

The Twenty Statement Test in Teacher Development

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe teacher characteristics using Twenty Statements Test (TST). Study group includes a total of thirty-five individuals, including teachers, guidance and counselors and research assistants. The study used a qualitative approach on teacher identity. TST is one of the qualitative methods that were used to determine individual self-conceptualization. Study group were requested to write twenty statements that describe themselves responding to the question "Who I am?" in a free format. The findings indicated that teachers were overwhelmingly in group c (reflective). No differences were found in terms of gender and profession. Only few significant differences have been found based on marital status. The utility of TST in teacher training and development was discussed.

Keywords: *Twenty statement test; teacher education; professional development; training*

Introduction

Recent studies on teacher training emphasized the importance of identity in teacher development (see Beauchamp & Thomas; 2009; Freese, 2006; Hoban, 2007; Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf, & Wubbels, 2001; Olsen, 2008; Sachs, 2005). Student teachers develop identities as the progress in to their programs just as teachers' go through these stages as a result of the interactions in schools and society (Beauchamp & Thomas; 2009). Any treatment of identity is obviously a complex one. However, knowing the importance of teacher identity will provide insights in teacher training

Studies in literature include arguments for attention to identity for various reasons. This can be used as an analytic lens through which to examine aspects of teaching: the ways in which teachers integrate a range of influences, the necessary confronting of tensions and contradictions in their careers (Olsen, 2008). Moreover, it can also be seen as an organizing element in teachers' professional lives, even a 'resource that people use to explain, justify and make sense of themselves in relation to others, and to the world at large' (MacLure, 1993, p. 311).

Many teachers and student-teachers believe that teachers' professional knowledge includes theoretical foundations of classroom teaching and conceptual explanations observed in the phenomenon under investigation. Gaining a more complete understanding of identity generally and teacher identity in particular could enhance the ways in which teacher education programs are conceived (Beauchamp &

Thomas; 2009). The literature on teacher education points out a common notion that identity is dynamic, and that a teacher's identity shifts over time under the influence of a range of factors both internal to the individual, such as emotion (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), and external to the individual, such as job and life experiences in particular contexts (Flores & Day, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sachs, 2005). These understandings about identity are helpful, yet defining the concept has often proved difficult for authors.

In a study of research on teacher professional identity, Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) noted the absence of a definition. The result of their investigation of literature about teacher professional identity from 1998–2000 is the articulation of four features of professional identity stemming from the works studied. They determine that identity is an ongoing process, and therefore that identity is dynamic, a constantly evolving rather than stable phenomenon (Beauchamp & Thomas; 2009).

Although constructs of self, self-concept, self-evaluation, self-confidence, and identity have widely been used in educational research, empirical research with using these concepts has been limited. Qualitative studies might be able to tap some of the identity related constructs better. However, this type of studies are especially quite limited. The reason for that is measuring self is difficult (Burke & Tully, 1977). Self has multiple facets and rich in terms of content. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the utility of TST in dealing with the issues of self and role identities of teachers so that we may develop more interesting and important training programs for teachers, students, principals, or adults.

The following quote demonstrates the importance of teacher identity in terms of teaching. This provides a basis for teacher how to approach, "how to behave," " how to understand," and "how to react."

Teacher professional identity then stands at the core of the teaching profession. It provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience. (Sachs, 2005, p. 15)

An individual's self-concept is usually viewed as crucial on influencing career decisions and other behaviors as well as a key outcome of professional and organizational socialization. Teaching is not a merely a rational activity because the degree of uncertainty is high (Schön, 1987). When professionals receive coaching and encouragement to think carefully at work when he/she is actually doing the work, their learning becomes more profound. Schön believes that the only learning that significantly influence behavior is achieved when it involves self-discovery and self-appropriation. One can provide the environment and encouragement. However, learning ultimately belongs to the student learner. Self-concept refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and feelings a person has about himself/herself. TST may be useful in establishing the relationship between self-concept and teacher development as well as serving as a valuable tool to involve self in training activities.

Borich (1999) discusses the aspects of the teacher self that have an influence on the effectiveness of a teacher's actions while Hamachek (1999) emphasizes self-knowledge as key to a teacher's successful practice. This notion of an inner teacher self obviously has links to teacher identity, placing a focus on the more personal aspects of the individual self (Beauchamp & Thomas; 2009).

Self-esteem is one of the strong predictors of organizational behaviors and attitudes (Thorenau 1979 cited in Arnold & Nicholson, 1991). It is usually agreed that socialization results influences newcomers'

behaviors, attitudes, and self-concept so that they can be more adaptive to their organizational environment (Nicholson, 1984). Teacher socialization has been an important problem in teacher training literature.

Recent literature in teacher education emphasizes the importance of identity development (see Britzman, 2003; Hoban, 2007), yet it is not clear how recognition of this importance translates into concrete action in teacher education program design and activities. Hammerness, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) make the following statement about teacher development:

Developing an identity as a teacher is an important part of securing teachers' commitment to their work and adherence to professional norms... the identities teachers develop shape their dispositions, where they place their effort, whether and how they seek out professional development opportunities, and what obligations they see as intrinsic to their role (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005: 383–384).

Teacher professionalization has been treated as a multi-dimensional construct in the literature. Teacher professionalization should be taken into account in terms of transitional stages. The dimensions were professional identity, professional socialization, professional expertise, professional security and professional development (Agarao-Fernandez & Guzman, 2006).

Teaching is one of the professions which use reflective practice and teacher training should use reflection (Schön, 1987). Reflection has been defined in different ways. According to Dewey (1933, p. 9), reflection is an "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads". Reflection enables teachers to analyze, discuss, evaluate and possibly change their own practice and encourages them to evaluate the moral and ethical issues implicit in their work in classrooms, including the critical examination of their own beliefs about good teaching. Moreover, it helps them to take greater responsibility for their own professional development and to search ways of acquiring some level of professional autonomy. Finally, it helps them develop their own theories-in-use. Various forms of reflection have been used in teacher training such as journals, diaries, group discussions, verbal questions, reflection worksheets and values (Hussein, 2007). Reflection is a part of experiential learning and it has a potential to expand learning. "Without reflection experiential learning will be a superficial activity that will not necessarily sustained learning results" (Rooth, 2000, p. 21). The use of TST in teacher training might make teachers more conscious in terms of their values since the values closely related to teaching practice and ethics.

Twenty Statement Test and Teacher Development

The Twenty Statements Test (TST) was developed to operationalize key concepts of symbolic-interactionist perspective by Kuhn and McPharland (1954). Since then, the test has widely been used to describe the content of self. The concept is easy to use and provide rich data and therefore many studies utilized the concept (Carpenter & Meade-Pruit, 2008).

TST locates individual (self) as a crucial element in social behavior. In this conceptualization identity is dependent on symbolic mediation for internal meanings and external control of action. Respondents are seen as locating their actions in internalized social definitions and self reflections (Rees & Nigelson, 1994). Individuals make conscious choices about what really matters to him/her. The TST is a qualitative research tool that provides responses quantifiable data. Moreover, each response gains meaning from other responses (Rees & Nigelson, 1994).

Individuals define themselves what they do and how they do. Whether individual is a "teacher", "an athlete", "a sister", "a jogger." Individuals also define themselves as moral attitudes and values and this frames them in a shared cultural normative frame and constructs. One of the underlying assumptions is that "self" is dependent upon "others." This is because self-evaluations have to be culturally shared so that it can be a part of interacting with others. One of the main perspectives of symbolic interactionism is that individual constantly negotiates his/her identity in all the interactions that they engage. As a result, an individual is not passively responding to external world but helps to determine self-identifications, where the attention is paid, and what interpretations are made and what behaviors are revealed (Rees & Nigelson, 1994).

Self-identifications such as TST make how individuals mediate their social environment in different and adaptive ways. It can also allow the statements for meaningful comparisons with others not only cross-sectionally but also longitudinally. The importance of the role of engagement in teaching and learning process cannot be overemphasized. As Bryson and Hand (2007) noted, there are three levels of engagement. (1) between teachers and students (discourse); (2) between teacher and the subject (enthusiasm); (3) and between teacher and teaching process (professionalism). All these levels of engagement require the involvement of the self and TST could help in engaging students. Therefore, these characteristics make TST a valuable and economical data collection instrument.

TST is an open-ended data collection instrument; it has greater structure than it is usually considered. "I am" implies that self is a state of being. In questionnaires, respondents do not respond to situations or states of "being." Indeed, they use statements such as "like", "dislike", "agree", "disagree", "do" and/or "do not." Sometimes respondents either may misread the instructions or they may forget them while filling out. However, in TST respondents choose the verb to describe themselves. "Being" verbs such as am, is, are imply greater certainty and commitment than have, do, enjoy and their variations. Thus, TST allows one to be able to establish links with statuses. If an individual likes the statuses and satisfied with them, he/she tends to retain them. Otherwise, individual withdraws from the status (Couch, 1977).

TST is used in cross-cultural comparisons (Carpenter & Meade-Pruit, 2008), to elicit self-concept the categories of self-concept such as traits and roles (Peng, Nisbet & Wong, 1997), gender differences (Smith, 1993), entrants to organizations (Arnold & Nicholson, 1990), TST may also be used determining the following questions: (1) How the individual sees himself/herself? (2) How individuals think others see him/her? and (3) How others actually see him? (Falk & Sonenfeld, 1974). As a result, many comparisons among individuals, occupations, and organizations using TST.

Burden (1982) noted that there are three career development stages for teachers: (1) the struggle for existence, (2) adaptation and balancing, and (3) maturity. Teachers do not trust themselves in the first stage. This is the most difficult stage for teachers. A considerable number of teachers leave the profession. Schools need to provide support structures for teachers in this period (Darling-Hammond, 2003). TST may facilitate this process for schools in providing support structures for both new and incoming teachers.

Beginning to teaching has always been difficult. Teacher needs to learn skills and use them at the same time. Teacher performance is full of anxieties stemming from control, authority, and identity. A study pointed out a teacher's experience based on as a result of a case study (Hargreaves & Jacka, 1995, p50.):

Palua's images of teaching appear to derive from three main sources: her individual personality and disposition; her biography, in particular the influences of her parent and her experiences at the faculty of education within her course program and her practicum experience. Teachers' images are often seen to be largely rooted in their personal biographies more than their formal preparation (Clandini, 1986).

Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach on teacher identity. TST is one of the qualitative methods that were used to determine individual self-conceptualization. The use of ethnographic methods in teacher training has been demonstrated (Frank & Uy, 2004; Rooth, 2000). Kuhn (1960) argued that TST has validity on two grounds: The first one is the "chain of logic" used in the test and the second is that the result of the test correlated with individual behaviors. These assumptions can be considered as valid in the current study as well.

35 teachers who have been graduate students in the various departments were asked to write twenty statements as if they have been describing themselves. The questions begin with "Who I am?" They were asked twenty statements that describe themselves responding to the question "Who I am?" in 15 minutes in a free format. A blank A4 paper is provided. They were only asked to provide their gender, age, profession, and marital status.

Once, teachers completed the statements, researchers separately went all the statements to group whether the statements were in Category A, B, C, or D. The, the two researchers checked whether their categorizations were consistent. There were different categorizations among a few of the categories. There was over 95 % consistency among statements. Only few statements differed and the researchers worked out the differences working together. Following that, the statements were entered into an SPSS file. Following that, descriptive statistics and the distribution of statements were calculated.

Although there have been many procedures on how to code TST statements, mainly two different procedures categories are prevalent in the literature. They are "specific category approach" or "total domain approach." The first one only classifies specific types of statements, the second one classifies every statement presented. McPartland (1965) developed a comprehensive method called "referential schemes" which includes four categories. This method assumes that the responses to "Who I am?" reflect various relationships individuals with their objective world. There are four categories and they are self-exclusive (Nigel Rees & Nigelson, 1994).

1. Statements about physical characteristics such as age, home location, etc. Category A: Conceptions of the self as a physical structure in the world in time and space ("I am ...cm tall", categorized as "physical"
2. Identifications of the self in relation to social groupings (interpersonal) and norms. Category B: The self identified himself/herself in terms of position within social structure such as roles ("I am a teacher"), categorized as "social."
3. If a statement makes a reference or imply to a specific pattern of behavior such as attitudes, values, and needs, they are coded as Category C: As an abstract social actor from social structure ("I am very self-confident"), categorized as "reflective."
4. If the self identifications are so vague and abstract, they were coded as Category D: Self as abstracted from physical being, social actor, and social structure (I am a world citizen), categorized as "oceanic."

This paper used these categories. First, all the statements were coded in one of these categories by one researcher. Then, a second researcher reviewed the codes and there was over 85 % agreement between the coding of the two researchers. So, the data may be accepted as reliable.

There might be a possibility of confusion between B and C. However, there is an easy way to separate them. Styles of behavior individuals attribute to themselves within a situational reference. Qualified statements of B can also be coded as C. For example, if a teacher stated that "I am an effective teacher", then he/she is coded as Category C because the performance of the individual is the qualifying the role. Not any "teacher" but "an effective teacher." Reflections on mood, motivation, temperament, style or ability is included in this category (Rees and Nigelson, 1994).

Results

The results were presented as follows: First, the gender, marital status, age distributions of participants were presented. Second, the analysis of TST followed.

Table 1. Gender of the participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
male	17	48.6	48.6	48.6
female	18	51.4	51.4	100.0
Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Professional distribution of the participants.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Teacher	29	82.9	85.3	85.3
Research Assistant	3	8.6	8.8	94.1
Counselor	2	5.7	5.9	100.0
Total	34	97.1	100.0	
Missing System	1	2.9		
Total	35	100.0		

Almost half of the participants were male and half of them were females. There is a balance among the genders. While the majority of the participants were single (78 %), about 22 % of them are married. Over 80 % of them were teachers. About 6 % of them were counselors (named as counselor teacher) in schools. About 9 % of them were research assistants at a university.

Table 3. Marital status of the participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	7	20.0	21.9	21.9
Single	25	71.4	78.1	100.0
Total	32	91.4	100.0	
Missing System	3	8.6		
Total	35	100.0		

There was only one individual over 30 years of age. The mean age of the participants was 26. However, the majority did not indicate their ages. This group is overwhelmingly composed of relatively young teachers. Only one teacher in the group was over 40.

Table 4. Age distribution of the participants

Ages	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
31	1	2.9	9.1	9.1
25	2	5.7	18.2	27.3
28	2	5.7	18.2	45.5
23	3	8.6	27.3	72.7
29	3	8.6	27.3	100.0
Total	11	31.4	100.0	
Missing	24	68.6		
Total	35	100.0		

Chi-square was used to check whether there is a relationship between individuals' classifications regarding gender, profession, age and marital status. However, no significant differences have been found.

Table 5. Total number of categories

A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	Total	%
11	1.56	32	4.55	618	87.9	42	5.97	703	100

Among the 703 statements, the overwhelming majority of individuals used statements that were categorized as C which is "reflective". Others were as follows: 11 statements in category A (1.56 %), 32 statements in Category B (4.55 %), 42 statements in category D (5.97 %). 618 statements were in category C (87.9 %).

These teachers typically identify themselves as reflective (Category C) to the question of "Who I am?" In the literature, Category C is more preferred since individuals who have dominant categories of C may have a higher adaptive capacity (Rees & Nigelson, 1994). The participants in this group are

composed of MA degree students, they may have higher awareness of themselves (referential category). Thus, they might have demonstrated an overwhelmingly dominant category C style.

Among these categories, the reflective ones in category C was the dominant category. These categories were analyzed whether they were positive or negative statements. They were important because category C reflect their situational references (Reflections on mood, motivation, temperament, style or ability is included in this category). Therefore, individuals' evaluations regarding their internal states, 618 statements categorized based on their positive or negative meaning. Of the 618 statements in category C, 450 of them positive (72.81 %) and 168 were negative statements (27.19 %).

These teachers have a positive outlook on life and their profession in general. Therefore, they may have not yet reached to burn out stage. They are still relatively young. A common characteristic of these teachers is that they currently are enrolled in an MA program. In order to prevent teacher burn-out, graduate training should be encouraged.

Category D does not lead to any expectations of behavior. Research indicates that young people define themselves in terms of personal traits, older people tend to describe themselves in terms of social roles. The finding of this study is consistent with the research in the literature.

Table 6 presents the Twenty Statement Test (TST) protocol by a teacher as an example. As one could easily observe, it was evident that the teacher was quite concerned with personality traits. See Table 7 for a comparison with Table 6 statements. Both protocols were written female teachers at different cultures at quite different times. There are similarities between the two statement protocols.

Table 6. The TST protocol statements by a teacher in Kuhn (1960) study

I am a serious person
I like to work
I have ingenuity
But lack tenacity
I am loyal to those I don't know as well as those I do know
I have overcome obstacles
I am independent thinker need encouragement from some
I am somewhat bound by group opinions
I am not able to take criticism
I am not emotionally stable enough to get respect of others
I do not approach others with my views in the right manner
I accept what others do, not because of who is doing it but because of what is done
I like being a woman—there are advantages
I am afraid of laziness
Some people don't understand what I say because I'm too brief—don't explain
I feel capable of doing many things
I do not depend on others for decision
I don't like unfairness

Source: Kuhn, 1960, p. 43.

Another TST protocol with one of the teachers in the current study was presented in Table 7. One of the statements had written by a teacher almost 50 years ago. The other one was written by another teacher almost half a century later in another culture. Comparison of the two teacher statements reveal that both teachers were quite concerned with their personality traits. TST provides quite rich

data indeed. When one has such statements, it might be easier to develop training programs to teachers because one knows what the issues, ambitions, hopes and problems are.

Table 7. The TST protocol statements of a teacher in the current study

I am a person who tries to do the best in her work
I like helping people
I sometimes talk too much
I am tired at times
I like working and innovations
I am sometimes a pessimist
I am too picky sometimes and it impedes my work
I am really liked indeed
I have dreams about the future
I use "no" rarely
I am really too busy
I think myself as a good listener
I can become very patient when it is required
I really think that I have to work hard
I like children
I can express myself comfortably in a social environment
I sometimes trust too much to individuals
I like my family
I think that I have a side of me which produces solutions to issues.

Reflection has been an important concept in teacher training. Valli (1997) argued that reflection means to bend back with grammatical, physical and psychological implications. Teacher training places too much emphasis on technical aspects of teaching. However, reflection in teaching includes reflection-in-and-on-action, deliberative reflection, personalistic reflection, and critical reflection in addition to technical reflection. Personalistic and critical reflections are both related to personal, social, moral and political dimensions of schooling. As once can easily find out, teacher protocols in Table 6 and Table 7 are involved a considerable amount of reflection.

The role of reflection in teacher development has been widely acknowledged (see Larrivée, 2000; Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf & Wubbels, 2001; Rodgers, 2002). Indeed, it has been recognized as the very core of effective teaching (Jay, 2003). Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) suggested that 'core' reflection, directed at identity and mission, is what is needed to tap into a sense of self (p. 53). Therefore, when one considers identity in the development of either student teachers or beginning practitioners, one must include the notion of reflection as central to this development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Conclusion

The review of the literature indicates that TST is a rich and powerful method that may be used towards the orientations of self-concept. TST may be used teacher socialization for new and in-coming teachers, students and principals. Since it emphasizes identity and self-concept and the reflective practice is important in teaching, TST may also be useful to develop teacher in-service training programs and trainings of other professional groups. Moreover, TST may be a useful tool for evaluating courses and seminars that include experiential learning.

Emotional experiences play an important role in teaching and learning because they involve socially situated practices. The act of teaching is charged by motivation and positive emotions (Hargreaves,

1998). Teaching takes place at an intersection between personal and public identities. Discussions of professional identity or the aspect to improve his/her professional role require how emotions are related to our professional practices (O'Conner, 2008). TST may provide us a foundation to discuss professional as well as personal issues. TST may be used in conducting needs analysis and sources of stress in teacher's work.

The literature points out that employee's perceive change in themselves early years; however, this change is not for the better towards others in organization (Arnold & Nicholson, 1991). As a result, motivation and commitment do not happen automatically. In order to keep participants positive and with high self-esteem in schools, ministries of education and schools should design appropriate career steps and development and promotional procedures.

How can teachers create models natural to them in teaching? They can do it through self-reflection through TST. How? They can continually generate insight into what accounts for both their successes and your failures. Then, they can identify the limits of their current model and opportunities for new areas of growth. And finally, they can experience renewed alignment of their work with what they most value.

While earlier studies (Kuhn, 1960;) noted that professional identity increases with years of training. Individuals reflected their identity and professional intentions and ambitions as well as their own self-evaluations. The findings of this study are consistent with Kuhn's findings. While as more recent studies (Rooth, 2000) indicated, by tapping these statements better, in-service training programs that are interesting and consistent with individual goals, ambitions and intentions could be developed. Thus, better in-service training of teachers might be achieved. This may also be used in pre-service training in the same set of observations for all undergraduates and graduates in teacher training as teachers.

The comparison between the statements of two different teachers who live in different periods and different cultures reveal similar aspects. Teachers were highly concerned with their personality traits. Paying greater attention to this point may be important. TST may be used in teacher socialization, adaption, training and prevent teacher burn-out.

The participants in this research have relatively high-self esteem and a high achievement orientation. The reason for that they self-selected themselves to study towards a master's degree. A larger sample with individuals from different programs should be used to further evaluate the needfulness of TST. TST may be used to examine interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, and administrators in schools. Teacher education programs may find TST useful while training their student teachers. Ministries of education could find ways to use TST to design in-service training programs.

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