

Final Synthesis Reflection

This has been a rich and rewarding learning experience. Across the various learning activities in the FCP I have been exposed to a broad range of perspectives, literatures and pedagogies. In particular, the literatures to which we were introduced, the opportunities presented with respect to scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) research methods, the embedding of multiple, tangible points for reflective practice, and participation in a diverse, vibrant learning community have been of great value. It has also been a rather labour-intensive process. I am ready for the next phase of my development as a SoTL leader at UBC.

Literature

My teaching subjects include learning technologies, social justice, health promotion and adult education. With the course I currently teach focused on learning technologies, I felt confident about my familiarity with this literature. However, looking at Bates and Poole (2002), Chickering and Gamson (1987), and Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) as a student learner was instructive. More specifically, self-evaluating my own practice against Chickering and Gamson gave me a better sense of confidence in terms of my practice—particularly my commitment to communicating high expectations, which is one of Chickering and Gamson's seven principles.

I also availed myself of the opportunity to revisit some adult educational literature with which I had been previously familiar. I re-read (sections of) canonical adult education works by Houle (1996), Knowles (1980), Mezirow (1981) and Freire (1973; 1997).

One educational theory I have not previously explored to great depth is Lave and Wenger's work on the legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice (2006), whose work is bandied about rather frequently in educational development circles. Already I see that in many respects the appeal of the term *community of practice* (p. 29) holds for folks working in educational development and faculty development. I am also convinced that this surface perspective on Lave and Wenger's work does these professionals a disservice.

SoTL methods

As an experienced social researcher the shift to SoTL methods was perhaps less challenging for me than my positivist peers in the cohort. Having experience with correlational design (surveys), ethnography, discourse analysis, and mixed methods research meant I had a range of methods from which to choose. In the end I chose a mixed methods design, since it allowed me to design a study that had both quantitative and qualitative elements. With adult education literature rather prominent in SoTL literature I felt quite comfortable integrating Caffarella's work on transfer of learning (2004) into my design.

Reflective practice

I expanded the scope of the monthly reflections early on to suit my own, individual, learning style. In addition to reflections on aspects of the readings in the program, I used the blogging tool in my eportfolio to capture my thoughts about SoTL in general, to remind myself of things I want to follow up, and to post some ideas in hope of some collegial feedback. One limitation of the eportfolio rollout in the FCP was not

emphasizing the sharing of these amongst the cohort. I suspect most of the people did not know that I had an e-portfolio; others did not have the URL. Over the six months of the program I received no comments, a wasted opportunity methinks. For next year I encourage the sharing of both site URLs and how to set up RSS feeds to follow others' reflections (something I do in my own course).

Further reflection on the notion of reflection

I encourage my students to leverage the blogging tool in their UBC Blogs e-portfolios, but I don't impose how they must do so. When I was a student I had a visceral, almost corporeal resistance to "journaling": as a result I tended to write extensively and superficially. This program was my first chance to test these reflective waters again. Overall it was valuable...but only because I wrested this into a process that was valuable to *my* learning. Had I strictly followed the instructions this too would have been one of those empty "colour inside the lines" tasks that is the antithesis of reflective practice.

Next Steps

As I put to bed this e-portfolio, I am keen to move forward on a number of fronts. First, I want to finalize my survey instrument and interview schedule, submit my BREQ application and begin collecting data for my SoTL research project. Second, I have already applied things learned from the FCP to my management role at UBC: there is, of course, scope to continue to do so--so I will map out a strategy to do so purposefully. Third, I am presenting a paper at a conference in Montréal, a reflective practice piece about my course in UBC's MET program; I expect to find out shortly about what I submitted to the Canadian Study on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STHLE) conference, also in Montréal. Fourth, my team is leading an evaluation study on the rollout of UBC's new LMS: the first phase wraps up shortly; there are two more phases in Summer Terms 1/2 and Winter Term 1. SoTL principles and methodologies have greatly informed this study.

As well, I have been developing (with some members of my team) a series of resources related to SoTL topics for our unit. This includes information on journals and conferences, curriculum models in and across academic disciplines, and different university approaches to promotion as it relates to (and analogous to) UBC's new professor of teaching. Finally, I piloted an internal SoTL workshop series for CTLT staff over the last few months; now I need to develop a longer term strategy to support SoTL among our staff.

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