



**SELF MONITORING – A STRATEGY FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT BY P.M. USHA RANI**

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**Abstract**

Teachers can evaluate their own performance by collecting information of their classroom teaching and classroom management. This is called self monitoring. It is intended for personal professional development. This is done through a systematic and objective collection of teaching behavior and this information is used for taking decision to introduce necessary changes for better teaching in future. Self monitoring is done to gain a better understanding of one's own teaching and one's own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. This self appraisal is necessary for teacher development.

**Introduction**

Change occurs in the field of education particularly in the domain of English Language Teaching whenever a new curriculum is framed or when new vision and mission statements are formulated in centres of learning or even when job profiles differ exerting changes in students' needs. If teachers wish their learners to achieve higher proficiency in their subjects and desire job satisfaction, they need to update their professional knowledge despite academic qualifications and pre- service training. Developing professional knowledge involves indulging in self reflection and evaluation, developing subject matter knowledge and skills of teaching, expanding knowledge base about research, teaching theories and principles , taking different roles and responsibilities like supervisor, mentor teacher, teacher researcher, or materials writer. (Richards and Thomas S.C.2005).



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Teacher development lies in identifying specific immediate and long term goals to achieve higher level of learning among students and get better results. Applied linguists cite eleven different approaches that promote professional development. They are workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, journal writing, and peer observation, teaching portfolios, analysis of critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching and action research.

### **Strategies for Teacher Development**

Teacher development is a long term goal and is aimed at facilitating a deeper understanding of teaching and of themselves as a teacher. The different goals of teacher development are :

- Understanding how the process of SL development occurs
- Understanding how our roles change according to the kind of learners we are teaching
- Understanding the kinds of decision making that occur during teaching
- Reviewing our own theories and principles of language teaching.
- Developing an understanding of different styles of teaching
- Determining learners' perception of classroom activities.

The conceptual framework of Teacher Development looks at teacher education as a package comprising the following approaches:

1. **Teacher learning as a skill.** According to this approach, teaching consists of mastering basic skills such as questioning, giving explanation and presenting new language for effective teaching.



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2. **Teaching learning as a cognitive process:** This approach views teaching as a complex cognitive process that draws upon teachers beliefs and thought process to take a decision suitable to a particular classroom practice. Processes include self monitoring, journal writing, and analysis of critical incidents.
3. **Teaching learning as a personal construction.** According to this belief learners internalize knowledge by actively reorganizing and reconstructing new experience into their personal framework (1988). In teacher education this approach focuses on teacher's self awareness through journal writing and self monitoring.
4. **Teacher learning as reflective practice:** This view of learning assumes that teacher's develop their skills by experience through focused reflection on the nature and meaning of classroom practice.

Thus reflective reviewing is seen as a teacher training and development strategy. Teacher Development can be better understood by making a comparison between novice and experienced teachers. According to Tsui 2003 some of the differences between fresh and experienced teachers seem to lie in “the different ways in which they relate to their contents of work and their conceptions and understanding of teaching...”

One of the yardsticks for measuring Teacher's efficiency and professionalism is by self appraisal. This consists of taking stock of the teacher's current knowledge, skills and attitudes and see how best it can be applied to better use for future teaching. In other words reflective reviewing is necessary. This is known as self monitoring. It is undertaken in order to have a better understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. This can be made by a systematic and objective collection of information and use this for making decisions for future planning.



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### **Vignette**

I am presently teaching oral communication skills to the first year students of Information Technology of B. Tech programme at B.S.Abdur Rahman University .The first step in preparation involved circulating a questionnaire to collect information regarding their personal profile like age, schooling background, medium of instruction , course completion marks in English language, their contact with English language in terms of activities like reading newspaper, watching films, writing letters or emails etc. Then I gave an orientation to the students on the methodology of making an oral presentation using a power point presentation. Thereafter they were made to view video clippings of oral presentation in the language laboratory. Before beginning the course, I motivated the students by highlighting the benefits of Oral communication- like getting selected in campus recruitment drives, climbing up the career ladder, taking up overseas jobs, being held in high esteem by colleagues etc. The actual classroom practice began with warm up activities like telling about me, indulging in conversation making. Then the presentation followed. It was for a time capsule of three minutes.The topics given for presentation was 1. Impact of mass media on youth 2. Advantages and Disadvantages of mobile phone use 3. Child labour. While the students made presentation, I prepared a lesson report.

### **Procedure for self monitoring:**

Writing lesson reports is the procedure adopted for self monitoring by me. While a lesson plan describes the plan of teaching, a lesson report describes what actually happened during the lesson. It is usually written after the class is over by jotting down as many details as I could recall. Observation on aspects like Articulation (audibility, pronunciation & pitch), Coherence ( organization and cohesion) and Logic(correlation of ideas in the argumentation). This is called a lesson report. While a lesson plan tells what the teacher sets out to do in class to teach a lesson , a lesson report tries to record what actually happened in class during a lesson . It is normally



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completed shortly after the lesson is completed and records as many observations as the teacher can make while the session is in progress. A lesson report serves as a document for reflective reviewing for taking decision regarding future planning. Out of the twenty students who made presentation only four spoke confidently and fluently. They had prepared well for the presentation. Some five students spoke but their talk was interspersed with grammatical errors like – can able to , discuss about , cope up with. more serious errors include discourse errors like

Omission of cohesive devices, wrong choice of reference words like “but”, “since”, “if”, “in spite of” etc. Coherent errors include lack of logical development of ideas, repetition of ideas, inappropriate use of vocabulary and so on. There were pronunciation errors also with regard to words like – company, litter, whoever etc. Vocabulary errors included dangerous for economical, radioactive for explosive, fatigue for fitness, banned for bannered .One student switched over to mother tongue in the middle. Majority of the students could not speak loudly because of stage fear. They stood facing the teacher rather than facing the class. Two students could not continue speaking and gave up in the middle asking for extra time for preparation as they could not recollect what was committed to memory due to nervousness. Three students were even reluctant to speak.

### **Reflection**

On reflecting upon the students’ presentation , I identified the following truths:

Most of the students did have the courage and confidence to speak to an audience.

The lack of confidence could be attributed to the reason that so far they had not been trained for classroom speaking. The deterring factors were lack of vocabulary, poor grammatical knowledge, shyness .



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### **Evaluation :**

As a teacher , I reflected upon

What aspects of presentation posed difficulty to students?

How many were able to deliver well?

How to help them overcome their difficulties?

I felt that the poor speakers had to be given more motivation. Students could be asked to come in private for some practice sessions before making classroom presentation. I could teach them some sentence structures and grammar. Vocabulary games could be conducted for developing the vocabulary.

### **Purpose and benefits of Self monitoring**

**An eye opener.** Teaching oral presentation skills has its own challenges. All students may not take to it well. The lesson report shed light on difficulties faced by students while actually making the presentation . This knowledge provides an insight on how to adapt the teaching for the next time to teach another batch of students.

**Identification of problems** As a result of the lesson report the teacher has identified the areas of difficulties the students face . The teacher can work out a new strategy to address it. It can also help teacher discuss with other colleagues to find out if the other students also have the similar difficulties and discuss together to arrive at a workable solution .

**Areas of improvement** :Teaching is an ongoing process that can be renewed and reworked with insights gained from the lesson reports. For instance, it was found that some students were not motivated well enough to take part. The teacher can think of different ways to motivate them .



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**Self Monitoring is teacher initiated rather than supervisor or coordinator initiated.**

**Conclusion**

Self monitoring is a good starting point for one's personal professional development as it helps in identifying the problem areas that require exploration and remedy. This can be attempted either individually by the teacher herself or by collaborating with colleagues. This information can be maintained as a teacher portfolio for future use.

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