Reflective practice in teaching fosters inquiry-based learning: Pedagogical implications for LIS education

1 July 2020

Yazdan Mansourian, PhD, AALIA
School of Information Studies

ymansourian@csu.edu.au
“We do not learn from experience ... we learn from reflecting on experience.”

John Dewey (1859–1952)
Introduction

• In this presentation I explain how we can support inquiry-based learning through a reflective practice approach in teaching.
• Then I provide a number of examples from the Library and Information Science (LIS) topics as productive grounds to foster inquiry-based learning.
• Finally, I share my experiences of applying both theories in the subjects that I teach and provide some suggestions in this area.
What is reflective practice?

• Reflective practice is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of concepts with rather diverse meanings.

• However, the core and common theme is the ability of learning through and from everyday life experiences with the aim of constructing a new understanding about ourselves and the experiences.
Dewey's model of reflective thought and action

Lewin’s feedback process
Beard & Wilson, (2013, p. 41).
Kolb’s experiential learning cycle
Beard & Wilson, (2013, p. 41).
Honey and Mumford’s learning styles
Beard & Wilson, (2013, p. 43).
What is the purpose of reflective practice?

• The main purpose of reflective practice is learning from the past to generate new knowledge in order to build a better future.

• Regarding the contemplative essence of this approach, it requires a number of thoughtful attitudes and skills such as self-awareness, critical thinking and mindfulness.
How to engage in reflective practice?

• Reflective practitioners should be able to explore the context, imagine possibilities and generate alternative methods in their practice.
• Reflective practitioners need to learn how to pose relevant questions to probe causes and consequences in a specific context and critically analyse complicated topics.
Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives

https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/crep20/current
Reflective practice in learning and teaching

- Reflective practice is widely accepted as an effective approach in the learning and teaching scholarship to improve the quality of learning and teaching experiences for both teachers and students.
From learning about to learning through

- Learning about work is *informational*
- Learning at work is *locational*
- Learning through work is *experiential*.

Smith and Betts (2000, p. 591)
Nine aspects of reflective practice

- Study your teaching for personal improvement - *Reflect regularly.*
- Evaluate your teaching using research - *Action research and Inquiry.*
- Link theory with practice - *Use the literature.*
- Question your personal theories and beliefs - *Critical analysis.*
- Consider alternative perspectives and possibilities - *Learning conversations.*
- Try out new strategies and ideas - *Innovation.*
- Maximise the learning potential of students - *Inclusive and flexible practices.*
- Enhance the quality of your teaching - *Effective practice.*
- Continue to improve your teaching - *Professional learning.*

*(Hegarty, 2013)*
Examples of reflective questions

- How can I reword the instructions?
- What worked in this subject? How do I know?
- What would I do the same or differently if I could teach this subject again?
- What is my top teaching goal for the coming year?
- What can I do to make my teaching more fun while adding to my students' learning and enjoyment?
- Are there any aspects of the profession that I am ignoring due to lack of knowledge or fear of change?
- Do I bring additional stress upon myself? If so, how can I decrease or eliminate it?

What is inquiry-based learning?

- Inquiry-based learning is a student-centred method and has a constructivist approach which enables students to pose their own questions about the topic and seek appropriate answers from a wide range of information sources.

- Inquiry-based learning is a form of sense making approach to engage students in an ongoing process of genuine curiosity, authentic experiences and construction of deep understanding.
The 5 E’s of inquiry-based learning (Northern, 2019).

Reflective practice in LIS education

- Developing new subjects such as Critical Librarianship or Information Freedom.


- Making direct links from the learning modules to current trends and issues in the real world and everyday life experiences.

- Moving from non-analytical reflection to analytical reflection (Grant, 2007)
Benefits of reflective practice in three levels

• **Individual level**: Gaining perspective; exploration of role and position; highlighting and accepting the barriers to change; analysis of situations and procedures; checking the progress of work tasks and assisting with course and job applications.

• **Team level**: Modelling good practice; coaching and mentoring and education of others.

• **Organisational level**: Improvement of services; highlighting good practice; facilitating innovative practice; development of plans and policies; and promotion of service.

“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)
References (1)


References (2)


Thank you for your attention!

Any questions or comments?