Professional Reflections

"En Route to Teaching: My Professional Reflection"

Phatcharin Buasin

Faculty of Education, Rangsit University

This is my personal reflection for a graduate course, EDS 605-Education Philosophy and Science Curriculum Development. The topic that I often reflected on while doing this course was "How can I be a good teacher?" I consulted literature in the field and found a number of definitions for 'a good teacher'. Ramsden (1992 cited in Casero Martínez, 2016), a well-known educator, says:

> "Skilled teachers should have a wide variety of specific teaching skills. Do not forget that their goals are to assist students in the learning process, to listen and learn from their students, to assess their own teaching activities on an ongoing basis, to believe that teaching means facilitating learning, to teach with enthusiasm, to show a concern and respect for students, to be easily understandable to students, to promote learner autonomy, to use methods that foster active, cooperative learning on the part of students, to give good quality feedback to students on their work, to teach the key concepts of their subject and not to overload students with work."

Based on Ramsden (1992), teachers are expected to **'know**', '**do**' and '**be**' so many things at the same time. Soon after I get my degree in teaching science from my programme, I will become a teacher at a school assigned to me and I hope that I can serve my students to the best of my ability.

I used to believe that a good teacher must know how to teach very well but I know now that there are other significant skills. The truth is that teachers are now expected to also be researchers. Previously, teaching a class and researching were two separate entities. Teaching was done by ones called teachers, while researching was done by well-groomed researchers, who were not teachers. These two groups of people entered the classroom with different eyes, one looking for ways to teach and the other searching for their research data. However, the trend was changing: the teacher must also be interested in problems in the classrooms. They must be continuously searching for how to help their students learn. I have read a book entitled "*Finnish Lessons 2.0: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?*" (Sahlberg, 2016) and am impressed with the concept of research-based teacher education (Ibid, 238-239). I understand that it means besides acting as someone who provides students with knowledge, the teacher should in fact solve the problems that arise from teaching. The teacher must train himself or herself to be visionary, observant and able to analyze and synthesize all the data perceived to derive at the most suitable way for students' most effective learning.

Another point that I would like to raise is the importance of 'curriculum'. Teachers are expected to be well-versed in the subject areas they teach, but they need to know how to design their teaching or how to effectively pass on what they know to the children since 'learning' is valued more than 'teaching'. The essence of teaching and learning is shown in what we call "curriculum". As a teacher, I need to plan my lessons as carefully as possible. The most important aspect to pay particular attention to is the learning outcomes—what I want students to achieve at the end of each of my lessons.

Learning does not occur only inside a formal class. New ways to learning have emerged to be alternatives for students and their parents. They can choose what is suitable for their students, especially at the time of the Digital Age, where people are easily connected with one another with the support of Information Technology. Distant learning is popular and a lot of online courses such as MOOCs (A massive online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access by the web) and COURSERA (online courses from top American universities) are offered with minimal charges. These online courses eventually become rivals to formal classroom learning. Another feature of informal learning is home schooling that attracts many families because several parents believe that they can serve their children better by asking them to do what they are interested in. Weaknesses of home schooling may be a lack of social skill training, interaction with other students and teamwork skills.

In summary, many people raise doubt about schools and the teachers and whether they will remain significant components of education in the future. Will technology replace teachers? The answer is 'No'. Teachers still have lots of jobs to do although they should not 'teach' in the way we know. Our roles are many—as facilitators, managers, coaches and activity organizers. Teachers and technology should work hand in hand and thus go for 'Blended learning', the concept that incorporates both face-to-face teaching and teaching supported by ICT (Lalima and Dangwal, 2017: 129) or 'Flipped learning', a pedagogical approach in which students are introduced materials before class with classroom time used to deepen understanding through discussion with peers (http://.heacademy.ac.uk, 2017) which eventually empower students with designing their own learning.

References

Casero Martínez, Antonio (2016). Deconstructing the notion of a "good teacher". An analysis of the formal and nonformal characteristics of university teaching. RELIEVE, 22(2), art. 4. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.7203/relieve.22.2.9419

Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to teach in higher education*. New York: Routledge
Sahlberg, P. (2016). *Finnish Lessons 2.0 : What can the world learn from educational change in Finland*. USA: Teachers College Press.

Lalima and Dangwal, K. L. (2017). Blended Learning: An Innovative Approach. *Universal Journal of Educational Research.* 5 (1): 129-136. Doi: 10.13189/ujer. 2017.050116.
Heacademy, (2017).*What is flipped learning?*. http://.heacademy.ac.uk