

Reflection: Exemplary Teachers of Literacy

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As a literature teacher, I always seek to find effective teaching practices to enhance the literacy skills of my students. I am reflecting on the article “Learning Exemplary Teachers of Literacy” written by Nell K. Duke, Gina N. Cervetti, and Crystal N. Wise which provides valuable insights into exemplary teaching practices for helping students to decode and comprehend (Duke et al., 2017). This reflection will incorporate the key teaching practices listed in the article with my relevant experience as a teacher and how these practices will be utilized in my future career goals.

One of the fundamental aspects that the article highlighted is the importance of responsive teaching. The principle of responsive teaching is about striving to create an inclusive learning environment considering students' differences to make them feel supported and valued (Hood, 2022). The article also emphasized that incorporating culturally relevant materials, fostering positive relationships, and adapting instructional activities can result in increasing student engagement and achievement (Duke et al., 2017). I was teaching a class of 50 students (a large classroom) from different areas with different cultures, needs, and learning styles. The curriculum designed for that grade (grade 11) could not achieve the desired objectives and missions of each specific subject. As a teacher, I was trying to create and design some co-curricular practices to provide my students with several diverse activities using some cultural-related materials to foster the engagement and achievement of my students.

For literacy instruction, exemplary teachers prioritize explicit instruction and higher-order thinking skills. The article highlighted the importance of clearly articulating the learning objectives, explicitly teaching a specific skill or strategy, modeling the skill or strategy with several texts, and discussing why and how the skills and strategies are useful to good readers (Duke et al., 2017). When students have a clear understanding of learning objectives and

know how to learn, the process of learning to decode and comprehend will be simplified (The Simple View of Reading | Reading Rockets, n.d.). Additionally, high-order thinking skills are about making connections and constructing meaning collaborative between students and text/subject (Duke et al., 2017). Here, we can encourage our students to delve into texts deeper through some problem-based projects or foster their critical thinking through questioning, discussions, and some authentic/reliable tasks.

Exemplary teachers establish a strong home-school connection to support the learning environment (Duke et al., 2017). The article highlighted how involving parents in their child's literacy journey can be important for fostering a supportive learning environment. Teaching in a large classroom may face many challenges concerning students' cultural and social backgrounds (Richardjamesrogers, 2023). My students came from low-income families, illiterate families, religious families, and also from different ethnicities. Considering these issues, I was not able to conduct any formal meetings with their parents and as well as talking about the home practices they can provide for their child's literacy empowerment. The school that I was teaching had two summative assessments; one midterm exam and a final exam. In students' transcripts, there was a section for parents/guardians' signatures. To cover this challenge, after each mid-term exam, I allocated two marks for students whose parents met me in person and signed the transcript on their own. The main focus of connecting with parents not always was on the academic growth of students but on their positive personality improvement. I was a literature teacher and enhancing the communication and collaboration skills of my students were my priorities. I met my student's parents/ guardians to understand the impact of my teaching on my student's behavior and ensure their positive outcomes.

There were many exemplary practices listed in the article that we also discussed in our classroom. Excepted the practices mentioned above, assessment-informed instruction also caught my interest. In discussion class, we delved into this instruction and concluded that providing different assessment activities is important to measure students' progress and gain valuable insights into students' strengths and areas for growth (Duke et al., 2017).

In conclusion, becoming an exemplary teacher of literacy is a dynamic and transformative process. By reflecting on my previous experience, drawing upon research-based practices, and envisioning future aspirations, teachers can continue to refine their skills and make a meaningful impact on the lives of their young learners/students (Kim et al., 2019). As a teacher, I am committed to including and using exemplary teaching practices during my teaching to foster a culture of literacy for the empowerment of my students.

References

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