Teacher Reflection: An Examination of Thinking about Thinking

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Description of Teaching Context

I am a full-year intern as a part of Penn State University’s Professional Development School during the 2009-2010 school year at the State College Area School District in central Pennsylvania. For the last nine months I have been student teaching in a self-contained 4th grade classroom at Gray’s Woods Elementary School. In addition to my full-time classroom, I also helped teach half-days once a week in a first grade classroom at Panorama Village Elementary School for the first half of the school year and sixth grade at Park Forest Middle School for the remainder of the year.

Examining the overall State College School District teacher population, according to the SCASD website, there are 675 teachers, 329 of which have either a master’s and/or a PhD degree. (SCASD.org, 2010) There are no specific numbers from the State College Area School District, but according to the National Education Association about nine percent of all K-6 teachers are male. This would mean of the approximately 400 elementary teachers in the district, 36 to 40 are male. On average, eighty-eight percent of State College Area high school graduates continue to secondary education or professional training schools.

There are three schools in the geographic region I have narrowed my focus upon, Gray’s Woods Elementary School, Park Forest Elementary School and Park Forest Middle School. Gray’s Woods is the home to 423 students and 25 teachers, 3 male and 22 female. Park Forest Elementary enrolls 447 students with 35 female and 3 male teachers. The Park Forest Middle School with grades six through eight has 883 students
and 64 teachers with 49 female and 15 male. Among the three schools, over half of the teachers graduated with a degree or certification from Penn State University. Thirty –five percent of these teachers have either a master’s or PHD degree as well. (See Appendix A for full Inquiry Brief)

Wonderings and Questions

Main Wondering

My wondering began innocently with a number of discussions with State College Area School District teachers on how they plan, teach, and examine lessons. Having the opportunity to help plan each week with my own mentor teacher has provided me insight into her thinking about not only the lessons, but reactions to the lessons by the students and why particular lessons worked or didn’t. These in-depth conversations made me begin to wonder how I as a first-year teacher will have to reflect on so much more than I do now. I have been fortunate to be trained to reflect on each lesson through our on-line lesson plans as well as required weekly reflections as a part of being in the Professional Development School (PDS). These assigned daily and weekly reflections caused me to wonder what I will do when they are no longer required and what do professional teachers do to reflect.

In what internal and external ways do teachers at Park Forest Middle School, Gray’s Woods Elementary School and Park Forest Elementary School use reflection to improve their practice?
Sub-Wonderings

- What are teachers reflecting about?
- Do teachers examine particular lessons, curriculum, students or the entire year?
- On what do teachers reflect? When? What motivates them to be reflective? What happens as a result of their reflection?
- Is it something teachers do all the time or do they give themselves time each week to look back on their week?
- Is there enough time for a teacher to be a comprehensive reflective practitioner?
- Do first-year teachers continue to journal and reflect in that manner as they practiced as a PDS intern or pre-service teacher?
- Is there a better time in the day or week to reflect? Can it be right after a lesson or is it something that needs some separation time?
- Do veteran teachers even reflect anymore? Is there a point where they feel as if they have seen it all and find it unnecessary?
- Could new technology such as podcasts or Studiocode help teachers in reflecting? Have teachers ever used these types of reflective tools? If not, do teachers think they would help or would they imagine them not to be useful?
- If they do have a regular reflective time, how much time do they devote to it?
- Do teachers read professional journals, books or examine others to help them to become more reflective in their own teaching?
- How do these types of tools and practices help teachers to develop their reflective practice?
Data Collection

Clear Description of Data Collection

In an effort to provide evidence of my wonderings I chose several different ways to collect data. I started with creating and issuing an anonymous on-line survey to teachers in the three schools I wanted to study. Through these responses I conducted six in-depth interviews with two teachers from each school. Finally I examined some formal reflective evidence provided to me by State College Area School District teachers and PDS interns within my three-school examination.

On-Line Survey

Early in the data collection phase of my inquiry I quickly realized that my goal of understanding how all teachers in the State College Area School District used reflection would be more analysis than one person could handle. With that in mind, I chose to issue an on-line survey through SurveyMonkey to three particular schools based on geographic proximity. (See Appendix C for Map of the three schools) I chose Park Forest Elementary School, Park Forest Middle School, and the one I am currently serving as an intern, Gray’s Woods Elementary School. My survey was issued in early March of 2010 and I closed it in early April with a total of 98 responses from the three schools. I asked ten questions examining demographics and reflection practices. (See Appendix D for list of questions in the Survey) I also discovered that among the three schools I got a good representation of teachers with all levels of experience. (See Appendix E for Bar Chart on number of years Taught) These levels of experience did change when I examined how many years these same teachers had taught just in the State College School District.
(See Appendix F for Bar Chart on SCASD years Taught) But it was through my questions directly on reflection and reflective practices that I was able to gather data on how these particular teachers used reflection in their teaching.

**In-Depth Interviews**

One of the most difficult aspects of my data collection methods was choosing teachers to interview in-depth. I decided to choose two teachers from each school. *(See Appendix G for list of Teachers Interviewed)* I started within my own school at Gray’s Woods Elementary and found a teacher who was in his first year as well as a teacher with almost thirty-five years of experience who is retiring at the end of the current school year. At Park Forest Middle School, I chose my partner classroom teacher with four years of experience and another teacher who had over twenty years of experience. Finally, the two teachers I chose at Park Forest Elementary School had nine and three years of experience respectively. I decided that years of experience would be my major data factor because it would give me an opportunity to see how reflective practices were seen by teachers who were very familiar with the school district and the curriculum as opposed to those who were still just in their early years of the profession.

Originally I had intended on asking an identical set of questions, but realized after my first interview that some questions had to be different based on the number of years of teaching experience. I did end up finding a set of nine questions that all six teachers were asked along with follow up questions. *(See Appendix H for list of 9 Questions)* I did discover that interesting answers did drive me to ask follow up questions that I think would help me flesh out more in-depth answers as my interviews progressed. I chose not
to transcribe the interviews in a full fashion but created a list of short-handed questions and answers in which I could go back and refer to my videos and examine specific answers fully. (See Appendix I for short-handed list of Questions and Answers)

Formal Reflective Evidence

To achieve some triangulation I asked teachers both in my on-line survey and during my in-depth interviews if they could provide me with some formal reflective tools they have used. Ironically this became one of the more difficult pieces of evidence to obtain. I widened my search to current interns as well as myself to cull through reflective journals and reflective responses within lesson plans. Many full-time teachers did not keep a formal reflective device as I had imagined they would have and I was forced to examine notes and post-its that have been written in curriculum manuals and textbooks. (See Appendix J for a collective of Formal Reflective Evidence) Through these formal reflective devices I was able to further develop questions for my in-depth interviews.

Data Analysis

Steps Taken to Analyze the Data

I was initially under the assumption that my main data would come from my in-depth interviews and I would use them to center my claims around. But I discovered as I read academic research on the topic of reflection that to answer my wonderings and sub-wonderings I would need a more baseline understanding of reflection as seen by a group of teachers as opposed to six individual teachers. Additionally, it would be unfair to
characterize the reflective practices and opinions of only six teachers in my three-school analysis.

After issuing my on-line survey I waited several weeks before I began to analyze the results and determine what sort of questions I would be asking my six in-depth interview subjects. I initially had about forty-five responses after my survey went live after I sent the link to the three participating principals. I made one last push to obtain more responses late in March of 2010 and got a great response rate finishing with ninety-eight responses.

I examined the data collected and was first able to determine that reflection means a lot of different things to different teachers. One of the first data sets that jumped out at me was that a majority of teachers answering my survey felt one element was the biggest factor they reflect upon. (See Appendix K for Bar Chart on Most Important Element of Reflection) I discovered that they overwhelmingly focused on students by the over ninety percent response rate followed by lessons only at thirteen percent. I realized I would ask follow up questions during my one-on-one interviews to further examine what about students they were reflecting upon. Another question that threw me a bit during my on-line survey was what teachers would define as reflection. (See Appendix L for Bar Chart on Defining Reflection) I gave the teachers to answer more than one choice for a definition and I discovered that all the answers garnered a number of responses but it was the other replies that gave me some rich responses. Through these on-line responses I then formulated some in-depth questions I think would help me answer my main wondering and sub-questions.
Explanation of Findings

After examining all the data I gathered from my various sources and trying to correlate it with my main wondering and sub-wonderings, I have developed three claims. These claims have helped me better understand the idea of reflection as used by teachers in the three schools I selected to examine in the State College Area School District.

Claim #1: **Most teachers do not tend to use a formal reflection tool despite the fact that they do see the value in its use.**

One of the big ideas that I have learned being a PDS intern this year, has been the idea of reflection and how to be reflective. We were challenged from the first day of school to write weekly reflective journals that could be about anything that was related to teaching or the profession of teaching. When we began writing lesson plans in the spring semester, we were required to reflect on every lesson we taught. This development of our reflective tool was not lost on Liz Cullin, a 5th grade teacher at Park Forest Elementary and former PDS intern, who said, “I think that going through the PDS program, I was primed from day one to be reflective, but I have only gotten better at being reflective with time.” Gail Romig, also a former PDS intern and nine-year teacher at Park Forest Elementary agreed, “I do think being a part of the PDS made me extra reflective because I was asked to do that so much through my internship. I think that is so ingrained in interns.”

Knowing that I and many other PDS interns would be embarking on our first year of teaching soon, had me wondering if the formal reflective tools we have used in PDS the past year was something seen among teachers. Some of these formal methods, such
as a journal, podcast, and video analysis are just some of the ways that can encourage authentic reflection. I asked teachers in my three-school survey to rank what they considered the most useful tool they used when reflecting. (See Appendix M for most useful reflective activities) The number one response was discussions with colleagues within grade level while a myriad of responses were given as the number two answer. These responses ranged from discussions with paraprofessionals, interns and even meditation and prayer. But the part that intrigued me was the lack of formal reflective devices. Only six of the ninety-eight responses even considered a journal as a viable option.

It was during my in-depth interviews that I asked what teachers used to reflect and several declared that a simple sticky note did the job. For several, the sticky note is used to help recall what not and what to do the next time a lesson is taught. Gray’s Woods Elementary third grade teacher Linda Witmer explained that she is married to her sticky notes, “I will quickly go back after a lesson and mark when Jim needs work on fractional sets or Mary needs more work on this. And I have stickies all over my desk.” (See Appendix J for Sticky Notes) Gail Romig, a nine-year teacher at Park Forest Elementary finds the notes helpful, “I keep pretty meticulous notes in my plan book. People make fun of me for so many details. I will put a sticky note in my unit saying “don’t do this” or “this was too hard”. I have to have them or I won’t remember.”

Many teachers did agree that the idea of journals and new technology with podcasts or video analysis could also be great tools, but time is such a factor. First-year teacher, Matt Peterson, at Gray’s Woods Elementary said, “At the beginning of the year I really took notes and reflected on each lesson, but as the year has gone on, actually I have
not been able to reflect as much as I would like to. I’m not going to lie and say I do as much reflecting now as I did at the beginning of year because I just don’t have the time.” He went on to say he does however see this will change, “I guess new reflection technology has always seemed a bit foreign to me. I have thought about doing a video journal with my computer or voice recording. I guess I still reach for paper first. That must be the teacher in me.”

My final question in my on-line survey I asked for teachers willing to share a journal to send me an email. I received only two responses. I could attribute this to the intense personal nature of the journal or the fact that they just don’t exist. Although I do not have direct proof, I still wonder if this meant that journals are not used that much or many teachers were not willing to share them with me. But based on my in depth-interviews and the fact that only six respondents even claimed to use a journal gave me the idea that reflection is not always as formal as I first surmised.

Claim #2: Reflection changes during the first few years of teaching from a lesson-centered approach to student-centered.

As an intern in PDS, my reflective emphasis has been on my lessons and my impressions as to how they went in terms of whether I met the objectives and goals I set out for each one. But when I issued my on-line survey to the three schools, it came back with a resounding ninety-two percent response that students were the most important element of reflection. (See Appendix K) Lessons came in only at thirteen percent and the numbers really surprised me. It was during my first interview with first-year teacher Matt Peterson, that I realized the emphasis on lesson reflection was his biggest concern,
“It’s difficult I think for a first-year teacher versus a more experienced teacher to know what is coming next in terms of curriculum. I wasn’t there yet and I have had to reflect on the units and the lesson first and then the students afterwards.” As I examined my data further I began to wonder when and how these reflections on lessons moved to a student centered reflective approach.

What I discovered is that in the first few years of teaching, the time crunch, new curriculum to learn, and the newness of the profession can really impede first-year teachers student-centered reflective practices. Matt Ammerman, a sixth-grade teacher in his third year at Park Forest Middle School, felt first-year teachers can’t even be expected to reflect on their students, “In your first year you are trying to keep your head above water. You probably reflect on the students and don’t even realize it since it seems as if all you are reflecting on is nothing but the curriculum, the curriculum, and the curriculum.”

Liz Cullin agreed, “That first year is hairy, at best. You can be prepared as possible and think you know it all. But until you are really in your own classroom doing it solo, it takes a lot of energy to be reflective.” Gail Romig added that she felt in her first year as a teacher she couldn’t take her reflective spotlight off of herself, “This probably sounds awful, but I felt I was reflecting more on how I was responding during the lesson. Oh is this working? Am I organized enough? Is this what I wanted to say? When you are first teacher you are not comfortable in your teacher skin. I always said my kids the first year learned in spite of what I did. But of course that is the nature of this job.”
As I examined the data further I found that many teachers agreed that there was a two or three year period when reflective practices began to change from lesson and curriculum focused to student centered. Liz Cullin saw the change become quite evident, “By year two you have a better idea how it went. Now you are pulling from your memory. You can change parts that you think you can do better. You think more about your learners are and how it will go with this set of kids. In year three, you understand your curriculum, understand objectives, and you know what the students need to take home both those that are struggling and higher achievers.” Kathleen O’Connell, a twenty-one year veteran teaching sixth grade at Park Forest Middle School described the transition, “I started spending a lot of time thinking about where my students are and how to get to them to the next step. Whatever that is, and how they are at so many different levels.” I leave this idea of student reflection with the words of Linda Witmer who in her thirty-four plus years of teaching has her reflection skills turned on all the time, “Sometimes I think you are so busy thinking about what you are doing that you are not really seeing how it’s being received. I see this in interns a lot. You might have the greatest hook and everything you need it to be. If it goes sailing right over everyone’s head, was it really a great lesson? I have always been focused on the children. That’s where it needs to be.”

Claim #3: With experience, teachers can begin to more easily access their in-action reflection techniques over their on-action.

In the work of Donald Schon and his book, The Reflective Practitioner, an examination of two different types of reflection. These are known as in-action and on-action reflection and they lead me to my third and final claim. Schon’s focus of
reflection indicated that it occurred before or after an action, which he termed as on-action. This would include thinking about a lesson before teaching it and then reflecting upon it after it was over. In-action reflection was anything that would adjust instruction based on unexpected student reactions or perceptions. These would be changes made while a lesson would be taught and even re-teach a part of the lesson that was not understood.

I wanted to get a specific answer to what teachers would define reflection as in my on-line survey. (See Appendix L for survey results on how to define reflection) I decided it would be unfair to pin them down to one particular definition and allowed for more than one answer as well as open responses if they chose. Although this lead me to a full tally greater than one hundred percent, what was revealed was that teachers were using both on-action and in-action reflection. Knowing more about the two ideas further I would have drilled my question down to see if they thought about what went poorly or well in a lesson, during the lesson, or after it was over. But my open responses left me not to wonder about this quite as much. (See Appendix N for survey open responses) Several responses directly indicated that they saw reflection as an in-action activity. One response claimed, “Reflection is an ongoing process that can even occur during a lesson which can result in redirecting instruction.” Many felt that reflection was not just one thing and felt a combination of all four answers were true. This gave me the basis to ask my in-depth interviews about the same idea.

I asked first-year teacher Matt Peterson where he thought what part of the spectrum he was practicing more of, in-action or on-action reflection, “I think I have done both. Anytime you are teaching a lesson and something is not working you have to
pause. There’s a lot of thinking on your feet, and that’s what teaching really is.
Especially first or second teaching and you are still getting used to it.” Gail Romig felt
that in-action reflection is always the one that takes more time for teachers to develop,
“With experience I’m not afraid to switch gears in the middle of a lesson when things are
not going well. Being a reflective person and knowing kid’s learning styles better, I’m
more able to meet their needs based on my own reflections and what I’m noticing.”
Teachers have discovered that in-action reflection is something that they tend to use
almost everyday. I asked Matt Ammerman if the idea of in-action reflection is
impossible for a first year teacher, “No I don’t think it’s impossible. But it’s back to the
experience factor, I know where the lesson is going to go and I know where the finish
line is. If I notice something is not working I feel comfortable making changes on the fly
and either redirect a particular student or redirect the entire class.” But Kathleen
O’Connell felt that in-action still has to be a two way street, “You have to ask a lot of
questions of your students. You’ve got to get out of the way and listen to them. Because
it’s so easy to listen for what you want to hear.”

I wanted to examine my own year to see whether I where I felt my reflections had
fallen based on my reflection entries from my lessons and consistently I was an on-action
reflector. (See Appendix O for Reflection Journal entries) I found that I was more
satisfied when I managed to get through all the objectives than whether all the students
understood the lesson. Liz Cullin says this is a common mistake made by rookie
teachers, “
Reflections and Implications on Future Practice

When I began this inquiry, my intent and purpose was to see how I as a first-year teacher could use the reflective tools I have sharpened in the PDS program at a higher level. I wanted to discover how current State College Area School District teachers were using reflective practices. I was interested in being able to apply what I learned to help me become a better reflector, examine what I should be reflecting upon and what are the best tools to reflect with. In PDS we have been given the unique opportunity to see how so many teachers teach and manage their classrooms on a day to day basis but not always the chance to find out what thoughts were behind each lesson or decision made in the classroom. My inquiry gave me this unique opportunity to do just that. To discover how teachers think about thinking.

It’s ironic that I am now reflecting about an inquiry covering reflection and how it has changed my thinking. In essence my thinking and approach to my first year being a classroom teacher has changed. As I interviewed the six teachers in-depth I noticed some of the exact pitfalls first-year teachers face when they are reflecting. I truly believe that I will still make some of these mistakes, but also I can start to think about how I can improve my reflection tools at the start of the year. The genesis of this inquiry was my interest in the teacher software program Studio-code and if I thought it would be a valuable reflection tool. Studio-code is designed to examine a teacher’s in class lesson or activity using a video analysis tool. I was curious as to whether something like this would be a good tool for teachers to reflect with. I quickly realized my scope was too narrow but that I really was onto a much bigger picture. My focus of what tools are used for reflection was broadened to the idea of reflection and how it was used. This still
brings me back to the formal tools of reflection and I can see that with my knowledge and understanding that I’d be willing to try a video blog or podcast as a new way to reflect. I’m a communicative person in the first place and feel very comfortable verbalizing my thoughts. But I have been warned already that time is the factor I will have to contend with no matter what sort of formal reflective device I choose.

My two other claims spoke directly to what I will as a first and second year teacher have my reflection fall upon. I have even noticed during my PDS internship that I am guilty of focusing only on the lesson and find it hard to actually see if the students always understand the lesson. This experience factor is going to be something I will have to grow into and I hope that since I’m already aware of my reflection focus that I can remember to take a step back once in awhile and really genuinely focus on the students and their needs.

As I look back the process of inquiry and more directly reflecting upon it, I wasn’t sure what sort of answers I would end up getting. I did manage to keep an open mind by not letting my results taint my thoughts. As with any inquiry, I’m left still wondering if it is better to reflect alone or with colleagues? Is it possible for a first year teacher to really learn how to reflect on students? Can a young teacher be even expected to develop a good reflective tool? Will new forms of reflection such as video analysis really take root to the point that they don’t seem too foreign or take too much time? After this inquiry I sincerely believe that teaching without reflecting is like eating without tasting.
Appendix A

PDS Inquiry Brief

Nick Downs

February 24th, 2010

Context
I am an intern as a part of Penn State University’s Professional Development School during the 2009-2010 school year at the State College Area School District. I have been student teaching in a 4th grade classroom at Gray’s Woods Elementary School.

Examining the overall State College School District teacher population, according to the SCASD website, there are 675 teachers, 329 of which have either a master’s and/or a PHD degree. There are no specific numbers from the State College Area School District, but according to the National Education Association about nine percent of all K-6 teachers are male. This would mean of the approximately 400 elementary teachers in the district, 36 to 40 are male. On average, eighty-eight percent of State College Area high school graduates continue to secondary education or professional training schools.

There are three schools in the geographic region I have narrowed my focus upon, Gray’s Woods Elementary School, Park Forest Elementary School and Park Forest Middle School. Gray’s Woods is the home to 423 students and 25 teachers, 3 male and 22 female. Park Forest Elementary enrolls 447 students with 35 female and 3 male teachers. The Park Forest Middle School with grades six through eight has 883 students and 64 teachers with 49 female and 15 male. Among the three schools, over half of the teachers graduated with a degree or certification from Penn State University. Thirty-five percent of these teachers have either a master’s or PHD degree as well.

**Inquiry Rationale**

The idea for my inquiry came from many conversations with a 12th grade English teacher at the State College Area High School. Michael Goldfine and his wife Kathleen O’Connell, a sixth grade teacher at Park Forest Middle School really set into motion my thinking about reflective practices. We have had many far-reaching conversations about life in general over the past year, but they would always come back to the idea of how Michael felt that he was a poor teacher for the first ten years of his teaching career. He said this put his entire life into a tailspin because he did not feel his teaching was at a level that he wanted it to be. He would attribute this to the idea that he was not a good reflective practitioner. As he struggled to find his own inner teaching style, his wife through many hours of reflection and studying was slowly finding her voice. He realized that reflection was the key element in her understanding of her teaching and the direction she wanted it to take. Until I had begun the Professional Development School program, I had never even thought about the idea of being reflective. In my former profession as video coordinator for the Penn State Football team, there was always thought of how to do the job more quickly, and speed was always the baseline to draw from. The sooner the information and data could be delivered to the coaching staff, the sooner they could analyze and create game plans. Suddenly, I’m thrust into a profession in which time is still important, but how to make the best use of that time is even more critical.

Since the beginning of the year I have been involved in the planning of each week with my mentor teacher. She has given me great insight into how she sees each month, week and day breakdown. She works very hard to make sure that the curriculum’s goals are adhered to while also meeting the needs of the students. Through these planning
meetings with her, I have wondered about her cognitive thought process and we have discussed it at length. My teaching opportunities in the first semester of my student teaching year were few and far between and each lesson I taught gave me time to think about the lesson and what I thought went well and what did not. I also received feedback from my mentor teacher as well as my Professional Development Associate from Penn State. These were valuable resources and opinions that made it much easier for me to think about the lesson from a different perspective. But my thoughts came back to my discussions with Michael Goldfine and how next year I would have my own classroom and it would be my domain from in which to sink or swim. This year I have been so lucky to have my mentor teacher by my side to guide me as well as my PDA to help me reflect and think about my lessons and ideas. This semester I have been fortunate to teach a lot more and keeping up with my reflections and analysis of my lessons, which has been a valuable way to look inwards. Many days I am teaching two or more lessons and the chance to think about each one becomes very difficult. I tend to lump the entire day into one mindset of reflection and analysis. But I’m still able to in some form, examine my teaching style and whether I have met the goals and objectives for each individual lesson. This formal analysis has helped me to think about each lesson and how I can improve upon it. This required analysis made me wonder what it will be like when I’m on my own and how the professionals around me reflect themselves.

Main Wondering

How do teachers at Park Forest Middle School, Gray’s Woods Elementary School and Park Forest Elementary School use reflection to improve their practice? What ways do they use reflection? Are we aware that we are reflecting or going through motions?

Sub Questions

What are some of the ways that teachers reflect?

What are teachers reflecting about? Do teachers examine particular lessons, curriculum, students or the entire year?

On what do teachers reflect? When? What motivates them to be reflective? What happens as a result of their reflection?

Is it something teachers do all the time or do they give themselves time each week to look back on their week?

Is there enough time for a teacher to be a comprehensive reflective practitioner?

Do first-year teachers continue to journal and reflect in that manner as they practiced as a PDS intern or pre-service teacher?

Is there a better time in the day or week to reflect? Can it be right after a lesson or is it something that needs some separation time?
Do veteran teachers even reflect anymore? Is there a point where they feel as if they have seen it all and find it unnecessary?

Could new technology such as podcasts or Studiocode help teachers in reflecting? Have teachers ever used these types of reflective tools? If not, do teachers think they would help or would they imagine them not to be useful?

If they do have a regular reflective time, how much time do they devote to it?

Do teachers read professional journals, books or examine others to help them to become more reflective in their own teaching? How do these types of tools and practices help teachers to develop their reflective practices?

Data Collection

- To examine my three specific schools in my wondering, I will be providing the three principals with a link to an anonymous online survey that will contain ten questions about reflection. The questions will be examined by one of the principals as to the validity of the questions as well as if any of them could be considered leading. Each question will be examined to make sure they tie back to my main wondering or sub-questions. The survey will provide me with an overall look at my teacher set and will have several open ended opportunities for response. The survey will help me to triangulate my data as well as give me better questions to ask during my video interviews.

- Video Interviews will make up a majority of my data with the idea that I will ask the same set of standard questions to each teacher I interview. My list of questions will be examined by a neutral party, most likely a district teacher, who will make sure they tie back to my main wondering as well as my sub-questions. This piloting of my question list will give me the opportunity to fine tune my questions and get some response possibilities before I begin my actual questioning among the teachers in my subset. I will make sure not to make the interviews too long and make sure that each teacher thinks about the questions by giving them prior to the interview, so they are better able to formulate their opinions.

- I will request for teachers in my geographic region, who do use journals, to give me permission to examine them. I am using the survey as a conduit for my request to see if any will be willing to share them with me. I am discovering that teachers I would like to interview do not use journals. I will ask PDS interns if they are willing to allow me to use some of their reflective journal entries as evidence that journaling is done at the intern level. I will ask any interns who do volunteer their entries if they would be willing to be interviewed on what the journals have done for them in terms of reflection. If I find an intern who is practicing reflection beyond the weekly reflective journal entry, I will see if they would be willing to be video interviewed as well.
## Time Line

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<tr>
<th>Week &amp; Dates</th>
<th>Planning &amp; Implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week #1 – Feb. 7th-13th</td>
<td>• Continue to read journals and books for ideas about reflective practices.</td>
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<td>• Make sure to contact every teacher asked to be a part of the inquiry if they will be willing to be interviewed. Inform them that it will be on camera.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Create a consent release form allowing me to use their image and likeness in my video for my presentation.</td>
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<td>• Generate a list of possible questions and how they will move towards answering my overall inquiry question.</td>
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<td>Week #2 – Feb. 14th – 20th</td>
<td>• Rewrite and narrow down the questions to a list of manageable questions and test them out on several teachers and PDA’s to see what responses are obtained.</td>
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<td>• Clean off computer so that there is plenty of space to upload the video.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Purchase an external hard drive to store video on.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Contact prospective teachers for interest in being interviewed on videotape.</td>
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<td>• Continue reading and researching journals &amp; books.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week #3 – Feb. 21st – 27th</td>
<td>• Distribute Online survey to teachers at 3 schools.</td>
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<td>• Load videos into computer and take notes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Feb. 24th – Revised Draft &amp; Ann. Bib Due</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ask other interns for journal entries that they would consider submitting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week #4 – Feb. 28th – March 6th</td>
<td>• Schedule and conduct first video interviews.</td>
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<td>• Continue to load video interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Begin to analyze on-line surveys and look for data.</td>
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<td>• Begin to look for trends and possible data clues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week #5 – March 7th – 13th</td>
<td>• Spring Break week</td>
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<td>• Continue to look for interview opportunities with identified reflective teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week #6 – March 14th – 20th</td>
<td>• Begin to compile all the data and make claims to outline</td>
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<td>• Create a rough outline of the paper’s main points and parts of interviews that I’d like to feature.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Begin to edit the video and follow the paper's outline as to what the different sections of the video will work in the presentation.</td>
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### Appendix B

**Annotated Bibliography – Inquiry 2010**

**Nick Downs – PDS 2009-10**


   a. Schön’s work might be considered the bell-weather of research on how to be a reflective practitioner. His basic premise is that when teachers or professionals in any field receive real time coaching and guidance to think carefully about what they do and why they do it, in turn they can learn in a more thoughtful way. The idea sounds fairly simple and straightforward, but it is really up to the learner and
whether he or she is willing to learn. Schön does further examine the ideas of reflection on many levels including a full examination of reflection-in-action in which the professional or teacher while teaching is able to reflect on the fly and change some facet of the teaching to affect the learning. This immediacy of reflection is another basic tenet I’m interested in discovering from my interview subjects. He also examines the idea of reflection-on-action which is basically reflection done at a later time. The book provides a large number of examples and instances of reflection across all professions but does build basic ideas of how all professionals are reflective. This book will provide a great foundation for me to build my understandings of reflective practices across all types of professions and teaching in particular. I will use it to help understand how reflective practice has been examined in research and the discoveries that have been made.


a. This rather simple but very concise article spells out the ideas of reflection and what it really entails. It follows the idea that reflection is something for all teachers to use at various stages and levels of their professional life. It explains the stages of reflection and how there is a beginning, middle, and end to the event to which a teacher will reflect upon. The article continues its analysis with the positive aspects of peer observation, which then can be used in the reflective process. Richards used several fascinating quotes from the peer process as well as responses from the teacher who then reflected upon the process. The last section of the article provides several methods for reflection including self-reporting, autobiographies, journal writing, collaborative diary keeping, and recording lessons. Overall the article provides a nice set of reasons for reflection, the process and ideas to take it further.


a. Daniel Pratt’s piece examines reflection as what happens in the end result by looking at teaching styles and how teachers have found the size or style that fits them. Pratt attempts to show that the constructivist view of learning and teaching has been forced among many educators across the world as a “one size fits all” mentality and ignores the idea that educators still must find the perspective that fits their own development of good teaching. He breaks it down into five sub-categories: Transmission, Developmental, Apprenticeship, Nurturing, and Social Reform. Pratt sees that through these five sub-categories, teachers create a lens in which they view teaching and learning in a unique blend of beliefs, intentions and actions. This reading gives me an opportunity to examine research of best
practice across all cultures and world school systems to understand a basic framework of how teachers see best practices in their own classrooms. The end result for teachers is that they find a style and manner, which suits them and the students, which is in essence the idea of being a reflective practitioner. I think the reading helps me develop a baseline of understanding for what many consider best practice and to examine if I see any of these perspectives come to the forefront as I discuss why teachers practice reflection in the first place and what they hope to achieve with it.


   a. This website was created by the Chancellor’s Office of the Minnesota State College & Universities as a tool for educators and teachers to begin to learn how to reflect. I found it a fascinating resource as to how professional programs encourage their employees to think about the facets of reflection and ways in which they can start ideas. They really examine the ideas of Daniel Pratt and refer to a website created by Pratt that helps teachers understand which perspective they would most embody. In terms of my inquiry, this website and the links built into it helps me understand the process in which professional educational institutions see reflective practice. It examines questions that should be asked and is a great way for me to think about some of my questions I would like to ask teachers that I’m planning on interviewing.


   a. The idea behind this title is that once a teacher becomes a reflective practitioner, what are the ways they can use it in their everyday practice. McKernan examines the idea of influencing curriculum to best suit the discoveries and ideas established during reflection. Much like our own inquiry process, the book lays out the idea that teachers are researchers in their own domain and can use quantifiable results through reflection and research to enhance their own curriculum and lessons. The book goes in depth in the ways to study curriculum and develop an action research plan. Once data is gathered it helps a teacher to be a mature reflective practitioner and examine the data both intrinsically and critically. I think this work really helps me to think about my own reflection techniques, as I will also be gathering data for my inquiry and how to examine the data further while still also understanding the reflective aspect. In a sense this title helps me to reflect on my reflection as it were. It provides many
specific examples of research and real examples of how data is gathered and then reflected upon.

   
a. This title examines reflective practices with an emphasis on how different types of reflection can influence improvement in schools. The book states that experience by itself is no longer enough but reflecting on experiences can lead to increased development. The desire of the authors of the this title is to show how reflective practice improves teaching and learning in schools, how to initiate reflective practices or improve upon them, and how to apply reflective practices within schools. This book is an excellent way for me to see how researchers see reflective practitioners, and how they can take their reflective ideas and create real world examples. I will be interested to see if some of the ideas put forth in this book will bear themselves out in my interviews and whether these are new ideas or ones that teachers are already using.

   
a. This book has provided me a great baseline as to understand reflective practices and teaching. It lays out the assumptions and beliefs that are sometimes wrongly attributed to the ideas of reflective practice. It examines the different viewpoints of reflective teaching and how they differ from one another. It also takes a look at the historical context and looks in particular at how John Dewey examined reflection and how today’s scholars look it at. What I find particularly valuable about this book is the examination of vignettes, which highlight the nuances of reflective practice and how they can differ ever so slightly. This is an excellent resource for my inquiry providing me with a nice base onto which to build my understanding of reflection and how it is viewed academically and within the classroom itself.

   
a. The idea behind this paper written in the journal, Teaching and Teacher Education, is focusing in on the idea of co-teaching and how interns such as myself learn reflection through observation as well as doing. It examines how many mentor teachers or experienced teachers have developed the sense of “masterful” teaching and can perform reflection without really even thinking
about it. It can fall under the umbrella of reflection-in-action but really was thought about long before and prior reflection is now activated without even thinking about it. This innate ability now has to be transferred to a student or intern still learning the craft and how they are at times unprepared to act in real-life situation because they have not developed the methods needed to become a reflective practitioner. The paper is a case study of a mentor and student and how they taught a 4-month unit in 7th grade science and how an intern can be developed through reflection into a “masterful” teacher. This is not an indicator that this teacher is perfect, but rather they have used reflective practices to develop mastery in a particular subject, topic or style. This is an excellent resource for me to examine how novice teachers are at times overwhelmed by the amount of information and devices used in teaching. It lays out an action plan for a mentor and a student to work together in tandem developing the student’s reflective skills.


http://www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/reflection/teaching.html

a. One of the more fascinating aspects of reflective practicioning is that it reaches across all professions. This website is from the UK Centre for Legal Education examines three ways of introducing reflection into teaching. It focuses on self and peer assessment, problem based learning, and personal development planning and portfolios. All three ideas are to help teachers provide tools for students to assess themselves as a part of their learning process. Although this does not involve direct reflective practicioning, it does help teachers encourage students to think about their own learning and ways to understand their learning. This is in the same way a teacher examines their own teaching and learns about what they are trying to teach and how the best way to convey that is. I think this website gives me a good frame of reference to examine student learning and how these tools can also be used in helping teachers to become better reflective practitioners.


a. This article is the synopsis of a three-year study in which an elementary school used student portfolios to examine what teachers thought they had taught and what students had actually learned. This examination gave teachers a better idea of what sort of instructional practices they were using and how they were able to use reflective practices using the student portfolios to reform on a number of levels. Teachers were able to examine classroom practice, identify organizational structures and professional development opportunities to help them reform their
teachings and curriculum. The article provides an excellent method of helping teachers to become reflective practitioners by using a student created portfolio to give teachers a tangible reflective device. I believe this helps my inquiry by seeing how a connection can be made directly between teachers and teaching and students and learning. It provides solid evidence in which teachers can examine their practices through the eyes of the students they are trying to teach. It gives me another idea for a tool that can be used for teacher assessment and analysis within a classroom. I think it is a way to have teachers connect what their function is and tie it into their students thinking and learning, without using the typical ways of reflective practitionering.

Appendix C
The three schools examined in my inquiry are marked by the stars in the map above. Park Forest Middle School and Park Forest Elementary are next to each other and Gray’s Woods Elementary is the star on the left portion of the map.

Appendix E
Appendix F
How many years have you been teaching in the State College Area School District?

- 1-5 years: 39.8% (35)
- 6-10 years: 20.4% (20)
- 11-15 years: 10.2% (9)
- 16-20 years: 18.4% (18)
- 21-25 years: 4.1% (4)
- 26-30 years: 2.0% (2)
- 30+ years: 5.1% (5)

Appendix G
Gray's Woods Elementary

1. Mr. Matt Peterson – 5th Grade Teacher – 1st year teacher
2. Ms. Linda – 3rd Grade Teacher – 34.5 years experience

Park Forest Middle School

1. Mr. Matt Ammerman – 6th Grade Teacher – 4 years experience
2. Ms. Kathleen O'Connell – 6th Grade Teacher – 21 years experience

Park Forest Elementary School

1. Ms. Gail Romig – 3rd & 4th Looping Teacher – 9 years experience
2. Ms. Liz Cullin – 5th Grade Teacher – 3 years experience

Appendix H

Questions used in In-Depth Interviews:

Used in all interviews:

1. When you were a first year teacher, did you recall if you reflected more on lessons or students?
2. What do you consider reflection?
3. Do use a formal way of reflection? I.E., a journal, notebook, audio or video?
4. Why do you not use (or use) any of these tools?
5. Is there enough time to reflect?
6. Donald Schon has seen reflection in two distinct ways, In-action and On-action. Which of these do you think you use more often?
7. I have noticed that most teachers say they reflect on students but they also use colleagues to help reflect. Is it fair to reflect with these colleagues when most teachers admit that they themselves know their students best?
8. When do you reflect? Is there a specific time or place?

9. Do you ever try and turn off your reflective moments?

**Appendix I**

Inquiry 2010 – Video Interviews

1. Kathleen O’Connell (21 years – 5th, 6th, K)

Q: In the beginning did you feel you like focused on the lessons or students? Where do you fall?

A: I spend a lot time thinking about where my students are and how to get them to the next level. I do still write practical notes on how to make a lesson work better on their thinking. When I change a lesson, it’s setting up their thinking better when I ask this question.

Q: At the end of the day are you reflecting on the lesson itself or how the students reacted to the lesson?

A: The kids. What happened in their brains. That’s what I want to know.

Q: When does it happen?

A: A lot of times it happens as I am teaching. It will happen in midstream. I don’t know how teachers can plan a week at a time because what happens today will inform what will happen tomorrow. Especially in math. Free periods when I’m running, swimming, driving.

Q: If you are not reflecting on a lesson when does it happen?

A: The most structured I am with reflection is usually at the end of a unit when I’m putting things away. I am constantly making changes as a unit is going on. At the end of the lesson, but with the advent of the computer and am transferring from paper files to computer files, it is quicker to make a change than before. This was a better question, better to pair share first.

Q: Is there a best technique, journal log? Waste of time?

A: The more you can impress on young teachers to start that way that it’s a great thing to do. Watching yourself is a great way to reflect, I learned a lot from it when I did. Nobody has any time.
Q: Paradox: Reflecting on students or reflecting with colleagues?

A: Both are useful. I shy away from reflecting on my students with other teachers who don’t have them. Some can be negative about students. I spend more time on what can I do to make things happen or not happen. I think you can reflect with teachers on lessons and the learning of lessons and what you can do to make that happen.

Q: What does reflective practicing mean to you?

A: I think we as teachers have an incredible opportunity because we are in charge of our own ship to a great extent. I can close my door and get kids to learn things depending on what I do. The better I am at thinking about how I am doing and the best I can. It took a lot of years to get to that point?

Q: Why?

A: You have to listen to them. Ask a lot of questions of your students. You must get out of the way and let them talk. You must not put your expectations upon them. Figuring out how students are thinking.

Q: Can it be ego driven?

A: If you are the sage on the stage. The guide on the side. I think it’s a lot harder and not hearing what students are saying. It is hard to tease it out of students and a class of 25.

Matt Peterson (1 year – 5th grade)

Q: Reflection in student teaching program?

A: Every lesson that was taught had to write a reflection on it. Reflected also with your co-op teacher.

Q: How did you reflect at the beginning of the year?

A: I started out the year by looking at what went well, didn’t go well and changes I would make. As the year has gone on. I have actually not reflect as much as I would like to. The one thing student teaching doesn’t prepare you for is things you don’t have to worry about. I still try to do reflection everyday.

Q: Do you reflect on students?
A: I understand as a first year teacher that have to do both you do end up reflecting more on the lessons than the students. I’m still learning the lessons. I think it is different, I have to reflect on the units and lessons first and then the students afterwards.

Q: Other ways to reflect?
A: Division meetings and speaking to colleagues. Discussing with my paraprofessional. I tend to talk with others in my grade and pulling ideas.

Q: Is it useful to talk to colleagues not in your grade level?
A: It is important to know where kids are coming from. It would help to observe a 4th grade classroom or talking to a teacher.

Q: Is there a better time to reflect?
A: Any time to have a free second. Most of them I did right after school. Stay and finish before I start planning for a new. I have a notepad next to my bed. Anytime I’m not surrounded by students. Whenever I can. Just try to squeeze it in.

Q: Schon’s ideas?
A: I think I have done both. Anytime you are teaching a lesson and something is not working. It’s like juggling and if something needs to be changed you need to make it right. It’s thinking on your feet. You are still learning yourself.

Q: Techniques of reflection?
A: I have thought of changing my way. I still write notes at this point. I thought of a video journal or voice notes.

Q: Can you do something to turn it off?
A: You can try but it doesn’t work for me. Even when I watching tv or a movie. It’s tough. I can’t turn it off.

2. Linda Witmer (34.5 years 3rd, 2nd, K)

Q: What do you reflect on?
A: I reflect on and every day and every minute of the day. On how well the children are learning. I am calculating who needs to get it. It’s always running in my head. It is not the lessons but how they are learning.
Q: You know the lessons well?

A: They are on the lesson. You are so busy what you are doing that you can’t see how it’s being received. Best lesson can have great hook but if it sailed over their heads, was it a great lesson? I have always been focused on the children and that’s where it needs to be.

Q: Tangible form?

A: Grade books, I have a clipboard with sticky notes. I will quickly go back and add notes about students and I have them all over my desk.

Q: Do you reflect all the time. In action on action.

A: I still think I do both. If I see we don’t have it. You can back up a step. Not sure if this is reflection. Or is it being intuitive. You have to do that with children. You have to do that, you can’t just keep going forward. When I drive home and to school.

Q: The paradox...

A: What I may do is to discuss with my colleagues, I may go to former teacher and ask them about a student. Usually in the beginning of the year. If there is a new concept I will discuss with colleagues. Every class is different and you are an everyday learner. I learn something new approach and the kids can teach me. It’s great.

Q: What is useful?

A: I think need to do whatever works best for you. I think it’s a worthwhile. Sometimes it gets buried or no time for it.

Q: Some teachers say it is too much?

A: It has to be not getting in the way.

Q: Do you turn the reflection off during the summer?

A: If I see something help me do something better. There is always something that I have piles. You never take a vactation

Q: Reflection?

A: Process for me to sit back. What can I do as a teacher to help my students to be the best they can be. It’s a process for me to help my children

3. Gail Romig (9 years, 3rd & 4th grade)
Q: What do you consider reflection?

A: I think of it during planning, while I’m teaching and after reflection. How will students respond? Will they be successful? Enough to be thinking but not too much information. Assessing what they have learned. Reflecting on how they are responding to what I’m teaching. What worked well and what didn’t work well?

Q: Which is most important?

A: I think they are all valuable. I think it’s always important while the lesson is going on. If you need to switch gears to make sure students are successful. During part is most. But after part is critical as well including assessment. You can’t always say the lesson is over and I’m done.

Q: Do you reflect differently than a 1st year teacher?

A: I was reflecting on how I was responding during the lesson. The longer you teach the more it becomes about the kids. Thinking on your feet comes more naturally.

Q: IS it a pitfall?

A: You are not completely comfortable in your teacher skin. It’s a do or die thing. Maintain classroom management, content, thinking about keeping yourself in line. You want your kids to get the most you can. The kids learned in spite of what I did. Nature of the job.

Q: Tangible way to reflect?

A: Keep meticulous notes in my plan book. I have so many little details. I will go back sometimes. Post it note...don’t do this, too hard, make sure to check this.

Q: Paradox.

A: Being part of PDS made me extra reflective. It is so ingrained in interns. I’ve naturally been reflective. To the point of driving me crazy and I have to let it go. Sometimes you have to chalk it up to experience. Sometimes you have an answer for yourself and sometimes not. Whether you know what to do with that reflection depends on person and circumstances.

Q: Reflect on students?

A: I think about the students and how independent could they do what I wanted them to do. I put a symbol if there is an adaptation. Andectoal notes.
Q: Do you reflect with colleagues?

A: I think it’s some of each. About students, you can draw from others teachers experiences as well. Double you experiences and can get an answer?

Q: Can you let it go?

A: I am better. Not every student is ready to learn when we expect they should learn. Just because it says teach it now doesn’t mean they are ready.

A: I always do it. I have been that way as a person. I think it’s important to do that we should always look at our words and actions impact someone. Reading the crowd. Look at how they responding. Puzzled looks…getting fidgety.

Q: IN action...

A: With experience I’m not afraid to switch gears when a lesson is going poorly. I’m more able to meet their needs based on my reflections and what I’m noticing.

Q: other ways using it?

A: Videos would be great. Time factor is a drawback. It is such a time factor. I lose 30 minutes to do other things in my classroom. It always comes down to time. It holds me back.

4.  Liz Cullin (3rd year 5th grade)

Q: Been reflective from day one?

A: Coming through PDS I was primed to be reflective. As I have wrapped my head around to what I’m teaching. Takes a lot of time and mental energy. My first year I felt like I was going to be mowed down. I had more of handle. First year is hairy. It takes a lot of energy to be truly reflective.

Q: Can you be reflective on lessons?

A: Spent a ton of time on what I needed to teach. I would study it and think about it and study it some more. Does it make sense to me? Will it come off? You just wanted to get through and it worked. Trying to keep up and trying to keep ahead above water. Trying to figure out the ebb and flow of each day. Most of reflective time was right sequence, differentiation, what about fast learners or struggling learners. By year two you have a better idea and you are pulling from memory. I
think you start thinking about in terms of your learners and how it goes over with this set of kids. By year three you are able to fully focus on the students.

Q: Paradox..

A: I don't think it was non-existant...just whether I was going to do this right. You become more comfortable in the skin. I don’t think as much about the lesson and the learning curve for curriculum was like a vertical climb. You have all kinds of kids and all kinds of needs. Some need more and extra. It gets way easier the more years you teach. I think you might do it unbeknownst in your first year.

Q: Internal or external?

A: I think we think out loud all the time.

Q: Inaction or on action

A: I would say it is fairly balanced. I have to reflect to make sure the lesson is the right way to teach this lesson. In the middle I’m constantly asking questions to make sure they are getting. I will change directions or reapproach it from another way. In the end I’m thinking if it worked and did they get it. Can they put it to test. It is sometimes done on the fly, pen to paper. The reflection continues well past the end of the lesson.

Q: Paradox...

A: I think I know my classroom way better than anyone else. Better than my cooperating teacher. She does know my kids somewhat. I can reflect deeply...general reflection....you wouldn't know my kids as well, personality, struggles, specific issues.

Q: Can it be balanced?

A: 2 brains are better than one. I think we can be more creative. Allows us to see if things to stick. It is unique for us. Different way of functioning.

Q: Do you use journals?

A: Post its are used. The lessons I leave a note if it didn’t work well and try doing it this way. Didn’t need this piece and think about . Too much curriculum. Ran out of time.
Q: Space for journals, video?

A: Reality is I don’t have anything else to give up. Can’t give up face to face. Can’t give up conversation up. You don’t get the same feedback from a video. If I had something to give up and I probably should do it once a year...but I wouldn’t look at it until June 18\textsuperscript{th}.

5. Matt Ammerman – (6\textsuperscript{th} grade PFMS – 4\textsuperscript{th} year in SCASD/5\textsuperscript{th} year)

Q: What is reflection?

A: Looking back on a lesson once it’s been taught. What worked and didn’t and what can I change. And in the middle of the lesson and how the class reacts to things.

Q: Reflection on what?

A: All one big piece. You can reflect on lesson or how the students respond to it.

Q: 1\textsuperscript{st} year teacher only on lesson?

A: It makes it easier and I know the curriculum. Curriculum 3times students a little bit but each year I know what I want to do and can focus more on the students.

Q: Reflection should it be expected out of 1\textsuperscript{st} year teacher?

A: I mean no one wants to hear that. First year you are trying to keep your head above water. You want to reflect on the students and don’t even realize you are doing it and

Q: Impossible not to reflect?

A: Yes. You may reflect and may realize not even doing it. You may reflect and not know you are doing it but whether you act on it is another story all together.

Q: You make an effort day or time?

A: Ongoing on the fly. IN a lesson I will write it down in the plans or unit and next time I come to it I will make those changes. With my partner and I can get a new set of students and make changes.

Q: Better way to reflect?
A: Personally, writing it down works. Video I think would help but I don’t do it. I would benefit from it, even now.

Q: Why not?
A: time.

Q: Enough time to reflect?
A: I think there is, because it’s little notes. I did my first year with 10 questions and kept it through my first year when I met with admin. With experience I do less and less and my home life is harder now.

Q: Is it fair? Reflection journals?
A: Same curriculum and you find what works for you. Every week and day and have the time and build into your routine. If you find what works for you best. Must keep time efficient and during the year your time is valuable.

Q: On action vs. In action. How often does it happen?
A: Almost everyday. Depending on class. Specific needs to each student. If I notice something is not working on the fly and change it as a class or for particular.

Q: First teachers can do it?
A: I can make the adjustments because I know the curriculum. If I’ve never done it in front of a class. But I know how long it will take and I will make changes if I need to. Redirect as a class or redirect a particular student

Q: 10 -15 years? Lessons so tight.
A: Kids change every year. Mine in particular changes everyday. You always have to reflect. If you stop reflecting that is NOT fair to students.

Q: Colleagues.
A: Lunch periods, before and after school. It is constantly, throughout my team.

Q: Sharing students?
A: Sharing reflection on students. He can point out particular students, you may want to know this student is off task during directions.
Q: Paradox?

A: I think you have to be with a student to reflect on them. I respect a lot of peoples opinion but I have my own ideas. 75 kids everyday.

Q: Every turn it off?

A: I try to turn it off. Pretty good about it. When I get home I try to leave it home, I take school work mon-thur. I’m obviously reflecting on. I try to shut if off and keep separate a professional and personal life.

Appendix J
Make up a ahead of time. Takes too long to have kids do this on their own. They add their own labels.
Appendix K

What is the most important element of reflection?

- Students: 31.6% (36)
- Lessons: 13.3% (13)
- Curriculum: 9.2% (10)
- Classroom: 6.1% (7)
Reflective Journal Entries:

1) I had an interesting week with my ADD child. Usually, this child depends on one-on-one interaction in order for her to get any work done. This has proven most difficult to me because it hinders my ability to scan the entire room during
reading and writing lessons. I decided to have a personal talk with this child about her “decision” to take such a long time to finish assignments. I asked if she enjoyed staying in for recess most of the time, and how she feels when she’s the only one not finished with something. (I asked these questions because I can see a dramatic difference in her demeanor when she is the last finished. Her cheerfulness is replaced with a slouching posture and short answers when the rest of the class is having fun.) She admitted that she doesn’t like not being done on time. So, we discussed how she might be able to finish earlier. She didn’t have many ideas, but was relatively open to my ideas. I asked her if she would raise her hand if she needs help instead of sitting blank-minded at her desk. She agreed that she could do that. I tried this out on Friday during the quick writing session. I first made sure that she had all of her needed materials on her desk and asked her to remember our plan, she said “yes” with a smile. For the first time in a LONG time, this student completed her work in the allotted time. She raised her hand for a few questions on how to spell difficult words, but overall, she did an excellent job. I think that sometimes students just need to know that teachers care, teachers want to help when they need it, and, ultimately, teachers want them to grow more and more towards independence. On a side note, my mentor wasn’t totally pleased that I was not sitting with this student pushing her along, but I chose to monitor the entire room instead of being such a crutch for this student. The good news is that our little plan worked, and the other 23 students in the class got some individual attention, too!

2) First Grade:

Today I had the chance to really become a part of my partner classroom. This was really exciting because I have spent a lot of time observing and working with individual students but I have not yet had the chance to teach the whole group. It was interesting to work with these students because they look at the teachers in a completely different way than my fourth grade students. My fourth graders really test you in a different way than the first graders. I feel like I was very capable of controlling the room and having an understanding of the differences in expectations for first graders vs. fourth graders. I am confident that no matter what grade I get placed in I will be able to achieve and having opportunities like this one helps me to feel this confidence in my future as a teacher being prepared to teach in any grade I am given.

Mid-Term Meeting:

I was really motivated after our meeting today. I know that I am capable of achieving so much in this program and that I have the skills to succeed, I just need to find the opportunities to do so. I am hoping that after our Wednesday meeting with Cindy and after her listening to my strengths that I have spent a long time developing will open her eyes to give me more chances to shine in the classroom.
Of course there is always the concern with her lack of wanting to let things go or give me a chance to at least try things. I feel like I rarely have the opportunity to try something new in her classroom to see how it works. Isn’t the saying, “you’ll never know unless you try?” I wish I had more chances to try.

**Being sick/writing plans:**

I was able to see this week how difficult it can be to teach when you do not feel good. It was hard to be on top of my game and be able to get excited, manage the whole room, and have things run the way I wanted when I didn’t feel good. The students reacted to my being sick with compassion though by being extra quiet and understanding of my lack of energy. This was nice to see that they care even at 10 years old.

I also got to experience what it is like to have to write things down and pass on the lessons when I was not expecting to. I had to write down what I wanted my reading group to do and trust that my students would be capable of carrying out the activities planned without me. Since school was cancelled on Friday I did not get to talk to the students to see how things went but I trust that everything went well. It is true in so many ways that it is easier to just go than to write things up. This is something that I will remember for my future classroom. I have talked to a lot of teachers who have mentioned that they have certain plans set aside for a substitute already with simple activities that the students can accomplish without too much assistance.

3) This past week has been a whirling dervish of activity, mostly teaching. With my mentor away for four straight days I’ve had the opportunity really to run the classroom under the watchful eye of a guest teacher. She has really given me free reign to run the room the way I see fit and I have taken the lead in almost all situations. I have been both fair and firm and have found the calming influence of having my mentor in the room interesting. In essence, the students DO respect me as the teacher and they DO understand that I’m in charge when my mentor is not around, but they also find ways to test my authority. Guest teachers can range in a wide variety of skills and experiences and the particular guest teacher gave me the opportunity to take control of whatever I wanted to do. I could tell there was something missing in the room and the fact that she wasn’t there did create a feeling of something missing. Although I can’t prove this, I’m sure my absence is noted as well. I know when I return from missing a day to classes or a partner classroom, students always come up to me to tell me the previous day’s events or happenings. I’m sure my mentor experienced this with her return as well.

I find now that I’m in the room a lot more this semester I have a much more keen interest in seeing the students learn and am concerned about their progress and how much they are learning. Case in point was an assessment we had for a science unit and I made sure we reviewed the material carefully. Much to my surprise students didn’t do as well as I
had hoped, especially students that usually are excellent test takers. I began to question my review, the time of day that took the quiz, the fact they had one prior, whether it made a difference if my mentor was there or not. The list of reasons why they did not do as well as I had hoped was endless and I think this goes back to my entire inquiry project in reflection and what to do with it. I still don’t have the ownership of every lesson that was taught in the unit so I can’t say that my review DIDN’T help a bit, but I guess I also can’t expect perfection either. I will be looking forward to teaching more units from beginning to end and seeing what sort of things I can do to achieve higher success rates in all facets of learning from final assessments to participation.