Supporting Student Teachers with Reflection

Bachelor of Education (Teaching)
The ultimate aim:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Graduating Teacher Standards (as a graduating teacher)</th>
<th>Education Council Standards (as a practicing teacher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduating teachers:</td>
<td><strong>Professional Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a. systematically and critically engage with evidence to reflect on and refine their practice</td>
<td>• Inquire into and reflect on the effectiveness of practice in an ongoing way, using evidence from a range of sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7d. are able to articulate and justify an emerging personal, professional philosophy of teaching and learning</td>
<td>• Critically examine how my own assumptions and beliefs, including cultural beliefs, impact on practice and the achievement of learners with different abilities and needs, backgrounds, genders, identities, languages and cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engage in professional learning and adaptively apply this learning in practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflection across the three years of practicum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDPRAC 101</th>
<th>EDPRAC 201</th>
<th>EDPRAC 305</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4 opportunities for professional growth are recognised, actioned and reflected upon with beginning insight</td>
<td>3.4 opportunities for professional growth are recognised, actioned and critically reflected upon</td>
<td>2.7 pedagogical practice is critically reflected upon and refined in relation to an emerging personal, professional philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 the implications of the social, cultural and political factors that impact on teaching are discussed and reflected upon in an informed manner</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.4 opportunities for professional growth are initiated, actioned and critically reflected upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1 social, cultural and political influences impacting on pedagogical practice are critically reflected upon in relation to professional decision making and personal practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EDPRAC 101  What the brief says:

During this practicum you are required to **reflect regularly** on your own teaching practice and professional learning, as well as interactions arising from your practice that caused you uncertainty.

Each week, discuss with your associate teacher a focus for your own professional development and record this on your ‘Next Steps’ sheet – see p.17, template also available on Canvas. At the end of the week, reflect on and record your progress with your associate teacher and identify your focus for the following week.

During the practicum, **record at least three professional reflections** focussing on your own practice using the following framework (Brookfield, 1995; Peters, 1991; Smyth, 1989):

- **DESCRIBE** – What happened? What did I do? - succinctly describe what occurred
- **CONSIDER PERSPECTIVES** – Why did I act/respond in this way? How did this make me feel? How were others affected? - carefully consider your own and others’ perspectives
- **UNDERSTAND** – What do I now understand about myself as a teacher? What has informed my understanding? - make links to literature, theory, and discussions with your associate teacher and other colleagues
- **ACT** – What actions could I have taken? Why? What action/s will I take in future? - consider different possible actions, then briefly outline your selected action plan

For more detail about each aspect of this professional reflection framework, refer Practicum Handbook (p.9).

Some of your reflective practice will take the form of discussions with your associate teacher, professional supervisor, and other colleagues. These discussions will help you to clarify your thinking, to make links to theory and research, to refine your practice, and to examine your beliefs about teaching and learning. Retain notes from reflective discussions in your practicum file to share with your professional supervisor.
Associate Teacher Role:

- With reference to your student teacher’s practice, support them to recognise opportunities for reflecting on their professional growth, for example: uncertainties, times when some teaching did not go as expected, behaviour issues and management, developing professional relationships with students.

- Ask questions that encourage them to consider the following:

  Why did I act/respond in this way?
  How did this make me feel?
  How were others affected?
  What do I now understand about myself as a teacher?
  What action/s will I take in future?
What the brief says:

During this practicum you are required to **reflect regularly** on your own teaching practice and professional learning, as well as interactions arising from your practice that caused you uncertainty.

- Some of your reflective practice will take the form of **discussions** with your associate teacher, professional supervisor, and other colleagues. These discussions will help you to clarify your thinking, to make links to theory and research, to refine your practice, and to examine your beliefs about teaching and learning. **Retain notes** from reflective discussions in your practicum file to share with your professional supervisor.
- Each week, discuss with your associate teacher a focus for your own professional development and record this on your ‘Next Steps’ sheet — template available on Canvas. At the end of the week, reflect on and record your progress with your associate teacher and identify your focus for the following week.
- During the practicum, **record at least three** professional reflections focussing on your own practice using the following framework (Brookfield, 1995; Peters, 1991; Smyth, 1989):

  **DESCRIBE** – What happened? What did I do?
  - succinctly describe what occurred

  **CONSIDER PERSPECTIVES** – Why did I act/respond in this way? How did this make me feel? How were others affected?
  - carefully consider your own and others’ perspectives

  **UNDERSTAND** – What do I now understand about myself as a teacher? What has informed my understanding?
  - make links to literature, theory, and discussions with your associate teacher and other colleagues

  **ACT** – What actions could I have taken? Why? What action will I take in future?
  - consider different possible actions, then briefly outline your selected action plan

For more detail about each aspect of this professional reflection framework, refer Practicum Handbook (p.15).
Associate Teacher Role:

- With reference to your student teacher’s practice, support them to recognise opportunities to critically reflect on their professional growth by considering, for example: uncertainties related to addressing the learning needs of individual children or diverse groups of children, uncertainties related to their response to specific contextual features of the classroom/school.
- Ask them to justify and expand on their answers to the following questions:
  
  Why did I act/respond in this way?  
  How did this make me feel?  
  How were others affected?  
  What do I now understand about myself as a teacher?  
  What action/s will I take in future?

- Expect them to make links to literature and theory.
- Look at their action plan/next steps and ask them to justify these.
EDPRAC 305  What the brief says:

Critical reflection will be a regular part of your practice. These reflections will be recorded in an ongoing journal shared with your professional supervisor and associate teacher throughout Part B. The wider historical, social, political, and/or cultural contexts that influence your beliefs and practice should be examined at these times.

You might take some of the following into account:

- beliefs and assumptions that might be influencing your thinking and actions
- what you consider important/value § the theories of teaching and learning which support your practice
- what you do to foster social competence
- how you justify the teaching strategies that you use
- how you provide purposeful learning for all children
- what do bicultural practice and differentiated learning mean to you

How do you know that children have learned?

DESCRIBE – What happened? What did I do?
- succinctly describe what occurred

CONSIDER PERSPECTIVES – Why did I act/respond in this way? How did this make me feel? How were others affected?
- carefully consider your own and others’ perspectives

UNDERSTAND – What do I now understand about myself as a teacher? What has informed my understanding?
- make links to literature, theory, and discussions with your associate teacher and other colleagues

ACT – What actions could I have taken? Why? What action will I take in future?
- consider different possible actions, then briefly outline your selected action plan

Student teachers use this framework during all practicum to support their developing skill in reflective practice; following the model carefully and with professional supervisor guidance during EDPRAC 101 through to deeper, critically reflective independent work during EDPRAC 305. (Practicum Handbook) This framework acknowledges and synthesises the work of key literature in this field (Brookfield, 1995; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009; Peters, 1991; Smyth, 1989). Evidence of this framework should be woven into your e-journal.
Associate Teacher role:

- Engage with your student’s e-journal regularly and give feedback.
- Ask your student teacher questions to encourage critical reflection that promotes their understanding of themselves as a practitioner, for example:
  
  Why did you …?
  What was the impact of your …?
  What assumptions did you make when you…?
  Who did that work/not work for?
  How do you know that children have learned?
  What beliefs and assumptions might be influencing your thinking and actions?
  What are the theories of teaching and learning that support your practice?
  What do you do to foster …?
  How might you justify …?
  How could you provide …?
  What does … mean to you?

- Expect your student teacher to engage in ongoing professional discussions about their practice.
Snippet taken from an e-journal entry:
By this time I was shocked by the students blatant disregard for the words I had just spoken. Just as the bell went I called for them all to take a seat in our meeting area, where I had raised my voice saying: I have repeated this instruction three times now. I have seen way too many people walking around, picking up nothing. There are still books in the corner - rubbish I can see next to the bin - paper all over the floor. Because I am feeling generous, you will have one last chance to clean this room, to the way it needs to be… I remember i was beyond angry that they had not listened on the first instruction and so I made sure they cleaned it to the way I expected them to do it the first time.

Clarifying and prompting question asked:
Is feeling beyond angry okay? If you reflect on this you were making some assumptions eg they should listen to me, I am the teacher. What drove those assumptions?
What could you have done differently? Why did they not listen?
It would be interesting for you to reflect further around this.

Follow up student e-journal entries:
I think my problem is that I react to students’ misbehaviour emotionally, without thinking. I allow myself to become angry and lash out, instead of stopping, to think of strategies I have learnt and discussed with my AT.

From my experience and home life, I had grown up knowing that adults, regardless of who they were, were respected. Teachers are meant to be respected and in turn, we should respect the students. These are the values that I have personally, and although I hadn’t told explicitly of this value, I had expected it of them. Speaking with my reliever, she said that is the same action he would take, after we unpacked it with together. She said that although he keeps the students in sometimes, this strategy may not work for everyone. I as a teacher cannot allow myself to make a heat of the moment, emotional decision. It may cause students to disengage, or become distant and harbour unforgiving feelings towards me; which could cause them to shut off their willingness to learn. I had the chance throughout the morning block to nip at any inappropriate behaviours from the students, but I turned a blind eye. This in turn allowed students to think that, what they were doing was appropriate.

Now as a teacher, I see that I could look at the different kinds of learning ideas and behaviour management strategies to try during this time. Students need me to be consistent with my implications, expectations, structures etc. We had created a set of class rules at the beginning of the year together. So constant reinforcement of those rules and expectations may be vital in helping them understand where I am coming from. I need to be prepared for these moments before they happen so that when they do, I can keep my cool and deal with the problem in a way that it gets resolved, and does so without tempers being lost or only temporary solutions being found. The effect of my emotions on misbehaviour have a major impact on students. I realise that I need to set the tone. I may set it in a different way before, which had given them the feeling to muck around. I now know that it is critical that I keep myself composed as a teacher, and use the strategies I have learned over the years, from literature and from my AT.