your data and the inferences that you can make from it” (p. 309).

Consequently, as this study intended to develop an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon of the RP of teachers, purposeful sampling strategy was employed, which allows a qualitative researcher to “intentionally select individuals who can best help to understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.206). For these reasons, ten teachers who might be using some RP in their daily work were selected. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) emphasize that it is typical for qualitative research to study a few individuals as the major objective and provide a complex in-depth analysis of each case (p. 209).

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

In addition, the researcher aimed at maximum variation among the participants, i.e. selected the most possibly diverse cases within a small sample (Robert John Woodson Foundation, 2008), in order to ensure inclusion of all the possible perspectives regarding the RP of teachers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.207). Hence, the participants represented different subjects and, consequently, different departments within the school (English and Global Perspectives, Mathematics, Physics, Russian). It was important to consider the differences among the subject departments due to the fact that they may have different cultures of reflection and belonging to a certain department may affect an individual teacher's daily practices and perception of reflection.

Another criterion for selecting the participants was their teaching experience. The researcher was interested in comparing the RP experiences of relatively new teachers with those of teachers who have been in the profession for three or more years. Hence, three of the participants had under three years of teaching experience, and the rest were teachers with seven to almost thirty years of experience.

It is important to mention that the sampling was, to a great extent, convenient as the researcher recruited her colleagues, whom she knew personally. This approach has its advantages and disadvantages, of which the researcher was fully aware. On the one hand, people feel freer with an interviewer they know and trust and, as a result, may share more information useful for the research. On the other hand, participants may be willing to please a familiar researcher and be afraid of sharing information that might affect their career. To eliminate the negative implications of the convenient sampling, the researcher fully informed the participants about the possible risks and assured them of data confidentiality and measures taken to protect their privacy and anonymity. In addition, the researcher made purposeful effort to remain neutral at all the stages of data collection and interpretation.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

3.5 Instruments

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggest that in qualitative research open-ended questions are asked to provide an opportunity for the participants to “voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings” (p. 218). Open-ended questions allow the participant to create options for their own responses (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 218). As the researcher was interested in the experiences and perceptions of the participants, a semi-structured open-ended one-on-one interview was selected as the main method of data collection, and a corresponding interview protocol was developed (Appendix A). The interviews were semi-structured because the researcher needed a certain degree of freedom in the process of interviewing the participants to probe and elicit further information from the participants, vary the order of questions depending on the flow of a participant’s ideas, and paraphrase some of them to make the questions more accessible to the participants. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher flexibility to elicit the necessary information or more details.

The interview protocol included several demographic questions to find out about the participants’ background and make them feel at ease along with a series of questions that were designed to elicit information that was necessary to answer the research questions. The questions were based on the themes that had emerged from the literature review and designed to answer the research questions. They were arranged in a logical sequence to ensure a coherent flow of thought by the participants and minimize the need for clarification by the interviewer. The interview protocol was translated into the Russian language as most of the participants felt most comfortable speaking this language. This issue was discussed with them at the initial stage when they agreed to participate in the interview. The interview protocol was pilot-tested with three NUGSE master students to

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

ensure the unambiguity and coherence of the questions and estimate the possible risks of the interviewees' reactions. As a result, some of the questions were rephrased to eliminate the risk of causing fear that the school administration might disapprove of the teachers' working practices.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The whole process of research was guided by the generally accepted ethical principles and standards as well as the recommendations of Creswell et al. (2011, 2013, 2014). As the study involved people who were asked to share information about their work, their rights needed to be protected. Consequently, all the research instruments (the interview protocol, the informed consent form) and a description of the inquiry procedure were submitted to the GSE Ethical Review Committee for approval. Once the approval was obtained, a request for the permission of the school principal, who is the gatekeeper for the research site, was filed. Participation in the research project was voluntary; consequently, the time factor and the busy schedules of the participants had to be taken into consideration.

After all the permissions were formally issued and signed, the selected teachers were sent an e-mail explaining the purpose and nature of the research project and asking them to take part in an interview. Then those who agreed to participate in the interviews were met in person, given further information on the process of the interviews and asked to sign the informed consent form (Appendix B). Along with this, the interviews were scheduled at a time and place convenient for the participants. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed. To increase the accuracy and credibility of the qualitative data, a member-check was employed, i.e. the transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants for them to confirm their responses.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

3.7 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis was guided by the principles suggested by Creswell et al. (2011, 2013, 2014). First, the interview records were transcribed into text files (Appendix C). As a large proportion of the interviews were conducted in Russian, they were transcribed verbatim, and only selected quotes were translated into English. As the volume of the data was quite small, they were analyzed using color coding in the Microsoft Word basic text processing application. Through several circles of the inductive coding process, categories were identified, which were further grouped into the major themes. Thus, the thematic approach to data analysis was employed, which, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is a method used for ‘identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data’ (2006, p.79). This method was selected because a ‘rigorous thematic approach can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.97). The themes that emerged were organized according to the research sub-questions and further analyzed and compared with the existing data in the field. At the same time, specific quotes were selected to illustrate the findings and copied to a separate file. The summary of the findings was sent to each of the participants for a member-check in order to validate their accuracy.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The participants were selected on a volunteer basis and were fully informed of the purpose and nature of the study. They were assured of respectful treatment regarding their rights and any sensitive issues that might arise during the study. They were asked to sign an informed consent form, which thoroughly explained the purpose of the research, the role of the participants, potential risks, and confidentiality arrangements, emphasizing that they may decline any of the interview questions or withdraw from the project at any time. In addition, their identities were coded as Interviewee A, B, C, etc., and the recordings have

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

been stored on the personal computer of the researcher and will be deleted immediately after transcription, the full transcripts being available only to the researcher, her supervisor, and a limited number of fellow researchers, the participant identity being anonymous. The researcher realized the risk to the careers of the participants that might arise from their sharing information on their daily RP that might be against the school policy or the fact that they did not use any RP at all. Hence, the participants were assured that the information shared in the interviews would be used solely for the research purposes following a member-check if they wished to confirm the interpretation of their answers.

3.9 Limitations

Like any research project, this study has its own limitations that should be acknowledged. The most important one is the fact that its results cannot be generalized due to the limited number of the participants who all represented one school, though the researcher has done everything possible in the given conditions to ensure the representation of different departments, age and gender groups.

Another limitation is that the only data collection instrument was interviewing. The research project might benefit from document analysis (e.g. analysis of reflective journals) and observation (e.g. guided reflection meetings). It would also benefit, if it were possible, from conducting a longitudinal study and trace how the RP of teachers evolve over time.

A further limitation is the predictable desire of the participants, who were selected by convenient sampling, to “look good” in the eyes of the researcher who works in the same school with them. They often tended to give “the right” answers and it was difficult to tell how authentic they were.

3.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a detailed explanation of the selected

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

research design, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, the processes of data collection and analysis, the ethical considerations pertaining to the research project, and its limitations. The subsequent chapters will describe the data obtained with the help of this methodology and discuss the findings.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the present study. As the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers related to the use of RP and the underlying perceptions about a teacher as a reflective practitioner, the participants were interviewed about their perceptions of RP and themselves as reflective practitioners, their use of RP in their work and professional development, the difficulties they face in their RP, and the possible ways they see to improve the RP of teachers. This chapter is divided into 5 main parts and puts forward the profile of the participants and the results of the qualitative analysis corresponding to the sub-questions posed in the introduction and attempting to reveal how teachers reflect, how they think about reflection, what difficulties they face and how these difficulties may be overcome.

4.2 Participants

For the purposes of this study, the total of ten participants was interviewed. They were selected purposefully to shed light on the experiences and perceptions related to RP from different school departments representing different subjects as the researcher had assumed that the department culture might affect their RP and aimed at maximal variation within the sample. In addition, the researcher aimed to ensure maximal variation in terms of teaching experience as the latter had been expected to affect the RP of teachers since literature suggests that reflective skills may be taught and developed over time (Calderhead, 1989, Zeichner, 1994, Sparks-Langer & Berstein Colton, 1991). The table below represents the profile of the participants regarding the background information

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

relevant to this study. The participants were assigned codes that will be used throughout

the whole paper for ethical reasons.

Table 1

Participants Profile

Participant code	Subject	Experience (years)
P1	Maths	30
P2	Physics	over 24
P3	Physics	about 3
P4	Maths	over 6
P5	English	over 4
P6	English	17
P7	Global Perspectives	14
P8	Global Perspectives	about 3
P9	Russian	less than 1
P10	Russian	24

Source: created by the author.

As can be seen in the table, the participants represent five different subjects, two of them belonging to one department (English and Global Perspectives) and may be roughly divided into two groups: teachers with little to moderate experience (1-6 years) and teachers with considerable experience (14-30 years).

4.3 Perceptions of Reflection and Reflective Practices

To explore the perceptions of teachers related to reflection and themselves as reflective practitioners, the participants were asked about their understanding of reflection and of the role that it plays in their work. Overall, all the participants perceive reflective

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

thinking as important for any individual and, especially, for a teacher. Among the definitions of reflection given by the participants, the idea of retrospective analysis prevails. Most of them agree that reflective thinking develops naturally over time and contributes to the improvement of their practice. It is noteworthy that experienced teachers are more confident defining reflection and more specific when describing the ways it affects their professional and personal development.

4.3.1 Retrospective analysis. When asked to define reflection in their own words, all the participants, in one form or another, mentioned the idea of “looking back” at what has been done at a lesson and asking oneself whether the result may be evaluated as successful or not. For example, one participant reported that she always tries “to reproduce all the 45 minutes in my head and analyze whether it went right or wrong” (P1) and P7 figuratively called reflection “the whys in the end of a day”. The suggested definitions may be summarized as follows:

Reflection is retrospective analysis of a past action against a set of internal criteria. As may be inferred from the discourse of the participants, the criteria of their retrospective analysis usually include either the needs of their students or their own teaching practice. A vivid example of this kind of thinking may be observed in the response of P5:

I usually reflect after a lesson, so when the lesson is finished, I just go through all my papers and just think what went well and what didn't and how I can improve, for example, things that didn't go well and what I can do to better help my learners, so they can understand something better.

According to the participants, in the process of retrospective analysis, they pose a set of questions to themselves when they reflect about a lesson that has been conducted.

These questions, though the wording may differ, include the following:

- What has been done?
- What was planned and what really happened?
- Why has it been done in that specific way?

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

- What was right and wrong?
- If anything went wrong, how to solve the problem in the future?

In addition, it is interesting to consider the definition of reflection given by P4 that differs significantly from the general view:

Reflection is a mental process when we either structure or deconstruct our experience, knowledge, or a problem.

P4 is a mathematics teacher who reported that she had been studying various strategies of reflection and practicing reflective thinking on her own since her childhood, which might have affected her way of thinking.

Overall, no significant difference has been observed in the perception of reflection as a retrospective process depending on the subject a participant teaches or the level of teaching experience. All the participants used different terms meaning looking back at a recent event. However, more experienced teachers tend to use their own professional development as the criterion of retrospective analysis while less experienced ones focus mainly on student achievement and attitudes.

4.3.2 Improvement of practice through a cycle of actions. Another aspect of the perception of RP by the participants that recurred throughout the analysis of the interviews is the cyclic nature of the process of reflection that leads to the improvement of practice and personal development. All the participants emphasize that the purpose of their reflection is improvement of their daily work and that “it is to ensure that your future lessons ... are better than previous ones” (P8). The explanation of the process of reflection by P2 illustrates these ideas:

... for example, I conduct a lesson for the first time and have problems with time management, I don't have enough time to do something or some tasks turn out to be more difficult or easier than is necessary. When I go to another lesson in a different class, I analyze my lesson plan and correct it when I teach the same lesson for a second time... Also, there may be questions from students that I am not

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

prepared to answer ... then I look this up somewhere and answer the question at another lesson.

The participants were asked to describe the process of reflection as it occurs in their

practice. The stages that they identified may be summarized in the following diagram:

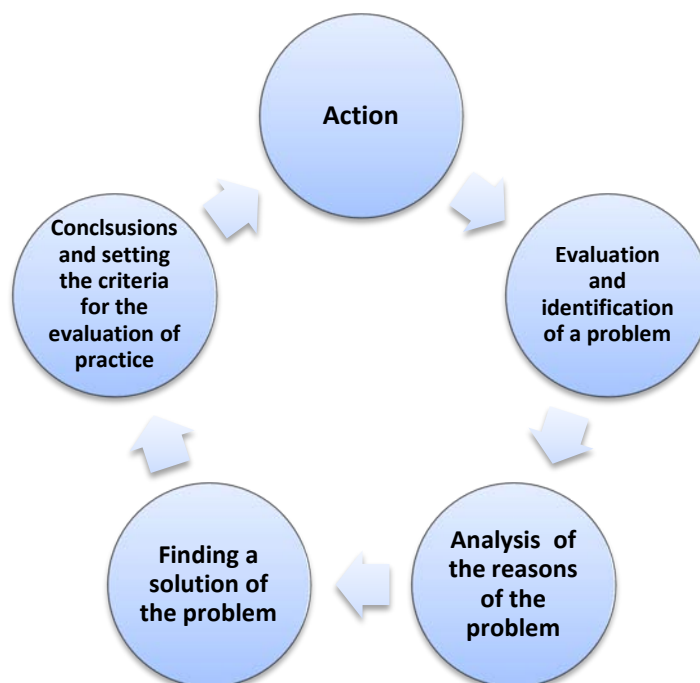


Figure 1. The Cycle of Reflection

Source: created by the author.

Moreover, some participants even suggest that reflection is the basis of innovations and social development. For example, P4 thinks that

... first of all, we need reflection for the development of a personality, self-education, self-improvement. This is very important for a teacher. Also, how do new theories and methods appear in education? They appear as a result of reflection. And innovative technologies appear the same way... When people understand the social and political context where they live... For example, why did the three-level courses appear? Because teachers realized that children had become different from those of the 90s and need to be taught in a different way.

In general, there is no difference depending on the subject a participant teaches in their perception of reflection as a cyclic process aimed at the improvement of practice. Meanwhile, more experienced teachers demonstrate a tendency to be more consistent in describing the stages of the cycle whereas less experienced ones sometimes mention only a

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

few of the stages or admit that in reality they deviate from the full cycle of reflective actions.

4.3.3 Development of reflective thinking. An unexpected theme that emerged in the course of the interviews was the development of reflective skills. Most of the participants admit that in the beginning of their careers they did not reflect almost at all. However, they also report that, as their experience grew, their reflective thinking developed proportionally. It is noteworthy that most of the participants perceive the development of reflective thinking as a natural process and reflection as an inherent quality of a human mind and “a characteristic feature of any teacher” (P1) or even “a natural reaction to a problem” (P8), though emphasizing that it largely depends on a personality. The perception of the development of reflective thinking may be illustrated by the following passage from the interview with P1:

It might have been named differently but reflection has always been part of teaching... When a student has just graduated from a university, he or she cannot reproduce this model immediately for a very simple reason that he or she has no experience. When he or she has worked for some time and gained some experience, the new teacher begins asking questions about what he or she likes or dislikes, what he or she has done well or not and why. However there must be a personal need for reflection. And by the presence of this need all teachers may be divided into two categories: those who have it and those who don't.

Some teachers report that they reflect about their teaching even when off-work. For

example, P2 says:

All our time is devoted to teaching, this is our life... Even if you don't want to reflect, on your way home or even at home, you keep thinking about children and their needs... It seems to me that we reflect all the time even if we don't write about it. Even during lunch with colleagues we talk about lessons.

This quotation also highlights the general perception of reflection as an integral part

of teaching practice among the participants.

To sum up, the majority of the participants, regardless of their subject or experience, perceive reflective skills as developing naturally, without any purposeful

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

influence, though they admit that their own reflective skills improved as they gained experience.

In conclusion, three main aspects of the perception of RP by the participants have been identified. The cumulative definition might be formulated as follows:

Reflection is a cyclic process of retrospective analysis aimed at the improvement of practice and learned naturally.

4.4 Use of Reflective Practices

To understand how teachers use reflection in their daily practice, the participants were asked to describe the process of their own reflection. In addition, through probing questions, the researcher elicited whether they use any form of written or guided reflection, what strategies they find useful, and how RP are regulated by the school administration. All the participants reported that they do not perform any formal actions related to reflection on a regular basis. Also, according to the participants, they do not employ any specific tools or strategies of reflection and do it mostly intuitively. However, they perceive the role of writing and involvement of colleagues in their RP as highly important. In addition, the content of the RP ranges from the emotional aspects of a lesson to the quality of curriculum delivery.

4.4.1 The role of writing. The main theme that emerged from the discourse on the strategies of reflection is making notes or using a reflective journal. Talking about the use of writing in their RP, the participants demonstrated a generally positive attitude to it. For instance, P7 expressed it in the following way:

I think writing is actually very important to keep record of your thoughts ... because you know it is very human to forget ... But I think that actually taking notes and writing is very important. And this is the skill that I need to just work on to improve and to develop it.

However, not all of the participants use any form of writing on a regular basis, the general trend being towards more experienced teachers using the written form of reflection

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

more often and more confidently. This may be a result of their experience in writing

various “reflective reports” required by the current system of professional development and participating in the “level courses”¹ where such reports are part of the final grade.

Based on the analysis of the participants’ responses about the use of writing in the RP, the participants may be divided into three categories: people who do not write at all, people who have “my own working note book”, and people who use the section for reflection in the standard NIS lesson plan.

P8 illustrated the attitude of the first category of respondents, who do not take any reflective notes: “I don’t take any notes. My head is my reflective journal... when I face with problems, these problems do not leave me and, like, bad things do not require a good memory”. Such an attitude tends to be characteristic of younger participants who have little experience with the system of education where everything is required to be recorded in the written form and seem to perceive reflective writing as unnecessary extra work.

P2 expressed the perception of writing of the people who use an informal note book as follows:

I have my own note book, but it’s not a journal, it’s my working note book. In it, I take all kinds of notes, for example, if something bothers me in the behavior of my students ... I take notes because I have to talk to the parents and want the conversation to be detailed and evidence-based.

A vivid example of the perception and use of the reflective section of the standard lesson plan was provided by P4:

Of course, we do it ... there is a good section in the lesson plan where we can make notes answering specific questions ... for ourselves. It means that reflection can be recorded. And I do it. But very briefly. For example, I note down some key words. The last two quotations belong to more experienced science and maths teachers

who seem to value the role of writing in their RP but have limited time and, therefore, tend to write very brief notes.

¹ level courses – teacher professional development system consisting of three levels and aimed at training in-service teachers in the modern theories of education (Center of Excellence, 2016).

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

P6 demonstrated an outstanding example of an attitude to reflective writing. She seems fascinated by writing and uses several forms of it supplemented with technology-assisted note-taking:

I like note-taking, usually, while having a lesson, I make some notes in my papers, I mean in my lesson plan. Something that really caught my eye, maybe the remark of a student ... after the lesson, I just add some more notes and I try to find a solution for the situation, if it's really necessary, I mean, if I need to improve, to develop something or maybe I just think. I have a kind of a reflective journal, I cannot say, that I keep it regularly, but I prefer to write down some of the things that are really important ... I also have a digital version ... I prefer a rather simple form, for example, an item that should be discussed or thought about and so on, then who or in what way I have just reflected on it ... and then what is the solution ... because it helps me a lot to keep them ... logical in my preparing and planning for the next activity.

P6 emphasized that her use of writing is her personal feature that had not been taught or otherwise promoted externally. She also admits that other people may be comfortable reflecting without making any notes.

Overall, all the participants demonstrated an explicitly positive attitude to the role of writing in their RP. However, teachers of mathematics and science subjects tend to avoid writing more often or use it less consistently than teachers of languages and humanities. This may be explained by the fact that teachers of languages and humanities are generally more used to writing and have more developed skills in it. In addition, less experienced teachers do not use written reflection as frequently as more experienced ones, probably, due to the fact that they have not had a chance to understand its value for their teaching practice and professional development.

4.4.2 The content of reflection. Although the content of reflection appears highly diverse, two broad overarching themes may be identified in the responses of all the participants. P1 defined them as “emotional and work-related” reflection. Talking about the “emotional” reflection, the participants report that they pay attention to the relationships with and among students, their development, their emotional and physical condition, involvement in the activities at a lesson. For example, P3 described this type of

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

reflection as follows: “Sometimes I make notes about specific children, for example,

Alikhan understood everything today, asked some questions ... How children participated in the lesson, whether they were active, whether they had enough time to complete all the tasks...”.

The “work-related” reflection is reported to cover the progress of students, the quality and effectiveness of lesson plans, student achievement as a result of a term or a year, the performance of the curriculum, the educational innovations. For instance, P4 stated that she uses “reflection to solve the problems in the understanding of the subject” and notes down “the difficulties that students have answering a certain question”.

On the whole, teachers reflect on a wide range of subjects, from student behavior in a particular lesson to the quality of the curriculum. Although there is no distinct difference in the content of teacher reflection depending on a subject, there is a clear tendency among younger participants to focus on children and their behavior, while more experienced ones include curriculum and method-related issues in the range of the themes of their reflection. An explanation for this may be an assumption that less experienced teachers have not had an opportunity to embrace all the complexity of the educational process and the interconnection of its elements, such as, for example, the connection between the curriculum and short-term lesson plans, and focus on their own immediate difficulties, such as, for example, student behavior.

4.4.3 The role of administration and colleagues. The key figures who affect the RP of teachers were reported to be the school administration and the colleagues who teach the same subject and belong to the same department. As for the role of the school administration, the general perception is quite neutral though most of the participants admit that generally the administration encourages reflection. Most of them spoke about the requirement to fill out the reflective section of the lesson plan and “to be a reflective

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

teacher” though without indicating any specific documents or measures taken by the administration to encourage reflection. For example, P2 describes the role of the administration as follows:

Our vice-principal always tells us to take notes, to have an observation flow sheet. Even if this is about formative assessment. In general ... I think the administration thinks positively about reflection. When they observe your lesson, they ask you to analyze your own lesson. To identify two positive and two negative moments. Isn't this all reflection?

As for the role of colleagues, all the participants highly appreciate the opportunity to discuss their professional issues with their colleagues who teach the same subject in the same grade (e.g. Maths in Grade 7). Most of them reported that their class is divided into two groups taught by two teachers and the teacher who works in the other group is their “closest friend and partner” (P1) with whom they reflect together. For example, P6 reported the following:

First of all, with my colleague we are teaching the same classes, and that's why I think it's important to share our ideas after the lesson and to ask her about her opinion or about something that goes wrong or goes right. And together we are a really good team, because we can find any solution and sometimes our teamwork creates really fine items of the...I don't know, worksheets or something that really helps them to work.

Moreover, all the teachers who teach one subject in one grade plan lessons together and share resources and lesson plans. The participants reported that in the process of this collective planning, they “discuss what worked and what didn't before and improve the lessons and then save them in a shared server” (P2). Also, regular department meetings were admitted to be an opportunity for collective reflection. For example, P8 observed:

I try to discuss especially global perspectives. There are some difficult parts and sometimes I ask questions. First of all, I ask how the lesson went with others...with other teachers, then I share my experience and they share their experience, and I reflect upon this. So I compare my teaching practice and their teaching practice. What they have... what they had on their lessons and my own lesson, then I compare and try to come to some conclusion.

Overall, collective reflection is evaluated as an important tool promoting professional development by more experienced teachers. This may have been caused by the fact that these people have already been within the NIS system, where opportunities for

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

collective reflection are arranged, for some time and have had a chance to use the support of their colleagues. P4 even observed that “the school has created a reflective environment for teachers where it is impossible not to reflect”. Saying this, she, probably, meant that the school policies require a teacher to be reflective and a system of collaboration with colleagues and mentoring are being promoted. As for the new teachers, they mostly rely on their mentors to guide their reflection. For example, P3 reported the following:

I discuss my lesson with my mentor ... she is an experienced Physics teacher. First we plan a lesson together. She approves my plan and then observes my lesson. After the lesson she may tell me how it might have been done better ... After I have conducted a lesson, we reflect together.

To conclude, it is hardly possible to identify a clear pattern in the use of RP by the participants though most of them use writing in one form or another but not on a regular basis and discuss their teaching practice with colleagues, preference being given to peers who teach the same subject in the same grades and mentors in the case of less experienced teachers. In addition, the content of their reflection may be roughly divided into two categories: the emotional and psychological aspects of teaching and the quality of curriculum delivery by teachers and mastery by students.

4.5 Difficulties in Reflective Practices

One of the research questions was about the difficulties that the participants face in their RP. Although the participants were probed on the issues of time, theoretical knowledge, and help of colleagues, the majority reported that there are no significant obstacles to their RP. For example, P8 thinks

... there are no problems. I think reflection, like good reflection, doesn't require any time. It is just what requires, what it actually requires is personal involvement, maybe, personal interest.

However, some of the participants, especially the less experienced ones, reported that lack of time caused by work overload often prevents them from reflecting properly.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

For example, P5 said, “We don't have time for that, most of the time”. P2 explained the lack of time by “the very tight work schedule”.

Another issue that disturbs the RP of the participants is the “fear of the new” reported by P4, though she belongs to the category of teachers with moderate experience. P2, who is one of the most experienced teachers in the sample, defined the problem as “the generally accepted canon” and explained it as follows:

Sometimes you are unhappy about something and you think it is not right. But when you think of ways to improve the situation, you unconsciously follow some standards and think that it should be done in a certain way. And you have to squeeze your reflection into these standards.

The experienced teachers have been exposed to the Soviet and early Kazakhstani systems of education, which were highly prescriptive, for a long time. The difficulty of implementing innovations may have been caused by the influence of that experience.

The participants were also asked to suggest measures that they believe to be useful to improve their own RP and those of their colleagues. Their responses vary from establishing strict school requirements to self-education. Along with this, all the participants emphasized the need for training in the strategies of reflection and guidance on the part of the school administration. Most of the participants would like some time on the weekly timetable to be allocated for reflection. Also, they would appreciate a unified form for written reflection. The general perception of the ways to improve the RP of teachers may be illustrated by the following excerpt from the interview with P7, who is an English and GP teacher with considerable experience:

... it will be kind of more beneficial for teachers if we had, you know, some kind of not requirements, but some kind of, like, you know... guided reflection ... Sometimes I think that... on the daily basis, we kind of skip reflection, especially this written form ... because we are not provided, maybe, with some kind of special requirements, opportunities ... Maybe just allocate more time, have more teachers come together, and have this, maybe, like, time for reflection ... also maybe have some kind of special schedule for this. That will be great. Or maybe also it will be great if, for example, it will be kind of like team reflection, you know ... And that will be kind of systematically ... it will be great if we kind of like record all these things and we can also talk to maybe the administration. You know, maybe some

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

teachers can be shown some strategies, some common strategies to be used to reflect ... But it will be great if we have some kind of workshops, seminars for teachers, just maybe demonstrate some... yes, teacher reflection, strategies about it and common practices to share.

In general, the descriptions of difficulties connected with RP suggested by the participants were, to a great extent, alike. However, new teachers tend to mention the time problem more frequently than more experienced ones while the latter appear to be affected by their past experiences in their reflection over current events.

When asked to explain how they cope with the difficulties, the participants did not mention any specific strategies and their explanations may be summarized as “we just survive” (P5). Overall, teachers appear to need guidance and training in RP in combination with administrative support. An interesting finding is that languages and humanities teachers tend to require stricter guidelines while science and mathematics teachers would prefer more freedom in their RP. This may be a result of the style of management in their respective departments, which either does not provide enough guidance in the case of languages and humanities or is too restrictive in the case of science and mathematics.

4.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings obtained through the analysis of the discourse of the interviews with the participants. As for the perceptions of reflection and RP, the analysis revealed that the participants perceive reflection as cyclic retrospective analysis leading to the improvement of teaching practice and the skill of reflection as developing naturally with experience. Regarding the use of RP, the participants reported that writing and conversations with colleagues are the most significant factors contributing to their RP. In addition, the content of their reflection was considered. The two main types of the content of reflection that were identified are student behavior and attitudes and the quality of curriculum delivery and acquisition. Finally, the difficulties that teachers face in their RP and the measures that they see as capable of

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

improving their RP were analyzed. The key difficulties were reported to be lack of time and fear of introducing something new. The participants suggested a variety of ways to improve their RP that amount to providing time and guidance.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret the findings of the present study in relation to the research questions set at the beginning of the project and discuss them in relation to the literature in the field of teacher reflection. As a result, an understanding of the experiences of teachers related to the use of reflective practices (RP) and their perceptions of themselves as reflective practitioners will be formed. The chapter will be structured according to the research questions and will shed light on how teachers reflect, how they think about reflection, what difficulties they face and how, in their view, these difficulties may be overcome.

5.2 Perceptions of Reflection and Reflective Practices

The first question that this study sought to answer was how teachers perceive reflection and RP. The findings suggest that, for the participants, reflection is an integral and very important part of the teaching profession. A definition of reflection derived from summarizing their responses is that reflection is a cyclic process of retrospective analysis that develops naturally as a response to practice and leads to its improvement.

The importance that teacher practitioners attribute to reflection seems to have resulted from the current transition of Kazakhstani education to the ‘post-method era’ where teachers no longer have to blindly follow the generally accepted canon or instructions from “the center” but, on the contrary, are expected to analyze their practice and create solutions appropriate for their specific context (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 539 as cited in Fat’hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.242). However, the participants appear to be still affected by the past when they report “fear of the new” and the urge to rely on generally accepted practices.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

As for the definition of reflection collectively constructed by the participants as retrospective analysis of practice, it resonates with Schön's notion of 'reflection on action', i.e. analysis of a past action (Schön, 1983, 1987). Yet, the participants also perceive reflection as a cyclic process that leads to the improvement of their practice in the future. This is in line with Schön's ideas of 'reflection for action', i.e. planning future actions, and formation of 'artistry' (Schön, 1983, 1987). The idea of a cycle of reflection that arises from the findings is also reflected in the literature. For example, Jay and Johnson describe reflection as a series of actions that ends with "new questions arising and the process spiraling onward" (Jay and Johnson, 2002, p. 76 in Fat'hi & Behzadpour, 2011, p.243). This highlights the discussion in the literature about whether and how much reflection is rooted in practice. The findings suggest that reflection is always based on a past action as teachers reflect on a lesson that they have already conducted. However, their RP involve analyzing implications for their further practice. A resolution of this controversy may be that reflection is a complex process consisting of a series of tightly interconnected stages directed both to the past and to the future. This conclusion is supported by the most recent definitions of reflection, such as Clara's (2015), where it is understood as "continuous interplay between inference and observation" (p.267).

Another issue related to the nature of reflection that is widely debated in the literature is whether reflective thinking can be taught and developed through external intervention or develops naturally (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000). The findings clearly indicate that the participants perceive reflective skills as developing naturally with experience. This is confirmed by the fact that more experienced teachers tend to be more consistent in their definitions of reflection and descriptions of the process of reflection that they perform. They are also more confident describing the ways in which RP positively affect their teaching and professional development. However, the participants highly value

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

mentoring and insist on the necessity of some educational input for the improvement of their RP. This means that they believe in the efficiency of external intervention, which is in conflict with the previous finding. A resolution to this conflict may be an assumption that, though reflective skills develop naturally with experience, external intervention may potentially enhance this process.

Similarly, many authors doubt whether reflection leads to the improvement of practice (Calderhead, 1989, Zeichner, 1994, Cornford, 2006, Fat'hi & Behzadpour, 2011). Though the findings do not give a direct answer to this question, they imply that, from the perception of the participants, RP are always aimed at higher quality of teaching in the future. The participants have clearly stated that, as a result of their RP, they enhance the quality of subsequent lessons and their teaching practice in general.

In conclusion, the participants perceive reflection as a cyclic process of retrospective analysis rooted in practice and leading to its improvement. They also perceive reflective skills as developing naturally. Overall, the findings are consistent with the state-of-the-art described in the literature and contribute to the understanding of the purpose of reflection by confirming that it entails a higher quality of teaching practice. However, the perception of the participants that reflective skills develop naturally contradicts the current views of the scholars.

5.3 Use of Reflective Practices

Another question that this study aimed to answer was how teachers use reflection in their daily practices. The findings indicate that, despite the generally positive attitude to reflection, the RP of the participants are, to a great extent, intuitive and lack consistency. Though some of them, occasionally or with certain regularity, make notes in their note books or in the reflective section of the standard lesson plan, they do not use any specific tools or strategies for reflection. However, the finding about the lack of regularity in the

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

RP of the participants contradicts another one in which they claim to be reflecting all the time, even when off-work. This situation may be explained by the fact that the participants admitted to not having been trained in RP and to being unfamiliar with any literature in this domain. Moreover, these findings confirm Finlay's conclusion in which she claims that practitioners tend to use formal reflection only occasionally and their ongoing RP are more tacit (Finlay, 2008, p.2).

As for the use of specific reflective strategies, the literature suggests a wide range, including action research, ethnography, supervisory approaches, curriculum analysis and development (Zeichner, 1987, p. 568), writing, in one form or another, being mentioned by most of the authors (Zeichner, 1987, Sparks-Langer & Berstein Colton, 1991, Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000, Lee, 2005, p. 713, Farrell, 2008). Moreover, writing is characterized by researchers as a promising activity in terms of developing reflective skills (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000). The findings of this study reveal that the participants also attach a high value to the role of writing in their RP, though they use it inconsistently. The inconsistency is especially evident among less experienced teachers, which is in line with the results of the research by Chitpin and Simon, whose participants were pre-service teachers and initially perceived written reflection as a difficult and time-consuming task but later began to appreciate its contribution to their professional development (Chitpin & Simon, 2009).

It is important to note, that the participants of the present study do not use any other strategies, apart from writing. This is probably due to the lack of knowledge and training as well as incentive on the part of the school administration. It was surprising to find that, although most of the participants participate in action research and lesson study projects, they do not perceive them as RP and do not mention them in relation to reflection strategies. Even when it comes to writing, literature suggests a wide range of electronically

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

assisted writing strategies, such as electronic reflective journals, blogs, online conferences with instructors and peer teachers (Oner, Adadan, 2011, Jones, 2014, Ikpeze, 2010, McCormack, 2010). Unfortunately, these are totally omitted by the participants. Some researchers claim that technology may enhance reflective skills (McCormack, 2010, Brent, 2010). However, the participants of this study did not report any data on the use of technology in their RP. This cannot be attributed to problems with access to technology because the school is very well equipped. Some possible reasons for this could be again lack of training and administrative incentive. As a result, it is impossible to evaluate the efficiency of writing or any other reflection strategy in the context of the participants.

Another practical aspect of RP that has attracted the attention of the researchers in this domain is collaboration with others. They emphasize that reflection may be both individual and collaborative (Finlay, 2008, Jay and Johnson, 2002 in Fat'hi & Behzadpour, 2011), though there are opinions that critical or constructivist dialogue may enhance the quality of reflection (Sparks-Langer & Berstein Colton, 1991, Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000). This is in complete conformity with the findings that suggest that, though the participants reflect both individually and in collaboration with their colleagues, they perceive the role of their colleagues in their RP as highly important and productive. Mostly, they co-reflect with a peer who teaches the same subject in the same grades, but less experienced teachers tend to rely, to a great extent, on the assistance of their mentors. This confirms the claims of Sparks-Langer and Berstein Colton that “novices should be taught the schemata of experts” (Sparks-Langer & Berstein Colton, 1991, pp. 38-39) as well as those of Yost, Sentner, and Forlenza-Bailey who suggest that supervised practical experiences are necessary to develop reflective skills (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000, pp. 41-42).

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

In addition, some researchers state that reflective skills are best developed in learning communities (Kabilan, 2007, p. 698) or teacher development groups (Farrell, 2008, p.2), which is also confirmed by the findings that suggest that the school where the study was conducted has, to a certain extent, developed a reflective environment promoting reflection. This environment includes the general support of RP by the administration, the requirement for a teacher to be reflective stated in the documents, the presence of a reflective section in the standard lesson plan. Moreover, the participants attach great value to the school environment in terms of the development of their RP.

Although, according to the existing literature that the researcher could access, the content of RP has not been explored by the researchers, this study reveals that different participants reflect on different aspects of their teaching practices. Thus, novice teachers tend to focus on the emotional and psychological aspects of a specific lesson, such as student behavior, probably, because they do not fully understand all the complexity of the educational process and want to solve their immediate problems, whereas more experienced teachers mostly reflect on the quality of curriculum delivery and their own evolution as a teacher. This confirms the idea that reflective skills, namely the levels of reflection (Larrivee, 2008), develop with experience.

To conclude, the findings of this study generally confirm the ideas expressed in the literature about the practical aspects of RP, such as writing and collaboration with colleagues. Yet, many of the modern research projects investigating the use of specific reflective strategies, for example, technology-assisted RP, cannot be linked to this study as, according to its findings, the range of strategies employed by the participants is limited to writing occasional notes and discussing certain issues with colleagues. Meanwhile, this study contributes to the research in the domain of teacher reflection by identifying two

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

types of content concerning the RP of teachers: emotional/psychological issues and curriculum-related issues.

5.4 Difficulties in Reflective Practices

This study also aimed to construct an understanding of the difficulties that the participants face in their RP. Surprisingly, the findings indicate that there are no significant obstacles to the RP of the participants except for lack of time. This corresponds to the description of the barriers that hinder reflection in novice teachers by Hatton and Smith, who mention the time factor as one of the key problems (Hatton and Smith, 1994, pp.36-37). The researchers also list “lack of suitable knowledge” and “negative reactions to the demands for reflection” (Hatton and Smith, 1994, pp.36-37) among the important barriers, which is in line with the finding that the majority of participants would like to receive some training in the domain of RP and keep their RP informal.

It is interesting that, although the participants have clearly stated that there are no problems in their RP, they have also listed a number of ways that, in their opinion, could improve their RP. Among such measures, more guidance from the school administration and training in the practical strategies of teacher reflection, more formal framework for reflection including a time allocated for RP and a unified form for written reflection were mentioned. These ideas are consistent with the results of recent research. For example, Whipp asserts that successful reflection has to be scaffolded by an instructor (Whipp, 2003, p. 331). Welch and James prove the necessity of a “user-friendly template” for reflection. Yost, Sentner, and Forlenza-Bailey (2000) recommend “supervised practical experiences” and “personally meaningful knowledge base” as ways to enhance reflective skills (pp. 40-41).

Overall, a conclusion can be made that the participants do not see any difficulties inhibiting their RP, apart from lack of time and training. This may be connected to either

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

their lack of knowledge on the subject or their reluctance to disclose facts that may negatively affect their careers. However, the participants suggested multiple ways to improve their RP that are in line with the suggestions of the existing literature.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings pertaining to the research questions about the perceptions of participants regarding RP, their use of RP, and the difficulties faced by the participants in their RP have been discussed in relation to the scholarly literature on reflection. Overall, the findings are consistent with the ideas of the researchers in the domain of reflection in the following aspects:

- Reflection is a cyclic process of retrospective analysis aimed at the improvement of practice.
- Writing is an effective tool of reflection.
- Collaboration with colleagues enhances reflection.
- Lack of time may be an obstacle to reflection.
- RP require guidance and scaffolding in the form of, for example, templates.

However, there are the following contradictions between the findings and the literature:

- The findings suggest that reflective skills develop naturally, though some researchers claim that they have to be taught.
- According to the findings, reflection leads to the improvement of practice, though there are doubts about this expressed in the literature.
- While literature suggests various strategies of reflection, the participants rely solely on writing, which, in their case, is used inconsistently.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

- The findings imply that there are two types of reflection regarding its content: emotional/psychological and curriculum-related, while this issue is not discussed in the literature.

Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter, the findings of this study will be summarized in order to answer the research questions. As a result, conclusions will be made and the degree of the research purpose achievement will be evaluated. In addition, recommendations for major stakeholders will be suggested as well as implications for further research.

6.1 Summary of the Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers related to the use of reflective practices (RP) and the underlying perceptions about teachers as reflective practitioners. The following questions were posed at the beginning of the study:

Main question was as follows:

What are the experiences and perceptions of teachers related to the use or RP?

Sub-questions:

1. How do teachers perceive their RP and themselves as reflective practitioners?
2. How do teachers use RP in their work and professional development?
3. What are the difficulties that teachers face in their RP?

The findings suggest the following answers to these research questions.

6.1.1 How do teachers perceive their RP and themselves as reflective practitioners? The participants perceive reflection as a cyclic process of retrospective analysis rooted in practice and leading to its improvement. Also, they perceive RP as a highly important integral component of the teaching profession. In addition, participants perceive reflective skills as developing naturally as experience is accumulated.

6.1.2 How do teachers use RP in their work and professional development?

The main aspects of the use of RP by the participants are writing and collaboration with colleagues. Though the participants attach a high importance to the role of writing in their RP, they use it rather inconsistently. Moreover, they do not use any specific strategies for

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

reflection. Informal conversations with colleagues are also perceived by the participants as being an important contribution to their RP. As for the content of the RP of participants, two types were identified: emotional/psychological issues and curriculum-related issues.

6.1.3 What are the difficulties that teachers face in their RP? The major difficulties faced by the participants are lack of time and training in the domain of RP. They have also reported lack of administrative incentive.

A conclusion can be made that, in spite of the fact that the participants perceive reflection as a highly important element of teaching practice and their understanding of the nature of reflection is in line with scholarly definitions, the lack of policy, either at the school or the nation-wide level, adversely interferes with the effective use of RP. With no clear policy in place establishing guidelines, standards and procedures of RP for teachers, inconsistencies arise as was noted with participants in this study. Challenges such as lack of knowledge in the domain of reflective strategies also can surface due to lack of clear, comprehensible policy. Overall, the purpose of the research project may be considered achieved because now we know how teachers in a specific school reflect, how they think about reflection, and what difficulties they face in their RP.

This knowledge may be beneficial for a number of stakeholders. First, the teachers who participated in the research are more aware now about their own RP and the potential of reflection to enhance their teaching practice and professional development. Moreover, they may share this knowledge with their professional community, including that beyond the school. Second, the policymakers at the level of the school administration, the NIS top management, and the Education and Science Ministry now have a starting point for further research in order to develop a policy guiding teacher reflection throughout the whole education system of the country. For this purpose, the following recommendations may be of use.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, the main recommendation that would solve the problem of lack of policy guiding the RP of teachers raised in this study is to develop a state policy guiding teacher reflection. There should be a pronounced requirement for teachers to reflect in a formal manner on a regular basis. However, the requirements should be balanced so as not to increase the workload of teachers who have mentioned the problem of lack of time and the importance of informal RP. It is also crucial to offer training for teachers in strategies promoting effective RP and tools, such as, for example, a template of a reflective journal in paper or electronic form and a protocol for collaborative reflection and mentoring practices.

The same recommendations apply to the decision-makers of the specific school where the study was conducted. The management of this school is quite autonomous and can introduce a more rigorous system of teacher reflection without seeking the permission of the Education and Science Ministry. The school administration should raise the awareness of teachers about RP highlighting their potential to improve their teaching and student achievement as well as suggest support in the form of educational input, time management, and reflective tools mentioned above. Moreover, the school administration should create an environment promoting teacher reflection. For example, they could arrange discussions on reflective experiences and sharing best practices in this area.

In addition, NIS is traditionally perceived as a leader in educational innovation and its experience is to be disseminated to mainstream schools. Consequently, if a successful system of teacher reflection were to be established in the school where this research was conducted, it could be shared with the other schools of the region.

6.3 Implications for further research

This research project was focused on exploring the reflective experiences of

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

specific participants and had certain time constraints. As a result, it had its own limitations, such as the limited coverage of participants and the reliance on a single data collection instrument. Consequently, the results of this study cannot be generalized. That is why it would be beneficial to conduct a study that would explore the RP of teachers representing different types of educational institutions in order to develop a comprehensive policy regarding teacher reflection.

Moreover, some questions about teacher reflection, mentioned in the literature as well as in this study, remain unanswered. These include whether and how teacher reflection can be taught or improved, whether it leads to the improvement of practice, what the stages of the reflective process are. It would also be interesting to investigate how guided reflection (e.g. with a mentor) affects the development of reflective skills in novice teachers. A more comprehensive picture of teacher reflection may be obtained through a longitudinal study employing a greater variety of data collection methods, such as document analysis (e.g. analysis of reflective journals) and observation (e.g. guided reflection meetings). Such a study would supply data on how the RP of teachers develop over time. In addition, this study has revealed that the content of reflection may vary, and it would be interesting to explore this issue in a greater depth to understand the factors affecting the variation.

Finally, neither this study nor the literature give a definitive answer as to the effective methods to develop reflective skills. Consequently, it would be beneficial for the whole pedagogical community to conduct a study that would compare and experimentally prove the effectiveness of certain methods currently employed to develop reflective skills or suggest and test a new method.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

References

- Akbari, R. (2007), Reflections on reflection: A critical appraisal of reflective practices in L2 teacher education. *System* 35, pp. 192–207.
- Berg, B. L. (2009). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Braun V. & Clarke V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology*. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, No. 3, pp.77-101.
- Boud, D., & Walker, D. (1998). *Promoting Reflection in Professional Courses: the challenge of Context*, *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 23, No. 2.
- Brent, W. (2010), Uses of technology to support reflective teaching practices (Doctoral dissertation). Department of Educational Psychology. The University of Arizona.
- Calderhead, J. (1989). Reflective teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. Vol. 5. No. 1, pp. 43-51.
- Center of Excellence. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.cpm.kz/en/about/>
- Chitpin, S., Simon, M. (2009). ‘Even if no-one looked at it, it was important for my own development’: Pre-service teacher perceptions of professional portfolios. *Australian Journal of Education*, Vol. 53, No. 3, pp. 277–293.
- Clara, M. (2015), What is reflection? Looking for clarity in an ambiguous notion. *Journal of Teacher Education*. Vol 66(3). Pp.261-271.
- Cornford, I.R. (2006). Reflective teaching: empirical research findings and some implications for teacher education. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*. 54:2, pp. 219-236.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative enquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating*

quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Demetriou, A. (2000), "Organization and development of self-understanding & self-regulation: towards a general theory", in Boekaerts, M., Pintrich, P. R., & Zeidner, M. (Eds), *Handbook of Self-Regulation*, London, Academic Press.

Dewey, J., 1933/1993. *How we think: a re-statement of the relation of reflective thinking to the education process*. DC. Heath, & Co, Boston.

Farrell, T. (2004). *Reflective Practice in Action: 80 Reflection Breaks for Busy Teachers*. California: Corwin Press.

Farrell, T. (2008). *Reflective Practice in the Professional Development of Teachers of Adult English Language Learners*. CAELA Network Brief.

Fat'hi, J., & Behzadpor, F. (2011), *Beyond Method: The Rise of Reflective Teaching*. *International Journal of English Linguistics* Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 241-249.

Finlay, L. (2008): *Reflecting on 'Reflective Practice': PBPL 52*. Open University.

Francis, D. (1995). *The reflective journal: a window to preservice teachers' practical knowledge*. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 229—241.

Ghaye, T. (2000), *Into the reflective mode: bridging the stagnant moat*. *Reflective Practice*, 1(1) 5-9.

Hatton, N., & Smith, D. (1995), *Reflection in teacher education: towards definition and implementation*. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 33-49.

Ikpeze, C. H. (2010). *Increasing Teacher Candidates' Reflection with Technology*. Pp. 332-346. In Yamamoto, J., Kush, C., Lombard, R. & Hertzog, C.J. *Technology Implementation and Teacher Education: Reflective Models*. Hershey. New York.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

- Jones, M. (2014). Reflective practice in the online space. Pp. 154-173. In Jones, M. & Ryan, J. *Successful Teacher Education: Partnerships, Reflective Practice and the Place of Technology*. Sense Publishers. Rotterdam/Boston/Taipei.
- Kabilan, M.K. (2007). English Language Teachers Reflecting on Reflections: A Malaysian Experience. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 681-705.
- Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology*. London: SAGE Publication Ltd.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a Postmethod Pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly*, (35)4, pp. 537-560.
- Lee, Hea-Jin. (2005). Understanding and assessing preservice teachers' reflective thinking. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 21, pp.) 699–715.
- McCormack, V. (2010). Utilizing VoiceThread to Increase Teacher Candidates' Reflection and Global Implications for Usage. Pp.108-123. In Yamamoto, J., Kush, C., Lombard, R. & Hertzog, C.J. *Technology Implementation and Teacher Education: Reflective Models*. Hershey. New York.
- Mertens, D. M. (2010). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology. integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE.
- Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools Transfer of experience. (2016). Retrieved from <http://nis.edu.kz/ru/edurenew/broadcast-exper/>
- Oner, D. & Adadan. E. (2011). Use of Web-Based Portfolios as Tools for Reflection in Preservice Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(5), pp. 477–492.
- Osterman, K. F., Kottkamp, R. B. (1993). *Reflective Practice for Educators. Improving Schooling Through Professional Development*. Corwin Press
- Oxford Dictionaries. (2016), Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/reflect>

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Recommendations on the Organization of Professional Development in Nazarbayev

Intellectual Schools in the Academic Year 2015-2016 (2015).

Robert John Woodson Foundation (2008). Maximum Variation Sampling. Retrieved from

<http://www.qualres.org/HomeMaxi-3803.html>

Sagintayeva, A. (2014). Development of strategic directions for education reforms in

Kazakhstan for 2015-2020. Astana. Retrieved from t.zan.kz/eng/docs/Z010000149_

Schön, D. (1983). The reflective practitioner." How professionals think in action. New

York: Basic Books.

Schön, D. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner." Toward a new design for teaching

and learning in the professions. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Smyth, J. (1992) Teachers' work and the politics of reflection. *American Educational*

Research Journal, 29, 267-300.

Sparks-Langer, G. M., & Berstein Colton. (1991), A. Synthesis of research on teachers'

reflective thinking. *Educational Leadership*. Pp. 37-44.

Stanley, C. (1998). A Framework for Teacher Reflectivity. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No.

3, p. 584-591.

State Program of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020

(2010). Retrieved from [http://www.edu.gov.kz/en/state-program-education-](http://www.edu.gov.kz/en/state-program-education-development-republic-kazakhstan-2011-2020)

[development-republic-kazakhstan-2011-2020](http://www.edu.gov.kz/en/state-program-education-development-republic-kazakhstan-2011-2020).

Welch, M. & James, R.C. (2007). An Investigation on the Impact of a Guided Reflection

Technique in Service-Learning Courses to Prepare Special Educators. *Teacher*

Education and Special Education, Volume 30, No. 4, pp. 276–285.

Whipp, J.L. (2003). Scaffolding critical reflection in online discussions. *Helping*

Prospective Teachers Think Deeply About Field Experiences in Urban Schools.

Journal of Teacher Education, Vol. 54, No. 4, pp. 321-333.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Yost, D.S, Sentner, S.M., & Forlenza-Bailey, A. (2000), An examination of the construct

of critical reflection: implications for teacher education programming in the 21st
century. *Journal of Teacher Education*. Vol. 51, No 1, pp. 39-47.

Zeichner, K.M. (1994), Research on Teacher Thinking and Different Views of Reflective

Practice in Teaching and Teacher Education. In Carlgren, I., Handal, G., & Vaage,

S. *Teachers' Minds and Actions: Research on Teachers' Thinking and Practice*

(pp. 9-28). London, Washington, D.C.:The Falmer Press.

Zeichner, K.M. (1987), Preparing reflective teachers: an overview of instructional

strategies which have been employed in preservice teacher education. *International*

Journal of Educational Research. Volume 11, Issue 5. Pp. 565-575.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Project: Reflective practices: the experiences of teachers in one NIS school in Kazakhstan

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. It will help me to collect data for my research project on the experiences of teachers related to RP. Do you mind recording our conversation? Please be assured that the recording and your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Your name will not be revealed at any stage. The interview will take 40-60 minutes. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time. Please read and sign the consent form.

Questions:

Background information

1. Please tell me about yourself.
 - What subject do you teach? What grades?
 - How long have you been working as a teacher? How long have you been working in NIS?

RQ1

2. How do you understand teacher reflection?

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

- What is the role of reflection in your teaching?
- How does reflection help you to improve your teaching practice / your students' learning?

RQ2

3. How do you reflect on your teaching practice?
 - Do you have any kind of journal where you write down your thoughts about your teaching? How often do you do it?
 - Do you discuss your teaching with your colleagues? Do you do it on a regular basis? Do you take any kind of notes?
 - Do you have a mentor? Describe your work together.
 - How do you use the reflection section of the lesson plan? What do you usually write there?
 - Do you know about any requirements of your school regarding teacher reflection? What are they?
 - What strategies of teacher reflection do you find useful? Why?

RQ 3&4

4. Are there any circumstances that make it difficult for you to reflect? How can the problems be solved?
 - Do you have enough time?
 - Do you think you need training in this area?
 - Do you need support of a more experienced colleague?
5. How can the reflective practices of the teachers in your school be improved?

Closing question

6. Is there anything that you would like to add to our conversation? Anything that I have not asked but you think is important for me to know?

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this interview. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and the recording will be electronically protected.

I will make sure to send you the transcript for you to verify your answers.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Протокол интервью

Проект: Рефлексия в работе учителя: опыт учителей одной НИШ в Казахстане

Время интервью:

Дата:

Место:

Исследователь:

Участник:

Должность участника:

Спасибо, что согласились принять участие в этом интервью. Это поможет мне в сборе данных для моего исследования опыта учителей в отношении рефлексии. Вы не против записи нашего разговора? Эта запись и Ваши ответы будут использоваться конфиденциально и исключительно в целях данного исследования. Ваше имя не будет использоваться ни на одном из этапов. Интервью займет примерно 40-60 минут. Ваше участие абсолютно добровольно и Вы имеете право отказаться от участия в любое время. Пожалуйста, прочтите и подпишите форму согласия.

Вопросы:

Общая информация

1. Пожалуйста, расскажите мне о себе.

- Какой предмет Вы преподаете, в каких классах?
- Сколько Вы уже работаете учителем? Сколько Вы работаете в НИШ?

В1

2. Как Вы понимаете рефлексия в работе учителя?

- Какую роль играет рефлексия в Вашей работе?
- Как рефлексия помогает вам улучшать Вашу работу / результаты обучения Ваших учеников?

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

B2

3. Как Вы используете рефлексию в своей работе?

- Вы ведете какой-либо рефлексивный дневник, где вы записываете свои мысли о своей работе? Как часто Вы это делаете?
- Вы обсуждаете свою работу с коллегами? Вы делаете это регулярно? Вы ведете какие-то записи?
- У Вас есть ментор? Опишите свою совместную работу.
- Как Вы используете раздел для рефлексии в плане урока? Какие записи Вы обычно там делаете?
- Вы знаете о каких-либо требованиях школы в отношении рефлексии учителя? Каковы они?
- Какие стратегии рефлексии учителя Вы считаете полезными? Почему?

B3&4

4. Существует ли что-то, что мешает Вам рефлексировать? Как можно решить эти проблемы?

- У Вас достаточно времени?
- Вам нужно обучение по этой теме?
- Вам нужна помощь более опытного коллеги?

5. Как можно улучшить рефлексию учителей в Вашей школе?

Заключительный вопрос

6. Вы бы хотели что-либо добавить? Может быть, я не спросила о чем-то, что Вы считаете важным в этой связи?

Спасибо за Ваше участие. Ваши ответы будут храниться конфиденциально, и запись будет храниться под электронной защитой. Я пришлю Вам расшифровку записи, чтобы Вы могли проверить свои ответы.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Reflective practices: the experiences of teachers in one NIS school in Kazakhstan

Dear Participant,

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a study of the experiences of teachers related to the use of reflective practices conducted by Xeniya Artamonova, a 2nd year M.Sc. in Educational Leadership student at Nazarbayev University. You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview, which will not take more than an hour, at any time and venue convenient for you. Your participation is entirely voluntary. The interview will be recorded with your permission and the recording will be transcribed. Your name will not be revealed at any stage (a code will be used instead), so your anonymity will be protected. You will receive an electronic copy of the transcript in order to eliminate any potential misunderstanding. All the data will be kept confidential on a password-protected computer and deleted after the completion of data analysis.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 1 hour.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: You may have to share information that is sensitive in terms of your employment and career. The potential risk may be connected with your sharing information about your professional life and an opinion about the organization of the reflective practices of teachers in your school. Please be assured that all the information will be treated as confidential and used solely for research purposes. Your participation in this study will not affect your relationship with your employer or Nazarbayev University. You may benefit from your participation in this study by becoming more aware of your own reflective practices. The study as a whole will contribute to the pool of knowledge about the reflective practices of teachers in Kazakhstan and may inform the policy in this domain.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor Dilrabo Jonbekova, PhD, e-mail: dilrabo.jonbekova@nu.edu.kz.

If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the
NUGSE Research Committee at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED!

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

ФОРМА ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ

Reflective practices: the experiences of teachers in one NIS school in Kazakhstan

Уважаемый участник!

ОПИСАНИЕ: Вы приглашены принять участие в исследовании по изучению рефлексии в работе учителя, которое проводит Ксения Артамонова, магистрант 2 курса по специальности «Лидерство в образовании» Назарбаев Университета. Вам будет предложено принять участие в интервью, один на один с исследователем, которое займет не более одного часа и будет проходить в любое удобное для Вас время и в любом удобном для Вас месте. Ваше участие является абсолютно добровольным. С Вашего разрешения, интервью будет записано и расшифровано. Ваше имя не будет указываться ни на одном из этапов (будет заменено кодом), таким образом будет сохранена Ваша анонимность. Вы получите электронный вариант расшифровки, чтобы исключить любое возможное недопонимание. Все данные будут храниться конфиденциально на компьютере исследователя, защищенном паролем, и будут удалены по завершении анализа данных.

ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ: Ваше участие потребует около 1 часа.

РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА:

Возможно, Вам придется поделиться информацией, которая важна для Вашей работы и карьеры. Возможный риск связан с раскрытием информации о Вашей профессиональной деятельности и мнения об организации рефлексии в Вашей школе. Заверяем Вас, что вся информация будет рассматриваться как конфиденциальная и использоваться исключительно в целях исследования. Ваше участие в этом исследовании не повлияет на Ваши отношения с Вашим работодателем и Назарбаев Университетом.

Вы можете получить преимущество от участия в данном исследовании, глубже осознав свой собственный подход к рефлексии. Исследование в целом внесет вклад в развитие научных знаний о рефлексии учителя в Казахстане и может послужить основой для выработки политики в данном отношении.

ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКОВ: Если Вы прочитали данную форму и решили принять участие в данном исследовании, Вы должны понимать, что Ваше участие является добровольным и что у Вас есть право отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любое время без штрафных санкций. В качестве альтернативы, вы можете не участвовать в исследовании. Также Вы имеете право не отвечать на какие-либо вопросы. Результаты данного исследования могут быть представлены или опубликованы в научных или профессиональных целях.

КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

Вопросы: Если у Вас есть вопросы, замечания или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, процедуры его проведения, рисков и преимуществ, Вы можете

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

связаться с с руководителем исследования, используя следующие данные: Дильрабо

Жонбекова, PhD, e-mail: dilrabo.jonbekova@nu.edu.kz.

Независимые контакты: Если Вы не удовлетворены проведением данного исследования, если у Вас возникли какие-либо проблемы, жалобы или вопросы, Вы можете связаться с Комитетом Исследований Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета по телефону +7 7172 70 93 59 или отправить письмо на электронный адрес gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму, если Вы согласны участвовать в исследовании.

- Я внимательно изучил представленную информацию;
- Мне предоставили полную информацию о целях и процедуре исследования;
- Я понимаю, как будут использованы собранные данные, и что доступ к любой конфиденциальной информации будет иметь только исследователь;
- Я понимаю, что вправе в любой момент отказаться от участия в данном исследовании без объяснения причин;
- С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я согласен принять участие в исследовании по собственной воле.

МЫ ВЫСОКО ЦЕНИМ ВАШЕ УЧАСТИЕ!

Подпись: _____

Дата: _____

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Appendix C

Interview Transcript Sample

005

Q – question

A – answer

Raw data	Codes	Themes	Notes
<p>Q: thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. It will help me to collect data for my research project on the experiences of teachers related reflective practices. Do you mind recording our conversation?</p> <p>A: No, no.</p> <p>Q: Please, be assured that the recording and your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Your name will not be revealed at any stage. The interview will take about 40 minutes. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time. Pleas, read and sign the consent form.</p> <p>A: Ok.</p> <p>Q: Ok, tell me about yourself. What subject do you teach? Which grades?</p> <p>A: So, I teach basically 7th grade only, <i>English</i> language. I've got 5 different classes from A to E. Two Kazakh class and two...no, three Kazakh and two Russian.</p> <p>Q: Wow. so many.</p> <p>A: Yeah.</p> <p>Q:Ok. How long have you been working as teacher?</p> <p>A: I've been working as teacher for 4 years, more than 4 years, if you would know. Before working here, I worked in different courses, language courses. Last year I worked in college of foreign languages "Lingva" and this year I started working here, this school. Before that I have never worked in the school.</p> <p>Q: Ok. So this is your first year as a school teacher. Ok. How do you understand "teacher reflection"? What is it for you?</p>	<p>background information</p>	<p>retrospective analysis</p>	<p>Little experience, new to this school</p>

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

A: Teacher reflection it's when you after you finish your job, like for a day maybe, you can look at the work you have done throughout the day and you can, I don't know, you can see and evaluate maybe yourself. How you did? How well you did? Maybe some techniques or some tasks, how well they went and maybe how bad they went, because sometimes it happens. How the class answered to your tasks? So, everything about that, just thinking of the work that you have done in a day.

Q: Ok. How do you personally reflect? Can you describe the process?

self-
evaluation

improvement of
practice due to
RP

A: Usually I don't spend a lot of time on it. Since we tend to, I tend to focus on other stuff. More preparing to the next day and things like that. And, I usually reflect after the lesson, so when the lesson finished, I just go through all my papers and just think what went well and what didn't and how can I improve, for example: things that didn't go well and what can I do to help my learners better, so they can understand something better. What can I do to maybe ...What can I do to my, for example language level, maybe something that I should simplify or maybe make it a little bit more complicated, so everything like that. After the lesson.

Q: Do you make any formal notes? Do you have a diary? or Do you use the section of the lesson plan?

writing
lack of time

problem of time
writing

Seems to
attribute all
problems to
lack of time

A: I usually don't. We don't have time for that, most of the time. After the lessons usually, I usually go to the next lesson or I go to lunch or I go to seminars or things like that. And when the work is done, when it's five o'clock I rush to home, because I'm tired and just prepare for the next day. That's why I don't usually have a lot of time to do this. In the beginning I used to do that, because in the beginning I didn't understand [noise] and I didn't plan the

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

lesson in the beginning, I just received the plan and just did it for my learners, for my students and that's all. Since I have started planning the lessons, I don't usually have a lot of time to reflect on them.

Q: So you mean, you don't reflect in the written form or you don't reflect at all?

A: No, **I don't reflect in written form.**

Q: But still, you think about how the lesson went?

A: **Think and just maybe check, not check, I correct some things.**

Q: Do you discuss this with your colleagues?

colleagues
mentoring

the role of
colleagues and
administration

A: Yes, **with my partners, who also teach on the 7th grade and I just come to her and say, that about things that also went well, didn't go well. We discuss it and if I have any questions I try to ask with them or other teachers who surround me, while some questions that I have. About some techniques maybe or tasks or some language stuff that I don't understand.** It doesn't happen all the time.

Q: So this happens occasionally?

A: Mhm.

Q: Ok. Do you have a mentor or any senior colleague, who is taking care of you?

A: Of course.

Q: Do you discuss your reflections with your mentor?

A: **No. I with my mentor know each other not for so long anyway, for like a month or a couple of months, so and since it was the end of the second term, we didn't have a lot time to communicate as much as I would like to.**

Q: So this is an organizational problem?

A: Mhm.

Q: Ok. Do you know about any formal requirements of the school regarding teacher's reflection? What are they?

reflective
section in a
lesson plan

the role of
administration

A: **I know that, we should reflect on the lesson, like in our lesson plan there is a special like table or**

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

teachers to reflect on their stuff, everything they did and we suppose to fill in those tables, but I know that, I think nobody does that. That is connected with our, like hours. We have a lot of hours, teaching hours and we cannot do all of them in a day, every single day.

Q: Generally, do you agree that reflection is useful? It can help you improve your teaching and student's learning?

Correcting mistakes way to improvement

A: Of course, I do agree with that things, because when you do that you can look on your mistakes, because no one is perfect, I think, and that's why you always do make some mistakes, even if it's like silly and it can be it can be silly mistakes and when you don't reflect on that you can just miss on that, you can just think about it on a lesson " Oh, I need to change that" but when the lesson finishes you can forget about that. And... it will happen al the time, so you can get used to it and then it will be very difficult to get rid of in the end, so that why, I think, when you reflect on something like, things like that, it will improve you teaching techniques, methods and you as a teacher, you will improve as a teacher.

Q: Ok. Do know about any strategies of reflection that you find useful?

A: I don't think so.

Q: So you haven't read any books, any online sources?

A: Mhm. (No)

Q: Ok. Apart from time, are there any circumstances that make it difficult for you to reflect?

need for training problem of lack of training

A: No, I don't think so. I think it's just the lack of time.

Q: Would you like to have some education in this area?

A: Yes, of course. Well, when you don't know how to reflect it has also some drawbacks, not only the time. For example, I was never educated, I

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

was never taught how to reflect on the lesson. I just remember the table that we have in our lesson plans and I usually just think about those questions, think about my lesson and that's how I reflect. But, if we had, I don't know, like new teachers maybe, newcomers, if we had a seminar or, I don't know, something like that, a workshop maybe. It will be better for us. I think it also will be useful for senior teachers, because some of them might not...might forget about it maybe, something like that. It will be useful for everybody. To have a seminars or workshops.

Q: Thank you for this answer. Would you like to have some help from colleagues, from your mentor or other colleagues in terms of reflection?

A: I don't want them, like...I don't want to bother them, so I think it's something that I can do on own, I can just look up on the Internet. It's just sometimes I am lazy and sometimes I don't want to do a lot of things like that, but I know that...Before that I have never thought about that, like reflection. Before this interview, I have never thought about that reflection is something useful, now that I'm talking, I understand that it is something that I need to work on and after the...after today I will go and search everything I can. If after that, when I after finish searching up on everything on the Internet, everything that I can. If I have questions after that then I will ask my colleagues and my mentor.

Q: Ok. If you were in power to change the situation in the whole school, what would you do? How would you change the situation about teacher reflection?

A: I don't know. I think, the easiest way is to find, for example, in our department I think there a lack of teachers. We don't have a lot of many...not as many teachers as we need to for our hours, for our grades, for classes. And **it will be very, if we had**

Organizational
problems

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES: THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN ONE NIS
SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

**more people to work. So, teachers
can have less...**

Q: Hours to teach?

A: Well, its not...it's not correct to say that. Less hours to be... When, for example, in a day you can have 6 lessons in a row, so you have lesson, lesson, lesson, lesson, so you don't have anything else to do. You cannot do anything else, so it will be great if didn't have, if we had a little breaks between the lessons. Not just like 5 minutes or 10 minutes, but more. And between this lessons it will be great to have special like, half an hour for teachers to reflect. **Special time on a timetable.** Specially made for.

Q: That's an interesting idea. Well, thank you for your answers. Just one last question is: Is there anything that you would like to add to the conversation? Maybe there is something that you thing is important, but I forgot to ask about? Would you like to add anything?

A: I don't think so, because as I've told before, I haven't thought about this topic before this interview. That's why I can't think about anything new to add to this conversation.

Q: Ok. Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this interview. Please, be assured that responses will be kept confidential and the recording will be electronically protected.

A: Ok.
