

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SUPERVISORS' FEEDBACK IN SOLVING PROBLEMS OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE

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Abstract

This Study is an action research which attempted to find out the role of supervisors' feedback in solving problems of prospective teachers during teaching practice. The objectives of study were **to discover nature of feedback given by supervisors to prospective teachers and to explore the nature of support which prospective teachers get from supervisor's feedback to solve classroom management problems during teaching practice session.** There were 3 supervisors and 15 prospective teachers who were selected as sample of this study. Data were collected through constructive feedback from supervisors and reflections of prospective teachers regarding evolutionary changes in their instructional strategies as a result of supervisors' constructive feedback. Data were divided under seven themes based on comments given by supervisors and reflections of prospective teachers over it. The results revealed that constructive feedback from supervisor teachers facilitated prospective teachers in adopting variety of strategies to solve the problems they faced during teaching practice.

Key Words: Constructive feedback, Reflections, Supervisor, teaching practice, prospective teacher

Introduction

In process of learning as prospective teachers, it is very necessary to motivate them towards better. For motivation, it is necessary to guide them positively by commenting on their work. This may be possible through feedback which provides teachers opportunity to have a discussion with students about their concepts, misconceptions understandings and errors. Feedback plays an important role in motivating learners towards improvement (Hattie, & Timperley, 2007).

Constructive feedback is a positive process of reflection about learners' progress. Written descriptions about progress make learning process more interesting and effective and leads towards further progress (Bean,2001). Constructive feedback is a source of developing trust and respect between teacher and learner, and leads them towards improvement (Walvoord & Anderson, 2011) Feedback refers to "the return to the input of a part of the output of a system, or process." It is also associated with a "response, especially to one in authority on an activity"

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(Bloom1976). Supervisors can provide better and constructive feedback for prospective teachers' learning, growth and development.

This action research was conducted by the researcher for prospective teachers which was based on the idea that constructive feedback may also be helpful in solving prospective teachers' problem related to classroom management like it is in all related fields. The students of B.Ed. honors' have to attend teaching practice sessions for four times during their 3rd, 5th, 7th and 8th semester. After completion of teaching practice in 7th semester, researcher (as in charge of teaching practice) collected students' opinions about their experiences as prospective teachers.

It was realized that basic problem of student teachers was regarding unavailability of feedback from supervisors about their lesson planning, use of teaching techniques and classroom management. They were of the opinion that supervisors didn't comment for them or commented negatively which demoralized them and they could not be able to solve their problems regarding classroom instruction and management. In 8th semester, the same class had to attend teaching practice again. Therefore, researcher planned an action research to explore the effect of supervisors' feedback in solving classroom management problems of prospective teachers through writing reflections on their progress and change in strategies to find out solutions of problems during teaching practice.

Objectives of research

1. **To discover nature of feedback given by supervisors to prospective teachers (comments by supervisors)**
2. **To explore the nature of support, prospective teachers get from supervisor's feedback to solve classroom management problems (Reflections)**

Research questions

1. **What is nature of feedback given by supervisors to prospective teachers (comments by supervisors)?**
2. **How do prospective teachers get support from supervisor's feedback to solve classroom management problems (Reflections)?**

Theoretical frame work of problem

Constructive feedback aims at provision of feedback which is helpful in better understanding of progress and solutions of problems. There are many theories that support the notion of constructive feedback.

Among these, Albert Bandura's Social learning theory is prominent. According to this theory, observation, modeling and feedback are sources of individual's learning. Feedback is an important source of learning which provides help in understanding consequences of behavior and accordingly regulate their actions (Bendura, 1977).

Review of literature

Teachers are the vital element in process of individual development. They also have a vibrant impact on economic vitality of the country through education and training of next generation. As current scenario is becoming more challenging, so, teachers should also be equipped with diverse and wide range of competencies, skills, and strategies to manage this challenge (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004).

During preservice teacher education programs, teaching practice session is an opportunity for prospective teachers to learn from senior and committed teachers. Under the supervision of

mentor teacher, prospective teachers are expected to show their best performance which will provide a base for their success as teacher in future (Richard et al., 2014).

Supervision plays a vital role during teaching practice. Supervisor observes prospective teachers during live teaching and guides them towards their growth as a future teacher. These supervisors belong to teacher education institutions (college/university teachers) (Ashraf & Ghazali, 2017). The duty of Supervisor involves a wide range of activities as guiding, facilitating, modifying, improving, counseling, recommending, assessing and demonstrating to make prospective teachers better future teachers (Mehraj & Mushtaq, 2018).

Teaching practice supervisor plays an important role as he/she provides constructive feedback to prospective teachers after observing their performance regarding classroom environment, teaching strategies, and interaction with students. The supervisor should have ability to convert his/her observations into actionable suggestions. The evaluation process is based on several criteria, including the professional and educational background of the student teacher, the overall classroom organization, feedback from the mentor teacher, and the evidence of lesson planning, communication, instructional activities, assessment of learners, and the use of learner teacher support materials (Ahmed et al., 2021; Onyango, 2019). It is supervisor's responsibility to provide feedback so that prospective teachers can grow themselves (Richard et al., 2014).

LaBoskey and Anna's research findings showed that student teachers became more active, enthusiastic and reflective when their supervisors had same qualities (2017). Prospective teachers got effected by philosophy, behavior and teaching styles of their Supervisors both in positive and negative way (Korthagen, 2017; Tiwari, 2019). Poster and Poster are of the opinion that conducting a pre teaching practice meeting between supervisor and prospective teacher is beneficial for understanding the nature and prospective problems of teaching practice (2003).

Feedback is basic element to the supervisory process, as it improves significance of instruction. According to Hyland (2009), feedback is a help for students in learning process. Certain feedback roles are "to help a student discover his or her own standpoint, obtain appreciation for his or her "own work," and find ways to convey it in his or her own voice". In teaching practice experience, the supervisor provides feedback after observing prospective teachers' performance (Adentwi, & Baafi-Frimpong 2002). Feedback is a source of meeting between supervisors and the prospective teachers during teaching practice (Richard et al., 2014).

Good feedback practice provides teachers with opportunity to reflect on their students' learning and also improves their own teaching experience (Korthagen, 2017). Students' reflections on teachers' feedback provides a base for understanding the impact of feedback on students' learning (Hargreaves, 2013) but teachers have to access their students fairly to provide them feedback on their performance (Mamoon-Al-Bashir et al., 2016). Feedback should be positive so that students can get motivated for further development. This provides teachers with a support to improve students' learning (Mamoon-Al-Bashir et al., 2016).

Different researchers have studied effect of feedback on preservice teachers' training by investigating various aspects. Doo and Kim (2018) have studied to explore how types of feedback effect teaching performance, satisfaction, and perceived learning on prospective teachers. The findings of this study indicated that in improving teaching performance and perceived learning, expert feedback was the most effective while peer feedback was the least effective. Riza and Rustaman (2018) had done a study to investigate about peer feedback effect on the teaching

practice of prospective teachers”. The results indicated that peer feedback improved the teaching practice of pre-service teachers, particularly in the areas of lesson planning and classroom management.

Kim and Bae (2019) have done a study to find out “The effect of feedback which is based on video won the professional development of pre-service teachers”. The results exposed that video-based feedback was effective in increasing pre-service teachers' teaching skills, pedagogical content knowledge, and reflection ability. The study had been done by Lee, Lee, & Kim (2020) on the topic “Effects of feedback on pre-service teachers' attitudes toward feedback and their teaching performance”. The findings of the study revealed that feedback had a positive attitude towards feedback and their teaching performance.

This study had been done by Seo and Lim (2021) to investigate “The effect of peer feedback on pre-service teachers' teaching efficacy and attitudes toward teaching”. The findings of the study revealed that peer feedback had a positive impact on pre-service teachers' teaching efficacy and attitudes toward teaching. Zhao, Huang, and Chen (2022) had done a research to explore the” Effects of online feedback on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy, motivation, and satisfaction in teaching. The results discovered that online feedback was effective in enhancing pre-service teachers' self-efficacy, motivation, and satisfaction in teaching.

Research Methodology

This research was qualitative in nature. It was an action research. This research was based on finding effect of constructive feedback provided by teaching practice supervisors as a source of solving problems of prospective teachers they had to face in managing their class during teaching practice. Researcher arranged a focus group discussion with senior faculty members of Department of Education Government College University, Faisalabad in order get guidance about selection and development of tools and methodology of research. A one-day seminar was arranged to guide prospective teachers about writing reflections and for supervisors of teaching practice to write constructive back. They were explained about the nature of study. The supervisors provided their feedback on lesson planning, class control and discipline, managing transition period and use of various teaching techniques by prospective teachers on their lesson plans and observation sheets. Prospective teachers were to write their reflection about the impact of teachers’ comments on their teaching practice.

Sample of study

There were 15 students in B.Ed honours elementary 8th semester, session (2019-2023). Whole cluster was taken as a research sample. They were divided in three schools and one teacher was appointed as teaching practice supervisor for one school. So there were 3 supervisors and 15 students as sample of this study.

Data Collection

The Operational (or technical) action research is used like a spiral following a series of steps, such as “planning → acting → observing → reflecting” in this research. Constructive feedback is planned, Students decisions and implementation of decisions were recorded in form of reflections written by prospective teachers. Then these reflections were divided into themes for analysis.

Two types of data collection techniques were used to collect data. These were as followed;

Supervisors’ constructive feedback (comments)

The supervisors had to provide their constructive feedback on a checklist used by department of education Government college university, Faisalabad in order to evaluate their prospective teachers during teaching practice about lesson planning, class control and discipline, managing transition period and use of various teaching techniques by prospective teachers. Constructive feedback is given according to the Identify-Describe-Encourage-Action (IDEA) feedback model. The IDEA method has four steps; Identify, describe, encourage, and action.

Reflections

Prospective teachers had to write their reflections about the constructive feed and also mentioned about change in their strategies to cope with problems they were facing during teaching practice. The ERA cycle is used to write reflections by prospective teachers. It is most simple model of writing reflections containing three stages; Experience, Reflection, and Action (Jasper & Rosser, 2013).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through thematic analysis. Supervisors' constructive comments and prospective teachers' (PT) responses were collected, transcribed and analyzed in correspondence to each other under relevant themes.

Results

The following themes emerged as a result of thematic analysis:

Theme 1: Managing Transition period

It was observed by the supervisor that prospective teachers find it difficult to manage transition period and class lost its discipline during transition period.

Supervisor 3 indicated in her feedback for PT 2 and PT 5;

"I observed that you are always in class on time but students are undisciplined during this transition time and there is a lot of noise and mismanagement in class so you have to apply some strategies to manage transition period".

PT 2 and PT 5 reflected on constructive feedback by supervisor 3

In the words of PT 2;

My supervisor appreciates my regularity but she also mentioned my weakness in classroom management. After discussing the issue with supervisor and reading literature about managing classroom discipline I decided to present students of another class as role model (how to behave in class during transition period). Then asked students to tell me how to behave. I also ask students to set rules (punishment and reward) for disciplined and undisciplined students. It helped me a lot in controlling the situation.

PT5 wrote reflections after constructive feedback from supervisor;

My supervisor's good words and gestures encouraged me to work more sincerely to manage discipline problems during transition period. At the end of class, I gave some task for next day which students have to complete during transition period i.e. enlist your favorite toys, what you like most, make a drawing of your breakfast etc.

Theme 2 Use of board

Supervisor 1 observed some problems regarding use of board by prospective teachers in class and gave his feedback in following words;

You have prepared lesson very well you read it for students and also wrote meanings on board but you should also involve students in lesson reading and ask them about meanings

of words while you are writing on board so they could be involved actively in class even when your face is not towards them.

PT 7 reflected on feedback by supervisor 1 in these words;

Positive feedback from my supervisor encouraged me a lot in solving my problems during teaching practice. I began to write words on board and asked students about their meanings, sometime complete words, and complete sentences, recognize proper sentence etc". I was happy to realize that now I can manage board writing and classroom interaction simultaneously which was very difficult for me earlier.

PT 2 reflected on feedback by supervisor 1 in these words;

After getting feedback from my supervisor, I felt positive and thought about the ways how I could involve my students more in class even when I was using board. I started asking them to read aloud in chorus what I was writing, to summarize the written information in their own words or solve questions on board.

Theme 3: Use of Reinforcement

Supervisor 3 observed some issues regarding use of reinforcing comments (appreciation or depreciation) by prospective teachers for their students to shape their behavior and commented in these words;

You involved students in classroom activities but it is equally necessary to appreciate them when they provide a correct response and not to humiliate them when they are unable to respond or take long time to respond or provide a wrong answer.

PT 10 reflected over it;

After receiving encouraging comments from my supervisor, I felt that I should also appreciate my students so they could feel the same motivation level as I do. Then, I began to use the words in class like 'very good, excellent and keep it up' to increase students' positive behavior and 'you are good but.....,your point of view is ok but.....,etc. to decrease their negative behavior instead of humiliating them.

PT 11 provided his reflection on it;

"After supervisor's constructive comments, I planned to appreciate my students when they answer me in class, read lesson or solve some problem".

Theme 4: Lack of Guidance for Students

Supervisor 1 provided his feedback about class management of PT 15;

I noticed that you taught very well but when your students were writing, you kept on standing near board or in front of class. Your students needed you near them. Your proximity at the time of written class work matters a lot for them. You should conference with your students and guide them while they are writing. Think about what would you do overcome this limitation.

PT 15 responded in following words;

After my supervisor's positive feedback and guidance, I began to walk between rows in class as students remained busy in writing and problem solving. It was very helpful for me in controlling my class. Students also benefited from this proximity as they were guided about their faults well in time.

Theme 5 Time out strategy

Supervisor 2 gave her constructive feedback on timeout strategy in the following words;

I saw some students were standing out of your class. After asking them I came to know that they were absent yesterday. I appreciate your effort to regulate them but the strategy you are using is only wastage of absent students' time. So you should look for some other strategies to regulate them rather than time out.

PT1 reflected over it about her strategy after getting above said feedback;

During teaching practice, I observed that teachers in school used time out punishment for absent students. I also followed this practice but my supervisor guided me that it is not a punishment for them, rather it was an enjoyment and wastage of their time. So, instead of using time out strategy, I gave those students extra time to complete their work.

PT 13 reflected on it;

"After constructive feedback from my supervisor, I used peer group teaching strategy for absent students which affected them positively".

Theme 6: Classroom Rules

Supervisor 3 wrote her feedback in these words;

"I observed that you are usually repeating classroom rules verbally which is a good effort to make students follow rules but you should find some other way to make them remember and follow these rule".

PT 6 gave her reflections in following words;

"My supervisor appreciated me for my strategy but it was really difficult for me to repeat rules daily. So, I began to ask students revise rules as per need in class".

PT 4 wrote reflections about above stated feedback;

"After receiving response from my supervisor, I asked students to write a chart of rules and display it on a prominent place in class".

Theme 7: Attending Assembly

Supervisor 2 wrote her feedback for PT 10 and PT 12 in following words;

"Your cooperative teacher told me that you were a good teacher and obedient follower but rarely you attended assembly in school which is not good for you as discipline management is a necessary part of your training as teacher".

PT 10 reflected in following words;

"Instead of scolding me on coming late, my supervisor guided me about the benefits of attending assembly. This practice helped me in improving my student control".

PT 12 wrote her reflections;

"My supervisor's comment urged me to attend assembly and there I had to perform my duty in lining up students, maintain discipline, checking their uniforms etc. It helped me a lot in managing my problems and difficulties regarding discipline and management".

Conclusion and Discussion

The first objective of the study to explore the nature of constructive feedback given by supervisors to prospective teachers (comments by supervisors). The constructive feedback provided by supervisors was divided into following themes; Managing Transition period, Use of board, Appreciation, Time out strategy, guiding students, Classroom rules, Attending assembly. This constructive feedback was provided by supervisors on time. Supervisors addressed specific problem clearly and made prospective teachers to decide strategy to solve the problem. Supervisors addressed multiple problems in their feedback but common qualities of the feedback were encouragement, appreciation and confidence on prospective

teachers' abilities to solve different problems during teaching practice. Duffy K (2013) did a study about Provision of constructive feedback during students' mentoring. It revealed that constructive feedback should be specific and on time. Rathel, Drasgow, & Christle, (2008) also did a study to find out that how Supervisor Feedback improves Teachers' Positive Communication Behaviors. Results of the study revealed that there was in teachers' satisfaction and positive behavior after supervisor's constructive feedback which supported current research study.

The second objective of this study was to explore the nature of support, prospective teachers got from supervisor's feedback to solve classroom management problems (Reflections). This support could be explored from the reflections written by prospective teachers. In their written reflections prospective teachers mentioned that Supervisors appreciated their regularity punctuality, teaching strategies, use of board and had used good words and gestures for encouragement. Due to supervisors' positivity prospective teachers were able to adapt different strategies to solve problems faced by them during teaching practice. Among of those strategies were presenting other class as role model for discipline, use of punishment and reward, use of appreciation words for students, avoid humiliation of students, use of creative activities during transition period, peer group teaching for absent students and in time arrival at school to join school assembly.

Ahea, Ahea, Kabir, and Rahman (2016) tried to find out The Worth and Usefulness of Feedback to develop Students' Learning and Professionalism in Higher Education. **The result showed that proving feedback ultimately helped students in improving their learning experience so as my research indicated.** Aslam, Khan, and Oad did a study (2021) to find out effect of Constructive Feedback on Learning Motivation and Academic Achievement in Chemistry, was a qualitative study. The results of the study indicated that incorporation of constructive feedback in formative assessment daily have positive improvement in results.

Recommendations

Supervisor teachers may be provided training regarding how to provide constructive feedback and how it can prove to be effective in making prospective teachers more efficient, constructive and confident during their teaching practice session. In future this research should be conducted with different and larger sample for generalization.

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