



THEORY INTO PRACTICE

THEORY USING REFLECTION TO DEVELOP TEACHING EXPERTISE

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As educators, we draw on our expertise in our content areas to teach classes. However, the students and situations in our classrooms fluctuate constantly.

To perform successfully in these environments, we must develop adaptive expertise.

What is adaptive expertise?

Adaptive expertise is a type of routine expertise which extends expertise into novel situations (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986). Adaptive teaching experts are:

pedagogical experts that engage in a process of self-assessing and strategically adjusting their decision-making before, during, and after teaching episodes. They are able to strategically move away from planned curriculum components to better support the contextual needs of their pupils, question familiar solutions to problems by noticing unique features, and recognize the need to refine, change, and try out different decisions while paying close attention to the impact on their pupils (Soslau, 2013, p. 768)

How can we continue on to develop our expertise to become effective practitioners in today's culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms? We can utilize systematic reflection.

What is systematic reflection?

Systematic reflection happens, "when teachers notice important elements in instructional events that can help develop their own content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, or pedagogical content knowledge" (Hayden, Moore-Russo, & Marino, 2013, p. 146).

According to Rodgers (2002), reflection "slows down the teaching/learning process, revealing rich and complex details, allowing for appreciation, and paving the way for a considered response rather than a less thoughtful reaction" (p. 232). Being able to create and employ these thoughtful responses during new teaching situations makes us adaptive experts.

Rodgers' (2002) Reflective Cycle

PRESENCE IN EXPERIENCE

Learning to see



DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIENCE

Learning to describe and differentiate



ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCE

Learning to think from multiple perspectives and explanations



EXPERIMENTATION

Learning to take intelligent action



PRACTICE

One way to use Rodgers' cycle is to isolate a critical moment during your class: a time when you're interacting with students or a time you observe student to student interaction. Ask yourself the following questions:

	STEP	RESPONSE
1	PRESENCE IN EXPERIENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role(s) did you play? • What thoughts did you have? • What responsibility(ies) did you have in this moment? 	
2	DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAY OBJECTIVE! • Describe a critical moment where something interesting occurred. • What did you do? 	
3	ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what happened in your moment. • Why did the actions happen? • How did you receive the actions? • How were your actions received by the students? 	
4	EXPERIMENTATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your plan for the next time this moment occurs? • What are some ideas you might suggest to students or other instructors? 	

By completing this cycle of reflection, you can analyze your experiences and propose thoughtful responses. "The ability to notice important events and feedback from teaching interactions, and to adapt in response, to remain fresh, is an indicator of teacher development and an ongoing career challenge (Hayden et. al, 2013)."

The more often you take time to thoughtfully consider elements of your teaching, you will increase your ability to respond to emergent situations with effective reactions. This is adaptive expertise.

NOTE: Your reflection can be written, but for a quicker and easier method, try recording an audio memo on your phone and revisiting it later.

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