

A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS ON THE USE OF REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICE AS PART OF PEER REVIEW PROCESS

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Abstract

Reflective practice has been used predominantly in teacher training programmes and medical education. Recently, reflection is becoming a vital component of professional development among university lecturers through peer review of teaching. This study examined university lecturers' perception about using reflective practices as part of peer review of their teaching. A sample of 122 lecturers from a multi-disciplinary background answered the Peer Review Questionnaires, which were designed for the reviewee and reviewer respectively. Through descriptive analysis, this study concluded that all the lecturers were aware of the importance of reflection after peer review and reflective practice is recommended to all reviewees. The reasons for engaging in reflection are for self-improvement and the opportunity for discussion, while some lecturers prefer not to engage in reflection because they perceive student feedback as a sufficient measure of teaching performance. Further recommendations for promoting and maintaining reflective practice were underlined.

Introduction

Reflective practice has been an essential component in teacher's education programmes (Richert, 1990; McLaughlin and Hanifin, 1995; Tummons, 2011). Recent research have also integrated reflective practice as part of peer observation (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond, 2005; Davys and Jones, 2007). Although the definition of reflective practice varies according to context, critical reflection in teaching is essentially about looking back post-event to search for thought patterns and examine the reasons for classifying teaching aspects as successes or failures (Raines and Shadiow, 1995). However, the transformative learning theory established in 1991 by Mezirow, Emeritus Professor of Adult and Continuing Education in Columbia University states that critical reflection can take place during or after an event (Mezirow, 1994). The transformative learning theory further explains how critical reflection can affect changes in the interpretations of ideas and processes among professionals as adult learners. It can be done by reflecting on the content, process and premise of the problem (Mezirow, 1994). Content reflection involves perceiving, thinking and feeling about student learning, instructional processes and subject matter while process reflection focuses on how teaching was performed and how well it was performed (Kember et al. 1999). Premise reflection involves reasoning why teaching was conducted in a certain manner (Kember et al. 1999). The advantage of critical reflection is that it does not neglect psychological and sociolinguistic perspectives, which are essential to motivate collective action for change in social and institutional practices (Meriam&Ntseane, 2008). However, the effort needed to reflect and adjust teaching practices could be discouraging for some lecturers. Mezirow (1994) countered this opinion by stating that reflective action involves making a decision and does not necessitate immediate behaviour change.

Reflective practice is often conceptualised as a solitary activity although it is not necessarily so (Collin and Karsenti, 2011). Gore (1987) stated that most reflections in pre-service teacher training and staff development programmes tend to be individualistic. The techniques that are often used for self-reflections are reflective writing in journals, portfolios and answering reflective questions (Collin and Karsenti, 2011). On the other hand, collective reflection requires peer involvement and can be conducted as discussion seminars, online communication and reflective interviews. Nevertheless, collective reflection is very much under-utilised as it stresses on verbal interaction as a method to confront and review teaching attitudes. In their paper, Osmond and Darlington (2005) summarised techniques that could aid reflective analysis. Some techniques such as think-aloud, pictorial presentations and knowledge mapping are suitable for on-going or post-event reflections. Meanwhile, techniques such as before-and-after questions, case analysis, reflective recall with recorded observations as well as exploring differences and presenting possibilities are suitable for post-event reflections.

Positioning Reflective Practice in Education

The importance of reflection lies in the need for lecturers to understand how they performed, learning how to use feedback for professional development, building on their strengths and addressing weaknesses (Hays and

Gay 2011). Maintaining and improving practice is achieved through reflection and adjustment. The failure to reflect may result in poor performance and a lack of insight (Hays and Gay 2011). In 1994, Cooper stated that reflection enables goal attainment, learning organisation and the recording of insights and new perspectives (Hutchinson and Allen 1997). This is supported by nurse practitioner, Ashby (2006) who described five benefits of reflective practice in the workplace: (a) reflection initiates self-discovery by helping an individual to recognise and fill knowledge gaps, (b) reflection aids strategy planning to deal with similar future situations, (c) reflection enables issues and mistakes to be discussed easily without being judgemental, (d) reflection can effect changes to existing practices and (e) changes resulting from reflection lead to higher empowerment and greater task satisfaction (Ashby 2006).

The effectiveness of reflection and its benefits is accentuated in the following researches. A case study by McLaughlin and Hanifin (1995) examined 16 trainee teachers' ability to demonstrate: (a) evidence of reflective practice in early field experiences, (b) the content of reflections and (c) effective strategies for stimulating reflection. The trainees had to write eight post-lesson reflections and a progress report. This study found that all the trainees were able to demonstrate some evidence of developing a reflective approach in their teaching practice, albeit at a basic level. There was also a marked change in reflection content in the mid-way of their practical. Initially, the content of reflections focused on classroom control and management, survival concerns and teacher role identity. Once the trainees were familiar with the classroom context, reflections began to focus on specific issues such as impact on student learning. This indicates a shift in the level of reflection as trainees begin to make meaningful connections between the students' and their own classroom experiences. The dominant form of reflection used in this study was descriptive and the trainees viewed 'deliberately-planned strategies' as most effective to stimulate reflection. The overall finding was that the trainees found reflections to be useful and preferred doing lesson reflections in a non-academic style.

Another research by Walkington, Christensen and Kock (2001) involved integrating reflection into a three-phase teacher training programme at the Technical University of Denmark. In the first phase, teachers had to prepare a statement on the course teaching plan, opinion about the students and reflections about the given teaching sessions. The second phase involves student evaluation of teaching. In the third phase, the teacher had to prepare a final report based on reflections of their teaching performance. Any discrepancy in their opinion against students' assessment was outlined. This research deduced that the role of lecturers is rapidly changing although formal teaching skills are still important in traditional teaching. As teaching evolves into a student-centred approach, the emphasis on experiential learning is applied to both students and lecturers (Walkington, Christensen and Kock 2001). Moreover, reflective practice is a good way to inculcate interest in teaching as well as increase awareness about the possibilities and satisfaction of teaching. Since a majority of university lecturers are employed based on research qualities, reflection also helps junior lecturers identify targeted areas for learning and improvement (Walkington, Christensen and Kock 2001). Davys and Jones (2007) further outlined a peer observation project which incorporated reflection as part of continuous professional development (CPD) in the University of New South Wales. This study proposed that reflection is also beneficial for senior lecturers who often find that increased expertise brings fewer opportunities for supervision and peer feedback. Moreover, reflections from a colleague may bring greater objectivity to teaching performance evaluations (Davys and Jones 2007).

What restricts Reflective Practice?

Although there are many merits in reflecting, there are several core issues with the adaption and implementation of reflection in the workplace. A noted Professor of Creative Inquiry and Adult Learning in the University of Toronto, Cole (1997) proposed that many lecturers conduct a systematic inquiry of their practice away from their workplaces due to the lack of professional support for reflective activity and its practitioners. Loughran (2002) also stated that the traditional nature of teaching, which entails not questioning educational practices, is an obstacle. Moon (1999), staff developer in the University of Exeter, UK, had argued that reflection involves an individual's feelings about teaching in addition to knowledge and understanding. This was supported by Cole (1997), who elaborated on Jersild's work in 1955 about emotional constructs that could affect feelings about teaching and impede the development of professionals as reflective practitioners. The six

emotions are anxiety, fear, helplessness, loneliness, meaninglessness and hostility. Anxiety among lecturers is occurs when there is a lack of peer support and resources as well as unreasonable curricular and professional demands. In addition, lecturers may have to work in a fearful state due to external pressure for accountability from the public and the media. In most circumstances, a sense of helplessness is built when lecturers have to comply with institutional policies without regard if the changes fit their needs or practice. Besides that, a decrease in personal control within their teaching practice results in a loss of meaning in teaching. Distrust between lecturers and lack of trust from the public about the roles of lecturers are the main contributors of loneliness as an educator. Hostility within the university environment such as gossiping, verbal abuse and disrespect further lead to dissatisfaction with the workplace condition and distract lecturers from their teaching role (Cole, 1997). Besides the workplace climate, reflective practitioners lack the necessary observation skills and opportunity to engage in reflection (Wildman and Niles 1987). In short, besides possessing the necessary attitude and resources, lecturers lack the time and collegial support to effectively nurture reflective skills.

Clegg, Tan and Saeidi (2002) further highlighted two problems in using reflective practice for CPD in higher education. Firstly, there is difficulty in understanding the personal meanings made in lecturers' reflection on teaching. Since reflection involves interaction between social and personal knowledge as well as experiential and conceptual insights, lecturers will be able to gain self-knowledge (Kolb 1984). The personal meaning constructed from self-knowledge will be unique to each individual (Brockbank and McGill, 1998). Thus, this gave rise to the second problem which is the ability to theorise reflective practice based on these understandings (Clegg, Tan and Saeidi 2002). Although reflective practice is becoming increasingly theorised in forms of reflective writing, a good model that gives allowance for individually constructed meaning is the Reflection Integration Model (RIM) by Hutchinson and Allen (1997). The RIM includes four components: (a) pre-experience: creating awareness of the purpose of reflection, establishing observation criteria, reflective skills and the structure of reflection, (b) experience: determining the setting in which reflection takes place such as the type of teaching instruction and student population, (c) reflection: making connections between pedagogical theory and practice (i.e., testing out educational theories in actual practice and evaluate its relevance in various teaching settings) and (d) integration: personal introspection (Hutchinson and Allen 1997). Integration is often neglected but it brings in-depth and critical insight to reflection through its three-level approach called the 'Mirror, Microscope and Binoculars', which was proposed by Cooper in 1994 (Hutchinson and Allen 1997). The three-level approach and its descriptions are: (a) Mirror: examine what they have learnt about the self and how they have changed in regards to their principles and self-esteem, (b) Microscope: enlarge the scope of their experiences by examining the impact of their actions to student learning, and (c) Binoculars: examine a distant issue from a closer perspective such as how social issues can bring different meanings to teaching.

The reflective literature also demonstrates a dearth of standardised tools that can assess levels of reflective practice among practitioners. The only standardised tool found so far is the Survey of Reflective Practice: A Tool for Assessing Development as a Reflective Practitioner by Larrivee (2008), Professor of Education in California State University. This survey is based on four levels of reflection: (a) pre-reflection: do not question practice or adapt teaching to students' needs, (b) surface reflection: focus on teaching strategies and methods, (c) pedagogical reflection: reflect on educational goals and knowledge theories, examine the connection between theoretical principles and real-life practice, and (d) critical reflection: examination of professional and personal belief systems, reflection of moral and ethical implications of teaching practice on student learning experience (Larrivee 2008). This tool adopted a combination of rating items based on a 3-point Likert scale (i.e., frequently to infrequently) and open-ended commentaries. The important implication of having a standardised reflective tool is that it provides a concrete process to examine lecturers' development as a reflective practitioner (Larrivee 2008).

Need of the Study

Despite methodological and implementation issues, reflection has the ability to affect the necessary changes to existing educational practices. Therefore, incorporating reflective practice as part of teaching peer review is a

good step towards supporting transformative efforts by the government. The introduction of the Quality Standard Assurance regulation by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) shows that the government is serious about their commitment to ensure that high quality education is provided to students (Ali, Isa and Ibrahim 2011).

Thus, the current study aims to examine the perception of lecturers from a multi-disciplinary background about the implementation of reflective practice in peer review for the purpose of professional development. The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. Are lecturers in higher learning institutions aware about the importance of reflective practice?
2. What are lecturers' perceptions on the importance of reflection in peer evaluation?
3. What are the reasons that could discourage the use of reflection in peer evaluation?
4. What suggestions can be given on presenting an effective reflective statement?

Methodology

Method

A qualitative survey using two sets of open-ended questionnaires was conducted at Monash University Sunway Campus (MUSC) and the Jeffery Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences Clinical School in Johor Bahru. Participants were recruited from the School of Medicine, Business, Education Quality and Innovation unit (EQI), Engineering, Pharmacy, Psychology and Nursing by means of media broadcasts and emails. The questionnaires known as the Peer Review Questionnaires were designed for the reviewee and reviewer respectively (see Appendix A and B). This survey was conducted in concurrence with the design of the Monash Dunseath-Thomas PRTI (Peer Review Teaching Instrument), which is available to all lecturers at the website: <http://intranet.monash.edu.my/EQI/Education%20Quality/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=/EQI/Education>.

A reflective section was included in the instrument for reviewees after an observation session. The three components participants had to reflect on were: (a) Achievement – strengths identified by reviewers, (b) Opportunities for Development – areas in need of improvement, and (c) Action Plan and Timelines – the action reviewees will undertake and its timeline. In addition, reviewees also had to reflect on the fairness of reviewers' comments. This survey assesses participants' opinion on reflective practice in peer review from the perspective of their role as a reviewee or reviewer. The questions on post-review reflective practice in the Peer Review Questionnaire were as follows:

1. Is this something you would recommend that all reviewees utilise after the peer review has taken place?
2. Do you consider that it is important to do so?
3. Why do you think the post-review reflective exercise is important?
4. Why do you think the post-review reflective exercise is not important?

Sample

A qualitative survey was conducted on 122 lecturers from both campuses in Malaysia. Participants volunteered to be reviewees or reviewers. A total of 59 reviewees and 54 reviewers answered the Peer Review Questionnaire as seen in table-1. There were 34 (57.6%) male reviewees and 24 (40.7%) female reviewees. One reviewee did not provide information on gender, discipline and academic rank. Among the reviewers, there was an equal gender distribution with 27 (50.0%) male and female reviewers respectively. A majority of reviewees (40.7%) and reviewers (46.3%) were from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. This was followed by the School of Business with 23.7% reviewees and 22.2% reviewers. However, the School of Information Technology (IT) had the least participants with 15.3% reviewees and 14.8% reviewers. In terms of academic ranking, majority of the reviewees were lecturers (32.2%) followed by senior lecturers and other academic positions with 27.1% respectively (see table-1). Among reviewers, majority of the participants were senior lecturers and lecturers with 29.6% respectively. This was followed by other academic positions (22.2%). Lecturers with the rank of professors had the lowest rate of participation for both reviewees (1.7%) and reviewers (1.9%).

Table-1
Descriptive statistics of participants' demographics

Variables	Reviewees (N=59)	Reviewers (N=54)
Gender		
Male	34 (57.6%)	27 (50.0%)
Female	24 (40.7%)	27 (50.0%)
Missing data	1 (1.7%)	-
Discipline		
Medicine and Health Sciences	24 (40.7%)	25 (46.3%)
Business	14 (23.7%)	12 (22.2%)
Engineering	11 (18.6%)	9 (16.7%)
Information Technology	9 (15.3%)	8 (14.8%)
Missing data	1 (1.7%)	-
Academic Rank		
Professor	1 (1.7%)	1 (1.9%)
Associate Professor	6 (10.2%)	7 (13.0%)
Senior Lecturer	16 (27.1%)	16 (29.6%)
Lecturer	19 (32.2%)	16 (29.6%)
Others	16 (27.1%)	12 (22.2%)
Missing data	1 (1.7%)	2 (3.7%)

Majority of the reviewees (91.5%) and reviewers (81.5%) taught undergraduate programmes as shown in table-2. This was followed by 5.1% of reviewees and 16.7% of reviewers who taught a combination of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Approximately 28.8% of reviewees had between five to eight years of teaching experience, followed by more than 16 years of teaching experience (27.1%). A majority of reviewers had between one to four years of teaching experience (31.5%) followed by five to eight years of teaching experience (27.8%). Majority of reviewees (49.2%) and reviewers (63.0%) also reported that they did not have a recognised teaching qualification as compared to 42.4% of reviewees and 27.8% of reviewers who did.

Table-2
Participants' teaching experience by programme, years of teaching and teaching qualification

Variables	Reviewees(N=59)	Reviewers (N=54)
Students' Programme Taught		
Undergraduate	54 (91.5%)	44 (81.5%)
Undergraduate and Postgraduate	3 (5.1%)	9 (16.7%)
Undergraduate and Others	2 (3.4%)	1 (1.9%)
Teaching Experience (years)		
< 1 year	1 (1.7%)	-
1-4 years	13 (22.0%)	17 (31.5%)
5-8 years	17 (28.8%)	15 (27.8%)
9-12 years	8 (13.6%)	8 (14.8%)
13-16 years	4 (6.8%)	7 (13.0%)
>16 years	16 (27.1%)	7 (13.0%)
Recognised Teaching Qualification		
Yes	25 (42.4%)	15 (27.8%)
No	29 (49.2%)	34 (63.0%)
Missing data	5 (8.5%)	5 (9.3%)

Cronbach's Alpha and factor analysis

The reliability of the questionnaires was analysed using the psychometric test, Cronbach's Alpha. The test shows that the questionnaires had relatively low reliability ($\alpha < 0.7$) (see table-3). A factor analysis was further conducted to check the item validity. Table-3 demonstrates that the reliability of the questionnaire can be increased by omitting seven items from the Peer Reviewee and Reviewer questionnaires respectively.

Table - 3
Summary of changes to reliability with items removed

Peer Reviewee Questionnaire	Alpha = 0.52	Peer Reviewer Questionnaire	Alpha = 0.16
Items Removed	Alpha	Items Removed	Alpha
Rank	0.56	Gender	0.18
Years of teaching	0.53	Rank	0.29
Teaching qualifications	0.53	Teaching qualifications	0.20
Previous participation	0.54	Previous participation	0.22
Reasons for not participating	0.58	Received training	0.20
Received training	0.54	Peer review activity mode	0.20
No. of students for session	0.54	Reflective practice recommendation	0.17

Analysis

Participants' responses in the open-ended questions were analysed using document analysis as a qualitative research method as described by Bowen (2009). Survey responses were skimmed and read before extracting relevant information about reflective practices. Data interpretation involved examining similarities in their statements, coding and categorising responses into common themes. Responses from the close-ended questions were input into SPSS version 18 to run the frequency test. The following are the statistical results and themes from the analysis:

Peer Reviewee Questionnaire

Question 1: Majority of the reviewees (74.6%) agreed that they would recommend reviewees to utilise reflective practice after peer review while 15.3% of reviewees stated that they would not do so.

Question 2: Approximately 79.6% of reviewees also agreed that reflective practice is important as compared to 10.2% of reviewees who did not.

Question 3: Participants were requested to comment on the reasons reflective practice was considered important. Out of 59 reviewees, only 43 provided a response (table - 4). Approximately 27 (62.8%) reviewees commented that post-review reflective practice was important for self-improvement. This was followed by 12 (27.9%) reviewees who stated that reflective practice provided an opportunity for the reviewer and reviewee to discuss teaching performance issues. About four reviewees (9.3%) stated that reflection will benefit the students.

Table-4
Frequency table of the importance of post-review reflective practice among reviewees

Common themes	Participants (N=43)
For self improvement	27 (62.8%)
Opportunity for discussion between reviewer and reviewee	12 (27.9%)
Benefiting the students	4 (9.3%)

Question 4: Participants were requested to state the reasons reflective practice was not considered important and only seven reviewees provided a response (table - 5). Out of these seven, 2 (28.6%) reviewees felt that feedback from students was sufficient as a measure of teaching performance with the implementation of MonQuest and Unit Evaluation (Monash University Student Evaluation of Teaching and the Units taught). Therefore, students were in a better place to evaluate as compared to peers. Other reasons given by reviewees include the issue of peer review being subjective (14.3%), Asian culture does not allow for direct criticism (14.3%), a waste of time (14.3%) and reflective practice is not mandatory to follow (14.3%).

Table - 5
Frequency table of reviewees' reasons against post-review reflective practice

Common themes	Participants (N = 7)
Student feedback is sufficient	2 (28.6%)
Peer review is very subjective (honesty issue, good in teaching vs. good in research)	1 (14.3%)
Asian culture (no direct criticism)	1 (14.3%)
Waste of time	1 (14.3%)
Not mandatory to follow	1 (14.3%)
Unable to comment	1 (14.3%)

Peer Reviewer Questionnaire

Question 1: A majority of the reviewers (75.9%) stated that they would recommend that all reviewees utilise reflective practice after peer review while 16.7% of reviewers would not recommend this practice. One reviewer provided a mixed response of a yes and no to this question while three reviewers did not provide a response.

Question 2: A higher proportion of reviewers (83.3%) also considered reflective practice to be important as compared to 7.4% of reviewers who did not. Two participants provided a mixed response of a yes and no to this question while three reviewers did not provide a response.

Question 3: Participants were asked to comment on the reasons they view post-review reflective practice to be important. Out of 54 reviewers, only 44 reviewers provided a response (table - 6). A majority of 29 (65.9%) reviewers considered reflection to be important for self-improvement. This was followed by 6 (13.6%) reviewers, who stated that it provided an opportunity for the reviewer and reviewee to discuss teaching performance issues. Besides that, reflective practice was viewed as a way to get feedback (4.5%), maintain university standards (4.5%) and as part of outcome-based learning (4.5%). Other responses to this question include the use of reflection for promotion and annual appraisal purposes and as a closure to the peer review session.

Table - 6
Frequency table of the importance of post-review reflective practice among reviewers

Common themes	Participants (N = 44)
For self improvement	29 (65.9%)
Opportunity for discussion between reviewer and reviewee	6 (13.6%)
Getting feedback	2 (4.5%)
Maintain the university standards	2 (4.5%)
Outcome based learning	2 (4.5%)
Length of questions	1 (2.3%)
Promotion and annual appraisal	1 (2.3%)
Closure to session	1 (2.3%)

Question 4: Participants were also asked to comment on the reasons post-review reflective practice was not considered important. Only five reviewers thought that reflective practice was not important with four reviewers (80.0%) stating that it is not mandatory to follow and one reviewer (20.0%) commenting that there is a need for subject-specific tool (table-7).

Table-7
Frequency table of reviewers' reasons against post-review reflective practice

Common themes	Participants (N = 5)
Not mandatory to follow	4 (80.0%)
Tool for specific discipline/subject	1 (20.0%)

Discussion

In response to the first research question, the reviewers and reviewees in this study were aware of the importance in carrying out reflective practice after peer review. This was proven by a higher proportion of reviewers and reviewees who agreed that they would recommend that reviewees engage in reflection. Lecturers in this study practiced reflection as part of peer review of teaching and were prompted to reflect with the aid of reflective questions from the Dunseath-Thomas PRTI. Reviewees had to reflect about their achievements as well as compare and evaluate the validity of reviewer's judgement on areas of improvement. Through reflective questions, the lecturers were able to reflect and articulate their current knowledge in addition to identifying knowledge gaps for future planning and improvement. The reflection process in this study was individualistic in nature but had collective elements as reviewees had the opportunity to engage in a professional discussion with the reviewer after the peer observation session. In addition, a majority of reviewers and reviewees also specifically agreed that post-review reflective practice was important in response to the second research question. Moreover, it is encouraging to note that a high proportion of lecturers in this study engaged in reflection for the purpose of self-improvement and the opportunity to hold a discussion with peers on teaching performance issues.

Since lecturers are aware of the importance and benefits of reflective practice, this brings forward the question of why reflection is still not extensively practiced. The third research question addressed the reasons that could discourage the use of reflection. Although only a small number of reviewers and reviewees provided a response to this question, it was interesting to note that lecturers viewed student evaluation to be a sufficient measure of teaching performance. Moreover, the lecturers reported that reflective practice is not mandatory to follow. This finding is not unexpected as student evaluation has been practiced since the 1970s and is considered a valid measure of teaching performance (Greenwald 1997). A university system that is accustomed to relying on student evaluation as a performance measure may view the reflective process as an additional burden to teaching and research duties.

Although reflective practice can be taught, the action of actually engaging in reflection depends greatly on lived practice (Edwards and Thomas 2010). Majority of the lecturers have expressed interest in reflection for self-improvement. Therefore, the university environment should be such that ample opportunity, resources and support are provided for lecturers to engage in reflection of teaching. Through regular practice, reflection will become a norm. Although a minority of lecturers felt that student evaluations were sufficient for teaching performance evaluation, there are two major limitations in student evaluations. The first is that students may not have sufficient expertise to evaluate all teaching aspects, especially the subject knowledge and the integration of research into teaching. In addition, student evaluations have to be handled carefully by asking precise questions. When there is a mismatch between self and student evaluation, it could be potentially damaging to lecturers' self-esteem. A large part of efforts to promote reflective practice require the cooperation of university administrators. University administrators need to establish a supportive work climate which instils mutual respect and trust among lecturers, values communication and encourages active participation from lecturers. Lecturers will be encouraged to reflect and engage in dialogue when they are situated in non-judgemental environment that supports the development of improved teaching practices.

Strengths, limitations and further research

This survey is a first-level analysis to obtain feedback from university lecturers on the reception of reflective practice as part of peer review. In a university where peer review of teaching and reflection is not common place practice, research such as these is essential to gauge the level of readiness among lecturers to adopt reflective practice into teaching. It also highlights presumptions and beliefs that are deeply ingrained within the education

system, that student evaluation is sufficient to measure teaching performance. Whilst there is truth that student evaluation helps measure teaching effectiveness towards student learning, it does not motivate lecturers to reflect how teaching practices can be further improved. This can only be achieved by reflecting on educational pedagogies and evaluating its sociocultural impact on teaching and learning.

However, it would be beneficial to further this research by considering how the outcome of reflective practice (i.e., self-reflection or collective reflection) can contribute towards the development of professional portfolios for lecturers. Besides self-improvement, lecturers can be motivated to practice reflection with the goal of developing a teaching portfolio that can contribute towards tenure promotions and application of teaching awards. Although teaching professionals should be encouraged to adopt individual ways of reflecting according to the context, some basic pointers from The Learning Centre in the University of New South Wales are: (a) reflective writing is more personal than academic writing, (b) reflection is an exploration of teaching, not just a description (c) it is fine to reveal weaknesses, anxieties and errors in addition to strengths and achievements provided lecturers understand the causes and consider steps for improvement and (d) it is valuable to reflect forward to the future in addition to looking back at past experiences. Introducing a basic structure of reflection is useful to lecturers who are attempting to reflect for the first time in peer review and can be used as a framework for expansion in future reflection.

Conclusion

Reflective practice is a skill that is worth developing although there is limited literature on the usage of reflection among university lecturers for personal, professional and knowledge growth. The uniqueness of reflective practice is that it brings an element of personal intellectual history by allowing lecturers to address questions, motivations and passion for teaching up to this point. Reflection also allows them to evaluate the need to transform their teaching practice to meet the changes of existing educational policies. University systems need to put in more efforts in supporting and maintaining reflective practice by adopting the Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change by Prochaska, Prochaska and Levesque (2001). Lecturers may be better able to engage in reflection when they are ready for change. Through decisional balance, lecturers can weigh the pros and cons of reflection based on their unique teaching circumstances. Once lecturers achieve the awareness of how reflection can bring improvements to their teaching experience, reflection can be practiced effectively and the rewards achieved will reinforce and maintain reflective practice within the institution.

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