The Development and Construction of Teacher Professional Identity: A Case Study on Beliefs towards Teaching

Öğretmenlik Meslek Kimliğinin Gelişimi ve Oluşumu: Öğretme ile İlgili Düşüncelere Ait Bir Vaka Çalışması

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to attain a more detailed understanding of teacher professional identity in general in order to enhance the ways in which teacher education programs are conceived. The paper reports on a three-year longitudinal case study on the professional identity change of one Turkish EFL teacher in the last two years of her university education and the first year of teaching in a primary school in Turkey. The significance of this study is that it examines the process of the combination of teacher identity over the period immediately before and after entering full time teaching. This study analyses teacher professional identity as an undergoing process and the findings show that reflecting on one's own teacher identity develops the consciousness which promotes the concept and strengthens the process of identity development.

Keywords: Teacher professional identity, teacher training, identity, professional identity development.

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı genel olarak öğretmen mesleki kimliği hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinerek öğretmen yetiştiren programların geliştirlmesidir. Makale, bir İngilizce öğretmen adayının üniversitedeki son iki yılı ve Türkiye'de bir ilk öğretim okulunda geçen meslek hayatındaki ilk yılını kapsayan toplam 3 yıllık boylamsal vaka çalışmasının sonuçlarını raporlamaktadır. Çalışmanın önemi, öğretmen kimliği gelişim sürecini öğretmen adayının tam zamanlı çalışma öncesi ve sonrası dönemini kapsamasıdır. Bu çalışma öğretmen mesleki kimliğini gelişmeye devam eden bir süreç olarak ele almaktadır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre öğretmen adayının kendi mesleki kimlik gelişim sürecine odaklanması bu süreci güçlendirmekle kalmayıp adayda bu konuda bir bilinç gelişmesine katkı sağlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen mesleki kimliği, öğretmen yetiştirme, kimlik, mesleki kimlik gelişimi.

1. Introduction

The concept of "teacher professional identity" is used to refer to the way teachers define themselves, considering their professional duties and especially the relation of these duties to education and teaching. In social contexts, it is believed that teachers have been entrusted.

Teachers are entrusted with the task of education in social contexts, and on the basis of this essential task they construct and reconstruct their identities over time. To a large extent, identity has to do with meanings that individuals make about themselves and with the meanings that others make about them (Beijard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000). Therefore, identity is a co-construction involving one teacher and other significant agents or teachers as well as the broader society to which they belong.

Most studies in this area (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2006; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2009) reveal the importance of addressing the concept of identity in the process of teacher education as a component. Wiggins and McTighe (2007, p. 128) go further, and claim that "some teachers, in good faith, act on an inaccurate understanding of the role of

"teacher" because they imitate what they experienced, and their supervisors rarely make clear that the job is to cause understanding, not merely to march through the curriculum and hope that some content will stick". This emphasizes the need to focus on the non-stable character of the teacher identity during teacher training. While much has been said and written about teacher professional identity and the effects of this on teachers' practice, much less attention has been devoted to the on-going processes of identity formation of teacher trainees. This study is an attempt to investigate the adjustments in the development of teacher identity over a three-year period. The study is expected to provide insight into the formation of teacher identity at this important phase. It is possible to say that the core of the study is how our teacher trainee "formed" her teacher identity and therefore "turned" into a teacher.

1.1. Teacher identity development

In order to understand the growing literature on teacher identity, I noted that identity in teaching has been studied in relation to a variety of factors including: emotions (Zembylas, 2003); the identity of a specific nationality such as Norway, China and the Netherlands (Soreide, 2007; Xu, 2013; Swennen, Volman & van Essen, 2008); implications for teacher education (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Abednia, 2012); the personal and professional selves of teachers (Day, Kington, Stobart & Sammons, 2006; Timostsuk & Ugaste, 2010; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013); and the role of reflection on teacher identity (Walkington, 2005) among many others. The very common characteristic of all the papers mentioned is the definition of teacher professional identity, which can be summarized as how teachers define their professional roles.

According to Pennington (2002), it is possible to study teacher identity in two different orientations. In terms of social psychology, teacher identity examines perspectives on teachers' *social identity* while the second focuses more on teacher education literature, and provides perspectives on teachers' *professional identity,* both of which can serve as a basis for studying teacher identity. According to Sachs (2005) professional teacher identity is:

"Teacher professional identity then stands at the core of the teaching profession. It provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience." (p. 15).

The elements of professional identity listed as "how to be, act" and "understand", compose not only the occupational but also the personal identity of teachers. In this sense, for Lasky (2005), teacher professional identity is all about how teachers understand and define themselves and how they present themselves to others.

So far, in our discussion of professional teacher identity, we stated that this is a process which almost all scholars believe starts during teacher education and continues to evolve. However, Lopes & Tormenta (2010) discuss that professional identity starts to develop before pre-service training and continues to be shaped during pre-service training and throughout the professional life. Therefore, Lopes & Tormenta say that "it is this identity that will be transformed during pre-service training, giving rise to the "basic professional identity", the identity of the teacher after completing the training. It is this basic identity which will be put to the test in the work contexts, at the beginning and throughout the professional career, giving rise to, at each stage of that career, the "current identity" of the teacher." (p. 2).

2. Method

2.1. Participant and Study Context

The current teacher training system was put in place by government regulations in 1973, and restructured in 1982 and 1997. In 1973, universities started to train teachers rather than high schools and in 1982, only universities become liable to train teachers, in 1997, the structure and the programs of teacher education were reregulated (Yüksel, 2012) and in 2006-2007 faculty of education programs have been restructured.

At present, faculties of education train school teachers for all levels: pre-school, elementary school, and secondary/high schools. All graduates have the opportunity to work for the Ministry of Education, as teachers or inspectors, or teacher in private schools. However, in Turkey, there is an alternative way to become a teacher. Graduates of faculties of Arts and Sciences, majoring in one discipline (Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Literature, etc.) are allowed to attend some pedagogical courses and complete their teaching certificates (Altan, 1998).

In 2006, there were 77 (53 public and 24 private) universities in Turkey. Of these, 50 (five private and 45 public) universities had faculties of education, most of which offered dual (both regular and evening) programs. Today, these numbers have almost doubled. After 1998, Higher Education Council standardized the curriculum for all education faculties in Turkey (Deniz & Sahin, 2006).

Teachers in Turkey deal with a lot of problems, some of which can be listed as: low income and therefore low status, heavy workload and lack of professional development opportunities. These have resulted in a sharp decrease in the attractiveness of the teaching profession, and day by day less and less number of young people choosing Education Faculties and teaching as a profession.

Esra (pseudonym), our participant, was not among those students for whom the profession of teaching had lost its attractiveness; in fact, she had the motivation not only to become an English Language teacher, but also participate in this long-term descriptive research project. One of the sixteen third year English Language Department students at this large Turkish state university, she alone agreed to keep a Reflective Journal and be involved with lesson observations over the three-year period.

Esra is a graduate of a teacher training high school, and achieved high grades in the university entrance exam. Both her mother and father are high school graduates and her father is a businessman and her mother is a housewife. She has got one sister. Esra originally comes from a city in mid-Anatolia, to which she returned after university to work as an English language teacher. Born on 19-05-1990, she was 19 when we started in 2009, at the end of her second year in university. The study officially started in 2010-2011 academic year, when Esra was a Fall semester third year student at Education Faculty, English Language Department, which was a four-year full-time program aiming to provide graduates with an in-depth knowledge of English language methodology, practicum, and culture.

2.2. Research Questions

The two research questions of the study are: (1) How did Esra's professional teacher identity evolve in three years' time? (2) How did Esra's pedagogical beliefs change over the three years' time? To explore these questions, it was necessary to investigate the beliefs and the identity change through a series of observations and interviews. The interviews were conducted using a social-constructivist approach in which both the researcher and the participants together construct a meaning (Cowie, 2010).

2.3. Instruments

The reflective journal used for the study was based on the formula D-I-E-P (Describe-Interpret-Evaluate-Plan). The idea was to use the same form for the observation of other and the observation of the self. No matter whose course was being observed two parties (Esra and myself), were using the same instrument and in our entries, we attempted to describe objectively what happened, what we saw and heard, then evaluate the effectiveness of what we observed and how this information will be useful to us.

In addition, in each year of the study, a semi structured interview was conducted, asking the same questions about her beliefs and understanding of teaching to identify the possible changes in her teacher identity (See Appendix B). The first two of the interviews were conducted face-to-face; however, the third was conducted online.

2.4. Procedures

Data were collected over a period of 3 years. Esra and I initially met on Saturday, February 26, 2009 when we got to know each other, and she was introduced to the study. Since it was already towards the end of the Fall semester and she was a second-year student, it was decided to use the second semester (Spring 2009-2010) for training. Therefore, Esra was first introduced the idea of reflection and how to keep reflective journals (See Appendix A) and the journal dairies kept this semester were not included in the study as they were for training purposes. The real data collection began in the Fall semester, 2011. I observed Esra teaching in kindergarten for one hour every week. After each lesson, we compared our reflections in a follow-up session and in the same semester Esra began to observe my own classes at university.

In 2011-2012, Esra, as a fourth-year student, was teaching at a primary school for her Practicum class and the same process was followed; we continued to observe each other and keep journals. The only time when we were not able to observe each other was the following year, 2012-2013, when Esra graduated and started to teach as an English Language teacher in her home city. At that time, she continued to keep her own journals but instead of every week she was only able to send them once or twice a month.

2.5 Data Analysis

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the shaping of teacher identity in a student teacher's career through reflective journals over time. In the literature, vertical investigation is recommended for analysis of single

case studies in-depth, especially when exploring the identity development of a case over the duration of her program (Anspal, Eisenschmidt and Löfstörm, 2012). For the study in hand, it was decided to use each research question as a category to analyze and report on changes in the participant's teacher identity. As Yaylı (2012) explains, the data were thoroughly read and coded in meanings relevant to the research questions. Then, the data was reanalyzed to select extracts which represent the main themes (p.66). The themes decided on for the study in hand were as follows: meaning of teaching, beliefs about teaching, and components of a good lesson.

An inductive approach to data analysis was used (Creswell, 2008), that is, the researcher attempted to comprehend the situation without "imposing preexisting expectations on the phenomenon or setting under study" (Patton, 1990, p. 44). The researcher coded the data and then searched for relationships and recurring patterns so as to determine categories. The next stage was to compare the categories that emerged from each data source. Finally, each category was checked for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity to ensure that each category was internally consistent and different from the others (see Guba, 1978). The results are presented in a descriptive narrative form. Data analysis began as soon as the first diary entry was received, and were analyzed on an on-going basis as suggested by the literature (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

3. Results

Results are divided into two broad categories. The first part discusses Esra's beliefs about teaching under two headings: meaning of teaching and components of a good lesson. The second part discusses her views on her identity as a teacher. Her changing beliefs and her answers to the same questions in years 2011, 2012 and 2013 are given to present how the idea of the professional identity seems to be stated in her words in her different replies to the same questions three years later.

3.1. Beliefs about teaching

It is considered that beliefs about teaching are generally shaped by the teacher background, i.e. professional training, experience, etc. Therefore, Esra's initial beliefs about teaching can be used to determine the degree to which her beliefs change over the three years of the study. I was mainly concerned with pedagogical beliefs, i.e. about the nature of teaching and learning. She was asked her opinion on the following issues:
1. What is education and who is it for?
2. Who am I teaching?
3. What should we be teaching?
4. Who teaches?

Esra's belief on the definition and the scope of teaching has not changed in three years. In her answers, she mentions the importance of education and that she believes that it is for all. She always associates education with schools and classrooms in her definitions, which in a sense emphasize her formal perspective on education. Another aspect, mentioned in the final interview, is the dynamism of education. Esra emphasizes that education is dynamic and it changes with time.

When asked to describe whom she was teaching, her answers changed over time. Her view in the first two interviews are summed up in this word for word quotation "… the one who wants to learn something and I am teaching the person needing learning." In her final interview; however, she makes no such distinction between those who want to learn and those who do not, stating:

> *"In fact, I am teaching to the whole class in education process but it is impossible for a teacher to teach all the students, because there cannot be a strict rule that every teacher must teach to every student in the class. According to their abilities, interests and intelligence; students can learn and teachers can teach."*

One very common theme throughout three years was that teaching should be shaped according to the needs of the learners. Whether a trainee teacher or a practicing teacher, this view did not change. In all her interviews she mentions the importance of tailoring teaching to her students' needs.

The reason for teaching was another aspect of the interviews. Many times, in different ways Esra emphasizes the important role of teaching, saying that "*Teaching is not an option but a must. Throughout the world, everyone needs to be taught. For this reason, some people teach and the others learn. This is the exact way to define 'teaching'*"

When asked to define who teaches, Esra defines a teacher first as "*The person who is equipped with the necessary qualifications and knowledge about the topic that will be taught must teach. If the person doesn't know what she/he will teach, it is impossible to teach.*" Over the years, the definition changes so that ability becomes more important than knowledge.

> *"Some specific people can teach and the rest do not have enough ability to do this job. Teaching is a magic and only a magician can use it, not the others. This person must have enough quality to understand the students' needs and their attitudes towards learning."*

3.2. Meaning of teaching

Esra's early understanding of teaching was shaped by the idea of mothering, which was probably due to her first teaching experience in a kindergarten. The theme "teaching is mothering" is frequently repeated in her interviews and diaries.

> *"I realized that being a teacher is not just teaching and then watching them. It is exactly the same as being a mother. I don't know how it feels, I am not a mother, but what I feel is the same with what I see when I look at my mother's eyes. To love someone so much, to feel proud when they say a word in English, and to always think about them just to teach them something more and for their good. I guess this is love. Teaching for me is not just teaching, it is much more than that" (26, Feb. 2011).*

In most cultures, education is seen and perceived most as an occupation for females which might be because of mothering. Forde (2013) states that "The teacher-learner relationship is conflated with that of mother and child in the formation of the next generation of citizens. However, although this image of 'teacher as mother' is rich in possibilities, there are significant implications for both women and men as educators." (p. 1)

Even after a year, when she was teaching to a different group of students (8th grade), the meaning of teaching did not change a lot for Esra.

> *"Teaching has now turned into an ideology in my life and keeps making me feel special every day. It is not just tutoring, it is labour. Teaching is more than an occupation and unfortunately, not something that all human beings can experience. It is a privilege. It is more like mothering; somebody who does not actually belong to you, is yours. They are all attached to you. You are somehow holy for them."*

However, two years after her first interview, Esra was much less insistent on the role of mothering, instead showing a more professional understanding of the meaning of teaching, expressed in the following extract from an interview on 01, July 2013:

> *"Before teaching was a privilege for me or I thought teachers were privileged. It was above everything. Now, I feel happy to choose this job, it is the one that suits me the best. But at the same time, I have concerns as well, I think about my students. I now know that teaching is not just book learning, encouraging them to explore themselves and to find out their own abilities is much more important."*

The meaning of teaching for her seems to shift from a totally romantic and emotional aspect to a more professional one within two years. This can be seen in her acknowledgment of the importance of imparting knowledge through personal experiences and her interest in the learning process, and in particular, the content, reason and methods of teaching. Encouraging students has become another concern.

3.3. Components of a good lesson

When asked about the components of a good lesson, her beliefs remained unchanged over time. This has implications for her beliefs regarding lesson objectives. When, as a trainee teacher, she was asked about objectives, methods, assessment criteria and evaluation of her own lesson, her objective was to "give a perfect lesson". That for her meant to be able to teach the lesson "in an entertaining way".

> *"My activities must be done in fun because I believe that if my students get bored, they won't be relaxed and they will not come to the class eagerly. My objective is to make them feel that they learn this lesson of their own free will not obligation."*

Among her other objectives, Esra lists "avoiding difficulty in time management", "to control the class", and "to make the students contribute the lesson". Two years later, however, Esra's concern shifted from classroom management to the learners in terms of objectives and the concept of "awareness" seems to have become a key factor.

> *"Before I start to teach, I always make a plan in my mind and say by the end of this lesson, every student in my class will know what they will be able to do after they have finished. This is my first aim because I am sure that no student can learn unless they understand the purpose of what they are learning. I believe that if they are not aware of the learning, they cannot learn. Firstly, they will know, and then they will learn. To me, making students aware of what they are learning is the first thing."*

When she was asked about the methods to be used, her first replies were rather abstract or a little bit bookish, stating the theory of language, theory of learning, activity types, teacher and student roles. It was as if she was

practicing for the written exam of an approaches and methods in a language teaching course. Her utterances were theoretically correct but lacked the element of experience, and maybe therefore were not very meaningful.

Esra was then asked about how she would evaluate her own lesson in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Before she was trained on reflective practices, she believed that the evaluation reports she receives from the students would help her to evaluate her own teaching. However, after the short reflection courses she received from the researcher, her perspective changed significantly.

> "*In my opinion, my lessons do not reach the point that I want. I use all kinds of material, and the most important point is that, I am an optimistic and cheerful teacher. But sometimes I realize that I cannot manage to do all the things that I really want to. Maybe, it is because I use a lot of audio and visuals. Listenings or films or videos. Maybe I need to think about this again.*"

As can be understood from this extract, Esra has started to reflect upon her own teaching and comment on it independent of the evaluation results from students. Another sign of progress is revealed in a journal entry, which states "*I learned that if a student does not want to learn, you cannot teach anything to her/him. So, from now on, I will make them love my lesson then I am going to teach. Every kind of experience has an effect on my teaching and learning progress; I am so glad to know that I am changing and keep on learning*".

3.4 Views on her identity as a teacher

Esra's changing beliefs on the actual definition of a teacher is a good example of one of the most important aspects of identity: "the self, never completed" (Zembylas, 2003, p.113). The idea is because the process of identity is never completed and therefore, to know yourself is basically to not to know yourself, because as humans we are always in the making. For example, before Esra started teaching- in the first year of the study- it was knowledge itself that was important for her as a teacher. After experiencing it, she turned to ability. Her definition of a good teacher was no longer subject matter but the ability to be able to transfer knowledge to the students. When I asked Esra "Who is teacher Esra? Have you ever thought about yourself teaching?" her answers were different each year, in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

2011 (teacher trainee- third year student- teaching in a kindergarten)

Actually, I have thought of myself teaching in the classroom a lot. This was the reason why I chose this department to study. There were times that I was not sure but it did not change. My all desire is to become a good, successful teacher who is loved by her students. It has always been nice to dream about young kids listening to you in a classroom. But when it is "teacher Esra" then I stop for a while and try to find her a place in my life. There is somebody struggling to become a good teacher somewhere inside. Maybe I feel so because I haven't taught yet. But I know Esra very well and as far as I know her, I am hundred percent sure that in her first class she will say "Thank God, I've become a teacher".

2012 (teacher trainee-fourth year student-teaching at a primary school for her Practicum class)

More than thinking about myself as a teacher, I see myself teaching. I know I am not a real teacher yet, but still being at a school with other teachers in the teachers' room is unbelievable. This makes me closer to the "teacher Esra" image in my head. Actually, it is all about embracing your role as a teacher. I think, Esra embraces her role very strongly, and therefore loves whatever she does as a teacher. I guess, teaching suits Esra a lot. The more she trusts herself as a teacher, the more she likes herself and her teaching. She knows her role in the classroom very well and even though she is not a professional actress she is doing whatever she can. Most of the time she feels like a character on the stage who is given the leading role in a play.

2013 (practicing teacher- teaching at a primary school)

Before I started teaching, I was thinking of myself as a teacher a lot, and I have done it. I have been teaching for a year and it is a fascinating feeling. I feel like Hera (from Greek mythology; the wife of Zeus. Her chief function was as the goddess of women). I feel strong and beautiful. It might be the worst school on earth, I don't care, I would continue to do my job because teacher Esra loves her job. Teaching has brought many sides of her to light, things she did not know to exist before. She is now discovering herself as well and feels really happy about that. To me, the best side of being a teacher is to feel as you are in love all the time. Always happy, energetic, and like living life to the fullest.

Reading Esra's early comments in 2011, although she is motivated by the idea of being a teacher, she is talking about something which is unknown, of which she has no experience. However, over time her perception of her occupation develops through experience and becomes more concrete. Now, it is something felt and experienced, and therefore more meaningful.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

I spent three years monitoring Esra's progress on the way to becoming a teacher, and had the opportunity to observe her teacher identity shifting as she moved from a trainee to a teacher. During that period, the focus of discussion, observation and reflection was the meaning of teaching, her beliefs about teaching and her views on the components of a good lesson.

Considered as the backbones of the education system that they are a part of, greater consciousness of teacher identity will allow teachers to answer questions such as "Who am I?" and "Why am I doing what I am doing?". Bullough & Gitlin (2001) state that to answer these questions, teachers should be aware of themselves and where they stand. Therefore, a focus on "self" is essential in teacher education in the sense that it is accepted that self-knowledge has a profound effect on teacher trainees learning, however, it shapes their identity as a teacher, attitudes to teaching and reactions to the context that they are teaching (Bullough & Gitlin, 2001, p. 45). Professional identity inevitably starts to form during the practicum for the pre-service teacher, but rather than leaving this to chance, it is important to encourage the process of development through supportive contexts.

Alsup (2005) believes that the formation of a professional teacher identity is crucial in becoming an effective teacher, therefore teacher trainees should be trained with a teacher education program that helps them to develop a satisfactory professional identity. For this, teacher educators "must bring issues of identity into the methods class and must talk to pre-service teachers about the difficulty of professional identity development" (Alsup, 2005, p. 7). However, as was once stated by Esra, there is insufficient focus on reflection in teacher training contexts in Turkey. This might be because the development of a professional identity is perhaps seen as a by-product of teacher education programs, rather than a targeted outcome (Cattley, 2007).

It was possible to see the development of a professional identity in Esra after she started teaching. The missing aspect of her identity started to appear after teaching for a semester. In her final interview, she said "I now feel myself more like a teacher. Yes, yes definitely this is how I feel. Now I feel I have the right to call myself '*a teacher*'. Different from my years as a teacher trainee, with a trust in myself, I now can call myself a real teacher".

Esra was lucky, because throughout the three years, she had the opportunity to discuss about her professional identity. Unfortunately, not all teacher trainees have this opportunity to consciously study how a teacher trainee's self-image and professional identity developed and reshaped by beliefs. This is important in the sense that now Esra can analyse the reasons behind her actions, and therefore take a more professional approach for her professional development. In this light, I believe that teacher trainees should be provided contexts where they can question themselves, describe and consider themselves as future teachers, reanalyze their beliefs, and thus have the chance to work on their professional identity again and again.

Williams and Burden (1997, p.56) report "a growing body of evidence to indicate that teachers are highly influenced by their beliefs, which in turn are closely linked to their values, to their views of the world and to their conceptions of their place within it."

To sum up, it is a very clear result that Esra's professional identity was formed and re-formed over the years. It is almost certain that this process will continue throughout the course of her career. Is there an end to that? No, Esra will continue to change as a teacher.

5. Limitations of the study

It should be emphasized again that this was a small case study with only one participant. As a result, as a researcher I cannot make any generalizations for any other teacher trainees in different contexts. Further studies with larger samples in different contexts might provide more valid and reliable results. Another limitation of the study might be the data collection method. All the data were collected by reflective reports and responses to the interview questions given by Esra. For future studies, other qualitative data collection methods can be suggested.

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Appendix 1: Reflective Journal Help

The following are helpful formulas for reflective journal writing.

Formula D-I-E-P

D – Describe objectively what happened
   • Answer the question, "What did I do, read, see, hear etc?"

I – Interpret the events
   • Explain what you saw and heard;
   • Your new insights;
   • Your connections with other learning, your feelings etc;
   • Your hypotheses; your conclusions
   • Answer the question what might this mean?

E – Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of what was observed
   • Make judgements clearly connected to observations made.

Evaluation answers the question, "What is my opinion about what I observed or experienced? Why?
P – Plan how this information will be useful to you
   • What are your recommendations? (Be concrete)

Consider: In what ways might this learning experience serve my in my future?

Formula … D–I–E–P

The following is a writing formula for reflective journal entries

D – Describe objectively what happened –
Answer the question, "What did I see and hear?"

I – Interpret the events – explain what you saw and heard. (Your new insights; your connections with other learning; your feelings; your hypotheses; your conclusions.)

Answer the question, "What might it mean?" or "What was the reason I did this activity?"

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E – Evaluate the effectiveness of what you observed/learned – make judgments clearly connected to observations made.

Evaluation answers the question, "What is my opinion about what I observed or experienced? Why?"

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P- Plan how this information will be useful to you.

What are your recommendations? (Be concrete.) Consider in what ways might this learning experience serve me in my future?

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In your entries attempt to:

_ analyse your own performance as a learner;

_ evaluate your gains in understanding and completing the tasks;

_ verbalise how you feel about your learning;

_ make connections with other experiences, ideas;

_ demonstrate transfer of learning;

_ integrate the concepts taught in courses.

Appendix 2:

Beliefs
1. What is education and who is it for?
2. Who am I teaching?
3. What should we be teaching?
4. Why teach?
5. Who teaches?

Classroom Reflections
The following sets of questions can help you think about the atmosphere and design of your classroom.
1. How do I want students to interact in the classroom?
2. In what ways is it important for students to interact with the community in which they live?
3. What resources should be available to my students?
4. How can I use the wall space in my classroom to further active learning?

Understanding of Teaching
1. Is there a difference as a teacher (in terms of field knowledge, classroom management, relation with students, etc.) between last year and this year?

2.   Did your teaching and learning concepts change? Since you have started teaching, have you had beliefs such as "I think, students learn best by......" which changed after you started teaching. Do you now know more/or different things about teaching and learning?

3.   How was your teacher identity affected by your experiences at school? Do you now feel more like a teacher?