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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED
TEACHERS USE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
TO IMPROVE PEDAGOGY

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

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By

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A PHEMONOLOGICAL STUDY OF NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED
TEACHERS USE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
TO IMPROVE PEDAGOGY

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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Most of all, I thank God for His amazing grace.

DEDICATION

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my late mama and daddy, Hattie E and James C. Harrington, whom I loved so very much. Also to my late brother, Arthur Grant Harrington and my late uncle Virgil Carr. To my late paternal grandmother, Josephine (Big Mama) Harrington, you are the reason I am who I am.

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And finally, to those of you who think I have forgotten how you have changed my life, I appreciate your support and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

We must remember that one determined person
can make a significant difference,
and that a small group of determined people
can change the course of history.

Sonia Johnson

You have all changed my story and I love you for it!

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

NBC	National Board Certification
NBCT	National Board Certified Teacher
NBPTS	National Board Professional Teaching Standards
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NCTAF	National Foundation for the improvement of Education
NFIE	National Foundation for the Improvement of Education

ABSTRACT

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS USE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE TO IMPROVE PEDAGOGY

This qualitative study described and explained ten Oklahoma National Board Certified Teachers' (NBCTs') perception on reflective practice. The conceptual framework employed in this study was phenomenology. The researcher question: How do National Board Certified Teachers learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice? Participants' selection was based on their successful completion of the National Board process and response to an invitational e-letter. Over a four month, period, the researcher gathered data from three separate interviews.

Upon completion of the data collection strategies, the interview transcriptions were analyzed and coded into meaning clusters. From the interview transcription the researcher identified formulated meanings of significant statements, discovering and illuminating hidden in the various context. Reoccurring themes were identified, allowing for emergence of themes that were common to all the participants' interviewed. The NBCTs described how and where they learned to reflect on their practice.

The analysis revealed those elements that influenced participants' perception of the phenomenon of reflective practice. The three themes that explicated these teachers' experiences with the phenomenon of reflective practice were: (a) meaningful opportunities to participate; (b) caring connected community; and (c) high expectations.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Introduction

In the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, the National Commission on Excellence in Education alerted the country to what was perceived to be a crisis in America's schools. To quote from the report, "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" (p. 5). Unless the country is willing to make drastic changes in the educational system, the authors argue, the country's economic future was at stake. Soon after the release of *A Nation at Risk* (1983) flurries of educational reforms were proposed. Most initiatives focused on student testing and accountability. One plan put forward by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching took a different path. Arguing that teaching was the heart of education, the task force's report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (1996) called for initiatives aimed at strengthening teaching. "Teachers must be among the best educated people in their community" and to ensure this, their report suggests drastic changes in the way teachers were recruited into and retained in the profession (Carnegie Forum, 1996, p. 36).

A Nation Prepared (1996) recommended an integrated plan to strengthen the teaching profession. This plan included a proposal for a three-stage process to assess teaching; the first two stages focus on pre-service teachers and the third stage focus on the assessment of advanced levels of teaching (Carnegie Task Force, p. 87). In a definite departure from strategies used in the past, which emphasizes weeding out unqualified

teachers from the profession, the task force recommended that “each of these stages should be designed not to eliminate candidates, but to “identify deficiencies” in preparation that need to be corrected before a certificate is granted (Carnegies Task Force, 1996, p. 87). In another departure from tradition, the task force argued for a professional development system in which they base compensation “on proven competence, not time in the chair” (p. 10). For too long, the report argued, school systems have given credit to teachers for in-service workshops without verifying what teachers have gained from such training. The task force wanted teachers to demonstrate what they know and can do.

To carry out its plan, the task force called for the establishment of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). NBPTS establishes high standards for practicing teachers, certify accomplished teachers that met those standards, encourage all teachers to strive toward the higher standards, and promote educational reforms for the purpose of improving student learning. “The object” according to the report, is to create a process that “helps as many [practicing teachers] as possible reach a high standard” (NBPTS, 2005, p. 87).

NBPTS was established in 1987, a year after the release of the Carnegie report. The NBPTS was established to serve two distinct purposes (a) to create an assessment and certification system to offer teachers an advanced certification designed to recognize accomplished teachers, and (b) to establish a board to develop standards in as many as 30 separate teaching certification areas (NBPTS, 2004). The standards were released to the public as Chapter II of *Toward High and Rigorous Standards for the Teaching*

Profession: “What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do.” Labeled as the five core propositions:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning;
- Teachers know the subjects they teach; and how to teach those subjects to students;
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning;
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experiences;
- Teachers are members of learning communities (NBPTS, 2004).

As candidates prepare the artifacts and the written commentaries, they engage in reflective thinking and make decisions based on student performances (NBPTS, 2004).

National Board defines the reflection process of a teacher in the context of teaching students as:

A thought process that occurs after a teaching situation. This is the thinking that allows you to make decisions about how you would approach similar situation in the future. You could decide to do something the same way, differently, or not all. Although reflection may occur in many places, the “Reflection” section of your Written Commentary is where you must show assessor how you learn from teaching experiences to inform and improve your practice in the future. (p. 15)

As part of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, the U.S. Secretary of Education’s report on Title II, Meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher Challenge, Rodney Page makes four claims. The second claim has resulted in the most controversy-that there is little evidence that traditional teacher preparation programs, lead to improved student

achievement (Heap, 2002). Educators, especially those in teacher preparation programs are concerned that an overemphasis on content knowledge at the expense of pre-service pedagogical training may not result in a more competent teaching force. In her study of teacher qualification in nine industrialized countries, Leibbrand (2002) cautions, “The fact that all [other nations] require education in ‘how to teach’ should give pause to those who promote the view that subject matter and a background check are all that is needed for heightened quality teachers” (p. 2). The current trend, however, is to define highly qualified teachers as those who demonstrate rigorous subject matter competence. Thus, the importance of reflective practices of experienced teachers is heightened.

Statement of the Problem

Reflecting on one’s teaching is an integral part of improvement of educational practice. Although reflective practice is advocated in the literature, there are few conceptually grounded models for implementation at the experienced level (Dewey, 1933; Osterman, 1990; Schön, 1983). There is a need for more widely disseminated knowledge on the concept of reflection and its application, particularly on the doing and facilitating of reflective practice at the experienced level. The literature has not sufficiently addressed reflective practice at this level and this research aims to investigate that phenomenon.

Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, and Hampston (1998) advise that it is time to listen to expert teachers to learn how they came to teach in the ways that they do. Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998) indicate that doing so will potentially guide teacher educators to prepare many more effective teachers. To achieve this goal, theories of expertise will provide both a foundation and a lens of describing the characteristics and instructional

practices of exemplary teachers. For the purposes of this study, exemplary teachers are those certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). These teachers have demonstrated their commitment to professional growth by earning a voluntary certification that is a prestigious teaching credential.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe reflective practice of National Board Certified Teachers in order to explain teachers' experiences during the process of reflective practice using a phenomenological design. This study will be important because it will examine in what context does experienced teachers engage in reflective practice. This study will also be important because it may help novice teachers develop an orientation toward reflection, rather than reverting to a habitual set of responses to the daily challenges of teaching. Since most studies on reflective practice report on pre-service teachers, a phenomenological study devoted to experienced teachers will have a significant purpose for future counties or school districts to experience.

Berliner (2004) explains, “[Experts] bring richer and more personal sources of information to bear on the problem that they are trying to solve” (p. 201) and “provide us with exemplary practice” (p. 184). The meaning that expert teachers extract from their experiences supports an additional purpose of this study, which is to provide support for novice teachers in reflection. Johnson (2001) predicts teachers with National Board Certification (NBC) can influence younger teachers as they grow professionally. This influence will be a positive contribution to the field as a model that may assist teacher education and professional development programs in linking theory and practice (Makin, Hayden, & Diaz, 2000).

Research Question

The research question guiding this dissertation is: How do National Board Certified Teachers learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice?

Significance of the Study

A study of how National Board Certified Teachers describe their experiences of reflective practice is important for several reasons. First, the study will add to research findings concerning reflective practice and contribute to the discussion on the usefulness of reflective practice as a reform effort. Second, the findings of this study will offer insights about improvements and suggest ways that may support the development of educational practice. Reflection can also play an integral role in novice teachers' motivation and sense of renewal. "A significant part of renewal is being a reflective practitioner of one's teaching" (Henderson, 2002, p.1).

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions will be employed:

Experienced teachers: For the purposes of this study, the term experienced teacher will be a teacher who has at least five years of teaching experience and who is National Board Certified.

Lived experience: "...investigator writes research question that explore the meaning of that experience for individuals and ask individuals to describe ..." (Creswell, 1998, p. 54).

National Board of Professional Teaching Practices (NBPTS): An independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization governed by a 63-member board of directors

comprised mainly of teachers, as well as administrators, school board leaders, and business and community leaders.

National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT): Teachers who have completed the National Board certification process and have been awarded the advanced certification.

“Pedagogy is a fascination with the growth of the other” (van Manen, 1991, p. 13).. It shows the orientation of one to the other, it is the sensitivity of the lived world, it is thoughtful, reflective and relational. “Pedagogical understanding is always concerned with unique and particular circumstances. Pedagogical understanding is interactive. It is not an abstract, detached form of understanding that must then be translated into practical action” (van Manen, 1992, p. 85).

Reflective practice: Based on Dewey’s notion of reflective action, reflective practices “involves the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of the reasons that support it and the consequences to which it leads” (Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter One discusses the statement of the problem and presents the research question as well as provides the significance of the study and definitions of terms. Chapter Two reviews the literature related to the study while Chapter Three presents the methodology, design for the study, data collection and analysis. Chapter Four provides the synthesis of data, clustered themes, and a synthesis of meanings and Chapter Five discusses the conclusions and recommendations for future study. The appendices contain a demographic table, invitational e-letter, and transcribed interviews.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

In the past ten to 15 years, numerous educational commissions, boards, foundations such as, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAE, 1996) the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE, 1996) the National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 1995) the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 1987), and states and local school districts, identified reflection as a standard toward which all teachers must strive. NCTAE (1996) state educators must be able to critically examine their practice, seek the advice of others, and draw on educational research to deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment, and adopt their teaching to new findings and ideas. These organizations and reports promote creating opportunities for teachers to reflect systematically on their practice and learn from experience.

Standards for teacher preparation and practice develop concurrently with new standards for K-12 students. Teacher preparation standards focus on classroom practices that encourage students to engage in active construction of meaningful learning. The belief that learners constantly change their internally constructed frameworks or understandings of how things work is rooted in constructivism (Brooks & Grennin Brooks, 1999). While educators have begun to accept the idea of encouraging students to construct knowledge for themselves, applying the same principle to the professional development of teachers is a more recent notion (Kroll & LaBoskey, 1996).

The aim of this literature review is to examine how reflection impacts the practice of NBCTs. The first section reviews work from John Dewey (1933), Max Van Manen (1991) and Donald Schön (2000). These works provide key theoretical frameworks for many who have studied reflection in teacher education. The second section addresses several definitions of reflection including types of reflections. Another section explains the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards process. I then present a variety of studies which have been conducted to gain understanding in the reflection of teachers.

Theoretical Foundations of Reflective Thinking

The theoretical works of Dewey (1933) Van Manen (1991) and Schön (2000) are often cited as influences on the literature on reflection in teacher education. Their works combine reflection as a theory of understanding, dealing with, and learning from problems. The contributions of these three theorists help explain the cognitive act of reflection and the interaction of the environment in which it occurs.

Dewey's Model of Inquiry

Scholars typically trace the origins of the concept of reflection in American education back at least to John Dewey (Hatton & Smith, 1995). In fact, it is hard to find a bibliography, from an article or book with the word reflection in the title, without reference to Dewey, *How we think* (1933). It is often cited in the theoretical frameworks of reflective thinking which contributes to an explanation of how people think about problems. Dewey's theory provides insight into the process by which adults learn from their experiences and begins to reveal some of the factors that influence this process.

Dewey (1933) describes reflective thinking as one type of thinking. He explains that other types of thinking exist such as stream of consciousness, which includes

daydreams and random recollections. But, as he explains, reflective thinking separates itself from other forms of thinking in that it involves: 1) a state of uncertainty and hesitation, some sort of mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and 2) searching and inquiring to find a solution that will resolve the troubled, uncertain mind. Dewey (1933) also reminds readers that reflective thinking is not necessary in all circumstances, but rather it is a particular type of thinking for particular circumstances, for example, the type of thinking involved when there are competing solutions to be considered. To Dewey (1933) reflective thinking represents an elaborate system of making sense of a confusing situation, in which there are several ways to respond, in order to act in a thoughtful manner.

Dewey (1933) explains that reflective thinking begins when a person encounters a situation that precipitates a state of confusion, doubt, or apprehension, and decides to deal with it. Attitudes, open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and responsibility, influence a person's decisions to begin reflective thinking about the problem they encounter and impact the phases of a person's reflective thinking. Dewey (1933) describes five such phases: suggestion; intellectualization; guiding idea (hypothesis); reasoning; and testing the hypothesis by action. Dewey (1933) asserts that the five phases do not progress through a fixed sequence, that individual reflective processes differ, that there is no set method, and that particular phases may be repeated to more clearly define the problem. Dewey (1933) continues to explain that the process changes with different people and at different times. In some instances, a phase may be missing entirely or subsumed within another phase.

Dewey (1933) also argues that attitudes, experiences, and judgments influence the form and outcome of reflective thinking. He proposes that reflection is important in the change processes of teaching through the reconstruction or the reorganization of experiences. He maintains that teachers should investigate their practice through inquiry. According to LaBoskey (1994) Dewey encourages teachers to be thoughtful students of their own practice, rather than followers of prescription or routines. Dewey (1933) warns of placing pre-service teachers into the schools before they develop the habit of reflection. He felt they could be overly influenced by existing practices, diminishing the potential for reflection, inquiry and experimentation, and encouraging mindless imitation. (Dewey, 1933).

van Manen

Like Dewey (1933) Max van Manen is a major influence on works on reflective thinking in teacher education. Van Manen (1991) offered three basic levels of reflection in teaching: the technical, critical and practical levels of reflection. The technical level of reflection takes into consideration the efficiency, and effectiveness of means to achieve certain ends, which are not open to criticism or modification (Hatton & Smith, 1995). Technical reflection refers to reflection used to examine skills, strategies, and methods. Such reflection is used in analysis of achievement of predetermined goals without giving much consideration to contextual influences within and outside of the classroom.

The second level, critical reflection encompasses the first level and considers moral and ethical criteria of the educational process (Gore & Zeichner, 1991). Critical reflection focuses on the underlying beliefs and moral values of practice being primarily concerned with social equity. According to van Manen (1991) reflective practices can be

broadly defined as the “systemic inquiry into one’s teaching practice and the deliberate attention to one’s experience” (p. 12). When a professional operates at the critical level, he or she analyzes personal action within a wider socio-historical and politico-cultural context (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Zeichner & Listen, 1996). Educators are collaborative members of a learning community called upon to make ethical judgments that are based on justice, and respect for others.

The practical level of reflection as van Manen (1991) explains is a complex concept that explains much of what teachers do every day. Van Manen (1991) describes three views of the practical (or views about teaching practice), which shows how these views about practice depend on an individual’s assumptions about the nature of knowledge, and explains how each view influences the ways that reflection in practice occurs. Although van Manen’s (1991) theory about the relationship between an individual’s epistemic assumptions and the nature of his or her reflective thinking does not directly build on Dewey’s (1933) conception of reflective thinking, it does expand and confirm Dewey’s (1933) thesis of the interconnected nature of reflective thinking. According to Dewey (1933) and van Manen (1991), reflective thinking is more than an isolated task; it has connections to a person’s attitudes, views of knowledge, judgment, and experiences.

One way van Manen (1991) describes the practical is guided by a conception of knowledge that focuses on techniques, control, efficiency, and effectiveness. Reflective thinking focuses on the technical application of knowledge and basic principles of education and curriculum to arrive at a stated end. When confronted with competing theories and views about educational choices, a teacher makes choices with an end goal

of efficiency and effectiveness. Van Manen (1991) also describes the practical as communicative understanding, which means practical decisions are guided by the analysis and clarification of individual and cultural experiences, perceptions, and assumptions. As he explains, reflective thinking would be used to frame and solve problems in ways that would help a person gain interpretative understanding of educational experience, including the nature and quality of that experience.

The third view of the practical that van Manen (1991) presents is the practical as critical reflection, which means practice guided by the constant inquiry into and critique of features of society that dominate and repress some people. This interpretation of the practical is based in critical theory. Reflective thinking focuses on the consideration of the worth of knowledge and the nature of the social conditions toward a goal of an educational system free of structures that repress individual or promote inequality among groups.

Schön's 'Reflection in Action'

Donald Schön is another proponent of reflective practice who expanded Dewey's concept of reflection. In his work, *The Reflective Practitioner* Dewey (1933) considers how professionals develop and use knowledge of their field. His theory explains a process of framing and re-framing problems that he refers to as reflection-in-action, an implicit process of problem identification and solving. Schön also refers to reflection-on-action, a more explicitly, after-the-fact of reflection about action. Schön's (2000) view of reflection is closely related to Dewey's (1933) perspective and each is concerned with action, experience, and values of the teacher's knowledge. The teacher's own knowledge

is critical to the problem solving process. Schön (1983) emphasizes making reasoned judgments from a rational and moral perspective (Hatton & Smith, 1995).

In addition, Schön (2000) uses the term technical rationality to describe the way of understanding professional knowledge that he asserts is inadequate because professionals often confront problems that have uncertain answers, many perspectives, and no single right path to follow. According to Schön (2000) technical rationality refers to a particular way of viewing knowledge and its use. In this paradigm, professional knowledge is finite and knowable. The professional does not develop new understandings, but merely implements existing and accepted processes. Schön (2000) explains that when learning is conceived of this view of knowledge it is defined in ways that are externally imposed on learners rather than the learners being active participants in their own learning. By this Schön (2000) means that learners, instead of developing their own understandings of and ways to address situations, are provided with specific prescriptions for each situation. In this view there is an unambiguous solution to problems.

Schön (2000) describes reflection-in-action as a contrast to technical rationality that more accurately describes the way professionals confront and solve the problems they encounter in their work, act on these problems, and learn from their experiences. He argues that professionals encounter problematic situations routinely in which part of the problem is itself the existence of the problem. These problems are complex and uncertain and framing or identifying the problem becomes an integral part of solving the problem. Reflection-in-action in Schön's (2000) theory is the way professionals identify, come to understand, learn from, and solve problems in their practice.

Reflection-in-action occurs during action and can be either implicit or explicit. Schön (2000) describes it as a reflective conversation with a situation. The goal of the conversation is to come to an understanding of the situation and form a plan of action. As the practitioner continues this conversation, in search of the problem, he or she finds new information that adds to the puzzle. Schön (2000) describes three specific and distinct parts of reflection-in-action.

The first part is the approach to the problem. Each problem is assessed as a distinctive case; the problem is not lumped into a general category of problems and given a routine answer. This part of reflection-in-action corresponds to two parts of Dewey's (1933) process: 1) an individual's acknowledgement that there is a problem that needs reflective thought and 2) the intellectualization phase, when the problem is clearly defined. In the second part, the practitioner re-frames the problem and engages in a conversation with the problem. Through this step, a person comes to an overall decision about how to proceed. This portion of reflection-in-action can be viewed as similar to Dewey's (1933) notion of a guiding idea. In the third part, the practitioner experiments with the problem in thought, which leads the practitioner to consider the implications of the decision he or she hypothesized and then further re-frame and experiment with conceptualizing the problem. This process is similar to what Dewey (1933) calls reasoning. Schön (1983) explains the entire process as a spiral of "appreciation, action, and reappreciation" (p. 132).

In summary, reflection on teaching has been and continues to be an important component of teacher growth. These descriptions of the nature of reflective thinking contributed to an overall understanding of reflective thinking that will guide the

development of this study. This section illustrates the general understanding of reflective thinking derived from the ideas of Dewey (1933) van Manen (1991) and Schön (1983, 2000). The next section presents the various definitions of reflection.

Conflicting Definitions and Terminology

There is no commonly held definition of reflection. Harrington, Quinn-Leering, and Hodson, (1996) and Sparks-Langer and Colton (1991) commented on the absence of any single definition for reflection. This review is not an attempt to expose a full array of the definitions. Rather, the purpose is to present a basis for understanding the complexity of defining the term. There are several definitions of reflection in the literature; however, the number of articles that did not contain a definition far out-numbered the ones providing a definition.

Dewey (1933) stated that reflection is the “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in lights of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p. 9). Elaborating on this broad definition, Dewey (1933) described such thought as conscious and voluntary, based on evidence and rationality, and supported by a disposition of open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and responsibility.

Rudney and Guillaume (1990) and Richert (1990) provided similar definitions. Rudney and Guillaume (1990) argued that “reflective teaching requires an active and persistent exercise of judgment about curricular or instruction issues” (p. 13). This description of reflection includes the idea of deliberation, which helps teachers to identify appropriate or inappropriate actions. Richert (1990) describes reflection as “the capacity

and orientation to make informed and intelligent decisions about what to do, when to do it, and why it should be done” (p. 509).

Ross’s (1990) definition of reflection incorporated the earlier work of Dewey (1933) Schön (1983, 2000), and Liston & Zeichner (1987) by emphasizing the importance of attitudes, attributes, and understandings that influence the kinds of student difficulties that will be recognized. Acknowledging how those difficulties will be interpreted and diagnosed, and what judgments are made about the desirability of various solutions. More specifically, Ross (1990) defined reflection “as a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choices” (p. 22). Ross (1990) stated that the elements of reflective practices include:

- recognizing educational dilemmas;
- responding to a dilemma by recognizing both the similarities to other situations and the unique qualities of the particular situation;
- framing and reframing the dilemma;
- experimenting with the dilemma to discover the implications of various solutions; and
- examining the intended and unintended consequences of an implemented solution and evaluating it by determining whether the consequences are desirable. (p. 99)

According to van Manen (1991) reflective practices can be broadly defined as a “form of human experience that distances itself from situations in order to consider the meanings and significance embedded in these experiences” (p. 100). Lasley (1992)

contends that reflection “refers to the capacity of a teacher to think creatively, imaginatively, and at times, self-critically about practice” (p. 1). Saban, Killion, and Greene (1994) state that “reflection is the practice of analyzing one’s own action, decisions, or products by focusing on the process involved” (p.16). Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, and McLaughlin, (1990) gave no definitions but explain that, “a reflective teacher critically examines instructional assumptions and practices in order to find and try new alternatives in the classroom” (p.16).

Schön (2000) describes how a teacher might use reflection-in-action to solve a problem in the classroom:

An artful teacher sees a child’s difficulty in learning to read not as a defect in the child but as a defect of his own instruction. And because the child’s difficulties may be unique, the teacher cannot assume that his repertoire of explanations will suffice, even though they are at the tongue’s end. He must be ready to invent new methods and must endeavor to develop in himself the ability of discovering the solution. (p. 66)

Schön, The professional teacher, describes careful, sensitive observations of classroom events, reflects on the meaning of those observations, and then decides to act in a certain way. “Reflection is not educational reflection unless it is linked to teaching action. Reflection involves conflicting thoughts and questions. It is hard work and it can be painful. Acting professionally on reflection requires true grit” (Freppon, 2001, p. 2).

These descriptions of reflection have the image of action in them. Each scholar suggests that reflection involves action and analysis. Also, the scholars discuss the need

to critically explain actions or practices. Therefore, reflection involves comparing actual practice with idealized practices.

For this study, reflection is defined as the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of the reasons that support it and the consequences to which it leads. Although a definition like the one presented is foundational for a study of teachers' reflection and learning, it is also limited in its ability to describe reflection specifically enough to be useful for reasons of research and practice. These limitations of a broad definition of reflection make it necessary to explore in-depth three specific areas of interest related to this study: (1) the nature of more specific types of reflection; (2) the importance of reflection in the context of teaching; and (3) experienced teachers and reflection. These areas are addressed in the next three sections of this chapter.

Types of Reflection

The first area of interest for this study is the types of reflection. The works from Grimmett, MacKinnon, Erickson, and Riecken (1990), Zeichner (1993), and Valli (1997) present types or levels of reflection in the context of teacher education. They present that types of reflection vary greatly and that there are a multitude of factors to consider when thinking about reflection in the context of education.

Grimmett, MacKinnon, Erickson, and Riecken

Grimmett, MacKinnon, Erickson, and Riecken (1990) propose a model for types of reflection based on underlying assumptions. They particularly explore the relationship between knowledge and reflection, framing their analysis of what they call different "perspectives" with three elements:

- the source of the knowledge that is reflected upon,
- the mode of knowing represents the particular conceptions of reflection; and
- the use that knowledge is put as a result of the reflective process. (p. 22)

Using this framework, Grimmer and his colleagues (1990) describe three perspectives of reflection, which share underlying assumptions. Similar to van Manen (1977) Grimmer and his colleagues explain that each of these assumptions about the use of knowledge translate into three purposes or uses of reflection. The first is reflection as instrumental mediation of action, which means that reflection helps teachers apply or replicate research findings and educational principles in a classroom. The second category is reflection as deliberating among competing views of teaching. This means teachers consider events within their unique context, deliberate among varied ideas about what good practice entails, and choose the best action to benefit student learning. The third category is reflection as reconstructing experience means that teachers reflect to reconstruct situations or events, their images of teaching, or their taken-for-granted assumptions in order to develop knowledge and understanding of teaching. Concluding their review, the researchers propose three questions that are useful for thinking across these different perspectives:

- What is being reflected upon?
- How is the reflective process engaged? and
- What is the purpose of reflection? (p. 36)

These questions are applicable across a range of perspectives on reflection and can be useful for understanding what perspective a given type of reflection embodies and its expected characteristics.

Zeichner

Similarly, Zeichner (1993) offers a framework describing types of reflection, emphasizing that each of the type derives from different traditions of reform with different underlying assumptions. Correspondingly, he recognizes five educational “traditions” leading to five different versions of reflection, defined as follows:

- Academic: emphasizes disciplinary knowledge;
- Social Efficiency: emphasizes “generic” knowledge and skills in teaching; includes knowledge base, skills-orientation, deliberation, flexibility and judgment;
- Developmentalist: emphasizes the development of the student and the teacher; includes teacher-as-naturalist, teacher-as-researcher, and teacher-as-artist;
- Social Reconstructivist: emphasizes social justice and equity, as well as care and compassion; includes inward and outward reflection;
- Generic: emphasizes reflective practice in general as central to teaching and teacher education, without a particular focus on the content, quality, or context of reflection. (Zeichner, 1993)

Throughout his presentation of these five traditions, Zeichner (1993) points out that none of them are distinct or mutually exclusive. Each of the traditions incorporates components of the others; the difference is a matter of emphasis.

Valli

Valli (1997) proposes another model based on her research of reflection in teacher education programs. Incorporating many of the same features as van Manen (1997) and Schön (1983), Valli identifies five types of reflection with the following characteristics:

- Technical: researcher based, involves matching performance to external guidelines;

- Reflection-in/on-action: performance based; involves making decisions in unique situations emphasizes craft knowledge and personal experience;
- Deliberative: decision making variety of sources covers a range of concerns; involves weighing viewpoints and research and supporting decisions;
- Personalistic: linked to personal growth, professional life and relationships; involves listening to one's own inner voice and others' voices; and
- Critical: focused on political, social, and moral issues; involves judging purposes of schooling. (Valli, 1997, p.73-81)

In her explanation of these types, Valli (1997) suggests that they are hierarchical in nature, giving as one example the idea that “a basic grasp of technical knowledge and skill might be needed for deliberative reflection” (p. 82). Valli (1997) notes that each type has strengths and limitation and that each of them hold values for teachers. However, she also implies that some types of reflection take on a certain moral importance, arguing in particular that critical reflection, with its emphasis on political, social, and moral issues, is “ultimately more important” than others (p. 82).

The models for describing types of reflection above will inform this study by laying the foundation of reflection that would be likely to exist in teachers' professional lives. However, the goal of this study will not be to refine or even to systematically apply descriptive types of reflection to the data, but rather to use them to heighten awareness about the ways in which reflection is likely to manifest itself differently in the real lives of experienced elementary teachers. This study will aim to capture and learn from the teachers' experiences with all different types of reflection.

Impact on the Practice

The second area of interest for this study is the impact of reflection on teaching. There has been a rush to share experiences of what works in promoting reflective practice and a growing body of research has addressed particular techniques and strategies for promoting reflection. In her research with 12 student teachers, Richert (1990) attends to questions about what facilitates reflection in teaching. She designs four research conditions in which pre-service teachers were asked to reflect: (1) journal writing, (2) portfolio-inspired reflection essays, (3) reflective conversation with teacher peers, and (4) portfolio-inspired conversation with teacher peers (p. 509). Richert (1990) defines the purpose of her study as follows:

The study was designed not to determine whether or not reflection would occur under certain circumstances, but to look at what differences arise in the reflection themselves and how the teachers perceive the opportunity to reflect under the different conditions. (p. 510)

The results of this study revealed conditions that promoted or fostered reflection for teachers. A structured opportunity to reflect, safety, and time emerged as important elements. The study also states that it was helpful to pre-service teachers to reflect with their colleagues (Richert, 1990). However, these conclusions were limited to a focus on teaching pre-service teachers to reflect in isolated activities, offering little as to how such opportunities might apply to experienced teachers or whether they would thrive in the context of schools.

Like Richert (1990) and Collier (1999) also studied the characteristics of reflection in different activities. However, whereas Richert (1990) emphasized the

structural features of activities enhancing reflectivity, Collier (1999) sought to discover the nature of three different types of reflection, which she called technical rationality, practical action, and critical, as they occurred in the context of various activities. The four activities she studied took place in the naturally-occurring contexts of student teaching: (1) reflective journals, (2) reflective interviews, (3) peer observation conferences, and (4) group seminars. Looking across these activities, Collier (1999) discovers that descriptive technical rationality and practical action types of reflection are more common than open-minded, critical types of reflection. She suggested that the first three categories were typically reactive and the fourth was proactive, leading her to emphasize in her recommendations the importance of developing proactive reflective habits in novice teachers that would ultimately develop into thoughtful and conscientious reflection. These recommendations were based on knowledge about pre-service teachers, limiting their relevance for experience teachers and the realities of their professional practice.

Another study conducted by Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, and McLaughlin (1990) specifically addressed the reflection of experienced teachers. Four questions guided their study:

- What forces simulate reflective activity?
- What are the activities and processes that define reflection?
- What forces constrain reflection in school settings?
- What is the impact of reflection on teachers? (p. 139)

Using these questions and a series of researcher-designed tasks to stimulate and support reflection, the researchers sought to “develop profiles of reflective work” (p. 141). The profiles illustrate the finding that carefully designed activities foster a more systematic

approach to reflection than naturally occurred, suggesting that such activities could be an important tool in teachers' learning and growth. However, the researchers also asserts that 'schools are difficult environments for reflection thinking' raising questions about how and when such activities could take place for experienced teachers in the absence of a research project like theirs, which constructed the activities (p. 160). Recognizing this problem, their implications suggest a call for more research to inform an understanding of "... how we might use [reflection] more systematically to promote teacher learning" (Wildman et al., 1990, p. 160).

Experienced Teachers

The final area of interest for this study is the perspectives of teachers on their own experiences with reflection. This goal was undertaken out of respect for the expertise of teachers and a belief that much could be learned from their "wisdom of practice" (Shulman, 1992).

The Wisdom of Practice

Berliner (1988) contends that professional development from novice to experienced teachers correlate with levels of reflectivity. He places teachers on one of four levels based upon experience and list the general characteristics of professionals at each level. The novice level is reserved for those with no actual experience in the classroom. In practice these teachers are inflexible and conforming. They are constantly seeking the one correct technique that will aid them in their teaching. With experience these teachers learn to set priorities and act responsibly and move to the stage of advanced beginner. Over a period of three to four years, Berliner (1988) claims that teachers achieve the level of competent performer. The use of more than one teaching

method and modification of instruction based on student learning characterize practice at this level. By the fifth year of teaching, practitioners become more deliberate and analytical in their practice. Berliner labels teachers at this stage as proficient practitioners and notes that the single distinguishing characteristic of this level is reflection.

If reflection is dependent upon one's ability to set problems (Schön, 1983, 1987, 2000; van Manen, 1991), then past experience is likely to have an effect on reflection. Garrison (1991) contends that learning through reflection is most suited to those who have a wealth of past experience, intellectual maturity, differing perspectives and the ability to sift ideas. For Berliner (1988) the novice level precludes reflective practices because of the teacher's limited pedagogical knowledge and limited experience on which to reflect. Lack of experience limits the perspectives available to the practitioner who is attempting to reframe or set a problem. Berliner (1988) proposed that the development of experience in teaching is a five-stage process: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and experienced. Ross (1989) notes this is one possible explanation for why novices offer a single interpretation of an event while experts can find multiple interpretations. Thus, for the experienced, the experience is richer and carries more meaning. This wealth of experience may explain why experts set problems differently than novices.

Some view the formation of schema as an ability that sets experts apart from others in the practice of teaching and appears to have a direct bearing on reflection. Berliner (1985) states, "experts have extraordinary fast and accurate pattern recognition capabilities. The recognition of patterns reduce the cognitive processing load for a person" (p. 11). Having surplus cognitive attention available in a given setting allows the

practitioner to focus reflective elements. Yang (1997) contends that such behavior enables teachers to “comprehend teaching situations and make appropriate pedagogical decision where they are called for” (p. 63). These decisions are a product of reflective inquiry performed in action.

Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993) maintain “studies of novice and experienced teachers demonstrate that novices are less able to quickly think through a situation than are experts” (p. 46). They list two reasons for the expert’s speed in decision-making. First, experts form more intricate schema. “Studies comparing novice and experienced teachers’ interpretations of classroom experiences indicate that experts have richly connected schema to draw upon when making decisions, while those of novices are ‘leaner’ and less elaborate” (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993, p. 46). Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993) cite the automatic routines of experts, termed automaticity, as a second reason experts act with greater speed than novices. These routines are acquired through time in practice and serve a role similar to schema, providing the practitioner with cognitive surplus while in action.

Allen and Casbergue (1997) investigate the relationship between experience and accuracy of recall of classroom events. They contend, “Accurate, thorough recall of classroom behaviors is important in order for teachers to know what to abandon, what to maintain, and what to modify concerning their methodology...such recall has been described as a first step in reflection” (p. 744). Allen and Casbergue’s study focuses on teachers’ recall of their own behavior, student behavior, and other specific behaviors within the classroom. Fourteen volunteer subjects, all elementary public school teachers, were divided into three groups based on their experience levels. The four at the novice

level were student teachers with no teaching experience. There were five teachers with between one to six –and-a-half years experience who were considered Intermediate level teachers. The remaining four teachers had ten or more years experience and were recommended by their principals as experienced teachers. Acting as outside observers, the researchers collected data via observation and ethnographic interviews with each subjects. Field notes were kept both on students and teachers as the observers made use of time sampling techniques with a researcher-designed checklist to aid in accuracy of collection.

Discussing the results of this study, Allen and Casbergue (1997) stated, “It would seem clear from these findings that in general, teachers develop in their ability to accurately and thoroughly recall their own and their students’ behavior as they gain experience in teaching” (p. 750). They cite as a possible explanation for this phenomenon the development of schema in more experienced teachers that allow them the cognitive surplus to focus attention on action outside of themselves. They assert, “It is reasonable to theorize that a certain level of experience is necessary before sufficient pedagogical schema develop and subsequently become well connected, rendering teaching behaviors rather than automatic and allowing teachers to focus primarily on their students” (p. 751).

National Board Certification

National Board Certification (NBC) is a symbol of professional teaching excellence. A National Board Certificate attests that a teacher has been judged by his or her peers as one who is accomplished, makes sound professional judgments about students’ learning, and acts effectively on those judgments. The National Board certification program is built on five fundamental propositions:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning;
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students;
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning;
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and
- Teachers are members of learning communities.. (NBPTS, 2004)

Candidates for NBC participate in assessments based on National Board standards for accomplished teaching. The assessments are developed in collaboration with practicing teachers who verified that they capture best practice and represent indicators of accomplished teaching. All NBPTS assess consist of the portfolio and assessment center (National Board Certification, 2004).

Candidates are asked to create a portfolio according to NBPTS specifications. The portfolio consists of four entries, each of which requires teachers to produce direct evidence that their teaching meets National Board standards. As part of that evidence, each entry must be accompanied by a written analytical commentary. Three entries focus on classroom artifacts (evidence in the form of student work samples and videotapes of teaching), and one entry requires evidence of professional accomplishments outside of the classroom.

In the Assessment Center candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of teaching practice across the full range of the certification area they have chosen. Four exercises are given at the Assessment Center. Candidates are allowed 90 minutes for each exercise. Candidates schedule a full day to attend an official Assessment Center location where the exercises are completed.

Attaining National Board Certification is a professional honor. As teachers complete the certification process, they must continually connect their classroom practice and student learning to National Board standards. Most candidates find that the year-long reflection analysis process to be one of their most rewarding and professionally meaningful experiences (Bond, Smith, Baker, & et al 2000).

Research shows that accomplished teachers impact student learning. Darling-Hammond (1996) stated, “What matters most in improving student learning through school reform is high quality of professionalism in teachers within their classrooms” (p. 16). Brophy and Good (1996) found that “research of the 1960s and 1970s yielded numerous replicated linkages between teacher behavior and achievement” (p. 360). Teacher actions resulted in increases in student learning. Ferguson’s (1991) study of 1000 schools showed that every additional dollar spent on more highly qualified teachers netted greater improvements in student achievement than did any other use of school resources” (p. 485), Darling-Hammond (1996) concurred and stated, “Studies show teachers’ ability, experience, and education are clearly associated with increases in student achievement” (pp. 5-6).

In one of the first studies of the NBPTS process, the authors presented results of a survey of 28 teachers’ perspectives on the certification process (Rotberg, Futrell, & Liberman, 1998). The authors cite numerous teacher comments about the positive effects of NBPTS process, stating, for example, that it was “one of the best professional development experiences, most dramatic and transforming experience, and the most meaningful self-evaluation” (p. 463). This change in perspective from teacher as program

deliverer to reflective participant has been put forth as another major benefit of the certification process.

According to Rotberg, et al. (1998) despite the generally positive reviews by participants in NBPTS, participation and success rates, nationally, are low. The process of NBPTS certification has resulted in recognition of a small number of expert teachers instead of leading to broad participation. Rothberg, et al. suggested several factors that limit NBPTS expansion to the point of impacting education:

- Many educators are unfamiliar with the certification process and give it low priority;
- Incentives for achieving certification are limited in some states and school districts;
- Many teachers do not have access to support services;
- The standards established by the NBPTS are often inconsistent with the teachers' training, school practices and classroom experience; [and]
- No empirical evidence exists regarding the impact of NBPTS certification on the quality of teaching. (pp. 38-42)

Implications from this study suggest that the process of achieving NBPTS certification can provide a strong professional experience; however, the limitations of participation negatively affect researchers' ability to assess the impact on school quality (Rotberg, et al. 1998).

Ballou and Podgursky (1998) questioned NBC as a cost-effective way to identify superior teachers. By the end of fiscal year 1998, NBPTS had received approximately \$49 million in federal funds and had certified 1,000 teachers. This suggests a cost of

\$49,000 per teacher certified. However, preliminary anecdotal and testimonial data indicate that NBPTS candidates view the certification process as offering a potential for improving student learning and providing teachers with the tools to become empowered professionals (Buday & Kelly, 1996). By establishing and meeting high and rigorous national standards, the teaching profession can therefore earn stronger support and respect from the public.

In the Teacher's Voice (2000) a study of NBCTs published by the National Board in conjunction with the Center for Teaching and Learning, WestEd, and Julia Koppich and Associates. In this research, 506 NBCTs in California responded to questions about the National Board assessment process and its impact on their teaching practice. There was no comparison group. The California NBCTs reported that, as a result of participating in the Board assessment process, "They are better teachers, more prepared to connect the state's academic standards to their classrooms, capable of involving parents and community members in their classrooms, and had been helped to develop stronger curricula and improved ways to evaluate student learning" (Center for Teaching and Learning, 2000, p. i).

The National Board recognizes accomplished teachers and claims that the NBPTS certification process assesses teachers' articulation of their performance at high and rigorous standards of teaching practice. The NBPTS impacts and validity study (2001) showed that "National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) outperformed their non-certified counterparts on every one of 13 generally recognized measures of good teaching, and the differences were dramatic on 11 of them" (p. 3). Achieving NBPTS is one way to identify teachers who perform at high levels of teaching.

Summary

The literature on reflection provides insight into the structure and function of the reflective thinking of prospective teachers. From this literature, reflective thinking can be defined as a complex form of thinking about problems that occurs both implicitly and explicitly. Reflective thinking is influenced by the attitudes, knowledge, and experiences of prospective and experienced teachers. The research support teachers talking or writing about their experiences in order to understand them in new ways. There are several conceptually grounded models for implementation at the in-service level. However, the literature on reflection for this study does not directly explain the relationship between reflective thinking and experienced teachers. There is a need for more widely disseminated knowledge on the concept of reflectivity at the experienced level. This study aims to describe how National Board Certified Teachers learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe reflective practice of National Board Certified Teachers in order to uncover teachers' experiences during the process of the phenomenon utilizing a qualitative phenomenology methodology. This chapter presents the statement of problem and an overview of the research design that will be used in this study. Next this chapter will discuss qualitative and phenomenological research. Then the chapter will discuss the data collection process and the three data sets that include a demographic survey, an interview, and written artifacts. The role of the researcher was described to clarify the relationship of the researcher to the study. The study's participants and setting were described. Finally, the process of data analysis procedures was explained.

Statement of the Problem

Although reflective practice is advocated in the literature, there are few conceptually grounded models for implementation at the experienced level (Dewey, 1933; Osterman, 1990; Schön, 1983). There is a need for more widely disseminated knowledge on the concept of reflection and its application, particularly on learning about and facilitating reflective practice at the experienced level. Teachers who do not question what they do or what their actions say about their educational philosophy may not be responding to the diverse and growing learning needs of today's students. This research will be designed to shed light on how NBCTs learn and engage in reflective practice refto improve their pedagogical practice..

Research Question

The research question guiding this dissertation is: How do National Board Certified Teachers learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice?

Research Approach and Procedures

The research approach used in this study is descriptive phenomenology. The goals of descriptive phenomenology were discussed in this chapter, followed by background on the philosophical underpinnings that guide descriptive phenomenology, and how that philosophy translates in to a research approach. The specifics of sample selection were presented, followed by a description of procedures used for the inquiry process and analysis.

Goals of Descriptive Phenomenology

The overall aim of descriptive phenomenological research is to describe and explain the everyday world in a way that expands our understanding of human experiences (Dahlberg & Drew, 1997). Unlike quantitative research methods, in descriptive phenomenology, the researcher is not seeking to validate any pre-selected theoretical framework. Instead, the researcher approaches the phenomenon of interest without preconceived expectations, with the goal of understanding the phenomenon of those who have lived it (Cohen & Omery, 1994; Omery, 1983). Phenomenologists seek to understand the nature of a phenomenon, rather than to predict or control it (Becker, 1992). A descriptive phenomenological study produces a description of the essential components (essences) of a particular phenomenon.

The impetus for the development of a phenomenological research approach was a perceived failure of natural science methods to adequately describe human beings and their lived experiences (Omery 1983). Phenomenology values subjective meanings of common life experiences, thereby going beyond the objective, “factual” accounts of phenomenon that are sought in a positivist paradigm (Jones, 2001). However, most education researchers who utilize phenomenology view the products of their research as complementary to the products of studies that use quantitative methods, each advancing educational knowledge in unique, harmonizing ways (Omery, 1983). For example, the product of a descriptive phenomenological study might be a description of a phenomenon that can be used to guide future quantitative studies from an informed starting point (Jasper, 1994).

Phenomenology as a Philosophy

Phenomenology originated as a philosophy of science, from which various research approaches have been developed. The following section includes a brief overview of the history of the philosophy and the major philosophical tenets and concepts that underlie descriptive phenomenology. A general understanding of phenomenology as a philosophy is important because “better understanding of the philosophical basis of phenomenology may enable better evaluation of the quality of phenomenological research” (Cohen & Omery, 1994, p. 136).

History of the Phenomenology Philosophical Movement

Phenomenology is a philosophy that has changed over time, both between photospheres and within each philosopher (Spiegelberg, 1982). Spiegelberg (1982) has suggested that phenomenology emerged in three distinct phases. The first was the

Preparatory Phase in which philosophers Franz Brentano (1838-1917) and Carl Stump (1848-1936) began to view phenomenology as a way to describe and explain human experiences without making any causal explanations.

The German Phase is the second phase of the phenomenological movement, and Edmund Husserl (1857-1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) were the prominent philosophical leaders during this time. Husserl is generally known as the founder of phenomenology and it is his philosophical ideas that have inspired descriptive phenomenological research. Husserl's ideas of phenomenology are epistemologic in nature, with the quote of "How do we come to know the world?" being the thread that runs through all of his philosophy. Heidegger, on the other hand, shifted to an ontological focus, and was concerned with the questions "How do we live in the world?" and "What does it mean to be a person (Jones, 2001). It is Heidegger's philosophy by merely elucidating, not explaining, the lived experiences through which knowledge become possible" (p. 12).

In phenomenology, the concept of lifeworld, or the world of lived experiences is central. Husserl felt that the world of lived experiences is not immediately accessible to us, because we generally live in the "natural attitude" (Husserl, 1970a). This is the everyday way that we take for granted the world as we perceive it, with the assumption that others perceive it the same way. "In the natural attitude we do not critically reflect on our immediate action and reasons to the world, but we just do it, we just are... To be in the natural attitude means that one does not consciously analyze what one is experiencing" (Dahlberg et al., 2001, p. 46). We are put into the natural attitude because of the idea of intentionality, which means that all consciousness is directed toward

something. For example, it is not possible to think without thinking of something; it is not possible to see without seeing something, and so on (Velarde-Mayol, 2000). When we experience something, our consciousness always perceives the experience to have meaning. These meanings are then carried through to other experiences and encounters with the world (Dahlberg et al., 2001). It is because of these assigned meanings that we generally live in the natural attitude, without truly examining the phenomena that we encounter on a daily basis. As Merleau-Ponty (1964) stated, “because we are in the world, we are condemned to meaning” (p. xix).

However, we are not in the world alone, but rather share the lifeworld with other humans. The phenomenological concept of intersubjectivity says that to be a human with experiences is to be in a world with other humans who also have experiences. While we cannot directly experience what another person is experiencing, we can come to know the meaning that experience has for that person through his/her description of the experience (Dahlberg et al., 2001). However, that is not typically done in the natural attitude, since we bring all of our own meanings from our own experiences with us when we encounter other people and their experiences.

Husserl (1970a) felt that living in the natural attitude was not adequate for philosophers of science. He felt that we must reflect upon our experiences at a conscious level in order to understand how we come to know the world. The concept of transcendental (Husserl, 1970b) says that we can remove ourselves from (transcend) the natural attitude in order to truly come to know the essential meaning of our experiences. “According to his idea, we can step out of the natural attitude and “put out of action’ or ‘exclude’ or ‘parenthesize’ parts of the world from our consciousness”

(Dahlberg et al., 2001, p. 60). Husserl refers to the process that we utilize to achieve this transcendence as the epoche or the reduction. The term epoche is a Greek term referring to suspension of beliefs (Cohen & Omery 1994). In order to enter into the reduction, we must bracket out any previous beliefs, prejudices, or understandings about the experience that we carry with us in the natural attitude. This allows us to examine experiences without any presuppositions, and allows us to encounter the phenomenon freshly and describe it precisely as it experienced (Giorgi, 1997). In this way, human experiences present themselves to us as they appear to those who have lived them. What we experience then represents a phenomenon, which comes from the Greek word meaning “appearance.” “So what is given to our knowledge is an appearance of something, what appears to me, a phenomenon... This method is purely descriptive: phenomenology is the description of what is given to our knowledge” (Velarde-Mayol, 2000, p. 12).

When we seek to describe phenomena, we seek to describe the true meaning of the phenomenon, or the essence. “One could say that an essence is the most invariant meaning for a context. It is the articulation, base on intuition, of a fundamental meaning without which a phenomenon could not present itself as it is” (Giorgi, 1997, p. 242). Imaginative variation is a technique that Husserl described for discovering essences. In this technique, one changes aspects or parts of a phenomenon and then sees if the phenomenon remains identifiable with the part changed or not (Giorgi, 1997). One then becomes aware of what the essential features of a phenomenon truly are. It is this process of transcendentalism and the search for essences that leads us “back to the things themselves” of which Husserl spoke.

Phenomenology as a Research Approach

While the philosophy of phenomenology provides a foundation for scientific work, it is not a mode or prescription for scientific research (Giorgi 2000). As Giorgi (1997; 2000) contends, if researchers were to simply follow the philosophical ideas that have been discussed, then they would be practicing philosophy and doing philosophical analyses. However, since researchers want to work at the scientific level, certain modifications to the philosophic ideas have to be introduced, but they must be made in a way that insures that the spirit of phenomenological investigations remains intact (Giorgi, 1997). Researchers should be inspired by, but not bound to, the phenomenological philosophy (Omery, 1983; Porter, 1998).

It is important to recognize that phenomenological research procedures will differ depending on the underlying philosophy. For example, researchers who are influenced by Husserlian phenomenology are generally concerned about questions of knowing and the focus is on the meaning of experiences for those who have lived them. The analysis methods are descriptive in nature. On the other hand, researchers who use the principles of Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology to guide their research are generally concerned with ontological questions of being and the focus is on the way we understand, and the analysis is interpretive in nature (Koch, 1995; Walters, 1994).

Dahlberg, Drew and Nystrom (2001) have developed a descriptive phenomenology research model, which they call a "lifeworld research" approach. Their model was inspired by the Husserlian phenomenological concepts that have been presented, and was the guiding framework utilized for the study research procedures?

The concepts of openness, encountering, immediacy, uniqueness and meaning comprise the model. Each of these concepts will be discussed in the following sections.

At the core of phenomenological research is the question of how lived experience of others can be described and how the inquirer can re-achieve it in written text form. The focal point of a “phenomenology is on understanding a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 1998, p. 37). In the research on reflective practices, the literature focuses on beginning teachers with little emphasis on experienced teacher. Given this problem, the question raised for this research was focused on describing experienced teachers’ actual definition, use, and strategy regarding reflective practices.

Methodologically, qualitative research in general, and phenomenology in particular, have the ability to address the "how" and the "why" questions. The research question stated above was concerned with describing teachers’ experiences. The inquiry was focused on describing, rather than explaining, what actually happened by investigating how teachers use reflective practice, implicitly and explicitly, in their daily classroom situations. For this reason, experienced teachers were selected for this qualitative research, with an emphasis on describing and analyzing teachers’ actual reflective practices in-depth to understand concrete experiences of teachers in context. Creswell (1998) notes that:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem.

The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

Qualitative research is appropriate to this study because it pays great attention to the meanings people under study assign to their actions in ordinary life situations. Indeed, teachers' reflection is viewed as an ongoing process in which they constantly try to make sense of what they do and how they do it. This is true of the social context inside and outside the classroom. Because this research assumes personal and social meanings to be fundamental aspects of teacher behavior, it is necessary to understand how qualitative research attempts to describe, "the ways different people make sense out of their lives" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 29).

Furthermore, it is also assumed teachers' thoughts and actions on reflective practice need understanding from their own perspectives. In other words, it is likely that teachers interpret reflective practice in relation to their classroom situations, along with their own personal beliefs and values. By following the way experienced teachers define and use reflective practice, one may start to see the grounded position on which experienced teachers stand. In this respect, the general assumption of qualitative research is appropriate, because it first attempts to account for other people's behavior or culture from the insider's point of view (Creswell, 1998).

As is often the case in qualitative research, the major instrument in this research will be the researcher herself. During the implementation process the researcher collected written artifacts and interview data from the experienced teachers in order to understand their views on reflective practice. This research was designed to use the researcher as the key instrument (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1998) for collecting data from other people. This activity of the researcher was also associated with matters of interpretation. The researcher completed the final interpretations and representations of the data

collected (Merriam, 1998). The way in which the descriptive data was interpreted was not always clear-cut, because the participants, in this case, teachers' personal values, beliefs, and unique contextual problems were involved in many ways.

For this subjective role of the researcher, Eisner's (1998) viewpoint is helpful in validating the assumptions that interpreting teachers' perspectives is possible. Based upon the function of the positive interplay of human cognition, Eisner (1998) argued that the way human beings interpret and represent a thing or person is likely to be done neither subjectively nor objectively (pp. 50-51). It is not purely objective, because the symbol, i.e., language, used by the researcher cannot depict all qualities and aspects. It is always only partial and incomplete, according to Eisner (1998). Nor can it be purely subjective, asserted Eisner (1998) because the researcher as a human being experientially mediates matters all the time and thus constructs negotiated meanings. Given this experiential dimension of human cognition, as long as coherent and plausible descriptions are constructed, Eisner (1998) believes that the researcher's interpretation and representation can be meaningful and thus persuade the reader.

Thus far, generic and broad characteristics of qualitative research have been explained. What makes research phenomenological is the specifically oriented methodological approach to the essence of the experience. While ethnography deals with the lived experience of members living within a particular culture or society (Creswell, 1998), phenomenology puts great emphasis on describing the immediate experience of particular participants under study. The beginning and ending point of phenomenological research is turning to the phenomena itself or letting persons under study speak for themselves (Creswell, 1998)

Phenomenological research, a qualitative methodological inquiry, explores the meaning of lived experiences (Creswell, 1998). Founded by Husserl, phenomenology seeks to explain the meanings of phenomena as they are lived and experienced in everyday existence (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Valle & King, 1978; van Manen, 1990). In phenomenological studies, the investigator abstains from making suppositions, focuses on a specific topic freshly and naively, constructs a question or problem to guide the study, and derives findings that will provide the basis for further research and reflection...a relationship always exists between the external perception of natural objects and internal perceptions, memories, and judgments (Moustakas, 1994, p. 47). Phenomenology differs from other qualitative inquiry in that it focuses on the participant's experienced meaning, not on descriptions of his or her overt actions or behavior (Polkinghorne, 1989). The phenomenologist believes that the meaning of a human experience can be derived from cataloging and describing it. In phenomenology, each participant has unique experiences that are explored; however, the researcher also assumes that there are commonalities in the experiences of the participants (Eichelberger, 1989; Patton, 1990).

Simply put, in order to understand the uniqueness of a phenomenon, topic, or concept, it is necessary to first look at what happens to make it as it is. The very concern of phenomenological research is with describing lived experience and interpreting the central meaning of lived experience. Van Manen (1990) defined phenomenological research as:

- The study of lived experience:
- The explication of phenomena as they present themselves to consciousness.

- The study of essence.
- The description of the experiential meaning we live as we live them
- A poetizing activity. (pp. 8-13)

Phenomenological research helps us see and understand the real features of an experience of a particular person. Unlike biography research, pulling out the oral or life history, phenomenological research places its focus on the experiences of individual teachers as they live them, making it possible for teachers to speak for themselves in a reflective manner. Therefore, in chapter one, the question “How do experienced teachers learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice?” was raised.

In asking such a meaningful question, as in many other qualitative studies, the major task of this research will be to describe what the selected teachers define, do, feel, think, and reflect. That is, the meaning of lived experience involves not only a situated moment such as emotions, memories, images, and the like, but also a constant movement inside and out through those situated moments (Creswell, 1998). Describing such explicit and retrospective experiences of the teachers is the major consideration of this research.

However, capturing lived experience of others is not simple because any form of expression for a certain phenomenon or experience can be quickly turned into secondary, as opposed to immediate or original experience. Van Manen (1990) states:

Experiential counts or lived-experience descriptions – whether caught in oral or in written discourse – are never identical to lived experience itself. All recollections of experiences, reflection on experiences, descriptions of experiences, taped

interviews about experiences, or transcribed conversations about experiences are already transformation of those experiences. (p. 54)

There is no single, truthful way to make phenomenological research phenomenological without seriously accepting this transformed nature of experience. It is dangerous; therefore, to think that in the name of describing teachers' lived experience, the researcher transmits the experience of teachers into texts in a mirror-like fashion. In the sense of phenomenological research, describing is part of interpreting and vice versa. Without deep reflection on the part of the researcher on the experiential worlds as teachers live them in their everyday existence or their life-world (van Manen, 1990) phenomenological investigation is impossible. Such reflections by the researcher are part of the research process toward a descriptive and interpretive account of the essence of experience that is basic to the whole stories or narratives of living human beings under study.

Finally, this theoretical and practical position of van Manen (1990) is clearly self-evident to the extent to which he places great emphasis on the art of reflective writing. Writing about the study is both a beginning and an ending during the process of research. In other words, the value of phenomenological writing is transactional and transformational. The research may discover "something" never felt before while writing about the phenomenon. In short, phenomenological writing requires a high level of reflection, skill, and capacity. Yet, it is possible when the researcher continuously writes and rewrites, "again and again, now here and then there...to arrive at a finely crafted piece" (p. 131).

Therefore, phenomenology involves a concomitant aspect of an interpretive research activity and at the same time a hermeneutic writing process. For van Manen (1990) two types of descriptions are salient “an immediate description of life world as lived ... [and] a mediated description of the life-world as expressed in symbolic form” (van Manen, 1990, p. 25). The former has to do with describing the state of the live-through quality of lived experience by means of “blushing, talk, action, a work of art, a text” (p. 25). Because most of the forms of lived experiences are the latter cases, into interpretive act of the researcher is necessary and can only be accomplished by writing activities. It is believed that the only way the researcher can arrive at deep layers of meanings of others is in writing that gets the research closer to the deep structure and ongoing construction of others’ lived experience.

The Role of the Researcher

In any study, especially in qualitative research, the researcher plays an important role in establishing trustworthiness and credibility in an attempt to describe and provide the context of the study as well as the findings. According to Patton (1990) “interpretation is essential to an understanding of experiences and the experience include the interpretations” (p. 69). Therefore the role of the researcher was that of the human instrument to collect the data of the participant’s individual experiences that influenced his or her interpretation of reflective practice. The researcher sought to focus mainly “on what people experience and how they interpret the world” (p. 70). It is through the descriptions of these experiences that the interviewer will examine the meaning of the phenomenon - how experienced teachers describe how they learn and engage in reflective

practice to improve their pedagogical practice? The researcher believed it was important to acknowledge how the researcher's interest in this topic unfolded over time.

Bracketing to understand a phenomenon is "setting aside all prejudgments" (Creswell, 1998, p. 52). The researcher as a National Board Certified Teacher, middle childhood generalist will have to first identify the biases and prejudices; these preconceived ideas was then bracketed so the phenomenon could be experienced afresh. Thus, the bracketing of all known information about the phenomenon by the researcher was done so that what was known was separated from the participant's description of their lived experiences. Husserl called this the epoche process (Moustakas, 1994).

Selection of Participants

Purposeful sampling is the preferred sampling mode for phenomenological research (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). The participants in this study were a "purposeful sample" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Purposeful samples are selected based upon the existence of characteristics that are relevant to a particular study. Participants for this study were NBPTS with a variety of experiences in reflection, who were able to articulate their thinking processes and describe their experiences. Purposeful sampling was used for phenomenological research because it is criterion-oriented (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990). The criterion-oriented phenomenon in this research study was the reflective experiences of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT).

The target population for this study was NBCTs because they had experienced the phenomenon, reflective practice. Creswell (1988) stated the participants must be "individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their conscious experiences" (p. 111). As of November 2005, there were 1,083 NBCTs in

Oklahoma (NBPTS, 2004). Thirty-nine of the 1,083 were located in the Lawton/Fort Sill area. An invitational e-letter was sent to the NBCTs in the area. The ten NBCTs who accepted the invitation to participate in an interview were the purposeful sample for the study. Participants were informed of the study's purpose and guidelines, as well as their rights as participants, in accordance with the rules set forth by the University of Oklahoma's Institutional Review Board. Informed consent forms were signed. The phenomenological focus of this study was conveyed individuals' experiences in their own words. Their responses were analyzed for similarities among participants. The interviewers used pseudonyms and participation was on a voluntary basis.

Data Collection

Interviewing

An interview is an activity conducted between at least two people, the interviewee and the interviewer. It involves a process by which the interview intends to obtain information necessary for his or questions from the interviewee. In qualitative research, interviews can be used in two ways: "Either ... [interviewing] may be the dominant strategy for data collection, or ... [interviewing] may be employed in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 135). In most cases, a qualitative interview is conducted in the semi-structured format, which Merriam (1998) describes as follows:

Usually, specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case there is a highly structured section to the interview. But the large part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be

explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. (p.74)

The interview format included asking the participant to answer demographic information. The second set of data collection was open-ended hour to two-hour interviews conducted with experienced teachers. The experienced teacher respondents will be drawn from a purposefully selected sample of teachers. The teachers will be selected because they are unique in that they represented NBPTS teachers. Creswell (1998) states that in qualitative research it is important that the researcher “conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15). In order to keep the interview as natural as possible, the participants will select the location for the interview.

Participants were asked to schedule a day and time convenient to them for a personal interview. The respondents were contacted through email or by phone and invited to participate. After the initial email, a phone contact was made to establish the exact time and location. The respondents were provided an informed consent form to sign. The study was briefly described to the respondents at the start of the interview. The researcher audiotaped and took notes of the interviewees’ responses to the questions. The same interview protocol was used for all participants. The participants’ NBPT reflection artifact will serve as a way to triangulate data among sources.

Examination of Artifacts

Artifacts, also referred to as documents, are described by Merriam (1998) as a ready-made source of data that is easily accessible to the investigator. Qualitative researchers who collect information from documents and artifacts are seeking information about the “behaviors, experience, beliefs, knowledge, values, and perceptions

of the subjects they are studying” (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 137). Data gathered via document analysis should be verified through other techniques, such as interviews (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996), as was done in this study.

The purpose for studying artifacts was to gain a deeper understanding of the practices used by National Board Certified Teachers by examining actual examples of reflection. Merriam (1998) suggests that artifacts should be evaluated for their authenticity and accuracy. The content of the reflections was deemed by the researchers to be of high quality because of its association with NBPTS and its exemplification of expertise in teaching. Merriam (1998) explains that the data found in documents, also referred to as artifacts, can be used in the same manner as data from interviews and furnish descriptive information as was the case for this research study. Data were collected from participants

Data Analysis

The goal of data analysis in qualitative research is to make sense out of the information extracted from the interviews. This step-by-step process involves identifying topics or categories of information that are recurring themes among the data sets. The challenge, according to Merriam (1998), “is to construct categories or themes that capture some recurring pattern that cuts across the preponderance of the evidence” (p. 179). Phenomenological data analysis accomplishes this goal by following three important steps: (1) Epoche, (2) reduction, and (3) structural synthesis.

The beginning point of data analysis was bracketing, or setting aside all prejudgments. This process also referred to as the epoche, or step one, (Moustakas, 1994) requires the researcher to set aside his/her former experiences, and causes him/her to rely

on intuition and imagination to gain an understanding of reflective practice and NBCTs (Creswell, 1998). This ability, to look and see experiences as if for the first time, is a key step to phenomenological data analysis and assures the validity and soundness of the methodology.

Step Two in the phenomenological research model was to move beyond the everyday thinking about reflective practice and NBCT and consider the information the participants share. This viewing of the participant's personal and professional landscapes in a new way is called transcendental phenomenological reduction. Reduction is the process by which the researcher reduces the phenomenon to its most authentic essence; it is the act of describing the experience in textual language (Moustakas, 1994). By isolating the phenomenon in its purest form, the researcher can then begin to explain and describe the knowledge gained from that experience. The reduction process consists of viewing the data over and over again extracting the most relevant experiences, each time being sure to bracket out our previous experience with it in an effort to see it an experience it in a new way. At the beginning every statement is given equal value, but with each new experience, the researcher is able to reduce or eliminate statements that are irrelevant to the topic. This leaves only the experiences or essences that truly describe the phenomenon (Moustakas 1994). According to Moustakas (1994), the challenge of phenomenological reduction "is the construction of a complete textural description of the experience" (p. 96). Such a description is the result of beginning with an epoche and going through a process of returning to the data in a state of openness and clear seeing that leads to deeper layers of meaning. This organized and systematic approach to

uncovering the nature and meaning of experience is what enables the experiencing person to gain a self-knowledge of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

As the data analysis take place, some of the statements may stand out as qualities of the experience that will not vary between participants and these statements may cluster into themes, so that the researcher could do two things: create an integrated description of these similar textural themes of each individual research participant; and create an integrated description of the group by using those individual textural descriptions. These clustered ideas will be what are left over after reduction and elimination of overlapping, repetitive and vague thoughts. At this point, the clustered ideas will be grouped into thematic labels, which will be the core themes of the experience.

The third and final step in phenomenological data analysis is “the integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100) or structural synthesis. Essence, as Husserl employed the concept, refers to that which is common or universal to all who experience the phenomenon-the most basic or fundamental qualities of a phenomenon that make it what it is. The development of structural synthesis is accomplished by first examining the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Osborne, 1994; Patton, 1990). This final synthesis may not correspond directly with each of the participants (Osborn, 1994). The test of “goodness of fit” is an important component of the validity of the research. In order to provide the highest possible levels of research validity, several strategies will be used to enhance the possibility that the results could be applied to other situations. First, the research includes a rich, thick description of the people and programs studied so readers can find similarities with their

own situation. Second, each of the participants will have the opportunity to review their transcribed interview and provide any clarifying comments or descriptions they feel are necessary. Finally, each of the research subjects will have the opportunity to review the results of the data analysis to determine if the reduction and synthesis produced a description of the phenomenon that is in line with their experience.

Table 1:

Colaizzi's Method and its Influence in this Descriptive Qualitative Study

COLAIZZI	THIS STUDY
Identify research question.	How do National Board Certified Teachers learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice?
Determine research statement	"Describe how you learned to reflect on your practice? In what context do you engage in reflection and explain the purpose of reflection."
Collect data.	NBCTs were interviewed, until saturation was achieved. Interviews were conducted by one researcher.
Transcribed interviews.	Transcriptions of the interviews were completed by the researcher.
Exact significant statements.	Each transcript was read and studied. Phrases and sentences that directly pertained to the investigated phenomenon were extracted.
Identify formulated meanings of each significant statement.	The researcher identified formulated meanings of significant statements, discovering and illuminating meanings hidden in the various context.
Organize formulated meanings in to clusters of themes	Reoccurring themes were identified, allowing for emergence of themes which were common to all of the participants' interviews
Refer clusters of themes back to the original interviews in order to validate them	Any identified common themes were referred back to original transcripts to validate them.
Identify any discrepancies among/or between the clusters.	All data to this point were combined into an "exhaustive description" of NBCT teachers' experiences with reflective practice.

COLAIZZI	THIS STUDY
Integrate all results thus far into an exhaustive description of the investigated topic.	Each of the participants interviewed participated in a final clarification and validation of data findings.
Incorporate any additional data into the findings.	No additional data were offered by participants.

Summary

In summary, this study will describe the reflective experience of ten National Board Certified Teachers using a phenomenological design. Using this method of qualitative analysis will allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of how National Board Certified Teachers learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice. Data analysis, using the processes of bracketing and phenomenological reduction will provide insight into the experience of reflective practice. The results of this analysis will be presented in the next chapter. The appendices contain a demographics table, an invitational e-letter, and transcribed interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis

Introduction

This phenomenological study investigated the reflective practice of teachers after they earned National Board Certification (NBC). The primary question in the investigation was: How do National Board Certified Teachers learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice? The study utilized a demographic survey, personal interviews, and written artifacts to collect data on National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) perception of reflective practice. The interviews were conducted using the interview protocol attached in Appendix A.

Demographic Information

Following the recommendations of qualitative inquiry, clear criteria for selection of participants is required (Creswell, 1998). Criteria for participation in this study was based on individuals who have experienced the phenomena, reflective practice, and are able to provide rich descriptions of that experience; therefore, participants who are NBCTs were selected. The purposeful sample included 10 of the 39 educators in a Southwest Oklahoma district. After informed consent forms were signed, each participant completed a brief demographic sheet containing personal data and information concerning National Board Teacher Certification (NBTC). The information on the sheet consisted of the following: name, address, home and work telephone, email, gender, age, race/ethnicity, highest degree completed, having NBC as a teacher, area of NBC, and number of years certified.

Interviews were conducted between October 2005 and January 2006. Three interviews were scheduled. The first was designed to establish rapport and to build a framework for subsequent interviews. The second interview was scheduled after the tape transcription to clarify and elaborate on answers and to collect portfolio entries. The final interview was to validate interviews and written artifacts.

This section depicts the rich descriptions of the reflective experience of the 10 participants after obtaining NBC. A pseudonym letter was used to maintain confidentiality and personal identifiers were removed to ensure privacy and anonymity of each participant. Nine of the participants were female and one was male. Their ages ranged from 33 to 55 years, with a mean age of 52 years. Six were Caucasian, two were Native American and two were African American. Six have Master's degrees and four have Bachelor's degrees. The average number of years taught was 21 years ranging from 12 to 27 years. Four have Early Childhood certifications, four have Middle Childhood certification, one has a School Counselors Early Childhood certification, one has an Exceptional Needs certification, and one has an Early Childhood Literacy Certification.

Table 2

Participants' Demographics

Participant	Age	Race	Degree	Years Teaching	Area	Years Certified
A	33	Native American	Masters	12	Middle Childhood Generalist	5
B	53	Caucasian	Masters	26	Early Childhood Generalist	6
C	43	African American	Masters	12	Middle Childhood Generalist	4
D	41	Native American	Bachelors	14	Early Childhood Generalist	6
E	50	African American	Masters	15	Middle Childhood Generalist	3
F	55	Caucasian	Bachelors	34	Middle Childhood Generalist	5
G	52	Caucasian	Bachelors	27	Early Childhood Generalist	8
H	47	Caucasian	Masters	26	Early Childhood Literacy	1
I	51	Caucasian	Masters	25	School Counselor	1
J	44	Caucasian	Bachelors	20	Exceptional Needs Specialist	3

Presentation of Results

The research explored the essence of ten National Board Certified Teacher experiences of reflective practice. Although they had different areas of certification, the

phenomenon, reflective practice, was common to all of them. In an effort to meet the criterion of dependability as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), an audit trail was established. Audiotapes and field notes were recorded during the interview sessions. The taped interview of each participant was transcribed. There was no time limit placed on the participants, and three interviews; meet, interview, and clarification ranged in length from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 10 minutes each. The following questions were posed: 1) Define reflective practice; 2) How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice? 3) In what contexts do you engage in reflective practice? and 4) Explain the purpose of reflection. During each interview, the wording of the questions was flexible to ensure that the participant understood what was being asked. Probing comments were made and additional questions were asked to elicit as much detail as possible about each individual's lived experienced of reflective practice.

After each interview the audiotape was reviewed at least twice in order to familiarize with the participant's tone, cadence of speech, and use of colloquialisms. I then transcribed the audiotape interviews. In the interest of confidentiality, no other person had access to the tapes. With the written transcript of each interview in hand for comparison, the audiotape was reviewed once more to verify the accuracy of the transcription process. Each transcript was thoroughly reviewed in order to identify significant statements and common experiential themes.

During the analysis process, much time was spent thinking about and reflecting upon the descriptions of the experiences provided by the participants. Significant statements were coded with descriptive terms that evolved as the analysis progressed. For example, a participant's statement, "I learned first of all [to reflect] when I was an

undergraduate” was initially code as undergraduate. This statement eventually became a part of the essential theme meaningful opportunities to participate and was re-coded as such. Significant statements were extracted from each transcript as verbatim quotes and were grouped together as commonalities of experience and essential themes were identified. Descriptions of the essential themes were carefully written to protect the participants’ identities and submitted to them for clarification and validation.

Input from the participants was used to further refine and organize the written descriptions. The written descriptions of the essential themes were then utilized to write a detailed thick description of the NBCTs’ lived experience of reflective practice. I strived to imbue this description with sufficient detail so that any interested individual could make a decision as to whether the findings of this study would be applicable to another similar situation. Themes appeared clearly established after the seventh interview, but three others were done to ensure that no new ones would emerge.

Data were collected until saturation occurred. Saturation was the criteria for discontinuing data collection, rather than the actual number of participants. Saturation occurs when no new themes or content area emerge with additional interviews. Evidence of saturation emerged after the 7th interview. Three additional interviews were conducted to assure that saturation had been reached. No new themes emerged. A total of ten NBCTs participated in this study.

A Summary of the Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings

Findings of this study will be presented in themes. Significant statements from each interview and their formulated meanings were grouped together into common theme

clusters. The themes were common to each interview and emerged from the participant descriptions of their lived experience of reflective practice.

A total of 10 interviews yielded 378 significant statements. From these statements, 378 formulated meanings were generated. Data were then grouped into three theme clusters. The three themes that emerged from analysis of the formulated meanings were (a) meaningful opportunities to participate; (b) caring connected community;; and (c) high expectations.

All NBCTs described how they learned to reflect on their practice and three sub themes emerged: undergraduate, staff development, or the NBC process. The NBCTs stated reflective practice influenced their professional growth. Two NBCTs elaborated on the importance of undergraduate school as to how they learned to reflect.

Both NBCTs inferred that student teachers may not naturally be reflective; they noted that their undergraduate programs were focused on critical reflection. One NBCT stated she learned to reflect on her teaching practice in undergraduate school. Teacher C stated:

In undergraduate school we would write in reflective journals about our classroom observations. We would reflect on readings from texts and thoughts or concerns we had regarding educational topics. Our mentor teacher would respond to our thoughts on a personal level and address any concerns.

During one interview, Teacher D shared that she first learned to reflect in undergraduate school, “I first learned [to reflect] when I was an undergraduate student and in the first early years of teaching.”

Another area that emerged under the meaningful opportunity to participate theme cluster was staff development. All NBCTs expressed the importance of workshops, meaningful trainings, and portfolios on how they learned to reflect on their practice. Three NBCTs discussed workshops as important to engage in reflective practice. Teacher G stated:

As a member of the first group of Oklahoma teachers to achieve NBC, and then later as an ELO Regional Coordinator, I've been to many workshops and trainings regarding the NB process in general and reflective practice in particular.

Teacher I declared:

I attended the orientation meeting provided by or local coordinator. I attended the two-day training in [place]. I attended monthly support meetings held at [place] and I attended an assessment center workshop in [place].

Teacher A affirmed:

“It was a PDI workshop. It told you things, specific to look for.”

Another sub-theme that emerged under meaningful opportunities to participate on how NBCTs learned to reflect was the use of a portfolio. Three NBCTs shared their perspective. Teacher F stated:

The portfolio process was an effective professional development tool that allowed for greater opportunities for me to reflect on my instructional practice.

Because of the portfolio I had to redesign and reorganize my teaching practices while at the same time enhancing my observation skills and self-evaluation.

In preparing portfolios, Teacher A recommended:

I begin with a standard that defines an aspect of good teaching and then define the benchmarks that will serve as evidence toward that standard. Include journal writing, videotaping, lesson planning and the examining of student work to provide evidence and documentation of the work toward the goal. The portfolio should include written reflection that demonstrates self-assessment as well as impact on students. The end product should summarize the “what” and “why” of the teaching and cause continual monitoring and adjustment to instruction as you reflect upon the product.

Teacher J shared:

The portfolio contained two videos of a classroom lesson with written explanation to specific questions; documented accomplishment that describes how I had worked with families and communities of my students, colleagues, and examined student work sample with a written explanation. These entries helped me to refine my reflective practice.

The NBC process was the third sub area that emerged under the theme meaningful opportunity to participate. Each participant described the NBC process as an area that helped him or her learn to reflect. Teacher E expressed:

I really learned how to be more reflective when I went through NB certification. Part of each entry was on how you would reflect on that lesson. They ask you these questions and you had to answer the questions fully and that made you walk back through the lesson and see how the kids learned what the objectives was. One question was would you teach this lesson again, if so why?

Teacher G stated:

I did refine my use of reflective practice through my experiences with NB since reflective practice is one of the main tenets of the process. As a member of the first group of Oklahoma teachers to achieve NBC, and then later as an [position], I've been to many workshops and trainings regarding the NB process in general and reflective practice in particular.

Teacher B confirmed:

I would say a lot of it did come from the NBC process because even though I had been teaching a long time I don't think I actually took as much time as I should to think back on what was going right? What was going wrong? What should I do? Instead of going from lesson one, lesson two, lesson three and go on with it. I think with NB process really helped me open my eyes to see that I really needed to be doing that more.

Every NBCT practiced being reflective and individuals defined reflection similarly.

Teacher A declared,

Reflection is when you look back and reflect over the things you are doing now to improve your teaching.

Teacher D agrees,

I would define it [reflection] looking back on what I have been teaching to see what I do be better.

Teacher G confirmed,

I define reflective practice as thinking back over what has occurring in my classroom and categorizing it as effective or not effective, and then making a plan to change what was not effective.

Some NBCTs stated they are looking for what worked in their lessons so that these characteristics may be included in future instruction. Teacher E stated:

The process itself was probably the best personal development thing I've done. It was a big thing with me because it also allowed me to learn how to budget my time as well as learning more about my classroom. Prior to this, I had a plan B. Everybody has a back-up plan, a plan for when something doesn't work. You just automatically go to plan B. If a child doesn't learn something one way; you just do to plan B. I have never questioned why plan A didn't work. This was a good eye opening experience because you had to actually look at what you had done during the instruction you had given and find out why it didn't work. What was wrong with what you did and what would make plan B better?

An additional theme cluster that emerged from the research data was NBCTs have high expectations. NBCTs hold high expectations of their students and communicate those expectations to the students. NBCTs efficacy and the ability to maintain high expectations for students are common as shared by Teacher D:

When students have a clear vision of what is expected of them, they have the opportunity to take the steps needed to achieve that goal and a much greater likelihood of meeting those expectations. When students have a clear vision of what is expected of them, they have the opportunity to take the steps needed to achieve that goal and a much greater likelihood of meeting those expectations.

One participant explained that he has always set and achieved goals and for him the desire to excel has always been very personal and internally driven. Teacher F shared:

Of course in the classroom you are going to do it [reflect] for academic reasons. But I think I do it in my own personal life. Looking at what's going to work here? Why isn't it working here? If I'm looking at a new venture that I'm going to do I think reflectively. What do I do? Where was I? Even to the point of job possibilities. Is it something I feel like I have the capabilities of doing?

Respondents expressed that they engage in reflective practice during the metacognition process, while planning lessons, and often times collaboratively.

A few of NBCTs discussed metacognition as a way they engage in reflective practice. Teacher G stated:

When I was in Germany it was a time in education when metacognition was very very prevalent. Thinking about thinking was everywhere.

Teacher C shared:

When I engage in reflection, I gain a lot of self-knowledge and self-awareness. It's really weird, because to say, reflect on your teaching, sounds like you just need to focus. But you really do need to spend a lot of time watching videotapes of yourself asking, why did I teach something this way and how could I teach it better?

Teacher A stated:

You think that you know who you are as a teacher and then you watch yourself day in and day out and self-evaluate every minute you are in the classroom. So, it is probably one of the most beneficial staff development pieces of my education because I began to truly evaluate what I do and I continue to do that.

Teacher I shared:

When you reflect on your practice on a continual basis, it's not just, sit down, reflect, you're done. It is an in-depth self-reflection.

In addition to metacognition, the NBCTs enable the students to find and make their connections that result in valid internalized meanings unique to the child. The teacher does this by asking questions to see how students may have previously

constructed information related to the topic. NBCTs raise questions that require students to think about ethical issues and conflicts from a variety of perspectives.

Teacher H confirmed:

My questions vary in type during the lesson. Through Guided Reading and other training I learned about questioning. Guiding questions introduce the concept, probing questions result in elaboration on current thinking, clarifying questions help understand student thinking, and integrating questions synthesize thinking and encourage reflection. Questions should engage student thinking, stimulate thoughtful questions, identify common misconceptions, challenge misconceptions and extend thinking to help students imagine how they will accomplish the task.

Teacher F explained:

What do students know about a topic? How are students thinking about what I am presenting to them? How do they come to think this way? How can they learn to value new ways of thinking about what I am presenting to them? How do they come to think this way? How can I help them grasp this idea?

Two NBCTs stated that teachers need to tell students clearly what they are to do or how they are to conduct themselves or the guidelines for completing an assignment.

Teacher J stated:

I lead the students through activities that enable them to investigate on their own and come to their own conclusions as to what is happening. Students are then asked to reflect on their own learning.

Teacher D declared:

I interact with each student to see how he or she is constructing the new information, and help them formulate sound conclusions by aiding the student in reconstructing the information in ways that are both valid and meaningful to the student.

In addition to stating expectations, NBCTs write comprehensive lessons, which involve learners and meet state standards.

Teacher J:

I have always been a real big planner. I think that the most important part of teaching is going in with a good plan—an effective well thought out plan and executing it. And then afterwards going back, looking at it, and seeing what you actually did. As in, did it work and what were the outcomes? There is some old saying about doing the same thing over and over and expecting a change or something else to happen. If you expect the same thing over and over and for me, this was able to show me that every day I should be looking back and saying okay, it's not just about the answer they're going to put on the test on Friday. But what worked today and what didn't work? So when I do this a year from now, should I change something? Also, it made me more aware of the whole individual nature of what teaching should be. It's not a group; it's not a group activity. Learning is individual.

Teacher D said:

Well, obviously, we are all impacted by the state curriculum. We have to teach according to what our district and state assesses. But when I look at what I am teaching today, I want to make learning as meaningful as possible. I started to realized that you really only have so many opportunities each and every day. You know those windows of opportunity open and close everyday, whereas before, I don't know that I thought about it as much.

Many NBCTs involve their students in deciding learning goals.

Teacher G stated:

I want my students to have a lot more choices and just one right answer and allowing them to see that, and so that's where I see that I've made major changes. In my language arts, I put a lot more control to my children. My children make a lot more choices; my children are guiding what I am doing with them, not through their knowledge of it, but by their actions, they are guiding it.

Some of the participants explained that it is important to provide purposeful and meaningful activities that are geared toward the students' interest. Teacher I states:

It's important to demonstrate an interest in students' lives, ideas, and activities and dignify students' efforts. I attempt to create an atmosphere where students feel respected, welcomed, and valued. It's vital that the learning environment enables students to experience success.

The participants described how the NBC process taught them to become reflective about their instructional practices in order to refine their teaching and enhance lesson effectiveness. Teacher B:

It starts from who are my students. Before NBs I would have assumed that I could have grouped them however it would have worked out, and it may have. Now, I have specific strategies that I discovered during the process to improve my craft that I use on a daily basis.

A couple of the participants mentioned that they consider the goals of their state standards when planning. Teacher C stated:

When I think about today in my classroom I reflected on a math lesson using money and how I could utilize objectives from the 6th grade PASS objectives yet still make the lesson functional for my children.

Teacher A stated:

Back in the classroom with my student teacher; I'm taking over ratios and we're getting those PASS objectives in and I hadn't been in there and I just noticed they're facing multiplication and double digit division. A couple of them it's not there.

I guess after I was getting back their papers and I was watching their face they didn't know what I was talking about.

Sometimes lesson plans are created after reflection on previous lessons and collaborating with colleagues. The NBCTs tend to be flexible when planning lessons noting that lesson implementations may change from what was planned based upon the needs of the students. Teacher F states:

If a child doesn't learn how to add, in a traditional way, for instance, then you just go to another way of teaching. And now if they're not learning that way, I'm saying, 'Okay why are they not able to get it this way?' and then thinking about what comes nexts...how can I break this down into smaller chunks, how can I make this easier for them... for the student to learn?

Teacher D shared:

You have to believe that the students can succeed in school. That they have a role and purpose in the classroom community and that through their own work they are making a significant contribution to the intellectual life of the school.

NBCTs participate in projects with each other to collaborate and share in the learning process. Most participants viewed reflection as an activity done in collaboration with others in a non-structured manner. Teacher E stated:

I reflect, but I do find myself in conversation less formally, discussing things with colleagues. I usually like to end the day with a few minutes, with colleagues and a little reflection.

Miss I acknowledged:

To me, it means that you are willing to be a life-long learner, open to reading current educational books and research so that you can continue to build on your pedagogy. Being in a community implies that you are collaborative and willing to meet with other teachers and discuss options and share, because many of the ideas and learning materials we learn from

other teachers. It means reaching out through the Internet and surrounding yourself with good teachers and you are involved in learning some of the processes and sharing your own as well. It's easier for me now, because I think we have picked up on collaboration and reading groups.

NBCTs recognized the value of collaborative reflection and suggested activities that allowed this to occur on a regular and scheduled basis. Teacher F stated:

We have to be encouraging change through exposure to new ideas. When we bring groups of teachers together we build relationships with people and we need to get back to that kind of thing.

NBCTs expressed the importance of families as partners with the school working especially hard at keeping lines of communication open and seeking opportunities to invite parents into the school. Miss D stated:

I think about my parents. One of the main things I try to do is keep an open communication with my parents.

Teacher A said:

To facilitate meaningful communication, I provide opportunities for students to express themselves in group settings. I also work in close proximity with students to increase communication and encourage personal interactions.

NBCTs stated that opportunities for collaboration with colleagues required a time commitment much greater than that which typically exists in teacher professional development. Teacher D revealed:

Opportunities for collaboration require teachers to learn to articulate their beliefs and explain their thinking to other teachers, parents, and even administrators. These opportunities for collaboration are most effective when they involve debate and a deliberate attempt to create disequilibrium so that teachers confront their assumptions and question themselves and others. I had a principal that would bring in small case studies and break the staff in groups and we would discuss topics such as discipline and classroom management.

A third theme that emerged from the data analysis was a learning community. A learning community involves students and the teachers. Two sub themes also emerged: improving student achievement and improving pedagogical practices.

The NBCTs often use assessment as the basis for determining types of instruction that will best meet the needs of their students. According to the NBCTs interviewed, reflection allows teachers to determine what was working and what is working and what is not. Teacher E explained:

Regarding assessment-that requires constant observation of the child, taking anecdotal records and trying to determine when and why behavior occurs and trying to positively change it. I collect samples of the students work so that I can see where the child started and whether they improved. This helps you to determine the kind of support that the child needs to improve and what kinds of resources you need to aid the learning.

NBCTs carefully analyze information received from parent-pupil-teacher conferences, parent-teacher conferences, and informal conversations with parents and other family members. Teacher F stated:

I hold conferences with students to discuss their progress. The conferences almost always occur individually and may be used to give children extra help.

The NBCTs in this research study most frequently plan their instruction to target the individual needs of their students. Teacher H said:

The number one thing you have to ask yourself is, did the child learn and did I address the learning opportunities for those who come with a lot of experience? Did I further their understanding and did I help address the needs of the child who didn't really have any background knowledge? I think when you are reflecting, you are always critiquing whether you accomplished what you set out to do and what did the children learn.

NBCTs use assessment information to determine teaching points. They carefully analyze students' standardized test scores and other data to gain insight that may inform their curricular decisions and instructional practice. Teacher A stated:

When you get back the test scores you reflect over those. We have weekly staff meetings and discuss what we can you do to bring those up? We evaluate why our students are low in this area? Then we adjust our practice as a result of the analysis and reflection.

All NBCTs made frequent reference to the needs of the child and a change in teacher interactions with children Teacher B stated:

I try to actively engage children in the process. When you listen to children, it takes time. I learned that it's important to give everyone a chance to talk. It's important for children to talk and I listen more. I don't try to talk them out of their thinking. I guess I like to build on the child's knowledge and I think I'm much more sensitive to their knowledge set now so that I can build my lesson on top of that so that I'm not teaching them things they already know or teaching them something that's so far above and beyond.

NBCTs expressed a hunger to build better relationships with students and to understand more about their thinking. They strive to become more attuned to formal and informal data in their planning. Teacher I stated:

This whole process made me much more aware of the fact that so many times I want to change those children and make them fit the way I teach. When in fact, I should be the one who is changing the way I teach to fit the way they learn. That's huge for me and that's like one of those light-bulbs moments. Actually national board made me much more aware of the process of how to be truly effective and how to individualize. It has to become a personal thing between you and maybe a room of 25 children but it has to be between you and that child.

All NBCTs focused attention on the learner. The participants in this research study reported the use of a variety of strategies for improving student achievement. Teacher J stated:

I think of it as looking at what I have done or am doing, deciding if it is the best possible delivery, completely changing the delivery because it bombed, changing it so that the student can better understand it by using his/her learning style, changing the delivery so that it increases the difficulty or amount of what is to be done.

These teachers use a well-developed repertoire of strategies, skills, and procedures that allow their classroom to function smoothly and that enable them to change directions effectively when they do not. Teacher D stated:

I have to find something that each kid can do successfully; on their own, but yet it's the same skill. The kid is the top priority. It might mean that I'm running myself ragged or running myself thin, but the main thing I think about what's best for the kids. I guess that kind of goes back to what I had mentioned earlier. I think about best practices. I try to implement whatever those best practices are. Keep in mind, we sway because we get in the heat of the passion of teaching, but it always comes back to I'm always refocused on what is best for the kids. So, I really try to keep in mind what's best for them.

Effective teachers carefully review their own teaching practices, looking for ways to improve and enhance their teaching skills. They continuously practice self-evaluations and self-reflection as learning tools. Teacher E discussed how reflective practice improves her teaching skills:

What it taught me is that you better have something behind what you're doing. You had better have objectives about where you're leading children

to a particular point. And if you can't say that, then you better be changing what you're doing. You just better start doing something else. So, it really helped me to clean up my teaching. I guess that's the best way to put it. Clean it up, get rid of the fluff stuff, and really get down to business. You can do creative things, but just make sure there's some substance behind it. That's really where I had to clean up.

The NBCTs emphasized the importance of decision-making and being flexible to be able to make changes that best meet their students' needs.

Teacher G shared:

I also have tried to squeeze in too much instruction in a short period...sometimes in trying to get ready for a district or state test... without allowing time for the knowledge to soak in before presenting new skills.

NBCTs know that the physical setting, including the placement of furniture, materials, and students, can facilitate the learning process and help extend student learning, engagement, and exploration. Teacher D discussed:

My classrooms is organized to meet the students' needs and to promote peer interaction and responsibility My environment for example, assignments, I think about the new kids I've gotten in, I have 24 kids within my classroom, but I have one child that I have to keep a desk for because she comes in just for socialization. She comes in for lunch, and different times of the day, so I have 25 kids, so I have to think about placement of those kids and who can seat with whom and who cannot.

This last week has been very difficult because of some of the chemistry with the kids. I had to do lots of reflection on group arrangements classroom arrangements, because my class is very large. There is very little room to move around, but yet still I have to have to think about okay do I have the walk space for the kids to move around. Do I have an area big enough for my kids to come and sit comfortably for when we do our morning meeting or calendar exercise? I also have to think about when they pull their centers. Is there going to be enough room for them to find a spot on the floor or on their desk in order to play comfortably.

Unfortunately, the room doesn't accommodate for that, but yet instill I have to think about that. So this last week alone I changed my classroom three times.

In summary, three clusters of themes emerged: Meaningful opportunities to participate; set and expect high expectations; and improve learning community with several sub-themes in each. Chapter five will summarize the data analysis section. The findings have been examined to answer the question: How do National Board Certified Teachers learn and engage in reflective practice? The chapter concludes with implications for practitioners and further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendations for Practice

Introduction

Since the release of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), many federal and state reform efforts have been initiated in an effort to improve American Education. Following its release, the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as Profession (1986) issued its report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*. This report recommended the establishment of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) to professionalize teaching by setting standards and by certifying teachers who meet those standards. In 1997, the Carnegie Foundation established the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for the Advancement of Teaching. The stated goal of the NBPTS is to improve student learning by strengthening teaching and by identifying teachers who meet the established standards.

National certification for teachers through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) affords accomplished teachers an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of content and pedagogy. The national certification process advances development of a cadre of accomplishments devoted to educating today's students, as well as developing educators as reflective practitioners. (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, July, 2002; Schön, 1986).

Reflective practice requires one to link behavior and action with reflection. It is a critical analysis of what one does, with the goal of improving professional practice. One of the "Five Core Propositions" of the National Board is "Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from their experiences" (NBPTS, General Information,

2004, p. 4). Through a certification process that requires candidates to describe, analyze, and reflect upon what they do as educators, NBPTS challenges teachers to critique and refine their work, with the ultimate goal of improving the educational process for the students.

All 50 states have recognized the importance of National Board Certified Teachers and have encouraged teachers to participate in the National Board Certified Teachers process. Many states subsidize candidates' fees and provide salary supplements including benefits for teachers who complete the certification (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2005). However, the NBPTS has generated debate in educational circles. Its supporters contend that nationally certified teachers will have greater opportunities, and that the teaching profession will achieve a status similar to other recognized professions. Opponents, on the other hand, claim that NBPTS creates an elite group of teachers and separates novice from expert teachers.

The purpose of this study was to describe how NBCTs learned and engaged in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practices. The study was designed to provide a demographic profile of these candidates and to describe the teachers' experiences with reflection while pursuing National Board. The 10 participants who took part in the study were purposefully selected from a total of 39 National Board Certified Teachers in Oklahoma. They were selected because of their response to an e-letter.

In this phenomenological study, the focus was on the phenomenon of reflective practice. Three data collection techniques were used in this study. These included demographic information, semi-structured interviews, and written artifacts. These data

collection techniques provide a rich source of information and enable multiple perspectives to be heard.

The analysis of the demographic data indicated that the majority of teachers who pursued NBPTS certification were white females with a master's degree. The majority of teachers had over seven years of teaching experience when they attempted NBC and pursued the Early Childhood Generalist or Middle Childhood Generalist certification. The majority of teachers reported they remained in the classroom, had not assumed administrative or supervisory positions and had not pursued, nor were pursuing a higher educational degree.

Statement of the Problem

Although reflective practice is advocated in the literature, there are few conceptually grounded models for implementation at the experienced level (Dewey, 1933; Osterman, 1990; Schön, 1983). There is a need for more widely disseminated knowledge on the concept of reflection and its application, particularly on learning about and facilitating reflective practice at the experienced level. Teachers who do not question what they do or what their actions say about their educational philosophy may not be responding to the diverse and growing learning needs of today's students. This research was designed to shed light on how National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) learned about and practice reflection to increase pedagogical practice.

The study findings were reviewed in terms of the research question and original inquiry. The research question for this study: How do National Board Certified teachers learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice? While popular literature pays much attention to the topic of reflective practice and pre-service

teachers, little research has been done on experienced teachers and reflection. This chapter reflects on the findings of this study, the unique description of the experience itself, and the value of these findings to administrators and other educators.

Through a review of related literature, interviews with 10 National Board Certified Teachers, my personal 14 years of experience as a classroom teacher, NBCT process, and service as school principal, conclusions and recommendations concerning reflective practice were made. The information gathered from interviews of NBCTs was collected and organized in an effort to promote the pedagogical expertise that bridges the gap between mastery and novice teachers.

Conclusions from the Study

The general conclusions from the study focused on the perceptions of reflective practice by National Board Certified Teachers. The findings of this study support the notion that reflective thinking is necessary for teachers to understand their own beliefs about teaching and learning through an examination of their own practices (NBPTS, 2005). The conclusions were made from a combination of a review of related literature, the transcribed interviews and analysis of the data. The specific findings were organized and clustered around three themes of the study:

- Meaningful opportunities to participate;
- Caring connected community; and
- High expectations.

Subtopics that emerged from the data analysis process were also addressed as they related to the three researched topics.

The first guided interview question asked: NBPTS define reflective practice as systematic thinking how do you define reflective practice? Though reflective practice has been defined in a variety of ways, the NBCTs in this study viewed reflection as looking back on one's situation, behavior, practices, effectiveness, and accomplishments by asking: What am I doing and why? Nearly all of the NBCTs in this study stated that reflection was looking back and making a decision to improve their teaching (Dewey, 1933). Several NBCTs shared that reflective practice involves active, persistent, careful consideration, speculation, and contemplation of your beliefs and knowledge, which leads to professional growth and greater pedagogical practice. One NBCT went on to say that to be truly reflective, you must be constructive, deliberate and on a continuous basis (Van Manen, 1991).

Several NBCTs' definition acknowledges Schön's (1983) perspective that reflection can take place in different time frames. When reflection takes place before or after an act, it is called reflection-on-action. The NBCTs discussed reflection in teaching before and after a lesson when planning and considering possible lesson outcomes. The majority of the NBCTs defined reflection as modifying and adjusting teaching based on unexpected student behaviors. This is similar to Schön's (1983) "reflection-in-action" which occurs during teaching. Two participants stated reflection was the ability to learn from acknowledged mistakes to improve and strengthen teaching and student learning. This study showed NBCTs use reflection to develop future lessons while also strengthening their teaching methods and strategies.

The findings in this study supported all three stages of reflection (Van Manen, 1983). Van Manen's (1983) stage one is limited to analyzing the effects of strategies

used. The NBCTs discussed analyzing running records, standardized test, and parent teacher conferences. The second stage involves reflection about the assumptions underlying a specific classroom practice as well as its consequences. The participants in this study shared specific classroom practice regarding reflection for example, looking at empty seats and replaying students' responses. Another practice was asking, "so what?" regarding the success or failure of a lesson. Stage three entails questioning the moral ethical dimensions of decisions related to the classroom situation. It involves reflection on the assumptions underlying a decision or act and on the broader ethical, moral, political, and historical implications behind the assumptions on which the decisions are based. It also involves technical, educational, and ethical consequences of those decisions. The NBCTs in this study discussed collaborating with other teachers regarding their teaching.

Meaningful Opportunities to Participate

The second guided interview question asked: How do you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice? The findings indicate that the overwhelming majority of teachers reported that going through the process of NBC had changed both their teaching and how they learned to reflect on their practice (Rotberg, Futrell, & Liberman, 1998). Other teachers noted that going through the NBPTS process had changed their teaching methods, instructional strategies, or methods of assessment. A couple of teachers reported that their teaching had changed as a result of an awareness of the National Board's Standards, which emphasize reflection (Allen & Casbergue, 1997).

A majority of the teachers felt that going through the process of NBC had an effect on their students' learning (Berliner, 1988; Bond, et al., 2000) These teachers

reported that this effect was a result of the change the NBPTS process had on improving the teacher; felt that their improved teaching resulted in improved learning (Brophy & Good 1996; Darling-Hammond, 1996). These teachers also reported that the positive effect that the NBPTS process had on their students' learning resulted from the emphasis placed on incorporating the National Board's Standards method of instruction which encourages innovative, non-traditional approaches (Rotberg, Futrell, & Liberman, 1998). NBCTs stated that they learned how to reflect on their practices in undergraduate and graduate school. A few NBCTs shared they that learned to reflect from workshop experiences and related professional development (Makin, Hayden, & Diaz, 2000).

Caring Connected Environment

The third guided interview question asked: In what contexts do you engage in reflective practice? NBCTs engaged in professional readings, attended staff development sessions, and engaged with their peers in dialogue (Makin, Hayden, & Diaz, 2000). They sought professional or personal challenges, growth experiences and a validation of their skills (Yang, 1997). The NBCTs stated they reflect upon professional readings over the summer and reflect upon their experiences of previous years (Makin, Hayden, & Diaz, 2000). The NBCTs in this study enjoy learning, reflecting on their practice and improving pedagogical practice (NBPTS, 2005).

Teachers in this study recognized the importance of reflection in their daily practice (Berliner, 1988). Their daily reflection influenced their instructional practices, grouping of students, selection of instructional resources, and use of student assessment data. Most of the NBCTs reported an ability to discern what is happening in the classroom and adapt their efforts based on what they learn (Garrison, 1991; Dahlberg et

al., 2001). Teachers in this study reflected on both their instruction and the needs of individual students (Richert, 1990). They created a daily habit of asking difficult questions of themselves and challenging their own pedagogy (Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, & Maclaughlin, 1990). Teachers also reported reflecting on student engagement and carefully studying the involvement of students in lessons and activities (Schön, 2000).

NBCTs examine their teaching practices by trying to make connections to past lessons, drawing on current understandings of methods to learning and teaching, comparing their goals with results of student outcomes, and designing better approaches and solutions for future lessons (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 2000).

High Expectations

Interview question four asked: In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection? The majority of the NBCTs interviewed for this study stated the purpose of reflection is to perfect their teaching and to improve student achievement through high expectations (Berliner, 2004; Collier, 1999; and Darling-Hammond, 2000). The NBCTs in this study stated that students need a clear idea of what to learn and how to do it in order to learn more effectively and more efficiently. Several NBCTs stated that holding high expectations encourages high academics and that through reflection they learn to accept, modify and/or change future lessons (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Several NBCTs stated the purpose of reflection is to react to current issues (Hatton & Smith, 1994). Another NBCT stated changing responses to or understanding of the profession was the purpose of reflective practice (Makin, Hayden, & Diaz, 2000). Some stated the purpose of reflective practice is change interpretations of coursework or student work (Ross, 1989; Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993). Others stated the purpose for reflection was to

prepare for personal future directions and the development of a greater sense of self-awareness about the nature and impact of one's teaching and classroom practices (Allen and Casbergue, 1997). The participants stated that reflective practice created a deeper level of awareness, more acute observational skills and the ability to become metacognitive (Moustakas, 1994). These beliefs mirrors Van Manen's (1983) levels of reflectivity that the "focus of reflection should initially be on the person himself/herself than classroom instruction, and then develop to broader concerns about schooling and society as the teacher becomes more experience" (p. 143).

Recommendations for Practice

National Board Professional Teaching Standards began in 1985, followed by National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 1987. NCATE worked with colleges and universities to create a similar scenario for their teacher education students (Elliot, 1996).

1. The data indicates the NBC process is ripe with continuing professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators. Including some of the elements of the NBC process into school improvement plans would give everyone an opportunity to learn about the NBC process and ways to improve their teaching and students' learning.
2. Schools/districts could supply their teachers with copies of the National Board standards for their teaching area as well as design workshops around those standards, which would be another way in which teachers could explain their teachings to parents/guardians and share with each other their own practices. For those who are not actively collaborating in the family or professional community

in the listed areas, participating in workshops centering on documenting accomplishments can give them areas of continuing professional development to pursue.

3. School administrators can significantly improve the level of reflection in their schools by creating space and time for teacher reflection. Teachers need an opportunity to explore their craft together in a safe and trusting environment. The ultimate professional development opportunity in the school needs to move away from hiring an expert who will come in and deliver the content and move toward meaningful dialogues of teaching and learning and helping one another to develop within the learning community.
4. Schools and district administrators should consider NBCTs as viable and accessible resources that may be tapped in order to assist other teachers and staff with the development and nurture of their own reflective practice. Any professional development activity for teachers must require the teacher to reflect and consider the impact of their actions or behavior in the classroom on their students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations included in this section are based on the review of literature, findings and conclusions from this study. This study investigated NBCTs' perception of reflective practice. The following recommendations for further study are offered:

1. The study could be expanded to include a participant base outside of the Oklahoma area.

2. Future research could be designed to collect more comprehensive data regarding reflective practice of other educational stakeholders, such as principals, teachers, parents, and students.
3. Additional research could examine the impact that NBCTs make in helping other teachers develop reflective practice.
4. Future research interviewing a pool of NBCTs in one school setting could provide some solid evidence of how groups of teachers or true caring communities comprised of NBCTs impact overall school improvement efforts;
5. Future research replicating the study using the same themes: meaningful opportunities to participate, caring connected community and high expectations to compare and contrast results with other school districts and within a certain time period using the same participants.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the fields of education administration and best instructional practices by describing how National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) learn and engage in reflective practice to improve their pedagogical practice. One the study described how NBCTs define reflective practice. Two, the study revealed how NBCTs learned and engaged in reflective practice. Third, the study described the purpose of reflective practice from the NBCTs' perspective.

The phenomenon of reflective practice was explored at length in this study. The study indicated that all of the participants regularly engaged in reflection-on-practice. The NBCTs were conscious of their use of reflection and were able to provide examples of how they learned and engaged in reflective practice. The NBCTs descriptions were much

more about reflection-on-practice than reflection-in-practice, although both were described. The NBCTs in this study described reflective practice as looking back on their practice to improve student achievement and pedagogical practice. The NBCTs described the importance of reflection to understand situations and to learn from experiences.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Table 2: Demographic Table

Survey Item	Response
Gender	
Male	1
Female	9
Age Range	33 to 55
Mean	52 years
Race	
African American	2
Caucasian	6
Native American	2
Education	
Bachelor's	4
Master's	6
Doctorate's	0
Teaching Years	
0-5 years	0
6-10 years	0
11-20 years	9
20+ years	1
Mean	21
National Board Area	
Early Childhood	3
Early Childhood Literacy	1
Exceptional Needs Specialist	1
Middle Childhood	4
School Counselor Early Childhood	1
Number of Years Certified	
Mean	4

N=10

APPENDIX B



The University of Oklahoma
OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

IRB Number: 11079
Category: 2
Approval Date: November 03,
2005

November 03, 2005

Jamie Polk
Educational Leadership and Policy
Studies 820 Van Fleet Oval, ECH
227
Norman, OK 73019

Dear Ms. Polk:

RE: A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective People

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRS), I have reviewed the above-referenced research project and determined that it meets the criteria in 45 CFR 46, as amended, for exemption from IRB review. You may proceed with the research as proposed. Please note that any changes in the protocol will need to be submitted to the IRS for review as changes could affect this determination of exempt status. Also note that you should notify the IRB office when this project is completed, so we can remove it from our files.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call the IRS office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grayson Noley", written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Grayson Noley, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

**Individual Informed Consent Form for Research
University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus**

INTRODUCTION

I _____ voluntarily agree to participate in this study entitled: A Phenomenological Study: Experienced Teachers and Reflective Practices. I understand that this study involves research that will be carried out under the supervision of Dr. Gaetane Jean-Marie.

It is important for me to understand: 1) that participation in this study is completely voluntary; 2) that I may not personally benefit from this study, but that the knowledge gained may benefit others; 3) that I am free to refuse to participate and to withdraw from the experiment at any time without prejudice to me. The study is described as follows:

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore how experienced teachers describe their experiences of reflective practice. It will provide a base of data that could be used to strengthen the teaching profession. You are being asked to participate because you are a National Board Certified Teacher.

DESCRIPTION

If you choose to participate, your participation in this study will take a minimal amount of time. You will be asked to participate in an interview. The one-on-one interview will last approximately an hour depending on your responses. The individual has the right to choose not to answer any question(s). The responses in conjunction with the demographic information will be used to present the perceptions of the participants.

SUBJECT ASSURANCES

By signing this consent form, I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age and that my participation in this study is voluntary. I acknowledge that I have not waived my legal rights or released this institute from liability or negligence. I understand that I may withdraw from this study without prejudice to me.

CONFIDENTIALLY

I understand that records from this study will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used in the final document. Only the researcher will have access to the actual names of the participants. Data will be stored securely until the conclusion of the study. Any further use of the audiotapes will not occur unless written permission is obtained.

SUBJECT BENEFIT/RISK

No risk beyond those present in normal everyday life is anticipated in this study. Participants may not personally benefit from this study, although the educational community may benefit. Subjects may obtain research results by contacting Ms. Jamie Polk.

INFORMATION

If you have questions about this research, you may contact Jamie Polk at 580.357.9996 or Dr. Gaetane Jean-Marie at 405.325.5976. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Office of Research Administration at 405.325.8110.

SIGNATURES

I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this study and I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research study. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I consent to being audio tape. I understand that I may receive a copy of this signed consent form.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX C

Invitational E- Letter

A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Congratulations on obtaining National Board Certification! My name is Jamie Polk and I am currently a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma, in the Department of Educational Administration Curriculum and Supervision. I am conducting research on reflective practice focusing on National Board Certified Teachers. I am requesting that you take an active part in this research endeavor. This study will generate data that will be used to complete my doctoral dissertation. Please note that the University of Oklahoma's Internal Review Board has approved this research. My research data will be gathered through an in-depth interview. The interview should take 60 to 90 minutes. Your participation is solely voluntary; therefore, if you choose to discontinue participation at any time during the research, you may do so. Thank you in advance for your help with this project. Be assured that all information you provide will be held in the strictest confidence. No real names or identifying remarks will be published in the final study.

I will be happy to answer any questions that you might have now or later. Feel free to call me anytime. My phone number is 580.357.9996. You may also reach me by cell phone at 580.704.0375 and jpolk-1@ou.edu. The University of Oklahoma advisor is Dr. Gaetane Jean-Marie. She can be contacted at 405.325.5976 or gjeanmarie@ou.edu. Written permission will be verified at the time of our meeting. You will receive a copy of the consent form should you agree to participate in this research. If you wish to be considered for the interviews, please reply to this email and I will contact you. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Jamie C. Polk, NBCT/MCG

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Thank you for taking part in my study, as you are aware I am working on my dissertation, the topic is on reflective practices. I want to get your perspective from a National Board Certified Teacher perspective on reflective practice. I have some questions that I want to ask, but please feel free to elaborate on your answers; the more you can remember and tell me, the more I will be able to represent your views in the dissertation.

NBCT defines reflective practice as systematic thinking how do you define reflective practice?

How do you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?

1. How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?
2. How did you learn to reflect on your practices?
3. Formal and informal training

In what contexts (situation/environment) do you engage in reflective practice?

1. Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection?
2. What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do?
3. What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about?
4. What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching?
5. What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?

In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?

1. What do you understand by the term reflection?
2. Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why?
3. Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?

You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked about, or that you'd like to share with me?

Thank you for your time.

Interview Protocol
A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time: Each interview is estimated to last 60 to 90 minutes.

Environment: The interviews will be conducted on school grounds in a quiet and private location.

Materials: A pad of paper, pencil, audio recording device and interview guide will be the materials used in the interview session.

Procedures:

1. The researcher will introduce herself and establish the purpose of the interview. The researcher will say or paraphrase the following: My name is Jamie Polk. Thank you for coming today and for being willing to participate in this study. Your input will make a difference. The purpose of this study is to describe reflective practice of National Board Certified Teachers. Would you mind if I tape this conversation in order to more accurately record your comments?
2. The researcher will set the context and pose the questions. The researcher will say or paraphrase the following: "The focus of this study is reflective practice. How do you describe how you learned to reflect on your practices? In what contexts do you engage in reflective practice? In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection."
3. In order to encourage sharing and make the participant feel comfortable with sharing his or her ideas, the researcher will be conscious of her body language and tone of voice modeling them after those of each participant while keeping an open and inviting demeanor. Eye contact will be sustained and consistent.
4. Comments and expression will be used to acknowledge the participants' comments as well as to clarify comments and extend ideas.
5. Notes will be taken of the main ideas of the conversation but will not be extensive so as to create a relaxed and comfortable environment.
6. Teachers will be thanked at the end of each session. The researcher will personalize the thank you for each teacher by reflection on topics discussed during the session.

Interview A

A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview: 8:15 AM

Date: Friday, December 2, 2005

Place: Cleveland Elementary

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewee: A

NBCT defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice?

1. My definition of reflective practice is when you look back and reflect over the things that you are doing right now to improve your teaching ability.
2. You reflect on it.
3. You look at your good things, your bad things, what you can do better
4. Reflective Practice takes careful consideration of your teaching.

How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?

5. How I learned to reflect on my practice?
6. I guess just looking back over what worked.
7. What could have made it better?
8. Why did it flop?
9. I guess and the National Board process really made you actually look at different areas of your teaching.

How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice? How did you learn to reflect on your practices? Formal and informal training?

10. Looking at some workshops I guess that would be formal, maybe.
11. I had some mentoring classes.
12. I had some like some mentoring classes I took before.
13. It was a PDI workshop
14. It told you things, specific things to look for if that counts.

Was that PDI workshop a form of the NB process or something you did on your own before that process?

15. It was something I did on my own, but they really geared it towards that.

In what contexts (situation/environment) do you engage in reflective practice?

Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection?

16. Oh, like at the end of the day, I might think well what could I have done in this lesson and made it better.
17. Oh you know so and so just really wasn't involved with it.
18. Something that's occurring in their personal lives or was there something that I could have done better to pull them in.
19. Uhm maybe I needed to go back and review like the basics like some of mine,

20. Okay like yesterday, back in the classroom with my student teacher and I'm taking over ratios and we're getting those PASS objectives in and I hadn't been in there and I just noticed their facing multiplication and double digit division.
 21. A couple of them it's not there.
 22. So, uhm, I guess after I was getting back their papers and I was watching their face they didn't know what I was talking about.
 23. That would constitute I assume reflection.
 24. Uhm of course when you get back to like the test scores the ... we got something back yesterday.
 25. I mean of course getting back your test scores reflecting over those.
 26. You have those meeting what can you do to bring those up?
 27. We have staff development like every week.
 28. You know... guided reading and I guess we reflect.
 29. We reflect then...formally I think of the portfolio.
 30. That's a process in itself.
 31. I begin with a standard that defines an aspect of good teaching and then define the benchmarks that will serve as evidence toward that standard.
 32. Include journal writing, videotaping, lesson planning and the examining of student work to provide evidence and documentation of the work toward the goal.
 33. The portfolio should include written reflection that demonstrates self-assessment as well as impact on students.
 34. The end product should summarize the "what" and "why" of the teaching and cause continual monitoring and adjustment to instruction as you reflect upon the product
 35. I guess that would be formal.
- What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about? What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching? What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?
- In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?**
36. I think the purpose it to make you a better teacher.
 37. Or even if you reflect on anything in your life. I think it's to improve.
 38. Improve something.
 39. To facilitate meaningful communication, I provide opportunities for students to express themselves in group settings.
 40. I also work in close proximity with students to increase communication and encourage a personal interaction, that's a purpose.
- What do you understand by the term reflection?**
41. Uhm, I understand that you are looking back on your thoughts, behaviors, your actions on an event a teaching event.
 42. You think that you know who you are as a teacher and then you watch yourself day in and day out and self-evaluate every minute you are in the classroom.
 43. So, it is probably one of the most beneficial staff development pieces of my education because I began to truly evaluate what I do and I continue to do that
- Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why?**
44. Uhm, Yes, I do.

- 45. Well, I mean, scholastically and academically in school... I mean ...that's your push you have to bring your test scores up.
- 46. What can we do?
- 47. Can you evaluate why your students are low in this area?
- 48. So you reflect.
- 49. You know ...What can I be doing to make students better or I mean just even in your personal life how could you improve the situation, make it better.
- 50. I think anyone who is... I don't know...self-actualizing would be a reflective person.

Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?

- 51. I think it is more important know than ever that tends to be the push that you know your administration is pushing towards to bring up those test scores to be a better teacher to reach...you know... every student.

You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me?

- 52. Uhm , no I think you covered it.
- 53. Just that the NB...I mean...once again your dealing with scores...I guess I'm just hung up on scores right now, but uhm...when you got back your results you had to reflect then...you know...what was your strength?
- 54. What was your weakness?
- 55. And what you have to do to make it better.

Interview B
A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview: 3:30 PM

Date: December 7, 2005

Place: Whittier Elementary, Lawton, OK

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewee: B

NBCT defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice?

1. Uhm, I would define it as looking back on what I have been teaching to see what I can do better.
2. What went well? What changes would I make? Speculation and that type stuff that's what I think of reflective practice.

How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?

3. Uhm, I would say a lot of it did come from NB Because even though I had been teaching a long time I don't think I actually took as much time as I should to think back on what was going right?
4. What was going wrong? What should I do? Instead of ...just you know... what was... I should be doing lesson one, lesson two, lesson three and go on with it
5. And I think with NB really helped me open my eyes to see that I really needed to be doing that more.
6. I know I did it some but not consciously. *How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?*
7. Are you referring to the uhm, like what I do... what I ...
8. I would say that I do that most immediately after I taught a lesson.
9. Some of it is just...you know... in my head thinking what I need to do.
10. Uhm... I'll jot down some little notes to my self at my desk and have piles of notes.
11. A lot of it comes when I get ready to do lesson plans.
12. Well, they didn't get that we better spend some more time on it.
13. Uhm, you know...I put arrows in my lesson plans with little notes.
14. We'll practice, do that again.
15. Uhm... and I even will keep notes in my unit folder and you know... circle things that I did that I want to maybe do again at a future time with another class.
16. Xing out things that I decided that I don't want to do. *How did you learn to reflect on your practices?*
17. Uhm, again I would say through NB I really was forced to reflect and I think I learned to do that by ... you know... by really sitting down and looking at questions.
18. What went well?
19. What didn't go well?
20. What would you do differently and just going over those same processes every time? *Formal and informal training*

21. I don't think I did...uhm I been teaching for 25 years and I don't remember really in any of my methods classes when I first started that reflective practice was part of anything we did.
22. It was more lesson plans.
23. It focused on lesson plans and the knowledge behind it. **In what contexts do you engage in reflective practice?**
24. Uhm, I would say a lot of it is done just privately.
25. I mean with my own self and my own thinking.
26. I try to actively engage children in the process.
27. When you listen to children, it takes time.
28. I learned that it's important to give everyone a chance to talk.
29. It's important for children to talk and I listen more.
30. I don't try to talk them out of their thinking.
31. I guess I like to build on the child's knowledge and I think I'm much more sensitive to their knowledge set now so that I can build my lesson on top of that so that I'm not teaching them things they already know or teaching them something that's so far above and beyond
32. Some of it is done with my teaching partner ... you know... she and I will talk about this lesson.
33. It was great, this happen, this happen or we're like ugh...that was terrible.
34. And you know... we'll even talk together, you know... we need to make sure we're doing this because the kids showed these kids of signs.
35. So a lot of this is done privately, myself and some of it uhm... with my fellow teaching partner as we make plans. ***Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection?***
36. Uhm.I know a specific time is when I was working on a Masters degree.
37. Uhm... where I had to analyze a lesson that I taught and specifically write how uhm... how I would do things differently.
38. What I liked?
39. What went well?
40. How I would use that lesson in the future?
41. How I would use it to improve student learning and with other lessons?
42. How it would carry through from one lesson to another. ***What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do?***
43. To engage in reflective practice?
44. Again, I would probably make little notes to myself, keep folders...
45. Uhm look at lesson plans.
46. I sometimes look at previous lesson plans just to jog my memory because a lot of times I write notes in there so I look back and say, I did this, but I didn't like that.
47. And I even do this...
48. I just thought of this... I teach social studies to both third grade classes uhm... the other teacher teaches science to both third grade classes.
49. So I usually teach a unit with my class and then I teach the same unit with her class.
50. But it usally is never the same because I find out things that I've done with my class and it's like well, I need to tweak that a little bit.

51. So I feel like I probably do a better job the second time I do it.
52. Uhm, no aside from what I already said. ***What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about?***
53. I think about things like what materials should I have used?
54. Or how I should have prepared?
55. I think about how the kids responded.
56. I think about how they ...whether it should be a paper pencil activity or a hands on activity would have been better.
57. I think about how I could relate it ...you know...integrate it to other subjects.
58. Uhm, I think about how I could do it in shorter time perhaps or how I need to stretch it out?
59. I think about how I should have said something.
60. Did I ...the way I said something show that they learn something?
61. Or do I need to re-teach?
62. That's mostly what I think about. ***What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching?***
63. I guess just thinking and writing them down.
64. I'll have them to refer back to.
65. And then talking about them with others. ***What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?***
66. Uhm, one thing that just came to mind, this year I asked my students to set goals and they write them down.
67. Especially at the beginning of every week, so, I ask I even ask them later in the week for them to reflect on their own goals.
68. Did you meet some of your goals?
69. Or are you still working on this one.
70. I even share some of my goals with them.
71. You know...here's a goal I have for this week... I haven't got it done yet, but I have written myself a note, so I share with them what I do so that maybe they will start to be thinking that way or even reflect.
72. So there's one example on an activity. ***In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?***
73. Wow, I learned that's pretty powerful because just to teach...you know... I taught lesson one, now lesson two, now lesson three, now lesson four.
74. Just because you teach it doesn't mean they learned it and so uhm I just know teaching has just got to be so flexible and you have to pick up on the kids and if they got it great, write it down.
75. That this is good and what you did worked and if it didn't you got to go back find some other avenues and I think that without that you are not really teaching. ***What do you understand by the term reflection?***
76. I think it means to go back and try to be honest look at what you have done, honestly.
77. Without beating yourself up. ***Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why?***
78. I think I am.
79. I think sometimes it keeps me awake at night...
80. My husband says your thinking about school ain't you.

81. Because I'll be sitting and we'll have a movie on and oh yeah, I thinking about what I should be doing.
82. Some of it planning, advance planning, but some of it is well I need to do this, and this, and this, because this, this, and this.
83. Sometimes at night I can't sleep so I get up and write down notes to myself so. ***Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?***
84. I do.
85. I do.
86. I think you just start really reaching the kids as best you can because there are so many, there all different.
87. You got to work so hard to get...to meet all their different needs anyway.
88. But if you don't go back and figure out what was good, what was not, how can you plan for what comes next. **You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me?**
89. Uhm, no, but as we talked here you know... the first time I really thought about reflecting is when I did NB.
90. I know I though about stuff...I never been one of these that pulled out last years lesson plans and said okay ditto.
91. I never have really just gone to the book and gone sequentially through stuff.
92. I'm pretty creative as far as what I dig out and I know in my head, I've been reflective, but I haven't really maybe put that term with it or really made the extra effort to say yeah I haven't ever been asked to do it.
93. I guess maybe that's part of it.
94. Because I haven't gone back to school for it...I just got what I got uhm at Cameron.

Interview C

A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview: 8:00 PM
 Date: December 07, 2005
 Place: Cleveland Elementary
 Interviewer: Researcher
 Interviewee: C

NBCT defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice?

1. I define reflective practice as looking back over a thought, uhm ...a situation, or some kind of action. It requires being mentally active. **How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?**
 2. Uhm, when I attended undergraduate school, we were required to keep a reflective journal of our methods class.
 3. We were required to have a field experience for each class and keep a journal of our experience.
 4. Within the journals you had to reflect on the experience.
 5. They had to be thought provoking...by that I mean you had to ask what could have been done differently.
 6. You were not allowed to just summarize what you saw, you had to state what could have been done differently. **How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?**
 7. I describe my experiences as positive.
 8. I also ...uhm...periodically keep a prayer journal...you know...a notebook where I write my thoughts down after I have studied the bible.
 9. Uhm...I had to reflect in school and...
 10. I had to reflect during the NB process. **How did you learn to reflect on your practices?**
 11. Uhm...the NB process helped me to sharpen...you know...make...focus my thinking...
 12. The NB asked the question, so what? If you had a good lesson you ask yourself so what and if it didn't ... relate to improving student learning you didn't do it.
- Formal and informal training**
13. I believe my undergraduate was formal training in reflective practice.
 14. In undergraduate school we would write in reflective journals about our classroom observations.
 15. We would reflect on readings from texts and thoughts or concerns we had regarding educational topics.
 16. Our mentor teacher would respond to our thoughts on a personal level and address any concerns.
 17. The professors required you asked yourself probing questions about your teaching style and on student learning. **In what contexts do you engage in reflective practice?**
 18. In what contexts?
 19. Uhm, I usually after a lesson...that's usually after the students have gone and it's quiet like this. I look around ...I look at the empty seats and I reply a lesson in my mine and I think about the student responses...you know...like were they with me.
 20. You can tell by there response if the understand what you are trying to explain.
 21. You know, I do a lot of reflection while I'm teaching..I'm questioning myself...my deliver...my lesson...the materials we are using... I ask am I reaching every learner.
 22. One thing I learned from NB was to be specific in my questioning.

23. When I engage in reflection, I gain a lot of self-knowledge and self-awareness.
 24. It's really weird, because to say, reflect on your teaching, sounds like you just need to focus.
 25. But you really do need to spend a lot of time watching videotapes of yourself asking, why did I teach something this way and how could I teach it better? ***Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection?***
 26. Yes, today we were planning next week's lesson and I told another teacher on my team...we team teach... that I have to go back over double digit multiplication because even my brighter students were having trouble with the ...uhm ...concept. ***What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do?***
 27. Uhm...what kinds of things do I do ... when I reflect?
 28. ...I may talk to myself, or my uhm...co-workers...or sometimes I write down things...is that what you mean? ***What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about?***
 29. Uhm...I'm asking myself how could I have done that better...uhm...did I reach the students?
 30. Was the lesson effective?
 31. I ask did I improve student learning? ***What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching?***
 32. Uhm ...strategies...once again I think of NB.
 33. You ask yourself why am I do this....
 34. What would I change?
 35. Did I increase student achievement? ***What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?***
 36. Uhm...I reflect on different things depending on the lesson...I mean...if it's a new concept...something the students have not heard I may reflect on what else I could do.
 37. If it's a concept that we have studied awhile I may ask myself how do I ensure the students retain the information.
 38. It just depends on the situation on what I reflect on.
 39. NB helped me...systematically reflect. ***In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?***
 40. The purpose of reflection is to help me be a better teacher and students be better students. ***What do you understand by the term reflection?***
 41. I understand reflect to be thinking, ... uhm...consideration, ...uhm deliberate deliberation ***Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why?***
 42. Yes... without a doubt...I replay things all the time over and over. ***Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?***
- You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me?

Thank you for your time.

Interview D

A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview: 4:00 PM

Date: December 10, 2005

Place: Cleveland ES

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewee: D

NBCT defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice?

1. Okay, my definition of reflective practice is practice aspect of it means that it is something that you have to work at doing it is something that is done repetitively.
2. The reflective aspect I think is metacognition.
3. You have to think about what you are doing...it's constructive.
4. Why you are doing it and then put those thoughts into practice.
5. You alter some things you are doing or you can keep those things you are doing that are successful.
6. But basically you're thinking about your own thinking and it's a deliberate act.
7. And the practice aspect is something you do on a continuous basis. ***How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?***
8. I think I first learned how to reflect on the things I did when I was actually an undergraduate student at Cameron and that is when cognition was really big and thinking about your thinking.
9. When I taught in Germany it was a time in education when metacognition was very very prevalent.
10. I learned first of all when I was in undergraduate student and in first early years of teaching practice, but then when I went through the NB process then that just kind of elevated it to another level.
11. Where it was just a little more in-depth to just some of the things I was doing.
12. I was doing certain practices, but then I had to ... I knew they were successful, I knew when things worked and not worked, but I really had to delve into why it was working or some of the statistical findings that ...you know...okay... to support what I'm doing and why it is successful. ***How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?***
13. My experiences uhm.. I would just have to say that just as a teacher that the experience of being a teacher we have a different group of kids every year and so the teaching practices and strategies that you use change on a yearly basis.
14. You know from one year to the next year, but also in the context of a year, in one given year it's going to change.
15. For example, in the last three weeks I've gotten three new kids.
16. Three new kids for the last three weeks, and so ...you know... I have to change how I'm doing things just to accommodate uhm...for the successes of those children.

17. So if something that happens on a yearly basis, you know through the experiences of one year to the next, but then also within any given year, or any given day or moment. ***How did you learn to reflect on your practices?***
18. Uhm... how did I learn to do that ...I think NB really pushed me to think... to think about it more than what I had done before at least more ... at least more...uhm...
19. Let's see how could I say it...on a more consistent basis... more in-depth...uhm.
20. Prior to NB, I did the reflective thinking, but through NB just some of questions they would ask... you know...why are you doing this? you know... what makes this successful?
21. How could you change this?
22. Some of the entries we did ...uhm... to obtain... or to meet the standards in any particular ...uhm...area there were questions that were asked and they pretty much forced you to think about what you were doing and why you were doing it.
Formal and informal training
23. I did have uhm... formal training.
24. I did receive some training through a program when I taught with the Department of Defense Schools .. I can't even remember what it is called now but I do have uhm...it's a program where I worked very closely with another teacher and it was a course.
25. We took a course and it was like a week long course a training and it basically dealt with reflective practice, so we, this teacher and I would do would observe each other and comment on what we were doing, and why we were doing, we had formal question conferences, conference questions that we would ask each other.
26. Then we would go back and look to see what kinds types strategies we were using, but again I would have to go back and look and see what the program was called, I want to say reflective thinking or some kind skillful teacher or something to that effect.
27. But that was a formal training. ***In what contexts do you engage in reflective practice?***
28. What context, I would say that any work that I provide for my kid.
29. I have to think about what I am doing and why I am giving it to them.
30. I interact with each student to see how he or she is constructing the new information, and help him or her formulate sound conclusions by aiding them student in reconstructing the information in ways that are both valid and meaningful to the student.
31. For example, I have about four or five different ability grouping which mean that in any different day I'm doing four or five different sets of lesson plans to accommodate for the learning of those kids.
32. My environment for example, assignments, I think about the new kids I've gotten in, I have twenty-four kids within my classroom, but I have one child that I have to keep a desk for because she comes in just for socialization.
33. She comes in for lunch, and different times of the day, so I have twenty-five kids, so I have to think about placement of those kids and who can seat with whom and who cannot.

34. This last week has been very difficult because of some of the chemistry with the kids.
35. I had to do lots of reflection on group arrangements classroom arrangements, because my class is very large.
36. There is very little room to move around, but yet still I have to have to think about okay do I have the walk space for the kids to move around.
37. Do I have an area big enough for my kids to come and sit comfortably for when we do our morning meeting or calendar exercise?
38. I also have to think about when they pull their centers out...you know...is there going to be enough room for them to find a spot on the floor or on their desk in order to ...uhm to play comfortably.
39. Unfortunately, the room doesn't accommodate for that, but yet instill I have to think about that.
40. So this last week alone I changed my classroom three times.
41. You know I try something and something doesn't work and I have to try something else and I'm not happy the way it is now, so I'm think about what I need to do.
42. I'm just doing enough to get me through Christmas, because you know the kids are excited and so forth but I know when we come back after Christmas you know.
43. I'll have that time to think about how I want to redo the room just to make it conducive for learning for right now I'm not really pleased with it.
44. I do know that you have to believe that the students can succeed in school.
45. That they have a role and purpose in the classroom community and that through their own work they are making a significant contribution to the intellectual life of the school
46. Opportunities for collaboration require teachers to learn to articulate their beliefs and explain their thinking to other teachers, parents, and even administrators.
47. These opportunities for collaboration are most effective when they involve debate and deliberate attempt to create disequilibrium so that teachers confront their assumptions and question themselves and others.
48. I had a principal that would bring in small case studies and break the staff in groups and we would discuss topics such as discipline and classroom management.
49. ***Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection? What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do?***
50. Uhm on occasion I might do some journaling.
51. I write my thoughts down and think of some pros and cons.
52. I do lots of just thinking, just sit down, quiet time when the kids are gone and sit at my desk and just kind of look out...like with the classroom.
53. I just sit there and look and try to envision in my head what I want, but yet at the same time I think about all these other factors.
54. Like is there going to be enough room to walk around and can this kid get to the trash can when they need to get to the trash can or get to the ...uh...or are they going to be able to get the pencil sharpener without having to weave their way through a maze or whatever.

55. But I do just lots of uhm...
56. I guess just time alone thinking.
57. If time does permit I do write some things down.
58. I have for example folders for different activities and I say okay, yes this activity worked or I may jot a note in my lesson plan yes this worked no this didn't.
59. Or this was a hit or no this wasn't a hit so the following year I'll know what to keep or what to trash. ***What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about?***
60. The only think I think about is what's best for the kids.
61. That's the bottom line... it may not always be the easiest thing for me, like I said about the ability grouping.
62. I have to find something that each kid can do successfully on their own, but yet it's the same skill.
63. The kid is the top priority
64. It might mean that I running myself ragged or running myself thin, but the main thing I think about is what's best for the kids.
65. Well, obviously, we are all impacted by the state curriculum.
66. We have to teach according to what our district and state assesses.
67. But when I look at what I am teaching today, I want to make learning as meaningful as possible.
68. I started to realized that you really only have so many opportunities each and every day.
69. You know those windows of opportunity open and close everyday, whereas before, I don't know that I thought about it as much ***What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching?***
70. I guess that kind of goes back to what I had mentioned earlier.
71. I think about best practices.
72. I try to implement whatever those best practices are.
73. Keep in mine, we sway because we get in the heat of the passion of teaching, but it always comes back to I'm always refocused on what is best for the kids.
74. So, I really try to keep in mind what's best for them.
75. One important strategy is set clear expectations for the students.
76. When students have a clear vision of what is expected of them, they have the opportunity to take the steps needed to achieve that goal
77. They have a much greater likelihood of meeting those expectations.
78. When students have a clear vision of what is expected of them, they have the opportunity to take the steps needed to achieve that goal and a much greater likelihood of meeting those expectations ***What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?***
79. My teaching strategies...am I conveying my teaching strategies well enough to where the kids are actually learning.
80. I think about the environment.
81. I think about my parents.
82. Keeping an open... one of the main thing I try to do is keep an open communication with my parents.

83. I always tell them at the beginning of the year, that I will never surprise them...you know with anything.
84. I think about the lessons.
85. I think about guided reading.
86. I think about the math activities.
87. I think about the calendar.
88. I think about the appropriate books to read, with everything.
89. Regarding assessment-that requires constant observation of the child, taking anecdotal records ...and trying to determine when and why behavior occurs and trying to positively change it.
90. I collect samples of the students work so that I can see where the child started and whether they improved.
91. This helps you to determine the kind of support that the child needs to improve and what kinds of resources you need to aid the learning.
92. The bottom line like I said earlier is making sure the kids are the main focus. ***In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?***
93. To me, it's just to make me a better teacher for my kids.
94. I want to be able to know the things that I am doing are for their benefit.
95. I don't want to become stagnant.
96. I don't want to think that I have ever arrived in the art of teaching to where I don't have to continue to get better.
97. I don't ever want to think that I know it all.
98. I think since education is constantly evolving and I want to be the best teacher that I can be then I will evolve with the changes.
99. With the most recent research and things like that.
100. I think it's just to keep me update on latest practices.
101. As well as just keeping me fresh for the kids and being the best I can be for them.
102. You know it's not for me, it's all for them. ***What do you understand by the term reflection?***
103. I think about looking in a mirror and what do you see.
104. If I had to step out of my body, for example, and I had to observe myself and teaching what do I think.
105. Do I see things that are good?
106. Do I see things that need to be changed?
107. Am I being short with this little kid over here because he is just working my patience, but then I have to think , okay how can I work with that child even though he is working me, but do it in a loving manner.
108. I think of just like a mirror, just looking at yourself.
109. It's almost like stepping out of your body to see what you are actually doing.
110. Then keeping those things that are good and altering those things that need to be changed. ***Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why?***
111. I would say that I'm reflective because I'm always thinking about I think about.
112. What I'm doing at any given moment.

113. It's not just in teaching or education; it's myself as a person.
114. I think about it as a mom, as a wife, as a friend.
115. I step back and I look at what I am doing frequently. **Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?**
116. I think we would have a much stronger educational system if all teachers reflected, but of course we know that is not the case.
117. I think it's a mind set and we can not of course make everyone think the right way.
118. I'm not saying that reflection is right, but we do know it has it's proven benefits.
119. I think that it is important for teachers because you have to think about what you are doing.
120. We all know teachers that say I've been doing this for twenty five years and it's worked for twenty five years, not considering that kids have changed, the reseach has changed.
121. I think it is extremely important *You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me?*
122. No, not really I think the questions have covered it.
123. Again, like the last question that was asked in regards to the importance of teachers reflecting.
124. I think it is very crucial four our educational system.
125. I think we could be a lot stronger, public school wise for our kids.
126. It will help us deal with those kids that don't have control over their home environment as opposed to maybe prejudging them, just by their appearance, or they way the act.
127. I have little Johnny who comes in and he's defiant rebellious, and he's every teacher's nightmare, but instead of just looking at him like if you sit back and think why is he acting like that.
128. What can I do to help him as oppose to just dealing with those behaviors.
129. I think we will have a lot less problems than we do have in our schools right now and that only comes through reflection and thinking about not only just thinking about us, but also we have to reflect for our kids because they don't know how to do it, yet.

Interview Guide E
A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview: 5:00 pm

Date: December 15, 2005

Place: Cleveland ES

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewee: E

Thank you for taking part in my study, as you are aware I am working on my dissertation, the topic is on reflective practice. I want to get your perspective from a National Board Certified Teacher's perspective on reflective practice. I have some questions that I want to ask, but please feel free to elaborate on your answers; the more you can remember and tell me, the more I will be able to represent your views in the dissertation. **NBCT defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice?**

1. I think that reflective practice involves looking back on things you did, things that you done, your behavior in order to teach that lesson or make that presentation to the students or whom ever you are working with.
2. You have to think about how you introduced it.
3. If you felt like the students understood in the fashion you presented.
4. You have to make those judgments to improve so that they can understand and so you can communicate with one another.

How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?

5. I really learned how to be more reflective when I went through NB certification.
6. Part of each entry was on how you would reflect on that lesson.
7. They ask you these questions and you had to answer the questions fully and that made you walk back through that lesson and see how the kids learned what the objective was
8. One question was would you teach this lesson again, if so why?
9. Is there part of it (lesson) you would change?
10. What did you like about the lesson?
11. What worked in essence and what did not work?
12. And you had to reflect on certain students; especially the students you had singled out to talk about.
13. You had to think about their conversations and that was the proof.
14. You always had to provide the proof for the NB
15. So you had to have proof that they understood what you were saying and in the fashion that you said it.

How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?

16. How did you learn to reflect on your practices?
17. Well, once I found out that when you reflect it's just an improvement, it's not incrimination, then I realized after going through NB that's the best way to improve you practice.
18. Even in other things.
19. You probably need to look back and reflect on lessons learned or I need to make a mental note to improve on this the next time.
20. That was the beginning.

21. Where now I don't sit down and write.
22. I don't journal or do any of that.
23. Mentally I go through and think about what I could do better or improve on.
24. I have always been one of those people to say what could I do different.
25. Especially if there was something that happened.
26. Or if there was a miscommunication.
27. I always go over in my mind and try to remember what I said.
28. And be truthful because a lot the times; especially like with your husband.
29. Especially when you work with children the whole goal is to have them learn and be excited about learning.
30. And if I didn't do a good job I need to be able to say, I need to go back and do that and re-teach that I know I could have done better.

Formal and informal training/

31. Actually, I don't remember any formal training.
32. Informal in that walking through the process of NB once I understood what reflective practice was then I got it just became a part of my everyday teaching routine.
33. Now I of ten do it.
34. Even in the middle of a lesson, I'll think
35. I'll think okay I got this, I need to go find this, and I need to use this or to help supplement this lesson.
36. Yeah, that was the beginning it was informal because you had to research it yourself.
37. The process itself was probably the best personal development thing I've done.
38. It was a big thing with me because it also allowed me to learn how to budget my time as well as learning more about my classroom.
39. Prior to this, I had a plan B.
40. Everybody has a back up plan, a plan for when something doesn't work.
41. You just automatically go to plan B. If a child doesn't learn something one-way; you just do to plan B.
42. I have never questioned why plan A didn't work.
43. This was a good eye opening experience because you had to actually look at what you had done during the instruction you had given and find out why it didn't work.
44. What was wrong with what you did and what would make plan B better

In what contexts (situation/environment) do you engage in reflective practice?

45. Well, I my building the teachers on my floor, we have 4th, 5th & 6th on that floor.
46. I reflect, but I do find myself in conversation less formally, discussing things with colleagues. I usually like to end the day with a few minutes, with colleagues an a little reflection
47. We tend to do a reflection at the end of the day just to bring closure on some of the things.
48. Either we have had some of the things or we have a joint unit.
49. Right now we have a joint unit on fossils and fuels so we kind of talk about and reflect upon the practices to help each other review those things.

50. Especially with discipline; sometimes it's called zapping, but we don't call it zapping, it's formal with us.
51. We'll talk about some things or strategies that will help students. **Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection?**
52. Before I made the NB, I think everything did I was reflecting, because for some reason I was internalizing that I didn't hit the mark because I wasn't doing something correct or incorrect.
53. Before I got it that was the hardest time I have ever been on myself as far as reflecting on my practice.
54. Then after I got it that year it' just been a habit.
55. I just do it pretty much all the time. **What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do?**
56. Usually it's either sharing with another teacher or talking to the students, because I will conference with them.
57. For example, if I misunderstood something, or if they misunderstood something I said, we conference.
58. That's one thing I like to do with the students to make sure that we are communicating the same message.
59. After I thought about what I said and sometimes I have to go back and I have to go back and say okay did you hear what I said
60. A lot of times working with students you really think they know and are more sophisticated and they are really not as far as discipline.
61. I've been very reflective on that because, a lot of times students can't go anywhere with you if they feel like you don't care about them, so I try to always monitor what I say.
62. It's not so much what I say, but how I say it.
63. So I really try and work when it comes to corrective types of things the kids. What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about? What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching?
64. The most consistent strategy would be I keep this little planning book and I make little brief notes.
65. I try to plan out my whole year just to pace myself
66. And I will make little brief notes about "went well," "need more research on something"
67. That's about the only systematic thing I have on reflective practice.
68. I do not maintain a journal. **In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?** What do you understand by the term reflection?
69. I understand reflection as looking back on your teaching or the things you did things to see how you could improve student achievement and asking yourself, 'So what?'
70. That's what I understand reflection to be.
71. What it taught me is that you better have something behind what you're doing.
72. You had better have objectives about where you're leading children to a particular point.

- 73. And if you can't say that, then you better be changing what you're doing.
- 74. You just better start doing something else.
- 75. So, it really helped me to clean up my teaching.
- 76. I guess that's the best way to put it.
- 77. Clean it up, get rid of the fluff stuff, and really get down to business.
- 78. You can do creative things, but just make sure there's some substance behind it.
- 79. That's really where I had to clean up

Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why?

- 80. Yes, I feel I am always looking back or reflecting to improve my practice, seeking to expand my repertoires, and deepen my knowledge about teaching. Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?
- 81. Without a doubt. If you are not reflecting on your teaching, you may be teaching for yourself and not for the students. I think most teachers reflect. I think NB teachers reflect more often.

You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me?

- 64. No, I just think that reflective practice is crucial to growing professional.
- 65. I think it's important to ask others to observe and offer a critique of your teaching.
- 66. Reflection is what you learn from your teaching experiences to inform and improve your practice in the future.
- 67. If you decide to do something the same way, differently, or not at all.

Thank you for your time.

Interview F

A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview: 10:00 AM

Date: December 17, 2005

Place: Park Lane Elementary

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewee: F

Thank you for taking part in my study, as you are aware I am working on my dissertation, the topic is on reflective practice. I want to get your perspective from a National Board Certified Teacher's perspective on reflective practice. I have some questions that I want to ask, but please feel free to elaborate on your answers; the more you can remember and tell me, the more I will be able to represent your views in the dissertation.

NBC defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice?

1. Reflective practice is not something that can be done by itself. It doesn't stand-alone. RF is an important part of teaching, it's constant work, persistency
2. After you have had the students go to work, during the time they do the work, after you grade and then as you reevaluate that content area.
3. Any time that I teach in the instructional area if I'm instructing in large group or small group I'm reflecting how they are responding and how many students understand me and if they do not do I need to go back and reteach, regroup or do something differently.
4. When the students begin working on their own, my reflection comes in as I am watching them work.
5. I have a rule if two students ask the same questions two times then we stop, go back and regroup and teach that lesson.
6. So that is an area I feel like is toward reflection.
7. Coming through on the daily assignment I look at the grades and see how they are going and reflect and adjust my teaching to according to what would be their age appropriate of each individual student you are working with.
8. District wide that comes when we do our district test what we have each nine weeks.
9. Reflecting on that seeing what we've taught and what we need to do, where I can make adjustments looking at each individual need of every student if a student has an IEP, or if a student has another handicap or something I need to figure out.
10. Right now I have one that is physically handicapped and I say what do you do with that child.
11. Do you increase the size of the print?
12. Do you need to have someone help him?
13. Do you give him another alternative as far as a computer or what do you do to help him be successful?
14. I think that's where reflection comes into play.

How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?

15. How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?
 16. It's ongoing.
 17. It definitely just doesn't happen in the classroom.
 18. With the NBC I more aware of reflective practice than I was other wise.
 19. Almost to the point in time where I was feeling guilty if I don't go back and do that, because I know it's so helpful.
 20. It takes a lot of time when you put paper and pencil to it and be reflective.
- How did you learn to reflect on your practices?
21. I probably became more aware of reflective practice through the NB.
 22. I think I always did it.
 23. But I don't think I looked at it as reflective practice.
 24. The portfolio process helped me grow professionally
 25. The portfolio process was an effective professional development tool that allowed for greater opportunities for me to reflect on my instructional practice.
 26. Because of the portfolio I had to redesign and reorganize my teaching practices while at the same time enhancing my observation skills and self-evaluation..
 27. Maybe more evaluation than reflection? How would I change?
 28. What would I do differently?
 29. I never been a teacher who has always used the same lesson plans year after year after year.
 30. I always looked at what's there trying to see how I could improve.
 31. What worked?
 32. What didn't work?
 33. Looking at not only my classroom, but grade level, district wide, state wide, being on different committees seeing where we are looking reflectively what's there in research bring that back.
 34. But to answer the question, where did I learn that probably more so in the NB workshops that I went to and actually having to do it.
 35. I think I always done it, but I don't think that I was aware.
 36. NB wrote about it and reading the articles on reflection and what you should do?
 37. How you should use it?
 38. Why it was important?
 39. OEA offers some workshops I went to during that time.
 40. Talking with other teachers going through the process.
 41. What did you do?
 42. Why did you do it?
 43. How did you do it?
 44. So there was a lot of peer interaction.
 45. Plus a lot of research.
- Formal and informal training.
46. I think you have to have the formal.
 47. I think you have to have that to begin as your basis, but then you take the informal and apply it to your classroom and to your individual students.
 48. I have one student that is on an individual plan for this child, we are going to do a visual plan.

49. But while looking at that with this individual student, I'm seeing where other students would also benefit from that.
50. So not only are you doing it academically you're doing so that you are getting all those children for the best area they need.

In what contexts do you engage in reflective practice?

51. Of course in the classroom you are going to do it for academic reasons.
52. If a child doesn't learn how to add, in a traditional way, for instance, then you just go to another way of teaching.
53. And now if they're not learning that way, I'm saying,
54. "Okay why are they not able to get it this way?"
55. and then thinking about what comes next...how can I break this down into smaller chunks, how can I make this easier for them... for the student to learn
56. But I think I do it in my own personal life.
57. Looking at what's going to work here?
58. Why isn't it working here?
59. If I'm looking at a new venture that I'm going to do.
60. I think reflectively, What do I do?
61. Where am I?
62. Even to the point of job possibilities.
63. Is it something I feel like I have the capabilities of doing?
64. Looking at the student - this skill is it that important?
65. What do students know about a topic?
66. How are students thinking about what I am presenting to them?
67. How do they come to think this way?
68. How can they learn to value new ways of thinking about what I am presenting to them?
69. How do they come to think this way?
70. How can I help them grasp this idea?
71. Or is it something that I need to spend a little more time on.
72. How is it going to fit into the entire web of everything we need to do.
- Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection?
73. When we got back our scores for math on the district level and going back and looking at those scores and take and put them on an excel spread sheet.
74. Going and looking at each individual student and the percentage and seeing where they were.
75. And asking if I have growth from year to year.
76. What caused that growth?
77. What do I need to do?
78. Is it more hands-on activities, is it more instruction?
79. Is it more whatever it might be?
80. I'm trying to figure out where it fits?
- What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do?
81. I don't know if I really stop and just say I'm going to do reflective practice then just I want to apply that.
82. I think I'm in the point now in my life, it's more ingrain.
83. It's something I do without even thinking.

84. You know when I'm doing my lesson plans, I say now what do I need to do here?
85. Can I pull out a game that I picked out from PDI.
86. Is it something I read or researched on?
87. Somewhere I have looked and said okay this is working here in this state okay this is something I can do here in OK in my classroom.
88. But it's just a continual part of the planning process.
What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about?
What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching?
89. I use charts and graphs a lot of times to see weakness and strengths of students.
90. Particularly in reading I would look at the students who spend more time at reading have better test scores, they do better academically.
What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?
91. When I reflect, the bottom line is to see if students are having difficulty?
92. Student reflection is done through writing a lot of times.
93. Having them reflect back or in a lesson write their own words what the steps are to accomplish this.
94. I will use chants.
95. I will use drawing.
96. I will use stories to get the kids to be able to reflect back to remember information.
97. For instance, if you have a number without a decimal where do you count to make it a decimal.
98. Well you place the decimal to the right, they echo back to me right. I echo back to them right and I say you're right.
99. So it's a reflective type activity to get them to apply the information by doing it in a setting that is non-threatening.

In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?

100. To me it is obvious, you reflect to improve.
101. I don't know how you could improve anything without first reflecting.
102. Going back and analyzing.
103. Was the student not successful because the skill not taught right.
104. Maybe they didn't understand the concept.
105. The actually purpose should be for the teachers to help the students be successful.
106. The ultimate outcome should be better test scores.
107. You want to have those students come back six or seven years from now and say X, I learned this in your classroom.
108. So, you think to yourself it worked.
109. So if it worked for those then it something you should be doing.
110. Reflective practice is not something just for today; it's ongoing, it's also prepares you for personal...future direction.
What do you understand by the term reflection?
111. I understand reflection to mean looking back over your teaching and making sure your students are successful.

112. Not just looking back over, but also before the lesson start and during the lesson. Asking your self is this working?

113. Do the students understand? Can they do this skill without my guidance?

114. Reflection is self-talk about improving.

115. I hold conferences with students to discuss their progress.

116. The conferences almost always occur individually and may be used to give children extra help.

Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why?

117. Yes, I definitely am not a risk taker and I think par of that is because I reflect back and I have to have a foundation on why it works.

118. So I don't reach to far off the boundaries because I want to know that I'm going to be successful.

Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?

119. Oh, I think if teachers do not reflect, they have no ideal if they are successful or not. We learn from our mistakes.

You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me?

120. I think administers can be very aware of the benefits of reflective practice.

121. If when they do an evaluation they add a component of reflection on your teaching practice. One of the best evaluations I ever had I hated it.

122. I was videotaped and my evaluator told me to list my strengths and weaknesses.

123. I grew so much from being forced to reflect on that lesson.

124. I still think about that lesson and how I have grown as an educator

125. There's not a day that goes by that I don't think how could I have done that differently?

126. Are my students getting it?

127. Is there anything else I could have done?

128. Reflection is vital part of my teaching.

129. We have to be encouraging change through exposure to new ideas.

130. When we bring groups of teachers together we build relationships with people and we need to get back to that kind of thing.

Thank you for your time.

Interview Guide G
A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview: 10:45 a.m.

Date: Dec. 27, 2005

Place: Almor West

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewee: G

Thank you for taking part in my study, as you are aware I am working on my dissertation, the topic is on reflective practice. I want to get your perspective from a National Board Certified Teacher's perspective on reflective practice. I have some questions that I want to ask, but please feel free to elaborate on your answers; the more you can remember and tell me, the more I will be able to represent your views in the dissertation.

NBCT defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice?

1. I define reflective practice as actively thinking back over what has occurred in my classroom and categorizing it as effective or not effective, and then making a plan to change what was not effective.

How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?

How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?

How did you learn to reflect on your practices?

What formal and/ or informal training have you had regarding NB?

2. I think that teachers naturally reflect on their practice, even when they don't realize they are doing it. I did refine my use of reflective practice through my experiences with National Board, since reflective practice is one of the main tenets of the process.
3. As a member of the first group of Oklahoma teachers to achieve National Board Certification, and then later as an ELO Regional Coordinator, I've been to many workshops and trainings regarding the NB process in general and reflective practice in particular.
4. I've used these trainings to try to help new candidates refine their use of reflective practice – really just realizing they already do this and bringing it to the forefront of their thinking.

In what contexts (situation, environment) do you engage in reflective practice?

Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection? What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do? What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about? What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching? What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?

5. I can remember times when I have tried to teach things that were "over the heads" of my children – perhaps because I didn't teach a skill that was a prerequisite. I also have tried to squeeze in too much instruction in a short period (sometimes in

trying to get ready for a district or state test) without allowing time for the knowledge to "soak in" before presenting new skills.

6. I can tell when I've done this based on the children's responses to written assessments and in class discussions.
7. I want my students to have a lot more choices and just one right answer and allowing them to see that, and so that's where I see that I've made major changes.
8. In my language arts, I put a lot more control to my children.
9. My children make a lot more choices; my children are guiding what I am doing with them, not through their knowledge of it, but by their actions, they are guiding it
10. I also reflect on my classroom practices by constantly bouncing ideas off my colleagues. It is comforting to hear them say, "I have the same problem."
11. Then together we can try to figure out a better way to present instruction, or perhaps just a new order of instruction.

In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?

What do you understand by the term reflection? Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why? Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?

12. "Reflection," to me is simply thinking back on something that has already occurred and evaluating it.
13. I do consider myself a reflective person, and National Board Certification has helped me become more so by forcing me to think about the process of reflection.
14. I know I always did this in my practice before going through the National Board Certification process, but it was automatic.
15. I do believe that I am a more reflective teacher now because I actually think about the process of reflection.
16. When it is a more deliberate action, it can produce better, more specific results.
17. Reflection is absolutely essential to good teaching as it is the only way to decide if lessons are effective, and if not, how to improve them to maximize student learning.

You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me regarding reflective practice and the National Board process?

18. No, not at this time.

Thank you for your time.

Interview H

A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview:

Date: January 13, 2006

Place: Cleveland

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewee: H

Thank you for taking part in my study, as you are aware I am working on my dissertation, the topic is on reflective practice. I want to get your perspective from a National Board Certified Teacher's perspective on reflective practice. I have some questions that I want to ask, but please feel free to elaborate on your answers; the more you can remember and tell me, the more I will be able to represent your views in the dissertation.

NBCT defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice?

1. I define reflective practice as looking back at what you have taught, how you taught, and how it has affected the child.
2. What the child has accomplished.

How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?

3. I think one of the things that helped me learn to reflect on my practice would be training to be a reading recovery teacher.
4. The way you look at the lessons that you do and how you prepare for them the next lesson that you do as you do the lesson.
5. What you are looking for what skills the child should be doing what you want them to use?
6. What you want them to use.

How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?

7. Keeping on reflective practice. Mainly after the lesson is over. Our lessons move rather quickly.
8. So as we look at our lessons.
9. The lessons from the sheet and the running records we look to see what the child needs to do the next day.

How did you learn to reflect on your practices?

10. It's something that comes with teaching.
11. From the beginning you are always looking to see what did I do?
12. What did the students do?
13. What do I need to do to change?
14. To get them to where I want them to be.

What formal and/ or informal training have you had regarding NB?

15. I think that's just a part of reading recovery, I think they teach you to look at your lessons and to take time to reflect and plan your next lesson and really look at your lesson and really reflect on what you do.

In what contexts (situation, environment) do you engage in reflective practice?

16. One of the main things in Reading Recovery where you do reflective practice is you look at a child's running record and see what strategies they are using and what you want them to use.
17. My questions vary in type during the lesson.
18. Through Guided Reading and other training I learned about questioning.
19. Guiding questions introduce the concept, probing questions result in elaboration on current thinking, clarifying questions help understand student thinking, and integrating questions synthesize thinking and encourage reflection.
20. Questions should engage student thinking, stimulate thoughtful questions, identify common misconceptions, challenge misconceptions and extend thinking to help students imagine how they will accomplish the task.
21. What they are neglecting and what you want them to use.
22. So, after you have done it a running record.
23. You immediately look for one teacher note and look at it to plan for the next lesson.

Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection?

24. Once again looking at a running record and saying this child is not using meaning cue or structuring original meaning cue and say how I can help that child.
25. What prompt can I give him?
26. The number one thing you have to ask yourself is, did the child learn and did I address the learning opportunities for those who come with a lot of experience?
27. Did I further their understanding and did I help address the needs of the child who didn't really have any background knowledge?
28. I think when you are reflecting, you are always critiquing whether you accomplished what you set out to do and what did the children learn.

What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do?

29. Is this child where I want them to be?
30. Are they heading in the right direction?
31. Are they moving at a reasonable rate?
32. Am I not giving them what they need?
33. Are my cues the right ones to be using?

What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about? What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching?

34. Once again, looking at the strategies of Reading Recovery?
35. Did you re-cueing what prompts are you giving?
36. A lot of times we tally mark student response?
37. Is it me am I the one not giving the students what they want?
38. Am I prompting to a certain cue?
39. Most of the times, I look at my teaching to see how it effects the students.
40. What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?
41. Just the reading that we do in Reading Recovery.
42. The writing that we do.
43. Writing the sentences and reading them.

In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?

44. To help children learn and be a better teacher...understanding the profession..

What do you understand by the term reflection?

- 45. It's not just on the child, what they are doing right and wrong, but to say what can I do to help them to become a better student.
- 46. Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why?
- 47. Yes, according to Reading Recovery, it's the most important part of lesson planning to get the students so that they are independent readers.

Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?

- 48. It's important, because if you just keep going on doing the same thing you may be wasting your time.

Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me regarding reflective practice and the National Board process?

- 49. No, it just that I think that doing NB helped solidify reflective practice.

Thank you for your time.

Interview I

A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview: 9:00 AM

Date: January 13, 2006

Place: Lincoln Elementary

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewee: I

Thank you for taking part in my study, as you are aware I am working on my dissertation, the topic is on reflective practice. I want to get your perspective from a National Board Certified Teacher's perspective on reflective practice. I have some questions that I want to ask, but please feel free to elaborate on your answers; the more you can remember and tell me, the more I will be able to represent your views in the dissertation.

NBC defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice?

1. I define reflective practice as a process in which you exam your day-to-day practices, the rationale for these practices, and the impact of your efforts on student learning, achievement and social/emotional growth, and contemplation of your beliefs and knowledge.

How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice? How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?

2. After having gone through the National Board certification process, I am making a conscious effort to reflect more on all aspects of my practices.
3. This year I am exploring ways to determine the effectiveness of my practices by creating/utilizing pre- and post-tests, reflective summaries for students, standardized behavioral assessments, and other instruments.

How did you learn to reflect on your practices?

4. I learned the process of reflection in my graduate program (MSU-Clinical Psychology), by going through the state licensure process and the National Board certification process.

What formal and/ or informal training have you had regarding NB?

5. I attended the orientation meeting provided by or local coordinator I attended the two-day training in Durant, OK over the summer, I attended the monthly support meetings held at a local university, I attended an assessment center workshop in Tulsa. **In what contexts (situation, environment) do you engage in reflective practice?** Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection?
6. From the start of the school year, I involve my students in setting clear expectations for classroom behavior, and then we uphold these expectations consistently.
7. Through democratic processes, we develop and discuss classroom rules, consequences, routines, and behaviors for effective learning.
8. I feel this creates a climate for working together as community of learners
9. Each year I prepare an annual program report.

10. In this process I exam students' scores on the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach).
11. Students are assessed at the beginning of each year and scores are compared from one year to the next to determine behavioral changes.
12. This information helps me to pin- point specific behavioral issues of students that I can target in individual sessions and guidance lessons.
13. I also use a Bullying Survey with my students each year to determine the degree of bullying and identify specific bullying behaviors that I can target in guidance lessons.
14. This information also informs me of potential victims and bullies in the school.
15. After I conduct the lessons and provide interventions I exam bullying reports, discipline records, and the next year's survey to determine if there was a reduction in incidents of bullying.
16. What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do?
17. At the beginning of the year I give a pre-test to determine students' knowledge and understanding of the Student Code Book (usually a boring topic for students!).
18. I use this information to design my lessons.
19. After teaching the lessons, I utilize a computerized game that is connected to the T.V. (Classroom Jeopardy) to assess student knowledge and determine the effectiveness of my lessons.
20. If students did not seem to learn the information, I will exam the information I presented and the way it was presented and assessed to determine any changes that I can make.
21. Then I start the process all over again looking for ways to assess what they know, provide effective instruction, and assess what they learned.
22. It's important to demonstrate an interest in students' lives, ideas, an activities and dignify students' efforts.
23. I attempt to create an atmosphere where students feel respected, welcomed, and valued.
24. It's vital that the learning environment enables students to experience success
25. At the end of each school year I ask parents, teachers and students to rate the effectiveness of my counseling program and provide feedback regarding parent workshops and other topics through the use of a program survey.
26. 19.I then use this information to help me plan activities, lessons, and interventions for the following school year.
27. What kinds of things do you think about? Can you think of anything else you think about?
28. 20. I think about different ways to present information and assess information and reflect on my practices.
29. I think about presenting information in a variety of ways—through game formats, taking into consideration learning styles and multiple-intelligences, using humor, and trying to make learning fun and exciting.
30. I consult with colleagues to get their ideas and feedback.
31. I read professional literature to expand my own knowledge.

32. I think about workshops that could improve my practices and I attend various ones throughout the year, including during the summer.
33. What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching?
34. I utilize pre- and post-tests, inventories, surveys, discussions with my administrator, teachers, and colleagues.
35. What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?
36. Guidance lessons covering the personal/social, career and academic domains (e.g. identifying and expressing feelings, team work, social skills, organization and study skills, bully prevention, career development etc.)

In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?

What do you understand by the term reflection?

37. In my own words, the purpose of reflection in school counseling is to enhance student learning and development through the process of examining our practices and the effects of our interventions. It is the development of a sense of self-awareness.
38. When you reflect on your practice on a continual basis-it's not just, sit down, reflect, you're done. It 's an in-depth self-reflection.
39. To me, it means that you are willing to be a life-long learner, open to reading current educational books and research so that you can continue to build on your pedagogy.
40. Being in a community implies that you are collaborative and willing to meet with other teachers and discuss options and share, because many of the ideas and learning materials we learn from other teachers.
41. It means reaching out through the internet and surrounding yourself with good teachers and you are involved in learning some of the processes and sharing your own as well.
42. It's easier for me now, because I think we have picked up on collaboration and reading groups

Do you consider yourself a reflective person? Why?

43. Yes, I consider myself a reflective person because I am constantly thinking about ways to improve my practices and provide the best services possible to all of my students, families and colleagues.
44. This whole process made me much more aware of the fact that so many times I want to change those children and make them fit the way I teach.
45. When in fact, I should be the one who is changing the way I teach to fit the way they learn. That's huge for me and that's like one of those light-bulbs moments.
46. Actually national board has made me much more aware of the process of how to be truly effective and how to individualize.
47. It has to become a personal thing between you and maybe a room of 25 children but it has to be between you and that child."

Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? Why?

48. Yes.
49. Reflection is important because it is a way to improve our practices, enhance student learning and gain valuable insight.

You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me regarding reflective practice and the National Board process?

50. Participation in the National Board process provided me with an opportunity for professional and personal growth.

51. The process has helped me to learn about ways to improve my services to students, families, and colleagues.

52. Although the process is challenging and rigorous, it is very rewarding in the end!

53. I am very thankful for the experience.

Thank you for your time.

Interview J

A Phenomenological Study of National Board Certified Teachers on Reflective Practice

Time of interview: 5:47 pm.

Date: Feb. 2, 2006

Place: Cleveland

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewee: J

Thank you for taking part in my study, as you are aware I am working on my dissertation, the topic is on reflective practice. I want to get your perspective from a National Board Certified Teacher's perspective on reflective practice. I have some questions that I want to ask, but please feel free to elaborate on your answers; the more you can remember and tell me, the more I will be able to represent your views in the dissertation.

NBCT defines systematic thinking as reflective practice how do you define reflective practice? I define reflective practice as thinking about your thinking, looking back over a situation and seeing how you can improve.

How would you describe how you learned to reflect on your practice?

1. How do you describe your experiences of reflective practice?
2. I have always used reflective practice in teaching the special needs students that I teach.
3. This is mainly because of the small steps they take in learning.
4. Having to put it in words on paper was another story.
5. Since doing this for National Boards I am able to explain to other teachers why I do what I do.
6. It has also helped me to look beyond what I had in the past.
7. How did you learn to reflect on your practices? Failure!
8. Not seeing my students grow in my classroom and tying it into not changing my delivery of service. What formal and/ or informal training have you had regarding NB?
9. I attended 2 meetings during the process.
10. The first meeting was so frustrating to me.
11. There were 2 Special Needs people.
12. Everyone else was on a different page talking about reading and algebra.
13. My students couldn't even talk and could barely put money in a soda machine.
14. However the second meeting I went to the presenter could see how frustrated I was and told me.....Just tell your story.
15. Those were magic words to me.
16. After that the process went smoother.
17. Since completing my National Boards I have read for several teachers.
18. They have all been Exceptional Needs Specialist. **In what contexts (situation, environment) do you engage in reflective practice?**
19. Can you give me an example of a time you engaged in reflection?

20. When I think about today in my classroom I reflected on a math lesson using money and how I could utilize objectives from the 6th grade PASS objectives yet still make the lesson functional for my children.
21. I also reflected with a young man's parents on social skills concerns and how to better serve this student.
22. He is in the regular classroom but I still serve him.
23. The math lesson reflection was going on while I was teaching the lesson.
24. The reflection with the parents was a 40 minute period during my planning time.
25. I know I also reflected on several small tasks during the day on how to expand the current tasks to make them more difficult. What kinds of things do you do? Can you think of anything else you do?
26. I lead the students through activities that enable them to investigate on their own and come to their own conclusions as to what is happening. Students are then asked to reflect on their own learning at their ability
27. I always refer back to what I learned in the TEACCH program training from the University of North Carolina.
28. The training is on how to teach individuals with Autism.
29. I also drive 50 miles to work each day. That is a lot of time to reflect.
30. What kinds of things do you think about?
31. Can you think of anything else you think about?
32. I think first.....am I giving this child a visual picture because I know children with Autism are not auditory learners.
33. Then I think does this child understand what they have to do, how much they have to do and what they do next.
34. Both of these things are principals of the TEACCH program.
35. Since attending the TEACCH training I have also added to this reflection thought process the question
36. Does this child have a communication tool in place for this teaching moment. What strategies do you use to reflect on with your teaching? Minimizing verbal directions is one. What are some of the activities you reflect on in the classroom?
37. Simple individual tasks, group lessons and modifications so that it meets each persons needs, social skills levels, communication levels, behaviors. **In your own words, explain the purpose of reflection?**
38. What do you understand by the term reflection?
39. I think of it as looking at what I have done or am doing, deciding if it is the best possible delivery, completely changing the delivery because it bombed, changing it so that the student can better understand it by using his/her learning style, changing the delivery so that it increases the difficulty or amount of what is to be done.
40. I have always been a real big planner.
41. I think that the most important part of teaching is going in with a good plan—an effective well thought out plan an executing it.
42. And then afterwards going back, looking at it, and seeing what you actually did. As in, did it work and what were the outcomes?
43. There is some old saying about doing the same thing over and over and expecting a change or something else to happen.

44. If you expect the same thing over and over for me, this was able to show me that every day I should be looking back and saying okay, it's not just about the answer they're going to put on the test on Friday.
45. But what worked today and what didn't work?
46. So when I do this a year from now, should I change something?
47. Also, it made me more aware of the whole individual nature of what teaching should be. It's not a group; it's not a group activity.
48. Learning is individual. Do you consider yourself a reflective person?
49. Why? Yes!
50. You have to be when you teach Autism.
51. Everyday all day I ask myself....What can I do different for this child.
52. I cannot say this child cannot learn. Do you think that reflection is important to teachers? YES Why?
53. We cannot continue to teach the same way teachers have been teaching.
54. Our world is such a complex place now compared to even 10 years ago.
55. Children do learn differently.
56. Our society has become a visual learning society.
57. Most school systems continue to deliver education through the auditory process. It will only be through reflection that this changes.
58. The best question we can ask ourselves as teachers is.....What can I as a teacher do differently to help this child learn.

You know the purpose of the study, and you've had a chance to hear my questions. Is there something you think is important that I haven't asked that you'd like to share with me regarding reflective practice and the National Board process?

I wanted to explain the portfolio process. The portfolio contained two videos of a classroom lesson with written explanation to specific questions; documented accomplishment that describes how I had worked with families and communities of my students, colleagues, and examined student work samples with a written explanation. These entries helped me to refine my reflective practice

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX D

Tally Results From Interviews

Participants	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J		Total
Themes												
NBC Process	1	3	3	1	7	2	4	1	5	3		30
Journals	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0		6
Written Notes	0	9	1	4	2	7	0	1	2	1		27
Lesson Plans	0	5	2	7	3	7	1	3	0	2		30
Thinking	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
Undergraduate	0	3	2	4	0	3	0	0	2	0		14
Field Experience	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
Tchg Experience	2	3	1	3	3	5	1	5	0	4		27
Questioning	0	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	2		9
Reflection	11	8	10	18	17	16	4	6	4	8		102
Collaboration	0	6	0	3	9	4	0	0	2	2		26
Student Learning	9	1	4	8	4	16	1	1	0	2		46
Goal Setting	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
Self-Talk	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0		4
Assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0		7
Looking Back	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1		12
Workshop(s)	6	0	0	2	1	5	1	0	5	6		26
Change	0	0	0	4	2	0	12	0	0	1		9
Total	31	41	32	60	55	66	15	18	28	32		378

APPENDIX E

Vitae

JAMIE POLK
1905 SW 41st Street
Lawton, Oklahoma

Work Phone: 580.353.8861
Home Phone: 580.357.9996
polkj@sunnet.net

EDUCATION:

Doctoral Student, Educational Administration, Curriculum and Supervision University of Oklahoma 2000 to Present

ADMINISTRATION CERTIFICATION

Southwestern Oklahoma University, Weatherford, Oklahoma May 1998

MASTERS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma May 1995

BACHELORS OF SCIENCE, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Mount Mercy College. Cedar Rapids, Iowa 1989

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

August 2004-Present: Principal at Cleveland Elementary, Lawton, Oklahoma. Responsible for creating and maintaining a safe environment, increasing student achievement and hiring and maintaining quality teachers.

August 2002-Present: Assistant Principal at Geronimo Road Elementary. Assist with day-to day operations and evaluation of instruction and personnel to increase student achievement while actively involving community and parents.

August 2000 – May 2002: Team Leader and 5th grade teacher at Cleveland Elementary School, Lawton, Oklahoma. Taught 5th grade at-risk students and prepared them for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills; assisted with after-school Book Club, taught critical thinking skills, math reasoning, study strategies and test taking skills.

August 1993 – May 2000: Team Leader and 6th grade teacher at Westwood Renaissance Academy, Lawton, Oklahoma. I prepared developmentally appropriate lesson plans according to PASS; encouraged positive social skills; lead math add-on teacher; mentored intern students from Cameron University.

August 1992 – May 1993: Team taught social studies and personal development using Skills Quest; planned and organized material for thematic units; committed to strategies involving social, emotional, and intellectual behavior of all students.

August 1991-May 1992: Taught 6th grade reading and language arts; effectively motivated students to maximum participation and increase student achievement; integrated special needs of students into classroom instruction; taught English as Second Language (ESL) students.

September 1990- May 1991: Taught self-contained 3rd grade students in Bamberg, Germany. Created a collaborative community of learners. Assisted with supervision of building and grounds.

December 1989 – May 1990 Taught 8th grade American studies to at-risk students; involved parents, social workers, and administrators; implemented positive classroom management strategies and learning centers.

WORKSHOPS PRESENTED:

Multicultural in Curriculum	LPS Staff Development	February 2004
Policy & Procedures	LPS Staff Development	August 2003
Increase Student Achievement	Through Staff Development	December 2001
Curriculum Alignment	LPS Staff Development	August 2001
New Teacher Induction	LPS Staff Development	August 2000
Technology Training	Westwood Staff Development	January 1999
Reading Renaissance	LPS Staff Development	August 1998

GRANTS WRITTEN AND RECEIVED:

\$1,000.00	Lawton Arts & Humanities, 2003
1,681.00	Lawton Public Schools Foundation Geo Share, 1999
499.50	Red River School-to-Work, 1998
1,493.00	Parents as Partners, 1994

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Lawton Public Schools (LPS) Textbook Adoption Committee, 2002, 2001, 2000
 LPS District Educational Improvement Council, 2002, 2001, 2000
 United Way Campaign Chair for Cleveland Elementary, 2001
 United Way Campaign Chair for Geronimo Road Elementary, 2002
 Revision of 3rd Grade Math Alignment, 2002
 Primary Social Studies Alignment Trainer, 2001, 2000
 Intermediate Science Curriculum Alignment Trainer, 2000, 1999
 Oklahoma State Department Committee for Criterion Reference Test, 2000
 Directed Horizontal and Vertical Curriculum Alignment for Westwood, 2000
 Who's Who Among America's Teachers, 2000, 1999
 Nominated Teacher of the Year, 1999
 National Board Certification Candidate, 1999
 Gifted and Talented Coordinator / Advisory Committee, 2002, 1998
 Test Coordinator, 2002, 1997
 School-to-Work Coordinator, 1997
 Artist-in-Residence Chair, 1996
 BRIDGES, Quarterly Parental meetings, 1994
 Excellence in Education, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1993

EDUCATION / PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Delta Kappa Gamma Society International
 National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc.
 Lawton Association of Elementary School Principals
 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development