Training Teachers of English to Reflect Critically

Belinda Ho
City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Teacher journals written in teacher education programs are usually required to be as reflective as possible. However, seldom is guidance given as to what is meant by 'reflective' and how to be critically reflective. Ho and Richards (1993) have developed two frameworks for measuring critical reflectivity. This study attempted to train in-service teachers of English in an English Language Teacher Education Programme to be critically reflective by using these frameworks. It investigated whether these teachers became critically reflective after training and whether the teachers' degree of critical reflectivity and their patterns of reflection changed over time. Results indicate that all teacher journals evidenced some traits of critical reflectivity after training. There seemed to be no great change in the degree of critical reflectivity that the teachers engaged in over time. Most teachers developed their own patterns of reflection which also seldom changed over time.

Key words: reflection, journal writing, critical reflectivity, training

INTRODUCTION

It is common that teachers are encouraged to engage in reflective practices in teacher education programs round the world (Farrell, 1999). Richards (2002, p. 30) opines that "a constructive view of teaching involves teachers in making their own sense of their own classrooms and taking on the role of a reflective practitioner". Reflection is regarded by teacher educators as an

important way to foster teachers' professional development (Liou, 2001; Schon, 1983; Tanner et al., 2000). It helps to raise teachers' awareness about teaching (Akbari, 2007; Kullman, 1998; Liou, 2001, p. 197) and allows them to gain a deeper (Abell, Bryan, & Anderson, 1988; Liou, 2001) and/or new understanding (Francis, 1997, p. 171; Griffiths, 2000, p. 552) of their teaching practices (Abell et al., 1988), the variables related to teaching (Liou, 2001) and the theory underlying practical knowledge (Akbari, 2007). According to Jay and Johnson (2002, p. 76), one can reach through reflection newfound clarity on which one bases changes in action or disposition. The informed action (Francis 1997, p. 171) triggers positive changes (Liou, 2001, p. 197) in the teachers' practice and helps them improve the quality of their performance in the classroom (Akbari, 2007).

Farrel (2008) identifies two main forms of reflection: the weak version and the stronger version. In the weak version of reflection, reflection seems to be a thoughtful practice which is carried out informally and does not necessarily lead to improved teaching. However, in the stronger version, teachers have to reflect systematically on their own teaching and take responsibility for their actions in the classroom.

In line with Farrell's (2008) weak version of reflection, Kabilan (2007, p. 948) thinks that reflection involves self-examination (Kabilan, 2007, p. 684) and self-exploration through metacognitive and reflective processes. Conscious reflection is used as a means to help teachers understand the relationship between their thoughts and actions (Daloglu, 2007; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Zeichner, 1992, 1993). Thus, "reflection requires a recapturing of experience in which the person thinks about it, mulls it over and evaluates it." (Loughran, 1996 as cited in Brandt, 2008, p. 42).

In line with Farrell's (2008) stronger version of reflection, Dalogu (2007) opines that a critical perspective is usually added to reflections on teaching. He thinks that reflection in teaching is often referred to as teachers learning to subject their beliefs of teaching and learning to a critical analysis and thus take greater responsibility for what they do in the classroom. According to Zeichner and Liston (1996, p. 698), critically reflective teachers examine

frames, attempt to solve the problems encountered in classroom practice and question the assumptions and values underlying their teaching. After they have analyzed their teaching and its underlying bases, they consider alternative means for achieving their ends. (Pennington, 1992, p. 48). Akbari (2007, p. 193) goes one step further and interprets that after reflective teachers have critically examined their practices, they should come up with some ideas regarding how to improve their performance to enhance students' learning, and put those ideas into practice.

One approach that has been used to promote reflective practice in teacher education is journal writing. Teaching journals are written reflections on issues related to teaching and learning that student teachers write on a regular basis. They are usually related to classroom teaching or the practicum. (Lee, 2007, p. 321). They are useful for developing reflection because they allow student teachers a space to reflect and a venue to establish connections between the theory and practical experience and to link prior knowledge with new understandings. (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000 as cited in Lee, 2007, p. 321). It is through writing that the teachers' flow of thinking can be facilitated (Farris & Fuhler, 1996). Lee (2007) explored how dialogue journals and response journals could be used to encourage reflection among two groups of pre-service teachers, one of which wrote dialogue journals and the other wrote response journals. Both groups of teachers in Lee's (2007) study realized that once they started the journal writing process, reflective thinking became easier. The journals also serve as evidence of teachers' development as learners and teachers (Shin, 2003, p. 6).

To help in-service teachers develop critical reflectivity, those who are asked to write reflective journals in teacher education programmes are usually required to be as critically reflective as possible. However, guidance regarding how to be critically reflective is seldom given. Ho and Richards (1993) investigated the ways journal writing promotes reflective thinking by examining the journals written by the teachers enrolled in an in-service TESOL teacher education program at a tertiary institution in Hong Kong. From the data collected, they developed two frameworks for measuring

critical reflectivity and suggested in their study (1993) that some initial training in reflective writing might be necessary as a preparation for journal writing. Some researchers (Farrell, 1999; Liou, 2001) have used these two frameworks to analyse the teacher journals in their studies.

Farrell's (1999) study examined what three experienced EFL teachers in Korea talked about in their weekly group discussions, whether the level of reflection was descriptive or critical and whether this reflection developed over time. Results showed that the teachers mainly talked about their personal theories of teaching and their problems. All three teachers were reflective to a certain extent in their orientation to their teaching though they varied in their degree of reflectivity in each category in the framework used for analysis. They did not have much change in their degree or focus of critical reflection over the 16 weeks.

To provide a description of pre-service teachers' reflective practice, Liou (2001) examined 20 student teachers' observation reports and 20 practice teaching reports over a six-week period in a teaching practice course. Results show that student teachers' major concerns were related to practical teaching issues and evaluation of other teachers' or their own teaching. They could do more critical reflection than descriptive reflection, but did not show clear development of critical reflection within a six-week period. Liou (2001) suggests after his study that interventions such as reflective training need to be incorporated into teacher education curriculum.

Some ideas for training have been suggested by researchers. Daloglu (2007) thinks that training needs to be given to journal writers, especially those who are new to journal writing, to tell them what to focus on in the journal. Lee (2007, p. 328) suggests that since journal writing may be a novel idea for many teachers, they should be provided with explicit help to guide them through the journal writing process. Teachers could be provided with some "pointers, prompts or guiding questions or a suggested framework for journal writing, especially in the initial stage" (Lee, 2007, p. 328). However, no concrete training methods have been recommended so far.

If the aim of teacher reflective practices is to help teachers to be critically

reflective, one logical way of conducting training is to use the two frameworks developed by Ho and Richards (1993) to train teachers to be critically reflective. An attempt was made in this study to train the teachers in this way. This study investigates (1) whether the in-service teachers of English in a university English Language Teacher Education Programme became critically reflective after being trained to reflect within these frameworks, (2) whether journal writing experience increased the degree of reflectivity which teachers engaged in over time and (3) whether the teachers followed certain patterns or structures in their reflection and whether such patterns changed over time.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING CRITICAL REFLECTIVITY

Ho and Richards (1993) developed a framework for measuring critical reflectivity based on Barlett's (1990) concept about critical reflectivity. According to Barlett (1990, p. 205),

> Becoming critical means that as teachers we have to transcend the technicalities of teaching and think beyond the need to improve our instructional techniques. This effectively means we have to move away from the 'how to' questions, which have a limited utilitarian value, to the "what" and "why" questions, which regard instructional and managerial techniques not as ends in themselves but as a part of broader educational purposes. Hence we need to locate teaching in its broader cultural and social contexts.

Barlett (1990) identified five phases in the process of reflective teaching each focusing on the following questions: (1) Mapping: What do I do as a teacher? (2) Informing: What is the meaning of my teaching? What did I intend? (3) Contesting: How did I come to be this way? How was it possible for my present view of teaching to have emerged? (4) Appraisal: How might I teach

differently? (5) Acting: What and how shall I now teach? Barlett (1990) regarded "Mapping" as a level which was primarily descriptive and procedural whereas the other four levels were primarily reflective because they involved evaluation, self-analysis, theory building and planning.

Based on this concept, Ho and Richards (1993) developed the first framework which categorized the topics that the teachers wrote in their journals as those that were primarily descriptive and those that were critically reflective. The table can be seen in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1
Framework on Descriptive and Reflective Entries

Topics	Primarily Descriptive Entries	Primarily Reflective Entries
Theories of teaching	Theories and beliefs about teaching and learning - A belief - An expert's view	Theories and beliefs about teaching and learning - A justification for something - A personal opinion
	Applying theories to classroom practice - How a theory was applied	Applying theories to classroom practice - Contradictions between theory & practice - How theories changed
Approaches and methods	**Approaches and methods in teaching**	**The teacher's knowledge** - Pedagogical knowledge - Knowledge and experience
	The content of a lesson	**The learners' background information**
		The school context
Evaluating teaching		**Evaluating lessons** - Positive evaluations of lessons - Negative evaluations of lessons
		Diagnosing problems - Student's problems - Classroom interaction - Teacher's problems
	Solutions to problems - Seeking solutions from the tutors	Solutions to problems - Alternative ways of presenting a lesson - Deciding on a plan of action

Self-awareness		**Perceptions of themselves as teachers** - Their teaching style - Comments on their language proficiency
		Recognition of personal growth
		Setting personal goals
Questions about teaching	Asking for advice and suggestions	Asking for reasons

To investigate whether the journal writing experience increased the degree of reflectivity which the teachers engaged in over time, Ho and Richards (1993) developed the second framework by identifying seven traits of development in critical reflectivity through examining the general patterns of each teacher's journal entries in their study (1993). These traits were: (1) a greater variety of types of critical reflectivity; (2) being more able to come up with new understanding or theories; (3) being more able to reflect across time span and experiences; (4) being more able to go beyond the classroom to broaden contexts; (5) being more able to evaluate both positively and negatively; (6) better problem solving by the teachers; and (7) being more focused on 'why' questions.

TRAINING USING THE FRAMEWORKS

This study was carried out in an in-service English Language Teacher Education course on "Reflective Teaching in the English Language Classroom" in a university in Hong Kong. The 13 teachers enrolled in this course consisted of in-service teachers of English from Hong Kong primary and secondary schools and at a tertiary level. They were asked to carry out action research in an eight-week practicum during which they had to write a reflective journal after each lesson in which action research was carried out. During the action research, the teachers introduced their students to some new methods of learning, such as cooperative learning, and they investigated

whether there was any improvement in the students' learning after the practicum.

Training was given to the in-service teachers of English before they were assigned the task of writing reflective journals. To undergo training, (1) in class, the teachers were first asked to write a reflective journal on a lesson that they had taught in whatever way they liked. (2) After the lesson, the teacher educator then marked and wrote comments on the journals based on the first framework developed by Ho and Richards (1993). (3) In the next lesson, a mini-lecture was given to the teachers explaining in detail the two frameworks developed by Ho and Richards (1993). (4) The marked journals were then returned to the teachers who were given time to ask questions about the comments written by the teacher educator and their relevance to the framework. (5) The teachers were given the article written by Ho and Richards (1993) to read at home for reference if necessary.

RESEARCH METHOD

To examine whether the training helped the teachers to be critically reflective, the journals written by the teachers after each action research lesson in the practicum were collected by the teacher educator. The journal entries were coded and analysed by the researcher and her research assistant based on the frameworks developed by Ho and Richards (1993). The inter-rater reliability was 96% Frequency counts were made on the traits of critical reflectivity that appeared in the journals. The frequency of occurrence of the traits of critical reflectivity manifested in each teacher's journal was compared with the frequency mean to identify the degree of critical reflectivity of the teachers.

To investigate whether journal writing experience increased the degree of reflectivity which teachers engaged in over time, the seven traits of development in critical reflectivity developed by Ho and Richards (1993) were examined in the teachers' journals. The earlier and later entries of each

teacher's journal were then compared to find out evidence for development of these features.

To find out whether the teachers' patterns of reflection changed over time, the structure of each journal entry of each teacher was compared to identify the pattern of reflection used by each teacher and determine whether there was any change in pattern over time. Three randomly selected teachers were interviewed to find out how and why they set up their particular patterns of reflection.

RESULTS

Whether the Training Helped the Teachers to be Critically Reflective

As regards whether the training helps the teachers to be critically reflective, the results can be seen in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2
Frequency of Occurrence of Traits of Critical Reflectivity in Each Category as Shown in the Teachers' Journals

Category	Frequency (Total)	Frequency (Mean)	Frequency of Occurrence of Traits of Critical Reflectivity in the Journal Entries of Each Teacher (T1 – T13)												
			T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13
1 Theories of Teaching	123	9.5	10*	3	3	0	0	1	12*	4	13*	19*	10*	29*	19*
2 Approaches and Methods	2	0.2		1*	1*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Evaluating Teaching	656	50.5	67*	54*	33	11	40	19	45	52*	56*	62*	95*	65*	57*
4 Self-awareness	4	0.3	1*	0	0	0	0	0	2*	0	0	0	1*	0	0

5 Questions about Teaching	16	1.2	0	5*	1	7*	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Total	799	61.5	78*	63*	38	18	40	20	59	57	69*	81*	107*	94*	77*

Key: Asterisked Figures = > Frequency Mean

Table 2 shows that all teachers evidenced traits of critical reflectivity in their journals.

The greatest number of traits of critical reflectivity was found when the topics written were related to evaluation of teaching (656 references), followed by theories of teaching (123 references). As shown in Table 2, all 13 teachers showed traits of critical reflectivity in relation to evaluation of teaching in their journals. The teachers evaluated their own teaching (300 references), diagnosed problems (147 references) and offered solutions to problems (209 references). Among the 13 teachers, 11 (Teachers 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13) related their teaching practice to theories and beliefs about teaching and learning. They gave justifications for the approaches and methods used (51 references), the content (4 references) as well as other mentioned items (51 references). They also came up with new realizations and their own theories (15 references). The teachers did not ask many questions (16 references) probably because after training, they kept in mind that they had to provide their own solutions to their problems as far as possible. That their attention would naturally be focused on providing pedagogical solutions to problems in the classroom could also be the reason why only a few traits of critical reflectivity related to self-awareness (4 references) were reported. No mere description of approaches and methods was reported. They seldom wrote about the approaches and methods as stand-alone topics but often attached them as secondary elements to their lesson justifications and evaluations.

Though all teachers evidenced traits of critical reflectivity in their journals, different teachers were seen to be engaged in different degrees of reflectivity. Slightly more than 53% of the teachers (Teachers 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13)

could be classified as being more reflective than the others as the total number of traits of critical reflectivity in their journals exceeded the total frequency mean. Teachers 7 and 8 (15.4%) evidenced critical reflectivity in their writing to a lesser extent than the teachers mentioned above as the total number of traits of critical reflectivity in their journals was only slightly below the total frequency mean. They could be classified as being less reflective. Teachers 3, 4, 5 and 6 (30.8%) were the least reflective as the total number of traits of critical reflectivity in their journals was far below the total frequency mean.

Within each category of teachers, there were individual differences in how their reflectivity was manifested. Among the teachers who were classified as being more reflective, Teachers 1 and 11, for example, mainly focused on evaluating their lessons. They gave both positive and negative evaluations. Teacher 1, for example, wrote in her journal after Lesson 4,

> In terms of the tasks, the students really enjoyed doing the tally exercise and I think it was a good way to use their math knowledge and to demonstrate through an activity that language is within everything that they do… A major failing I feel in the lesson was again the lack of differentiation in the writing task.

They were often aware of the teachers' and the students' problems and could readily come up with suggestions for alternative ways of teaching or decide on new action plans. Teacher 11, for example, when facing the problem of noise in the classroom, wrote in her journal after Lesson 2,

> The classroom became quite noisy and they had some problems explaining the reasons to their classmates. A possible solution to reduce the level of noise in the classroom is to give more guidance to the students before they were asked to explain their reasons.

While both teachers tried to link theory to practice and could generate theories from their classroom experience, Teacher 11 liked to justify her actions more than Teacher 1. Both of them, however, had self awareness

about changes in their own teaching styles. Teacher 1 wrote after her first lesson that she wanted to change her teaching style,

> I feel that this lesson is the tip of the iceberg as an example of my being too teacher-centred and that shifting the paradigm to being more student-centred will I hope result in my being less focused on product and more on meaningful and authentic language production.

Teacher 11, however, wrote confidently in her journal after Lesson 7 that she "worked as a facilitator in the class instead of the source of knowledge."

Teachers 9, 10, 12 and 13 focused their reflections mainly on evaluating teaching and theories of teaching. While Teacher 8 and 2 often reflected critically on how they taught, Teacher 2 asked more "why" questions than the other reflective teachers.

As regards the two less reflective teachers, they often presented the content of a lesson and the detailed procedures together with the rationale behind the use of their methods before they evaluated their lessons. While Teacher 8 evidenced traits of critical reflectivity in her journals when evaluating her teaching, Teacher 7 reflected critically more on the theories of teaching and her self awareness about her teaching styles.

The least reflective teachers, however, only showed traits of critical reflectivity when evaluating their teaching. No traits of critical reflectivity appeared in relation to the topics of "Approaches and methods" and "Self-awareness".

Whether the Journal Writing Experience Increased the Degree of Reflectivity which Teachers Engaged in over Time

The results are seen in Table 3 below:

TABLE 3
The Development in Degree of Critical Reflectivity as Shown in the Teachers'
Journal Entries

Traits of development in critical reflectivity	The development in degree of critical reflectivity as shown in the teachers' (T1 to T13) journal entries												
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13
A greater variety of types of traits of critical reflectivity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Being more able to come up with new understanding of theories	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Being more able to reflect across time span and experiences	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Being more able to go beyond the classroom to broader contexts	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Being more able to evaluate both positively and negatively	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-
Being more able to solve problems	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
More focus on "why" questions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Key: + = Shows sign of development

- = Shows no sign of development

The general impression emerged from the analysis was that there seemed to be no great change in the degree of critical reflectivity that the teachers engaged in over time. However, some signs of development occurred in certain traits of critical reflectivity as evidenced in some teachers' journals.

An example of how the frequency of a trait was traced over time is shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
An Example of Frequency of Traits of Critical Reflectivity Developed over Time

Trait 2: Being more able to come up with new understanding of theories								
Teacher	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8
1					1	2		
2			1					1
3		1	1			1		
4								
5								
6				1		2		1
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								

In Table 4, Teachers 1 and 6 show slight signs of development in the degree of critical reflectivity over the trait "Being more able to come up with new understanding of theories".

As shown in Table 3, the trait over which most teachers showed signs of development were related to evaluation of teaching. A total of 3 teachers (Teachers 6, 9, & 11) were more able to evaluate their teaching both positively and negatively towards the end of the practicum. Some teachers, such as Teachers 6 and 9 showed a slight increase in certain kinds of traits of critical reflectivity that they used. However, there were no clear patterns of development. On the whole, teachers who were classified as showing evidence of critical reflectivity in their journal writing tended to reflect the same approach to reflective thinking throughout the practicum. Teacher 6, who was classified as not being very reflective, began to show the development of two traits of reflectivity but not to an extent that indicated an important change in awareness.

However, in spite of the fact that the teachers did not show obvious development in the degree of critical reflectivity over time, one interesting

finding was that all interviewees reported that they had developed a habit of reflecting over the eight-week practicum. They had become more ready to reflect and more skillful in reflecting critically after the practicum. One interviewee said,

> After I had done more reflection, I thought I got better at it maybe because I was getting better at thinking. I hadn't to think so hard about what I was trying to do. It was almost like a skill. I think I got better towards the end of it.

Another interviewee mentioned the lasting effect of the training over time. She said,

> After I have taken the course, when I teach, I keep on jotting down the points of reflection or areas for improvement next time though I will not write a journal.

Whether the Teachers' Patterns of Reflection Changed over Time

Though all the teachers were trained in the same way, all teachers developed their own patterns of reflection which seldom changed over time. They set up their own structure for reflection and followed the same pattern in each journal. For example, Teacher 1 started each journal with the evaluation of her lesson, followed by suggestions on alternative ways to teach or deciding on a plan of action and then concluded by mentioning her new realizations about theories. Teacher 12, however, started each journal with an introduction and then reflected on each part of the lesson and concluded with an overall reflection. Teacher 13 followed the topics on the framework closely and wrote similar sub-headings in each journal, which were: Justification of the theory of teaching, Application of theory to classroom practice, Pedagogical knowledge, Evaluation of teaching (a. lesson; b. problems diagnosed; c. suggested solutions), Self-awareness and Questions arising from the reflection. Teacher 8 did not have any headings in her journal entries. However, she followed an implicit structure when she wrote

her journals. She described and explained what went well and what not in her lessons and then suggested what she would do to improve the lesson.

The interview data show that the teachers constructed their own structure of journal entries based on the information provided in the articles used for training, the course outline and the PowerPoint slides used during the training session. They thought that it would be easier for them to write the journals if they followed a structure. However, one teacher commented that what she could put under each heading of her journal entry decreased over time. She said,

> When I wrote the first few journals, I had more points to write, but when I wrote the fifth or sixth journal, I found that I was repeating myself. Would it be because I had already reflected upon the teaching and had already tried to improve it so that I was running out of ideas? As I wrote and wrote, I found that the number of things that I needed to improve obviously decreased. Did it mean that the training had already helped me to make improvement in teaching so that I did not need to improve further?

It seems that the structure on the one hand helped the teachers to organize their thoughts more easily, but on the other hand restricted the areas of their reflection so that what they wrote under each heading became repetitive.

DISCUSSIONS

The helpfulness of the training and implications of the findings for training using Ho and Richards' frameworks (1993) will be discussed in relation to each research topic below.

Whether the Training Helped the Teachers to be Critically Reflective

Results of the study seem to show that the training had helped teachers to reflect critically. All teachers evidenced traits of critical reflectivity in their

journals. Though none of the teachers trained in this study possessed all the traits of reflectivity, none of them had no reflective traits at all. Slightly more than half of the teachers could be considered as being reflective.

It seems that the training was helpful in providing the teachers with the right direction to go regarding how to reflect critically. It made the teachers aware of what was regarded as critical reflectivity and the need not to turn their journals into narrative accounts of what happened during the lessons. This was evidenced by the fact that when they wrote about the approaches and methods, they did not describe them as stand-alone events but often attached them as secondary elements to their lesson justifications and evaluations. Being able to distinguish between what was primarily descriptive and reflective and to engage in what was primarily reflective was in fact the first step to success in being critically reflective.

The greatest number of traits of critical reflectivity was found when the topics written were related to evaluation of teaching, followed by theories of teaching. The trait over which most teachers showed signs of development was also related to evaluation of teaching. It seems that evaluation of the teachers' teaching was an easy starting point for training as most teachers responded to this aspect naturally and readily. It could also be chosen as a cost-effective training focus. When the teachers focused their reflections on evaluation of their teaching, the teaching theories behind it, and alternative ways to teach, they often could bring about positive changes in their teaching and growth in their professional development (Liou, 2001), which was in fact the ultimate goal of critical reflection.

While the teachers in this study went into great depth when evaluating their lessons hoping to improve their teaching through reflection, the scope of their reflection could be broadened to touch more on underlying rationales and external factors such as learner background and school contexts so that their reflections could be well-rounded-out. After the main goal was achieved, one of the next steps or future goals of training could be to help the teachers deepen and widen their ability to reflect critically.

Whether the Journal Writing Experience Increased the Degree of Reflectivity Which Teachers Engaged in over Time

This study also shows that there seemed to be no great change in the degree of critical reflectivity that the teachers engaged in over time though some teachers thought they had developed a lasting habit of reflection over the eight-week practicum. This finding is in line with the result of Liou's (2001) study in which the teachers could do more critical reflection than descriptive reflection, but did not show substantial development of critical reflection within a six-week period. In Farrell's study (1999), even 16 weeks' time did not bring about change in the development of the teachers' critical reflectivity. That little change was seen in this study might be due to the fact that the practicum only lasted for 8 weeks. The period of time was too short to be able to bring about obvious changes in the degree of critical reflectivity. In fact, one limitation of the training in this study was the insufficiency of time spent on training. At least two three-hour lessons in a 13 week course should be spent on teaching the teachers how to reflect critically.

Another reason might be that the teachers were only given a lecture on how to trace the development of the traits of critical reflectivity in their journals over time but they did not have a chance to practise doing this and obtain the teacher educator's feedback on the development of their traits of critical reflectivity. The training method could be improved by asking the teachers to write pre-reflections and post-reflections before and after training. Feedback could be given to the teachers in the pre-and post activities to help them be aware of their areas for improvement. Samples of reflection could be selected for analysis with the class to help clarify the teachers' concepts about critical reflectivity. The teachers could be asked to analyse their journals using Ho and Richard's (1993) frameworks at different stages to find out how reflective they were and how their reflectivity was manifested in their journals so that they knew where to focus their attention when developing their critical reflectivity. This would give them a chance to internalize what they had learned during training and apply it to their

reflection.

To help teachers to develop their critical reflectivity over time, they could be encouraged to write reflections on their reflective journals to trace their own development so as to raise their consciousness about the changes in their own values, beliefs, etc. and their self-development (Lee, 2007, p. 328) and the need for the changes.

Whether the Teachers' Patterns of Reflection Changed over Time

The finding that most teachers developed their own patterns of reflection which seldom changed over time is interesting. It seems that though the framework used for training was the same, different teachers reacted differently to the framework. Without being instructed to do so, they automatically developed their own structures for the journals based on their preferences for the topics in the framework. Once they had set up a structure, they followed it through in all their journals. The teachers' initial intention might have been to make use of the structure to facilitate the carrying out of their assignments not realizing that this could have restricted the way they reflected. It should be brought to the attention of the teachers during training that to be critically reflective, it is important not only to write on topics that are primarily reflective but also to transcend the boundaries of time and structure when they reflect. They should not treat the reflective practice as an assignment in a teacher education course but a continuous process (Francis, 1997, p. 171) that fosters their professional development which is ongoing during their teaching career (Kullman, 1998) .

CONCLUSION

To help teachers reflect critically in teacher education programmes and in their teaching career, this study has demonstrated how the frameworks developed by Ho and Richards (1993) could be used as tools for measuring

the teachers' degree of critical reflectivity and for training. Using the frameworks to measure the teachers' degree of critical reflectivity could even be part of the procedures of training. Based on the findings of this study, suggestions regarding how the training could be more effectively carried out in terms of the choice of the starting point, the focus, the duration, and methods of training were given for teacher educators' future reference. It is hoped that with more intensive and thorough training provided, these frameworks can function more effectively as a means to equip teachers with the ability to reflect critically not only in teacher education programmes but also to continue to grow in their profession through constant reflection in their career. What can be derived from this study is not only relevant to the teachers in the context of this study but can also be applied to those in similar learning contexts all over the world.

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THE AUTHOR

Dr. Belinda Ho is Associate Professor in the Department of English at City University of Hong Kong. Her research interests include reflective teaching, reflective learning, teacher education, diary studies, journal writing, writing, learning strategies, learning style, and issues related to the teaching of English for Specific Purposes.
Email: enwankam@cityu.edu.hk

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