10-14-2019

Reflection: Theories and Approaches

Robert Mckenna

Griffith College Dublin

Follow this and additional works at: https://arc.cct.ie/cert_tl

Part of the Higher Education Commons, and the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

Recommended Citation

https://arc.cct.ie/cert_tl/6

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the CCT Centre for Teaching and Learning at ARC (Academic Research Collection). It has been accepted for inclusion in Certificate in Teaching and Learning by an authorized administrator of ARC (Academic Research Collection). For more information, please contact jsmyth@cct.ie.
Reflection

Theories and Approaches
A Theory - Kolb’s Learning Cycle

(Kolb 2015)
Kolb’s Learning Cycle – Points to consider....

• This model is really to help learners conceptualise learning itself as an active process

• In applying it ourselves we might ask the following questions:
  • Does this apply to every “concrete experience”?
  • Can this ever be done subconsciously or must it be conscious?
  • Do we really need to articulate the “abstract conceptualisation” or is it enough that we reflect?
  • What if I never get to “Active Experimentation”- but I have still actively reflected?
Another theory - Dewey’s Model of Reflective Thought and Practice

• Kolb’s Learning Cycle emphasises reflective observation as a way to analyse and draw conclusions from an experience.

• The aim is to take this learning into new experiences, completing the cycle.
Dewey's Model of Reflective Thought and practice

1. Disturbance or Uncertainty
2. Definition of Problem
3. Formation of a working hypotheses
4. Reasoning
5. Testing the hypotheses

Idea / Concept
Solution of the problem

(Dewey 1989)
Dewey’s Model – Points to Consider

• Dewey’s emphasis is on a “disturbance”.
• Is it possible to reflect on an experience if it not “disturb” us?
• How is this implemented in practice?
• We often ask students to reflect on “critical incidents” during their experiential learning.
• We too can do this in relation to our teaching practice.
Contrast the Learning Cycles in Respect of these Two Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Kolb</strong></th>
<th><strong>Dewey</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Having the experience”</td>
<td>“Creating the disturbance”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Reflective Observation”</td>
<td>“Problem definition leading to a hypotheses”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Abstract Conceptualisation”</td>
<td>“Forming the hypotheses”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Active Experimentation”</td>
<td>“Testing the Hypothesis”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Changed Behaviour”</td>
<td>“Solution”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Practice?

• Reflective process is not homogenous.
• Different approaches may be determined by discipline and scenario.
• Most find it useful to have a theoretical framework as an approach to reflection.
• May assist learners by providing a “hook” to hang it on.
• Which works best? Let's find out.
Another Theory - Gibbs’ Model of Reflection

(Gibbs 1988)
Gibbs’ Model- Points to Consider....

• This is cyclical and in that sense is similar to Kolb’s learning cycle yet it contains additional elements,
  • What are they?
• What does this model require learners to do that is not explicit in Kolb?

• In what sense do you find it
  1. Helpful, and
  2. Challenging in terms of your own reflections?
Another Theory - Rolfe’s Framework for Reflective Practice

This can be simplified as comprising the following 3 Questions:

- **What?**
  
  (Describe the situation)

- **So What?**
  
  (Theory and knowledge building)

- **Now What?**
  
  (How to improve the situation)

(Rolfe 1989)
Rolfe’s summary of reflective processes

Rolfe (1989) summarises reflective processes as follows: Questioning what, why and how one does things, and asking what, why and how others do things. This may include:

- Seeking alternatives;
- Comparing and contrasting;
- Seeking the framework, theoretical basis or underlying rationale;
- Viewing from various perspectives;
- Keeping an open mind.
Rolfe’s Model - May Also Include:

• Asking “what if”?  
• Asking for others’ ideas and viewpoints.  
• Considering consequences.  
• Hypothesising.  
• Seeking, identifying and resolving problems.  
• Seeking the framework, theoretical basis and/or underlying rationale.
Rolfe – Points to Consider….

• In what sense might this be called a “pragmatists guide to reflection”?

• What are the challenges in using this approach?

• How might you adapt it for your own use in practice?
Another Theory - Brookfield’s 4 Critical Lenses

Brookfield (2017) suggests that we employ four “critical lenses” through which to view and reflect upon our practice.

These are:
1. Our students
2. Our own view (*autobiography*)
3. Our peers
4. The various theoretical perspectives in educational literature and research
Brookfield – Points to Consider....

• Which of the four perspectives is, in your view, the most valid, reliable, important?

• What are the pros and cons of our autobiographies as against student experiences?
Brookfield- Which Lens is Most Valid?

- Our autobiographies are “one of the most important sources of insight into practice to which we have access” Brookfield(2017 p31).

- Examining our own experience as learners helps us to “uncover our most deeply embedded allegiances and motivations” Brookfield(2017 p32).
Another Theory - Peters

Peters (1991) describes a process called DATA that consists of 4 steps:

1. **Describe**
   - Describe the “incident”.

2. **Analyse**
   - Analyse the contributing factors and identify underlying beliefs, assumptions and motives.

3. **Theorise**
   - Theorise about alternative methods by taking the theory in the previous step and developing it into a new one.

4. **Act**
   - Act, try out the new theory.
Peters – Points to consider....

- Are there inherent challenges within this approach?
- Why might this approach be said to be empowering for learners?
- Is it relevant that Peters wrote in the context of “Adult and Continuing Education” or “Educating Adults”?
- How might you apply this in your own teaching and/or learning?
Another Theory - Schön

• Schön(1983) describes ‘reflecting in action’ as reflecting on the incident whilst it can still benefit that situation rather than reflecting on how you would do things differently in the future.

• This process is described by Schön(1983 p68) as
  “When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case”.

• As well as “coping in the moment”, Schön refers to the more long-term impact on “professional mastery”.
Points to Consider….

• This is a useful tool to use in disciplines where the professional has to react to an event at the time it occurs – rather than having the luxury of being able to think about what happened and make changes at a later time.

• Can you think of instances where this might apply?
• Could it be relevant to your own practice?
Reflective Practice in Teaching Digital Badge

• Based on, and with thanks to, the National Forum Digital Badge on Reflective Practice in Teaching by Bronagh Heverin and