Part 1 Current issues and new thoughts

What is reflective practice?
Jo TRELFA

Use of epistemological lenses on the ambiguity of reflective practice:
What is it to reflect on experience?
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Reflection, emotion and knowledge of the self
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How the intersubjectivity of teacher and learner reflections contributes to transformative learning experiences
Joan M. KURODA
Current Issues and New Thoughts on Reflective Practice

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Ian Nakamura
Jo Trelfa

Research Institute of Foreign Studies
Kobe City University of Foreign Studies
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Preface

Classroom practitioners go through a variety of interactional incidents. Memories of those experienced teaching events, however, are left to oblivion and get quickly discarded from our consciousness, often with little trace of existence. Significance of reflection is pinned down here in that experiences do not become experience unless they are reflected on. Redefining Dewey’s work, Rodgers (2002) considers reflection as a meaning-making process of experience and distinguishes systematic reflection from ‘other’ types of thinking. Practitioners’ reflection needs to be distinguished from mere thinking.

Thus identifying reflection as a systematic means to make sense of experience I stand at the entrance of the wonderland of practice and slowly step into the woods describing and interpreting all over again. I write, talk and share experiences with my mates, as I believe it is the only way to develop understanding of experiences. My senses are freed as I walk, and things I didn’t notice before start to communicate with my body: the murmuring of grass through my ears, faint shadows cast by the trees through my eyes and the tenderness of the piles of fallen leaves by my feet. I even become startled by the fresh smell of rain that the winds bring as they pass around me. They are not unfamiliar sounds, sights or smells but all tiny things I just didn’t take notice of. Dewey (1938/1997, p. 35) quotes a verse from Tennyson:

> Yet all experience is an arch wherethro’
> Gleams that untravell’d world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever when I move.

Engagement in reflection shines a light into the depth of the meaning of experiences, which otherwise would be lost in darkness.

Experience to be reflected upon, furthermore, has a complex temporal dimension and is not limited to past events. As stated by Schön (1983), reflection is directed not only to past action but also to on-going actions that take place in the here and now. Improvisers, in this sense, are unique practitioners in that they expose themselves to in-the-moment experiences and even go beyond, opening themselves toward the future. Experience is dynamic and should not be considered only as something of the past, but as something that is open to the present and the future as well.
Putting all this together, we find the need of throwing light on experience from different angles and exploring ways of approaching it first. Exchanging ideas on different theories of viewing experiences and relevant research methods will surely open new paths to practitioners and researchers who put their feet in the field of practice. Narratives describing the process of reaching such awareness will invite practitioners towards new insights. There is no reason whatsoever for paths to experience to be limited to one. We would rather explore versatile paths to revisit experience again and again.

I am very happy to have compiled seven articles from the 2014 KCUFS Reflective Practice Conference with which to share the inquisitive process of reflection with practitioner-researchers in different fields. I hope this volume will be of some use to furthering the understanding of reflection.

Ken Tamai
Kobe City University of Foreign Studies
Organizer of 2014 KCUFS Reflective Practice Conference
(September, 28th-30th, 2014)

The above conference was held with the sponsorship of the Research Institute of Kobe City University of Foreign Studies using part of the JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) (No. 24520633)
atmosphere has changed in the classroom and it has made me feel more confident about my lessons and my ability to understand what is happening in the classroom. For example, when it came time to give the final presentations, many groups seemed to be looking forward to giving their presentations. Afterwards, when I spoke to you about your presentations, many of you seemed to find real satisfaction in what you had accomplished. I don't think it was just relief that you had crossed an assignment off your list. I was impressed with many of your comments. Even if you felt it was a job well done, you seemed to know that there is always room for improvement and more to learn.

I can't know for sure though if you don't tell me the story about your journey in this class.

As you know, we have come to the end of the first semester, but we still have another semester together. I use the term 'journey' when I ask you to tell me your story because I think we are still exploring what we can do in this course together. At the beginning of the course I hadn't met you before, the syllabus was new, and the university was unfamiliar. I'm sure you were also faced with new situations and challenges. I'd like to hear about them so we can make the most of our time together during the rest of this course. For some of you, this is the end of your journey with me, as you prepare for your year abroad. This does not make your reflections any less valuable for the rest of the year. I value your experiences with this course and your classmates will benefit from your insight.

I have prepared portfolios that contain 1) your weekly reflection papers, 2) teacher and peer evaluations from your final presentation, 3) a copy of your teacher evaluation from your mid-term presentation. You should already have your self and peer evaluations from your mid-term presentation. Look through your portfolio to remind you of things that happened during the course.

I look forward to reading your stories.

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(Names are listed according to the order of chapters)
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