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Philosophies in Action: A Personal and Analytical Look into Reflective Teaching

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PHILOSOPHIES IN ACTION

A Personal and Analytical Look into Reflective Teaching

By
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ABSTRACT:

In this thesis, I will address the implementation of reflective teaching into everyday practice and how this reflective teaching impacts teacher actions and decisions in classrooms and schools. I engaged in reflective teaching for a semester of my student teaching practicum experience, focusing extensively on my philosophy of education, its evolution, and its implementation. Additionally, I interviewed in-service teachers at a rural Mississippi high school on how they engage in reflective practice and implement their philosophies into their teaching daily. The research from both the journals and interviews was uploaded into a qualitative data analysis software where it was analyzed, coded, and categorized. From this data, I was able to establish the skills and practices necessary to truly engage in reflective teaching. Based on my findings, I devised guidelines for future teachers so that they can engage in reflective teaching throughout their career. I found that even though each teacher has individual beliefs and values that guide their practice, engaging in reflective teaching follows a similar pattern for each teacher.

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SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM

In this first section, I will explain why reflective teaching is essential to being a successful teacher. Teachers can become complacent and monotonous in their practice if they do not reflect on and acknowledge their own successes in the classroom. Engaging in reflective teaching helps teachers to avoid "traps of demoralization and self-laceration" (Amzat & Padilla-Valdez, 2017, p. 5). The reflective teaching process challenges teachers to focus on what they do each day in their classroom and why they chose to implement that into their classroom. The purpose of this thesis will be to demonstrate that reflective teaching is critical for teachers at all stages of their careers. In the end, I will ask the question: "How can reflective practice drive the evolution of a philosophy of teaching and the practice of teaching?"

Defining the Problem

Teachers often do not take the time to reflect on what they are doing daily in their classrooms. Rather than thinking about their practice and changing it as needed, teachers become "trapped in unexamined judgments, interpretations, assumptions, and expectations" (Amzat & Padilla-Valdez, 2017, p. 5). Every teacher has his or her own personal goals for their career and for the education of the students in his or her classroom. Reflective teaching gives teachers the "capacity to translate educational philosophies so as to achieve educational goals" (Amzat & Padilla-Valdez, 2017, p. 4).

These various goals for teaching and beliefs about education should impact what a teacher does in the classroom. But do they?

Many teachers become discouraged and defeated throughout the year because their responsibilities increase exponentially. They focus on standardized testing, the bureaucracy of education, the many meetings that must be attended throughout the year, the paperwork, making activities, etc. Teachers have so much to worry about that they often lose sight of why they got into teaching and what they believe to be the purpose of their teaching (Lumsden, 1998). Teachers get knocked down into this negative cycle of feeling they are not successful because their students continuously get into trouble, their students cannot pass the required standardized tests, or their administration is making them use certain strategies in their classroom. Because of all of this, they begin to forget why they teach and do not implement their philosophies into their teaching and classrooms.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to track the evolution of my philosophy throughout my student teaching practicum experience teaching high school mathematics at the Dewey School. Not only does this study track the evolution of my philosophy, but it also tracks how I implement or do not implement it into my daily teaching. This study additionally reviews the philosophies of two in-service teachers at the Dewey School, how their philosophies have grown throughout their career, and how their philosophies are implemented into their everyday teaching. Through tracking this evolution in both current in-service teachers and myself, I can prove the imperativeness of reflective

teaching in all teachers. Reflection drives us all to be critical of and grow from what we do. The biggest issue is how?

How can teachers stay focused on their philosophy when their students have to take a state test at the end of the year? How can teachers actively reflect on what they do and why they do it? How can teachers' philosophies be embedded in their classrooms regularly?

The Question

This thesis will take a comprehensive look into the question: How can assuming the role of a reflective teacher influence the development of a philosophy of teaching and the practice of teaching? The following section encompasses research, statistics, and opinions on reflective teaching, philosophies of education, and their impacts on teachers.

SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I will use research and definitions of reflective teaching from professionals and scholars in the field of education to form a definition of reflective teaching for the purposes of this thesis. Additionally, by using the research and definitions found I will be able to examine the importance of reflective teaching and consider the question, "Why is it imperative that teachers implement their philosophy and beliefs about education into their daily practice?" This question will explore the idea that reflective teaching is critical to teachers and their development at all points in their careers.

Defining a Reflective Teacher

Firstly, before this thesis can begin to discuss the importance of reflective teaching, the term must be defined. In order to be an effective teacher, a teacher must also be reflective in their practice. Reflective teachers are those who "think deeply about what they are doing" in their daily practice. Further, in doing this, they are "thoughtful, analytical, self-critical, and informed decision-makers" in their own classroom. Additionally, they stop to evaluate the impact of their work and the "potential need to change or adjust their actions" (Hunt, Touzel, & Wiseman, 1999, p. 6).

This, however, is not all that it takes to be a reflective teacher. Zeichner and Liston (2014) define a reflective teacher as someone who:

Examines, frames, and attempts to solve dilemmas of classroom practice; is aware

of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to the table; is

attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teachers;

takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change efforts;

takes responsibility for his or her own professional development (p. 6).

Through this reflective process, teachers are engaged in an active process of

implementing each new experience and reflection with their previous beliefs (Kumari,

2014). Examination of practice is essential to the success of reflective teaching. Effective

teachers possess and utilize their reflections to thoroughly examine their practice and

their decisions (Zeichner & Liston, 2014; Hunt et al., 1999, Santagata & Angelici, 2010).

This examination has specific requirements in order to truly be considered

reflection. Brookfield (1995) explains that examination is not always reflective. Teachers

can easily focus solely on examining the "basic backbones of classroom practices" (p. 8)

without ever stopping to think about how their beliefs and goals as a teacher affect their

practices. If a teacher never questions the "goals and values that guide his or her work,

the context in which he or she teaches, or never examines his or her assumptions,"

(Zeichner & Liston, 2014, p. 1) then the examination of practice is not truly considered

reflective teaching. When a teacher puts these goals and values into a personal statement

that guides their practice, they have determined their philosophy of education (Lewis,

2018). This reflection of philosophy of education and its impact on teacher practice is

essential to reflective teaching. Thus, in order to properly define reflective teaching for

this thesis, I must consider this research in my definition.

Our definition of reflective teaching, however, is not complete. Additional research and opinions must be considered to form a definition of reflective teaching for the purpose of this thesis. Reflective practitioners observe and possess "skills, competencies, and knowledge" vital to effective teaching. Additionally, they realize they have to regularly attempt to develop and improve their abilities more deeply in order to reach and achieve "high levels of effectiveness" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 7). Teachers who reflect in some way regarding their practice and education on a holistic level will improve their teaching abilities (Gipe & Richards, 1992). A reflective teacher is not only examining their practice and using it to make decisions, they must be striving to improve.

Kochendorfer (1994) advises teachers beginning their journey in reflective teaching that "reflection can get you in trouble with yourself" (p. 11). When a teacher engages in true reflective teaching, they are keeping their practice constantly open to review. Through this reflective process, teachers may solidify their philosophies and the effects they produce, but the teachers will also never be fully satisfied. Thus, the teachers will continue to develop. Reflective teachers can take comfort in knowing that they will always be sure that they are doing their best, and that their best will continuously improve (Kochendorfer, 1994). Clearly, striving for continuous improvement and the desire to become more effective is crucial in the definition of reflective teaching.

It is evident that reflective teaching has many definitions and many meanings to different people. Through this research, I have created a definition of reflective teaching for the purpose of this thesis:

Reflective teaching is a continuous examination of the goals and beliefs that drive individual practice to ensure continuous improvement and greater effectiveness.

Misconceptions of Reflective Teaching

Now that this thesis has a definition of reflective teaching, it is crucial to understand the misconceptions of reflective teaching. In the previous section, many different definitions of reflective teaching were introduced and cited. It is evident that, though this thesis has its own definition of reflective teaching, reflective teaching has many definitions and looks differently to different people. Despite these varying definitions and beliefs about reflective teaching, research explicitly states what is not reflective teaching and why it is not such. These misconceptions must also be addressed before understanding the need for reflective teaching.

Reflective teaching is not simply a deeper, more intense, and more inquisitive form of reflection. A key misconception of reflective teaching is that teachers focus solely on the lessons they teach, what went well, what needs improvement, and then taking the actions to improve the lesson for the following class or the following year. Because teachers are often limited to reflect solely on their teaching skills, strategies, and merely the instruction, they are prohibited from reflecting on their "moral realms" of teaching (Zeichner & Liston, 2014, p. 75).

Instead, reflective practice requires teachers to "question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long-term interests" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 8). The reflective process requires more and deeper thought than many people and teachers think. Teachers must be willing to acknowledge various problems in their classroom and their practice that may arise in their reflection. Additionally, they must be willing to change their thinking and corresponding actions (Artzt & Armour-Thomas, 2002). In order to be a reflective

practitioner, teachers must question their work and ensure it is continuously moving them toward their goals as an educator. This misconception can lead to reflective habits that will actually worsen a teacher's practice.

Another major misconception about reflective teaching is the idea that reflective teaching emphasizes the importance of conducting reflection by individual teachers who are to think solely by themselves and for themselves about their work (Zeichner & Liston, 2014). Teachers should not be isolated to their own classroom walls throughout their reflective practice. This isolation can cause teachers to be dependent on the content, curriculum, and practices provided (Kumari, 2014). As established in the definition of reflective teaching for this thesis, teachers must be motivated by their own personal goals and beliefs while teaching. If a teacher simply relies on themself and what is provided without collaborating with others, they are not engaged in reflective teaching. Of course these goals and beliefs will vary for each individual teacher, but that does not mean teachers should be isolated throughout this process. It is imperative that teachers not only self-reflect on their teaching but also seek out support and feedback from other teachers.

Groups of teachers should "support and sustain" each other's growth and continuous improvement (Zeichner & Liston, 2014, p. 76). By collaborating and discussing each other's philosophies, teachers can begin to find their colleagues' philosophies engrained into their daily instruction, interactions, and decisions. This holds teachers accountable and promotes a culture of continuous development and improvement, which is the only way to improve the quality of teachers (William, 2012).

As teachers observe each other and aid each other in the reflective process, it is important to give feedback and criticism. Many teachers misconstrue this criticism in

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both self-reflection and peer-reflection. It is not meant to be harsh. Rather, it is defined as a "positive process" in which a teacher bases the judgment on the "awareness" of specific actions and the "deep sense of correctness" that results from the reflection (Kochenforfer, 1994, p.11). This criticism is only meant to allow teachers to continuously and more deeply examine their goals and beliefs that drive their individual practice to ensure continuous improvement and greater teacher effectiveness, so it is important to understand how teachers can help each other in becoming reflective practitioners. Teachers must not be isolated throughout the reflective process. Instead, teachers should work together to examine how they incorporate their own philosophies into their classroom regularly.

How to be a Reflective Teacher

Now that a definition of reflective teaching has been established and the misconceptions proven wrong, it is important to understand how teachers can become reflective? What does it actually look like in practice? What tools or methods are available to aid teachers to become reflective teachers? Reflective teaching is not simply thinking back on a particular class, how it went, and making it better for the next class. It is so much more than that.

Failure is a daily occurrence for teachers (William, 2012). This is crucial in understanding how to be a reflective teacher. It is inevitable that teachers will fail somehow each day, but what classifies a teacher as truly reflective is how they respond to the failures, how they learn from them, and how they grow from them. It is equally important to highlight successes throughout each day so that teachers can examine what is working well for them and why it is working well.

One method to document these successes and failures is a teacher journal (Heaton, 2000). In order to maximize the effect of a journal, teachers must "record their true thoughts and feelings" regarding their work in the classroom as well as journaling on a regular basis (Kochendorfer, 1994, p. 31). If teachers do not express their genuine feelings about their work in these journals, they will never truly be reflective in their practice. By journaling every day, teachers will be able to track their development and growth throughout the unit, the year, and even their entire career. It will allow them to look back on their original goals and beliefs, to constantly reflect on those and make any changes necessary throughout their career. These journals are a positive way to create the habit of true reflective teaching (Gipe & Richards, 1992). They allow teachers to continuously examine the goals and beliefs that drive individual practice, which ensure continuous improvement and greater effectiveness in the classroom.

Another tool that can be used effectively to create the habit of reflective teaching is David Hunt's "BEP Formula" (Martin, Majesky, & Ecker, 2003). The BEP Formula refers to reflecting on behavior, environment, and people regularly while teaching. In order to truly follow the BEP Formula, teachers must reflect on behaviors of students, principals, colleagues, parents, etc. as well as what they expect from each. When it comes to people, reflective teachers must focus on "peers, principals, pupils, parents, professionals, the public, and the private self" in their regular reflection (Martin, Majesky, & Ecker, 2003, p. 107). How do these people impact the continuous examination of goals and beliefs that drive individual practice? How do these people ensure continuous improvement and greater teacher effectiveness? Lastly, reflective teachers must examine how the environment in their classroom reflects their philosophy.

This environment includes everything to how the teacher greets the students to how the students treat each other (Martin, et al., 2003). The BEP Formula is a great tool to use when reflecting or journaling to ensure that teachers are actually examining their practice more in-depth than simply looking at the instruction.

One final method that can be used to become a reflective teacher that will be discussed in this thesis is the use of video recording. Video-based observations, both self-observed and peer-observed, are powerful tools that allow for teacher learning (Santagata & Angelici, 2010). Teachers can record their lessons, or even portions of their lessons, then watch later to digest exactly what happened in the class. When reviewing these video recordings, teachers get the opportunity to examine their own teaching to find their strengths and to pinpoint the areas in which they need to improve to become more effective.

Rather than simply watching full lessons, Trent and Gurvitch (2015) suggest editing full videos allows teachers to obtain and exhibit "shorter, specific teaching incidents" which in turn allows for "deeper, more conceptual reflection" of teaching practices (p. 3). These varying methods of video recording allow teachers to actually look back and reflect on what truly happened, because sometimes memory is not completely accurate. In watching and reflecting on videos, teachers can examine their practice thoroughly and truly strive for continuous improvement. Again, it is critical for teachers to reflect not only on the surface-level instruction, but also to think about the decisions they made and how their goals, beliefs, and philosophy played into those decisions.

The Need for Reflective Teaching

A vital piece of the definition of reflective teaching is requiring teachers to ensure continuous improvement and greater effectiveness. Teachers hope to be effective, but typically this is not for selfish reasons. Teachers have young minds in their hands each day, and they should strive to empower those minds and be as effective as possible for them. Reflective teaching not only benefits teachers, it also benefits students. It enhances the possibilities of learning for students (Loughran, 2002). Teachers need to be reflective so that they can better educate students in their classrooms.

One of the biggest challenges teachers face in their classrooms today is preparing students for standardized assessments (Longo, 2010). These standardized tests can impact the way teachers educate their students and the decisions they make in the classroom. It can even impact their preferred teaching style (Brady, 2008). Because of the pressures teachers face regarding the standardized tests, their teaching may not align with their personal philosophy. The stress caused from these standardized tests can result in the deterioration of a teacher's purpose (Lumsden, 1998).

By not focusing on personal philosophy when making decisions, teaching becomes a "technical activity" (Zeichner & Liston, 2014, p. 75). In a time where standardized testing seems inescapable, teachers need to keep their beliefs and values at the core of what they do in the classroom. Reflecting on and assessing philosophy and instructional practice, teachers put themselves in a position to be successful (Artzt & Armour-Thomas, 2002). This success will ensure that teachers continue to be reflective, which will ultimately lead to further development and improvement. Through this continuous development, teachers will be able to reach and achieve "high levels of

effectiveness" (Hunt, et. al., 1999). Effective teachers will be able to effectively teach the standards required for standardized tests, and they will do so with their philosophy driving each decision they make.

Reflective teaching is a continuous examination of the goals and beliefs that drive individual practice to ensure continuous improvement and greater effectiveness. Through reflective journals, collaborating with other teachers, video-recording lessons, and many other methods, teachers are able to assume the role of a reflective teacher. This reflective practice furthers their development and allows them to become a more successful teacher, even in the age of standardized testing. Teachers who actively reflect on their practice are able to develop their beliefs over time based on their mistakes as well as successes to further improve their practice of teaching.

SECTION 3: Research Methodology

In order to find answers to the proposed questions of this thesis, this research is based my own as well as others' personal reflections. These reflections serve to show how philosophies of education play a daily role in and outside of classrooms. Also in this third section, I will introduce my forms of research, participants, methods, and tools of research. I will lastly explain my method of data generation and data analysis.

Forms of Research

This study used two major qualitative research methods. These methods were used to examine the connection between reflective teaching and evolution of philosophy and practice. Qualitative research focuses more on description than quantity. Because of this, qualitative research studies typically have a small number of participants (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996). The qualitative research methods utilized for this study were personal journals and interviews with two teachers from The Dewey School.

The first method was a continuous, self-reflected journal that I kept through my student teaching practicum experience at The Dewey School. I completed this process from September through December, journaling and reflecting about my philosophy in each entry and changing it when necessary. More specific information about these journal entries is below in the data generation section.

The second method of research was through one-on-one interviews with in-service teachers at the Dewey School. I created a list of questions to ask the teachers and audio-recorded their responses. The recordings were then transcribed and analyzed.

Participants

The participants in this study were in-service teachers at the Dewey School. These participants teach students in grades nine through twelve, and taught at the Dewey school for the 2017-2018 school year. Below, I have created a table that links each teacher to their matching pseudonyms, the subject they teach, and their years of experience teaching in general but also their years of teaching at the Dewey School.

Table 1

Participant Information

Participant*	Subject	Teaching Experience (at DS)
Ms. Lincoln	Social Studies	15 (7)
Ms. Newton	Mathematics	28 (18)

*pseudonyms

In addition to the teachers at the Dewey School, I was also a participant in this study through my continuous reflective journal as a pre-service teacher.

Setting

The research for this thesis was conducted at a rural public high school in the state of Mississippi with students grade nine through twelve. The school is referred to under a pseudonym, The Dewey School, for the purpose of this research. The Dewey School was chosen for research because I will be teaching in Mississippi public schools, so interviewing teachers from a Mississippi public school about their philosophies and how

they are implemented into the classroom would be beneficial not only to me, but also to other future Mississippi educators.

Data Generation

In my teacher journal (Heaton, 2000), I wrote my philosophy statement at the beginning of each journal entry, along with the date, and then explained how my teaching for the day aligned with my philosophy. If my teaching did not align with my philosophy, then I had to reflect on that as well. I would then rewrite my philosophy statement at the end of the journal if I still agreed with my philosophy statement. If an event or situation took place that day that made me rethink my philosophy, however, I would change my philosophy, explain why, and propose how I wanted to further implement it into my classroom on a daily basis.

In each entry, I examined my lesson plan, the implementation of the plan, interactions with students, student behavior, and the many other factors that influence teaching. Throughout these examinations I reflected on what I felt I was doing well in the classroom and what I felt could have been better. Not only did I reflect on the positives and negatives, I thoroughly examined my philosophy statement and how I implemented it into my teaching each day. This is the critical part of this data generation. In these reflections, I had to explain and synthesize how I was incorporating my philosophy and how it impacted my teaching each day. A sample journal entry is below:

I will facilitate love and learning in my classroom while using data from formative assessments to drive the learning that takes place in my classroom.

Today was simply a quiz day. We were covering material that I felt I had not taught very well, and I was incredibly nervous for the students to take the quiz. I felt like they were missing out on a lot of knowledge because, even though I covered all of the material on the quiz, I had not taught it well or effectively, in my opinion. But, I was pleasantly surprised to see that even though they may not have completely understood the material as well as I hoped, they still had a baseline understanding. They still did well on their quizzes. The score is not ultimately what matters to me, though. I focus more on their learning. So, this upcoming week I am going to try to supplement the new material with old material the students overall struggled with.

By taking my students' learning so personally, I am facilitating love within my classroom as well as learning. If my students can see how personally invested I am in their learning, they will know I care about them and love them. They will also know that I will push them and push myself to help them learn as much and as deeply as I know they can. I pushed one of my students in particular because I felt responsible for his learning. As soon as I made that apparent, he began to show more initiative for his own education. He just needed to see that I wanted to facilitate love, and then his learning followed. This really solidified why I believe in my philosophy. For all three previous quizzes and the last two tests, he has received a score in the 50s. Today, however, he received a 73! The material was not easier, he simply showed initiative and began wanting to learn. Seeing this student grow and learn has solidified my belief that if I facilitate love first, the learning will follow.

I will facilitate love and learning in my classroom while using data from formative

assessments to drive the learning that takes place in my classroom.

Teacher Journal Entry from September 22, 2017

In addition to the journal entries, I conducted interviews with teachers at The Dewey School as a form of qualitative research. The interviews were conducted during school days at a time when the teacher was available: before school, after school, or during their planning period. Students were not present for any interviews. The interviews lasted approximately ten to fifteen minutes and were digitally recorded. Each teacher was asked questions regarding her history with getting involved in education, her philosophy, and various moments throughout her career that have made her rethink her current philosophies. These interviews required the teachers to be reflective in the moment about the past, present, and future of their careers.

Each teacher responded to the same pre-made list of questions (See Appendix A) about their introduction to education, why they got into education, their philosophy, how they implement their philosophies in the classroom, and how their philosophy has changed or remained the same. All of the interviews were audio recorded then transcribed. The transcriptions of the interviews were then deidentified to include pseudonyms to conceal the identity of each participant.

Data Analysis

The transcriptions and journal entries were uploaded into Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software. I went through several cycles of coding (Saldaña, 2013) while analyzing my data. I first looked through the data from both the interviews and the

journal entries with fresh eyes and was simply looking for interesting points or ideas as well as great quotes, what Richards (2009) terms "taking off from the data" (p. 77). I then refined my searches and analyzed the interviews and journal entries separately. In my journal entries, I narrowed my analysis to entries where a change in my philosophy occurred throughout my first semester of student teaching. I marked these changes with a code "Philosophy Change." This code, along with the others used, allowed me to look for specific descriptions and trends within my journals. For the interviews, I also coded changes in philosophy, implementations of philosophy, and then any commonalities between the two interviews. Using the qualitative data analysis software, I was able to examine code co-occurrences and find many similarities among the philosophies of the two in-service teachers and myself. This next section details the findings that resulted from my data analysis and examination.

Section 4: The Findings

Throughout my coding process and data analysis, I noticed several trends within the interviews of the in-service teachers as well as in my own journal entries. The in-service teachers at the Dewey School, although they teach different subjects, had similar beliefs and events that made them shift their philosophies. As for my journal, I found that I never changed my philosophy statement without reason. Behind every philosophy change was an event, a lesson, a conversation, a success, or a failure that caused me to rethink my philosophy and make changes to it so I could continuously implement it into my teaching.

In this section, I will focus first on my personal philosophy, its evolution, and how it looked in action. I will demonstrate the evolution of my philosophy by highlighting its changes throughout the semester as well as the reason behind the changes. I will then show my philosophy in action and describe how I intertwined my philosophy and my teaching. Then, I will focus on the teachers from the Dewey School, the evolutions of their philosophies, and how they put their philosophies into action. In addition, I will draw similarities to the responses and beliefs of my two interviewees from the Dewey School as well as to my own philosophy and journal entries. Before I can begin developing and tracking the evolution of my own philosophy and the comparisons with my interviewees, I must first define philosophy of education for the purpose of this thesis to exhibit its importance in teacher beliefs and practices.

Defining Philosophies of Education

As mentioned before, a philosophy of education can be summarized as the set of personal beliefs and values that a teacher focuses on when making decisions and adjustments to their practice. Below I have listed my philosophy of education as well as the teachers' from the Dewey school as examples.

My philosophy evolved substantially throughout my student teaching experience, but currently it stands as:

> *I will facilitate individualized challenges to progress each student toward their own success.*

Ms. Lincoln's philosophy of education can be summarized as:

> *You cannot scare me with work. You can pile it up, and I will get it done. Show up, get your work done, and be accountable.*

Ms. Newton's philosophy of education can be summarized as:

> *All of my students in my classroom can do math. They can do math better by the time I am done with them.*

These personal statements guide the teachers each day. The philosophy of education is central to each individual teacher and the methods in which they teach, whether it drives their instruction, their management policies, their implementation of material, or even their interactions with students. Philosophies are active in the sense that they should influence the teacher and his or her decisions daily. It needs to guide the teacher in order to truly be a philosophy in action, or else it is simply a set of beliefs with no real meaning.

In the evolution of my philosophy, you will see my philosophy continuously changing because of different events, lessons, or interactions that made me change my beliefs. As these beliefs changed, I had to change my philosophy to reflect what I wanted to do daily in my classroom. Through reflective teaching, I was able to continuously challenge and reaffirm my philosophy of education while also ensuring I was putting it into action. The evolution of my philosophy statement demonstrates the importance of reflective teaching.

What follows is a personal, external, and holistic look into reflective teaching and its influence on the development of philosophy of teaching and the practice of teaching. The personal look exhibits the evolution of my own philosophy as well as its implementation into my teaching throughout my student teaching at The Dewey School. The external look will then examine the responses from the interviews of the two in-service teachers at The Dewey School and how these teachers' philosophies have evolved and been implemented into their practice throughout their career. Finally, the holistic look will compare the personal and external looks while examining how the collaborative process impacted my own philosophical development.

The Personal Look

The following section is a documentation of the evolution of my personal philosophy and the corresponding practice from the classroom throughout my first semester of student teaching at The Dewey School. In addition, I will detail the patterns that occurred before, during, and after the changes in beliefs.

Evolution of Philosophy. This section of the thesis will display the evolution of my philosophy, as well as how and why it evolved. As I previously mentioned in this section, I never changed my philosophy of education without reason. I will provide the reasoning or event that took place behind each change in philosophy to demonstrate the importance of reflective teaching in the classroom. My philosophy at the beginning of my reflective journey reads, "Love is at the center of learning." Below are the entries in which my philosophy changed.

I will facilitate love and learning in any classroom.

> This was a review day for my class before a unit assessment. In order to review, the students were working on stations where each station had different mathematical concepts and problems from the given unit. Students were working in groups, and I grouped them heterogeneously "so that students could work together" on the mathematics "rather than being told what to do." I noticed that "by working together, all of the students were discussing the mathematics and figuring it out rather than being told what to do." Through these observations and reflections, I found that "I truly felt like a facilitator in the classroom today… I had the students working together and teaching each other instead of doing the instruction" myself. "I love watching my students work together and discuss mathematics." In this entry, I concluded that I wanted to add something to my philosophy about "facilitating learning or discussion amongst my classes because I want that to be an integral part of who I am as a teacher."
>
> *Excerpts from Teacher Journal Entry on September 13, 2017*

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I will facilitate love and learning in my classroom while using data from formative assessments to drive the learning that takes place in my classroom.

This lesson incorporated a technology called Desmos where students were able to input their answers while simultaneously allowing me to view their responses and answers. After seeing the "student responses throughout the Desmos activity, I realized how much I really enjoyed being able to track students, their understanding, and their learning throughout a lesson… If I had not had this data, the students would have just been working through an activity without knowing if they were doing it right or wrong. I think this data is crucial in facilitating learning, and I want to incorporate that into my philosophy so it will become ingrained into my daily instruction. If I can track where my students are and where their learning is, I can better facilitate learning in my classroom."

Excerpts from Teacher Journal on September 19, 2017

I will facilitate love and learning in my classroom. I will use data from formative assessments to drive the learning and discussion taking place while also ensuring no students fall behind.

As I advanced in my education classes, I was introduced to more technologies and began incorporating them more in the classroom. At this point in my teaching I had begun to integrate Plicker more often and relied on it as a formative assessment tool to track student performance and understanding. "This data is allowing me to make decisions about what learning takes place in my

classroom… This way, students do not simply get swept to the side and their needs are addressed… Making sure none of my students fall behind is a huge priority of mine, and I want to continue to do this every day. I want to make sure we are all on the same page moving forward, and I think the data can help me with that."

Excerpts from Teacher Journal on September 27, 2017

I will facilitate love and learning in my classroom through differentiated instruction that uses data from formative assessments to drive the learning that each individual student receives.

This change in philosophy did not come from any one particular event. Rather, it was more based on several lessons and experiences I had using new skills I had been taught in my education classes as well as just observing the classroom, the students, and their performances. "I feel in order to actually facilitate learning effectively, I have to have different expectations for my students… I want to challenge my students who are understanding the material and challenge them to continue their learning and understanding to more challenging questions or concepts… By differentiating my instruction, I am meeting all of my students' needs, which facilitates learning… Differentiating learning and instruction will facilitate learning for every student in the class based on their needs for the specific content and material."

Excerpts from Teacher Journal on October 10, 2017

I will give students an equitable education through support, respect, and love.

When a student says they want to drop out, that will really make you rethink your philosophy of education. "It absolutely broke my heart because I know he wants to be successful and do something with his life, so it hurt to hear him so upset with school… I felt like I had to support him because part of my philosophy is to facilitate love, and this child needed love. If a child does not feel loved, respected, or supported, why would they ever want to learn? Why would they want to come to school?"

Excerpts from Teacher Journal on October 19, 2017

I will challenge students to understand mathematics each day through an equitable education filled with support, respect, and love.

I have discovered that I feel strongly about challenging my students. Not just challenging them, but also challenging each and every student at the level they are at… I have been trying to do a better job of getting students to actually understand the information and the material on a mathematical and conceptual level instead of simply memorizing information told to them. I think this type of thinking challenges them and allows them to truly remember the mathematics and make sense of the mathematics. For this reason, I think I need to change my philosophy to include something about getting students to actually understand, synthesize, and make sense of the material because I believe that will ultimately allow them to understand and appreciate mathematics.

Excerpt from Teacher Journal on November 13, 2017

I will challenge each student to understand mathematics each day through student-based mathematical discourse and an equitable education filled with support, respect, and love.

I love challenging my students and having them talk amongst each other to figure out mathematics. I think student collaboration and discourse is vital to learning and understanding mathematics. I have found that students learn better from each other. I want to facilitate these discussions, but ultimately I want the students talking about the math as much as possible… Because I so often ask students to talk with their partners or with their groups [about the math] I want to have that in my philosophy statement because it is a big part of who I am as a teacher.

Excerpt from Teacher Journal on November 29, 2017

By tracking the evolution of my philosophy in a journal, I was able to see what caused me to rethink my beliefs as a teacher. Through this data analysis, I discovered that I never edited my philosophy statement without reason. Behind every adjustment was a different reason, but a reason was always present. When my beliefs changed or were challenged, I rewrote my philosophy statement to include what I considered important and fundamental to my classroom. At the end of almost every journal entry where my philosophy changed, I stated something along the lines of "I want to include this new belief into my philosophy because I want to continue to integrate it into my teaching." This further proves that my philosophy was ever changing throughout this reflective process for reasons beneficial to my teaching and my student's learning. By continuously reflecting on and adjusting my philosophy to include the values and beliefs I found

fundamental to my classroom and education, my philosophy was continuously put into action, guiding my instruction and decisions.

Philosophy in Action. Although my philosophy changed seven times over the course of just four months, I found that I continuously implemented my philosophy at the time into my lessons and actions. I also found that on days where I reflected that I had not implemented my philosophy into my teaching, the following day my actions directly aligned with my philosophy. By journaling my thoughts, beliefs, and reflections about each day I was able to ensure I incorporated my philosophy into my teaching each day. I have provided several excerpts of journal entries as well as the philosophy statement attached to the reflection as evidence to further prove that reflective teaching forced me to consider my philosophy statement each day.

Love is at the center of learning.

> Love was completely at the center of their learning. They were showing love to each other by helping each other when someone was not quite understanding the material. I truly feel that the level of learning that occurred in my classroom today would not have happened without the love students showed throughout working in their groups.
>
> *Excerpt from Teacher Journal on September 12, 2017*

While reflecting on my philosophy, I reflected on how well I implemented it into my classroom. This journal entry shows that I kept my philosophy at the forefront of my mind. My reflections and comments were not simply about how the day went and what I

liked or disliked, but rather they were examining how well I incorporated my philosophy into my teaching and decisions. I focused on how love drove the learning and was central to my teaching. Since my students were even showing each other love, it is clear that my philosophy not only affected what I did in the classroom, but also what they did. By putting this philosophy in action, I created an environment of love in my classroom.

I will facilitate love and learning in any classroom.

Today, we had a really great dialogue and discussion about functions… Students were jumping in with really great questions whenever they felt confused and then other students were answering their questions.

Excerpt from Teacher Journal on September 14, 2017

They were all asking questions and answering each other and discussing amongst each other rather than relying on me to guide the lesson.

Excerpt from Teacher Journal on September 15, 2017

Only four students missed the problem in the entire class [of twenty]. Fortunately, each of their partner's had the correct answer, so when I saw this, I had the correct student stop making their graph and help the student with the wrong answers. I went back to check and asked each student who had gotten the answer wrong initially what their mistake was and how they got their new answers… This instructional move really facilitated learning… Rather than stopping to tell the students what they did wrong, I allowed them the opportunity to learn from

someone else and from their own mistakes… I also could have told the student

where his or her mistake was, but instead I wanted to facilitate the learning rather

than directing it. Learning comes from talking about the mathematics with others,

and I think I facilitated that.

Excerpt from Teacher Journal on September 15, 2017

These three excerpts from my journal provide various examples as to how my

philosophy looked when it was in action. Each excerpt was from a different day, proving

that through my reflective process, I was implementing my philosophy into my teaching.

By allowing the students to talk amongst each other and answering each other's

questions, I facilitated both love and learning. These entries display how I implemented

my philosophy into my teaching and my classroom, and having students discuss the

mathematics instead of me telling them everything they would need to know became

central to who I am as a teacher. Thus, it was part of my philosophy and was lived out

each day in my classroom.

I will facilitate love and learning in my classroom while using data from formative
assessments to drive the learning that takes place in my classroom.

This Google Form contained problems similar to ones the students would see in

the activity the next day. From this, I could see who already knew how to do what

we were focusing on the next day in class. I grouped these students together and

gave them an extension to the activity. They had to answer additional questions

along with the questions that all of the students were doing. I wanted them to feel

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like they were being challenged… I used data from the formative assessment to drive the learning that took place today.

Just when I started to further explain, one of my students started to explain it to her. My students sit in pairs, so that makes it easier for situations like this to occur naturally. I continued on with my teaching and went on to the next example problem while he explained to her why the domain was what it was. She understood, and then they caught up with where we were in the next problem… This type of scenario happened because of how I handle my classroom, the values I encourage, and the environment I foster based on my philosophy.

I only used Plickers as a closer so that I could not make decisions before the lesson started. I can, however, use the data I received to form what we learn and what we go over tomorrow. I found several student misconceptions from the data, so I can easily address those tomorrow.

Again, these different excerpts from different journal entries illustrate my philosophy in action. I had begun to incorporate more technologies that allowed me to use formative assessment more frequently and effectively because it was central to my philosophy of education. I felt that differentiating instruction was vital to facilitating

learning in my classroom, so I did just that through the Google Form and extension questions. Even the decision to have my students sit in pairs illustrates my philosophy in action. I believe in facilitating learning, and having students sit with another student in pairs allows for more learning to take place among them. By actively using formative assessments to drive and facilitate learning in the class, I again was intertwining my philosophy directly with my teaching.

I will challenge each student to understand mathematics each day through an equitable education filled with support, respect, and love.

> I had students holding up what they thought the [answer] was based on a given word problem so that I could monitor each student's learning… It allow[ed] each of them the opportunity to work with the mathematics individually… They get to think about it first. I feel that this challenges students to understand mathematics each day.
>
> *Excerpt from Teacher Journal on November 14, 2017*

> I knew that they could figure it out if they thought back to what they previously learned about solutions of systems of linear equations, so I wanted to give them this opportunity to truly understand the mathematics behind solving systems of linear inequalities rather than simply telling them how it works.
>
> *Excerpt from Teacher Journal on November 15, 2017*

These pieces of my journal again further prove that by continuously reflecting not only on how the day went but also on my philosophy of teaching and how I used it in the classroom, I was able to embed my philosophy into my actions, decisions, and teachings. I began to use whiteboards (as described in this first excerpt) because I wanted each student to think about the math on their own. I wanted them to think and understand for themselves. This decision to incorporate more use of whiteboards came directly from my philosophy that I wanted to "challenge each student to understand mathematics." Additionally, the second excerpt shows how I provided a challenging opportunity for students to understand the mathematics before I explained it to them. By providing this opportunity, I was truly living out my philosophy statement.

These various excerpts from my journal further prove that my philosophy was the focus point of my reflections. Through my reflective practice, I was able to look back on my teaching, how it went, how well I incorporated my philosophy, and how to continue to put it into action. The excerpts included above verify that I was living out my philosophy in all of my decisions and actions in the classroom. I did mention previously, however, that I had days where I felt as if I had not incorporated my philosophy into my teaching. I found that when I reflected on those journal entries, the following day was taught directly in-line with my philosophy. I have included examples of those journal entries below.

I will facilitate love and learning in my classroom while using data from formative assessments to drive the learning that takes place in my classroom.

Unfortunately, today was probably my worst day of teaching according to my philosophy. I collected data, but I did not facilitate learning as much as I typically do. My class is behind, so I was trying to get caught up… In trying to catch up, I was much more direct with my teaching rather than facilitating dialogue… I have to keep my philosophy and my students' needs at the forefront of my mind and at the center of my teaching more than I did today.

Excerpt from Teacher Journal on September 26, 2017

What I lacked in teaching based on my philosophy yesterday I made up for today. I reflected a lot on what happened in my instruction and my class period yesterday and made necessary adjustments to teach according to my philosophy today.

Excerpt from Teacher Journal on September 27, 2017

I will facilitate love and learning in my classroom through differentiated instruction that uses data from formative assessments to drive the learning that each individual student receives.

I did not differentiate through my grouping or the problems students' received, so I lacked in [incorporating my philosophy].

Excerpt from Teacher Journal on October 17, 2017

My lesson today was driven directly from my philosophy… I formed groups to where all of the students combined had the answers to the specific problems I

wanted them to focus on. This allowed all of the students to be engaged in the discussion.

These entries show that even though my philosophy was not perfectly ingrained into my teaching each day, I was able to consider that through this reflective journal and make the adjustments necessary to include it the following day. As I stated before, on the days where I did not feel like I incorporated my philosophy well, I came back the next day and made sure that my philosophy guided my lesson and the decisions I made in the classroom. This is a result of reflective teaching. By continuously examining my goals and beliefs that drive my individual practice to ensure continuous improvement and greater effectiveness, I ensured that my philosophy was in action each day in my classroom.

The External Look

In this portion of the thesis, I will provide my findings from the interviews I conducted with in-service teachers at the Dewey School. I will share how Ms. Lincoln and Ms. Newton's philosophies have evolved throughout their career, why they have evolved, as well as how they implement their philosophy into their classroom. This section will contain excerpts from the two interviews to show how teachers practice reflective teaching throughout a career.

Evolution Throughout a Career. My philosophy, the evolution of it, and how it looks in action is unique to me. In order to see how others define their philosophies, how they have evolved, and how their philosophies look in action, I interviewed two teachers

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from the Dewey School. The evolution of my philosophy was specific in the sense that I could point to the exact moment or situation which made me rewrite my statement, but these evolutions are much more broad. The two in-service teachers did not keep a journal, but rather they were simply asked to reflect on instances throughout their career that made them sincerely reconsider their philosophies. This portion of the thesis provides an external overview of the evolution of philosophies throughout a teaching career.

When asked about moments that caused their philosophies to evolve, both teachers took a second to ponder and truly reflect. Ms. Lincoln described how her first year of teaching made her rethink a lot of her philosophy. "I didn't think that year went well… I didn't enjoy it. I felt like everything I did was wrong and that summer I changed, thought things through, and changed up my game plan. And that second year was so much better" (Ms. Lincoln). That year caused her to do some rethinking, but she claims it was not until she had children of her own that she truly changed her set of guiding beliefs. "I'm probably more patient. Now, I can be impatient with kids, but I'm more patient than I was as a new teacher… When a kid says to you 'You've hurt my feelings' when you had no intention of hurting anybody's feelings or that you never saw it from that perspective, that's a gut check moment" (Ms. Lincoln). She even went on to apply why having children of her own truly forced her to make these adjustments into her philosophy: "I really understand that everybody is somebody's baby. Somebody's hopes and dreams are in that child because I have children and my hopes and dreams are in them" (Ms. Lincoln).

Ms. Newton did not have a specific moment or event that made her rethink her philosophy, but she attributed a major change in her philosophy to teaching at the same school in the same community for eighteen years.

When I first started teaching, I was just basically I think a math teacher. I wasn't really looking at the whole child, or the whole person, or the whole fitting into the community or anything like that, simply because I, myself, was only like 22. I didn't really get it, but I think especially because I've taught at [the Dewey School] for now, this is my 18th year. I really understand how people fit into the community and give back to the community… So I feel like my teaching is not just within the walls of the classroom, but like it's on into when they go to college and they lean over and help their friend… It's just kind of a little more of a spreading of that (Ms. Newton).

Although this does not pinpoint an exact moment or event, the evolution of philosophy is undeniable. She completely shifted her perspective from simply being a math teacher to someone who influences her students, those around them, and the community around them. Ms. Newton still provides a reason for this change in her philosophy and how it impacted the way she taught the children in her classroom.

Both of the teachers cited explicit reasoning behind the evolution and major changes in their philosophy. Ms. Lincoln had a specific event in her life that cause a major adjustment to hers, while Ms. Newton had a broader overview of why her philosophy took on a major update. Nevertheless, they both transformed their philosophies for a reason. They clearly show that they were engaged in reflective teaching by being able to cite specific reasons for these changes. They examined their

goals and beliefs that drove their instructional practice to ensure continuous improvement and greater effectiveness in their classroom, in their students, and in their communities.

Philosophies in Action. Each of the teachers I interviewed has different philosophies and beliefs that drive their everyday instruction. They also have varying explanations as to how they came to their current individual philosophy of education after several changes throughout their careers. Because of this, they will each have distinctive ways of implementing their philosophy into their classroom, their teaching, and their interactions with students. Through interviews and observations, I was able to analyze just how each teacher puts her philosophy into action.

"You cannot scare me with work. You can pile it up, and I will get it done. Show up, get your work done, and be accountable." (Ms. Lincoln)

Through my interactions and observations of Ms. Lincoln, I found that she truly models her philosophy each day at school. When she has hundreds of copies to make, deadlines for PLC responses, papers to grade, and work of her own outside of school, she still shows up and gets her job done. She is able to block out all of the distractions and extra work of teaching when she comes to work each day. She focuses on her students and always maintains a positive attitude. "We are here to be nice to each other, to get this done. We're [going to] have a good time while we do it, but we're [going to] get it done." She truly exemplifies what she means by that through her actions. She plays music in her classroom, greets students with a smile on her face outside of her door before class begins, and jokes around with students while also ensuring that they are getting their work done.

She even recognized that her philosophy in action is demonstrated by her modeling the behaviors she wants to see in her students. "I try to model what I think a quality employee is… Just because US History isn't your favorite subject and just because you don't excel at it doesn't mean that you shouldn't keep working at it. Keep working. Keep showing up" (Ms. Lincoln). Through this reflective interview, Ms. Lincoln was able to describe exactly how she lives out her philosophy daily. Her incorporation of her philosophy looks different than mine, but what is ultimately important is that she does incorporate her philosophy into her everyday instruction and interactions.

"All of my students in my classroom can do math. They can do math better by the time I am done with them." (Ms. Newton)

Similar to Ms. Lincoln and myself, Ms. Newton puts her philosophy in action each day she comes to school. The beliefs she has drive her instruction and decisions. "I never want to write a kid off. And I never want to have a kid who's so strong already not challenged in my room" (Ms. Newton). This statement directly correlates to her philosophy. She never gives up on students and their mathematical abilities, no matter the level, because she wants them to be able to do math better by the time they leave her class. To ensure this growth occurs within her students, Ms. Newton ensures that her class is "always driven towards a goal… We're never goofing off in my classroom in terms of like doing something just to have busy work or watching a movie." By creating a classroom where she and her students are working toward a common goal each day,

Ms. Newton lives out her philosophy that each student will know more math after they leave her classroom.

Additionally, she never teaches anything in isolation. "I'm always pulling it back to stuff they already knew or where it's going to go." She does this so her students can make meaningful mathematical connections. She acknowledges that these connections are more for her high-achieving students because she is always looking to challenge them.

> That is more frightening, actually, than the kid who's kind of a low-level kid is a high-level kid who's not been challenged because of those kids. If they aren't challenged and I'm not talking about with busy work but with things that make them go 'what?' Like, just have their assumptions challenged and stuff like that (Ms. Newton).

Her instructional decision to never teach anything in isolation comes directly from the idea that she wants to challenge all of her students, but especially the "high-level kids." I found this philosophy lived out each day in her room through the assignments she gave students, the activities given to the students, and simply the way she carries out the environment in her classroom. She lives out her philosophy each day by incorporating it into everything she does as a teacher.

Thus, each teacher's philosophy is personal and individualized based on his or her personal set of beliefs of what is important to education. When engaged in reflective teaching, a teacher is continuously examining his or her goals and beliefs that drive their instruction so they can continuously improve. By reflecting on these beliefs, each teacher's philosophy will inevitably change. This change will take place for a reason,

whether the reason is a specific event or just a shift in beliefs in the duration of a career. No matter how frequently a teacher changes his or her philosophy, it will be integrated into their teaching and decision making each day if a teacher is truly engaged in reflective teaching.

The Holistic Look

This section of the analysis will focus on the comparisons between the personal and external looks. I will compare the findings from both views and analyze how they impact our philosophies and reflective practice as teachers. I will compare the philosophies, their evolutions, and their implementations amongst the participants in the study. Additionally, I will share how collaborating with veteran teachers impacted my philosophy and beliefs of teaching.

Philosophies. As stated previously, each participant in the study has their own unique set of beliefs and values, and the development of those philosophies is also unique to each participant. I found that I was able to pinpoint all of the changes in my philosophy through my reflective journal, while Ms. Lincoln and Ms. Newton were only able to recall the major changes to their philosophies throughout their career.

Both teachers described a realization that their students fit into a world outside of just their classrooms. Ms. Lincoln claims this development of her philosophy began after she had children of her own. She was able to recognize that "everybody is somebody's baby" (Ms. Lincoln). This allowed her to be more patient with students and think about their lives beyond the walls of her classroom. Ms. Newton also experienced a similar development in her philosophy, but attributes it more to her years of experience at the

same school. She began to see how her students grow up to fit into the community, which also prompted her to reflect on her each of her students as a "whole person" (Ms. Newton).

As a twenty-two year old pre-service teacher, I have not had the teaching experience or life experience that Ms. Lincoln and Ms. Newton have had. I have not had children of my own or taught at the same school for eighteen years. Because of this, I have not been able to think about my teaching and how it impacts my students in the world around them. I found that my philosophy continuously focused on my actions in the classroom and how to enhance student learning. My main concern was developing myself as a teacher so that I could promote mathematical learning in each of my students in my classroom. I did reflect on the idea that as a teacher I am "there ultimately to help them be citizens in the world" (Excerpt from Teacher Journal, September 20, 2017), but I never felt it so central to my practice to incorporate it into my philosophy.

Through the interview process, I was able to see how these veteran teachers have assumed the role of a reflective teacher and developed their philosophies and practices of teaching throughout their careers. This collaboration allowed me to reflect on how my teaching affects students as a whole, which I would not have done otherwise. I would have stayed so focused on my practice and its effects on students within my classroom. Through collaborating with other teachers, I found that I began to think about my philosophy in a different way, and thus it developed even further and affected my practice as well. Collaboration between teachers at all points in their careers is beneficial to reflective teaching and developing philosophies of education and practices of education.

Another finding in both the personal and external look is that each teacher had a reason behind her changes in philosophy. I was always able to look back into journal entries to find an exact reason or instance that made me rethink my philosophy. I never changed it without purpose. The two in-service teachers, although not able to locate exact reasons for every change in their philosophy, were able to explain the reasons behind their biggest changes in philosophy. By looking at their practice through a reflective lens, these teachers and myself were able to further develop our philosophies of teaching and our practices of teaching.

Philosophies in Action. An additional finding of this study is the implementation of philosophy into teacher practice looks different for each teacher. It is important to understand that each of the participants in this study put their philosophy to action each day. But, each philosophy looks different when implemented.

My philosophy guides my strategies and actions each day. I was continuously evaluating the strategies I was using and determining if they were effective for student learning. My philosophy truly influences the specific actions and decisions I make in the classroom, which impacts how I teach my students each day.

Ms. Lincoln models her philosophy daily. Rather than incorporating it into her practice, she models what she believes is important. This allows her students to see exactly what she expects of them while also serving as a positive role model. Her philosophy does not guide her instruction as much, but it guides the attitude she brings to her classroom every day.

Ms. Newton embeds her philosophy into her content. She wants to challenge students and push them to be better at math by the time they leave her classroom. Thus,

this belief drives what she teaches her students every day in her room. She wants to connect the content to what students have already learned or give them a preview of what they will learn in future math classes. She does not model her philosophy, but instead her philosophy influences the specific material she teaches.

Each of the three teachers in this study implements her philosophy into her practice in a different way. Ms. Lincoln uses her philosophy to drive her attitude and behavior in the classroom; Ms. Newton uses her philosophy to drive the content she teaches; I use my philosophy to drive the different strategies and tools I use to teach. Whether it is through how they teach, what they teach, or how they carry themselves in the classroom, these teachers have continuously implemented their philosophy into their practice.

Section 5: Final Conclusions

Limitations to Research

My research was conducted at one high school in a rural area near a major university. It was confined to two in-service teachers at the same school, who both have over ten years of experience in the classroom. Although I was also a participant in the research, I am merely a pre-service teacher with no real teaching experience to reflect on when making changes to my philosophy. While effort was made to show the evolutions of philosophies and philosophies in action in a diverse group of teachers, I was unable to interview a teacher with anywhere from one to ten years of experience. In addition, it is impossible to track exactly how the two participants' philosophies evolved throughout their career as well as how and why other teachers change their philosophies throughout their careers. Although this study is small, it does provide evidence to the importance of reflective teaching and implementing educational philosophies into the classroom.

Implications for Practice

Previously, I outlined the evolution of my own philosophy of education and its implementations throughout my student teaching experience. I also summarized the responses two in-service teachers gave in interviews. Through comparing my personal experience to those of two veteran teachers, I was able to determine the importance of reflective teaching. This section details the implications for practice in other classrooms

outside of my own and outside of The Dewey School. I will explain how reflective teaching influences the development of a philosophy of education and the practice of teaching.

Development of Philosophy. One of the most interesting and impactful results from this study was seeing how my personal philosophy evolved over just one semester. Through assuming the role of a reflective teacher, I was able to continuously develop my philosophy. Most days my beliefs and values remained the same as they were the previous day, but they did change seven times from September to December. This shows that the process reflective teaching challenged me to rethink and develop my philosophy continuously over a period of time. These reflections allowed me to truly consider what is important to me as an educator, and how I allow those beliefs to drive my actions. As beliefs transform, so does philosophy.

Since I am a pre-service teacher, it makes sense my philosophy would change so frequently in a short period of time. I was still taking courses at a University and learning different methods of practice. I was able to observe several different teachers regularly. I was still figuring out what I felt was important to who I am as a teacher. I was learning so much in these four months still that I had to continuously update my philosophy to reflect my new beliefs and values as I continued learning and growing.

This implies that learning new strategies, ideas, and practices keep teachers thinking and developing their philosophy. They have to take the new information they have learned and reflect on whether they want to incorporate that into their core beliefs and values. Thus, in order to assume the role of a reflective practitioner, a teacher must continue to learn and develop professionally. They can attend conferences, work toward a

higher degree, take courses online, or even follow a blog in order to continue their development. In order to ensure teachers are developing their philosophies, teachers need to keep learning.

Additionally, this study showed that teachers at all points in their careers make developments and adjustments to their philosophies. Reflecting on why they teach and what is important to them allows teachers to continuously adjust their beliefs and values of education and their role in the classroom. While they may not be able to explain the exact date or moment that changed their perspective, they can explain the reasoning behind the change in philosophy. Reflective teachers are able to understand these shifts in beliefs and recognize how they influence their philosophies.

This implies that teachers do not change their core beliefs and values without reason. They are continuously learning from both teaching and life experience, and thus can explain how these various experiences have led to the development of their philosophy. Because of this, it is never too late for a teacher to become involved in the reflective process. Teachers of all ages, content areas, and levels of experience can become reflective teachers, and thus further develop their philosophies of education.

Development of Practice. This study detailed how various reflective teachers implement their philosophies into their practice of teaching. No matter how they apply their philosophy to their daily actions, they use this set of values and beliefs to guide some part of their practice. Incorporation of philosophy in practice looks different for every teacher. It is important for teachers to not only reflect on their philosophy, but also how it influences their practice.

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As a pre-service teacher, my practice developed substantially throughout my student teaching experience. This is to be expected, as I am new to the profession. The in-service teachers also developed their practice, but it was more of a broad development. They have adjusted and improved their practice from years of experience in addition to their reflective process. Regardless of the years of experience, teachers should reflect on their successes and failures in the classroom on a daily and holistic level. This will allow them to continuously examine their philosophy and its implications for their practice. As long as teachers are reflective, they will continue to develop their practice.

How to be a Reflective Teacher: Applying the Results

Assuming the role of a reflective teacher may look different for each teacher. Just as teachers have individual philosophies, they may have different reflective practices. Teachers need to be comfortable with their reflective practice in order to truly be able to develop their philosophy of education and their practice of education. This study, however, suggests several key components to reflective teaching. In order to fully assume the role of a reflective teacher, teachers should reflect daily on their philosophy and its implications for their practice; teachers should document their evolution and development; teachers should continuously seek out opportunities to further their own learning; and teachers should collaborate and work together to further develop each other's practice.

Daily reflection implies more than simply thinking about how a lesson went. It requires teachers to examine what actions they took, why they chose to take those actions, and the effects of those actions on the classroom and the students. This regular reflection forces teachers to consider their philosophy and how it impacts their practice.

Ultimately, this will lead to development of teacher philosophy and development of teacher practice. Reflective teachers will daily have to assess their philosophy and if they still believe in it. This will continuously challenge teachers to reexamine their beliefs and values about education, and this will allow them to further develop their philosophy. As teachers consider their philosophies, they must also consider how it impacts their practice. Through daily reflection, teachers will be forced to examine how they incorporated their philosophy into each instructional decision, student interaction, and action taken in the classroom. This development of philosophy and practice will not be as successful without daily reflection, so it should become part of the practice of reflective teaching.

In addition to daily reflection, teachers should document the evolution of their philosophy. I documented mine in a reflective journal, but this is not the only method to document the evolution of a teacher's philosophy. No matter how a teacher records this development, it needs to be done in order to assume the role of a reflective teacher. While teachers should reflect on their philosophy and practice daily, as stated above, they do not need to document every day of their teaching. Instead, it is important for a reflective teacher to record the major changes of their philosophy and why it changed. This will allow them to physically see the evolution of their philosophy over time. It displays exactly what changes took place in their career as well as why those changes took place. This reflective practice will allow teachers to take ownership of their development of philosophy and practice.

Reflective teachers also need to search for opportunities to further their own learning. Professional development has become almost a requirement of teachers in

schools, but assuming the role of a reflective teacher requires more than this. Teachers must seek out new research and strategies that they may be interested in implementing into their own practice. They can also observe other teachers to see if others incorporate anything in their classroom that they would want to adopt into their teaching. By learning from other teachers, researchers, or even post-undergraduate courses, teachers will be forced to develop their philosophy based on their new knowledge. They will also have to incorporate this new knowledge into their practice. Thus, by seeking out opportunities to further their own learning, teachers assume the role of a reflective teacher.

The final component to reflective teaching is that teachers must collaborate through their reflective journeys. Reflection and development is personal, but teachers should not be isolated in this process. Discussing beliefs and values with others in the profession will allow teachers to see ideas and opinions they may not have otherwise considered. It is easy for teachers to become set in their philosophy and practice, but this collaboration encourages reflective teachers to continuously develop their philosophy and their practice of teaching.

Implications for Future Research

Analyzing the effect of reflective teaching on my own personal development as well as the development of two veteran teachers provides valuable insight into the importance of reflective teaching in the development of a teacher. It is essential that teachers and researchers explore innovative ways to become a reflective teacher. This thesis focuses on the development of a two veteran teachers at one school as well as the development of one pre-service teacher at one university. Future research should expand the study to teachers at different school who are at varying points in their career. This

would provide more insight into the development of philosophies of teaching and practices of teaching at all points throughout a teacher's career, as well as how the area they are in affects both their philosophy and their practice. Researchers should additionally analyze the ways in which teachers assume the role of a reflective teacher. The components defined in this thesis resulted from the study of three teachers in the same area. Future research could support, modify, or conflict with the components that define reflective teaching in this study.

Conclusion

Reflective teaching is not merely passive thoughts about how a lesson went and what could be changed the next time the lesson is taught. It is a process that requires teachers to thoroughly examine their assumptions, beliefs, and values about teaching and summarize it into a philosophy statement. It requires this philosophy to be incorporated into teacher decisions and practice. It requires daily consideration, regular documentation, a desire to continue learning, and collaboration amongst colleagues. This continuous examination of goals and beliefs drives individual practice to ensure continuous improvement and greater effectiveness.

The teachers who undergo the process of reflective teaching will see a development of philosophy of teaching as well as practice of teaching. The reflective process allows teachers to see the daily growth of how philosophy embeds itself into teaching. In addition, are able to reflect on how they could continue to grow and how their philosophy could continue to embed itself into their practice. If teachers truly wish to improve their practice and continuously develop, they must assume the role of a reflective teacher.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Teachers:

1. Have you always wanted to be a teacher?

2. How did you know you wanted to become a teacher?

3. Please summarize your philosophy of education.

4. How do you live out this philosophy daily in your classroom? Any specific examples?

5. How has this philosophy changed and developed throughout your career?

6. What was the biggest moment that happened that really made you rethink your philosophy?

7. What are some moments that have solidified your philosophy?