

Reflective Practices in Practice: Creating a Reflective Environment

Reflective practices involve both looking back on and learning to pay attention to one's actions in order to self-analyze and make meaning from experience. Rodgers (2002), in an effort to make the thinking of John Dewey¹, more accessible, explains that

reflection is not an end in itself but a tool or vehicle used in the transformation of raw experience into meaning-filled theory that is grounded in experience, informed by existing theory, and serves the larger purpose of the moral growth of the individual and society. (p. 863)

As such, reflective practices can lead to discovery of assumptions and to transformation of insights and can provide strategies for personal and organizational growth since they provide a foundation for continual learning. They are widely known within education and religious arenas and are increasingly a part of the practices of healthcare professionals. In addition, reflective practices are seen within adaptive management approaches, and many leadership approaches also embrace reflective practices within coaching programs. Though also accepted as a way for individuals in business and industry to continually update skills and knowledge, these settings often lack a formal structure for facilitating or even encouraging reflective practices. This may be changing though.

A trend within instructional design indicates business and industry is “shifting mental models and adopting a growth mindset” (Hart, 2020, p. 3). This involves embracing change and understanding “the value of giving employees time to engage in learning experiences: practice, reflect, rinse, and repeat” (p. 3). As a result, organizations are taking new approaches to training

¹ John Dewey, along with Donald Schön, provide foundational definitions of reflection on which, according to Tannebaum et al. (2013), current views of reflection are built.

that embraces “behavior change, awareness, and reflection” (p. 4). They want employees to continually ask why and how regarding their work as it connects to organizational purpose. This trend not only connects employees with organizational missions and goals in meaningful ways, it also points toward the transformational role reflective practices can play in furthering that connection.

Using recent studies (i.e., most are published within the last 10 years) focusing on reflective practices, this paper seeks to understand foundational reflective terminology before then considering how reflective practices affect performance, self-regulation, and transformation in general. It then looks at reflective practices and power within organizations before considering examples of reflective practices within a variety of disciplines to help understand the complexity and depth reflective practices can take. Finally, this paper concludes with broad application points to provide direction for any organization, but specifically those within business and industry, desiring to create a reflective environment.

Understanding Reflective Practices

Foundational reflective terminology both demonstrates the depth and breadth possibilities of reflective practices as well as reveals its intricacy. In a broad sense, reflection applies to all aspects of living since anyone can be reflective and many do so as an avenue for understanding life and actions (i.e., through journaling, counseling, etc.). Reflection becomes reflective practice when it focusses on improving practice, usually one’s professional practice, though any habitual and structured reflection can be considered reflective practice even if not in a professional setting. Fook (2007) explains that reflective practice serves, according to Schön, to reduce the gap between theory and practice. Through reflective practice, professionals improve their

practice by discovering and articulating what they are actually doing rather than by only discussing what they do in terms of the theories related to their profession.

Extending reflective practice, critical reflection involves looking at power structures and assumptions behind practice. Critically reflective practice examines how to adjust practice for the purpose of bringing about change within social situations surrounding professional practices. Critical reflection includes “an awareness of how assumptions about the connection between oneself and social context/structure can function in powerful ways, so that awareness of these assumptions can provide a platform for transformative action” (Fook, 2007, p. 441). This awareness happens, Fook contends, through reflexivity, which “emphasizes the ability to look both inwards and outwards to recognize the connections with social and cultural understandings” (p. 443). Reflexivity happens when, for example, “a practitioner successfully identifies and makes meaningful responses to the information, knowledge, skills, performance, and attitudinal gaps that affect his or her effectiveness” (Hussein et al., 2019, p. 37).

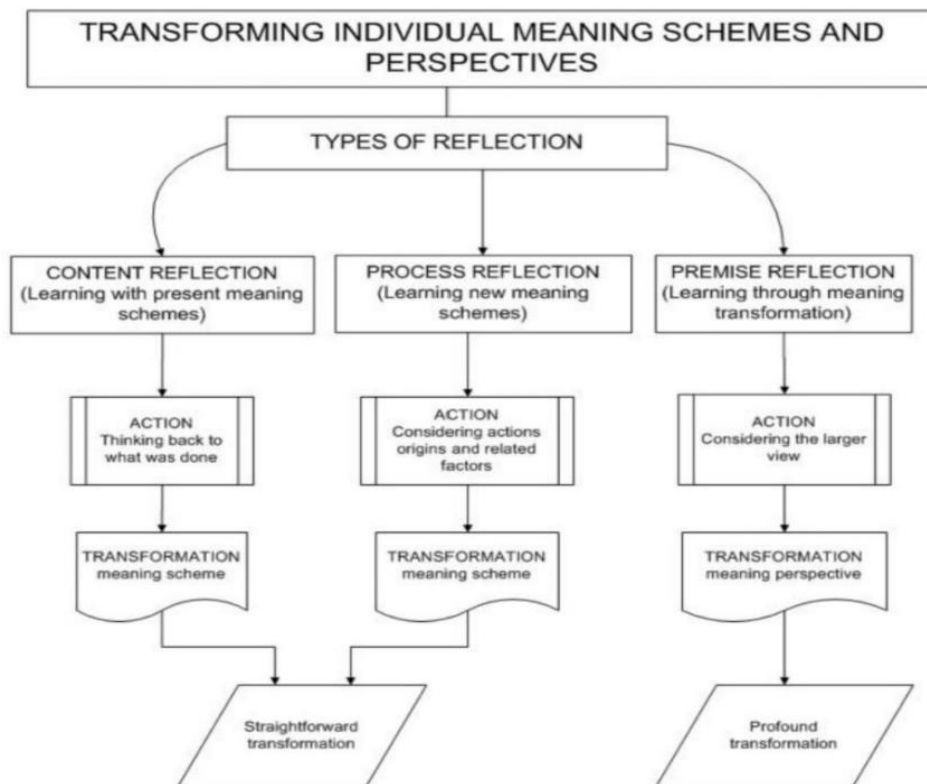
Mezirow’s transformative learning theory² helps in understanding the difference between the change that takes place with reflection versus that which happens with critical reflection. In this theory, Mezirow emphasizes critical reflection, which “involves the nature and consequences of one’s actions but also includes the related circumstances of their origin” (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 114), over straightforward reflection, which is an on-purpose assessment of one’s action. Mezirow presented three types of reflection: content reflection (i.e., thinking back), process reflection (i.e., identifying cause), and premise reflection (i.e., identifying values).

² Mezirow first used the label “transformation” in a study of U.S. women returning to postsecondary study or the workplace after significant time away. His findings identified 10 phases of personal transformation. (Kitchenham, 2008, p. 104-105).

This distinction, illustrated in figure 1, shows the significant difference between straightforward transformation that results from content and process reflections and the “profound transformation” (p. 115) that takes place as the result of premise reflection (i.e., critical reflection).

Figure 1

Mezirow’s Three Types of Reflection



From A. Kitchenham, 2008, *Journal of Transformative Education*, p. 115.

Reflection and critical reflection are often used interchangeably, within both research and practice, with the implication that they have the same meaning. Yet, recognizing the nuances within each reveals their uniqueness. Brookfield (2010) helps clarify the distinction between reflection and critical reflection by explaining that reflection “makes practices work more smoothly and achieve the consequences intended” (p. 216) while critical reflection questions

power relationships. “For reflection to be considered critical,” Brookfield says, “it must have as its explicit focus uncovering, and challenging, the power dynamics that frame practice and uncovering and challenging hegemonic assumptions” (p. 216).

Taking these concepts in a different direction by breaking with self-reflection, diffraction presents “an inter-connected activity that entangles the human and the non-human” (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017, p. 115). Bozalek and Zembylas describe diffraction as “a process of being attentive to how differences get made and what the effects of these differences are” (p. 112), and say it acknowledges the influence of the knower in knowledge production. Diffraction analysis studies “the practices of knowing as they are enacted in the world in a state of interdependence with other parts of the world” (p. 115). With this, Bozalek and Zembylas believe diffractive analysis is an alternative methodology to critical reflection.

To help grasp the meaning behind these reflective terms, Keevers and Treleaven (2011) provide one way of considering how reflective practices might operate within an organization. Their empirical study of reflective practices within a counselling organization elaborate on a relational approach that shows diffraction in an organizational context and as an organized approach to reflection-in-action. They conclude that a relational approach and practice-based study enables a reconfiguration of reflective practice “as a direct, material engagement within practice” (p. 518) rather than a looking-back activity performed at a distance. They also use diffraction as a metaphor for better understanding reflective and reflexive practice because it “is a powerful reminder that reflective practice can be directed other than back on itself, it can spread outwards, bend around corners, and can be other than self-referential” (p. 518). Keevers and Treleaven show that reflective practices not only allow for a looking back on actual practice for areas of improvement of that practice, but they also can lead to looking at an organization

from perspectives that expands the way an organization views reflective practice and brings “to foreground the emergent, relational and political character of practice” (p. 518).

Helping illustrate the intricate nature of reflective practices for wide application, Yancey (2015) explains that “reflection can take many forms and serve many purposes; it can also be situated in different ways” (p. 189). She then discusses that for some, reflection is an individual activity and for others a social activity. In either case, context influences meaning. In her discussion of an ePortfolio-based model of reflection, Yancey emphasizes the importance of key terms for helping “develop or expand or complicate a language of a field or discipline” (p. 196) and also for thinking about that field or discipline. Yancey concluded that reflection “provides a vehicle for synthesizing... collective wisdom and experience” (p. 201). With Yancey’s thoughts along with the terminology discussed above in mind, this paper now considers ways reflective practices can potentially impact performance, self-regulation, and transformation in the workplace.

Performance, Self-Regulation and Transformation

In discussing Schön’s theory, Tannebaum et al. (2013) explains how students often graduate from college knowing a lot about their professions but without the ability to apply that knowledge in practice, either as skills within or reflection on performance. This leads to a gap between theory and practice. Tannebaum et al. point to reflection as important for turning experience into learning, specifically noting Schön’s claim that “the act of improvised reflection helps practitioners find desirable and plausible solutions based on the practitioner’s experiences and beliefs” (p. 249). In the workplace, opportunity for this process most often shows itself within professional development.

A study by Karatsolis et al. (2016), provides an example of how reflective practices integrating within professional development can lead to improved performance. Looking at information technology (IT) professionals using an online learning environment, Karatsolis et al. present “an experimental pedagogical framework for providing technical professionals with practice on writing skills” (p. 244) through focus on developing metacognitive rhetorical awareness. Though the IT professionals in this study did not regularly reflect on their own writing nor were they familiar with the terms and concepts within reflective practices, they nonetheless engaged in reflective thinking that led to increased metacognitive knowledge. These IT professionals connected implicit and explicit knowledge using reflective practices and experienced their metacognitive knowledge influencing self-regulated learning. Thus, the training intervention, which included reflective practices, increased IT professionals’ metacognitive awareness and led to an increase in rhetorical ability. Their findings, which Karatsolis et al. admit are only preliminary because of the limitations of their pilot study, indicate promising avenues in need of confirmatory research. Even without this research, though, the connection of metacognitive awareness to reflective practices is strong enough for consideration “as an alternative to formalized communication instruction or feedback” (p. 257) since it clearly shows a move from awareness-of-sense (i.e., awareness of distinct genres common in the environment) to awareness-in-articulation (i.e., ability to express what is known).

Taking reflective practices deeper, critical reflection in the workplace presents an interesting consideration since research lacks, according to de Souza and Brunstein (2018), agreement with defining critical reflection as it relates to performance and context transformation. They explain that utilizing critical reflection only in terms of performance without looking at context transformation diminishes the possibilities of critical reflection. They

note that “reflections – when they exist – are more in service of performance for maintaining employability” (p. 268). Critical reflection, according to de Souza and Brunstein, sometimes operates on two dimensions, as illustrated in table 1, and thus “assumes a performance dimension in the workplace, while a political framework is not always considered” (p. 272).

Table 1

Critical Reflection Notion on Two Dimensions

Dimensions	Notions
Orientation for workplace performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical exercise of prudent judgments; • Change of results of actions and intentions; • Openness to disciplined thinking; • Skepticism towards arguments and suppositions; • Questioning of existing perspectives; • Examination of professional conduct; • Assessment of workplace behaviours; • Visible behaviours influenced by personal motivation and by characteristics of organisational work.
Orientation for context transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of new behaviours or ideas; • Changes in dominant ideological model; • Social and political as well as contextual examination; • Emancipation; • Questioning of beliefs and values considered right; • Focus on the social aspect (concern with the collective and not with the individual); • Attention to power relations; • Context reconstruction.

From de Souza and Brunstein, 2018, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, p. 272.

Believing that critical reflection is diminished if the only result is performance improvement, de Souza and Brunstein (2018) advocate for critical reflection that is not overly focused on performance. This is one reason why, in their study of managerial competence regarding professional conduct, they sought to study a company interested in going beyond

performance and toward transforming relationships. The resulting discussion, they believe, motivated thinking of critical reflection more toward its ultimate purpose of context transformation.

In order for transformation to take place, Hilden and Tikkamaki (2013) point to the need for developing metacognition, emotion management, and self-regulation. They believe these are only possible “by becoming aware of oneself through reflection” (p. 79). McIver et al. (2016) connect the ideas of self-regulation and workplace transformation by discussing the learning process involved with applying generic skills and the higher-order cognitive and behavior activities involved with them. They believe “individuals learn skills for the self-management of learning and thinking” (p. 62) and that this learning relies on a foundation of memorizing information, understanding relationships, and applying skills such as that learned through apprenticed know-how. Applying generic skills, they contend, indicates “the ability to apply skills across subjects or situations” (p. 62-63). This type of learning involves reflection that leads to learners becoming aware of and challenging “personal ingrained (and often unconscious assumptions about them or the world” (p. 63). Reflection, then, more specifically reflection that is critical in nature, challenges assumptions in ways that can move individuals and organizations toward transformation.

An example from the field of technical communication (TC) illustrates the transformative role reflective practices, especially those employing critical reflection, can have on not only individuals and organizations but possibly even on entire disciplines. Garrison’s (2018) “off the grid approach to thinking about technology and technical communication” (p. 201) uses off the grid living as an “embodied metaphor” to “understand and encourage a movement that provides nonstandard solutions over today’s systems of technology” (p. 207). He encourages TC

professionals to “actively choose [their] technical life world (p. 208) by “rethinking praxis” (p. 209). This change, Garrison suggests, occurs through a critical thinking process that involves critical reflection. This process includes using tough questions that require TC professionals to “grapple with the complexities, think globally, and find ways to enact theory in [their] local, daily communications” (p. 214). Such reflection, he contends, forces remembering “the value of complexifying information, thinking globally, and acting inefficiently” (p. 214). The reflection process Garrison suggests TC professionals use in their practice, whether they work in business and industry, education, or any other sector, provides an example of the pathway for transformation critical reflection can create and the more widespread evolution it can have even on issues of global relevance.

Providing another perspective on reflective practices, a diffractive methodology, considers that it is not the reflexive individual that has fundamental impact but rather individual and social entanglements that have transformational power. With that realization, Bozalek and Zembylas (2017) believe unlearning the “drive to engage in a reflective process focused on the self or searching for interpretations” (p. 121) is important for seeing alternative possibilities. Further, they believe this diffractive process happens via “knowings through beings entangled through and with other objects and beings” (p. 121). In other words, transformation does not come through reading about or applying reflective practices, such as journaling with its focus on the individual subject, but rather through a diffractive methodology.

Reflective Practices and Power

Some researchers argue that reflection sometimes “supports self-regulation in a way which disadvantages the individual while benefiting the organization” (Siebert & Walsh, 2013, p. 167). This happens when reflection becomes a tool for discovering how to work harder and

more effectively for the purpose of reaching organizational goals. When seen this way, workers “modify their actions and learn to deal with the multitude of power relations within which they have to operate” (p. 169). Self-regulation through reflection, then, leads to workers feeling like they are always being watched and like they must continually maintain a certain image, one that allows for a feeling of power and security. As a result, many researchers conclude that “individual identification of the benefit which comes from the exercise of reflection is an illusion, and that any benefit actually accrues to the organization” (p. 170).

However, Siebert and Walsh (2013) also believe this illusion of reflection only happens if individuals are not capable of action. They explain that “where there are dynamics of power there are also always possibilities” (p. 173) that include the empowering of work-based learners. Many factors (i.e., work position, social factors, gender, race, and others) impact participation in workplace opportunities for learning and development, and many of these factors “operate at an informal level and are not immediately apparent to those disadvantaged by them” (p. 173). Tacit knowledge also plays a role as an informal practice that operates outside of awareness and impacts the possibility for empowering workers. Applying reflection creates opportunity for seeing opportunities for transformation. Siebert and Walsh explain that

when reflection is applied to the production of knowledge and practice in context, in addition to the analysis and evaluation of one’s professional practice, there is also the requirement to analyze and evaluate the relationship between practice and organizational context. (p. 174)

The effectiveness of reflection for transformation in the workplace, then, lies in its use to “provide the tools to negotiate discourses of power more effectively” (p. 174). In doing so, reflection in the workplace can lead to challenging the status quo by leading to questioning the

professional practices (i.e., ethics, values, theory) that may be perpetuating power structures. This creates a “broader range of knowledge” (p. 176) that corroborates the dynamics of power offering both possibilities and constraints.

Hilden and Tikkamaki (2013), in their study of “Reflective Practice as a Fuel for Organization Learning” conclude that risks associated with engaging in reflective practices in the workplace for the purpose of workplace renewal include the potential to “challenge existing norms” (p. 91) and “make visible the existing power structures in organizations” (p. 91). In this, reflection can serve to break old patterns, but it can also cause anxiety as an organization’s identity is challenged. Likewise, it can lead to “posing challenging questions and open dialogue” but also cause “political conflict within the organization” (p. 91). As a result of these risks, Hilden and Tikkamaki recommend considering the potentially transformational nature of reflective practices and finding ways to facilitate a safe place for discussing and gradually implementing the change reflective practices can provoke.

Again taking the discussion in a different direction, bringing diffraction into power dynamics involves moving beyond figuring out what someone really meant. Diffraction does not involve interpreting, reflexivity, or analyzing sameness or difference. Instead, it looks for connections and relationships. Because of this, Bozalek and Zaybylas (2017) consider diffractive methodology “an ethical and socially just practice” (p. 116). This happens, they explain, through a careful study of interactions of different viewpoints and of how they build on and are different for the purpose of making new and creative ways of seeing things. “Choosing a diffractive analysis will,” they conclude, “create new opportunities for ethical and political connections and transformations that were previously unimaginable” (p. 116).

Reflective Practices in Practice

Understanding foundational terminology within reflective practice led to taking a broad look at how such practices hold potential for impacting performance, self-regulation, and transformation. That understanding provided a way to grasp the interaction of reflective practices and power within organizations. Now, this paper considers specific points of application for reflective practices; specifically, it considers reflective practices within leadership and management practices, knowledge transfer, research practices, and conflict resolution. Doing so provides a way to collect broad application points for both better understanding and practically implementing reflective practices in workplaces desiring to create a reflective environment.

Leadership & Management

Hilden and Tikkamaki (2013) see reflection as an essential part of managerial practices giving need to “increase the understanding of reflection as not only an individual or group process but as an organized practice” (p. 77). They believe reflection should not be studied solely as a “hidden mental process” but instead as “a visible practice directed at past, present, or future objects” (p. 78). Hilden and Tikkamaki note the broad consensus among learning theorists as to the core role reflection plays in adult learning, and they cite Mezirow’s definition of critical reflection and the role cultural influences play. They add that “reflection examined in the work context also needs to be realized in processes of interaction, sharing opinions, asking for feedback, challenging groupthink and experimentation” (p. 77).

In their observations, Hilden and Tikkamaki (2013) discovered reflective working “incorporates not only the hidden human processes of metacognition (individual, group and organizational), but also the hidden human processes of metacognition and emotions – forming the basis of our thinking and acting in change” (p. 91). This means, they conclude, that reflection

should not be separated from work; instead, it should be part of how work is planned, carried out, and evaluated. Further, it needs to be valued within organizational strategy and, therefore, a legitimized practice. In this, reflection provides a way to make sense of change and thus “demonstrate potential in supporting organizational renewal emerging from the ranks and being managed from the top down” (p. 91).

An example of reflection as part of organizational strategy comes from Grandy and Sliwa (2017) through their illustration of contemplative leadership, which they describe as a “relational, engaged, reflexive, and embodied activity that requires knowledge from within context and practical wisdom” (p. 424). Further, they explain that it is focused on the welfare of others and happens within “the mundane and everyday experiences of leadership” (p. 424). They emphasize context for understanding organizational purpose and consider leadership and communities to be interconnected. They also illustrate the role tacit knowledge has in understanding contemplative leadership since “knowing of leadership is grounded in layers of experience tied to a complex and intimate understanding of the organizational context and commitment to good purpose” (p. 435). In other words, the knowing and practice of leadership are intertwined.

In discussing “virtue ethics and ethics of care and responsibility as essential to contemplative leadership” (p. 426), Grandy and Sliwa (2017) refer to Gilligan’s³ three-stage model for connecting reflective practice to leadership in practice. Of particular note in Gilligan’s model is the third stage of highest awareness where critical reflection leads to reconciling the responsibility of self to others. This contributes to an ethics of leadership, which, Grandy and

³ Carol Gilligan offered a feminist account of moral development that is based on an ethics of care and responsibility (Grandy & Sliwa, 2017, p. 428).

Sliwa believe, is a concept applicable to any type of organization since “everyday practices of leadership are in many ways similar to leadership in other organizations in that they involve activities such as setting, priorities, measuring performance, and managing finances” (p. 436). They believe part of the development of an ethics of leadership involves helping practitioners in reflective work develop their phronesis. As de Souza and Brunstein (2018) note, this relational knowledge, results in prudent judgment, which has the potential for bringing change by implying “the capacity to decide not only how to act, but also to reflect on the actions and intentions that support judgment” (p. 269). Critically reflecting in this way, they note as they refer to work by Antonacopoulou, holds potential for changing the results of actions and intentions.

Knowledge Transfer

Knowledge, according to Hussein et al. (2019), is an adaptive process that is practically useful. Knowledge transfer refers to the way knowledge is shared and spread and how doing so hopefully results in problem solving. It considers how formal knowledge transfers to the workplace and how tacit knowledge, which is difficult to articulate, can be transferred from one person to another. Knowledge transfer also considers the role of phronesis as well as situated knowledge that reflects the conditions (i.e., context, locations, structures) in which knowledge is produced. When an environment is conducive to reflection, Hussein et al. contend, meaningful organizational learning can take place. Such an environment promotes acquiring and using knowledge in practical contexts and results in “an environment for collaborative construction and reconstruction of knowledge” (p. 41).

In a discussion of work-based learning and reflection prior to looking at self-regulation and self-liberation, Siebert and Walsh (2013) note how work-based learning within higher education “blurs the lines between formal education and informal learning at work” (p. 168).

Further, they believe that reflective practice transforms and even enhances workplace learning. They reference Schön and his observation that “skillful practice may reveal a kind of knowing that does not stem from a prior intellectual operation” (p. 168).

In a similar vein, Bloch (2011) briefly emphasizes the importance of reflection for students in internship programs in the introduction to her study of technical writing internship reports. She lists journaling, class discussions, and comprehensive reports (completed at the end of the internship) for making “connections between the work done on the job and the knowledge learned in school” (p. 308). While no other connection to reflection is made, Bloch’s brief mention does help further emphasize the role reflection can play in connecting implicit and explicit knowledge for the purpose of knowledge transfer.

In a qualitative study exploring the nature of informal learning during the everyday work activities of instructional design (ID) professionals, Yanchar and Hawkley (2015) consider the impact of reflection on identifying learning. They give an example of the initial struggle participants have beyond “obvious or common learning experiences, beyond those involving new technology and course subject matter” (p. 430). With reflection, however, ID professionals began seeing other aspects of their work as learning too. This included problem solving, collaboration, and workload management. Reflection helped these ID professionals see informal learning happening in the “everydayness” (p. 430) of their work. Yanchar and Hawkley’s findings connect both with Schön’s notion of reflection-in-action and with critical thinking by way of the roll greater awareness of assumptions and practices plays in seeking to increase and refine informal learning habits. This greater awareness, Yanchar and Hawkley say, involves “self-reflections regarding a finished product, what they learned through the process, what factors hindered or facilitated their informal learning efforts, what they could have done differently, and

so on, all for the sake of continued professional development” (p. 433). This leads, the study concludes, to “the most capable informal learners” who are also “the most capable instructional designers” (p. 433).

A study by Griggs et al. (2018) connects the impact of leadership and having an environment friendly to reflection by showing a lack of knowledge transfer when both are absent. They consider, through a study of human resource (HR) professionals, what happens after graduation and whether teaching reflective practices transfer to reflective practices in the workplace. With a definition of reflection borrowed from Boud, Keogh, and Walker, Griggs et al. operated on the belief that reflection is “a bridge between experience and learning” (p. 1172) and that “reflective practice can generate understanding of situations and how change might be introduced and managed” (p. 1173). However, they discovered a performance-driven approach to reflection in the HR professionals. They also found that the techniques learned formally were not adopted in the workplace for several reasons. Those reasons include that the professionals did not have a variety of techniques from which to pull nor did they have a community of practice in which to reflect. Ultimately, the researchers found, lack of professional endorsement as well as absence of a workplace reflective culture and organizational support led to this lack of transfer.

Research Practices

In their study of pedagogical research in technical and professional communication, Melonçon et al. (2020) engaged in a reflexive research practice that involved “reflection as part of the interpretation process” (p. 107). It also involved reflection after the research process to “provide key insights into ways to improve the design, methods, and practices of research” (p. 107). They feel that doing so creates “sustainable research” (p. 107) that will have an impact not just via the specific study results but also by way of providing a model for research. While

implementing that process for their own study, Melonçon et al. discovered teacher reflection to be a significant aspect of improving local practice. The nature of the research (i.e., collecting teacher reflections) applies to a specific classroom, but the practice itself speaks to its value for inspiring “similar, local instructor metacognition such that new, individual insights are possible” (p. 105). While the activity is not technically research, Melonçon et al. note, it does offer a model that can be used to inform individual “reflective critical praxis” (p. 106). They also offer it as an example of what reflection on the insights of research completed can yield. For application beyond their own research, they offer the conclusion that “every field needs to take time to reflect on current practices” (p. 111) and encourage “vital reflective work about research practices and processes” (p. 113).

In considering educational practice and research, and once again taking the discussion about reflective practices in another direction, Bozalek and Zembylas (2017) acknowledge that both reflection and diffraction “acknowledge the situatedness of knowledge and offer a more enlarged perspective of the research process” (p. 121). However, they believe diffraction as a tool for analysis “goes beyond the idea of reflexivity and interpretation and produces new entangled ways of theorizing and performing research practices, co-constituting new possibilities of strengthening and challenging knowledge” (p. 122). They provide an example of such methodology by describing their use of technology for communicating regularly across different geographical locations. This communication addresses a collaborative research question using discussion of a variety of related texts. As participants interact with the texts, they seek to go beyond critical reading and reflecting and into diffractive reading and reflecting to allow for exploring “ways of mapping routes of ‘reading’ through space and time and to create collaborative cartographies that are not merely ‘representational’” (p. 117). As a result, they

focus on “the entanglements of disciplinary knowledge-making processes, different life experiences and the affects that these have on the texts” (p. 117). Ultimately, Bozalek and Zembylas conclude, this provides “ongoing and mutually constitutive encounters of entanglements with text” (p. 118) and results in “inspiring unpredictable and provocative ways which provide possibilities for new imaginings, for complexity and for creation of the not yet known” (p. 118).

Conflict Resolution

Hussein et al. (2019) describe the process used in and the outcome of their efforts to integrate reflective practices with conflict resolution approaches. Though they specifically studied land-related conflicts, their approach and conclusions drawn offer relevant insight into how reflective practices can be transformational to both individuals and organizations. The transformative context they wanted to create involved the combination of learning and knowing as practices that are a part of the practices and experiences of everyday lives. They wanted participants to “develop alternative ways of thinking and acting with full commitment to their workplace” (p. 27). The process they used included “reflective debriefing” (p. 28), which involved assessing and reflecting on “social and institutional problems that constrain practical implementation of the theories of change” (p. 28) taught in training. Participants were encouraged to go beyond just describing what happened to making critical reflections that would lead to transformation of how they viewed the world. They did this by applying Brookfield’s emphasis on “identifying assumptions that underlie one’s practices and decisions and shape one’s interpretations” (p. 29).

Intertwining reflective thinking and conflict resolution processes produce what Hussein et al. (2019) call “diverse reflections” (p. 41). They believe these show not only individual growth

but also how individuals made sense out of the experiences leading to that growth. In creating an environment conducive to reflection, they discovered that “reflective problem-solving and mindfulness increase practitioners’ effectiveness in generating useful meanings from the unique dynamics of a particular conflict they handle and from the practical circumstances that inhibit constructive resolution of conflicts” (p. 43). As a result, Hussein et al. conclude, knowledge is adapted in useful ways as performance improves, such as through the ability to respond to new circumstances and demands, through reflecting on practice.

Creating a Reflective Environment

Becoming a reflective organization requires a concerted approach toward creating a reflective environment. As Nilsen et al. (2012) discovered in their efforts to present a theoretical framework to increase understanding of reflection as a mechanism for integrating research-based knowledge with pre-existing practice-based knowledge, “there is an obvious conflict between time for production and time for activities that involve reflection and learning in the workplace” (p. 411). They also found individual “active engagement” (p. 411) and full support by leadership to be crucial in successful workplace reflective practices.

Creating a reflective environment begins with expanding on a foundational understanding of research practices and on the role these practices play in performance, self-regulation and transformation as well as within power structures in organizations. This knowledge combined with an understanding of how reflective practices apply within leadership and management practices, knowledge transfer, research practices, and confliction resolution, provides a beginning understanding of how to develop such a reflective environment. To solidify that understanding, consider the following broad application points for implementing reflective practices in the workplace.

1. Develop an organized practice of reflection. Reflective practices should not just be an individual or group process; they must be valued as an organizational strategy.
2. Create an ethics of leadership that reconciles the responsibility of self to others through reflective practices. This involves considering actions and intentions and the role they play in judgment.
3. Collaboratively construct and reconstruct knowledge through reflective practices. Implementing reflective practices provides ways to see, adapt, and transfer knowledge and leads to the creation of avenues for professional development.
4. Understand technology's role for facilitating reflective practices. Reflective organizations seek out technology for opening new channels for communication and collaboration even within areas of conflict.
5. Facilitate change management by reflecting on research practices and processes. This involves taking time to reflect on current practices and to encourage reflective work in areas of research related to one's industry.

In discussing shifting mental models and adoption of a growth mindset, Hart (2020) emphasizes the need for learning professionals to find “new and better ways to help people walk in others' shoes, see other perspectives, and make decisions with those perspectives in mind” (p.

6). Reflective practices provide an avenue for these types of perspective shifts. Additionally, reflective practices can play a part in connecting individuals to organizational purpose and in pointing them toward transformational possibilities. For reflective practices to have this type of significance within organizations, though, a focus on creating a reflective environment is crucial.

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