

Reflective Practice

Tempus MASTS

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Overview

- Investigating reflective practice
- Models of reflective practice
- Critical Incident Sheets

Standard Definition

‘Reflective Practice places an emphasis on learning through questioning and investigation to lead to development of understanding’

(Smyth, 1992 cited in Loughran, 2004: 34)

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Reflective Practice

- Dominant philosophy or underpinning theory in UK teacher education
- The model to aspire to – the reflective practitioner
- Questions of compatibility with ‘competence’ model

‘Teachers need to be able to integrate the high-quality decision-making of preparation with the low quality decision-making of classroom interaction. To do this, and survive, requires an extensive opportunity to make errors in a supportive situation and an opportunity to improve’ (Furlong et al, 2000, Teacher Education in Transition, p. 42)

Reflective Practice

- To reflect – to think about
- To be reflective – to be thoughtful
- Reflexivity:
 - challenges questions of explanation, prediction and control;
 - the real world is not an experiment
 - self-inquiry, adaptation, interaction constantly changes the situation
- Reflective practice – organised thinking to inform practice
- Criticisms
 - formulaic
 - just navel-gazing
 - blurred, un-theoretical, superficial thinking
 - rationalisation of existing practice

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Reflective Practice and Theory

Armitage, A. *et al* (2007), *Teaching and Training in Post-Compulsory Education*, pp. 13-21,

Place of theory...

- “Practice is re-presented, however subtly, as theory. Tutors and students then begin to systematize and elaborate a description of their practice and call it ‘theory’” (p. 14)
- Theory – ‘it is a part of the framework through which we understand the world, whether or not it is of immediate practical use’ (p. 14)

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Legacy of Reflective Practice

- Dewey, (1933); Mezirow (1981); Schon (1983); Kolb (1984)

In education: Schon, D. (1983), *The Reflective Practitioner*, pp. 39-40.

'In real-world practice, problems do not present themselves to the practitioners as givens. They must be constructed from the materials of problematic situations which are puzzling, troubling and uncertain'

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Theoretical Perspectives

Loughran, J. (2002), Effective Reflective Practice: In Search of Meaning in Learning about Teaching, *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 53, No. 1, pp. 33-43.

- Underlying rationale – from thinking about something to defined practices as part of process
- Problem – puzzling, curious, perplexing
- Context, nature of problem, anticipated value of reflection – what is reflected on and for what purpose
- Priority – investigating taken for granted assumptions

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Theoretical Perspectives

- A problem is unlikely to be acted on if it is not viewed as a problem (Loughran, 2002, p. 35)
- Rationalisation – ‘the dogged adherence to an approach almost despite the nature of the practice setting because alternative ways of seeing are not (cannot) be apprehended’ (Loughran, 2002, p. 35)
- Other ways of seeing
- Other ways of acting
- **Key implication for practice - peer observation and discussion**

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Theoretical Perspectives

Ruch, G. (2002), *From Triangle to Spiral: Reflective Practice in Social Work Education, Practice and Research*, *Social Work Education*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 199-216)

- Response to competence models – technical-rational, competency-based, managerial, procedural approaches to education and training where there is an emphasis on doing.
- Need for a renewed emphasis on thinking, feeling, doing; context and variety, unpredictability, individualisation; complexity and diversity
- **Key implication for practice: recognise that ‘best practice’ is always contextual**

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Theoretical Perspectives

Ruch, G. (2002), From Triangle to Spiral: Reflective Practice in Social Work Education, Practice and Research, *Social Work Education*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 199-216)

- **Technical reflection** – efficient, effective, measurable outcomes
- **Practical reflection** – knowledge as relative, constructed, contextual and inter-subjective; openness to practice, alternatives, insight, self and others
- **Process reflection** – unconscious and conscious processes at work; (reflect, think, feel and act)
- **Critical reflection** – challenge social, political and structural conditions which are evident and which practice can re-enforce

Key implication for practice: reflective practice is more or less supported by a school/educational context in terms of curriculum and process

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Theoretical Perspectives

Mackintosh, C. (1998), Reflection: a Flawed Strategy for the Nursing Profession, *Nurse Education Today*, Vol. 18, pp. 553-557.

- Uncertainty around definition – reflective thinking (Dewey) reflectivity (Mezirow), reflective practice (Schon)
- Uncertainty around practice – diaries, journals, workshops, critical incidents, problem-solving
- 3 major problems:
 - the process by which reflection takes place;
 - the ability of individuals to reflect in a meaningful way;
 - the benefits for practice

'Reflection, with its emphasis on individual perspectives of events, their interpretation and their analysis, excludes all other viewpoints: those of the multidisciplinary team and, most importantly, the client group, patients or carers who nurses are there to help' (Macintosh, 1998, p. 556).

Key implication for practice: from individual practice to community of practice

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Reflective Practice in Practice

- To what extent do you see as, implicitly or explicitly, reflective practice being influential in teacher education in Serbia?
- To what extent do you see the key implications for practice being supported by the context of education in Serbian schools?
- Are Serbian teachers reflective practitioners?

Components of Reflective Practice

- Professional knowledge
- Professional values
- Professional practice
- Evaluation of practice

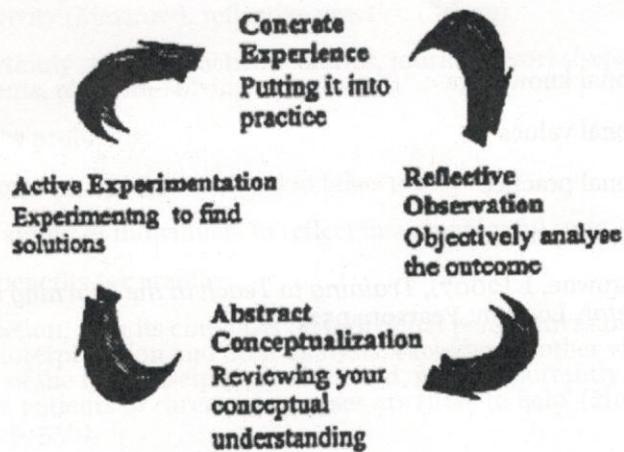
Keeley-Browne, L (2007), *Training to Teach in the Learning and Skills Sector*, London: Pearson, p52.

Schon – Reflection in Action

- Explore the possibilities
- Develop a series of action steps
- Testing them out
- Evaluating the more successful solution

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Kolb's Learning Cycle



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Gibb's Reflective Cycle (1988)



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Developing Reflective Practice

Critical Incident Sheets

- Regular (sometimes assessed) opportunities to develop reflective practice
- Reflection – discussion – evaluation
- Problematised
- Other perspectives

Activity – Critical Incidents

Describe a professional situation you have recently experienced:

1. Describe what happened and explain your perception of the situation
2. What meanings did you bring to the situation, based on previous experiences and thinking?
3. What assumptions did you make about the meaning of the situation?
4. What conclusions did you draw about the experience based upon meanings and assumptions?
5. What other meanings and assumptions could be introduced into your thinking?
6. What actions might result from reflecting upon a broader range of meanings and assumptions?

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Critical Incident Sheet

Student example.

Refer to the criticisms made earlier: do they apply?

- Criticisms
 - formulaic
 - just navel-gazing
 - blurred, un-theoretical, superficial thinking
 - rationalisation of existing practice

Discussion

- What do you see as the relevance of reflective practice for developing teacher education in Serbia?
- What changes would the adoption of reflective practice make necessary?
- Would there be expected improvements in education: content, process, experience, outcomes?

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