

Reflective Narrative

Description

This narrative utilises Gibbs' (1988) model as a framework for reflection following the delivery of a micro teaching session. The session was thirty minutes on a topic of my choice delivered to a group of seven adult learners and developed in keeping with The UK Professional Standards Framework (2011) including activity, values and knowledge (A, K, V). The aim of the session was to develop an understanding of the basic principles of burn first aid. Learning objectives required the students to describe, list, identify and explain elements of burn first aid principles (A1). The learning objectives were developed using a SMART approach. The approach was firstly, specific; the aim of the session outlined clearly what I wanted to achieve. The approach was also measureable; learning was assessed through the outcome of a quiz; achievable, the topic was discussed with fellow learners prior to developing the session; realistic, the session was created taking into account the time constraints of the session and time-bound, using the reflective process to review the session and its outcomes (A1).

The assignment remit also included the need to identify and utilise at least two emergent technologies (K2, 4, 5). I created a PowerPoint presentation in order to outline the main content, supported by the use of an embedded video clip. Assessment of learning was achieved with an interactive digital quiz via Socrative (A3).

Feelings

I approached the session with some trepidation. Even though I was confident in my knowledge of the subject and content, I was aware that I was being evaluated on my ability to deliver the content in an engaging, effective way (K2). Whilst having previously used PowerPoint as a platform for material delivery, I had not used any other emergent technology. Having decided to use an embedded video clip and interactive on-line quiz, I found myself being somewhat distracted by what could potentially go wrong, and forgetting to feel confident in my own knowledge and to revert back to more traditional teaching methods in the event of technical failure (A5).

One of the main objectives of the module was to gain an insight into and develop an understanding of emergent technologies as an additional tool in my teaching kit. Following

the session, I now feel more open minded and confident in their use, and can appreciate the value of including technology in an effort to support the wide range of learning styles that exist. The success of the session depended on how interesting the learners found the content and delivery of the material. I was aware that whilst I am very passionate about the topic, some learners might have been disengaged finding it irrelevant or boring. I created an on line interactive quiz in the hope that it would offer variety and appeal to the different learning preferences and in addition assess learning (A1, 2, 3).

During the delivery of the micro teach, the video clip was only partly successful following a lack of sound, however I decided to continue, outlining to the group the content of the clip. This was highlighted as a positive element within the tutor feedback, and on reflection was a valuable learning experience. I recognised that having sound core knowledge and understanding of the topic could overcome any issues with technology that is used to support teaching and learning not act as a substitute (K2, 4, 5).

Evaluation

The role of the teacher is highlighted by Petty (2014) who writes about the different types of teachers that students encounter throughout their learning journey, including teachers that are passive, active, facilitating or instructing. Arguing that the majority of teachers fall within the category of facilitator and instructor, Petty (2014) states that teachers adopt elements of teaching as a result of how they were taught but also attempting to teach within a set of personal values, recognising that successful teaching and learning is the result of a collaborative approach, teacher and student working together utilising a mixture of teaching and learning styles. Supporting this assertion, the micro teaching session described above, utilised a mixture of teaching strategies including use of emergent technology, and traditional teaching methods, including use of a whiteboard and question and answer with positive outcomes facilitating discussion and enhancing learning (K3, 5 V1).

It is suggested by Foley (2004) that all aspects of life include elements of learning, and that learning is a fundamental dimension of life for all individuals. Foley (2004) goes on to argue that learning takes place on different levels, that it can be planned or unplanned and suggests that adult learning is less likely to occur within the formal setting of a classroom, but rather gained through experience or active participation. With this argument in mind, the purpose of utilising blended learning such as the incorporation of emergent technology within a

traditional framework becomes apparent. The use of Socrative, an on line interactive quiz supports the various styles of learning that might exist within a group, but in addition, allows immediate assessment of the learning that has occurred through identifying correct and incorrect answers. Nicosia (2013) writes that individuals are encouraged to become independent learners and goes on to argue that teachers should therefore become independent teachers that seek to create and support learning environments that are conducive to different learning styles, whilst maintaining a learner centred approach.

The idea of learning as a social process is also addressed by Foley (2004) who discusses the work of social constructivist Vygotsky whose theory argued that interaction between individuals supports learning. The theories of Vygotsky are also highlighted by Foley (2004) within the context of how a teacher adopting all their different roles, including mentor, coach, facilitator, can support the learner who is self- motivated and independent to increase their knowledge by means other than by observation alone. With this in mind, a micro teaching session that includes a variety of teaching strategies therefore should support the learning process.

Analysis

Learning is described by Reece and Walker (2006) as a course of change that can either occur consciously or sub consciously arguing that learning involves personal development and is a process of acquiring new skills. This is supported by Curzon and Tummons' (2013) definition of learning as a behaviour changing process that is the result of individual experience that changes that individual's attitude and skills through a variety of ways including, experiential, informal and formal learning.

Furthermore, Avis *et al* (2015) highlight three fundamental theories of how learning occurs. The cognitive school looks at how the thinking process affects learning. On the other hand behaviourist theories look at how teacher behaviour affects learning whilst humanistic school of thought highlights learner's wider needs including their emotional needs. The humanistic school of learning, Petty (2014) suggests, is central to the way adults learn arguing that successful adult learning occurs as a result of self- directed learning where individuals are responsible for reflection, self-evaluation in circumstances of their own choosing.

Moreover, within the context of how individuals learn, Denby (2015) highlights Bloom's (1956) model of taxonomy, a model that categorises a hierarchy of skills as learners move

through levels from the lower level, that is knowledge, to the highest level, that of evaluation. However, Denby (2015) suggests that whilst this model has value as a tool in the teacher's armoury, the model is criticised for being too general in its categorisation, assuming that individuals only move forward in a chronological way.

It is suggested by Knowles *et al* (2005) that adult learners are the least likely group to respond to traditional, structured forms of teaching, preferring more interactive, independent learning methods. Additionally, Knowles *et al* (2005) suggest that adult learners' different learning styles and preferences increase with age, and those adults have an inherent need to be less reliant on the transfer of knowledge from teacher to learner, preferring to be self-directed and independent.

In keeping with these ideas, Petty (2014) also writes about the idea of preference within the context of learning styles, suggesting that students thrive within an environment that has variety, offering more than a didactic method or strategy. Petty (2014) refers to Kolb's (1976) learning cycle arguing that to proceed, the individual learner needs to adopt different learning styles, including activist, reflector, theorist and pragmatist. Also discussing the work of Kolb (1976) Rogers and Horrocks (2010) describe the cyclical nature of the model as concrete experience, complete engagement in the present; reflective observations, a multi perspective reflection of the individual's experience; abstract conceptualisation, taking observations and developing theories and active experimentation and utilising the theories created to problem solve and reach decisions.

The learning cycle is described by Knowles *et al* (2005) as an interactive process that occurs between experience and content, and that learning occurs when a transformation happens, when thinking, knowledge and skills are modified with individuals choosing to enter the cycle at different points depending on their learning preferences.

Within the context of the micro teaching session, teaching methods and how this was influenced by different learning styles and preferences are identified. The content of the session was delivered utilising a traditional method, the use of PowerPoint to impart information through a written and pictorial technique. As teacher, this involved standing in front of the class, delivering information that the students may or may not have learned, depending on their own learning styles. Supporting a traditional method of delivery, the inclusion of emergent technology supported development as a teacher (A5). Gregson and Hillier (2015) write that in order for effective learning and teaching to occur, there is a need

for the teacher to learn, arguing that teachers learning is a continual process that supports the development of knowledge and skills and therefore supports their ever changing roles.

The notion of the role of teacher and what that involves is discussed by Jarvis (2005) who suggests that the teacher is not simply an individual that imparts information, but also acts as mentor, facilitator, role model, coach and assessor for example. When considering the multi-faceted role of the teacher, it becomes apparent that a level of self-awareness is vital in order to enhance skills (A5).

Conclusion

It is suggested by Armitage *et al* (2016) that the emergence of technology has transformed the way students learn, but that teachers need to have a clear idea of how and when technology can be an effective tool for teaching and learning (K2,3,4). In support of this, Jarvis (2015) suggests that the use of technology within teaching can enhance learning and improve teaching methods, but argues teachers must acknowledge that technology is an additional tool, and should not be utilised as a substitute for fundamental teaching principles. On the other hand, Somekh (2007) discusses the apparent lack of imagination that can exist when teachers fail to recognise changes in how society is developing and the ever-changing learning preferences. Additionally, Armitage *et al* (2016) argue that many individuals are reluctant to introduce the use of technology, experiencing anxiety when trying something different and potentially challenging (A5).

With this in mind, considering the future and the role of emergent technologies within education, recent literature argues that there is a place for the inclusion of greater interactive methods of teaching and learning. Cabero and Barroso (2017) argue that in recent years the use of technology has gained momentum and those new practices including the use of Augmented Reality is in keeping with a constructivist methodology as it depends on the interaction of the student to achieve the best possible outcome. In keeping with this argument of promoting student's independent learning, Al-Qirim *et al* (2017) suggest that there is a call within higher education facilities to promote the use of technologies such as the interactive whiteboard, suggesting that the creation of an environment that is more creative, and experimental allows the students to become more flexible and organised within an environment of self-learning.

Petty (2014) writes that digital, emergent technologies are a very useful tool at the teacher's disposal, suggesting that the vast array of digital equipment readily available enhances student learning due to its potential for interactive, immediate and exciting experience. Additionally, Petty (2014) suggests that within the context of teaching methods, that there is no one style fits all approach, arguing that developing a variety of teaching methods develops a teacher that can adapt to the learning styles of individual learners.

Action Plan

When considering the above conclusions, it is apparent that the use of emergent technologies can enhance the quality of my teaching when utilised appropriately and when acknowledging the different learning styles of individual learners (A1, 2). Whilst the emergent technologies that I chose to use were new to me, it has become clear that there are numerous technological tools at my disposal. Interactive quizzes such as Kahoot and Socrative, as used within my session can add valuable opportunity for interactive teaching and immediate assessment of learning.

Even-though I chose PowerPoint as my tool for content delivery, in future I will seek to push my own learning boundaries and utilise platforms such as Prezi and Keynote (A5). With this in mind however, the development of my next teaching session will move away from the use of emergent technology and focus on an interactive practical hands on approach that allows the learners to utilise different learning styles. The idea of learning by doing or experiential learning is discussed by James and Miller (2007) who examine Edgar Dale's theory and the resulting Cone of Experience. This theory suggests that learners retain more information by what they do as opposed to what is heard, read or observed. Whilst the interactive digital quiz supported the assessment of learning, the development of a teaching session that will require the students to develop a practical skill should also support assessment of learning and effectiveness of my teaching methods (A1, 2, 4).

Valuable feedback was given in relation to lesson planning, in particular teaching strategies. As discussed above, teaching strategies and methods are wide and variable. The micro teaching session discussed within this narrative relied on a learning preference for visual and auditory learning styles. However, the kinaesthetic learning style might be considered as a possible preference considering the theories discussed regarding adult learners and their preference for self-direction, independence and interactive learning (A4). The lesson plan

developed for the first micro teach was rewritten placing more emphasis on teaching strategies in an attempt to support my development and improve my teaching methods within the second session (A1, 4).

Completing this reflective narrative has supported personal development through allowing me to consolidate my first experience of lesson planning, gaining an understanding of learning theories, the principles of teaching and learning and how the use of emergent technologies can enhance teaching methods and support teaching strategies, whilst acknowledging individual styles and preferences (A5,K1,2,3,4,5).

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