

Experiential learning and reflection



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Mairi Turner 2nd Reflection Introduction The following reflection is exploring some of the models that can facilitate the reflective process. The use of reflective practice has enabled me to gain experiential knowledge of teaching and learning. According to Jenny Moon (2005) Reflection is a form of mental processing that we use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. It is applied to gain a better understanding of relatively complicated or unstructured ideas and is largely based on the reprocessing of knowledge, understanding and, possibly, emotions that we already possess.

Through the following reflective processes I have gained a better understanding of my own practice and by continuing to reflect it will help me to be coming a better and more professional teacher who responds positively and learns through having up to date knowledge of my own subject area as well as gaining experience through creative teaching and learn. The Oxford English dictionary (1993) defines reflection as 'idea arising in the mind' and mind means 'seat of consciousness, thought, volition, and feeling.

Reflection, in an every day term is about thinking therefore reflection is very personal. I have decided to look at two reflective frameworks that I have already used Kolb and Briggs. I will also be discussing why on reflection I could have and may use Schon and Brookfields in the future. The Kolb Cycle is based on the theory of experiential learning. The cycle comprises four different stages of learning from experience and can be entered at any point but all stages must be followed in sequence for successful learning to take place.

According to Kolb that it is not enough to have just the experience in order to learn. It is necessary to reflect on the experience and form new ideas which can be applied to new concrete situations relating it back to the theory through planning, doing and then reflecting (Jarvis 1995) I used Kolb's reflective cycle after my first observation I felt this was an appropriate cycle as I was at the beginning of researching and beginning to link theory to practise. Using Kolb's cycle enabled me to see the connections between theory and practise. Kolb is a structured straight forwards approach which maybe good starting point for reflection for first time teachers. But life is not straight forward, which this can be linked to views of Dewey which is the idea of stages, and steps do not sit well with the reality of thinking (Dewey 1933) Gibbs cycle Gibbs' model is a circular process of reflection where you must not only describe the experience but also include an evaluation and analysis of how they were feeling during the experience.

This examination of the emotions associated with the situation allows you to make sense of the situation and come to a conclusion of what else could be done, or what other options could have been taken. The important aspect of Gibbs' model is the final stage whereby an action plan is formulated to examine what actions would be employed if the situation arose again (Gibbs 1988) I used this cycle for a reflection I did last term on my own feelings regarding communication and my son's education.

Gibbs reflection cycle enabled me to bring my personal feeling out and then begin to move forward. I would now say that it would have also worked for the situation in the photography sessions when students don't have any resources. My action plan would always too have extra resources available.

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Students are suppose to come to sessions with resources, But I personally feel that is they don't I am not going to let them fall behind and will support them where necessary which will include having resources

SCHON'S (1987) Reflection - In -action (a session where I used this approach unknown to myself until I actually reflected after the session was ended)

Reflectioninaction occurs at a time when you can still make a difference to the particular practice situation, i. e. it's ' onthespot' reflection. You may be surprised by an event in practice an unexpected outcome, either pleasant or unpleasant and find that your practice is interrupted by an immediate reflective response, that is, you are thinking about what you are doing as you do it.

Reflectioninaction has a critical function, questioning the assumptions that underpin our knowinginaction. It gives rise to onthespot experimentation because of our awareness and observation of new phenomena or things that occur in our practice (Schon 1987) I think we do this process subconsciously and we have all had situations when we have had to think on our feet. I was in this situation only last week when I had a group of 27, 8- 9 years for a photographic workshop.

Once I began the workshop I realised that it was to advance and my level of coding was to elaborate for the students so I had to think on my feet and break the session down into smaller steps with proper use of language. This was a big learning experience for me which I really enjoyed and gained a lot out of in regards to every situation is diffent and that you have to some times adapt quickly to suit your students needs. Brookfield (1995) four “

critical lenses (Will be more aware of this reflection in future as I believe that by doing this it will help me to become a better teacher)

It is Brookfield's (1995) opinion the most fundamental aspect for judging whether or not good teaching is happening is the extent to which teachers deliberately and systematically try to get inside students' heads and see classrooms, learning from their point of view. Using a student feedback form helps here. We should view and reflect upon our practice through the student's views our fellow professional and various theoretical perspectives as well as our own view. According to Brookfield (1995) as a teacher you need to discover and examine our assumptions by looking at our practice through four points 1.

The point view of the tutor 2. The point of view of the learner 3. The point of view of our mentor 4. The point of view of the theories (Barentsen and Malthouse 2009) I linked Brookfield's (1995) to a situation in relation to how the students may have felt when I was delivering a session where they had to mainly listen and take notes. I Had to try and keep them motivated during this session as the students came to me not realising they had photography that week, as the timetable had been changed and apparently they had not been informed.

At the end of the session I asked students for verbal feedback regarding the session, as it was not practical based. The feedback seemed positive. But decided to recall the session the following week to see if any learning had occurred. Most of the students were able to recall some of the session. Brookfield's' (1995) can also be linked back to an observation with my

mentor and the discussion after the observation, where I was given constructive feedback regarding my teaching approach.

I enjoy researching theory and feel it important to link all the four elements of Brookfield's critical lenses as you are involving all areas of teaching and learning. Taking into consideration feedback from all areas, such as the students, mentor and tutors, as well as my own thoughts all add to my professional development as a teacher. You need to act on and use what you have gained through the use of reflective practice. According to Moon, reflective practice is the key to improvement. If we don't think about, analyze and evaluate our professional practice we cannot improve (Moon 1999) | |