Making theory-practice-connection more visible – Theory-based reflection on videotaped role-playing in academic settings

Dagmar Festner, Clara Stumpf, Bianca Steffen

Keywords: theory-practice, reflection, video, pre-service teachers, classroom disturbances

**Background and aims of the study**

Many pre-service teachers are challenged by recognizing connections between theories learnt at university and their future teaching practice. Therefore, researchers suggest to strengthen the theory-practice connection in pre-service teacher education (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Blomberg et al., 2013) and to foster pre-service teachers to act as reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983). Video-based feedback is a powerful tool to enhance noticing and reflection processes (Kleinknecht & Gröschner, 2016) as the possibility to watch the video repeatedly allows reflection from multiple points of view (Spiro, Collins, & Ramchandran, 2007). In addition, a meta-analysis showed that video-feedback had a strong impact on professional interaction skills (Fukkink, Trienekens, & Kramer, 2011). The aims of the study were (1) to design an authentic learning environment in which pre-service teachers attempt to cope with classroom disturbances in combination with theory-based reflection, and (2) to evaluate possible effects of the intervention on readiness for reflection.

**Method**

The workshop classroom disturbances consists of four different scenarios – differing in classroom setting and type of disturbances happening – and short theoretical inputs according to classroom disturbances. In every scenario one student slips into the role of the teacher and the others take over the role of pupils. Everybody gets a short written description of the classroom setting. As only the “pupils” get descriptions of their character and suggestions for individual disturbances, the setting for the “teacher” seems to be quite authentic as it remains unknown what will happen. The role-playing is followed by a theory-based discussion. By using the video the plenum gives feedback, searches for teaching alternatives and tries them out.

In three workshops N=36 pre-service teachers filled in a questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the workshops, i.e. according to their readiness for reflection (11 items, α=.84). In addition, they provided qualitative feedback and evaluation-data at the end of the workshop.

**Results**

As pre-service teachers estimated their readiness for reflection at the beginning on a 5-point Likert-scale quite high (M=4.09, SD=.50) the fractional increase to M=4.15 (SD=.56) is not significant (t(29)=-1.30, p=n.s.). Nevertheless, the evaluation showed positive perceptions of the workshop: They learned to consider multiple perspectives (M=4.18, SD=.95) and perceived a strong theory-practice-connection (M=4.48, SD=.80) and relevance for their future professional life (M=4.27, SD=.84).

Qualitative feedback showed that participants attach great importance to reflection on the specific action during role-playing. They asked for more explanations and discussion of the videomaterial. A smaller group of students expressed that they would be more aware of “blind spots”.

**Results**

As pre-service teachers estimated their readiness for reflection at the beginning on a 5-point Likert-scale quite high (M=4.09, SD=.50) the fractional increase to M=4.15 (SD=.56) is not significant (t(29)=-1.30, p=n.s.). Nevertheless, the evaluation showed positive perceptions of the workshop: They learned to consider multiple perspectives (M=4.18, SD=.95) and perceived a strong theory-practice-connection (M=4.48, SD=.80) and relevance for their future professional life (M=4.27, SD=.84).

Qualitative feedback showed that participants attach great importance to reflection on the specific action during role-playing. They asked for more explanations and discussion of the videomaterial. A smaller group of students expressed that they would be more aware of “blind spots”.

**Results**

As pre-service teachers estimated their readiness for reflection at the beginning on a 5-point Likert-scale quite high (M=4.09, SD=.50) the fractional increase to M=4.15 (SD=.56) is not significant (t(29)=-1.30, p=n.s.). Nevertheless, the evaluation showed positive perceptions of the workshop: They learned to consider multiple perspectives (M=4.18, SD=.95) and perceived a strong theory-practice-connection (M=4.48, SD=.80) and relevance for their future professional life (M=4.27, SD=.84).

Qualitative feedback showed that participants attach great importance to reflection on the specific action during role-playing. They asked for more explanations and discussion of the videomaterial. A smaller group of students expressed that they would be more aware of “blind spots”.

**Results**

As pre-service teachers estimated their readiness for reflection at the beginning on a 5-point Likert-scale quite high (M=4.09, SD=.50) the fractional increase to M=4.15 (SD=.56) is not significant (t(29)=-1.30, p=n.s.). Nevertheless, the evaluation showed positive perceptions of the workshop: They learned to consider multiple perspectives (M=4.18, SD=.95) and perceived a strong theory-practice-connection (M=4.48, SD=.80) and relevance for their future professional life (M=4.27, SD=.84).

Qualitative feedback showed that participants attach great importance to reflection on the specific action during role-playing. They asked for more explanations and discussion of the videomaterial. A smaller group of students expressed that they would be more aware of “blind spots”.
In the workshop school practice is integrated in an academic setting by role-playing. Videography is used to enhance opportunities to reflect practice. The interplay of theory and practice is meant for providing productive learning opportunities. One first step to reduce the gap between the "two worlds" of teacher education can be to make the connection between theory and practice in academic settings – and in the next step: similarly in schools – more visible.

**Literatur:**