

The Role of Collaborative Critical Reflection and Individual Reflection in Groups in Mentoring ESL Teachers

Ipshita H. Sasmal

Abstract

This study documents the process of critical reflection which nine teachers who participated in the ARMS (Action Research Mentorship Scheme) project engaged in and how the mentors and mentees tried to move beyond reflective practice. This article tries to understand the directions we need to take so that teachers' engagement with reflective practice results in a transformative journey at the professional as well as personal levels. The process of critical reflection was approached in two ways: first, the construct of 'critical' in critical reflection was questioned to arrive at its meaning; and second, a distinction was made between individual reflection in groups and the potential for a 'collective focus' which is often missing in collaborative reflection in groups. Finally, the findings of the study are presented which record the major differences in individual reflection in groups (IRG) and critical collaborative reflection (CCR).

Keywords: reflective practice, critical reflection, teachers' beliefs

Collaborative Reflection

The practice of reflection is often limited to individual learning from personal experience (Boud, 2006, p. 160). In this context some practitioners and teacher educators try to move beyond individual reflection. They encourage a group of teachers to get together and engage in reflecting and sharing their personal experiences about professional issues. Thus, discussions are often encouraged in these reflective groups on teachers' professional concerns and/or triumphs. While teachers listen to personal