

Critical reflection for learning: What's in your tool box?
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Description: As educators we often encounter puzzles of practice that cause us to reflect -- but what exactly do we choose to reflect upon? To make a difference for student learning, the focus of that reflection matters. In this interactive session, we will explore tools for reflecting on puzzles of practice that are informed by what we know about learning, our students and ourselves. Together we'll entertain the potential for engaging in ongoing inquiry about practice in a way that's guided by research and conceptual frameworks.

Workshop outline:

1. **Quick welcome/introductions**
2. **Dive into Individual reflection (5 minutes)** -- Ask participants to jot down, a **puzzle of practice/dilemma** they have experienced in teaching their students - by this we mean things that students didn't know, didn't understand or didn't do.
3. **Setting the purpose (5 minutes).** For this short workshop we are going to engage an inquiry together. We will examine how using frameworks informed by learning theory and a culturally responsive orientation to motivation can: (i) guide the critical reflection of a puzzle of practice; (ii) help us bump into assumptions about students/teaching/learning that are worth reconsidering -- such as shifting lens from an analysis of achievement gaps to an analysis of opportunity gaps (Milner, 2011); and (iii) inform a focus for further professional development that could make a difference for student learning.
4. **Get oriented to partners' puzzle/dilemma (6 minutes)** -- Partners one at a time, share summary of the puzzle & why unexpected. Partner poses 1 or 2 clarifying questions to ensure they understand the nature of the puzzle, and probe for underlying assumptions that made the puzzle unexpected *(3 minutes each-- if group of 3, each person gets two minutes)*
5. **Examine frameworks with your partner** (handout) -- What you have in front of you is a graphic organizer with questions informed by two frameworks -- (i) Ambrose et al's *seven principles of teaching* that are informed by social & cognitive theories on how people learning; and (ii) Ginsberg & Wlodkowski's motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching. **TASK** →
 - (i) Explore the questions and pick 1 or 2 that could provide insight to your puzzle of practice. *(10 minutes)*
 - (ii) Zoom in *(20 minutes)*:
 - Use the handout with more detailed descriptions to make sense of these two questions (one from Ambrose et al., and one from Ginsberg and Wlodkowski).
 - What do the ideas/purposes/practices for that principle or aspect of the framework illuminate for you?
6. **Debrief (10 minutes):** Get a couple of people to share -- short and sweet!
 - What was the puzzle?
 - What new insights/questions did the frameworks raise for you about your puzzle?
 - What might be your next steps for further understanding?
7. **And to what end**
 - Use quote by *Cochran-Smith (2004)* to draw attention to goal of using frameworks for critical reflection that (i) shifts the focus from achievement gaps to opportunity gaps ... in other words, shift to examining the ways the lessons are structured to provide opportunities to learn; and (ii) if serious about attending to learning need to be culturally responsive.
 - Any professional development needs to take *Inquiry as Stance* . Frameworks can help prioritize relevant work.
8. **Q&A & final reflection on learning (i.e. session assessment) (10-15 minutes)**

Bibliography








Ambrose et al., (2010), *How Learning Works – 7 Research-Based Principles for Student Teaching*

Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road : Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

[Ginsberg, M.B. & Wlodkowski, R.J. \(2009\). Diversity and motivation: Culturally responsive teaching in college. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 43-48.](#)

Critical Reflection for Learning








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| Consider the questions below. Which can provide insight to you puzzle? Pick a couple to focus on. | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Learning Principles | Motivational Framework | | | |
| | Inclusion | Competence | Attitude | Meaning |
| | <p>Inclusion</p> <p><i>Have I created a space where we all feel respected by and connected to one another?</i></p> | <p>Competence</p> <p><i>Have I created an understanding that we are effectively learning something we value and perceive as authentic to our real world?</i></p> | <p>Attitude</p> <p><i>Have I used relevance and encouraged student agency to create a favorable disposition toward learning?</i></p> | <p>Meaning</p> <p><i>Have I created challenging and engaging learning experiences that include learners' perspectives and values?</i></p> |
|  | <i>What do I know about students prior knowledge?</i> | | | |
|  | <i>What do I know about how students' knowledge is organized?</i> | | | |
|  | <i>What do I know about students' self-efficacy and what they value? Does the classroom environment encourage and support risk-taking?</i> | | | |
|  | <i>Are students given opportunities to practice, integrate, and apply what they are learning?</i> | | | |
|  | <i>Are students given opportunities for goal-directed practice? Do they receive targeted feedback and opportunities to revise?</i> | | | |
|  | <i>Have I created an environment that supports students' social, emotional, and intellectual development?</i> | | | |
|  | <i>Are students given opportunities to reflect on, analyze, and adjust their approaches to learning?</i> | | | |

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informed by Ambrose et al., (2010), *How Learning Works – 7 Research-Based Principles for Student Teaching*

| Learning principle | What does it look like to attend to this principle in a class? |
|---|---|
|  <p>Student's prior knowledge can help or hinder learning</p> | <p>Does the class regularly get students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● elicit prior knowledge? ● bridge and build on any gaps in that knowledge? ● engage in both declarative & procedural knowledge? ● distinguish which knowledge is relevant (or not) to context? |
|  <p>How students organize knowledge influences how they learn and apply what they know</p> | <p>Do the tasks and lessons of the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● help us to see how students are organizing ideas? ● reveal the expert/disciplinary organization of ideas (e.g. advanced/graphic organizers)? ● get <i>students</i> to <i>make</i> connections among the pieces of knowledge they are learning using principles or frameworks? |
|  <p>Students' motivation determines, directs, and sustains what they do to learn</p> | <p>Does the class and learning environment provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● support and encouragement – i.e. does it demonstrate belief in learner? ● opportunities for students to learn, to get feedback and to practice? ● ways for learners to believe in their chances for success? ● material & tasks that are interesting, relevant and authentic in students' worlds to build perceived value and purpose of goals and assignments? |
|  <p>To develop mastery, students must acquire component skills, practice integrating them, and know when to apply what they have learned</p> | <p>Does the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● anticipate all the skills the learning goals depend? ● help students to manage the cognitive load by strategically lightening aspects of the task (e.g. time to practice individual skills, or scaffolding complex tasks)? ● have reasonable expectations for time needed to think and do? ● provide opportunities for transfer? (i.e. get students to grapple with when and where to apply what they've learned.)? |
|  <p>Goal-directed practice coupled with targeted feedback enhances the quality of students' learning</p> | <p>Does the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● help students make sense of and focus their attention on the specific goals or set of goals? ● provide sufficient opportunities for students to practice that “are <i>focused</i> on a specific goal or set of goals and at an <i>appropriate level of challenge</i>?” (p136) ● provide feedback that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – focuses “students on key knowledge and skills,” – is timely and frequent enough for students to be able to use it, – links to additional opportunities to practice, – communicates where students are relative to goals, and – provides just enough/not too much, information? |
|  <p>Students' current level of development interacts with the social, emotional, and intellectual climate of the course to impact learning</p> | <p>Do the pedagogical strategies we employ support development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● setting up norms where learning depends on multiple perspectives, listening, valuing uncertainty, and resisting a single right answer? ● making sure learning opportunities and content don't act to marginalize or miseducate students. For example, do the lesson & materials provide opportunities to examine, inform and challenge, where necessary, assumptions that fall into stereotypical narratives about learners (and per Milner (2010) |
|  <p>To become self-directed learners, students must learn to monitor & adjust their approaches to learning</p> | <p>Does the class invite and support self-monitoring & regulation by creating opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● that model and provide scaffolding for metacognitive involvement? ● that help students: (i) make sense of learning goals and task criteria; (ii) self-assess strengths and weaknesses; (iii) reflect on and adjust their work/approach to the work; and (iv) plan and take next steps for refining understandings/skills? |



Motivational Framework

Inclusion

Q: *What do we need to do to feel respected and connected to one another?*

Criteria: Respect and connectedness

Norms

1. Coursework emphasizes the human purpose of what is being learned and its relationship to the learners' personal experiences and contemporary situations.
2. Teachers co-construct knowledge that is inclusive of the ideas, perspectives, and experiences of learners.
3. Collaboration and cooperation are the expected ways of proceeding and learning.
4. Course perspectives assume a non-blameful and realistically hopeful view of people and their capacity for change.
5. There is equitable treatment of all learners with an invitation to point out behaviors, practices, and policies that discriminate.

Routines and rituals are visible and understood by all:

- Rituals are in place that help everyone feel that they belong in the class.
- Students and teacher(s) have opportunities to learn about each other.
- Students and teachers(s) have opportunities to learn about each other's backgrounds.
- Classroom agreements/rules and consequences for violating agreements are negotiated.
- The system of discipline is understood by all students and applied with fairness.

All students are equitably and actively participating/interacting:

- Teacher directs attention equitably.
- Teacher interacts respectfully with all students.
- Teacher demonstrates to all students that he or she cares about them.
- Students talk to/with a partner/small group.
- Students respond to the lesson by writing.
- Students know what to do, especially when making choices.
- Students help each other.
- Student work is displayed.

Developing Attitude

Q: *How can we use relevance and volition to create a favorable disposition toward learning?*

Criteria: Relevance and volition

Norms

1. Teaching and learning activities are contextualized in the learners' experience and knowledge and are accessible through their current thinking and ways of knowing.
2. The entire academic process of learning, from content selection to accomplishment and assessment of competencies, encourage learners to make choices based on their experiences, values, needs, and strengths,

Teacher works with students to personalize the relevance of course content:

- Students' experiences, concerns, and interests are used to develop course content.
- Students' experiences, concerns, and interests are addressed in responses to their questions.
- Students' prior knowledge/learning experiences is/are explicitly linked to course content and questions. Teacher encourages students to understand, develop, and express different points of view.
- Teacher encourages students to clarify their interests and set goals.
- Teacher maintains flexibility in pursuit of teachable moments and emerging interests.

Teacher encourages students to make real choices such as:

- how to learn (multiple intelligences, including the arts)
- what to learn
- where to learn
- when a learning experience will be considered to be complete
- how learning will be assessed
- with whom to learn
- how to solve emerging problems

Enhancing Meaning

Q: *How can we create challenging and engaging learning experiences that include learners' perspectives and values?*

Criteria: Engagement and challenge

Norms:

1. Learners participate in challenging learning experiences involving deep reflection and critical inquiry that address relevant, real-world issues in an action-oriented manner.
2. Learner expression and language are joined with teacher expression and language to form a "third idiom" that enables the perspectives of all learners to be readily shared and included in the process of learning.

The teacher encourages all students to learn, apply, create, and communicate knowledge:

- Students build on prior knowledge and interests to guide deep learning.
- Teacher, in concert with students, creates opportunities for inquiry, investigation, & projects.
- Students actively participate in challenging ways, including regular reflection on learning.
- Teacher asks probing questions of all students throughout a learning experience.
- Teacher elicits high-quality responses from all students.
- Teacher uses multiple "safety nets" to ensure responses to their questions.

Engendering Competence

Q: How do we create an understanding that we are effectively learning something we value and perceive as authentic to our real world?

Criteria: Authenticity and effectiveness

Norms:

1. The assessment process is connected to the learner's world, frames of reference, and values.
2. Demonstration of learning includes multiple ways to represent knowledge and skill.
3. Self-assessment is essential to the overall assessment process.

There is information, consequence, or product that supports students in valuing and identifying learning:

- Teacher clearly communicates the purpose of the lesson.
- Teacher clearly communicates criteria for excellent final products.
- Teacher provides opportunities for a diversity of competencies to be demonstrated in a variety of ways.
- Teacher helps all students concretely identify accomplishments.
- Teacher assesses different students differently.
- Teacher assesses progress continually to provide feedback on individual growth and progress.
- Teacher creates opportunities for students to make explicit connections between new and prior learning.
- Teacher creates opportunities for students to make explicit connections between their learning and the "real world."
- Teacher provides opportunities for students to self-assess learning in order to reflect on their growth as learners.
- Teacher provides opportunities for students to self-assess their personal responsibility for contributing to the classroom as a learning community.