Steven A. Mondy

Assessment: TEACHING AND LEARNING EVENT
Faculty: For the Faculty of Education

Due Date: 4-January 2011
“One of the hardest things teacher’s learn is that sincerity of their intentions does not guarantee the purity of their practice.” (Brookfield, 1995)

Critical reflection is a key way to gain insights into the way that we approach, view, improve and carry out our teaching. The critical reflection process has been put forward by those that research and teach, especially those in the field of higher and adult education as a way to understand the approaches and methods that educators utilize, and a way to question the assumptions that we as teachers have, which may work against our most conscientious endeavors. (Ramsden, 2003; Schoeberlein, 2009; Brookfield, 1995). It is a multi-faceted process, incorporating reflective practice in action – RIA (during the process of teaching) and on action ROA (after the fact). The reflective process is critical for any kind of tangible improvement to be made in teaching and learning, in all approaches and methods, from behaviorism (and teacher-centered transmission of knowledge) through to constructivism in all its forms (learner orientated interaction through experience). Reflective practice enables teachers to be what Schoeberlein (2009) terms, ‘Mindful’ of their teaching practice, and develop the capacity to notice the impact, good or bad, and the effectiveness of their methods and practices. It also enables the individual educator to see if their actions are aligned with their beliefs and intentions about teaching. (Pratt & Collins, 2001). It is the goal of this short evaluation to point the reflective finger towards my own teaching practices. It will attempt to unravel the relationships between: my beliefs in teaching, my hopes and intentions as a teacher, and my actions in teaching. In so doing, I will be able to see how closely my practices are aligned with my objectives. I will also be able to make clearer judgments about my practices. Even though the reflective process is ongoing and not necessarily predictive of all learning situations, I will be better able to plan for more engaging and rewarding learning experiences for the future.

To be truly effective in the reflective process, the tools that we utilize should help us in the understanding of what Palmer and Zajonc (2010) have defined for integrative education, yet also valid in other approaches, as Ontological reality (our particular theory of being), Epistemological necessity (to be constantly connected to the way we know things), Pedagogical asset (relationships of students to teachers, students to students, and teacher to student to subject) and the ethical corrective (impact on learners). The reflective tools, or lenses as Brookfield (1995) suggests, include
autobiographical reflection, understanding through the student’s eyes, enlisting the help of colleagues, and the use of theoretical literature. This evaluation focuses its main attention on one part of the reflective process, namely peer-evaluation (help of colleagues). However, it will make use of the ‘Teaching Perspectives Inventory’ (TPI) to establish the kind of teacher I think I am, and to highlight my assumptions about the pedagogical impact I think I am having. It will also use a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) to identify both positive and problem areas within my teaching. Evaluation of the learning event will provide insights into how other students (colleagues) view my teaching style/performance (peer review). The T-DEPLOY framework will help make sense of the relationships. With the help of theory in literature, these aspects will stand as a beginning to my reflective process. It does not indicate a final answer, but a suggestion as to my stance as a teacher, my pedagogical impact at the moment, and a road map for the future.

Reflections on My Performance

I felt that my overall performance in the learning event was not totally representative of my entire teaching style, however, it did represent an aspect of my teaching. My initial belief was that I was always, in every circumstance, a facilitator not a teacher who stands at the front as a provider of essential information. My TPI scores mirror this belief placing the ideas of ‘Apprenticeship’ and ‘Nuturance’ higher than ‘Transmission’ (Pratt & Collins, 2001; Heimbecker, B., n.d.) (See appendices 1 and 2). This effectively means that my ‘pre-learning event’ image of myself was that I believed that teaching was: a process of socialization, and that it assumes long term, persistent effort by the learner. This is consistent with my own understandings of my teaching. To see the opposite kind of teaching happen in the learning event was a shock to say the least. However, it provided some useful insights into the way I approach different teaching situations (Wimba virtual classroom vs. real-world classroom), students (content learners vs. second language learners), and what I present (knowledge vs. skills) as a teacher.

My part of the learning event seemed to take on aspects of level 1 of Biggs’s (Biggs, 2001; Biggs, 2001, as cited in Ramsden, 2003) quality model. That is, the teaching was more of transmission of information. Thus, I presented the information, and I presumed that the student’s would take the responsibility to understand it. Thus placing a heavy burden on the students to learn the content in the way it was presented. Unfortunately, from the student’s perspective, the material may not suit
their level of engagement. According to one peer comment, “the content was just too complex” (Sellars, 2010) (see appendix 4). In addition, I believe there was little time for questions (from the teacher and/or students), and/or feedback. This shows a very important deficiency in the teaching/learning process, but also a concern for any follow up assessment procedures. We are unable to know exactly what is happening in our classes, and because learners are unable to get immediate feedback from teachers, they lose chances to improve. Geoff Partridge’s (2010) presentation at the learning event was a good example of directing questions to individuals to aid learners toward the lessons learning objectives and getting feedback from learners. His style of teaching used learner’s prior experiences. (Bitchener, J. Young, S. Cameron, D., 2005).

Ramsden (2003) discusses how educators are likely to conceptualize the process of teaching, which may lead to a misleading and/or an altered view of what is appropriate for the situation/context. I believe that for the Wimba online classroom-learning event, I was operating under some self-created assumptions that tended to influence my presentation. I discovered that I was unconsciously making the assumption that content was more important than the learning process. Actually, during the presentation, Geoff Partridge made the observation that the focus should be on the activity, not the content. I had a lot that I wanted to teach. My aim was to give a complete picture of ‘Communicative Language Teaching’ (CLT), even though there was the 20-minute time constraint. The choice of what to do in the presentation clearly did not meet the requirements of the context. So, what ended up happening was the presentation of information, clear and logical as it may have been, which gave no time for learner interaction. Ironically, the presentation style was contrary to the methodology behind CLT. Clearly what I should have done, was to follow the example set within CLT, and present the idea of CLT through an activity. Presenting in this way may have opened up more opportunities for students to interact and react. With less material, but practical, learners could engage with the activities, and would have had deeper understandings of the material. I would also have been able to better understand the learners and their engagement with the lesson.

“Much the easiest mistake to make in deciding upon content and aims is to include too much content. We should rather strive to include less, but ensure that students learn that smaller part properly.” (Ramsden, 2003)
There was also the hidden assumption I had made about my students being the ones that had to make sense of the material on their own. So, I rarely asked direct questions, and didn’t respond much to how the students were reacting to material. Therefore, I was unable to really know if the students understood. It was only after the lesson, through the peer evaluation, that I was able to know that some students understood, and others were confused toward the end. Perhaps as Richards (n.d) suggests, recording of future lessons, and reviewing material later could provide a basis for more critical reflection. In such a case, our own actions, and student engagement could be seen more clearly. Student perspectives could be obtained through questionnaires, and informal discussions. Much of the literature points to understanding the student perspective as part of the critically reflective process. Brookfield (1995) discusses the lens of student’s eyes, and Ramsden (2003) sets aside a whole chapter on learning from the student’s perspective in order to see if our actions match that of student perceptions of us.

Some of the students in the learning event seemed to have been engaged with my use of cartoons. According to the peer review evaluations, this was a positive step in trying to attain student engagement (see appendix 3 & 4). Students in the lesson could be seen enjoying some of the cartoons; however, I didn’t give them time to digest the material, as there was still a lot of content to cover. I ended up rushing and forsaking valuable learning opportunities. I was under a ‘level 1’ assumption that if I set out the material in a logical format, and I presented it clearly, that all students would be able to understand. However, half way through the event, the comments in the chat seemed to be dropping off. It seemed that many students were disengaging, an idea confirmed within some of the peer review sheets and by comments from our lecturer.

Reflecting upon other areas of the presentation, I believe that there were positive aspects that arose from the learning event that were reinforced by some of the peer review comments, which included: a reconfirmation of my knowledge of the content area, good pacing, at least within the first half of the presentation, and logical sequencing of the content. The activities that I presented (rather than take students through) were varied and showed an insight into activities that nurture, not burden. Those that provide opportunities for student expression and time for students to spend with the material, so they can develop firm understandings. They were activities that were representative of my day-to-day teaching, that I had difficulty representing within the confines of the Wimba classroom. According to the SWOT analysis (see
appendix 5), some of these were highly rated self-perceived skills, which I often utilize for preparing Syllabi and for creating different kinds of worksheets/tests, and for choosing of different kinds of activities.

My specific learning event within the Wimba classroom showed competence in the knowledge of the CLT approach (content), yet when put into practice, fell back on traditional teacher-centeredness within the confines of a lecture format (Transmission of content). According to the T-DEPLOY model an educator should seek to demonstrate thought toward different learning approaches in relation to content and theoretical approaches. For the learning event, I effectively pigeonholed myself within a misguided assumption. Also, an educator should decide which of these best relates to students needs, course content, and how to specifically operationalize teaching and learning in a particular context (USQStudyDesk, 2010). My learning event failed to consider the best way to meet student’s needs, in that the content was overwhelming for the time frame. In addition, the presentation style did not match the goals of the theoretical concepts underlying the material. It did not present an engaging activity to facilitate learning.

From the experience in the learning event and the reflection on my action (ROA) I have realized that sometimes within my teaching, my instinct when trying to design a course is to cram as much of my own knowledge into what I am presenting to students. Often creating situations in which there isn’t much time for ‘deep learning’ to take place. Instead of the holistic learning (which preserves meaning) that I hope would take place, the learner’s knowledge becomes fragmented, in part by the heavy burden to learn information. The transference of knowledge (quantity without quality), sometimes called ‘Surface’ learning, means that deep understandings (quality and quantity) are not taking place (Ramsden, 2003).

Teachers often use a variety of techniques and approaches. However, time constraints, teacher’s assumptions, learning environments and heavy requirements of the curriculum sometimes impact on the teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom. There are many reasons for the incorrect alignment between the teaching objectives and practice. The key is not to let our teaching become automated, but to have a series of checks and balances that allow us to understand what we believe, how we plan and how we implement our ideas as teachers. Whether it is from an eclectic constructivist viewpoint, or a more narrowly defined approach. The learner’s are central to this process, and the recipients of all the benefits that come with reflection.
The upcoming assignment is to identify learning goals, then to create an implementation plan for better teaching. Having identified the inconsistency between my beliefs and intentions about teaching and the process of implementation, for the second assignment I will try to identify areas within my own teaching where content is placed as a priority. I will seek out instances where level 1 behavior predominates, and see what needs changing. Addressing areas that have been identified through the SWOT analysis (appendix 5): Goals and issues based planning, determining the right content to teach, and how to differentiate that content so it suits the greatest variety of learning styles. I will also try to improve all aspects of my teaching, by hunting for assumptions, also trying to find any hidden assumptions. I will balance what I implement with how students are perceiving my teaching. This may mean the creation of questionnaires to determine student perspectives. I will seek out help from colleagues and gain their input, by either peer discussions or peer review for other lessons. I will try to utilize anecdotal records, and think about how to use lesson reaction sheets. I will try to make objectives that place learning as a priority, over content. In this way, I will strive to place learners into more active learning situations.
References


http://www.google.co.jp/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB0QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.learningdomain.com%2FMEdHOME%2FSPECIALISATIONS%2FWriting.feedback_on.writing.pdf&ei=TXMcTdKzA4zUvQPPs7XGDQ&usg=AFQjCNE5UalGawmt0forxu3QBWy7yDgDfw&sig2=1mD82ZL9BqJd3OXHfT_K9A


Sellars, E. (2010), *Peer evaluation*, Retrieved December 30, 2010 from sellers.eric@gmail.com


Appendix 1: TPI Results

Transmission total: (Tr) 28.00
B=10; I=7; A=11
Apprenticeship total: (Ap) 35.00
B=12; I=13; A=10
Developmental total: (Dv) 34.00
B=12; I=11; A=11
Nurturance total: (Nu) 35.00
B=13; I=11; A=11
Social Reform total: (SR) 34.00
B=11; I=13; A=10

Beliefs total: (B) 58.00
Intention total: (I) 55.00
Action total: (A) 53.00

Mean: (M) 33.20
Standard Deviation: (SD) 2.64
Hit: (HiT) 36.00
Lot: (LoT) 31.00

Overall Total: (T) 166.00

For future reference your TPI ID number is: 101124060839

Appendix 2: Analysis of TPI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Scores</th>
<th>Highest Score</th>
<th>Lowest Score</th>
<th>Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally in 30’s</td>
<td>Apprenticeship/ Nurturance</td>
<td>Transmission</td>
<td>Somewhat Flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>Back-up</td>
<td>Recessive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship/ Nurtance</td>
<td>Developmental/ Social Reform</td>
<td>Transmission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancies</td>
<td>Consistencies</td>
<td>Unexpected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transmission – Intention
Apprenticeship – Intention
Nurturance – Belief
Social reform – Intention
Beliefs – Nurturance
Intentions – Apprenticeship / Social reform
Actions – Transmission / Developmental / Nurturance
Transmission scored highly for actions.

**My Beliefs:**

**Apprenticeship**
- Effective teaching is a process of socializing Ss into new behavioral norms and ways of working.

**Nurturance**
- Effective teaching assumes that long-term, hard, persistent effort to achieve come from the heart, not the head.

**Back-Up**

**Developmental**
- Effective teaching must be planned and conducted from the learners point of view.

**Social Reform:**
- Effective teaching seeks to change society in substantive ways.

**Least Held Belief**

Effective teaching requires a substantial commitment to the content or subject matter.
Appendix 3: Peer Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation links to key concepts, theories, models in Themes 1 and 2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Peer reviewer comments:**

1. Steve explained concepts well and described communicative language teaching well. He also discussed issues with teaching in a range of cultures and in particular with language teaching. Teaching was moving towards the constructivist level, with opportunity for reflection by learners and ample opportunity for discussion. (David Thorpe, 2010)

2. It is evident that a lot of effort and time was taken to prepare the slides. The slides were very visual with pictures, cartoon strips, charts and diagrams, helping learning interesting. (Rehnu Marimuthu, 2010)

3. I really think that you linked well with Themes 1 & 2 and I felt that you utilised a Constructivism approach which WIMBA made quite difficult for you. I recognised that you are most certainly striving towards Level 3 Biggs. (Eric Sellars, 2010)

4. Working with WIMBA was a challenge that not many of us were really prepared for, so no doubt we all learned something about presenting in this medium. From my own experience I can understand how nerves can affect us through a presentation. Your talk had achieved between Level 2 and Level 3 Biggs quality model. (Elizabeth McCarthy, 2010)

5. Steven tried to build up the learning from the learners. It worked well in the first part. But, presentation had too much for learners to absorb. So, later learner centered teaching did not exist. (Weena Lokuge, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation was informative and enhanced understanding of key concepts and/or development of core skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Peer reviewer comments:**

1. Steve explained the process of communicative language teaching well, including a discussion of receptive and productive skills, development of competencies, assumptions used in language teaching, cultural issues, and the types of activities used in classes, including pair work activities and circulation activities, such as “getting to know you” and similar games. It could be clearly seen that the use of such activities would considerably aid language teaching. One of the important issues he discussed was whether assumptions made with respect to language teaching were suitable for the culture in which he teaches. All of these points were described and discussed in a way that developed an understanding of them in the peer group audience. (David Thorpe, 2010)

2. Presentation was very informative. The class activities seem very interesting. However, it would have been very helpful if the activities were conducted during our WIMBA session. (Rehnu Marimuthu, 2010)

3. I enjoyed the powerpoint presentation although it was perhaps a bit lengthy and in parts a little disjointed which contributed to people losing focus towards the end. You clearly have an excellent knowledge base yourself and I don’t think WIMBA was the right forum for what you were trying to achieve. I could see where you were coming from and feel that perhaps given the time constraints some of the content was too complex. I felt that your presentation was learner focused and with an audience which had an appropriate knowledge base related to the core content this would have worked very well. (Eric Sellars, 2010)

4. Your concepts and technical language were well explained – I was able to catch onto the meanings of acronyms from early on in your session. I really enjoyed looking at the different types of activities that you present to your students. Some of them – like the “money” as incentive to participate, and the surveys – are genius. (Elizabeth McCarthy, 2010)

5. Informative. But at the later part it was difficult to absorb as there was too much information. (Weena Lokuge, 2010)

6. Demonstrated extensive knowledge in field of teaching, on how to deliver subject matter and engage learners. (Geoff Partridge, 2010)
Appendix 4: Peer Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement of audience enhanced learning</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peer reviewer comments:

1. Steve made good use of cartoons in engaging the audience and in doing so caught attention and held that attention throughout the presentation. He also responded well to audience questions. Slides were clear and well structured. One comment was that there was too much material for a short presentation. (David Thorpe, 2010)

2. Good questions were addressed to the audience. However, the presentation contained high level of details which may need some prior knowledge. Therefore, it reduced the level of engagement of audience. Nevertheless, you have put a lot of effort and time to ensure the enhancement of the audience’s understanding on the topic presented by presenting very visual slides. (Rehnu Marimuthu, 2010)

3. I feel that this was the area that you need to work on most. It was a well-structured presentation and your knowledge of the content was brilliant but I feel that you probably lost the audience’s attention throughout the presentation. This may have been due to the constraints of WIMBA. I would be interested to know if you feel that this is an accurate representation of your usual teaching style. (Eric Sellars, 2010)

4. Initially, really good engagement was achieved through the questions peppered through your talk. At times though, the session was teacher centred. I found the material very interesting. The cartoons added humour to the topic – which is always a sure way to engage the audience and “break the ice”. (Elizabeth McCarthy, 2010)

5. Had good learner’s engagement at the beginning. (Weena Lokuge, 2010)

Overall

1. Overall, a good presentation that may have been improved by less detailed discussion about the activities used to engage the language students. (David Thorpe, 2010)

2. Overall, a job well done! (Rehnu Marimuthu, 2010)

3. Overall, I feel that you did a really good job. Thank-you (Eric Sellars, 2010)

4. A good topic which did not require much prior background knowledge, so well suited for your audience. Being all teachers, we all appreciated seeing different types of activities which you presented. Your Powerpoint slides were clear and concise, and used well as points from which you would elaborate. Thanks so much for your helpful supportive comments throughout. (Elizabeth McCarthy, 2010)

5. First half of the presentation was really good. I like the way you used cartoons to make the audience more energy. Second half too much information. Letters were so small that I could not read the slides. Learner’s engagement reduced during this time. (Weena Lokuge, 2010)

6. I found the material very useful and it was clear you knew what you were doing. I have nothing negative to add, as I though you did a good job. (Geoff Partridge, 2010)
Appendix 5: SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Skills Ranked as High</th>
<th>Example of how you are using them</th>
<th>3 Skills Ranked as Medium or Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge of the subject area.</td>
<td>1. Developing objectives for syllabi.</td>
<td>1. Effective planning to meet personal/long term goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Effective use of varying methods of assessment.</td>
<td>2. Different kinds of tests, testing items, such as multiple choices, word choice, fill I the blanks. Writing assessment tools such as rubrics.</td>
<td>2. Effective maintenance of records of Ss progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Capacity to match teaching approaches to Ss needs.</td>
<td>3. Using C.L.T: Pair work, task based / group-work, lecture.</td>
<td>3. Capacity to respond to individual differences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategies, techniques or data collection, which might be helpful in monitoring, checking on and improving skills.

1. Goals based planning – Vision, values; create better action orientated goals to work towards.
2. Issues based planning – addressing specific issues.
3. Time management: Research information about reducing content to meet learning objectives.
4. Questions: Consider the following: What do I want Ss to remember? How should taking the course change Ss? What skills should Ss gain? How does this course relate to other courses?
5. Determining course content…
   i. Select topics to be covered.
   ii. Determine structure.
      - Do I need to teach certain skills?
      - Which theory do I want to follow?
      - Can I organize topics in a particular theme?
   i. Appropriate to size of class.
   ii. Consistent with the course goals.
7. Determine how I will evaluate Ss.
   i. Assignments
   ii. Exams
   iii. Practice
8. Select text or other materials.
9. Review objectives – connect to performance (Ss evaluations, in-class observations, presentations, and assignments…
10. Differentiate instruction
    i. Sensitive to Ss needs (find out the Ss perspective)
    ii. Help Ss make connections, engage them.
    iii. Goals may be similar, but the methods can vary tremendously.
11. Differentiate the content.
    i. The process – vary learning activities, multiple paths, pay attention to learning styles (kinesthetic, auditory, visual)
    ii. The product.
12. Repertoire of Teaching Strategies
    i. Direct instruction
    ii. Inquiry / Problem Solving
    iii. Cooperative and Collaborative learning.
    iv. Information processing.