An Exploratory Study on the Professional Development of High School Novice Teacher in Khulna Division in Bangladesh

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Abstract: *Novice teachers are those who work from the initial period of teaching profession up to 3-years. Moreover, for the sake of professional development Novice teachers should give more concentration on their teaching professions. In spite of having sound teaching capabilities they do not possess authentic pedagogical knowledge even they fail making effective lesson. The objectives of this study were to investigate Novice teachers' understanding regarding effective teaching and to explore the problems and challenges faced by Novice teachers. For this exploratory and qualitative pilot study one (01) High School novice teacher was requested for interview from Khulna Division, Bangladesh. The result discussed in three parts. The first part deals with the Effective teaching activity, second part with the process of conducting teaching and the third part with the problems and challenges experienced by the high school novice teachers for their professional development.*

Keywords: *Effective Lesson, Novice teacher, Pedagogical knowledge, professional development, Teaching Capabilities*

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite teaching profession is one of the most challenging, it is one of the most rewarding professions, too. Gathering ample experience and spending long period of time novice teachers can be rewarded. For processing expert teacher from inexperienced novice teacher 'time and effort' in teacher training programs are spent. For example, Scholars (Morine-Dershimer & Vallance, 1976; Peterson et. al., 1978; Zahorik, 1975) suggest that experienced teachers do not prepare written objectives and detailed lesson plans, and our experience in the schools supports these findings. Other researchers (Sardo, 1982; Cutcheon, 1982) found that only the least experienced teachers write lesson plans and many teachers prepare written lesson plans of any kind only because of administrator demands. Taylor (1970) found that novice teachers focus on assessment during the process of instructional planning.

In other words, it is clearly observed from the data on teacher retention that particularly, novice teachers are vulnerable. Approximately 33% of new teachers leave the profession within the first three years, and almost 50% leave within 5 years (Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). For the sake of profession, Novice teachers are to perform the similar duties as the expert teachers from the very beginning day of their teaching career; but other professionals gradually engaged themselves deeply into their professional responsibilities. For example, Nolan and Hoover (2007) state,

> "Novice lawyers are not expected to tackle the most difficult cases, and first – year engineers are seldom given responsibility for the most challenging project; they gradually work-up to assuming a full load. Teachers, on the contrary, are immersed into the totality of professional responsibilities from their very first day on the job. They typically have the same student loads and daily teaching responsibilities as their experienced counterparts" (P.226).

Although this is an unrealistic expectation, there is limited success in rectifying the situation without the support of colleagues and mentors who can help the novice teacher to identify the source of behavior management problems and to identify possible strategies (Robinson, 1998). Van Hover and Yeager (2004) state in their research of a beginning teacher that they suddenly faced with heavy workloads, multiple lesson preparations, typically the least desirable students, a limited supply of

resources (other teachers took everything from the last teacher or classroom of that certain day), little peer support, classroom management and behavior issues, poor support from administration, parent-student wants and needs, trial and error in developing their own procedures and routines, and a general realization that what they ideally thought they are going to be doing is quite a bit different from the reality of the classroom. Black (2004) states that the novice teacher has been placed the same demands upon them as an experienced teacher.

Bullough (1989) says, "Experienced teachers have a wealth of past experiences to rely on (not to mention handouts, work-sheets and tests), their workloads are reduced. Beginning teachers, in contrast, start from scratch, as attested to by the countless hours spent planning during student teaching and the first year on the job." "The major difference between inexperienced or novice teachers and 'expert' teachers is that expert teachers have high level pedagogical skills. Pedagogical expertise means that these teachers are able to:

- describe the explicit quality criteria of a task to students;

- make clear connections between students' prior knowledge and new knowledge;

- understand and practice scaffolding;

- reflect on their own learning;

- use questioning techniques effectively;

- use explicit instruction to teach the skills critical to all subject areas – reading, writing, language structure, note-taking, research, speaking, listening." and so on (Independent Schools Queensland briefings, volume 15 issue 3april, 2011).

New teachers often receive insufficient professional development, such as induction support during their initial year of teaching (Darling-Hammond, & Sclan, 1996). Beginning teachers do not possess any idea about creating effective teaching environment in their classroom even sometimes they forget to conduct as a teacher. As a consequence of difficulties that they experience as newcomers, beginning teachers abandon the classroom at high rates (Gold, 1996; Gordon &Maxey, 2000). Entering the teaching profession Novice teachers are to face many difficulties and challenges. To succeed during their induction into teaching, new teachers need support (Gold, 1996).

However, from the previous studies it is clearly observed that there are not many studies which were conducted on high school Novice Teachers' professional development. So, for high school Novice Teachers' professional development the present study intends to explore their understanding regarding effective teaching. Walls (1999) argued, "More effective teachers display a high level of enthusiasm that reflects their professional competence and confidence". This study also investigated their behavioral performance (pre, while and post) in conducting teaching.

1.1. Research Questions

- What do the High school Novice teachers' understand by effective teaching?

- How do they conduct their teaching (pre, while & post)?

- What problems and challenges do they face in their teaching profession?

1.2. Theoritical Framework

The 'Instructional Design Theory' by Merrill was used in this study. Instructional Design is defined as "a systematic process that is employed to develop education and training programs in a consisting and reliable fashion" (Resier, & Dempsey, 2007). There are three components which are essential to specify an instructional objective such as 'behavioral performance', 'conditions' under which this performance will be observed and 'criterions' for acceptable performance.
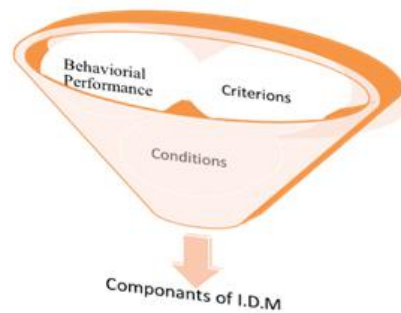
Figure1. *Instructional Design*

According to Merrill (2001) current instructional model suggests that the most effective learning environments are those that are problem-based and involve the student in the four distinct phases which are Activation of prior experience, Demonstration of skills, Application of Skills and Integration of these skills into real world activities. The literal meaning of the instructional design is a set of events that facilitate learning and it is an appropriate designing or planning for professional parlance. All teachers are to attend a class, to teach and to conduct some training sessions and so on. So, they sometime notice that some classes are well planned and some others are not so. For this reason the teachers should have knowledge about instructional design theory. The goal of instructional design theory is to make some plans and create situations which enhance learning opportunities of the individuals. "Instructional science provides the theoretical construct to the process of instruction" (Mukopadhyay, 2001). Briggs (1977) claimed, "Instructional Design is the entire process of analysis of learning needs and goals and the development of a delivery system to meet the needs".

Instructional design makes instruction and also the instructional material more engaging, effective and efficient. It is a pedagogic or teaching device. The paramount aim of instructional design is to optimize learning outcomes. In other words, learning theories are the background of any instructional design.

1.3. Conceptual Framework
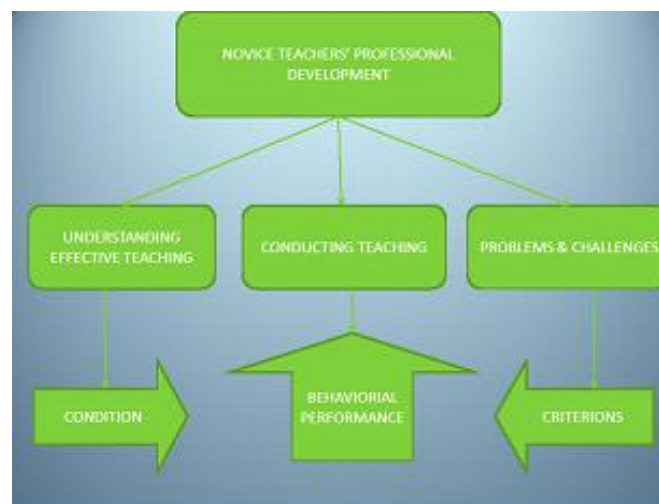
2. METHODOLOGY

It is an exploratory and qualitative study which provides a detailed description of how the study was conducted. The focus of qualitative research is on participants' perceptions and experiences, and the way they make sense of their lives (Fraenkel, & Wallen, 1990; Locke, 1987; Merriam, 1988). The research design was exploratory in nature and it was based on interview, and note-taking method. According to Barbie exploratory studies are performed for three purposes: (1) to satisfy the researchers' curiosities and desires to better understand a particular scenario, (2) to test the feasibility of undertaking more extensive study, and (3) to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study.

In order to investigate the questions which raised in the research questions the researcher conducted face to face interview. The interview questions were structured. In this regard, during the interview session, the researcher used Audio tape recorder for recording the response of the Novice teacher and henceforth, the responses were transcribed.

2.1. Interview

Interviewing is the most common form of data collection in qualitative studies in education. In other words, in qualitative research face to face is the most common form of interview by which one person draws out information from another. Both face to face and group interview can be defined as a conversation but a "conversation with a purpose" (Dexter, 1970, p.136). To find out the particular type of information, an interview approach is the paramount objective of research. The researcher wants to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind" (Patton, 1990: 278).

Again Patton (1990) claimed

"We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe, we cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intensions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people about those things. The purpose of interview then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 196).

This design was used in an attempt to focus on Professional Development of High School Novice teacher in Bangladesh. The respondent was interviewed by the researcher for approximately 44 minutes and the interview was recorded with the permission of the interviewee.

2.2. Participant of the Study

For this research study the researcher has selected one high school novice teacher of Khulna Division, Bangladesh as a participant. The respondent was male and he was approximately 35-years old. He obtained his M.A. degree (Masters of Arts in 'Quran and Sunnah') from Bangladesh and again he achieved another degree of MOM (Masters of Management) from IIUM (International Islamic University, Malaysia). Now he is teaching in a high school for 2-years and 3-months.

2.3. Data Analysis Procedures

At the time of data analysis the researcher transcribed in verbatim the taped interviews and the participant's taped diary. In order to validate the accuracy of the information the researcher made a data row for transcripts, field notes, images and so on. Then the researcher organized and prepared the collected data for analysis. After reading through all data the researcher coded the data by using computer "Express Dictate" Soft-ware. After that the researcher used the color coding process to generate categories or themes for data analysis. Then the researcher inter-related the themes and description for representing in the qualitative narrative. And at the final step of data analysis the researcher interpreted the meaning of themes and descriptions.

3. FINDINGS

In the findings part the researcher discussed the result of this study in three different aspects. These are:

3.1. Effective Teaching Activity

The respondent opined regarding effective teaching activity frankly. To his mind novice teachers' need to follow different types of strategies, techniques and policies and as teachers, they are to maintain many things for the sake of the students. As he said,

"We have to follow different strategies, different technique, different policy to achieve our profession. As a teacher we have to maintain many things for our students; because students are very cleaver". This finding is similar to this comment "More effective teachers utilize instructional strategies that engage students repeatedly throughout the entire lesson (Walls, 1999)".

Personally, he as an Islamic teacher always tries to teach the students Islamic knowledge and so on. "….. First of all … as a Islamic school.. I try to teach my student from the sense of … Islam, good akhlak". According to Walls (1999) when a teacher tells, shows and makes the message available from alternate perspectives to alternate senses, that teacher is engaged in effective instructional practice.

3.2. The Process of Conducting Teaching

The interviewee discussed about effective learning, he told that before starting the teaching he asked to the students many questions and again he mentioned that at first he created question in his students' mind and after that he asked them if they could assume the answers or not and at last he provided the authentic answer. In the following narrative he described,

 "Before teaching.. I ask them many question". "First I create question in their mind.. then I ask them ok this kind of question, can you answer? No so, can I answer to you"? Students are asked to think and talk about their own learning and encouraged by their teachers to describe the conditions under which they believe they learn most effectively (Chamot, 1993). This standard reflects the clear research evidence that the teaching of complex thinking that involves students in challenging tasks is a principle for effective instruction (Bruer, 1993).

Moreover, regarding 'the process of conducting Teaching' he indicated many points like making decision for subject choice "….. In my class … I decide my decision according to my lesson, my chapter", Teacher's Observation "Firstly … after my lesson … I observe them .. what is their feelings about my lesson when I am teaching them". "… I observe their eye-contact. Are they with me or not or their concentration outside." Students' concentration "They were concentrate, they are very careful, they are good listener and they are very good listener in my class. I am happy with them." Lesson plan ".. We have our fixed lesson plan." "Our rules within six months what we are going to teach every day, every class we have to submit". Applying teaching capacity "I always maintain medium, and liberal", "I always try ... to think [generally]", "And I always try to .. focus those student average or less than average their situation", "I repeat two, three, four times because of poor student. So, I know in this moment no need to focus good student. Good student they automatically… can learn can catch because of many time repeating. But when I repeat two or three times than poor students can [understand].", "I want to encourage their strength and their mind".

Again he emphasized on the Communication with the students "normally my communication individually with all student. Every student they know I love them. I love each other. They know I love each one more than other. I love one more than other, I love one more than other; they know individually. This is my policy, I create in my class." and providing Teaching materials & advice to improve students' learning "I encourage them and I give them policy. I give them materials, I give them points, some from books, some from my experience, some from other books. Even sometime I tell them to go YouTube and find out these lovela". These beliefs operate as a key factor in a generative system of human competence (Bandura, 1997), leading to the assumption that they are powerful influences on the overall teachers' effectiveness with students. So, for conducting teaching "many of these opinions are focused on what the discipline believes classroom teachers should know and use, rather than what knowledge and skills classroom teachers will need (DeGraffenreid, Kretchmar, Jeanneret & Morita, 2004; Jeanneret, 1997)".

3.3. Challenges in Teaching Profession & Teacher's Confidence in Overcoming the Challenge

The analysis of the interview data and field-note indicate that the respondent perceives teaching profession is not so easy rather it is quite challenging; because students are very lazy, they would like to learn in a very relaxing mood, they are reluctant to read from the books even they appeal to the teacher to read so that they can listen and it is their belief that after hearing they will be able to remember the lesson. So, "The challenges of the first year of teaching are notoriously difficult for novice teachers" (Dollase, 1992; Kane, 1991; Megay-Nespoli, 1993; Ryan, 1992; Sachar, 1991). On the other hand, from the view of my respondent as most of the students come from the rich and sophisticated family so sometimes it becomes so difficult as well as tough to rebuke them and to give more pressure on them regarding their studies; and he also thinks that sometimes teachers' are to endure their haughtiness, their misconduct and so on. From the following description his remark is vividly observed:

"It's quite challenging, it's not easy … why? Because students are very lazy. Most of them come from very rich family". "And most of them they don't want to read. Most of them they always want to learn in relaxing way. They don't want to read from the book. They request Ustaz to read, just we will listen." "We just want to listen from your mouth, and then we will remember, we will learn."

Moreover, he has a stronger desire to overcome these challenges. Accordingly, he feels more confidence and competence in his teaching profession. Again, his belief creates a greater motivation and higher levels of confidence towards his profession. As he says,

> "As Islamic subject with me they never cheat. I am very, very sure because my speech delivery with them is something spiritual." "Because my student number one, my students trust me too much. Number two my students believe me, respect me and my students know I have very good experience, very good knowledge." "They believe it. And my student they really learn many things. It is their comments. So, when they comment Alhamdulillah! We learn many things from the Ustaz meaning Alhamdulillah! I am success. Why? Because student, they learn many things. "So, in this way I overcome."

4. INTERPRETATION & CONCLUSION

This study examined novice teachers' effective teaching activity, the procedures of conducting teaching and the challenges faced by them as well as their expectations to overcome the challenges for their professional development. Among these findings, the novice teacher of this study has given more emphasis on the teachers' observation to the students during class time, having good lesson plan, implementing an excellent teaching activity, good communication with the students and essential teaching aids provided by the authority.

Some encouraging findings have been explored by which novice teachers' may get more confidence in their teaching career and they may be more careful towards their students who are the paramount focus for their professional development. Therefore, it can be said that the high school novice teachers tend to comprehend their teaching process in a constructivist manner. On the other hand, for professional development and to cope with the present challenges they are very practical and realistic.

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