

## **Effect of Reflective Practices on Quality Instruction at Higher Level**

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### **KEY WORDS**

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Reflective practice, quality instruction, higher level

### **ABSTRACT**

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Present study intends to explore the effect of reflective practices on quality instruction at higher education level. Major objective of the study was to assess the effect of reflective practices on quality instruction at higher level. The effect of reflective practices was explored on five indicators of quality instructions including professional responsibilities and effective human relations, planning and preparation of curriculum, instructions, assessment practices and classroom environment. Study was descriptive in nature. Population of the study comprised of 5149 teachers teaching in universities of Islamabad. By using stratified random sampling technique 515 (10%) teaching faculty of universities was selected. 515 questionnaires were distributed among teachers and from them 408 teachers returned hence the response rate was 79.22%. Two research questionnaires were used which includes Reflective Practice instrument developed by Linda Lawrence-Wilkes and Alan Chapman (2015) with Cronbach's Alpha reliability of .84, and Quality Instruction questionnaire developed by the researcher with Cronbach's Alpha reliability of .87. Findings revealed that there is significant effect of reflective practice on quality instruction at higher level, Reflective practice has positive effect on maintaining classroom environment, assessment practices and instructional techniques of teachers. It is recommended to conduct trainings and seminars for the awareness of teachers about reflective practices and its importance and role in improving quality of instruction.

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## Introduction

The term "reflective practice" expresses a more explicit engagement from the presupposition and the questioning of the hypothesis to the critical and creative thinking process, linking the practical experience and learning to the practical action. The practice of reflection shows a method of inquiry characterized by participation, thinking, choice, reasoning and taking different perspectives, especially in complex and novel situations, which require situational awareness and understanding. This reflection process acts to change our current understanding of the operation by conceiving the problem or encounter in a different or novel way, or by improvising a new way to deal with the problem at hand (Higgins, 2011).

The strongest, long-lasting and most effective factor in educational change is not policymakers, curriculum makers or even the education sector itself but teachers. The quality of teacher's educational transformation with the implementation of skills and opportunities is as consistent and skilled as teachers' personal reflexivity and self-knowledge development. Historically, these areas of teacher development process have been neglected in preparing and promoting effective teachers. Teachers' understanding of content, pedagogical understandings and their ability to understand their students as knowledge builders in different social contexts is essential for quality instruction. In order to make teachers efficient in the age of technology and emerging information, they not only need to recognize students' backgrounds, diversity and learning preferences, but also need to be able to improve their teaching by taking effective and active actions in the classroom environment in order to improve students' educational achievements. To do this, they must have the will and cognitive ability to recognize the moral dilemma and examine their views on key and analytical issues. This requires regular real reflection.

With the changing face of higher education, quality instruction has become an important issue. Student groups have considerable social and geographic expansion and diversity, students require new teaching methods. Modern technology has entered the classroom, thus changing the nature of the interaction between students and teachers. The government, students and their families, employers, and funders increasingly need value and hope to improve their efficiency through quality instruction. Present study aimed to check the effects of reflective practices of teachers on the quality instruction at higher level.

## Literature Review

Reflection is the process of regularly reviewing and reflecting own behaviours and practices and making adjustments for the purpose of improvement. For teachers, reflective practice requires periodic investigation of their behaviour in the classroom through numerous means. For example, educators can reflect on the validity of their pedagogical practices by

recording images and videos, reflecting on the effectiveness of their pedagogical practices, or educators can reflect on the validity of their pedagogical strategies by investigating student assessment data (Tripp, Tonya & Peter, 2012). Using a variety of lenses, teachers should reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses, and challenge teachers to adjust their own practices in order to facilitate students' learning and their own growth (Bamberger, Jeanne, & Schon, 1983).

Reflective practice is a process of promoting teaching, learning and understanding. It plays an essential role in teacher professional improvement. When student teachers conduct a systematic investigation of themselves, they learn about themselves, their practices, and their students. The word "reflective" can be considered as a manifestation of human consciousness. Reflecting as a process or activity refers to the means by which human thoughts recognize themselves and their thoughts. This process is deeply rooted in the ongoing relationship between action and reflection. In this sense, one can conceptualize reflexivity as one that diverts or fixes one topic to teach (Higgins, 2011). As Schön (1983) first proposed, engaging in reflective practice is particularly important for the growth and development of teachers as professionals. According to Braun and Crumpler (2004), this is an unresponsive result for an unreflective teacher who is only a skilled technician who has limited ability to make the right decisions; consider consequences of his behaviour; and to change his behavior.

Reflective teaching encourages teachers to constantly improve their work who never reach the stage of their daily work satisfaction. This is a modern attitude that suits the needs of accelerating change in the new era. Teachers should learn to adapt to different learners in the classroom and to meet their learning needs. In addition, teachers should also maintain their attitude of learning from practice and inform them of their future decisions. The need to train professionals has been widely accepted and is increasingly being adopted as a desire to span multiple professional standards. Many people think that reflective practice is a hallmark of teachers' professional ability to enhance quality instruction (Cole & Knowles, 2000). Teaching is just like a group, composed of individuals where everyone has a diverse experience, which in turn is interpreted in terms of time and context in a specific way. Everyone also personally built their understanding of the profession, becoming teachers and reflection. The ability of a person to be completely objective may be a topic of heated debate in a philosophical debate, but it is widely assumed that it is almost impossible. The significance of reflecting on professional practice is obvious: Individuals describe, analyze, and plan a way to develop on their own (Burgh, 2005). Reflection is an investigation of the motivation, methods, materials, and consequences of educational practice. It enables reflective practitioners to carefully study the conditions and attitudes that improve student

achievement and teachers professional development (Taggart & Wilson, 2005).

Posthuma (2012) conducted a case study and found that there is a link between teachers' reflective classroom teaching on quality instruction. Teachers who are more reflective in preparing and introducing their courses are also evaluated as more effective than those who are less reflective. High quality content refers to the educational expectations and teaching programs. The educational goals of the country and the statement of achievements that translate these goals into measurable goals should provide the starting point for the development and implementation of curricula (UNICEF, 2000). In general, the curriculum should emphasize in-depth but not extensive coverage of key knowledge areas, real and situational learning issues, and problem solving that emphasizes skills development and knowledge acquisition. The curriculum should also provide individual differences, closely coordinate and selectively integrate subject content, and focus on student learning outcomes or criteria and goals (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2000). There are different indicators of quality instruction in which classroom environment is one of the most important one. In the classroom, a welcoming and non-discriminatory atmosphere is crucial to creating a quality learning environment. Learning can take place anywhere, but positive learning outcomes that the education system generally requires occur in a quality learning environment. The learning environment consists of physical, mental and service delivery elements. Physical learning environment or formal learning venue, from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air meeting place. Willms (2000) in his study on investments to improve children's educational outcomes found that students who lacked classroom instructional resources at educational institutions showed lower test scores and higher repeat scores than well-equipped students.

### **Significance of the Study**

In the profession of teaching, reflective practice refers to seeing what a teacher does in class, thinking the reason behind doing it, and considering whether it works or it needs improvement. In short, reflection is a process of being your own observer and assessor. Reflective teaching is the research topic of education in all countries of the world. However, in Pakistan, few researches have been done in the area of teacher reflection. Present study explored the impact of teacher reflection practice on superior quality guidance. In theoretical perspective, this research is important and contributes to the existing body of knowledge. This will provide guidance to teachers in better understanding of the effect of reflection on quality instruction which may improve their reflective practice and make teaching more effective in professional standards. This study will help educational institution managers improve their teachers' professional development

strategies by evaluating their reflective and quality instruction. This study is of great significance for students to conduct in-depth research in the field of reflection. The results of this study will provide more exploration areas.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to:

1. To assess the effect of reflective practice on quality instruction at higher level.
  - 1.1 To assess the effect of reflective practice on professional responsibilities and effective human relations at higher level.
  - 1.2 To assess the effect of reflective practice on planning and preparation of curriculum at higher level.
  - 1.3 To assess the effect of reflective practice on instructions at higher level.
  - 1.4 To assess the effect of reflective practice on assessment practices at higher level.
- 1.5 To assess the effect of reflective practice on classroom environment at higher level.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. There is no effect of reflective practice on quality instruction at higher level.
  - 1.1 There is no effect of reflective practice on professional responsibilities and effective human relations at higher level.
  - 1.2 There is no effect of reflective practice on planning and preparation of curriculum at higher level.
  - 1.3 There is no effect of reflective practice on instructions at higher level.
  - 1.4 There is no effect of reflective practice on assessment practices at higher level.
  - 1.5 There is no effect of reflective practice on classroom environment at higher level.

### **Research Design**

Present study was intended to find out the effects of reflective practices on quality instruction at higher level. Present study was descriptive in nature in which survey technique was used.

### **Population and Sample**

5149 teachers teaching in all departments of 27 public and private sector universities in Islamabad were the population of study. There were 3590 teachers teaching in public sector and 1559 teachers teaching in private sector universities of Islamabad

By using stratified random sampling technique 515 (10%) teaching faculty of universities was selected. 515 questionnaires were distributed among teachers by personal visits and 408 teachers returned properly filled questionnaires.

### Research Instruments

By keeping in view the variables of the study two research questionnaires were used in present study. Pilot testing was done to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaires. Reflective Practice instrument developed by Linda Lawrence-Wilkes and Alan Chapman (2015) as research tool was adapted. Five point Likert Scale was used in the questionnaire. Reliability result of Reflective Questionnaire was Cronbach's Alpha .84. Other questionnaire was developed by researcher which was on Quality Instruction; the questionnaire was divided into five sub-sections and consisted of 32 statements. Cronbach's Alpha reliability of questionnaire was .87. Statistical values have been presented in table 1.

Table 1

*Cronbach's Alpha Reliability of Research Instruments*

Scale	Items	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability
Reflective Practices	42	.84
Quality Instruction	32	.87

The above table 1 explains the reliability of both instruments. Reflective practice scale used for the research was found reliable (.84) and can be used in future researches. The second scale deals with Quality Instruction were also found reliable (.87) and can be used in future researches.

### Results

After collecting the data from teachers, it was tabulated and analyzed statistically with the help of SPSS 21<sup>st</sup> Version. Regression analysis was done. The hypotheses of the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented in underlying tables followed by interpretation of each.

Table 2

*Effect of Reflective Practice on Quality Instruction*

R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	T	Sig
.013	.056	2.09	.03

The R squares value (0.013) shows that independent variable (Reflective Practice) had 1.3% effect on the dependent variable (Quality

Instruction). While the  $\beta$  value shows that this effect was positive and was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. So it is revealed that there is significant effect of reflective practice on quality instruction at higher level.

Table 3

*Effect of Reflective Practice on Professional Responsibilities*

R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	t	Sig
.00	.004	.38	.69

Table No. 3 explains that R square value is 0.00 which shows that the independent variable (Reflective Practice) describes 0% effect on dependent variable (Professional Responsibilities) while the  $\beta$  value is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. So above table indicated that there is no significant effect of reflective practice on professional responsibilities of teachers.

Table 4

*Effect of Reflective Practice on Planning and Preparing Curriculum*

R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	T	Sig
.006	.00	-104	.91

Table N. 4 describes that R squares value (0.006) shows that independent variable (Reflective Practice) had 0.6% effect on the dependent variable (Planning and Preparing Curriculum). While the  $\beta$  value shows that this effect was statistically not significant at 0.05 level of significance. So it is revealed that there is no significant effect of reflective practice on planning and preparing curriculum by teachers at higher level.

Table 5

*Effect of Reflective Practice on Instructional Techniques*

R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	T	Sig
.011	.001	2.23	.02

The R squares value (0.011) shows that independent variable (Reflective Practice) had 1.1% effect on the dependent variable (Instructional Techniques). While the  $\beta$  value shows that this effect was positive and was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. So it is revealed that there is effect of reflective practice on instructional techniques of teachers at higher level.

Table 6  
*Effect of Reflective Practice on Assessment Practices*

R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	T	Sig
.018	.01	2.48	.01

Table 6 revealed that R squares value (0.018) shows that independent variable (Reflective Practice) had 1.8% effects on the dependent variable (Assessment Practices). While the  $\beta$  value shows that this effect was positive and was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. So it is revealed that there is significant effect of reflective practice on assessment practices of teachers at higher level.

Table 7

*Effect of Reflective Practice on Maintaining Classroom Environment*

R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	T	Sig
.034	.027	3.45	.00

The R squares value (0.034) shows that independent variable (Reflective Practice) had 3.4% effect on the dependent variable (Maintaining Classroom Environment). While the  $\beta$  value shows that this effect was positive and was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. So it is revealed that there is significant effect of reflective practice on maintain classroom environment by teachers at higher level.

## Discussion

It seems that a new method of learning and teaching emerged and it captures the attention of practitioners, leading to dominant thinking and research. Reflective and reflective teaching is a very popular method for teachers (Johnston & Usher, 1996). Quality instruction has a major role to improve student learning. Present study aimed to find out the effect of reflective practice on quality instruction at higher level by keeping in view parameters of quality instructions. Present study found that there is a significant effect of reflective practice on quality instruction at higher level. The results of another study Donaldson (2015), showed that reflection has a positive effect on instruction and it is an effective tool for enhancing instructional practices.

Findings revealed that there is no effect of reflective practice on professional responsibilities of teachers. Results of present study are in contrast with the study conducted by Rayford (2010) in which teachers and administrators responded that reflection plays an important role in the professional development of teachers and have effect on their professional



responsibilities. The result of the present study are different, may be because of the difference of environment and cultural context. Present study found no effect of reflective practice on planning and preparing curriculum by teachers at higher level. A study conducted by Costa, Casagrande and Ueta (2009) found that teachers reflective practices have a positive impact on the development and application of different course of curriculum. Results of present study are in contrast with this study, this may be because all of our teachers are not involved in the process of curriculum development in Pakistan so teachers found no link between their reflective practices and curriculum development process.

Effect of reflective practice was found on instructional techniques of teachers at higher level. Results of present study are in line with the study conducted by Huang (2001) in which teachers believe that reflective practices have a great effect on their instructional techniques. It was found that there is significant effect of reflective practice on assessment practices of teachers at higher level. Results are in line with the study conducted by Bond, Denton and Ellis (2015), in which it was found that reflection have positive effect on assessment practices and further have a positive effect on students learning. Results of present study revealed that there is effect of reflective practice on maintaining classroom environment by teachers at higher level. The interweaving nature of reflection in all environments of the learning process reinforces teaching practice. A study by Goens and Farley (2017) examines the impact of reflective practice on classroom environment and student performance. The findings support the positive impact of reflective practice on maintaining the classroom environment and student performance.

### **Recommendations**

1. In order to cope with and survive in the professional field, teachers need to develop and bring about changes in instruction for better quality. Reflection is the flashback that teachers need to mediate for their development.
2. Universities may conduct seminars for the awareness of reflective practices for teachers so that they may inculcate reflective teaching in their teaching for better teaching learning process.

Assessment practices of teachers may be further improved by conducting trainings for teachers in which teachers may be trained to use reflection more positively for improvement of assessment techniques and ways.

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