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Numerous people have defined the term 'reflection' however, as stated by Peterbuwert (2013) Donald Schon defines reflection as "a dialogue of thinking and doing through which I become more skilful" (Schon, 1987, p. 31). Throughout this reflection, I have applied Donald Schon's (1991) 'Reflective Model' I feel I can resonate with his 'reflecting-in-action' model, as I always 'think on my feet' within both my personal and professional life while linking theory to previous experiences (Kolb, 1984). Implementing Schons' (1991) concept of reflection allows me to make any rapid modifications as and when needed. As a professional, I regularly 'reflect-on-action' to see how I might have improved if I had to repeat the task in question again.

Professionals that value lifelong learning usually utilise reflection as a tool for learning from experience (Jasper, 2003). I fully comprehend the importance of self-reflection, as it is a crucial element to lifelong learning (Schon, 1987).

Reflection is clearly purposeful because it ends a conclusion. The purpose

Reflection is to untangle a problem or to make sense of a puzzling situation.

Reflection involves working towards a better understanding of the problem and ways of solving it (Loughan, 1996, p. 14).

As a busy person with commitments at work and at home, I found myself 'reflecting-in-action' (Schon, 1987) on my decision to enroll while I engaged in my busy professional and personal situations. The blended learning approach (Rothwell, 2020) consisted of a variety of asynchronous and synchronous lectures, which suited me well as this gave me flexibility and the

opportunity to study simultaneously around my full-time job and hectic family life. I was able to balance my professional and academic responsibilities effectively and efficiently. I was able to achieve my academic goals while still employed.

My family and coworkers gave me tremendous support, which enabled me to finally follow my career aspirations. I had enrolled in the Inclusive Education course; I felt excited and relieved I had finally enrolled. With regards to Kolb's cycle of reflection (1984), this is known as the 'concrete experience' (*as cited in Brown, 2022*).

I attended all lectures through asynchronous and synchronous interactions (Scheiderer, 2021). Initially, I was timid as I lacked confidence (Kansil *et al.*, 2022). After observing and understanding the congeniality of my peers, I felt comfortable participating vocally during the lectures—my interpersonal skills had advanced. We all shared our experiences and views to create and facilitate our learning (Punie, 2007; Wenger, 1998, *as cited in*, Grenfell, 2015). Conversely, I did feel asynchronous lessons lacked empathy and a reduction in effective social communication (Sedon *et al.*, 2021). Distractions at home also lead to my inadequate cognitive performance (Opoku, 2021).

The teachers were caring and supportive (Baker, 1999) and delivered material in a constructivist, learner-centered approach (Dewey, 2012; Kember and Kwan, 2000) throughout the course and supported me through both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers that I encountered, primarily with inadequate technical skills (Nel, 2014). I applied for a laptop bursary from the university, which was soon granted and enabled me to successfully complete the authentic assignments (Hughes and Thomas, 2017). I felt overwhelmed with all the new technological skills I needed to perform to complete the course, as my technical abilities were limited, but I was ready for the new

challenge ahead. Teachers implementing the Adult Learning Theory andragogy model (Knowles, 2019) played a pivotal role to me as I have lots of firsthand experience within my current employment role. According to Knowles' principles of andragogy, the foundation needed for learning activities is experience, which includes errors. Knowles (2019) suggests adults are most interested in learning subjects that are immediately relevant and affect their personal or professional lives (*as cited in*, Machynska, Boiko, and The Ivan Franko National University of Liviv, 2020). The interactive lectures are presented by a 'More Knowledgeable Other' (MKO) since Vygotsky (*as cited in*, Dolittle, 1995) posits that social interaction and collaboration can assist learners through the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) and can expand their knowledge and achievements. Through spiral learning (Bruner, 1961; 1977), each module I cultivated a deeper understanding of educational theories and methodologies and could relate my daily practices to them. Collaboration with peers and real-life experiences can boost motivation and cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1980). I became an intrinsically motivated, attentive student (Amabile, *et al*, 1994; Gagne, *et al*, 2010; Grant 2008; Vallerand *et al*, 1992, *as cited in*, Fishbach, and Woolley, 2021).

After accepting support and feedback from lecturers from previous assignments, my technical skills flourished. I felt satisfied I had finally mastered Moodle and all technical aspects of the course. However, I had more than my fair share of technical issues, from internet and technical problems to microphone defects, which hindered my overall learning at times. But focusing on my positive mindset, I overcome these barriers (Song *et al*, 2004; Dweck, 2017) with perseverance. Bruner (1961) also advocates, students "experience success and failures not as a reward or punishment, but as information" (*as cited in*, Joseph, 2021).

My new habits of developing academically were now infused within my characteristics (Bourdieu, 2012, *as cited in*, Grenfell 2015). I discovered my cognitive (Bandura, 1986) and competence talents were kindled by lectures (Barker, 1994). I took relevant notes at each lecture as I am a visual learner; this enabled me to enhance my performance throughout my assignments (Armbuster, 2009; Crawford, 1925, *as cited in*, Bui and Myerson, 2014). Research shows that a variety of communication is encouraged during lectures, students are more likely to participate in the learning process and potentially achieve higher learning outcomes (Lanier, *et al*, 2022). However, I did feel at ease knowing all lectures were recorded in case I could not attend a lecture for any reason; this also gave the opportunity to recap the lecture and watch the recording again at any given time. I like to touch base with my lecturer (Milton, 2009, *as cited in*, Grenfell, 2015) via email to ensure I'm on the correct track with each assignment; this is an illustration of Argyle's (2001) communication theory (*cited in*, Sheasby, 2023) and implement any feedback given. Thurmond (2003) defined interaction as,

the learner's engagement with the course content, other learners,

the instructor, and the technological medium used in the course.

Interaction is the exchange of information that inevitably allows

students a greater comprehension of the content supplied and

learning goals (Thurmond, 2003).

According to Schon (1987) in his Reflective Theory, this phase of my growth is termed 'Reflecting-in-Action' as we collectively engaged in lectures and articulated our real-life experiences and proficiencies on various topics during lectures. I found the synchronous lectures

more beneficial to assimilate material delivered from a teacher social constructivism approach (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1971) collaborating effectively, building on previous schemas and accommodating new information to create a state of equilibrium in a non-bias way (*as cited in*, Chand, 1995).

Referencing was hard to grasp at first as this is something I had never done before; I experienced anxiety about plagiarism (Aisami, 2015). Having the Harvard Reference Guidelines to hand was a great visual tool as I am a visual learner; this aided to embed the information deeper (Rozalski, 2004, *as cited in*, Gunnarsson *et al.*, 2014) to ensure that I did not plagiarise and my work was full of ‘academic integrity’ (Jones *et al.*, 2024). My organisational skills improved significantly, particularly with referencing, as I had to arrange reference list in alphabetical order and accurately recall the source of research, as this became a habit, my memory skills enhanced as I learnt to remember the sequence to referencing; this was visible in my results with later assignments. I welcomed both positive and negative feedback from my lecturers, and as my improvement regarding my positive mindset (Dweck, 2017) continued, I believed mistakes are a vital part of the learning process (Dewey; Rogers; Skinner, *as cited in*, Perkinson, 1979; Dweck, 2008, *as cited in*, Yeager and Dweck, 2020). According to Dweck (2017) it is not intelligence, talent or education that differentiates people instead; it is their mindset, and their approach to life's challenges. Albert Einstein also proclaimed, “Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new” (p.14 *as cited in*, Cohen, 2012). In my opinion, consistent paraphrasing and citations became apparent in the majority of my assignments. I displayed my effective time management and metacognition competencies by completing and submitting assignments successfully by the suggested deadline dates (Theobald, 2021).

I felt eager and proud to start my final year of the Foundation Degree. (I cannot quite believe how fast the past two years have gone!). My motivation had increased, so I decided against procrastinating on assignments, as procrastination can lead to undesirable outcomes on overall grades (Michinov, *et al*, 2011, *as cited in*, Nicholls, 2023). I assured myself that by employing my effective time management skills I would eliminate any anxiety and stress factors (Aeon, *et al*, 2021). This is highlighted as ‘Reflection-in-Action’ based on Schon’s model of reflection (1987).

One evening when I was studying, my 18-year-old son expressed, “I am really proud of you, mum!”. Social capital can influence other forms of capital, and the bond of family relationships is essential (Coleman, 1994, *as cited in*, Webber and Dismore, 2020). Tears welled up in my eyes as a mix of emotions flooded through me, a sense of pride and accomplishment warmed my heart from within. This experience is an example of Schon's ‘Reflection-in-action’ reflective model (1987) and provided me with the boost I needed to complete the course. In a sense of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990, *as cited in*, Edgerton and Roberts, 2014) I had hoped that I had set the foundations to inspire my son to study again and gain a degree in the near future. This demonstrates the importance of social connections (Bourdieu, 2012, *as cited in*, Grenfell, 2015).

The lecturer's support was impeccable throughout, their knowledge and enthusiasm filtered down to us as students, always adapting their pedagogies to each student, showing empathy and understanding. Empathetic teachers can inevitably boost academic success and the overall rapport between student and teacher relationships (Wubbels and Brekelmans 2005; Stojiljkovic *et al*, 2012, *as cited in*, Ge *et al*, 2021). This is supported by University Trinity Saint David ranking joint 3rd in the UK for student satisfaction and joint 1st in Wales for “high-quality staff/lectures” (Neves *et al*, 2024).

‘Reflecting-on-action’ (Schon, 1987) through this course, I have transformed into a confident, compassionate, and reflective practitioner, equipped with the appropriate skills to prepare and inspire the next generation. I gained a richer comprehension of educational theories and methodologies. “There is nothing so practical as a good theory” (Lewin, p. 6, *as cited in*, Caulfield, 2011). My ability to design inclusive, engaging environments has flourished, ensuring every child in my care feels safe, valued and supported (Maslow, 1987; UNICEF, 2022; Welsh Government, 2015). I have embraced a growth mindset (Dweck, 2017) constantly seeking opportunities to enhance my teaching practice and adapt to the diverse needs of children in the 21st century. I have developed strong communication skills, allowing me to collaborate effectively with peers, colleagues, children, parents, and the wider community. My catalytic leadership qualities have matured, which have empowered me to take on greater responsibilities to creatively and confidently contribute meaningfully to the school's ethos and result in positive outcomes for all (Murray and Clark, 2013).

In the future, I will always have this reflection to return to increase my personal development skills further (Bassot, 2020). If I were to do this course again, I would not change anything, as I firmly believe I have displayed accountability while remaining proactive and resilient over the past 3 years. The professional and personal characteristics I have developed will undoubtedly transfer to my employability skills in the 21st century. Additionally, I plan to continue with my studies and complete a full degree in Inclusive Education. Finally, I hope to improve my Welsh language capabilities, as I feel that would develop my employability skills further.

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