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ABSTRACT

Training teachers as reflective practitioners is an important element in many teacher education programs. Teacher education literature indicates that journal writing is an approach that fosters reflection, and is an effective source of dialogue between student and teacher. This document reports on an action research study on the use of journals in the development of reflective practitioners by investigating both student and teacher comments. The participants, 15 students enrolled in an "Approaches to Teaching" course, were required to keep a reflective dialogue journal as a class assignment. Additional data were gathered from sources such as interviews, questionnaires, and class lesson plans and notes. Analysis of the data identified six reflective writing modes for students: descriptive/narrative, affective, metacognitive, meta-affective, connective/extensive, and proflective writing. Teacher comments were characterized as affirming, think more or nudging, personal connection, give information, and little/no reaction. While the preservice teachers' journals displayed entries in all six modes, the descriptive/narrative and affective modes were used most frequently. These pre-reflective modes served as a foundation for developing the other four modes. In the metacognitive and meta-affective modes of writing, students began to move beyond description to recognition of their own understanding, emotions, and beliefs, and finally to substantive reflection in the connective/extensive and proflective modes. The teacher responded with a type of comment appropriate to the students' journal entry. (Contains 59 references.) (ND)

PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' DIALOGUE JOURNALS: WHAT CHARACTERIZES STUDENTS' REFLECTIVE WRITING AND A TEACHER'S COMMENTS

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PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' DIALOGUE JOURNALS: WHAT CHARACTERIZES STUDENTS' REFLECTIVE WRITING AND A TEACHER'S COMMENTS

The idea of teachers as reflective practitioners is strongly emphasized in teaching, teacher education programs, and new teacher licensing systems across the United States (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 1992; Goodman, 1988; Grimmett and Erickson, 1988; Valli, 1992; Zeichner and Liston, 1987). The CCSSO's Principle 9, which comes from the seminal work of the National Board for Professional Teaching, defines a teacher as "a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of her/his choices and actions on students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community, and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally" (Ohio Department of Education Standards Revision Committee for Teacher Education and Certification, 1994, p.18). Although reflective practice is described as a needed disposition for teachers, teacher education programs that emphasize reflection do not share the same outlooks or ideologies, with the resulting problem of reflection meaning all things to all people (Feimen-Nemser, 1990; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; McAninch, 1995; Smyth, 1992; Zeichner, 1993).

Writing in journals is a commonly accepted activity for fostering reflection. Teacher education programs that are based on reflective themes, frequently incorporate journal writing assignments (Francis, 1995; Grimmett, MacKinnon, Erickson, & Riecken, 1990; Proefriedt,1994; Ross, 1987, 1990; Valli, 1992; Zeichner and Liston, 1987). Just as there is a nominal consensus on the value of reflective teaching, there is a consensus in teacher education literature that journal writing is an approach or technique that fosters reflection (Holly, 1989; Proefriedt, 1994; Pultorak, 1993; Surbeck, Han, & Moyer, 1991). When journal writing is used as an assignment to foster reflection, supervisors, mentors, and/or instructors may respond to the students' journal entries. Journals are seen as a

source for dialogue between student and teacher (Canning, 1991; Diakiw and Beatty, 1991; Freiberg and Waxman, 1990; Holly, 1989; Surbeck et al, 1991). Also, teachers' comments are viewed as being essential to the students' reflection (Canning, 1991; Colton and Sparks-Langer, 1993; Ross, 1990).

As a teacher educator of preservice teacher education students, I also accept the premise that reflective practice is desirable and the premise that reflective dialogue journals provide a means for developing reflective educators. Therefore, over the course of several semesters, I have explored what characterizes the content of semester-long reflective dialogue journals in a university-based preservice teacher education class (my students' reflective writing and my teacher comments). Since previous research has not attended to journal use before encounters with field experience, has not examined journal entries and teacher comments from theoretical underpinnings of reflection and writing, and has not explored what journal entries meant to the teacher and students, I attempt to address these areas.

Reflection and Writing Literature

Literature on the theories and research of reflectivity and writing, is wedded to form a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for characterizing the reflective modes. Literature from writing theory and research serves as a basis for characterizing teacher comments and the dialogue patterns.

Reflection

The works of Schon (1983, 1987), Van Manen (1977), Hullfish and Smith (1964), and Dewey (1933/1910) are commonly cited referents of reflective teacher education. Their disparate but intertwined views of reflection inform this research. Dewey and Hullfish and Smith describe reflection as a process of a kind of thinking. They explain reflective thinking as the process of inquiry. Schon also describes reflection as a process of thinking, but a process that involves action occurring within practice. Van Manen

describes reflection in terms of educational practice, but does so by categorizing hierarchical levels of reflective thought.

Reflective teacher education programs (Valli, 1992), the work of the CITE program researchers (Sparks-Langer et al, 1990), King and Kitchener's (1994) research, and LaBoskey's (1994) research all inform this study. The CITE researchers, King and Kitchener, and LaBoskey attempt to identify characteristics of reflection as evidenced in the students' writing or interviews. The frameworks and /or criteria each developed add to the framework of reflective writing in my action research. The reflective teacher education programs, the CITE researchers, and LaBoskey view student writing as a lens for seeing students' reflective thinking.

Parallels found between the preceding theories and research efforts, provide my action research with an initial conceptual framework of what characterizes reflective writing. For example, there are parallels between Van Manen's technical-empirical level, Schon's activity on the bottom rung of the ladder of reflection, Dewey's and Hullfish and Smith's first steps in setting the problem by observing and gathering data, King and Kitchener's Stages 1-3 which deals with knowledge that is certain or from authority, CITE's layperson descriptions, and LaBoskey's simplistic and certain responses. Each can be associated with a mode of writing that is characterized by description, i.e., writers could describe their own technical or authoritative knowledge, or could describe the problematic situation, related data, or the activity to be reflected on.

Writing

Writing is commonly viewed as a way of learning or making meaning (Berthoff, 1981; Hillocks,1995; Langer and Applebee,1987). Writing occurs in a social context and occurs because of a social context. The aspects of audience are an integral part to the reflective dialogue journals of my students. The views of Britton (1975), Moffett (1968), and LeFevre (1987) provide my research with an initial conceptual framework for examining the dialogic aspects of the journal entries. For example, Britton's audience of

self, Moffett's intrapersonal communication, and LeFevre's internal dialogic perspective of invention, all parallel a kind of writing that is not concerned with the reader.

Teachers' written comments may fall into a variety of categories (Baumlin and Baumlin,1989; McCracken, 1985; Warnock,1989; Ziv,1981). Students' interpretations of and reactions to the teachers' comments also may be varied (Beach,1989; Odell,1989; Ziv,1981).

The conceptions of the categories of written discourse are central to this study (Britton, 1975; Emig, 1971, 1983; Moffett, 1968). The function categories of writing, along with the conceptions of reflection stated earlier, serve as a theoretical basis for characterizing the reflective modes in the reflective dialogue journals. For example, the descriptive mode of writing that was suggested by the merging of theories and research on reflection, could be further described by Britton's function category of informative transactional writing, Moffett's discourse category of recording, and Emig's reportorial extensive writing mode. Course content and textbook content would be likely stimuli for this writing. The descriptive mode might also be a recording of an event, situation, or action. Further parallels between reflectivity theories and discourse categories imply personal, metacognitive, interpretive, querying, social critical and action modes of writing.

Journals as a pedagogical tool, are commonly viewed as a means for students to learn from writing, of making use of the social context and audience of writing, and for students to engage in various discourse functions of writing (D'Arcy,1987; Fulwiler, 1987; Staton,1987). Journals are used by adults as learning tools in a variety of ways (Fallon. 1995; Lukinsky, 1991). Sometimes journal writing is used according to a prescriptive framework (Francis, 1995; Sparks-Langer et al, 1990; Yinger and Clark,1981).

Procedures

My approach to the procedures of this study is that of a teacher researcher. I have a personal goal of wanting to improve my own teaching practice. I want to do the best I

can to encourage the reflection of my students who are in a university-based preservice education class. Therefore, I have engaged in action research to attend to the use of journals in the development of reflective practitioners in the field of education. Teacher-researcher action research provides the researcher with an insider's perspective while developing the quality of the researcher's practice (Bell, 1987; Kelley, 1985; McKernan, 1991; Zeichner, 1993).

Participants

Over several semesters, I have been examining my students' journals, my comments, and our dialogue patterns in assigned reflective dialogue journals. As the course instructor, I have specific knowledge of the journal assignment, the students, and the course content and events that are often the focus of the journal entries. As the respondent in the journals, I have direct knowledge of my reactions to the students' journals and my intentions in writing comments. Participants are students who are enrolled in my sections of an Approaches to Teaching course. Approaches to Teaching is a three semester hour course that introduces general strategies and skills of instruction. Participants in my study are from three consecutive sections of Approaches to Teaching: Spring 1995, Summer 1995, and Fall 1995. All of my students were required to keep a reflective dialogue journal as a class assignment. At the end of each semester, I asked for volunteers to participate in my study on a confidential basis. The participants gave me permission to use their journals and agreed to participate in a retrospective and concurrent interview. The fifteen interview participants represent a cross-section of the Approaches to Teaching classes. Seven are sophomores, six are juniors, one is a senior and one is a post-graduate. There are twelve females and four males. There are two black and thirteen white participants. The age range is from nineteen to fifty-two. The participants' teaching certification areas are early childhood (1), elementary education (4), K-12 music (1), secondary math (1), secondary history (1), secondary English (6), and secondary business education (1). All participants have the relevant characteristics of being (a) preservice

teacher education students, (b) in a university-based class without a field component, (c) in my Approaches to Teaching section, and (d) engaged in the unit of my examination, i.e. a reflective dialogue journal.

Data Collection

Students in my Approaches to Teaching classes are required to keep a reflective dialogue journal as a class assignment. I explain the nature of a professional reflective dialogue journal at the beginning of the semester course and provide students with a guide sheet. Students generally choose their own topics from our course or from happenings outside of our course that can be related to the profession of education. Students are encouraged to reflect or go beyond just writing about what they see or read. I write comments on the opposing blank page of each entry and I encourage the students to write responses to my responses. Journals are turned in to me at least four times throughout the semester. For each journal entry that is completed on time, a set amount of points is earned.

In order to examine what characterizes reflective dialogue journals, participant provided data is as follows: journals, open-ended responses to questionnaires about the journals, interviews about the students' own journals and my comments, and open-ended responses about journaling and reflecting given at the start and at the end of the semester (A-R prompts). Teacher provided data is as follows: class lesson plans and notes, interview notes, a researcher global journal, and intent of comments log.

Data Analysis

The data in this study is analyzed in a manner that is common to qualitative research, that is, by inductive analysis (Erickson, 1986; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The initial coding involves categorizing and naming the phenomena. The macro unit of analysis in this study is the reflective dialogue journal of each participant. All other data sources and methods of data collection center around the journal.

Characteristics of Students' Reflective Writing

Initial categorizing of students' writing in the reflective dialogue journals, has resulted in a conceptual framework of the participants' reflective writing. The reflective writing modes in this framework appear to be as follows: descriptive/narrative, affective, metacognitive, meta-affective, connective/extensive, and proflective writing.

Descriptive/Narrative

Journal entries or parts of journal entries may describe a concept or narrate an event. The descriptive or narrative writing seems to be prereflective in nature. Descriptive/narrative writings are driven by retellings of prior knowledge, descriptions of concepts, or narrations of events, whether personal or public. In an entry that narrates a personal event Troy writes:

> This entry is about one of our topics: evaluation. I also have a speech class this summer. In this class it's fairly straightforward stuff. I do all the reading and homework. I was also prepared for our test. Well, I only got a 65% on the test, which was actually better than the average. The problem was, there was one extended problem that was worth a third of the total points. I don't mind extended problems that base one answer on the ... In fact, as a math teacher I think they can be good. Those types of problems can show true understanding or mastery. But this problem went too far. I made a mistake early on and it blew the rest of the problem for me. I missed 1/4 of the total points on this test from this one problem. How does this show what I know? It proves that I don't know the first step to this problem, but the rest I might know perfectly fine.

Later on Troy recognizes the prereflective nature of his entry when he says, "I don't think I was really being reflective. In fact I sort of feel bad about this entry...I don't think I really met the stated requirements for a journal entry."

Affective

Some writing states the writer's personal feelings or makes broad, axiomatic statements. Affective writing is driven by talk of the writer's own views, opinions,

attitudes, beliefs, and moods or is driven by maxims, proverbial statements, or axioms. In an entry that includes both axiomatic statements and personal feelings, Elizabeth writes:

> As a future teacher, I expect to have many students in my classes with handicaps, especially with the new trend of mainstreaming that has become so popular lately. I think that mainstreaming can be both good and bad. On the positive end, 'normal' students would benefit greatly by learning to interact with handicapped students and the opposite is true too. I must admit that I do become slightly nervous around handicapped individuals and that is because I never had the chance to interact with one.

Later, Elizabeth says she was reflective in the entry precisely because of the affect, " I was reflective because I discussed my own feelings about mainstreaming." Yet other students described their entries as not being reflective, precisely because they stated their feelings or opinions. Thus recognizing affective writing as prereflective, seems to be problematic.

Metacognitive

Some writing begins with a description of a concept or a narration, but then involves metacognition on the part of the writer. The writing involves a self-awareness of the writer's own meaning-making processes. In a metacognitive entry Notlaw writes:

> In our discussion on discipline we talked about the three different stages [ways] we react to people. The three different stages are child, parent, and adult. These concepts were familiar to me because I learned about them in a defensive driving class. The teacher used the different stages to show how you respond to a situation on the road. If someone cuts you off while driving and passes you up and then you speed up to pass them, then you are exhibiting the child stage. If you point your finger and scold, then you are exhibiting the parent stage. If you just let them pass and continue to drive defensively, then you are exhibiting the adult stage. This helped me to better understand the concept when introduced in approaches to Teaching class.

In describing this entry, Notlaw later says, "I was reflective in that because as I was learning this particular concept I was looking back at how I had learned it before but in a

different manner." A metacognitive entry may begin with prereflective writing that is descriptive of a concept or narrates an event, but moves on from there.

Meta-affective

Affective writing, like descriptive/narrative writing is interspersed in most entries. Sometimes entries appear to be 'meta-affective'. The writing embodies a self-awareness of the writer's own feelings, views, opinions, and emotions. For example, Courtney writes:

> This whole lesson plan is really making me crazy! I don't understand it as much as I would like to. and whenever I feel this way, I put it off until I absolutely have to deal with it I am very disciplined and always put more than enough time into my work, but I wish just for once, something would come easy for me. It seems like everything I do I have to work so much harder than everybody else, and I still don't end up with the grades I want. Last semester I gained 15 pounds from never leaving my dorm, I went to class and studied that was it, and I still didn't do as well as I thought I should have. I'm sorry, I'm going off on a tangent!!!

Connective/Extensive

While journal entries always have elements of descriptive/narrative, affective, metacognitive, or meta-affective writing, sometimes the writing moves outside of these modes, extending them. The writing moves beyond the writer's self, driven by talk of what's behind the topic or what is connected to it; driven by a question, a recognition of a problematic situation, or the problem-solving process. For instance, after giving a descriptive/narrative account of her younger brother's bad grades in sixth grade and her imminent conference with his teachers, Madison moves into a connective writing mode.

> I know he is adjusting to the new atmosphere, his hormones are beginning to run rampant, and he feels he can't do the work because he is not smart....From observing how he learns, I know he has to have some type of hands-on project. For instance, he had to do a collage and he received an A+ on it because his was the most creative and innovative. He also had to create some drums for music and instead of making two separate drums, he wanted to put them together although they were

already finished. He loves to do creative and fun things like that. I know if his teachers are lecturing and teaching in one way, then that is part of the problem because they aren't addressing his learning style. I wonder if his teachers view children as vessels that knowledge is poured into I hope not because children need to apply, comprehend, understand and relate what they learn...

Connective/extensive writing may be concerned with topics that are close to the writer such as Madison's excerpt or it may be concerned with topics that are more public or social in nature. Examples of the latter come from two of Jessie's entries on a proposed voucher system in a local school district:

[Entry 1] If it is the majority of parents who are already sending their children to private schools who are for the vouchers, don't they understand what that would do to private schools? If everyone is to receive vouchers and could choose where to send their children wouldn't that mean more competition for the private schools? What would happen to public schools? I am not sure private schools would be too private anymore. I think there are more draw backs to the voucher system than benefits....[Entry 2] I am not sure I can think of a way that the district will benefit from the vouchers. Would that eliminate the problems that the Public Schools are having with money? Would the students have the opportunity of a better education? The district schools would be competing for the students' "business" so to speak. The students would be using these vouchers to choose which school they liked. That means the schools would have to prove that they are the best school for them. Could this be the way for the schools to get their act together, for the students' sakes?

Proflective

Some journal writing is very clearly oriented towards the future. When students' write in this action mode, they are envisioning an action that could be done or planned to be done by themselves or others. I have come to think of it as their striving to find their true 'pedagogical selves'. During his interview, Troy coined a great term for this type of writing or thinking:

As far as if I was reflective or not, I don't think I was really being reflective at all for this entry. Maybe you can say I was being **proflective** or something like that. Looking towards the future as opposed to looking at your past. Looking in the past towards your future.

In these excerpts, students are being proflective or defining their pedagogical selves:

You demonstrated a mini-lesson today in class. It was very helpful and fun. I bet you had a good time teaching. I've had it in my mind that it would be great to be a humorous type teacher (repressed stand-up comic) but that would not be enough. The class might love it, but would they be learning? The biggest worry is "Can I teach so they will learn." You demonstrated that learning can be fun and you connected it to the class. I hope I will be able to plan lessons like that.

April

As a teacher, I could spice up my lectures by throwing in jokes when appropriate. I could do experiments, give examples and draw my own personal experiences into the lectures depending on what the subject matter is. I could also ask the students questions to get them involved. When I lecture I do not have to just straight lecture. I could have the students do some type of hands-on project or something to get them out of their seats. The main thing I do not want to do is lecture the whole time. I don't want the children to only hear my voice. I want to incorporate the students into my lesson. I want my students to be active learners.

Madison

Characteristics of My Teacher Comments

Based on my intents in writing the comments and the students' interpretations of and reactions to the comments, the initial coding of my teacher comments results in the following categories: affirming comments, think more or nudging comments, personal connection comments, give information comments, and little/no reaction comments.

Affirming Comments

My comments sometimes appear to fall into a category that confirms what the students have written. Student perceptions of the affirming comments are varied. Some

interpret my comments as being summations of their thoughts, as compliments, as indications they are on the right track, as proof of my interest in them, as my agreement with them, as confirmation, or as something to feel good about. Examples follow.

In response to the excerpt from Elizabeth's journal above, my comment was: "True". Elizabeth explained her reaction to my comment as follows: " Your first comment was I would say helpful. One word, it went either way but I guess it was helpful because you agreed with what I had written, another encouragement." In response to Notlaw's excerpt above my comment was "This is a great analogy. I wanted to ask you to share this with the rest of our class - can you remind me on Wednesday?" Notlaw explained his reaction to my comment as follows:

> My reaction to this comment was oh boy you want me to share this with the class. (laugh) I like the fact that you liked the entry that I wrote and the example that I gave. I liked the fact that you liked it. It was more of a surprise that it was made. The only thing it made me think about was will everyone else think it was good. (laugh)

In response to the excerpt from Madison's journal on spicing up lectures above, my comment was:

> You have certainly thought up some helpful and workable ideas of how to 'spice up' lectures and keep learners cognitively active (even is they're not physically active.) I think you'll find the next few lesson approaches and strategies we'll learn about in our class, to your liking.

Madison explained her reaction to my comment as follows:

> I was pleased with your comment because you praised me You know everyone likes to be praised. So I just felt that you felt that I was taking this journal seriously and the stuff that I was writing on was helping me. You even gave me a comment saying that I would like the next approaches that we had to teach, which I did, very much so. It was kind of you gave me a light at the end of the tunnel when you said there were other approaches (laugh). I was pleased.

Think More or Nudging Comments

Sometimes my comments fall into a category that makes the students think more. These types of comments more than any others, elicited further written dialogue from the students, either on the same journal page or in future entries. Even when there was no further written dialogue, students usually attributed these comments with having made them think more or think differently. Examples follow.

In response to the excerpt from Troy's journal above, my comment was, "Indeed, so what does that make you consider as a math teacher who might use extended problems? Could some credit (points, etc.) be given for the correct processes...???" Troy explained his reaction to my comment as follows:

> I remember when I read it I really agreed with it. I had classes where I've gotten credit, even if I had the wrong answer or used the wrong number. I've gotten credit for using the correct process. It just sort of slipped my mind and then you wrote that and it was sort of like - oh yeah that's right. I thought it was a really good idea at the time. So I had a really positive reaction to it and it was really helpful because hopefully, once I have my own class and I start evaluating kids, I won't forget to do that. It's not the answers that I want the kids to get, it's the process and the problem-solving. So hopefully I'll remember to do that. I think I will, but it brought it back to my attention so it was very helpful.

In response to Courtney's excerpt above, my comment was, "As a teacher, if you remember this, you will have some insight to the very individual way that your students learn." Courtney explained her reaction to my comment as follows:

> This is a very good comment because, looking at the way that I'm learning and the way that I do things and how I procrastinate because I'm overwhelmed with information, makes me think, that my students that I teach some day will be exactly the same way. Some of them, not all of them.

In response to the excerpt from April's journal above, my comment was as follows:

> Sometimes fun and sometimes not. Perhaps when it's not fun, we can help our students understand intrinsic motivation. Can you think of times or situations where you might need to use 'delayed

gratification' or where your students would need long-term goals, before they got to the 'fun' part of the school activity?

April explained her reaction to my comment as follows:

> You talked about when learning can't just be all fun and you have the intrinsic motivation, which did lead me to think about some of my studies again, which weren't all fun. And I had talked about when I studied German and how tough that was and how I agonized over it. I do realize that it is rewarding to study hard even though it isn't all fun. It was helpful to my thinking because as I'm thinking teaching should be just fun and then I have to think that teaching can't all be fun because learning always isn't fun. Sometimes it's very tough work and has to be done in order to achieve something.

Personal Connection Comments

At times my comments seem to simply seek a human connection with my students by offering a pleasantry or an invitational remark. At the end of my comment to Madison about her upcoming conference with her sixth grade brother's teachers I remarked, "Let me know the rest of the news." Madison explained her interpretation of my comment as follows: "You shared in my excitement with me and you just wanted to know how it went."

After reading Jacques' narration of doing a field observation for a teacher education class in his former high school, I responded, "I did that with my elementary school." Jacques' interpretation of my comment was, " You went back and did a field experience...I realized that I wasn't the only person that's done that (laugh)."

Give Information Comments

Occasionally my comments are of a didactic nature, giving students explicit information or terms. At times, the didactic comments are in response to a student's question to me. In an entry on professional development, Troy specifically asked," How many graduating math teachers can expect to get jobs? Where are the jobs?" My comment was, " 306 WTH [student services] should have some information on this.

Information I have shows a slight demand for high school math." Troy's reaction to my comment was, "I always figured that somebody in White Hall would have that kind of information...a couple of days after I read this, I went down there [student services]."

At other times, I offer specific information that the student did not ask for. For example, in response to Mary's entry about a Russian emigre who had difficulty with the GRE, I wrote," This reminds me of issues concerning bilingual education, e.g. the need to keep teaching students subject matter in their native language, while they are learning English." In response to an excerpt from Jill's entry where she says "each discipline seems to have a logical order in which the content is already arranged", I wrote, "content hierarchy." Jill explained her interpretation of my comment as follows: "You were just telling me what that was called... it's called content hierarchy."

Little/No Reaction Comments

Sometimes my comments, no matter what my intent, seemed to create little or no reaction or interpretation on the part of the students. The students simply ignored the comments because the comments had no effect on them, did not catch their attention, or were not understandable to them. Sometimes the students thought they should probably think some more about the comment but they didn't bother to think more. A comment to Courtney about her up-coming lesson plan was, "O.K. that makes sense." Instead of interpreting it as an affirming comment, Courtney had little reaction when she said, " You're just commenting." When I asked Madison "What other styles [of learning] are there, besides the ones you have mentioned as your favorites?", she did not think more but said , "A few things crossed my mind but I didn't focus on it...I just brushed it off."

Once in a great while, students perceived my comment as being a misinterpretation of their writing. An example of the latter occurred when Charlene reacted to a comment of mine asking her what kind of teaching approach she would like to use. She says, "I remember thinking that I thought I had addressed it at the end of the entry, about what kind of approach I would use..."

Discussion and Implications

This action research on preservice teachers' reflective dialogue journals has resulted in the formulation of a reflective writing mode framework. The six part framework is as follows:

(1) Descriptive/Narrative: driven by retellings of prior knowledge, descriptions of concepts, or narrations of events, whether personal or public.

(2) Affective: driven by talk of the writer's own views, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and moods or driven by maxims, proverbial statements, or axioms.

(3) Metacognitive: driven by a self-awareness of the writer's own meaning-making processes.

(4) Meta-affective: driven by a self-awareness of the writer's own feelings, views, opinions, and emotions.

(5) Connective/Extensive: driven by talk of what is behind the topic or what is connected to it; driven by a question, a recognition of a problematic situation, or the problem-solving process.

(6) Proflective: driven by envisioning an action that could be done or planned to be done by self or others.

While the preservice teachers' journals displayed entries in all six modes, the descriptive/narrative and affective modes were used most frequently. Moffet (1968) said that the stages on the ladder of abstraction (recording, reporting, generalizing, and theorizing) can not take place until the ones before it take place. The lowest levels of recording and reporting characterize the descriptive/narrative mode. Britton (1975) said the expressive function of writing, which characterizes the affective mode, was the basis of all other types of writing. The descriptive/narrative and affective modes in the preservice teacher's journals were often the basis of other modes of writing. As Britton and Moffet purport, other discourse must necessarily stem from these modes. The descriptive/narrative and affective modes perform a foundational service to the other

modes of the framework. As such, they occur quite regularly and frequently in the journals. However, these foundational modes are pre-reflective in nature. Dewey (1933/1910) refers to the observing and data gathering stages of problem solving as pre-reflective. Also, King and Kitchener (1994) refer to the first stages of reflective judgment, where knowledge is viewed as certain or authoritative, as pre-reflective. Retellings of what is known or experienced and narrations of personal experiences, views, feelings, and beliefs are necessary for furthering reflection, without being reflections themselves.

Metacognitive and meta-affective modes of writing stem from the pre-reflective modes. The recognition of and tracing of one's own understandings, emotions, and beliefs moves beyond descriptive/narrative or affective writing, but does not move beyond the writer. Emig's (1971) reflexive mode which is written for the self and Britton's (1975) expressive writing function which stays close to the speaker and self, demarcate the "meta" modes. King and Kitchener (1994) refer to the stages of reflective judgment where knowledge is viewed as idiosyncratic and subjective, as quasi-reflective. Thus the "meta" modes that appear in the preservice teachers' journals are quasi-reflective.

Substantive reflection is characterized by the connective/extensive and proflective modes of writing in the journals. Writing discourse theory would view these modes as being on a higher level of abstraction. Moffett (1968) refers to the analogic of classification as the discourse of generalizing, and the transformation of generalizations through tautology as the discourse of theorizing. Emig (1983) refers to analysis and synthesis as the major modes for making-meaning with writing. In both Dewey's (1933/1910) reflective thinking activity and Schon's (1987) frame experiment, reflection is dependent upon the analysis and synthesis of problem-solving and listening to the "back talk." Thus if the writing is distinguished by a marked search for relationships, connections, justifications, consequences, analysis of meanings or situations, or the like, then substantive reflection in the connective/extensive mode is evidenced. If the writing is distinguished by a considered search for what ought to be or by an envisioning of what

could be, either in the form of a personal pedagogical theory or a public, social theory, then substantive reflection in the proflective mode is evidenced.

As teacher educators using reflective dialogue journals with preservice teachers, we might expect our students to write primarily in the descriptive/narrative and affective modes, and occasionally in the metacognitive and meta-affective modes. We would have to make our decisions as to whether we believe they should go beyond these modes. If we hold to the belief that teachers need to be reflective practitioners, then we approach the assignment of journal keeping with the distinct perspective of wanting to and needing to increase our students' reflection in the connective/extensive and proflective modes. Our roles as readers/responders to our students' dialogue journals, correspond with Schon's (1987) description of reciprocal reflection-in-action as a process that involves a student and a coach working collaboratively. We need to be aware of our students' writing modes and to respond with comments that will stimulate and nurture reflectivity.

A categorization of teacher comments, has resulted from an examination of my comments, my intents in writing those comments, and most importantly, the students' interpretations of and reactions to my comments in the reflective dialogue journals of this study. The teacher comment categories are identified as follows:

(1) Affirming Comments: intended and/or interpreted as a confirmation of the writer's understandings, feelings, views, ideas, thinking processes, and so on.

(2) Think More or Nudging Comments: intended and/or interpreted as a stimulus to further considerations related to the writers' topic.

(3) Give Information Comments: intended and/or interpreted as a provision of knowledge, pedagogical or otherwise.

(4) Personal Connection Comments: intended and/or interpreted as a mutuality, pedagogical or otherwise.

(5) Little or No Reaction Comments: no matter the intent, interpreted so there is little or no reaction or thwarted reaction.

The act of writing a comment begins with the act of reading the students' writing and selectively responding to a portion or topic of the journal entry. Affirming comments respond to whatever reflective writing mode the teacher wants to draw to the students' attention. Mayher, Lester and Pradl's (1983) suggestion that teacher response should emphasize the positive and Baumlin and Baumlin's (1989) description of the epideictic or celebratory mode of teacher comments, correspond to the nature of the affirming comments in the journals. Affirmations would be used to motivate students' continued use of the particular reflective writing mode. Students can be expected to react to affirmations along a spectrum from needing an affirmation, to liking the affirmation, to accepting the affirmation.

Think more or nudging comments appear to be the most crucial when looking toward the future of the written discourse and dialogue in the journal. Think more comments may respond to any writing mode, but aim to either move the writer into another mode or to examine other aspects of the topic in the coexisting mode. Baumlin and Baumlin (1989) refer to comments with this character as being in the deliberative mode and using the rhetoric of change and persuasion. Think more or nudging comments not only create more reflective thought in the journal writers than other comments, but also occasion more follow-up written dialogue than other comments. Kay and I had some of the most on-going dialogues (i.e. back and forth several times on one topic) of all the journals. As Kay explains:

> I think with the second bunch of entries, I start thinking about things a little bit more, comment wise, ... as I wrote the entries I could almost hear your questions about it. I can almost answer those questions before you even have time to write the question to me.

Personal connection comments and give information comments, may respond to any writing mode. They do not have as their primary aim however, the nurturing of reflectivity. Nevertheless, they impact on the writing modes in the journal by way of reciprocal interactions between the student writer and the teacher responder. Give

information comments and especially personal connection comments, cultivate the dialogue between student and teacher. Writing is a social, collaborative process (Bleich, 1988; LeFevre, 1987) and teacher responses can either encourage or hinder that process.

Use of the various types of comments should vary according to the needs and purposes of the journal writers. Teacher educators in the role of readers/responders need to know their own intents in writing comments. They should be mindful of not becoming trapped in the use of only one comment type or in responding to only one writing mode. Not every teacher comment will lead to greater reflectivity and not every teacher comment will be interpreted or reacted to as the teacher intends. But teacher comments can affirm and nudge students' reflective writing and they can encourage a dialogue. If we are using journals with our preservice teacher education students and have understandings of the reflective writing modes framework and the types of teacher comments, we will be better able to establish a dialogic ethos and to stimulate the growth of reflective educators.

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