A Case for a Reflective Approach to Teaching 'Practicum Debriefing' with Implications for Teacher Educators and Education

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Over the past 30 years, the teaching profession has embraced the notion of the teacher as a reflective practitioner, which has led to an increased emphasis on teacher education programmes offering learning experiences that model and encourage reflective practice. This qualitative instrumental case study research explored the usefulness, benefits, and challenge of an innovative approach to teaching practicum debriefing—namely, an exercise called the reflective approach to teaching practicum debriefing (RATPD). Examples of the usefulness and benefits of the approach are (1) it encouraged student teachers to not only focus on observing the techniques and methods of teaching and the daily issues that teachers face in their practice, but to also consider self as a teacher and (2) it encouraged critical thinking, self-directed critical thinking, and self-awareness. The main challenge of the RATPD is that students are sometimes reluctant to share their perception and what they truly believe and feel about a particular issue or situation. Implications for teacher educators and education are discussed.

Introduction

Over the past 30 years, the teaching profession has embraced the notion of the teacher as a reflective practitioner. This led to an increased emphasis on classroom practices that encourage teachers to reflect in and on action to improve their teaching and to engage in action research. Teacher education programmes have embraced the notion of the teacher as a reflective practitioner by offering learning experiences that model and foster student teachers' reflective capabilities, thus empowering future teachers as reflective professionals (Grushka, McLeod, and Reynolds, 2005; Parkinson, 2009).

Encouraging student teachers' reflective capabilities requires a focus on the development of their cognitive and affective skills. This is a process that involves: encouraging them to take initiatives, nurturing the use of intuition and providing opportunities for them to surface, examine, and utilize personal values and assumptions they hold about teaching. It is also agreed that teachers with the ability to take the initiative and use their intuition can be advantageous to any school or school system. For example, there is evidence that doing so leads to creative and innovative approaches to classroom situations and problems. It also leads to self-understanding and self-improvement and could result in being better teachers, thus facilitating necessary changes in 'self', others, and the working environment (Cunningham, 2001; Zeichner, 1992).

Providing learning experiences that encourage student teachers to utilize their reflective capabilities should be the main focus of any reflective teacher education programme. This is important for three reasons. One, providing opportunities for them to utilize their reflective capabilities is one way to encourage their continued use of reflection on entering the teaching profession. This is necessary because they will encounter barriers to teaching reflectively in schools (Cole, 1997); for example, teachers' workload and overcrowded

classrooms. Two, there is the need to develop proponents for the idea of reflection and reflective teaching; therefore, enabling student teachers to experience the benefits of teaching reflectively could aid in achieving this aim. Three, developing autonomous teachers who are self-directed professionals is an aim of teacher education programmes worldwide. Providing opportunities for student teachers to utilize their reflective capabilities could also aid in achieving this goal.

As a reflective practitioner and a proponent of the practice with a deep interest in ensuring that teacher education programmes offer learning experiences that encourage the development of students' reflective capabilities, I devised, implemented, and evaluated the reflective approach to teaching practicum debriefing (RATPD) with a number of student teachers from a local university.

What Constitutes the RATPD?

The RATPD combines elements of reflective teaching—in particular, reflection-on-action—with student teachers' practicum debriefing tutorials. The theoretical underpinning for this exercise is a combination of the idea of reflection-on-action (Schön, 1987) and the thought that reflective teaching must involve not just questioning teaching techniques but also the teacher's goals, values, beliefs, assumptions about teaching, and the teaching context (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). The approach encourages student teachers to reflect on their actions and those of the mentor teacher observed during their practicum exercise in schools. However, implementing the approach requires, first, an understanding of who and what a reflective teacher is. Second, it requires the development and administration of questions to facilitate reflective thinking during the teaching practicum debriefing sessions. These are addressed next.

Understanding Reflective Teaching

Zeichner and Liston (1996) provide a useful starting point for our understanding of reflective teaching. They assert:

> If a teacher never questions the goals and the values that guide his or her work, the context in which he or she teaches, or never examines his or her assumptions, then it is our belief that this individual is not engaged in reflective teaching (p.1).

Given this statement, I define reflective teaching as involving a questioning disposition and critically thinking about one's teaching techniques, personal goals, values, beliefs, assumptions about teaching, and the teaching context. This means that the desire and willingness to question and to think critically must come naturally or be cultivated through practice. The ability to cultivate this disposition through practice is supported by Posner (1989), who pointed out that all humans can question and think critically because these are human characteristics that can be developed.

In addition to a clear definition of reflective teaching, utilizing the approach requires understanding several concepts about reflective teaching and teachers. These are displayed in table form below.

Table 1. Concepts about reflective teaching and teachers.

Concepts about reflective teaching and teachers	Author (s)
Reflective teaching demands that teachers employ and develop their cognitive skills as a means of improving their practice. They should be able to recall, consider, and evaluate their teaching experiences as a means of improving future ones.	(Farrell, 2001)

Reflective teachers need to develop and use self-directed critical thinking and ongoing critical inquiry in their practice, initiated by them and not administratively decreed. This results in the development of contextualized knowledge.	(Cole, 1997; Hyrkas, Tarkka, & Ilmonen, 2001).
Reflective teachers think critically, which involves the willingness to question, take risks in learning, try out new strategies and ideas, seek alternatives, take control of learning, use higher-order thinking skills, and reflect on their own learning processes. They would discuss with others and analyze problems they encounter in their classroom, to aid their analysis of situations, which could result in improved future classroom encounters.	(Elder & Paul 1994; Halpern, 2014).
Reflective teaching demands that teachers use and develop their affective skills as a means of improving their practice. They use their intuition, initiative, values, and experience during teaching and exercise judgment about the use of various teaching and research skills.	(Markham, 1999).
Reflective teachers identify personal meaning or significance of a classroom or school situation, and this would include the disclosure and examination of personal feelings.	(Reiman, 1999).
Reflective teachers take personal risks, for reflective teaching demands the sharing of perceptions and beliefs with others. They engage in sharing ideas, receiving, and giving feedback as a part of a collaborative experience, and they confront the uncertainty about their teaching philosophies and, indeed, their competence.	(Cunningham, 2001; Day, 1999; Markham, 1999).

This understanding is important for two reasons. First, it is useful when interpreting students' response to the RATPD debriefing questions. For example, one would be able to identify the extent to which students had engaged in self-directed critical thinking or reflected on their learning processes. Second, during debriefing sessions, it can be used to guide students' thinking about activities such as identifying personal values, beliefs, and assumptions and how these influenced their understanding of the episode or situation they are describing. In my experience, students sometimes find it difficult to, are reluctant to, or avoid talking about this aspect of teaching. This is especially so among those encountering the notion of reflective teaching for the first time.

Reflective Questions

As outlined in the preceding discussion on the theoretical underpinning of the RATPD, the use of questions is central (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Given my understanding of reflective teaching also outlined in the above discussion, I developed several reflective questions:

> Reflective Question 1: What have you learned about teaching?
> Reflective Question 2: To what extent has the observation/teaching practicum caused any changes in your beliefs, values, and assumptions about teaching?
> Reflective Question 3: What have you learned about 'self' as a teacher?

It is through these reflective questions that the RATPD is enacted. They are also used to guide discussions during debriefing sessions. I refer to the questions as "reflective" because they emerge from my understanding of reflective teaching but, more important, they help to encourage student teachers to critically think about what they had observed in schools during their practicum.

While some international writings combine both areas—that is, reflection and student practicum tutorial (Grushka et al., 2005; Vásquez & Reppen, 2007)—there are no known writings that specifically highlight: the kind of questions utilized in the RATPD, how they are arranged and used, the responses to the questions and the benefits and challenges of the approach. Based on these observations, a study was launched to evaluate the RATPD strategy and highlight its usefulness, benefits, and challenges.

The Aim

The study aimed to empirically evaluate the RATPD strategy and ascertain the usefulness, benefits, and challenges of the three reflective questions through which the approach is enacted.

Research Design

A qualitative instrumental case study was employed. Creswell (1998) and Stake (2000) define an instrumental case study as a type of study where the focus is on a specific issue rather than on the case itself. The case then becomes a vehicle to understand the issue or to provide insight into the concerns of the study. For this study, the unit of analysis was the RATPD, its usefulness, benefits, and challenges of the three reflective questions through which the approach is enacted and not the participants (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 2000).

Participants
The participants for this study were three student teachers at a local university who had recently (February 2019) completed a school term practice teaching in a secondary school in southwest London. The participants were Cello, Viola, and Pinto (pseudonyms). Practicum or placement was an important part of their education and training and is a requirement for the successful completion of the teacher education degree.

In selecting the students for the study, I used purposeful convenience or opportunity sampling—they were doing their practicum in the school where I worked as a supply or substitute teacher—and considered them information-rich. Guba and Lincoln (1998) state that information-rich participants can illuminate or provide a great deal of insight into the issues of importance to any research. An examination of the findings and the responses of the participants reveal that they were able to provide in-depth, relevant, and unique perspectives on the research issue.

Data Collection and Ethical Issues

Participants were invited to take part in the study via various face-to-face meetings. They were told about the nature of the research and how the data would be utilized and promised anonymity. They were also told that their names and that of the school and University which they attended would not be included in the report and that the study will not be used in any aspects of their assessment. This was adhered to, for no mention of the name of the school or university is made in this report. All agreed to participate.

Just before the final week of their practicum, they were given the reflective questions. This gave them time to think critically and formulate their responses. They were to email responses to me, which they did.

Data Analysis Process
The responses to the questions were analyzed using content analysis. This meant that an analysis was done on each participant's views, as was a cross-examination of emerging categories to discern findings common to all. I also used direct interpretation of the data, which involved looking at each and drawing meaning from it (Creswell, 1998).

Specifically, I read through the responses to the three questions and found the ideas that recurred. These ideas and words became the main categories or themes. For example, an examination of the responses to

reflective question 1 revealed words and phrases such as lesson planning, differentiating instructions, data entry and marking. Based on these I created the category 'mechanics of teaching'. Responses also included words and phrases such as 'guiding student to develop personally', 'encouraging positive behaviours' and 'helping pupils'. Based on these, I created the category 'affective/relational aspects of teaching'. Responses to reflective question 2 revealed phrases such as 'remain committed' 'challenged my assumptions' and changed my views', and responses to reflective question 3 revealed words and phrases such as 'patience', 'constant reflection' and 'being friendly'. These were used as categories. From this process of analysis, I constructed an understanding of the usefulness and benefit of the RATPD and by extension the three core reflective questions.

To aid in reducing researcher bias in the data analysis process I employed participants' validation (Elliot 1991), by presenting the participants with a transcript of the report and asking them to say if the report faithfully represents their views. In checking that the study faithfully represented their views, they were also encouraged to say if their identity were also obscured. All agreed that their identities were obscured, and only minor spelling and grammatical changes were necessary.

Results and Discussion

Usefulness of the RATPD and by extension the three Reflective Questions
Reflective Question 1. The first question asked, 'What have you learned about teaching?' The examination of the responses to this reflective question reveals its usefulness in three ways. First, the question revealed that participants had learned about the mechanics of teaching and practice these.

For example, one participant said:

> I have learnt how to differentiate lessons effectively to cater for the different abilities in a class and different strategies for encouraging positive behaviour in the classroom (Viola).

Another said:

> I have learnt that teaching is so much more than planning your lessons 'starter, main activity, plenary', and marking and data entry, although these are all important components…(Cello).

An important and expected outcome of any teaching practicum exercise is to enable student teachers to experience and successfully engage with the mechanics of teaching in a school— such as those highlighted here by this study's participants. However, for learning to occur it requires a reflective engagement with the mechanics of teaching. Reflective question one seems to be a useful catalyst to enable this learning to take place. This is so because it requires student teachers to recall, examine and determine what aspects of the mechanics they learned (Farrell, 2001). Additionally, during the debriefing exercise, these highlighted aspects of the mechanics would be discussed with the student to aid their analysis which could result in improved future classroom and/or school encounters (Elder & Paul 1994; Halpern, 2014).

Secondly, the question revealed the overall belief among participants that the mechanics of teaching must be balanced with the affective/relational and even the reflective aspects of teaching:

> Essentially, I have learnt that teaching is so much more than the curriculum, or planning a lesson… it is compromise, it is negotiation, and it is helping all pupils to navigate the complexities of adolescence, guiding them to develop personally as well as intellectually as you teach them (Cello).

> I have learned many things about teaching during my practice at the school, especially the importance of getting to know your students and how this influences lesson planning (Viola).

I have learnt that reflective learning for teachers can actually block effective teaching, as in 'analysis paralysis' (Pinto).

While Pinto learned about the need for a balanced use of analysis in the teaching-learning dynamics, other participants learned about the need to balance attending to students' education and their other needs. Here we find participants— as a result of engaging with reflective question one— learning about balance, but more importantly, being 'teacher as pedagogue' which involves a caring interest in the growth and welfare of students which ought to motivate their practice (Van Manen, 2006).

Thirdly, the question facilitated the expression of the challenge of matching theory (that which is learned in the University) with practice in schools:

After having spent a couple of months in university, it can be challenging to marry the theory with the realities of teaching, and especially when integrating your own values into school policy. Throughout first placement at the school I had the opportunity to research this for my first PGCE dissertation on getting pupils to read, in which I planned a sequence of lessons with academic pedagogical works in mind, which was great and really illuminating (Cello).

While this area of challenge is not new and may continue to be difficult (Richards, 1996) here we find question one encouraging a student teacher to confront a challenge in her teaching which is an important aspect of being and becoming a reflective practitioner (Cunningham, 2001; Day, 1999; Markham, 1999).

Reflective Question 2. The second question asked, "To what extent has the practicum experience caused changes in your beliefs, values, and assumptions about teaching?" The examination of the responses to this reflective question reveals its usefulness, in that it encouraged participants to think affectively, by targeting their values, beliefs, and assumptions in relation to teaching and learning. All participants pointed out that the experience either confirmed, challenged, or changed their beliefs, values, and assumptions about teaching. For example, Cello's experience confirmed her belief, values, and assumptions about teaching history.

In terms of teaching History, I remain committed to teaching according to the university's values such as diverse histories, histories for all and historical thinking, which are compatible with the history scheme of work at the local school, giving me the opportunity to expand my understanding and implementation of these values (Cello).

On the other hand, it caused changes in these areas:

However, in terms of teaching in general, certain assumptions have been challenged. I assumed you can just go in and be everyone's favourite teacher, but it is important to establish boundaries, rules, and expectations first (although nothing near as harsh as the 'don't smile until Christmas' rule). Therefore, cultivating behaviour for learning is an ongoing target of mine - they will not listen to / behave for you if you are always nice to them and you must use sanctions according to school policy (Cello).

For Pinto, he arrived at the conclusion that children are low on the list of priorities. However, similar to Cello, Viola also experienced changes in these areas:

The way I view teaching is now very different from when I started my practice in the school. I underestimated the workload which teachers face and the pressure that they are under from parents, the government and school leadership teams. This practice experience has changed my view on the amount of planning involved in every lesson and that being a good teacher is not something that is automatic but takes years of practice (Viola).

The fact that there is a mixture of response by participants to this question could suggest that while teachers' beliefs, values, and assumptions about teaching are deeply ingrained and sometimes difficult to change (Borg, 2001), sometimes they do change if they are willing to reflect on these (Minott, 2009). Also, of importance is the fact that via reflective question two, participants disclose and examine personal feelings which is an aspect of being and becoming a reflective teacher (Reiman, 1999). This idea of disclosing personal feeling can be a challenge and is addressed later in this paper.

Reflective Question 3. The third question asked, "What have you learned about 'self' as a teacher?" The examination of the responses to this reflective question reveals its usefulness in that it encouraged the participants to personalize the teaching practicum exercise by examining and disclosing personal feelings (Reiman, 1999).

Pinto made the point that he has learned that he is able to remain true to teaching even while facing criticisms. Viola said that she has learned that she is patient and constantly reflective and these are very helpful when planning based on students' needs and during lesson implementation. Cello is of the opinion that she has two personas, the teacher and 'the real', and she can keep them separate while in the classroom. She is also a friendly person who cultivates friendships at work. She concludes that— while she may not be charismatic or intellectually brilliant—she is a reflective teacher. And this, for her, is 'a golden nugget'.

An examination of these quotations displays an awareness of 'self' by the participants, and self-awareness is a facet of reflective teaching and is critical to teachers' professional growth. More is said about self-awareness in the next section as we examine the benefits of the RATPD.

Benefits of the RATPD and by extension the three Reflective Questions.
An overview of the preceding discussion and the responses analyzed, reveals that the RATPD and by extension, the three core reflective questions through which the approach is enacted encourages the development of student teachers' reflective capabilities. The thought of one participant supports this idea. 'Overall, the questions are useful in helping to reflect critically on the practicum experience and to think about what I have learned so far as a teacher' (Viola).

The need to aid student teachers to reflect on learning is now well documented in the literature. Specifically, the RATPD encourages critical thinking, self-directed critical thinking, and self-awareness. Another benefit of the RATPD, not identified from the examination of the data, was that it offers a structure to guide de-briefing sessions.

Critical thinking is a process of disciplined intellectual criticism combining research, knowledge of context, and balanced judgment (Minott, 2009). It is characterized differently by various writers. Fowler (2015) lists over 15 definitions of critical thinking proposed by 15 writers. There are some similarities as well as differences to these. An examination of the definitions suggests that the writers all agree on the fact that its binding characteristic is that it is primarily a mental or cognitive process with particular outcomes, such as arriving at appropriate:

- beliefs,
- patterns of reasoning,
- conclusion of whether to reject or suspend judgment on an issue,
- understanding and meaning of an issue or statement,
- logical inferences, evidence and following where it leads,
- and decisions about material by distinguishing between facts and opinion.

This list of outcomes of critical thinking displays the different uses and results of the application of this cognitive skill. For example, critical thinking can be applied to various situations and a conclusion drawn regarding what to believe or what actions to take, or it can result in making logical inferences. The need to

develop and the importance of improving teachers and students' ability to think critically have been documented. For example, Schafersman (1991) points out:

> Critical thinking is an important and vital topic in modern education. All educators are interested in teaching critical thinking to their students. Many academic departments hope that its professors and instructors will become informed about the strategy of teaching critical thinking skills, identify areas in one's courses as the proper place to emphasize and teach critical thinking, and develop and use some problems in exams that test students' critical thinking skills (n.p).

Carrol (1989) states:

> Why should we be concerned about critical thinking in our classrooms? Obviously, we want to educate citizens whose decisions and choices will be based on careful, critical thinking. Maintaining the right of free choice itself may depend on the ability to think clearly (n.p).

The RATPD encourages critical thinking, for the reflective questions utilized cannot be effectively answered without thinking critically (Minott, 2015), and two, as displayed in the preceding discussion, participants confirmed or changed certain beliefs and assumptions about teaching, for example,
> … in terms of teaching in general, certain assumptions have been challenged. I assumed you can just go in and be everyone's favourite teacher, but it is important to establish boundaries, rules, and expectations first (although nothing near as harsh as the 'don't smile until Christmas' rule)… (Cello).

Participants also arrived at various understandings of teaching (such as the need to balance the mechanics and affective/relational aspects of teaching) and made logical inferences from situations they encountered.

Cole (1997), while embracing the concept of critical thinking as a co-requisite to reflective practice, points out that critical thinking should be "self-directed." In other words, it should be an integral aspect of teachers' ongoing critical inquiry into their teaching and not administratively decreed by policymakers or educational administrators. Other writers, such as Hyrkas and colleagues (2001) and Calderhead (1992), agree with this, for they are of the opinion that there is indeed a feeling of autonomy when teachers engage in self-directed critical thinking as an integral aspect of the ongoing process of inquiry into their own teaching. When this occurs, teachers are more likely to take control of their learning, which should result in improved learning opportunities for students.

The RATPD process also encourages self-directed critical thinking. This is so because students are given the questions in advance of the debriefing session to guide their thinking. This process also allows them the opportunity to determine what aspects of the practicum they will think, talk, or write about during debriefing sessions (Minott, 2015).

Elder and Paul (1994) and Halpern (2014) state that self-awareness of our ways of learning and our knowledge is the essence of critical thinking, but, more important, it encourages professional growth. Richards and Shupe (2003) agree with this thought when they state that teachers' professional development depends on their willingness to take stock of their own behaviour or become aware of "self." Critical to this process is the willingness to ask questions about one's behaviour's and how they might be negatively affecting one's professional growth.

According to Cunningham (2001) and Bengtsson (1993), if teachers hone their cognitive and affective skills via reflective teaching, this could improve their ability to react and respond—as they are teaching—to assess, revise, and implement approaches and activities on the spot. The honing of cognitive and affective skills via reflective teaching could also develop further self-awareness and knowledge. More important, self-awareness could aid in encouraging teachers in their role as autonomous professionals who take responsibility for their own professional growth.

An examination of the preceding discussion, especially the participants' comments, reveals that the RATPD encourages self-awareness, as they were able to identify aspects of themselves as teachers. This was facilitated by the reflective question asked about "self" as teacher. For example, one participant points out the struggle she has with planning time effectively and maintaining a healthy work/life balance. Another pointed out that he has learned that he is able to remain true to teaching even while facing criticisms.

The RATPD provides university teacher educators, school-based mentors, and student teachers with a useful, practical, user-friendly reflective tool for use during practicum exercises (Minott, 2015). For the university teacher educators and school-based mentors, the strategy also offers a structured guide for practicum debriefing sessions. While there are no universally set numbers of hours for a practicum debriefing session, I have found that the RATPD and the questions asked help to keep debriefing sessions between 30 and 40 minutes. This is particularly important when one university teacher educator is assigned to debrief 20 to 30 student teachers in one sitting. Also, the questions act as a guide for students' thoughts and tend to limit their "ramblings," which can be evident in debriefing sessions, especially when an open-ended questioning technique is employed (Minott, 2015).

Challenge of the RATPD and by extension the three Reflective Questions.

The main challenge of the RATPD that should be considered is that student teachers are sometimes reluctant to share their perception and what they truly believe and feel about a particular issue or situation encountered. This suggests that genuine reflexivity is not always easy for student teachers. It seems, to examine one own feeling in the context of teacher education continues to be contentious and only recently, has it been acknowledged as central to teaching (Day and Leitch 2001). Hargreaves (1998) adds to the conversation when he points out that acknowledging and talking about emotion in an educational setting is a means to an end—that of facilitating the really important business of cognitive learning. This reluctance by student teachers to share perception and what they truly believe and feel about an occurrence or teaching episode could be seen, not just as a challenge of the RATPD, but also a limitation of this study.

However, to help to resolve this challenge of students' unwilling to talk about feeling or emotions, values, beliefs, and personal assumptions, I reassure them during debriefing sessions that what they say in the tutorial room "stays in the room." In other words, I promise confidentiality, and I do not record all that is discussed in the sessions, especially if I sense that what is being discussed is personal and emotional. Additionally, after each session, I invite students to read and edit the debriefing record that is kept in their file.

Summary

The results and discussion of findings point out the following about each question. Reflective Question one, solicited from participants what they observed and learned about the mechanics and the affective/relational aspects of teaching. It revealed the overall belief among participants that there is the need to balance the mechanics and the affective/relational and reflective aspects of teaching. Reflective Question two, encouraged participants to think affectively by targeting their values, beliefs, and assumptions in relation to teaching and learning. Reflective Question three, encouraged participants to personalize the teaching practicum exercise by examining and disclosing personal feelings about 'self' as a teacher.

The three main benefits of the RATPD are as follows: one, it encouraged critical thinking, for the reflective questions utilized cannot be effectively answered without thinking critically; two, it encouraged self-directed critical thinking; and three, it encouraged self-awareness. The main challenge of the RATPD is that students are sometimes reluctant to share their perception and what they truly believe and feel about a particular issue or situation encountered.

Implications and Conclusion

Despite the main challenge of the RATPD identified in the preceding discussion, teacher educators, school-based mentors and cooperating teachers should view it as an additional tool that enables and encourages the reflective capabilities of student teachers. Some educators may be using these or similar questions in their practice. The RATPD however, provides a structure and a framework to guide debriefing sessions— central aspects of the work of these educators.

The use of the strategy in a teacher education programme would contribute to the hidden curriculum. Doing so, indirectly conveys to student teachers the importance placed on teaching reflectively and their development as reflective practitioners. Jerald (2006) notes that, among many things, the hidden curriculum indirectly communicates through written words and actions: attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours that are learned by students.

One role of teacher educators is to model various aspects of teaching. The Association of Teacher Educators (USA) (2003) identifies modelling of teaching and ideas that student teachers are expected to grasp, as the number one standard expected of accomplished teacher educators. The use of the RATPD is an opportunity for teacher educators to display the kinds of questions that student teachers should carry into their practice as teachers. Conklin (2008) supports this idea for the writer points out that modelling also includes the use of activities to teach covert or unspoken aims.

The three questions through which the strategy is enacted can be easily memorised and others added as needed. This memorisation aid in making the dialogue between the student teacher and the mentor more conversational. This conversational approach helps to put the student at ease. Additionally, the RATPD can be used as an evaluation tool at the end of a lecture or unit of lessons in any discipline in the teacher education curriculum (Minott, 2015).

To conclude, this instrumental research case study used the recent practicum experience and opinions of a selected number of UK student teachers from a local university to evaluate the usefulness, benefits, and challenge of the three-core reflective question through which the RATPD strategy is enacted. The usefulness of the three questions and by extension the RATPD can be seen in the fact that they encourage participants to think critically about their teaching and about own behaviour as potential teachers. Also, it encourages student teachers, during the actual teaching practicum, to not only focus on the mechanics and affective/relational aspects of teaching but to consider self as a teacher, which is a major facet of being and becoming a reflective practitioner.

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