

Education in Practice Reflective Learning Research

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Abstract: This research will be explaining about what I have experienced from this module 'Education in Practice'. This module is about how we approach contemporary educational issues, critical thinking and theory and the impact of these on classroom practice. As this module might help me in the future as this will allow me to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to evaluate the issues in my particular field.

Keywords: Teaching practices; Critical thinking ;Teaching methods

1. Teaching practices and Experiences

1.1 Four theorists

The four theorists I learn from this module which I think is useful for my future is cognitive, humanist, social and behaviorist. Cognitive is allowing students to learn from accommodating new experiences as this involves building cognitive structures-schemes, maps and concepts (Tsur, 2006). Moreover, teacher's role is extremely important as he or she requires to structure the right content of the learning activity depending on students they are having. Next, humanist is affected by individuals' perceptions of themselves and not from organic or cultural factors (Matthew H. Olson, 2016). In another words, humanism would concentrate upon the event of the child's self-concept. For example, a child will be willingly to learn when he or she is deeply driven especially when they are feeling good about themselves. Besides that, theorist seek to grasp both the structure of communities and the way learning occurs in them when it comes to social or situational theorists (Matthew H. Olson, 2016). Communications is very important in all teaching methods but in this method will be more important as teachers need to work to establish communities of practice so that they can create conversations and participation from students. Lastly, behaviorist sees that learner actually learns when stimulation and responses are acquired through new behaviors or changes in behaviors (Matthew H. Olson, 2016).

These four theorists that I learnt from this module allows me to understand different theorists have their own beliefs and their advantages and disadvantages. I remember my lecturer divided us into groups to have a small competition regarding about this topic. She allows us to learn from activities and gave us a chance to have discussion with others regarding about this topic, as this allow us to have more communication and interactions between the students and lecturer. On the other hand, my specialized subject is on secondary vocational students as humanism will be the best option to be applied in the teaching process. As China's secondary vocational students not only need to cultivate students' solid professional knowledge, but also need to cultivate students' noble morality. Such as, incorporating humanism into the language classes of secondary vocational schools.

1.2 Teaching practices

There are a few teaching practices that I found is important and may be useful in the future. First, I understand that rewards and punishments are important in teaching practices as this requires encouragement from the teachers towards the students. The right attitude and behavior from the teachers towards the students are important as this will directly affect the image of a teacher from a student. However, overly power abused will create a barrier between students and teachers as students will be more afraid of having conversation with teachers and this is commonly seen in China as teachers hold the rights of what students are learning before they step into colleges. That is why I have the same mentality as these teachers from China because I have been taught by these teachers as

well. However, once I came to the UK, I had a different experience from this module regarding about teaching practices. Three main teaching practices I had experienced and learnt from these classes is teacher clarity, classroom discussion and metacognitive strategies.

Teachers here will clarify what the students will learn from a particular subject and show them the benefits of learning them as mentioned by (Darren L.Linvill, 2017). Presenting a model or examples allow students to understand more or even make them interested because they knew what the end product looks like. Next, discussing in groups in class allow us to improve our communication skills as well as our ability to work with others which is the same research as (Murphy, 2009). This helped me the most as I have to not only communicate with my group mates but also my lecturer. This is extremely rare to see in China as most China lecturers apply ‘teacher led’ approach. Communicating with my lecturer not only allows me to learn more but also allows me to have a better relationship with my lecturer as this helps me in the future if I have any problems, I will not be afraid to seek for help from my lecturer. Lastly, metacognitive strategies allow students to take their own responsibilities as mentioned by (Yilmaz, 2017). As lecturers allow students to plan and organize, monitor their own work and to self-reflect along the way. This also will increase student confidence by increasing their ownership.

These 3 practices have the same similarities from what I have experienced from all the classes I had attended in the UK. For example, every single class will start with an introduction module that allows us to understand what we were going to learn and when we will be learning it. It helps us in preparation and also understand the learning outcome which is the similar to teacher clarity. Next, as I mentioned above that we have great interaction with our lecturers as this module allow us to have presentations and group assignments to help us improve in different ways. Our lecturers gave us lots of encouragement even though our speaking skills weren’t as good as the local students. However, our lecturers were patient and encourage us all the time. This gave us confident to speak up and also allow us to handle our own responsibilities. Not only that, these practices are different from what I had experienced in China and I will definitely consider applying these teaching practices and share it when I got back to China.

Chinese teaching methods are different from the methods or practices in the UK. For example, a classroom full of students obediently taking notes and there will be not much interactions with the lecturers as all across China from primary school to universities have the same approach which is the ‘teacher led’ approach. Moreover, they believe that Chinese students are best with memorizing and they will perform better with this method (Bo Dahlin, 2010). Therefore, lecturers subsequently utilize a precise approach to arranging and conveying information-packed lessons to understudies who passively get information. Another reason may cause the usage of the method is college entrance exam (gaokao) which is potentially be one of the toughest exam in the world (The Guardian, 2016). This exam causes loads of stress not only to students but to family members as well. Memorization is broadly respected as the essential course to effectively procuring the huge volumes of information tried within the gaokao. This belief, combined with a broad regard for lecturers in Chinese society, motivates a perception among understudies to listen to the educator. In another words, they categorized teacher know best and only few students may ask questions and consider group discussions are waste of time.

On the other hand, UK teaching method that I experienced and visited through the trip to the Chester International School. Their teaching methods see students as contributors rather than recipients and focus on loads of interactions with the students. Students are key members within the learning prepare and are encouraged to inquire questions and challenge ideas and concepts. During the trip, I have noticed that students are allowed to pick their own interest to study and they are even allowed to have one-to-one lessons with the teachers. I believe that this is very rare in China and I also think that this allow students to have deeper conversations and understandings with the teacher regarding about their own area of studies. These two different methods have their own strengths and weakness. For example, student-led approach allows students to have their own control over their tasks and allow them to have their own thinking towards the tasks (Salna, Sia, Curtis, Leddy, & Widmann, 2016). Students will develop more experienced skillset, though prove suggests they hold distant less data than their Chinese counterparts. On the other hand, (The Guardian, 2016) mentioned that gaokao may place unhealthy amount of stress towards Chinese students but it also may causes some to take extreme measure towards success.

To sum up, I will consider what the students I will be facing in the future and then only apply the right methods to teach them. It is difficult to say that which method will be better but by understanding the environment will allow us to make the right decision. I believe that gaokao is a factor that is hard to change when all across China believes that this exam is the most important exam for students to take before they study in universities (The Guardian, 2016). However, I am planning to make some little changes towards the teaching method. Even though might be difficult to change the way Chinese students’ study, as the reason had mentioned above but I wish to have my students to have more interactions with me. Having more interactions with students allow me to understand their needs and when they required assistant especially students in China have to take College entrance examination (gaokao) to further

their studies in colleges and universities.

Conclusion:

Through the above analysis, We found that faced with the severe challenge of the shortage of outstanding talents in the Chinese market, Chinese universities should draw useful inspiration from the British education and teaching model, quickly adjust the curriculum, update the teaching content, discard old textbooks, increase the application and practice of the class hours, understand the social needs, and jointly establish internship bases with enterprises. The students trained by Chinese colleges and universities are quick in thinking, new in professional knowledge, and strong in practical work ability, which meets the urgent needs of various industries in society.

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