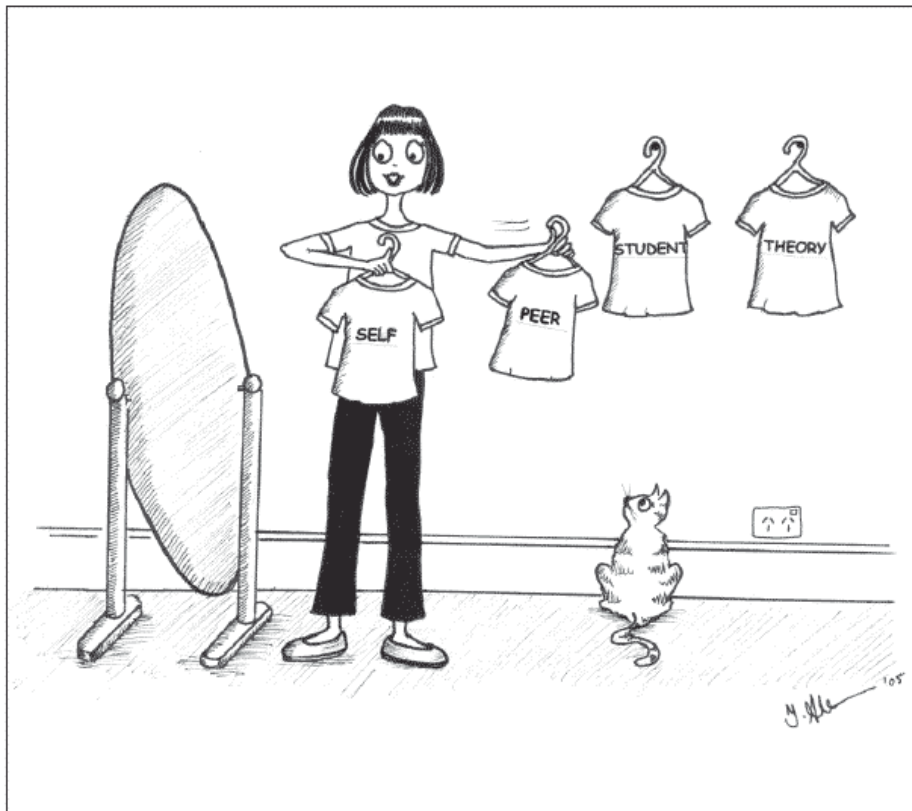




Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



Professional Teaching Experience Portfolio

Critical reflective evaluation of the overall Professional Teaching Experience, which this portfolio applies to including any pastoral care / learner welfare duties or actions undertaken. Including a critical review of your use of assessment of and for learning during your teaching practice experience.

Mark Flagg

Alice Surgy, p147900

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Introduction

This report analyses my personal journey throughout this last academic year in relation to my placement and the experiences within it. Furthermore, this report also explores the effectiveness of my use of assessment and the impacts on my teaching.

Gibbs reflective cycle

Gibbs (1988) created a reflective cycle which can be used to critically reflect an experience, I utilised this model as it is a great model of beginners in relation to reflection (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018). The model consists of 6 stages which are represented as headings for this report.

Description

My placement took place at Swansea Business School which is part of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, at the Business school there are a variety of courses and degrees, but for my personal placement I focused on sports management and public services.

Within this placement I was allocated a set timeline for the majority of my time there, which consisted of assisting teaching Monday and Tuesday with Level 4 sports management, followed by teaching public services Tuesday afternoon. Wednesday was more of a meeting and admin day with my mentor and Thursday was for the Level 5 sports management. Fridays was the most challenging day in regard to lecturing and the subject knowledge, as on Fridays I taught Level 6 sports management and therefore needed a higher level of knowledge which required me to do some research before teaching. A timetable for the two terms can be found in Appendix 1.

I was lucky to have an amazing team of lecturers with me at this placement, and since I had known them for 3 years prior to the placement it made it easier to work together. The pillar of my experience and the one who helped me the most was my mentor, he firstly convinced me to undertake this degree last year and I am glad he did. He has played a key part in shaping my educational journey and I aspire to one day do the same to the future generations.

Feelings

At the start of this journey I was feeling nervous and somewhat excited, however when the first opportunity to stand at the front arrived I was mortified, I have always been

this over the top confident girl and the day I had to teach for the first time I did not even recognise myself. I was so nervous. However as soon as 10 minutes went by I felt myself relaxing and I have not been nervous or scared since then. As the weeks progressed I had times where I deeply regretted choosing to do this degree, I was feeling mentally and physically drained from all the stress and work. At times it was overwhelming and I just felt like quitting. Retrospectively now, the Sports management degree that I took for 3 years was 10 times easier than this past year.

When I was not feeling stressed and overwhelmed I felt happy and proud, I saw students change and progress and become better within my teaching placement. I saw personalities change and students really dedicate themselves to university. I felt important, I felt as if I was making a change in the world, and to some extent I was.

Within my placement at times I felt as if I was a burden, and just someone they had to find things to do. I did not need to feel this way as I know the members of staff were happy to have me and help around but I could not stop feeling that way. And at other times I felt as if I was just an option to have some work done for free. Looking back now, I know I was just over reacting and over thinking, and that deep down I knew that they were all just trying to help me.

When you spend your days surrounded by the same people it can become claustrophobic and I think that is what influenced my feelings occasionally.

In all honesty, the placement was not what caused stress or the feeling to quit. It was instead this course itself, as we felt we were pointless and discarded like garbage, when the lead lecturer quit and we were left with nothing I felt like leaving, not because I was not enjoying the placement but because I was not getting the education I deserved. Luckily, Mark stepped in to cover and thankfully made me want to pursue this degree once again.

Above all, I am grateful. My heart is full of love for everyone that I had the chance to work with, I know I was a pile of stress and anxiety at times but that was down to poor time management on my side and not due to the timetable I had been given.

The feeling that I can mostly associate with my teaching experience is joy, I felt joy when I taught my students, I felt joy when I saw my students be accepted towards their

placements and I also know I am going to feel joy when I watch them graduate this summer.

Analysis

The positives in this experience massively outweigh the negatives, however it is still vital to mention those negative experiences because those are the ones that shaped my journey. The pressure and schedule was definitely one of the hardest parts of this year, being in placement 5 days a week and working 2/3 days at my actual job as well strained me and I felt physically drained for the majority of the year. However, it was my decision to want to do the full schedule as I wanted to experience what a full lecturing job felt and looked like. Obviously, I did not take into consideration my other job as much when deciding my schedule.

I classed myself as a “yes man” sort of persona within my placement, as I wanted to portray myself as reliable and ready to help, however I did not take into consideration the negative aspects of it, which resulted in being very tough to say no to any challenge or task, as I was expected to say yes (Gupta, 2018). This impacted my placement deeply, especially after discovering the financial crisis affecting my placement, as I did not require or was motivated by the money aspect of the placement, but was instead motivated by the idea of having a job where I could develop and be intellectually stimulated (Tibergien, 2017).

Another negative aspect was the rudeness of some students, as they still saw me as a student and not a lecturer and therefore did not abide by any activities or tasks I set. It was hard to gain their trust and respect and looking back now I wish I had been stricter with the way I behaved around them, I tried the friendly approach and I should have taken a more professional approach.

Furthermore, a big wakeup call in relation to the education system was the mental health awareness involved within the placement, as some of my students struggled with mental health, anxiety and depression, and therefore I had to be careful on how I conducted myself around those students. I was also involved in extenuating circumstances meetings where I realised the extreme of mental health and I therefore maintain an open door policy to ensure all students felt welcoming to speak to me and discuss any problems, obviously disclosing information to my mentor if I thought was important or life threatening.

The PCET course, as mentioned previously was a big downfall of this year, as it felt like no one really cared for our education and we were just being passed around to whoever could care. Luckily someone did and I am forever grateful to Mark for taking this extra responsibility to ensure we had an education.

It did not portray the teaching experience right although, as we were meant to be learning to be teachers when no “real” teacher would step up to teach us, until Mark did.

Enough about the negatives though, this experience was also highly positive, especially in regards to the support provided to me by my mentor and the rest of the team, they trusted me to deliver course/lectures without ever questioning my ability. I was treated a part of the team. Furthermore, it is vital to also acknowledge the third year students sports management group, who knew me previously as a student for 2 years but treated me with the respect and authority I deserved, they were the nicest and kindest group of students I had the pleasure to teach.

Evaluation

Within this section, I wanted to explore with more detail a positive aspect and a negative aspect. Probably, the hardest part of this journey was indirectly related to me but impacted me greatly. There was a funding crisis within the university resulting in that potential job opportunity that I saw at the beginning of this degree fade away. At around November time I had a conversation with my mentor about the possibility of covering some modules and lecturing some classes, however after the financial controversy I knew that those options were unlikely. This decreased my motivation as I was hoping to pursue a future career within the university and those options were almost to non-existent.

On a positive note, I was not alone within my placement, I was lucky enough to have other student-teachers with me at the business school which made the experience so much more enjoyable. I did not feel by myself, I felt united and it was great to experience this placement with people who were going through the same journey.

Conclusion

Overall, this experience made me realise that perhaps teaching is not for me yet, as I need to develop more as a person. I was too nice and friendly and not authoritative enough to control the class. I wish I went easier, I do not regret any of it but I wish I

took it easier or did not insert myself into every challenge, although it was very rewarding.

If I was to do this course again, I would. But I would have picked a different placement. I loved my placement but students saw me as a friend and a fellow student and therefore it impacted my credibility. Additionally, I wish I had worked on my time management more effectively, as I was left with half-filled lesson plans and mentor meetings as I did not work towards my portfolio during this year.

Action Plan

Moving forward I plan on doing a master's in business, it is my other love other than education and therefore I plan on exploring that side of possibilities more before deciding what career I want to pursue.

I have not fully discarded the option to teach, but for now it does not seem likely. If I was to pursue a teaching career I would probably choose to do a year abroad teaching English or sports in Asia as that experience would aid my in fulfilling my love for travelling and education.

Formative and Summative Assessment

Within this placement I had various opportunities to assess students and therefore assess my learning, I utilised a variety of assessment strategies, with emphasis on formative and summative assessment.

Formative assessment can be defined as the process of how teachers recognise student learning in order to enhance and expand knowledge (Wiliam, 2018). I incorporated formative assessment through the means of quizzes, questions and tasks to ensure students were engaged and learning, this only allowed me to judge their knowledge but also analyse and establish how effective my teaching was.

Summative assessment relates to assessing and recording what has been learnt over the course of a module, usually associated with an assignment or presentation (Curzon and Tummons, 2013). I was fortunate enough to be involved in setting, marking and delivering the assignment briefs, I found marking easier than firstly anticipated and I was grateful that I was provided with the experience.

Assessment was one of the hardest sections as I had to judge and grade students based on their knowledge, and as previous student myself I know how hard grades

can affect motivation, so I ensured I was fair, positive and provided constructive feedback to allow students to develop.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the 507 hours I officially spent in my placement was an eye-opening and rewarding experience that I do not regret. It was probably one of the hardest experiences I have had to endure and I am glad I had my mentor to guide me through it. The PCET course itself was devastating, challenging and unorganised. The lack of importance and dedication from the lecturing team towards the students was appalling until Mark stepped in. He really did built the course up from scratch and provided us with hope. I am eternally grateful.

It made me realise that however, I do not plan on pursuing a teaching career currently and I am instead going to focus on other passions and interests before deciding what my future career will entail. I am not discarding the option to teach I just personally feel drained from teaching and need a break before embarking in a teaching career.

Lastly, I am just so thankful that this degree has finished and I am excited for what the future may bring.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Timetable

Day	Time	Class	Semester
Monday	9-3	L4 Sports	1 / 2
Tuesday	9-1	L4 Sports	1 / 2
Tuesday	2-5	L4/L5 Public Services	1 / 2
Thursday	12-3	L5 Sports	1
Thursday	12-4	L5 Sports	2
Friday	10-1	L6 Sports	1
Friday	12-3	L6 Sports	2